WILEY

National Identity and Economic Inequality: New Insights From Disadvantaged and Advantaged Groups

Valeria De Cristofaro[1] | Carmen Cervone[2] | Silvia Filippi[2] | Marco Marinucci[3] | Andrea Scatolon[2] | Roberta Rosa Valtorta[3] | Michela Vezzoli[4] | Valerio Pellegrini[5]

[1]Department of Psychology, University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli", Caserta, Italy | [2]Department of Developmental Psychology and Socialization, University of Padova, Padua, Italy | [3]Department of Psychology, University of Milano-Bicocca, Milan, Italy | [4]Department of Psychology, Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Milan, Italy | [5]Department of Social and Developmental Psychology, Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, Italy

Correspondence: Valeria De Cristofaro (valeria.decristofaro@unicampania.it)

ABSTRACT

This research examined the association of national identity with system justification and collective action against economic inequality specifically relating to socioeconomic status (Study 1), ethnicity (Study 2) and gender (Study 3) among both disadvantaged and advantaged groups. Additionally, in Study 3, we investigated the competing predictive role of national narcissism. Across all studies ($N = 3387$) and regardless of group membership, we consistently found that participants who scored higher on national identity showed stronger system justification and, in turn, lower joint collective action intentions. After controlling for national narcissism in Study 3, however, the relation of national identity with joint collective action through system justification became non-significant. Instead, national narcissism was positively related to system justification and then negatively associated with joint collective action after controlling for national identity. These results advance the understanding of the psychosocial pathways that undermine collective efforts towards social change, thereby contributing to the maintenance of economic inequality.

1 | Introduction

Common identity, which implies that advantaged and disadvantaged group members identify themselves as members of the same broader group, promotes intergroup harmony (Gaertner and Dovidio 2012). As a result of this recategorisation process, members of different groups replace their separate identities—'us versus them'—with a more inclusive and common identity—'we', which reduces prejudice while improving intergroup attitudes (Pettigrew and Tropp 2006).

In the context of inequality, however, intergroup commonalities associated with a shared common identity may backfire by demotivating efforts towards social change. This 'dark side of we' is described in a series of studies on the negative consequences of communality interventions for collective action towards equality (see Dovidio et al. 2016 for a review). For example, Saguy et al. (2009) found that commonality-focused contact (i.e., a positive contact involving a discussion about the things the groups have in common) produced false expectations of outgroup fairness for minority group members (i.e., expectations that majority group members behaved fairer than they did when allocating resources). In turn, optimistic expectations and positive evaluations towards the majority reduced support for social change. Similarly, Saguy et al. (2011) found that intergroup commonality, a useful strategy to increase intergroup harmony, could potentially reduce social change. Intergroup commonality was related to false expectations for equal treatment, reduced inequality perceptions (i.e., minority group members were less likely to perceive themselves as targets of discrimination), and

---

thus weaker collective action intentions. These findings indicate that emphasising commonalities between groups may conceal unfair disparities that occur in intergroup contexts. By reducing perceptions of inequality, common identity decreases readiness to challenge inequality and mobilise for social change towards greater equality (Wright and Lubensky 2009).

This research is designed to extend and move beyond this line of work by providing new insights into the potential downsides of sharing a common identity in the context of economic inequality and the psychosocial pathways underlying resistance to social change towards greater equality. To meet this goal, we focused on national identity as a specific type of common identity that pertains to the broader national group and examined its role, in conjunction with the role of national narcissism in Study 3, in undermining participation in joint collective action against economic inequality through system justification. After reviewing the relevant literature, we describe three studies relying on different contexts of economic inequality, countries and disadvantaged and advantaged group members.

2 | National Identity and System Justification

Focusing on the negative consequences of communality interventions, Saguy et al. (2009, 2011) found that emphasising intergroup commonalities reduced support for social change via increased favoritism towards the outgroup and decreased perceptions of inequality. Relevant to the present research, Saguy and Chernyak-Hai (2012) showed that commonality-focused interactions led members of disadvantaged groups to perceive the hierarchical status quo as more legitimate.

Building on this, the present research proposes that system justification, which is a motivational tendency to imbue the (unequal) status quo with legitimacy (Jost and Banaji 1994), enables meaningful progress towards understanding the demobilising potential of common identity. As theorised, system justification affects fairness judgements so that intergroup disparities are seen as fair and deserved, and the majority group is evaluated more favourably (Haines and Jost 2000). Therefore, we propose system justification as the psychological process through which national identity may exert its demobilising potential on collective action against economic inequality.

Recent research on national identity supports our line of thought. For example, Rubin et al. (2023) proposed a theoretical model predicting a positive association between national identity and system justification. Owuamalam et al. (2023) provided empirical support for this association among nationally representative samples of discriminated groups from several European countries. The authors also found that national identity was related to increased system justification among women (as members of a disadvantaged group) and feminists (as members of a politicised group). Similar results were obtained by Jaśko and Kossowska (2013), showing that national identity was related to increased tendencies to legitimise the unequal financial system among the minority.

At the same time, system justification has been linked to reduced engagement in collective action towards intergroup equality

(Osborne et al. 2019). Those higher in system justification believe that the status quo, including intergroup inequality, is just and desirable and should be preserved at all (personal and collective) costs. In this way, system justification undermines collective action aimed at challenging the status quo and promoting social change (Becker and Wright 2011; De Cristofaro et al. 2021, 2023; De Cristofaro et al. 2022; Osborne and Sibley 2013).

By integrating these parallel, but thus far, separate lines of research, we examined the association between national identity and collective action intentions against economic inequality through system justification. Also novel to this research, we planned to analyse intentions to engage in a *joint* form of collective action, which refers to collective action undertaken by advantaged and disadvantaged group members together (Subašić et al. 2008). Joint collective action differs from ingroup collective action, which is undertaken by disadvantaged members without the presence of advantaged members (van Zomeren et al. 2008), and solidarity-based collective action, which is undertaken by advantaged members without the presence of the disadvantaged (van Zomeren et al. 2011). Unlike previous research, which mainly focused on ingroup and solidarity-based forms of collective action, we here employed members of both disadvantaged and advantaged groups and examined their intentions to join and participate together in collective action against economic inequality. More specifically, these groups were defined according to the context of economic inequality considered: socioeconomic inequality in Study 1 (i.e., low- medium- and high-SES), ethnic economic inequality in Study 2 (i.e., Black and White) and gender economic inequality in Study 3 (i.e., women and men). Based on the literature, we predicted that national identity would relate to a higher motivational tendency to legitimate the national system. This, in turn, would relate to weaker intentions to participate in joint collective action against economic inequality among members of both advantaged and disadvantaged groups (H1).

Support for this prediction would provide novel theoretical insights and empirical evidence into the demobilising potential of national (common) identity and the psychosocial mechanisms that contribute to maintaining economic inequality regardless of group membership.

3 | National Identity and National Narcissism

The secondary purpose of the present research is to investigate the competing predictive role of national narcissism, defined as the belief in the superiority of one's group associated with the need for external recognition (Golec de Zavala et al. 2009). We were inspired by theory and research according to which common identity and collective narcissism, albeit correlated with each other, derive from different motivational grounds and are related to different intergroup outcomes (Cichocka 2016; Cislak et al. 2018; Marchlewska et al. 2020). Indeed, both common identity and collective narcissism influence the thoughts, feelings and behaviours of group members in a way that develops and maintains a positive image of one's group. When taking their shared variance into account, however, common identity manifests itself as a secure form of group attachment that is based on satisfied personal needs

and relates to openness towards minorities. In contrast, collective narcissism reflects a defensive form of group attachment that serves to compensate for frustrated personal needs and relates to hostile attitudes towards minorities (Golec de Zavala et al. 2013).

Accordingly, there is evidence that after controlling for national narcissism, national identity was unrelated or positively related to intergroup tolerance and support for minority rights (Cichocka et al. 2018; Guerra et al. 2022; Marchlewska et al. 2022; Verkuyten et al. 2022). Conversely, after controlling for national identity, national narcissism was associated with negative reactions towards minorities and support for extreme violence (Bertin et al. 2021; Cichocka et al. 2016; Cislak et al. 2021; Golec de Zavala and Federico 2018; Jaśko et al. 2020). Interestingly for this research, Górska et al. (2020) found that national narcissism, minus its overlap with national identity, was negatively associated with collective action intentions in support of refugees. Moreover, the authors found a negative association between national narcissism and empathy towards women and LGBT people. Consequently, decreased empathic feelings were found to be related to weaker collective action intentions against the abortion ban as well as in support of LGBT rights. Yet, these associations from national identity were not significant or reversed after controlling for national narcissism.

