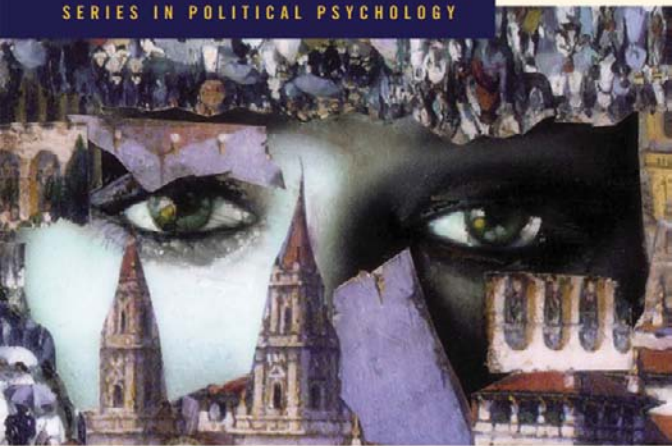


SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL BASES OF IDEOLOGY AND SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION

SERIES IN POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY



**EDITED BY JOHN T. JOST,
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Printed in the United States of America
on acid-free paper

We dedicate this book to three of our teachers:

Irving E. Alexander

William J. McGuire

Lee Ross

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FOREWORD

Why Political Psychology Is Important

The knowledge of our own minds can be put to no better use than in understanding our social and political lives. That is why political psychology matters. Political psychology applies an important branch of the cognitive and brain sciences—experimental psychology, including social and cognitive psychology—to politics. Although the methodologies may be limited to the techniques of one or more subfields, the results nonetheless contribute substantially to the overall picture: Political thought is not what it appears to be. It is much deeper, as we strive to show in *Social and Psychological Bases of Ideology and System Justification*.

Over the past three decades, the cognitive and brain sciences have utterly changed our understanding of the mind and how it works. The results are startling to most people, including academics in most fields and political professionals. Perhaps most startling is the concept that ideas are not abstract; they are physical structures in the brain—and once there, they don't change easily. A widely accepted view of the mind assumes that reason is conscious, literal (it can directly fit the world), logical, dispassionate, universal, disembodied (independent of perception and bodily movement), and serving of self-interest, so much so that it is seen to be irrational to act against one's own interests.

We now know from scientific studies of the brain and mind that all of these commonplace views of reason are false. Reason is mostly unconscious, automatic, and effortless. We make inevitable use of conceptual framing and metaphor to understand and reason about reality. Thus reason does not fit the world directly—in most politically important cases, it's not even close. Our "logic" is frame- and metaphor-based; it is not the logic of logicians and mathematicians. Reason is anything but dispassionate. The reverse is true. If brain damage (say from a stroke or an accident) has eliminated your emotional capacities, you would not know what to want or how anyone else would want you to act: loss of emotion makes the use of reason virtually impossible.

Reason is anything but universal: even conservatives and progressives in the same country do not use the same forms of thought. Since you think with your brains, and since concepts arise from the body, reason is anything but disembodied. Moreover, mirror neuron studies indicate that we are born

with a natural capacity for empathy and cooperation, and do not use reason simply in the service of self-interest.

Viewed through the lens of my field, cognitive linguistics, the political environment is not what the TV pundits tell you. Conservatives and progressives don't just have different beliefs; they have different views of the world and different modes of reasoning—mostly unconscious. The central difference arises from a commonplace metaphorical understanding of the nation as family, with conflicting ideas of what an ideal family should be, either strict or nurturant. Many Americans are biconceptual; they have both worldviews and modes of thought, but apply them in different arenas of life—say, conservative on foreign policy and progressive on domestic matters, or the reverse. Foundational concepts, like freedom, fairness, equality, and democracy don't have just one meaning. They are essentially contested; they will inevitably have multiple incompatible meanings, reflecting the multiple differences in worldview. Most people will be unaware of all this because thought is mostly unconscious. Similarly, they will be unaware that we all normally think in terms of conceptual frames and metaphors.

Why should we care that our main political modes of thought operate below the radar screen? Because conservatives, through their think tanks, have taken advantage of the situation, framing just about every issue in public discussion their way via conservative messages filling the airways. Our political discourse is disastrously out of balance. To remedy the situation, we need to understand more about how our minds are linked to our politics.

This book will take you on a grand tour of political psychology. What justifies systems of hierarchical power and vastly unequal wealth? Why does the status quo have an advantage over change? How do people manage uncertainty and terror, and what are the consequences? How do personality types line up with political ideologies? Why do so many people think the world is getting worse? Why do people tend to care more about injustices done to others by outsiders, than about injustices done to others by their own group members?

Read on.

George Lakoff
Berkeley, CA
April 2008

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PART I

Introduction

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On the Social and Psychological Bases of Ideology and System Justification

Hulda Thorisdottir, John T. Jost, and Aaron C. Kay

Abstract

This book both reflects and exemplifies the recent resurgence of interest in the social and psychological characteristics and processes that give rise to ideological forms. Ideology is an elusive, multifaceted construct that can usefully be analyzed in terms of “top-down” processes related to the social construction and dissemination of ideology as well as “bottom-up” processes, including dispositional and situational factors, that make certain ideological outcomes more likely than others. In this chapter, we briefly summarize the contents of this volume, focusing especially on the cognitive and motivational antecedents and consequences of adopting specific ideologies, the functions served by those ideologies, and the myriad ways in which people accept and justify (versus reject) aspects of the social and political worlds they inhabit. Current challenges and future directions for the study of ideology and system justification are also discussed.

Ideas about how to structure and govern society change reluctantly when they change at all. Although democracy, social welfare, and equality under the law have been implemented over the last few centuries in many parts of the world, such innovations have been surprisingly slow to spread elsewhere. For example, only about half of the 165 independent nation-states in which most of the world’s population resides can be considered democracies, and of those, only 27 are “full” democracies (Kekic, 2007). Compared to the sweeping scientific and technological advances that have permeated nearly every aspect of modern life around the globe, political systems hardly budge. In this chapter and this book, we suggest that one reason why ideology does not “advance” at the rate of other technologies is that it is constrained in fundamental ways by human nature. That is, the stability of social and political orders and the belief systems that underpin them can be said to stem from basic human predispositions and regularities in social life (see Jost, 2006, for a similar argument with respect to left–right ideology in particular).

THE STUDY OF IDEOLOGY

Ideology has been described as one of the most elusive constructs in all of the social sciences, largely because it has been enormously difficult for researchers to agree on a compact, yet comprehensive, definition of ideology (e.g., see Gerring, 1997; Jost, Federico, & Napier, 2009; McLellan, 1995; Mullins, 1972). Attempts by social scientists to whittle down the definition of ideology to one or two sentences bring to mind the well-known Indian legend of the blind men describing an elephant. Their descriptions reflected whichever part of the animal they happened to touch (trunk, tusk, tail, etc.) and therefore failed to capture their target in its complex entirety. It is difficult to avoid this fate in trying to capture the multifaceted construct of ideology. Any single definition of ideology is bound to approach the concept from a limited vantage point and to be at least somewhat incomplete (see also Eagleton, 1991).

“Top-Down” and “Bottom-Up” Approaches to the Study of Ideology

The approach we take in this volume is to strive to illuminate a phenomenon (or set of phenomena) that we readily acknowledge as too large and complicated—even sprawling—to describe exhaustively from a single theoretical perspective. This is one reason why the chapters in this volume address the topic of ideology in ways that go well beyond political belief systems as they are conventionally understood in terms of socialism, liberalism, and conservatism. Some of the chapters, for example, address religious ideology, and others address everyday beliefs about fairness and legitimacy that are not as formal and systematic as most definitions of ideology would require. We believe that this highly inclusive approach to ideological (or proto-ideological) subject matter not only gives the reader a more nuanced view of the construct, but it also reflects current research in the field more accurately than a narrow conception would allow.

