

## ISPP Virtual Seminar Series – Asia-Pacific Region April 2022

Organizers: Ying-yi Hong, Diwa Malaya Quinones, Peter Beattie, Idhamsyah Eka Putra

Date: April 29 (Friday) at 1-3pm Bangkok time / 2-4pm Malaysia and Hong Kong time

Host/Moderator: Peter Beattie



Speaker: Chuma Kevin Owuamalam

Institution: University of Nottingham  
Malaysia

Topic / Title: **If it barks like a dog, but slithers like a snake, then it must be a cow!  
Confusion in the system justification literature and the birth of SIMSA**

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### Abstract

According to system justification theory (SJT; Jost & Banaji, 1994), instances of outgroup-favoring attitudes among members of disadvantaged groups support the hypothesis of a “system justification motive” that is (a) distinct from the traditional personal and group motives and (b) motivates people to support and justify social institutions/customs, even if those systems disadvantage them and their groups. According to SJT, this system motive is required to explain why members of disadvantaged groups (e.g., women) support social and economic arrangements that favor advantaged groups like men (e.g., systemic male

privilege). However, there is no convincing evidence, yet, that this system justification motive operates independently from personal and group motives. In fact, researchers in the system justification tradition have used personal and group interests, which are conceptualized as being separate motives, to account for instances of system-justifying attitudes and behavior amongst the disadvantaged (e.g., the need to reduce uncertainty; the need to feel good about one's self; and so on). In my talk, I will present a program of research (a) highlighting confusion in the system justification literature, and (b) disputing key assumptions underlying the novel system motive. I will then explain (c) how this research program has led to the birth of a social identity model of systems attitude (SIMSA) that explains system-justifying attitudes amongst the disadvantaged from a social identity perspective and without recourse to the theoretically problematic notion of an autonomous system justification motive.

Short Bio:

Chuma Owuamalam is an Associate Professor of social psychology at the University of Nottingham Malaysia (UNM). Prior to joining UNM, Chuma completed postdoctoral fellowships at the Royal Holloway University of London and the University of Manchester (both in the UK). Chuma's research interest is broadly in the psychology of inequality and he approaches the study of this topic mainly from the perspective of social identity and system justification theories.

Speaker's links: [Speaker website](#), [orcid](#), [google scholar](#)