Building on this evidence, we propose that national identity would become unrelated to system justification and then joint collective action after controlling for national narcissism (H2a). Conversely, national narcissism would remain positively associated with system justification and then negatively associated with joint collective action after controlling for national identity (H2b). We tested these predictions in Study 3, focusing on the context of gender economic inequality and employing women (as disadvantaged group members) and men (as advantaged group members). Support for these predictions would indicate that the maintenance of gender economic inequality could be attributable to a greater extent to a defensive, narcissistic form of attachment to one's nation rather than to a secure national identity, suggesting novel directions for future research.

4 | The Present Research

The present research investigated the role of national identity in maintaining economic inequality among both disadvantaged and advantaged group members. We specifically conducted three studies designed to provide converging evidence across both disadvantaged and advantaged group members about different contexts of economic inequality: socioeconomic inequality in Italy (Study 1; low-, medium- and high-SES Italians), ethnic economic inequality in the United States (Study 2; Black and White Americans) and gender economic inequality in Italy (Study 3; female and male Italians). Because national identity has been shown to positively relate to system justification (Owuamalam et al. 2023) and the negative relation between system justification and collective action in the direction of greater equality has been established (Osborne et al. 2019), we formulated the prediction that national identity would be negatively associated with joint collective action intentions against economic inequality through increased system justification (H1).

In Study 3, we additionally aimed to compare the role of national identity to the role of national narcissism in their association with system justification and then joint collective action. Given that national identity, minus its overlap with national narcissism, does not necessarily result in inequality maintenance (Górska et al. 2020; Marchlewska et al. 2022; Verkuyten et al. 2022; see also Golec de Zavala et al. 2013), we predicted that national identity would be unrelated to system justification and then joint collective action after controlling for national narcissism (H2a). Conversely, national narcissism would be expected to remain negatively related to joint collective action through increased system justification after controlling for national identity (H2b).

To date, the existing literature lacks empirical evidence that bolsters the relation between national identity, system justification and joint collective action against economic inequality. In the present research, three studies, employing different contexts of economic inequality, countries and members of both advantaged and disadvantaged groups, were designed to fill this research gap and generate converging evidence that national identity plays a significant role in the maintenance of economic inequality through higher system justification. The secondary purpose of Study 3 was to further extend this evidence by examining whether there may be specific conditions when national identity stops producing inequality-maintenance consequences: building on previous findings, we proposed that this may be the case when national narcissism is taken into account. Thus, Study 3 deepens our knowledge of the demobilising potential of national identity. By proposing and showing that national narcissism may overcome the demobilising potential of national identity, which we planned to consistently examine across three convergent studies with robust samples, Study 3 provides additional insights useful for both theoretical and practical purposes.

The minimum sample size needed for each study was determined by performing a power analysis designed for mediation models with a single mediator (Schoemann et al. 2017). We specifically opted for conservative expected effect sizes and number of replications to achieve a robust statistical power ($r = 0.20$, $1\text{-}\beta = 0.90$, replication $= 5000$, draws $= 20,000$, Monte Carlo confidence level $= 95\%$). The power analysis revealed that we needed a minimum sample size of 410 participants to achieve a statistical power of 0.90 (95% CI $= 0.89, 0.91$).

5 | Study 1: Socio-Economic Inequality

In Study 1, we examined our prediction that national identity would be negatively related to joint collective action intentions through increased system justification among members of both disadvantaged and advantaged groups (H1). We focused on the Italian economic context, where inequality is widening (Pastorelli et al. 2022) and is associated with adverse socio-psychological outcomes such as poor well-being and limited access to healthcare (Jetten and Peters 2019; Schmalor and Heine 2022; Vezzoli et al. 2023). We recruited a convenience sample of Italian participants and tested our prediction among low-SES (as disadvantaged group members), medium- and high-SES (as more advantaged group members). SES was examined by its three main components, namely education, income and

employment status. This classification was informed by prior literature that highlights the multidimensional nature of SES, where education, income and employment status are key inter-related components (e.g., Fliesser et al. 2018; Seid et al. 2018). Acknowledging three levels of SES, this study offers a more comprehensive understanding of how the demobilising potential of national identity may operate among three distinct socio-economic groups.

5.1 | Method

5.1.1 | Participants

One thousand three hundred and ninety Italians living in Italy (60.2% female, 35.8% male, 4% other; M age = 27.80, SD = 10.82) were recruited through snowball sampling and social networks. Political orientation was measured on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = *extremely conservative* to 7 = *extremely liberal* (M = 5.61, SD = 1.33). For education, a middle school diploma (8.6%) was categorised as a low level of SES, a high school diploma (47.1%) as a medium level and higher-level titles (44.3%) as a high level. For income, we considered a monthly household net income less or equal to 1700€ (42.4%) a low level of SES, between 1701€ and 2500€ (27.7%) a medium level, whereas higher than 2501€ (29.9%) a high level. For employment status, being unemployed or retired (55.6%) was considered a low SES level, being employed in mid-status occupations such as office workers and mid-level military personnel (31.5%) a medium level, whereas being employed in high-status occupations such as manager and senior military personnel (12.9%) a high level.

5.1.2 | Measures

Participants' identification with their nation was assessed with the 10-item Identification with the Nation scale (Tyler and Blader 2001; e.g., 'I feel a sense that I personally belong to Italy'). Responses were given on 7-point scales (1 = *completely disagree*; 7 = *completely agree*) with higher scores indicating higher national identity (a = 0.84, M = 3.39, SD = 1.16). Then, participants completed the 17-item Economic System Justification scale (Jost and Thompson 2000). Examples of items are: 'The existence of widespread economic differences does not mean that they are inevitable' (R) and 'Economic positions are legitimate reflections

of people's achievements'. Items were rated on 7-point scales (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*), with higher scores indicating increased endorsement of system justification (a = 0.79, M = 2.81, SD = 0.81). Finally, consistent with the theoretical definition of joint collective action, joint collective action intentions were measured with 7 items (see past research by Hasan-Aslih et al. 2020; Teixeira et al. 2020), capturing the extent to which participants are willing to participate in collective action against economic inequality together with members of both advantaged and disadvantaged groups. Examples of items are: Together with other low-, medium- and high-SES Italians, 'I would organize and/or participate in a demonstration' and 'I would distribute and/or sign a petition'. Items were rated on 7-point scales (1 = *not at all willing*; 7 = *very much willing*) so that higher scores represented higher intentions of joint collective action (a = 0.92, M = 5.05, SD = 1.58).

5.2 | Results and Discussion

Based on previous studies on SES (e.g., see Fliesser et al. 2018; Seid et al. 2018), we combined educational attainment, income and employment status as described above to divide participants into three SES groups: low-SES (N = 580; 59.5% female, 34.3% male, 6.2% other; M age = 22.38, SD = 6.21; M political orientation = 5.88, SD = 1.18), medium-SES (N = 518; 59.3% female, 37.6% male, 3.1% other; M age = 31.69, SD = 11.99; M political orientation = 5.37, SD = 1.47) and high-SES (N = 292; 63.4% female, 35.6% male, 1% other; M age = 33.70, SD = 11.11; M political orientation = 5.48, SD = 1.27). Then, we ran a perfectly identified mediation model where national identity was the predictor (X), system justification was the mediator (M) and joint collective action was the criterion (Y). Because indirect effects are conventionally not normally distributed, we estimated the mediation model using a robust maximum likelihood method with the Huber-White correction. This model was tested simultaneously across low-, medium- and high-SES groups by conducting a multigroup path analysis with lavaan (Rosseel 2012), using the RStudio integrated development environment (RStudio Team 2023). We initially set free to vary the associations among variables, obtaining a specific baseline model to examine any differences between the groups. As shown in Figure 1, the unconstrained model showed slight differences between the groups. Therefore, we tested a model where we imposed equality constraints on all coefficients to gauge if the structural associations in the
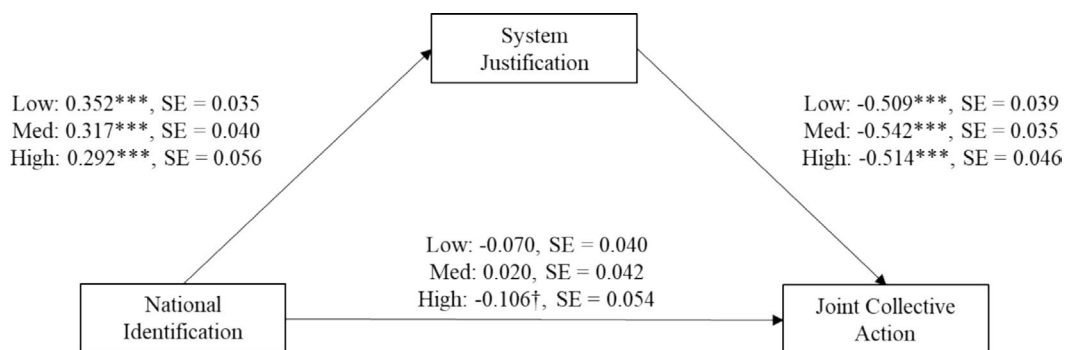