Even if a perfect definition of ideology eludes scholars and researchers, an imperfect definition can be useful in guiding research and theory. For our present purposes, a relatively simple, practical definition will do (see also Jost, 2006; Jost et al., 2009), such as the two-part definition offered in the fourth edition of the *American Heritage Dictionary* of the English Language:

1. The body of ideas reflecting the social needs and aspirations of an individual, group, class, or culture.
2. A set of doctrines or beliefs that form the basis of a political, economic, or other system.

This kind of broad definition allows for considerable flexibility in investigating ideology from a social psychological perspective. It also highlights

the fact that ideology can be analyzed in terms of both “top-down” processes, whereby political elites in the media and elsewhere construct and publicly disseminate ideological “bundles,” and “bottom-up” processes arising from the psychological needs and motives of ordinary citizens (Jost et al., 2009). Attention to top-down processes has dominated research in political science, especially research in the rational choice tradition, with relatively little consideration given to the influence of other psychological factors (e.g., Hinich & Munger, 1994; Zaller, 1992). Psychologists have argued that the success of top-down processes is affected also by characteristics of message recipients, especially the extent to which the general public possesses the cognitive abilities and motivations required to accurately grasp and apply the ideological messages proffered by elites (e.g., Federico, 2007; Judd & Krosnick, 1989; McGuire, 1985).

In contrast to the top-down approach, research on bottom-up processes is premised on the notion that a variety of psychological factors, both dispositional and situational, tend to determine ideological proclivities. This idea is clearly on display in the present volume, especially the notion that variability in epistemic, existential, and relational motives generally map onto ideological differences. One example comes from the accumulated body of research documenting correlations between the endorsement of politically conservative opinions and epistemic needs for certainty and structure, existential needs for security and threat management, and relational needs for conformity and solidarity (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003; Jost, Ledgerwood, & Hardin, 2008; Jost, Napier, Thorisdottir, et al., 2007). We assume that a reciprocal, dynamic relationship exists between top-down and bottom-up processes. Several social psychological phenomena—such as stereotyping, persuasion, and the rationalization of hierarchical arrangements among social groups—link the two. Stereotypes and group status differences are well-known to the general public and to political elites, and they are frequently part of the subtext (if not the text) of ideological discourse (e.g., Mendelberg, 2001; Valentino, Hutchings, & White, 2002).

The End of the End of Ideology?

Until fairly recently, research on political ideology had fallen out of favor among many social scientists. Some very prominent sociologists and political scientists in the 1950s and 1960s declared that ideology was neither relevant nor helpful in explaining ordinary citizens’ social and political behavior (e.g., Bell, 1960/1988; Converse, 1964; Lipset, 1960; Shils, 1955/1968). Their basic argument was that most people were not cognitively sophisticated or politically motivated enough to structure their attitudes according to abstract philosophical conceptions associated with the left–right dimension.

The “end-of-ideologists” also disputed observations made by Adorno and colleagues (1950) and others that psychological differences are at the heart of ideological differences between liberals and conservatives (for a critical discussion of these arguments, see Jost, 2006).

Although several researchers did investigate the determinants of ideology from a bottom-up (psychological) perspective during the 1980s—focusing on variables such as cognitive style (Sidanius, 1985, 1988; Tetlock, 1983, 1984), authoritarianism (Altemeyer, 1981, 1988), and the effects of threat on political preferences (Doty, Peterson, & Winter, 1991)—these constituted relatively independent strands of research. It took several years before these insights were integrated into a broader theoretical framework (e.g., Altemeyer, 1998; Duckitt, 2001; Jost et al., 2003). It now seems clear to many observers that the current historical period is a particularly ideological one, especially in the United States (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2008; Barker & Tinnick, 2006; Jost, 2006; Layman & Carsey, 2002; Stimson, 2004), and research on the social and psychological bases of ideology has begun in earnest again. As Jost, Nosek, and Gosling (2008) noted, a significant resurgence of interest has occurred among researchers in the social, cognitive, and motivational underpinnings of political orientation (e.g., see Block & Block, 2006; Caprara & Zimbardo, 2004; Haidt & Graham, 2007; Jost et al., 2003, 2007; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Skitka et al., 2002; Tetlock, 2007; van Hiel & Mervielde, 2004; Willer, 2004). Social and behavioral scientists are now much more likely to acknowledge that the abilities, needs, values, and motivations of individuals influence the contents of political belief systems from the bottom up (Bizer et al., 2004; Duckitt, 2001; Federico, 2007; Federico & Schneider, 2007; Feldman, 2003; Jost et al., 2007; Lavine, Lodge, & Freitas, 2005; Weber & Federico, 2007).

Many researchers working on the psychological basis of ideology recognize that—as Converse (1964) and others famously argued—the political opinions of ordinary citizens are generally not tightly constrained by pressures for consistency and logic, but this does not mean that they are unconstrained by other psychological forces (for a recent review, see Jost et al., 2009). So, although it would be a mistake to equate ideological thinking with political sophistication and rationality, mounting psychological evidence suggests that political scientists and others must attend to the social and psychological bases of ideology in order to gain a fuller understanding of citizens’ political preferences (Jost, 2006). In other words, bottom-up processes do reliably predict ideological opinions and voting preferences. Jost and colleagues (2003) showed, for example, that psychological needs to manage uncertainty and threat consistently give rise to politically conservative (more than liberal or moderate) opinions. They argued that a special affinity exists

between the contents of conservative ideology, which they identified as resistance to change and acceptance of inequality, and heightened epistemic and existential needs to ward off uncertainty and minimize perceptions of threat (see also Jost et al., 2007, 2009).

*Present Contributions to Understanding
the Social and Psychological Bases of Ideology*

The contributors to this volume, who come from such diverse fields as psychology, political science, sociology, law, and organizational behavior, all seek to advance our understanding of these and other social psychological functions served by ideological belief systems. Several of the chapters advance the general hypothesis that people are motivated to uphold certain beliefs and ideologies at least in part because they serve salient psychological needs that are rooted in personality differences (see especially chapters by Duckitt & Sibley; Federico & Goren; Feygina & Tyler; Hafer & Choma; Haidt & Graham) or evoked by situational conditions (Anson, Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Greenberg; Kay & Zanna; O'Brien & Major; van den Bos; Willer). Although different authors may choose to emphasize either relatively stable, internal dispositions of individual actors or external circumstances, such as the social situation, for the sake of focusing their arguments, any complete explanation of human behavior must incorporate both dispositional and situational factors (Lewin, 1936; Ross & Nisbett, 1991).

Several of the chapters in this volume are innovative in their theoretical and methodological incorporation of implicit, unconscious, cognitive and motivational processes that seem to affect ideological dynamics (Ferguson, Carter, & Hassin; Nosek, Banaji, & Jost; Uhlmann, Poehlman, & Bargh). It seems quite likely that research on implicit processes will eventually exert considerable influence in political psychology, just as it has transformed work in cognitive and social psychology. It is worth noting, however, that Mitchell and Tetlock (this volume) register skepticism about certain "subterranean" explanations for the apparent alignment of psychological characteristics and ideological outcomes, and other authors stress cognitive factors, such as information processing (Eidelman & Crandall) and perspective-taking (Eibach & Libby), rather than motivational factors in explaining ideologically significant outcomes.