FIGURE 1 | Standardised coefficients for low-, medium- and high-SES groups. Study 1: Low-SES (N = 580), medium-SES (N = 518) and high-SES (N = 292). †p = 0.05, ***$p \leq 0.001$.

model could be considered invariant in magnitude across each group. This model fitted the data nicely (robust $\chi^2 = 6.02$, df $= 6$, $p = 0.42$; CFI $= 0.99$; TLI $= 0.99$; SRMR $= 0.019$; RMSEA $= 0.003$, 90% CI $= 0.000$, 0.060), indicating that the differences between the groups were negligible. As such, we reported and discussed univocal standardised coefficients for the groups. The predicted indirect association is reported separately for each group since it was not considered in the model fit estimation. Equality assumptions about the indirect association peculiar to each group were tested by contrasting the related coefficients (see also Pellegrini et al. 2022). Descriptives and correlations for each group are reported in Table 1.

As predicted by H1, we found a significant and negative indirect relation between national identity and joint collective action through system justification. Specifically, the indirect relation was significant and negative for each group of low-SES, $\beta = -0.179$, SE $= 0.022$, $z = -8.134$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [-0.222, -0.136], medium-SES, $\beta = -0.172$, SE $= 0.025$, $z = -7.006$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [-0.220, -0.124] and high-SES, $\beta = -0.150$, SE $= 0.030$, $z = -4.943$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [-0.210, -0.091]. The analysis showed non-significant differences between contrasted indirect associations for low- and medium-SES groups ($\beta_{diff} = -0.007$, SE $= 0.033$, $z = -0.220$, $p = 0.826$, 95% CI [-0.072, 0.057]), low- and high-SES groups ($\beta_{diff} = -0.029$, SE $= 0.038$, $z = -0.773$, $p = 0.440$, 95% CI [-0.103, 0.045]) and medium- and high-SES groups ($\beta_{diff} = -0.022$, SE $= 0.039$, $z = -0.556$, $p = 0.578$, 95% CI [-0.098, 0.055]). This indicates that, regardless of SES (hence group membership), individuals higher in national identity were more likely to endorse system justification and, in turn, were less willing to engage in joint collective action against economic inequality. Therefore, Study 1 provided initial support to our prediction H1 about the demobilising potential of national identity through higher system justification among members of both disadvantaged and advantaged groups. In the next Studies 2 and 3, we aimed to replicate these results across different contexts of economic inequality, different countries and different samples of both disadvantaged and advantaged group members.

6 | Study 2: Ethnic Economic Inequality

In Study 2, we investigated whether the associations that emerged from Study 1 may be replicated within a different context of economic inequality (i.e., the ethnic pay gap, which is defined as the disparity in the average hourly pay between White and ethnic minority people), different country (i.e., the United States) and among different independent samples of disadvantaged (i.e., Sample A; Black) and advantaged (i.e., Sample B; White) group members. Indeed, economic inequality has a highly racialized component, especially in the United States, where Black Americans suffer from prejudice and severe forms of economic discrimination. Although some progress has been made towards equality, the ethnic pay gap remains a pervasive problem in the United States (Chetty et al. 2020; Manduca 2018). As in Study 1, we tested our prediction H1 that national identity would be negatively related to joint collective action intentions through increased system justification among members of both disadvantaged and advantaged groups.

6.1 | Method

6.1.1 | Participants

In Study 2, we recruited participants online via Prolific setting as screening criteria that their nationality and country of residence were the United States, and that their ethnicity was either Black (Sample A) or White (Sample B).

6.1.2 | Sample A

Among Black participants ($N = 500$; 52.4% female, 44.2% male, 3.4% other; M age $= 38.42$, SD $= 13.14$), 11% identified themselves as conservative, 31% moderate, 53.8% liberal and 4.2% other. For educational attainment, they were distributed as follows: no formal qualification (0.4%), primary school diploma (0.4%), middle school diploma (0.2%), high school

TABLE 1 | Descriptives and correlations for scores on National Identity (NI), System Justification (SJ) and Joint Collective Action (JCA).

Low-SES	a	M	SD	1.	2.	3.
1. NI	0.83	3.22	1.12	1		
2. SJ	0.79	2.67	0.78	0.35***	1	
3. JCA	0.91	5.34	1.47	-0.25***	-0.53***	1
Medium-SES	a	M	SD	1.	2.	3.
1. NI	0.85	3.48	1.17	1		
2. SJ	0.79	2.95	0.82	0.32***	1	
3. JCA	0.93	4.82	1.63	-0.15***	-0.54***	1
High-SES	a	M	SD	1.	2.	3.
1. NI	0.86	3.59	1.16	1		
2. SJ	0.79	2.85	0.80	0.29***	1	
3. JCA	0.91	4.88	1.60	-0.26***	-0.55***	1

Note: Study 1: low-SES ($N = 580$), medium-SES ($N = 518$) and high-SES ($N = 292$). ***$p \leq 0.001$.

diploma (40.2%) and higher-level titles (58.8%). Their income varied as follows: no annual personal net income (4.2%), $\leq$\$10.000 (9.2%), \$10.001–\$20.000 (9.8%), \$20.001–\$30.000 (11.8%), \$30.001–\$40.000 (13.2%), \$40.001–\$50.000 (8.2%), \$50.001–\$60.000 (9.4%), \$60.001–\$70.000 (8.6%), \$70.001–\$80.000 (8.4%), \$80.001–\$90.000 (3%), \$90.001–\$100.000 (2.8%), > \$100.000 (11.4%). For employment status, 61.4% of participants were employed full-time, 18.4% were employed part-time, 12.2% were unemployed, 6.2% were not in paid work and 1.8% other.

6.1.3 | Sample B

Among White participants ($N = 500$; 47.6% female, 49.2% male, 3.2% other; M age = 43.43, SD = 14.33), 23.4% identified themselves as conservative, 24% moderate, 49% liberal and 3.6% other. Their educational attainment varied as follows: no formal qualification (0.2%), primary school diploma (1%), middle school diploma (1.2%), high school diploma (38.4%) and higher-level titles (59.2%). Concerning income, participants were distributed as follows: no annual personal net income (3.4%), $\leq$\$10.000 (10.8%), \$10.001–\$20.000 (13%), \$20.001–\$30.000 (12%), \$30.001–\$40.000 (9.4%), \$40.001–\$50.000 (9.2%), \$50.001–\$60.000 (9.2%), \$60.001–\$70.000 (7.6%), \$70.001–\$80.000 (6.6%), \$80.001–\$90.000 (3.2%), \$90.001–\$100.000 (4.2%) and > \$100.000 (11.4%). For employment status, 51.6% of participants were employed full-time, 15.8% were employed part-time, 9.8% were unemployed, 20% were not in paid work and 2.8% other.

6.1.4 | Measures

Parallel to Study 1, we adapted the 10-item Identification with the Nation scale (Sample A: $a = 0.94$, $M = 3.78$, SD = 1.55; Sample B: $a = 0.94$, $M = 3.93$, SD = 1.47) and the 17-item Economic System Justification scale (Sample A: $a = 0.72$, $M = 3.29$, SD = 0.75; Sample B: $a = 0.87$, $M = 3.34$, SD = 1.03) to fit the U.S. context. We also included the same 7 items used to measure joint collective action intentions against the ethnic pay gap as in Study 1 (Sample A: $a = 0.94$, $M = 4.65$, SD = 1.65; Sample B: $a = 0.96$, $M = 3.51$, SD = 1.85).