Finally, several contributions to this volume draw on the effects of societal level variables on individuals and groups and therefore represent neither purely top-down nor bottom-up approaches but rather seek to understand their dynamic interplay. There are chapters, for instance, on the relationship between ideological stances and gender stereotyping (Cikara, Lee, Fiske, & Glick), regional culture and political preferences (Rentfrow, Jost, Gosling, & Potter), and the ideological effects of belonging to a domi-

nant social group (Starzyk, Blatz, & Ross; see also Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Thus, recent work on political psychology not only reflects a resurgence of interest in bottom-up cognitive and motivational processes but also offers the promise of integration across levels of analysis in understanding the antecedents, contents, and consequences of ideology (see also Doise, 2004; Stangor & Jost, 1997).

SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION THEORY

To the extent that people adopt a particular ideology at least in part because it serves their psychological needs, they may use ideology to make sense of and manage their social world. In other words, ideology serves as a particularly useful framework for forming “attitudes and values about the proper goals of society and how they should be achieved” (Tedin, 1987, p. 65). As we have already suggested, people adopt ideological belief systems at least in part to help them understand, predict, and perhaps even rationalize current societal arrangements (or alternatives to those arrangements).

Many have observed that the vast majority of people, including rich and poor, are reluctant to express dissatisfaction or outrage at the substantial, even stark differences in wealth, status, and power that occur both within and across societies (Hochschild, 1981; Jackman, 1994; Jost, Blount, Pfeffer, & Hunyady, 2003; Kluegel & Smith, 1986). Contentment on the part of the well-heeled is not particularly surprising because the current societal order serves their self-interest rather well. The same cannot be said for the underprivileged. Why they not only tolerate but even defend and justify disparities of income and other resources as fair, legitimate, necessary, and inevitable, is an apparent enigma (e.g., see Frank, 2004). System justification theory (SJT) tackles this issue and proposes that people are motivated to justify the system in which they live because it serves a palliative function (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost & Hunyady, 2002, 2005). That is, the theory posits a general tendency to defend, legitimize, and bolster the social and political systems on which people are psychologically dependent (see also Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Kay & Zanna, this volume).

Although it was originally formulated to explain the relatively perplexing phenomena of outgroup favoritism and the internalization of inferiority among low-status group members (Jost & Banaji, 1994), SJT now seeks more broadly to understand the myriad causes and consequences of everyday ideology, especially the motivated (but not necessarily conscious) defense of all types of socio-political systems. According to researchers in this tradition, any large or small social system that subsumes individuals and/or groups can engender a powerful psychological attachment (e.g., Blasi & Jost, 2006). Such systems can be relatively tangible, such as the families, institutions,

and organizations within which people live their daily lives, or they can be more abstract and intangible, such as the unwritten but clearly recognizable rules and norms that prescribe appropriate social behavior, including guidelines for appropriate interpersonal and intergroup encounters. Accordingly, research on SJT has shown that whether the system is operationalized as society as a whole, the government, the economic system, specific institutions such as one's university, or even the network of social norms, people will engage in various psychological processes—including social stereotyping and various forms of motivated social perception and judgment—aimed at defending the legitimacy of the social systems (e.g., Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Jost & Hunyady, 2002, 2005; Jost & Kay, 2005; Kay, Jimenez, & Jost, 2002; Kay & Jost, 2003; Kay, Jost, & Young, 2005; Kay, Gaucher, Napier, Calan, & Laurin, 2008; Lau, Kay, & Spencer, 2008).

The system justification motive likely evolved as a psychologically adaptive mechanism, helping people to cope with the existential and epistemic threats posed by imposing and frequently illegitimate, unfair, and/or unstable social systems (Kay et al., 2008; see also, Jost & Hunyady, 2005). However, as is the case with many ordinarily adaptive psychological processes (e.g., categorization and the attainment of cognitive efficiency), the system justification motive also frequently leads to undesirable outcomes. To the extent that a given social system entails either significant inequalities or injustices—which almost all social systems do, at least to some extent (Dumont, 1970; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999)—the system justification motive instigates cognitive and motivational processes that maintain (and even reinforce) these aspects of the system and inhibits attempts at redress (e.g., Wakslak, Jost, Tyler, & Chen, 2007). This brings us to the nature of the relationship between system justification and politically conservative ideology.

The Relationship Between System Justification and Political Conservatism

Jost and Hunyady (2005) treated political conservatism as one especially popular form of system justification in Western capitalist societies. On this formulation, system justification is a broader and more inclusive term than what is typically meant by political conservatism. However, if one accepts the bipartite definition of conservatism in terms of preservation of tradition (or resistance to social change) and acceptance of inequality in both social and economic spheres (Jost et al., 2003), it is clear that a system-justifying attitude in a capitalist system would be predominantly conservative in both respects (Jost et al., 2008).

Like other psychological perspectives, SJT is largely a bottom-up theory. It does not seek to explain the origins of the structural details of the social order

(why the system is the way that it is). Rather, the theory addresses the implicit and explicit attitudes and beliefs held by individuals and groups about the societal structure (including both normative and descriptive beliefs), as well as the motivation evident in all people (to differing degrees) to support the status quo and defend and protect the social systems that affect them. In other words, SJT is a quintessentially social psychological theory that focuses on individual and group processes but with broad implications for other levels of analysis, including the societal level of analysis (Doise, 2004; Stangor & Jost, 1997). The scope of the theory extends well beyond political ideologies, because it is not restricted to attitudes concerning political institutions.

System justification is, therefore, neither synonymous with political conservatism nor a mere by-product of it, although some have implied that this may be the case (Huddy, 2004; see also Anson et al., this volume). System justification processes do, however, contribute to ideological outcomes and are more likely to give rise to certain ideologies than others, as pointed out by Jost and Hunyady (2005). When the motivation to justify the system is heightened, people will be more likely to embrace ideologies that emphasize the value of the status quo. In contemporary Western societies, this alignment tends to occur more readily with respect to political conservatism than to its counterpart, liberalism (see also Jost et al., 2003, 2008, 2009).

What Lies Ahead?

By now, psychologists have fairly thoroughly mapped how differences in individual personality characteristics go hand in hand with particular political and ideological stances. For example, conscientiousness, rule-following, reluctance to embrace new experiences, and preferences for order, structure, and closure have all been linked to various indicators of political conservatism (see Jost et al., 2003, for a review). In contrast to the many decades of research on individual differences, relatively few experimental studies exist in this area. This could stem from a longstanding theoretical assumption, namely that explanations for differences in political preferences will ultimately be traced to formative experiences in childhood or even to genetic predispositions (Adorno et al., 1950; Alford, Funk, & Hibbing, 2005; Altemeyer, 1988, 1996; Block & Block, 2005; Stenner, 2005; Sulloway, 1996). At the same time, it is primarily through experimental approaches that we can hope to illuminate the underlying cognitive and motivational processes that give rise to ideological outcomes. In other words, researchers need to design experiments that capture the rich interconnectedness of the individual and the situation as it pertains to political ideology (cf. Ross & Nisbett, 1991).

Jost and colleagues (2003) commented on the relative dearth of experimental evidence in the literature and expressed hope that theoretical integration

would pave the way for new research that would “at long last address a wider range of social situations and conditions that give rise and momentum to conservative attitudes, thoughts, behaviors, and even social movements” (p. 366). According to a search of the PsycINFO database undertaken in February of 2008, 154 articles had already cited the article by Jost et al. (2003). However, classification of the abstracts of these articles reveals that most of them adopted an individual differences approach. More specifically, 79 abstracts mentioned research dealing exclusively with personality and individual difference variables, whereas only 16 of the abstracts described at least one experimental study, and most of these abstracts discuss individual differences as well. (The remaining 59 articles were purely theoretical or review papers.) Although the balance remains tipped in favor of individual difference approaches, it is heartening that experimental work on the subject of political and religious ideologies has started to appear in various publication outlets, including the present volume.

In contrast to most research on the psychological underpinnings of ideology, research on SJT has, from the start, relied primarily on experimental methods. Instilling a sense of system threat in participants through exposure to passages criticizing the system and manipulating the perceived status of various social groups within a system are two particularly effective methods of eliciting system-justifying attitudes and behaviors in participants (Jost, 2001; Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Jost, Kivetz, Rubini, Guermandi, & Mosso, 2005; Kay et al., 2005; Lau et al., 2008). What lies ahead for SJT, therefore, is not to establish the causal direction between system justification tendencies and outcome variables such as stereotyping and rationalization, but rather theoretical refinement, including the establishment of limiting and boundary conditions. In other words, it has been demonstrated that many people defend and justify the system to which they belong, apparently even at their own expense, but less is known about situational factors that cause people to disengage from—or even disparage and challenge—the social system. System justification theorists, as well as others who embrace motivational explanations for certain ideological outcomes, also need to respond effectively to the kinds of criticisms raised by Haidt and Graham (this volume) and Mitchell and Tetlock (this volume)—namely, that acceptance of the prevailing social system does not always or necessarily reflect motivationally biased processing in favor of the current status quo (and against alternatives to it).

OVERVIEW OF THIS VOLUME

In this volume, we have encouraged theoretical and methodological pluralism to represent a wide variety of research traditions bearing on the social and

psychological bases of ideology and system justification. These traditions include (a) the study of attitudes, social cognition, and information processing at both conscious and nonconscious levels of awareness, (b) theories of motivated reasoning and goal-directed cognition, (c) research on personality and dispositional correlates of political orientation, (d) work on social justice and the origins of moral values, (e) the myriad ways in which social and political opinions are shaped by local situations and environments, and (f) studies of stereotyping, prejudice, and the ideological correlates of intergroup attitudes. Given the complex, multifaceted nature of ideology, this variety of approaches is not only desirable but perhaps necessary. Our sense is that the time is ripe for a book in which prominent scholars from several neighboring disciplines are brought together to facilitate the scientific understanding of ideological dynamics across the boundaries established by different theoretical perspectives, research traditions, and empirical methodologies.

*Major Strengths of This Volume and
Its Use as an Advanced Textbook*

A major strength of this book, we think, is the fact that it represents “state of the art” research on ideology and system justification as it is being conducted now by many of the world’s leading social and behavioral scientists. Data collection methods include traditional laboratory experiments, huge Internet and other public opinion surveys, and even the use of thought experiments in the framework of the “hypothetical societies” paradigm. The phenomena under investigation range from subtle and short-lived effects on ideologically significant outcomes, to more robust and enduring differences in public opinion. One example of the former comes from priming studies in which brief exposure to a picture of the American flag is found to activate values pertaining to nationalism; an example of the latter type of investigation is the demonstration that variability in “state-wide personalities” is associated with regional differences in voting behavior in several recent presidential elections.

Roughly half of the 19 chapters following this one focus on political and/or religious ideologies, and the other half highlight processes of system justification. Importantly, at least one-third of the chapters explicitly address the link between political conservatism and system justification (see also Jost et al., 2008). Although the majority of authors are from either the United States or Canada, reflecting the fact that most of the current research on these topics is taking place in North America, some contributors hail from Great Britain, the Netherlands, Israel, and New Zealand. During the writing process, authors were encouraged to read and refer to other chapters in the book, and we believe this has facilitated dialogue among authors and added intellectual coherence to the volume.

As the volume took final shape, it became increasingly clear to us that it would be a good textbook for advanced undergraduate or graduate courses in social and/or political psychology or any course with a focus on processes of ideology and system justification. We came to this conclusion for two main reasons. First, if there existed a “who’s who” list of researchers on these two topics (and especially their intersection), it is clear that the contributors to this volume would be listed. The second reason is that most of the chapter authors have chosen to frame their chapters by starting with a concise overview of a research area or theory, such as automaticity in social cognition, belief in a just world (BJW), system justification theory (SJT), or terror management theory (TMT). Following these brief overviews, the chapters then extend the guiding ideas in new and important directions, either by connecting them to other theories represented in the volume or by developing and testing novel hypotheses concerning ideology and system justification. Chapters that are organized in this way guarantee that students will be exposed to a wide range of theoretical approaches and will also be able to see how theories in social and political psychology evolve through empirical confrontation.

Readers with at least some prior knowledge of the approaches represented in this volume should find it to be a practical, valuable source of reference when planning their own research. What will probably be most exciting to those already familiar with the research programs summarized in the volume is the active, scholarly exchange of ideas. A few chapters contain sharply worded commentaries on or critiques of other approaches taken in the volume. Still others advance the field by weaving together seemingly disparate perspectives, such as the chapter by Feygina and Tyler on the relationship between procedural justice and system justification theory, and another chapter by Eibach and Libby on how illusory perceptions of moral decline can increase one’s affinity for politically conservative attitudes and opinions.

The Chapters to Come

Ideology and Automaticity. Following the foreword by George Lakoff and this introductory chapter, the next section of the book is devoted to “Ideology and Automaticity,” which we regard as an extremely new and exciting field of inquiry within social and political psychology. Researchers have very recently begun to explore the notion that ideology serves more than a heuristic function and that it can exert surprisingly profound influences at an implicit as well as explicit level of awareness (e.g., see Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Jost et al., 2008; Kay & Jost, 2003). John Bargh and his collaborators are pioneers in the study of automaticity (e.g., Bargh, 1994; Bargh & Ferguson,

2000). In this volume, they show that certain characteristics of automatic cognitions, including the fact that they are intuitive, spontaneous, effortless, and/or unconscious, can have powerful ideological consequences.

In Chapter 2, Eric Uhlmann, T. Andrew Poehlman, and John Bargh propose that “implicit Puritanism” is a pervasive aspect of American culture and that—whereas many nations base their identity on shared history, culture, language, or customs—American identity is based on shared moral and political values. Specifically, due to its settlement history, American identity is based on the Protestant values of hard work and individual merit. They argue that these values are implicitly embraced by all Americans, whether Protestant or not, and they can therefore be automatically activated to influence social judgments outside of conscious awareness. They discuss results from several ingenious experiments testing this idea. In one study, they find that Americans (but not others) who were primed with words related to the concept of “salvation” worked harder on a subsequent task.

In Chapter 3, Melissa J. Ferguson, Travis J. Carter, and Ran R. Hassin also explore the implicit influence of nationalist ideology on behavior and attitudes, including support for the current system. They review several experiments in which subtle, even subliminal priming of American flag imagery activates ideologically associated constructs such as power, materialism, and aggression. These effects seem to hold regardless of political party affiliation, but they are amplified for people who are high in exposure to political news coverage, suggesting that both top-down and bottom-up processes may be at work.

The Psychological Power of the Status Quo. The third section of the book contains four chapters that address the psychological power of the status quo. The authors take different perspectives on the topic, and because of this, they represent well the range of current thinking in the field. Chapter 4, by Scott Eidelman and Christian Crandall, reflects a purely cognitive account of system justification. Specifically, these authors argue that upholding the status quo requires minimal effort, intention, awareness, and control and therefore has a psychological advantage over alternatives to the status quo. In Chapter 5, Carolyn L. Hafer and Becky L. Choma adopt a more motivational perspective, identifying Lerner’s (1980) construct of the BJW as a critical determinant of deservingness judgments. They review recent theorizing and experimental evidence suggesting that believing in a just world leads one to perceive less personal discrimination, thereby increasing the likelihood of arriving at system-justifying ideological outcomes.