6.2 | Results and Discussion

The method of analysis was the same as in Study 1. Specifically, we tested our proposed perfectly identified path analysis model simultaneously across Black and White participants by a robust maximum likelihood method with the Huber-White correction. We first tested the unconstrained baseline model. Then, we tested the fully constrained model to gauge the magnitude of structural associations' variability across each group. Goodness-of-fit of indicators for the fully constrained model was not satisfactory in this study (robust $\chi^2 = 34.53$, df = 3, $p < 0.001$; CFI = 0.89; TLI = 0.77; SRMR = 0.86; RMSEA = 0.145, 90% CI = 0.107, 0.187), suggesting that the magnitude of coefficients' variability was not negligible. However, when testing standardised coefficients and indirect associations (see Figure 2), we obtained similar results in terms of the direction of the associations for both groups. Correlations for each group are reported in Table 2.

As in Study 1, and confirming H1, we found a significant and negative indirect association between national identity and joint collective action through system justification (Sample A: $\beta = -0.099$, SE = 0.022, $z = -4.431$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [−0.143, −0.055]; Sample B: $\beta = -0.234$, SE = 0.029, $z = -8.123$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [−0.290, −0.178]). The analysis revealed significant differences between contrasted indirect relations ($\beta_{\text{diff}} = 0.135$, SE = 0.036, $z = 3.704$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [0.064, 0.206]). This indicates the existence of significant differences in the magnitude—but not in the direction—of the predicted mediation model (H1) between Black and White participants. Put differently, although stronger for White, the predicted mediation model similarly emerged among members of both disadvantaged and advantaged groups. Thus, it is possible to conclude that regardless of ethnicity (hence group membership), national identity is related to increased system justification and then decreased willingness to jointly participate in collective action against ethnic economic inequality, consistent with Study 1 and as predicted by H1.

7 | Study 3: Gender Economic Inequality

Study 3 had two main goals. First, we aimed to improve the robustness of the results of Studies 1 and 2 by replicating them within a different context of economic inequality (i.e., the gender pay gap, which is defined as the disparity in the average hourly pay between men and women) and among different independent samples of disadvantaged (i.e., Sample A; women) and advantaged (i.e., Sample B; men) group members. As in Study 1, we focused on the Italian economic context, where the gender pay gap remains an unsolved economic inequality
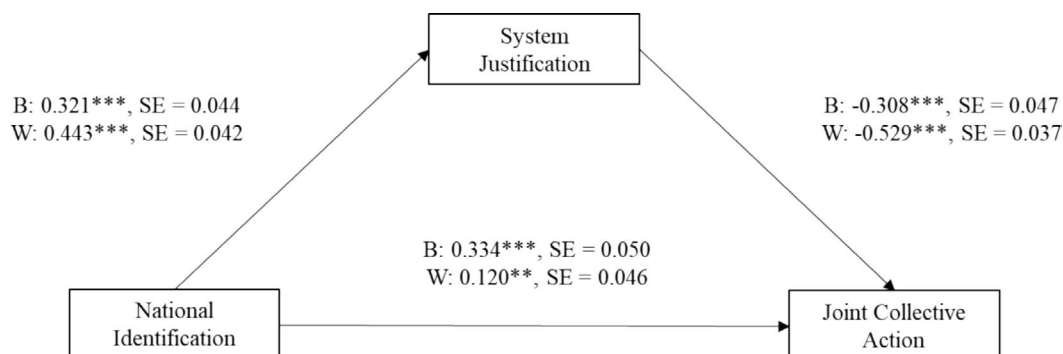

FIGURE 2 | Standardised coefficients for Black and White. Study 2: Black ($N = 500$) and White ($N = 500$). **$p \leq 0.01$, ***$p \leq 0.001$.

TABLE 2 | Correlations for scores on National Identity (NI), System Justification (SJ) and Joint Collective Action (JCA).

Black	1.	2.	3.
1. NI	1		
2. SJ	0.32***	1	
3. JCA	0.23**	−0.20***	1
White	**1.**	**2.**	**3.**
1. NI	1		
2. SJ	0.44***	1	
3. JCA	−0.11**	−0.47***	1

Note: Study 2: Black ($N = 500$) and White ($N = 500$). **$p \leq 0.01$, ***$p \leq 0.001$.

issue. Based on ISTAT data (ISTAT 2021), Italian women experience significant earning penalties relative to comparable Italian men. Again, as in Studies 1 and 2, we tested our prediction H1 that national identity would be negatively associated with joint collective action intentions through increased system justification among members of both disadvantaged and advantaged groups.

The second goal of Study 3 was to investigate the relation of national identity with system justification and then joint collective action while considering the variance that national identity shares with national narcissism. This is important for advancing our understanding of the national identity-system justification link and its implications for the maintenance of economic inequality. Based on existing findings (Górska et al. 2020; Marchlewska et al. 2022; Verkuyten et al. 2022; see also Golec de Zavala et al. 2013), we predicted that national identity would become unrelated to system justification and, in turn, joint collective action after controlling for national narcissism (H2a). Instead, national narcissism would remain positively related to system justification and, in turn, negatively related to joint collective action after controlling for national identity (H2b).

7.1 | Method

7.1.1 | Participants

In Study 3, we recruited participants online via Prolific by setting as screening criteria that their nationality and country of residence were Italy and that they were either women (Sample A) or men (Sample B).

7.1.2 | Sample A

Among women ($N = 499$; M age $= 30.70$, SD $= 9.99$), the attained educational level varied as follows: middle school diploma (0.8%), high school diploma (34.7%) and higher-level titles (64.6%). For income, they were distributed as follows: no annual personal net income (26.9%), $\leq 10.000€$ (27.5%), 10.001€–20.000€ (23.4%), 20.001€–30.000€ (17.8%), 30.001€–40.000€ (2.6%), 40.001€–50.000€ (1.6%), $> 50.000€$ (0.2%). Women

indicated that their main source of income derives from salary (49.5%), self-employment (11.2%), agricultural activities (0.6%), retirement (1%), unemployment benefits (1%), social grants (1.2%), properties (1.2%), other (3.4%). As in Study 1, we included 1 item for measuring political orientation on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = *extremely conservative* to 7 = *extremely liberal* ($M = 5.22$, SD $= 1.11$).

7.1.3 | Sample B

Among men ($N = 498$; M age $= 30.24$, SD $= 8.98$), the educational attainment varied as follows: middle school diploma (1.6%), high school diploma (45%) and higher titles (53.4%). For income, they were distributed as follows: no annual personal net income (27.9%), $\leq 10.000€$ (15.3%), 10.001€–20.000€ (21.7%), 20.001€–30.000€ (21.5%), 30.001€–40.000€ (9.2%), 40.001€–50.000€ (2.4%), $> 50.000€$ (2%). Their main source of income varied as follows: salary (47.2%), self-employment (15.7%), agricultural activities (0.4%), retirement (0.4%), unemployment benefits (1%), social grants (0.2%), properties (3.6%), other (3.4%). Their political orientation ($M = 4.81$, SD $= 1.20$) was rated on a 7-point scale (1 = *extremely conservative*; 7 = *extremely liberal*).

7.1.4 | Measures

As in Studies 1 and 2, we included the same 10-item Identification with the Nation scale (Sample A: $a = 0.90$, $M = 3.91$, SD $= 1.20$; Sample B: $a = 0.90$, $M = 3.68$, SD $= 1.19$). Next, collective narcissism was assessed through the 9-item Collective Narcissism scale by Golec de Zavala et al. (2009); for example, 'I wish other groups would more quickly recognize the authority of my group' and 'Italians deserve special treatment'. Specifically, participants were instructed to complete each item while thinking about their country of origin and residence, Italy, and the national group of Italians to which they belong. Responses were given on 6-point scales ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree* with higher scores reflecting higher national narcissism (Sample A: $a = 0.85$, $M = 2.79$, SD $= 0.89$; Sample B: $a = 0.85$, $M = 2.74$, SD $= 0.88$). Finally, as in Studies 1 and 2, we administered the same 17-item Economic System Justification scale (Sample A: $a = 0.75$, $M = 3.02$, SD $= 0.70$; Sample B: $a = 0.82$, $M = 3.25$, SD $= 0.83$) and the same 7 items used for assessing participants' willingness to engage in joint collective action against the gender pay gap (Sample A: $a = 0.93$, $M = 4.49$, SD $= 1.56$; Sample B: $a = 0.93$, $M = 3.15$, SD $= 1.55$).