Gregory Mitchell and Philip E. Tetlock strike a different, more critical tone in Chapter 6. They question the emphasis many psychologists put on

subconscious motivations for explaining people's support for the system, or what they call "subterranean-motivational theories." Mitchell and Tetlock claim that what system justification theorists describe as motivated, even potentially irrational, support for the status quo should be seen as a neutral, if not downright rational form of object appraisal. They advocate the use of a research paradigm originating in philosophical thought experiments, which they refer to as the *hypothetical society paradigm*, to explore the boundaries of a system justification approach.

Aaron C. Kay and Mark Zanna round out the section on the psychological power of the status quo, with a contextual analysis of the psychological and societal consequences of the system justification motive (Chapter 7). They review very recent evidence for the notion that people's support of the system will depend on contextual factors such as system threat, perceived inevitability, and psychological dependence. Heightened support for the system, in turn, affects social judgments such as victim-derogation and reliance on complementary stereotypes. The work by Kay and Zanna extends the reach and theoretical precision of system justification theory considerably.

Epistemic and Existential Motives. In the fourth section of the volume, three chapters explicitly compare and contrast different social psychological theories aimed at explaining why people tend to support the status quo. In Chapter 8, Kees van den Bos focuses on how subjective experiences of uncertainty can be aversive and therefore motivate people to restore certainty by increasing their allegiance to the status quo (see also Kay et al., 2008). Van den Bos also contrasts his uncertainty management model with TMT.

The terror management theorists have their say next. In Chapter 9, Jacqueline Anson, Tom Pyszczynski, Sheldon Solomon, and Jeff Greenberg describe several areas of convergence and divergence between terror management and system justification theories. The authors seem to agree with system justification theorists that some worldviews are better suited to calm the fear of death, and that these are typically characterized by structure, order, and certainty (e.g., see Jost, Fitzsimons, & Kay, 2004). However, they also dispute the notion that death anxiety leads people to gravitate disproportionately to right-wing (versus left-wing) ideologies in general.

The author of the final chapter in this section (Chapter 10), Robb Willer, also compares TMT to an alternative account. He argues that the fear of death is associated with increased religiosity because for most people religion is inseparable from the promise of an afterlife, and he demonstrates experimentally that mortality salience leads to a stronger belief in the afterlife for both religious and nonreligious people. Willer proposes a relatively

straightforward motivational account that does away with the more elaborate notion of “worldview defense” advocated by terror management theorists.

Personality and Individual Differences. The three chapters that comprise the fifth section of the book offer new insights and relatively comprehensive reviews of several important individual difference factors that have been shown to matter greatly in the formation and adoption of political ideologies. In Chapter 11, Christopher M. Federico and Paul Goren use sophisticated statistical techniques to analyze nationally representative survey data to explore the link between epistemic motivation and ideology. They find that the relationship between the need for cognitive closure and conservative orientation (e.g., see Jost et al., 2003) is stronger for those who are high (versus low) in political sophistication and expertise.

In Chapter 12, John Duckitt and Chris G. Sibley advance our understanding of the motivational basis of ideology and system justification by demonstrating that right-wing authoritarianism is associated with the endorsement of attitudes that serve to maintain ingroup norms and values (traditionalism), whereas social dominance orientation is related to endorsement of attitudes that accept and justify hierarchy (rationalization of inequality).

Chapter 13 by P. Jason Rentfrow, Sam Gosling, John T. Jost, and Jeffrey Potter breaks new ground by attempting to link individual-level personality variables to more “macro” regional-level variables. Drawing on extremely large Internet data sets that include psychological data from inhabitants of all 50 U.S. states, they demonstrate that average state-level scores on the personality dimension of Openness to New Experiences strongly predict pro-Democratic voting patterns, whereas state-level scores on Conscientiousness significantly, albeit less strongly, predict pro-Republican voting patterns.

Perspectives on Justice and Morality. It is at least arguable that justice and morality are next of kin to the concept of political ideology, with a two-way street connecting them. People are apt to embrace ideological opinions that are in line with their ideas about what is fair and moral and, once adopted, ideological opinions are likely to influence beliefs about what is just and appropriate. Three chapters in the sixth section of the book explore this kinship from quite different perspectives.

Irina Feygina and Tom R. Tyler (Chapter 14) investigate the possibility that perceptions of procedural fairness are affected by system justification tendencies. They test this hypothesis using data collected from citizens who had recently interacted with either the police or the courts. Findings reveal that political conservatives, who are chronically higher in system justification motivation compared with liberals (see Jost et al., 2008), are generally more

satisfied with decisions made by authorities. Feygina and Tyler also observe that decision satisfaction is less affected by the perceived fairness of procedures for conservatives than for liberals.

Jonathan Haidt and Jesse Graham (Chapter 15) venture to the “Planet of the Durkheimians” to try to explain why some moral and political attitudes, which are sometimes seen as wrong and/or incomprehensible to liberals, are experienced as subjectively right and desirable by conservatives. Building on their previous work (Haidt & Graham, 2007), they argue that morality rests on five foundations: Harm/care, fairness/reciprocity, ingroup/loyalty, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity. Haidt and Graham suggest that system-justifying outcomes are seen as moral and desirable from a conservative perspective (but not a liberal perspective) because they are in line with the authority/respect foundation.

In Chapter 16, Richard P. Eibach and Lisa K. Libby analyze the fear of moral decline in society to explain the psychological appeal of nostalgia, tradition, and politically conservative opinions. The authors review studies showing, for example, that when people become parents they come to see the world as a more dangerous place but fail to realize that it is a change in their personal circumstances (rather than a change in the state of the world) that is responsible for their perception. As a result, they gravitate toward more conservative, system-justifying positions without even realizing it.

Implications for Self, Group, and Society. In the final section of the book, four chapters explore questions of ideology and system justification insofar as they intersect with feelings of personal entitlement, gender relations, the redressing of historical injustices, and implicit and explicit intergroup attitudes. In Chapter 17, Laurie T. O’Brien and Brenda Major tackle the thorny question of why inequalities between groups are maintained in society, and they argue that a state of disadvantage leads individuals to develop a depressed sense of personal entitlement, thereby preventing people from demanding equality. The authors suggest that social comparison and system justification processes work together to undermine the sense of entitlement among members of disadvantaged groups and to perpetuate inequality.

Gender relations are the focus of Chapter 18 by Mina Cikara, Tiana L. Lee, Susan T. Fiske, and Peter Glick. These authors review theory and research on ambivalent sexism, which is an ideological belief system that combines a hostile view of women as manipulative and seductive with an ostensibly benevolent view of them as sweet, caring, and virtuous, but also as emotional, irrational, and above all in need of male protection. A benevolently sexist view of women is particularly effective for satisfying system justification needs, because it offers a somewhat flattering view of women and therefore

enables both men and women to rationalize gender inequality (see Jost & Kay, 2005).

In recent decades, members of historically oppressed minority groups in various societies have begun to request that authorities redress the harm their ancestors suffered. Katherine B. Starzyk, Craig W. Blatz, and Michael Ross address this important issue in Chapter 19, drawing on anecdotal examples from Canada's past and present, as well as on findings from their own experimental research. They start with the observation that one impediment to rectifying historical injustices is that majority group members are often unaware of historical events or view them benignly. This lack of awareness is often explicitly promoted by the government and more fundamentally reflects the motivation to justify the social system.