7.2 | Results and Discussion

7.2.1 | Testing H1

The method of analysis was the same as in Studies 1 and 2. Specifically, we tested our proposed perfectly identified path analysis model simultaneously across women and men by a robust maximum likelihood method with the Huber-White correction. Again, we first tested the unconstrained baseline model showing slight differences between the groups (see Figure 3 for standardised
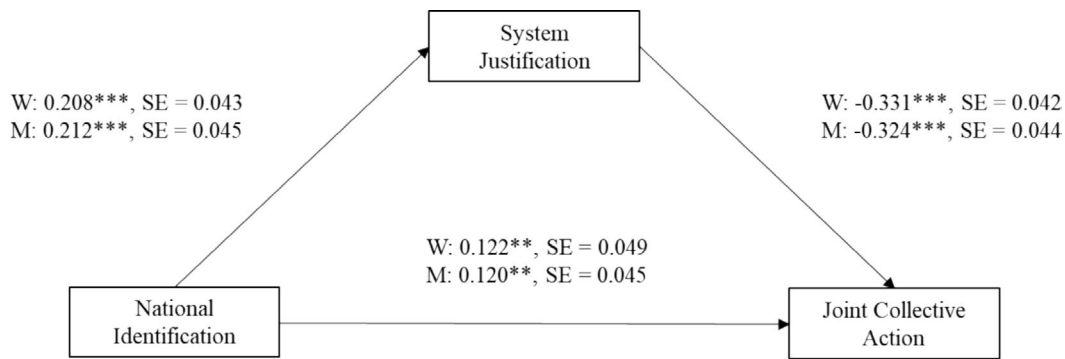
FIGURE 3 | Testing H1: Standardised coefficients for women and men. Study 3: We tested the relation of national identity with system justification and then joint collective action (H1) among women ($N=499$) and men ($N=498$). $**p<0.01$, $***p \leq 0.001$.

coefficients for each group) and then we tested the fully constrained model to gauge the magnitude of variability of structural associations across each group. Goodness-of-fit of indicators for the fully constrained model was excellent (robust $\chi^2=1.400$, df $=3$, $p=0.705$; CFI $=0.99$; TLI $=0.99$; SRMR $=0.014$; RMSEA $=0.0001$, 90% CI $=0.000$, 0.053), indicating that the differences between women and men were negligible. Thus, we reported and discussed univocal standardised coefficients for the groups. The predicted indirect associations are reported separately for each group since they do not affect the model fit estimation. Equality assumptions about the indirect association peculiar to each group were tested by contrasting the related coefficients.

Replicating Studies 1 and 2, and further confirming H1, we found a significant and negative indirect association of national identity with joint collective action through system justification. Specifically, the indirect association was significant and negative for both women, $\beta=-0.069$, SE $=0.017$, $z=-4.096$, $p<0.001$, 95% CI $[-0.102, -0.036]$ and men, $\beta=-0.069$, SE $=0.018$, $z=-3.752$, $p<0.001$, 95% CI $[-0.105, -0.033]$. We found non-significant differences between contrasted indirect associations ($\beta_{\text{diff}}=0.000$, SE $=0.025$, $z=0.002$, $p=0.99$, 95% CI $[-0.049, 0.049]$).

7.2.2 | Testing H2

In Study 3, we also implemented a perfectly identified path analysis model, where national identity and national narcissism were the parallel predictors (X1 and X2), system justification was the mediator (M) and joint collective action was the criterion (Y). Once again, the model was tested simultaneously across women and men by a robust maximum likelihood method with the Huber-White correction. We first tested the unconstrained baseline model showing slight differences between the groups (see Figure 4 for standardised coefficients for each group) and then we tested the fully constrained model to gauge the magnitude of structural associations' variability across each group. Goodness-of-fit indicators for the fully constrained model were excellent (robust $\chi^2=3.87$, df $=5$, $p=0.57$; CFI $=0.99$; TLI $=0.99$; SRMR $=0.017$; RMSEA $=0.0001$, 90% CI $=0.000$, 0.052), indicating that the magnitude of coefficients' variability was negligible. Thus, we reported and discussed univocal standardised coefficients for the groups. As the predicted indirect associations were not considered in the model fit estimation, we reported them separately for each group. Equality assumptions were tested by

contrasting the related coefficients. Correlations among the variables of interest for each group and relevant for testing H1 and H2 are reported in Table 3.

As predicted by H2a, the indirect relation of national identity with joint collective action through system justification was not significant for both women, $\beta=0.004$, SE $=0.018$, $z=0.191$, $p=0.848$, 95% CI $[-0.033, 0.040]$ and men, $\beta=-0.026$, SE $=0.020$, $z=-1.333$, $p=0.183$, 95% CI $[-0.065, 0.012]$. As predicted by H2b, we found a significant and negative indirect relation of national narcissism with joint collective action through system justification for both women, $\beta=-0.142$, SE $=0.024$, $z=-5.912$, $p<0.001$, 95% CI $[-0.189, -0.095]$ and men, $\beta=-0.079$, SE $=0.021$, $z=-3.715$, $p<0.001$, 95% CI $[-0.121, -0.037]$. We found non-significant differences between contrasted indirect relations from national identity ($\beta_{\text{diff}}=-0.030$, SE $=0.027$, $z=-1.105$, $p=0.269$, 95% CI $[-0.083, 0.023]$) and narcissism ($\beta_{\text{diff}}=0.063$, SE $=0.032$, $z=1.952$, $p=0.051$, 95% CI $[-0.001, 0.125]$).

Overall, Study 3 replicated the results of Studies 1 and 2 providing further support for our prediction H1 that national identity is negatively associated with joint collective action through increased system justification among both disadvantaged and advantaged group members. As predicted by H2a, however, this relation becomes non-significant after controlling for national narcissism. Instead, as predicted by H2b, national narcissism is positively related to system justification and then negatively to joint collective action after controlling for national identity. These results advance our knowledge by shedding novel light on when national identity stops exercising its demobilising potential. Focusing on the context of gender economic inequality, we indeed found that national identity is no longer associated with system justification and then joint collective action when national narcissism is taken into account. Conversely, the demobilising potential of national narcissism appears to overcome that of national identity. Thus, from these results, it seems possible to propose that gender economic inequality is primarily attributable to (defensive attachment of) national narcissism rather than (secure attachment of) national identity among members of both disadvantaged (i.e., women) as well as advantaged (i.e., men) groups.

To summarise, the relations of national identity and national narcissism with system justification and joint collective action that emerged in Studies 1–3 are displayed in Table 4.
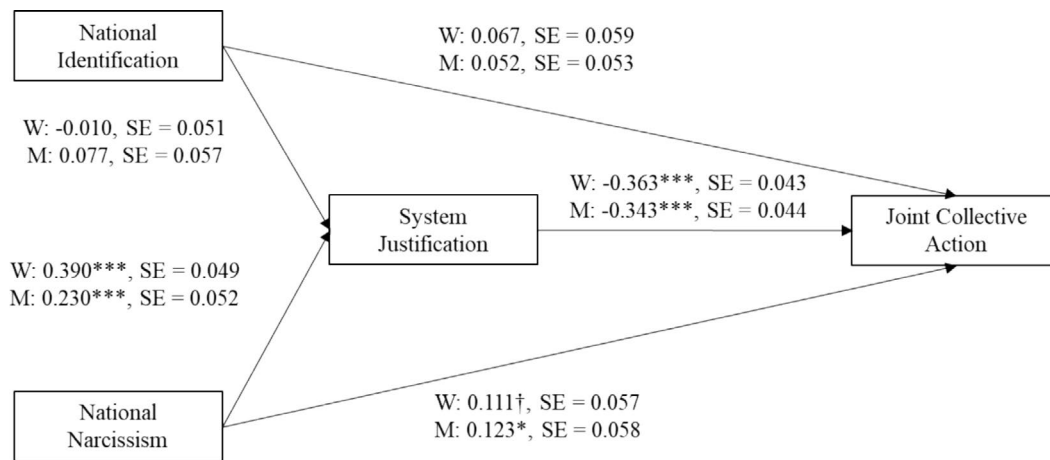
FIGURE 4 | Testing H2: Standardised coefficients for women and men. Study 3: We tested the relation of national identity and national narcissism with system justification and then joint collective action (H2) among women ($N = 499$) and men ($N = 498$). $\dagger p = 0.05$, $*p < 0.05$, $***p \leq 0.001$.

TABLE 3 | Correlations for scores on National Identity (NI), National Narcissism (NN), System Justification (SJ) and Joint Collective Action (JCA).

Women	1.	2.	3.	4.
1. NI	1			
2. NN	0.56***	1		
3. SJ	0.21***	0.38***	1	
4. JCA	0.05	0.01	−0.31***	1
Men	**1.**	**2.**	**3.**	**4.**
1. NI	1			
2. NN	0.59***	1		
3. SJ	0.21***	0.27***	1	
4. JCA	0.05	0.06	−0.30***	1

Note: Study 3: women ($N = 499$) and men ($N = 498$). ***$p \leq 0.001$.

8 | General Discussion

The present research investigated the role of national identity in demotivating collective efforts towards challenging economic inequality. Across three studies, focusing on different contexts of economic inequality (i.e., socioeconomic, ethnic and gender), countries (i.e., Italy and the United States) and both disadvantaged and advantaged group members (i.e., low- medium- and high-SES, Black and White and women and men), we demonstrated a consistent pattern of relations supporting the prediction that national identity is negatively related to joint collective action through increased system justification (H1). These results indicate that individuals who strongly identify with the nation are more likely to favour the existing status quo and thus are less willing to participate in joint collective action against economic inequality, in line with a system justification perspective (Jost and Banaji 1994). Also, these results align with previous research on the 'dark side of we' (Dovidio et al. 2016) showing that national identity poses a barrier to social change towards greater equality because of its role in facilitating compliance with the status quo.

In Study 3, we examined the role of national identity more in-depth by disentangling it from that of national narcissism. As expected, we found that the relation of national identity with system justification and then joint collective action is no longer significant when accounting for national narcissism (H2a). Conversely, national narcissism remains positively related to system justification and then negatively related to joint collective action when accounting for national identity (H2b). Consistent with previous research on national narcissism (Cichocka 2016), it seems that increased system justification and thus the maintenance of gender economic inequality is mainly attributable to a narcissistic form of identification with one's nation rather than a more secure form of identity, among both women (as disadvantaged group members) and men (as advantaged group members).

Overall, the present research provides novel theoretical insights and empirical evidence into the potential downsides of sharing a national (common) identity and the psychosocial pathways that contribute to the maintenance of economic inequality regardless of group membership.

9 | Implications

This research extends previous theoretical models and empirical findings in three main ways.

First, we investigated the indirect association of national identity with joint collective action through system justification that is absent from the existing literature. The positive relation between national identity and system justification is empirically supported (Owuamalam et al. 2023). There is also evidence that system justification demotivates collective action intentions in favour of greater equality (Osborne et al. 2019). In the present research, we integrated these parallel, but thus far, separate research streams and consistently found that national identity is indirectly and negatively associated with joint collective action via increased system justification. Thus, the present research extends and moves beyond the existing literature by showing that system justification may operate as the psychological process through which national identity exerts its demobilising potential.

TABLE 4 | Relations of national identity and national narcissism with system justification and joint collective action that emerged in Studies 1–3.

Study 1	B	System justification		p
		SE		
National identity	0.326	0.025		< 0.001

	B	Collective action		p
		SE		
System justification	−0.521	0.024		< 0.001
National identity	−0.045	0.025		= 0.079

Study 2: Black	B	System justification		p
		SE		
National identity	0.321	0.044		< 0.001

	B	Collective action		p
		SE		
System justification	−0.308	0.047		< 0.001
National identity	0.334	0.050		< 0.001

Study 2: White	B	System justification		p
		SE		
National identity	0.443	0.042		< 0.001

	B	Collective action		p
		SE		
System justification	−0.529	0.037		< 0.001
National identity	0.120	0.046		= 0.009

Study 3: Testing H1	B	System justification		p
		SE		
National identity	0.205	0.031		< 0.001

	B	Collective action		p
		SE		
System justification	−0.303	0.029		< 0.001
National identity	0.111	0.031		< 0.001

Study 3: Testing H2	B	System justification		p
		SE		
National identity	0.026	0.037		= 0.487
National narcissism	0.312	0.036		< 0.001

	B	Collective action		p
		SE		
System justification	−0.325	0.029		< 0.001
National identity	0.057	0.037		= 0.122
National narcissism	0.103	0.037		= 0.006

Note: Study 1 ($N = 1390$); Study 2: Black ($N = 500$), White ($N = 500$); Study 3 ($N = 997$), Testing H1: we tested the relation of national identity with system justification and joint collective action, Testing H2: we tested the relation of national identity and national narcissism with system justification and joint collective action.

Second, during the past decade, a growing number of studies focused on ingroup collective action and solidarity-based collective action (see Agostini and van Zomeren 2021 for a review). However, there are still few studies in the existing literature focusing on a joint form of collective action, which comprises both advantaged and disadvantaged group members mobilising together (Subašić et al. 2008). Filling this lacuna, the studies reported in the present research contribute to our knowledge about psychological factors and processes behind the collaboration between the advantaged and disadvantaged. This collaboration is potentially meaningful as it could facilitate mutual support between individuals and social groups in the fight against (economic) inequality.

Another implication worthy of discussion is about the national identity-system justification relation. By showing the positive relation between national identity and system justification, this research suggests that a greater identification with one's nation may result in a greater legitimation of the (unequal) status quo. This concurs with existing findings that a focus on common identity may have a 'dark side' as it encourages the acceptance of intergroup inequality, hence being counterproductive for the promotion of social change (Dixon et al. 2012; Dovidio et al. 2016). Besides, this concurs with recent propositions that consider system-justifying beliefs as a form of nation-level ingroup favouritism (derived from the Social Identity Theory; Tajfel and Turner 1979), rather than an independent epistemic motivation (Owuamalam et al. 2023). Accordingly, the present research suggests that the disadvantaged's paradoxical justification of a system that oppresses their condition may be based upon ingroup-serving social identity processes (i.e., the ingroup bias expression of their national identity) rather than an independent system justification motivation to reduce uncertainty and alleviate cognitive dissonance (Jost 2017). Moreover, it is important to note that we found consistent results across members of both disadvantaged and advantaged groups in reference to different contexts of economic inequality in different countries. This is important because past research has predominantly focused on isolated examinations of disadvantaged group members (but see Marinucci et al. 2022), while this research provided consistent evidence that existing findings may apply to advantaged group members as well.

Additionally, this research provided new knowledge on the relationship between national identity and system justification by showing that the demobilising potential of national narcissism may overcome that of national identity. Consistent with existing findings on national narcissism (see for example Górska et al. 2020), the results of Study 3 suggest that national narcissism (which is strongly associated with a defensive form of attachment to one's nation) may confound the national identity-system justification link and operate as a crucial predictor of system justification. This adds to the existing literature by suggesting that system justification may be better understood as a system of beliefs supporting a defensive (vs. secure) national attachment. Knowing that system justification may be conceived as the expression of a narcissistic national identity's ingroup bias enriches the existing literature and stimulates the creation of new predictions. Of course, further research is necessary before we can draw definitive conclusions. However, we believe that this research offers promising avenues of scientific investigation

for future research. Against this backdrop, policymakers and advocates for greater equality could consider the nuances of this pattern of relations to develop effective strategies for promoting social change towards equality, while addressing the sedating role of national identity, national narcissism and system justification. Balancing a secure sense of national identity with the promotion of social change towards equality is an ongoing challenge in societies worldwide that warrants further exploration and consideration.