In the last chapter of the book, Brian Nosek, Mahzarin R. Banaji, and John T. Jost summarize results derived from analyses of two large data sets that address the manner and extent to which political ideology predicts (or constrains) both implicit and explicit attitudes toward social groups. First, data based on thousands of people who have taken the Implicit Association Test (IAT) on the Project Implicit website reveal that, whereas both liberals and conservatives exhibit implicit preferences for high-status (or advantaged) groups over low-status (or disadvantaged) groups, the tendency is more pronounced for conservatives than liberals. Second, analysis of public opinion data from the American National Election Studies between 1972 and 2004 shows that, compared with liberals, conservatives are indeed more resistant to social change, especially when change is associated with increased egalitarianism. Whereas liberals generally advocated racial equality as long ago as 1972, it took several decades for conservatives to "catch up."

CONCLUSION

This introductory chapter has highlighted the diversity of theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of ideology and system justification. By alluding to the fable of the blind men and the elephant at the outset of the chapter, we certainly do not mean to imply that the current state of knowledge about the social psychological bases of ideology and system justification is in any way akin to researchers fumbling in the dark. Nevertheless, an honest broker is obliged to point out that social, personality, and political psychologists are still some ways from achieving 20/20 vision with respect to ideological phenomena. Our hope is that by summoning some of the world's most illustrious researchers in this important area of investigation, this book will help to provide readers with a good pair of spectacles (or

perhaps a few pairs) that can aid them in their own explorations of the social and psychological bases of ideology and system justification.

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PART II

Ideology and Automaticity

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American Moral Exceptionalism

Eric Luis Uhlmann, T. Andrew Poehlman,
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Abstract

The judgments and actions of contemporary Americans reflect the implicit influence of America's Puritan-Protestant heritage. Americans valorize individual merit, a residue of the Protestant emphasis on a personal relationship with God and earthly rewards and punishments. And the United States has remained deeply religious and traditional in the face of enormous prosperity, at least in part attributable to the founding influence of the Puritan-Protestants. Americans, but not members of comparison cultures, implicitly link work and divine salvation and display other judgmental biases consistent with *implicit Puritanism*. As predicted by theories of implicit social cognition, which hold that the influence of traditional cultural values is strongest at an implicit level, less religious and non-Protestant Americans are just as likely to display such effects as devout American Protestants.

In his classic *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville (1840/1990) became the first major scholar to characterize America as exceptional, and many others have since followed suit (e.g., Baker, 2005; Kingdon, 1999; Lipset, 1996; Shafer, 1991; Voss, 1993). Although the focus of these commentators differed—the small size of the federal government in the case of Kingdon (1999), the ostensible American crisis of values in the case of Baker (2005)—they shared a sense that America is somehow qualitatively different from other countries, and that this difference needs explaining.

As we will argue, much of American culture's unique quality stems from its Puritan-Protestant heritage.¹ Moreover, contemporary manifestations of

¹ In the present chapter, we use the term *Protestant* when referring to the Protestant faith and community in general, including both United States and northwestern Europe, among others. The terms *Puritan-Protestant* or simply *Puritan* are used to refer to a subgroup of English Protestants who felt that the Anglican Church had undertaken insufficient reforms when it broke from the Catholic Church. These Puritan-Protestants were especially devout and committed to the values of the Reformation, and—in part because they were among the first to arrive—exerted a disproportionate influence on what became the American creed. We sometimes use the term *Puritan* in reference to contemporary American beliefs to reflect this heritage.

Puritan-Protestant values are frequently implicit and automatic. In making this case, we draw on the work of Sanchez-Burks (2002, 2005), who demonstrates that American Protestants implicitly follow a “Protestant relational ideology” that prescribes impersonal work relationships. The research reported in this chapter extends this important work into the domain of moral values (i.e., questions of right and wrong rather than appropriateness), and further focuses on cases in which non-Protestant and less religious Americans display judgments consistent with traditional Puritan-Protestant values.

We focus on two key ways in which American moral values are “exceptional” in the sense of diverging markedly from the norm, both of which have their roots in America’s Puritan-Protestant heritage. First, American culture valorizes individual merit to a remarkable degree. This is due in part to the Protestant emphasis on an individual relationship with God and the notion of earthly punishments and rewards.

Second, and just as importantly, the *developmental course* of American culture diverges sharply from the norm around the world. Almost as a rule, wealth and democracy engender secular, less traditional values (Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). Because historically Protestant countries industrialized and became wealthy prior to other cultures, they were also the first to secularize and are today among the world’s *least* traditional societies. The major exception is the United States, which remains deeply religious and traditional, a consequence of its heritage as a nation founded by extremely devout Puritan-Protestants. Indeed, contemporary American values are in some respects more similar to those of impoverished totalitarian states than to those of other wealthy democracies. Despite their extremely high level of economic development, Americans are relatively likely to emphasize the importance of religion, endorse traditional family values, and reject divorce, homosexuality, abortion, euthanasia, and suicide. Of particular relevance to contemporary issues such as the war on terror, Americans are much more absolutist when it comes to their moral standards than one would predict based on national wealth.

While drawing on the results of self-report questionnaire measures like the World Values Survey (Inglehart, 1997), we emphasize that the implicit cognitions of contemporary Americans are especially likely to reflect traditional Puritan-Protestant morality. Of particular interest, Americans implicitly link work with divine salvation. We consider this and related phenomena manifestations of *implicit Puritanism*.

IMPLICIT CULTURAL COGNITION

There has been an increasing recognition within psychology that implicit cognitions play a central role in human judgments and behaviors (Bargh &

Chartrand, 1999; Dijksterhaus & Bargh, 2001; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Haidt, 2001; Nisbett & Wilson, 1977; Rudman, 2004; Sanchez-Burks, 2002; Wegner & Bargh, 1998; Wilson, 2002). The term *implicit* is used to refer to cognitions that are intuitive, spontaneous, effortless, unintentional, uncontrollable, and/or unconscious (Bargh, 1994; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Wegner & Bargh, 1998; Wilson, 2002). However, it is rare for all of these characteristics to occur together (Bargh, 1994). In the present chapter, we use the label *implicit* to refer to cognitions that are intuitive, spontaneous, effortless, and which do not require a conscious intention on part of the social perceiver to occur. But the social perceiver is in many cases consciously aware of his or her cognition and can, at least in theory, deliberately correct for its influence.

To take one example, an American social perceiver may intuitively, spontaneously, and effortlessly judge a lottery winner who retires at a young age negatively. No conscious intention to evaluate the lottery winner needed to take place for the judgment to occur. However, the social perceiver is aware of her negative judgment, and may upon deliberation decide it does not make sense for the lottery winner to continue working when it is no longer economically necessary.

This places the cognitions we examine in this chapter in a similar category to those described in Haidt's (2001) influential social intuitionist model. He argues persuasively that moral judgments are typically intuitive rather than reasoned, and culturally socialized rather than individually chosen. Supporting this thesis, participants find themselves "morally dumbfounded" (i.e., unable to muster an effective logical argument) when asked to explain their opposition to harmless yet culturally condemned acts such as washing the toilet with the national flag and eating the family dog after it has been killed by a car (Haidt, Koller, & Dias, 1993). Moral judgments occur spontaneously, but their logical justifications are often rationalizations rather than true reasons (for additional empirical evidence, see Uhlmann, Pizarro, Tannenbaum, & Ditto, 2007).

Not only indirect measures, but also explicit scenarios and survey questions like those used in social intuitionist studies (Haidt, 2001; Haidt et al., 1993) and the World Values Survey (Inglehart, 1997) can tap into implicit cognitions. As we will see, American participants are much more likely than members of other wealthy democracies to view moral values in black and white terms (Baker, 2005). Although this sense of moral absolutism is consciously reportable, it is at the same time implicit in the sense that Americans are unaware of the influence that their Puritan-Protestant heritage has on their view of morality. In other words, they are unconscious of the source of their moral absolutism (Gawronski, Hofmann, & Wilbur, 2006; Wilson, 2002). And values can also operate implicitly, for example when the conscious

belief that moral principles are absolute unconsciously influences the extent to which unsavory political allies are recharacterized as morally upstanding (Gawronski et al., 2006; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995).