10 | Limitations and Future Directions

This research presents some limitations that need to be addressed through future research. Because we found converging evidence across both disadvantaged and advantaged group members in reference to different contexts of economic inequality in different countries, the emerged pattern of relations seems quite supportive of our prediction H1 that national identity is negatively related to joint collective action intentions through increased system justification. Although these results are encouraging, we acknowledge that they are not conclusive because we have only tested relations between variables of interest. Given the correlational nature of our research design, we cannot be conclusive about the directionality of the associations we found here. These results are strongly theory-driven, but the possibility remains that system justification demotivates engagement in joint collective action through increased national identity. Therefore, future studies should address this limitation by experimentally enhancing (vs. reducing) participants' identification with one's nation.

Furthermore, we investigated intentions to engage in collective action but not actual behaviour. It is known that, when it comes to collective action, effects on intentions are generally stronger in comparison to effects on behaviours (Agostini and van Zomeren 2021). Therefore, future studies should verify whether these results hold when assessing engagement in actual collective action.

Finally, these results are promising and call for further scientific investigation. A roadmap for future research is to investigate the demobilising potential of national narcissism in more detail, either alone or in conjunction with national identity, for example by experimentally enhancing (vs. reducing) national narcissism and focusing on other manifestations of intergroup inequality such as those pertaining to same-sex marriage, racial segregation and abortion rights.

11 | Conclusion

A focus on common identity can promote intergroup harmony, but it can also preserve intergroup inequality. In three studies ($N = 3387$), focusing on different contexts of economic inequality (i.e., socioeconomic, ethnic and gender), countries (i.e., Italy and the United States) and both disadvantaged and advantaged group members (i.e., low-, medium- and high-SES, Black and White and women and men), we consistently found that national identity was negatively related to joint collective action through increased system justification. This pattern of relations,

however, became non-significant in Study 3, after controlling for national narcissism. Instead, national narcissism remained positively related to system justification and then negatively to joint collective action after controlling for national identity. These results open new research avenues on the downsides of national identity, for theoretical and practical purposes, and advance the knowledge of the psychosocial pathways behind the maintenance of economic inequality.

References

Agostini, M., and M. van Zomeren. 2021. "Toward a Comprehensive and Potentially Cross-Cultural Model of Why People Engage in Collective Action: A Quantitative Research Synthesis of Four Motivations and Structural Constraints." *Psychological Bulletin* 147, no. 7: 667–700. https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000256.

Becker, J. C., and S. C. Wright. 2011. "Yet Another Dark Side of Chivalry: Benevolent Sexism Undermines and Hostile Sexism Motivates Collective Action for Social Change." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 101, no. 1: 62–77. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022615.

Bertin, P., K. Nera, K. Hamer, I. Uhl-Haedicke, and S. Delouvée. 2021. "Stand out of My Sunlight: The Mediating Role of Climate Change Conspiracy Beliefs in the Relationship Between National Collective Narcissism and Acceptance of Climate Science." *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 24, no. 5: 738–758. https://doi.org/10.1177/13684 30221992114.

Chetty, R., N. Hendren, M. R. Jones, and S. R. Porter. 2020. "Race and Economic Opportunity in the United States: An Intergenerational Perspective." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 135, no. 2: 711–783. https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjz042.

Cichocka, A. 2016. "Understanding Defensive and Secure Ingroup Positivity: The Role of Collective Narcissism." *European Review of Social Psychology* 27, no. 1: 283–317. https://doi.org/10.1080/10463283. 2016.1252530.

Cichocka, A., A. Golec de Zavala, M. Marchlewska, M. Bilewicz, M. Jaworska, and M. Olechowski. 2018. "Personal Control Decreases Narcissistic but Increases Non-Narcissistic In-Group Positivity." *Journal of Personality* 86, no. 3: 465–480. https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12328.

Cichocka, A., M. Marchlewska, A. Golec de Zavala, and M. Olechowski. 2016. "'They Will Not Control Us': Ingroup Positivity and Belief in Intergroup Conspiracies." *British Journal of Psychology* 107, no. 3: 556–576. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjop.12158.

Cislak, A., M. Marchlewska, A. D. Wojcik, et al. 2021. "National Narcissism and Support for Voluntary Vaccination Policy: The Mediating Role of Vaccination Conspiracy Beliefs." *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 24, no. 5: 701–719. https://doi.org/10.1177/13684 30220959451.

Cislak, A., A. D. Wojcik, and A. Cichocka. 2018. "Cutting the Forest Down to Save Your Face: Narcissistic National Identification Predicts Support for Anti-Conservation Policies." *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 59: 65–73. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2018.08.009.

De Cristofaro, V., V. Pellegrini, M. Giacomantonio, S. Livi, and M. van Zomeren. 2021. "Can Moral Convictions Against Gender Inequality Overpower System Justification Effects? Examining the Interaction Between Moral Conviction and System Justification." *British Journal of Social Psychology* 60, no. 4: 1279–1302. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12451.

De Cristofaro, V., V. Pellegrini, M. Salvati, L. Leone, and M. Giacomantonio. 2023. "Employment, Collective Action, and Satisfaction: The Moderating Role of Acceptance of Inequality." *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy* 23, no. 2: 474–494. https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12356.

De Cristofaro, V., V. Pellegrini, and M. van Zomeren. 2022. "The Relation Between System Justification and Collective Action in Individualistic Versus Collectivistic European Countries." *TPM: Testing, Psychometrics, Methodology in Applied Psychology* 29, no. 1: 55–70. https://doi.org/10. 4473/TPM29.1.5.

Dixon, J., M. Levine, S. Reicher, and K. Durrheim. 2012. "Beyond Prejudice: Are Negative Evaluations the Problem and Is Getting Us to Like One Another More the Solution?" *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 35, no. 6: 411–425. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X11002214.

Dovidio, J. F., S. L. Gaertner, and A. R. Pearson. 2016. "Aversive Racism and Contemporary Bias." In *The Cambridge Handbook of the Psychology of Prejudice: Concise*, edited by F. K. Barlow and C. G. Sibley. Cambridge University Press.

Fliesser, M., J. D. W. Huberts, and P. M. Wippert. 2018. "Education, Job Position, Income, or Multidimensional Indices? Associations Between Different Socioeconomic Status Indicators and Chronic Low Back Pain in a German Sample: A Longitudinal Field Study." *BMJ Open* 8, no. 4: e020207. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2017-020207.

Gaertner, S. L., and J. F. Dovidio. 2012. "Reducing Intergroup Bias: The Common Ingroup Identity Model." In *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology*, edited by P. A. M. van Lange, A. W. Kruglanski, and E. T. Higgins, vol. 2, 439–457. Sage.

Golec de Zavala, A., A. Cichocka, and M. Bilewicz. 2013. "The Paradox of In-Group Love: Differentiating Collective Narcissism Advances Understanding of the Relationship Between In-Group and Out-Group Attitudes." *Journal of Personality* 81, no. 1: 16–28. https://doi.org/10. 1111/j.1467-6494.2012.00779.x.

Golec de Zavala, A., A. Cichocka, R. Eidelson, and N. Jayawickreme. 2009. "Collective Narcissism and Its Social Consequences." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 97, no. 6: 1074–1096. https://doi.org/ 10.1037/a0016904.

Golec de Zavala, A., and C. M. Federico. 2018. "Collective Narcissism and the Growth of Conspiracy Thinking Over the Course of the 2016 United States Presidential Election: A Longitudinal Analysis." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 48, no. 7: 1011–1018. https://doi. org/10.1002/ejsp.2496.

Górska, P., A. Stefaniak, K. Malinowska, et al. 2020. "Too Great to Act in Solidarity: The Negative Relationship Between Collective Narcissism and Solidarity-Based Collective Action." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 50, no. 3: 561–578. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2638.

Guerra, R., K. Bierwiaczonek, M. Ferreira, et al. 2022. "An Intergroup Approach to Collective Narcissism: Intergroup Threats and Hostility in Four European Union Countries." *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 25, no. 2: 415–433. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430220972178.

Haines, E. L., and J. T. Jost. 2000. "Placating the Powerless: Effects of Legitimate and Illegitimate Explanation on Affect, Memory, and Stereotyping." *Social Justice Research* 13: 219–236. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1026481205719.

Hasan-Aslih, S., E. Shuman, R. Pliskin, M. van Zomeren, T. Saguy, and E. Halperin. 2020. "With or Without You: The Paradoxical Role of Identification in Predicting Joint and Ingroup Collective Action in Intergroup Conflict." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 50, no. 6: 1334–1343. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2677.

Istituto Nazionale di Statistica-Italian National Istitute of Statistics (ISTAT). 2021. "La Struttura Delle Retribuzioni in Italia—Anno." https://www.istat.it/it/files/2021/03/REPORT_STRUTTURA_RETRIBUZIONI_2018.pdf.

Jaśko, K., and M. Kossowska. 2013. "The Impact of Superordinate Identification on the Justification of Intergroup Inequalities." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 43, no. 4: 255–262. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.1946.

Jaśko, K., D. Webber, A. W. Kruglanski, et al. 2020. "Social Context Moderates the Effects of Quest for Significance on Violent Extremism." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 118, no. 6: 1165–1187. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000198.

Jetten, J., and K. Peters. 2019. *The Social Psychology of Inequality.* Springer.

Jost, J. T. 2017. "Working Class Conservatism: A System Justification Perspective." *Current Opinion in Psychology* 18: 73–78. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.08.020.

Jost, J. T., and M. R. Banaji. 1994. "The Role of Stereotyping in System-Justification and the Production of False Consciousness." *British Journal of Social Psychology* 33, no. 1: 1–27. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8309.1994.tb01008.x.

Jost, J. T., and E. P. Thompson. 2000. "Group-Based Dominance and Opposition to Equality as Independent Predictors of Self-Esteem, Ethnocentrism, and Social Policy Attitudes Among African Americans and European Americans." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 36, no. 3: 209–232. https://doi.org/10.1006/jesp.1999.1403.

Manduca, R. 2018. "Income Inequality and the Persistence of Racial Economic Disparities." *Sociological Science* 5: 182–205. https://doi.org/10.15195/v5.a8.

Marchlewska, M., A. Cichocka, A. Furman, and A. Cislak. 2022. "Who Respects the Will of the People? Support for Democracy Is Linked to High Secure National Identity but Low National Narcissism." *British Journal of Social Psychology* 61, no. 2: 599–621. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12499.

Marchlewska, M., A. Cichocka, M. Jaworska, A. Golec de Zavala, and M. Bilewicz. 2020. "Superficial Ingroup Love? Collective Narcissism Predicts Ingroup Image Defense, Outgroup Prejudice, and Lower Ingroup Loyalty." *British Journal of Social Psychology* 59, no. 4: 857–875. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12367.

Marinucci, M., D. Mazzoni, N. Aureli, et al. 2022. "Together to Welcome, Together to Exclude: Intergroup Contact as an Antecedent of Collective and Interpersonal Behaviors pro and Against Migrants." *Social Psychology* 53, no. 4: 244–256. https://doi.org/10.1027/1864-9335/a000497.

Osborne, D., J. T. Jost, J. C. Becker, V. Badaan, and C. G. Sibley. 2019. "Protesting to Challenge or Defend the System? A System Justification Perspective on Collective Action." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 49, no. 2: 244–269. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2522.

Osborne, D., and C. G. Sibley. 2013. "Through Rose-Colored Glasses: System-Justifying Beliefs Dampen the Effects of Relative Deprivation on Well-Being and Political Mobilization." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 39, no. 8: 991–1004. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167213487997.

Owuamalam, C. K., L. Caricati, R. Spears, M. Rubin, M. Marinucci, and A. Ferrari. 2023. "Further Evidence That System Justification Amongst the Disadvantaged Is Positively Related to Superordinate Group Identification." *Acta Psychologica* 232: 103813. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2022.103813.

Pastorelli, E., A. Stocchiero, F. Petrelli, M. Midulla, M. Maranò, and V. C. Dezza. 2022. "Inequalities in Italy." https://gcap.global/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/8.3.a-report-IT.pdf.

Pellegrini, V., M. Salvati, V. De Cristofaro, M. Giacomantonio, and L. Leone. 2022. "Psychological Bases of Anti-Immigration Attitudes Among Populist Voters." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 52, no. 6: 449–458. https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12871.

Pettigrew, T. F., and L. R. Tropp. 2006. "A Meta-Analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 90, no. 5: 751–783. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.90.5.751.

Rosseel, Y. 2012. "Lavaan: An R Package for Structural Equation Modeling and More." *Journal of Statistical Software* 48, no. 2: 1–36.

RStudio Team. 2023. *RStudio: Integrated Development Environment for R.* RStudio. http://www.rstudio.com/.

Rubin, M., C. K. Owuamalam, R. Spears, and L. Caricati. 2023. "A Social Identity Model of System Attitudes (SIMSA): Multiple Explanations of System Justification by the Disadvantaged That Do Not Depend on a Separate System Justification Motive." *European Review of Social Psychology* 1-41: 203–243. https://doi.org/10.1080/10463283.2022.2046422.

Saguy, T., and L. Chernyak-Hai. 2012. "Intergroup Contact Can Undermine Disadvantaged Group Members' Attributions to Discrimination." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 48, no. 3: 714–720. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2012.01.003.

Saguy, T., N. Tausch, J. F. Dovidio, and F. Pratto. 2009. "The Irony of Harmony: Intergroup Contact Can Produce False Expectations for Equality." *Psychological Science* 20, no. 1: 114–121. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02261.x.

Saguy, T., N. Tausch, J. F. Dovidio, F. Pratto, and P. Singh. 2011. "Tension and Harmony in Intergroup Relations." In *Understanding and Reducing Aggression, Violence, and Their Consequences*, edited by R. P. Shaver and C. Mikulincer, 333–348. American Psychological Association.

Schmalor, A., and S. J. Heine. 2022. "The Construct of Subjective Economic Inequality." *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 13, no. 1: 210–219. https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550621996867.

Schoemann, A. M., A. J. Boulton, and S. D. Short. 2017. "Determining Power and Sample Size for Simple and Complex Mediation Models." *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 8, no. 4: 379–386. https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550617715068.

Seid, A. K., K. Bloomfield, and M. Hesse. 2018. "The Relationship Between Socioeconomic Status and Risky Drinking in Denmark: A Cross-Sectional General Population Study." *BMC Public Health* 18, no. 1: 1–7. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-018-5481-y.

Subašić, E., K. J. Reynolds, and J. C. Turner. 2008. "The Political Solidarity Model of Social Change: Dynamics of Self-Categorization in Intergroup Power Relations." *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 12, no. 4: 330–352. https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868308323223.

Tajfel, H., and J. C. Turner. 1979. "An Integrative Theory of Inter-Group Conflict." In *The Social Psychology of Inter-Group Relations*, edited by I. W. G. Austin and S. Worchel, 33–47. Brooks.

Teixeira, C. P., R. Spears, and V. Y. Yzerbyt. 2020. "Is Martin Luther King or Malcolm X the More Acceptable Face of Protest? High-Status Groups' Reactions to Low-Status Groups' Collective Action." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 118, no. 5: 919–944. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000195.

Tyler, T. R., and S. L. Blader. 2001. "Identity and Cooperative Behavior in Groups." *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 4, no. 3: 207–226.

van Zomeren, M., T. Postmes, and R. Spears. 2008. "Toward an Integrative Social Identity Model of Collective Action: A Quantitative Research Synthesis of Three Socio-Psychological Perspectives." *Psychological Bulletin* 134, no. 4: 504–535. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.134.4.504.

van Zomeren, M., T. Postmes, R. Spears, and K. Bettache. 2011. "Can Moral Convictions Motivate the Advantaged to Challenge Social Inequality? Extending the Social Identity Model of Collective Action." *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 14, no. 5: 735–753. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430210395637.

Verkuyten, M., R. Kollar, J. Gale, and K. Yogeeswaran. 2022. "Right-Wing Political Orientation, National Identification and the Acceptance of Immigrants and Minorities." *Personality and Individual Differences* 184: 111217. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2021.111217.

Vezzoli, M., R. R. Valtorta, S. Mari, F. Durante, and C. Volpato. 2023. "Effects of Objective and Subjective Indicators of Economic Inequality on Subjective Well-Being: Underlying Mechanisms." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 53, no. 2: 85–100. https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12928.

Wright, S. C., and M. E. Lubensky. 2009. "The Struggle for Social Equality: Collective Action Versus Prejudice Reduction." In *Intergroup Misun-Derstandings: Impact of Divergent Social Realities*, edited by S. Demoulin, J. P. Leyens, and J. F. Dovidio, 291–310. Psychology Press.