Supporting the profound impact of culture on implicit cognitions, studies show that subtly activated cultural concepts exert a powerful influence on judgments and behaviors (Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996; Dijksterhuis & van Knippenberg, 1998; Kawakami, Dovidio, & Dijksterhuis, 2003). For example, unscrambling sentences containing words related to stereotypes of the elderly (e.g., *Florida, bingo*) led college students to walk more slowly as they left the laboratory (Bargh et al., 1996), and subliminal exposure to pictures of skinheads led them to endorse more negative attitudes toward immigrants and racial minorities (Kawakami et al., 2003). These striking findings suggest that cultural ideas can prime actions without the individual's awareness of their influence (Bargh & Ferguson, 2000; Bargh & Chartrand, 1999).

More stable implicit beliefs likewise reflect the cultural context (Banaji, 2001; Blair, Judd, & Fallman, 2004; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998; Rudman, 2004). The pervasiveness of implicit racial stereotyping is an excellent example. Exposure to cultural stereotypes of Black Americans creates a mental association between Black Americans and crime. This association can lead individuals to discriminate under conditions in which it is difficult to consciously override the tendency to stereotype. Consistent with this, White Americans playing the part of a police officer in a virtual reality game accidentally shoot Black civilians when obliged to respond quickly (Correll, Park, Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2002; Greenwald, Oakes, & Hoffman, 2003).

Prominent cultural researchers have speculated that most cultural influences are similarly implicit (e.g., Cohen, 1997; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001; Norris & Inglehart, 2004; Sanchez-Burks, 2002, 2005; Sperber, 1985; Weber, 1904/1958). Although general principles of how the mind works suggest that implicit cognitions are especially likely to reflect traditional cultural values (Banaji, 2001; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Rudman, 2004), the content of those values is based on each country's cultural history. In the case of the United States, that history is especially unique and interesting (Sanchez-Burks, 2002, 2005).

AMERICA'S UNIQUE CULTURAL HISTORY

In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Max Weber (1904/1958) argued that Protestantism was a major factor in encouraging the development of modern capitalism. He suggested that a Protestant ethic of everyday behavior emphasizing hard work, productivity, honesty, diligence, seriousness,

rationality, and saving facilitated the growth of businesses and economies. The Calvinist principle of predestination also played a role, by helping to remove some of the stigma surrounding the open pursuit of material wealth. Because economic success suggested that one was among God's elected, pursuing it was not only moral, but even mandatory.

The economic effects of the Protestant Reformation were tremendous. Before the Reformation, southern Europe was better off than northern Europe in economic terms. But over the next three centuries, capitalism flourished in Protestant countries but not in Catholic countries (Inglehart, 1997; Landes, 1998). For the first century and a half of the Industrial Revolution, industrialization was confined to the historically Protestant countries of northwest Europe, Protestant regions of historically Catholic European countries, and the Protestant regions of the Americas (Inglehart, 1997). As Inglehart and Welzel (2005; p. 75) note, industrialization was "overwhelmingly concentrated in predominantly Protestant societies and among the Protestant segments of mixed societies."

Typically, as a society becomes more affluent, the influence of religion fades and is replaced by secular values (Inglehart, 1997). Because of this process, in most of the world, Protestantism has become a victim of its own (material) success. Predominantly Protestant countries industrialized and developed economically earlier and to a greater extent than Catholic, Muslim, Hindu, and other countries (Landes, 1998). As a result, they also secularized earlier (Norris & Inglehart, 2004). Protestantism has become something of a fading light in its birthplace of Northwest Europe.

The most prominent exception to this process is the United States, which is virtually as religious as it enters the new millennium as it was sixty years ago (Gallup & Linday, 1999; Greeley, 1991; Norris & Inglehart, 2004). In 2000, 50% of Americans rated God's importance in their life at the maximum of 10 on a 10-point scale, and 60% attended church at least once a month (Baker, 2005). The same proportion of Americans (40%) attended church in a given week in March 2003 as had in a given week of March 1939. In both 1947 and 2001, 94% of Americans believed in God. Out of all nations surveyed, only the United States and Brazil did not experience a drop in the percentage of people who believe in God between the years 1947 and 2001 (Norris & Inglehart, 2004). The percentage of Americans who believed in life after death actually *rose* from 68% in 1947 to 76% in 2001. Seven in ten Americans believe in the devil, as compared to one-third of British people and one-fifth or less of West Germans, French, and Swedes (Lipset, 1996). More than half of the American public, and 79% of Christians, expect that Jesus will return to Earth, and 44% of Americans believe this will occur within the next 50 years (Harris, 2006; Sheler, 2006). Over half of Americans believe the universe was

created 6,000 years ago (Harris, 2006). A 1999 Gallup poll found that Americans were more willing to vote for a Roman Catholic (94%) and homosexual (79%) candidate for political office than for an atheist (49%; Dawkins, 2006). President George Bush senior, when asked if atheists could be legitimate citizens and patriots, responded “No, I don’t know that atheists should be considered as citizens, nor should they be considered patriots. This is one nation under God” (as quoted in Dawkins, 2006, p. 43).

What makes America exceptional is not its high level of religiosity, which is no greater than that of many Latin American and Islamic countries, but that it has retained high levels of religiosity in the face of enormous economic prosperity. As Wald (1987) points out, over half of Americans say that religion is very important to them personally, but based on economic development, the prediction would have been that only *five percent* of Americans would see religion as central to their lives.

The most likely reason is America’s unique cultural heritage as a nation founded, to no small degree, by Puritan-Protestants fleeing religious persecution. These devout immigrants hoped to create a religious utopia in the New World. In some cases, entire congregations emigrated to New England together (Bellow, 2003). This process of self-selection led to extraordinary levels of religiosity in the new colonies (Fisher, 1989). And although the early English settlers were followed by others pursuing economic goals, it was the devout Protestants who laid the foundation of American culture. Because religiously devout settlers got in on the “ground-floor” of a new society, they enjoyed an enormous influence over what eventually became known as the American creed.

Many scholars have argued that Protestantism continues to play a powerful—and often implicit—role in the values of contemporary Americans (Baker, 2005; Landes, 1998; Lipset, 1996; Sanchez-Burks, 2002, 2005). We now turn to the first major way in which America’s unique cultural history has shaped the contemporary values of its populace: the ideal of individual merit.

AMERICANISM AS IDEOLOGY: THE ETHIC OF INDIVIDUAL MERIT

Lipset (1991, p. 16) writes that “Americanism, as different people have pointed out, is an ‘ism’ or ideology in the same way that communism or fascism or liberalism are ‘isms.’” And, as Richard Hofstadter states, “It has been our fate as a nation not to have ideologies but to be one” (as quoted in Kazin & McCartin, 2006). Ralph Waldo Emerson and Abraham Lincoln described American ideology as a “political religion” (Baker, 2005), and Robert Bellah

refers to America's "civic religion" (Bellah, 1980). Whereas most national identities are based on ancestry, history, language, customs, and/or religion, American identity is based on shared values. To fail to endorse certain moral principles is to be "un-American." One of the most important and interesting American values is the ideal of individual merit. Although an individualistic ethos is based in part on the Protestant emphasis on a personal relationship with God, belief in meritocracy derives in part from the Protestant tenet of earthly reward and punishment.

Individualism

Scholars from a variety of fields consider individualism one of the critical dimensions of national character (Hofstede, 2001; Inglehart, 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Mead, 1967; Triandis, 1988, 1995). America's strong individualism sets it apart from most of the world, which is more collectivistic or group oriented (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985; Inkeles, 1983; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Large-scale international surveys reveal that the United States is more individualistic than even other Western European countries. In a landmark study, Hofstede (1980, 2001) compared the values of IBM employees in over 50 countries around the world. Individualism was one of the primary dimensions of culture that his work revealed, and the United States scored as more individualistic than any other country.

Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars' (1993) survey of 15,000 senior managers in 12 wealthy European and East Asian Nations further highlighted the American conviction in individualism. Seventy-four percent of Americans believed that working for a company simply involves the exchange of pay for the individual's successful completion of her assigned functions. In contrast, only 29% of Japanese, 35% of French, and 41% of Germans endorsed this view. Members of these other cultures took the position that working for a company involves a group of people cooperating and forming strong relationships. Notably, dramatic differences were found not only between the United States and East Asian countries, but also between the United States and other Western countries.

Of course, any cultural dimension as important as individualism is multiply determined. Factors as diverse as having an agrarian economy, open frontier, level of immigration, geographic mobility, and urbanization contribute to a culture's level of individualism (Kitayama, Ishii, Imada, Takemura, & Ramaswamy, 2006; Nisbett et al., 2001; Triandis, 1988). However, one of the roots of American individualism clearly lies in Protestantism's rejection of certain aspects of the Catholic faith (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Weber, 1904/1958). Partly in response to the perceived corruption and deviance from scripture of the Catholic Church, Protestantism emphasized a personal

connection with God. Whereas Catholics focused on the community of believers, Protestants sought a more individual covenant. Martin Luther, for instance, wrote that each individual is “a perfectly free lord, subject to none” (as quoted in Sampson, 2000, p. 1427). Empirically, historically Protestant countries are more individualistic than Catholic countries (Hofstede, 1980, 2001; Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 1993; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998).

The United States, however, is significantly more individualistic than even other historically Protestant cultures (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). The United States is, uniquely, a Protestant country with many sects, in which people are willing and able to select the church most suited to their individual spirituality (Lipset, 1996). Weber (1904/1958) theorized that sectarian Protestantism was especially likely to contribute to individualistic behavior. Tocqueville (1840/1990) further noted that American Protestant sects are congregational rather than hierarchical, which contributes to individualism by further emphasizing a personal covenant with God not mediated by church representatives.

Earthly Reward and Punishment

Although many religions promise that the faithful will be rewarded in the afterlife, relatively few make hard promises for the present one. The major exception is of course certain strains of Protestantism—most notably the Calvinist belief that everything is predetermined, only God’s chosen people can achieve paradise, and that material success is evidence of this grace. Calvin went so far as to argue that Christ died only for a select few rather than for all of humanity.

The Calvinist principle of earthly rewards made a significant contribution to the American conviction in individual merit. A full 96% of Americans believe that the principle that “with hard work ... anyone can succeed in America” should be taught to children (Baker, 2005). Such beliefs can be adaptive to the extent that they motivate children to pursue success. However, they are difficult to defend as empirically correct (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Of the scores of nations included in the World Values Survey, Americans were the most likely to believe that individuals should be paid based solely on job performance (Lipset, 1996). Pay based on individual merit is so fundamental to how Americans do business that it is easy to forget that other countries have very different ideals regarding who should get hired and promoted. For example, promotion in Japanese companies is based largely on seniority. Whereas 79% of Americans believe that a boss’s authority is based on the ability to do his or her job, only 27% of Japanese believe this. Japanese, Dutch, Australians, Britons, and others are considerably more likely than Americans

to view a boss's authority as stemming from power over others (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 1993).

Although Americans believe universal rules based on merit should be applied to everyone, perceived norms and values in many other societies lead people to choose loyalty to friends over the merit principle. Pearce, Branyiczki, and Bigley (2000) found that Hungarian workers viewed their companies as less likely to apply the same rules to everyone than American workers did. The perception that success was unfair (i.e., based on nepotistic connections rather than merit) mediated Hungarian workers' low level of trust in the company and low organizational commitment. In contrast to the prior study of *perceived norms* among Hungarian workers, a comparison of the *values* of American and Mexican bank employees revealed that Mexicans were considerably more likely to do what was best for their friend as opposed to act on the merit principle (Zurcher, Meadows, & Zurcher, 1965). For example, Mexican participants were more likely than Americans to believe that you should give a friend an unearned passing grade in a class, overlook a friend's cheating on an exam, and write a positive review of a friend's lousy stage play. Tellingly, Americans construed the survey as a measure of honesty, whereas Mexicans viewed it as an assessment of their loyalty as a friend.

Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars' (1993) aforementioned survey of over 15,000 senior managers in 12 countries highlighted Americans' conviction in an impersonal morality based on the merit principle. Managers were presented with ethical dilemmas that involved choosing between the merit principle and personal loyalties. Of the nations surveyed, Americans were typically the most merit-oriented. For instance, one dilemma involved a longtime subordinate whose recent work was unsatisfactory and showed no signs of improvement. Seventy-seven percent of Americans believed that the employee should be fired, compared with 19% of Koreans, 26% of French, 27% of Italians, 31% of Germans, and 42% of Britons. Members of these other cultures believed that the subordinate's 15 years of loyal service should not be repaid with a dismissal (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 1993). In additional surveys involving over 30,000 managers from 55 countries, Americans consistently chose merit-based principles over personal loyalties, and exhibited differences with other cultures as large as 60 percentage points (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 1993; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998).

It seems likely that America's commitment to meritocracy contributed to its ascent as an economic superpower (Fukuyama, 1995; Landes, 1998, 2000). It is clearly the case that historically Protestant nations dominate the world economically. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some Asian companies are

actively seeking to abandon practices such as seniority-based hiring in favor of the individualistic American business model. And as noted earlier, the Protestant work ethic may be adaptive in the sense that it leads individuals to pursue educational and vocational success. However, the legacy of Protestant faith in earthly punishments and rewards has multifold effects, not all of which are clearly welcome. The (often implicit) belief that bad people are punished on earth contributes to ideologies that justify social inequality (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Katz & Hass, 1988; Lerner, 1980; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Americans are more likely than members of many other cultures, including other wealthy democracies, to endorse the belief that people get what they deserve (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Eighty-two percent of Americans believe that what happens to people is their own doing, as compared to only 33% of Venezuelans, and 39% of Chinese. It is of course relatively unsurprising that people in poor countries—where life is arguably less fair than it is in America—view the world as unfair. However, more Americans believe in a just world than do Japanese, Germans, and Swedes (63%, 66%, and 71%, respectively).

Both correlational and experimental studies support a role for Protestant work values in promoting prejudice against members of low-status social groups. In studies done with American participants, individual differences in endorsement of Protestant work values predicted negative attitudes toward Black Americans (Katz & Hass, 1988) and negative stereotypes of the obese (Quinn & Crocker, 1999). Priming Protestant work values by having participants complete relevant questionnaire items led White Americans to endorse negative stereotypes of Black Americans (e.g., as lazy and undisciplined; Katz & Hass, 1988). Similarly, listening to a speech about Protestant work values led White participants to perceive a Black person as less competent than a White person, even though these individuals were identically described (Biernat, Vescio, & Theno, 1996). Also, reading a passage about meritocracy caused obese women to feel badly about themselves (Quinn & Crocker, 1999). Suggesting that consciousness is not a necessary condition for these effects, implicitly priming statements like “judge people on merit” using a sentence unscrambling task (Srull & Wyer, 1979) led American participants to justify unfair treatment of low-status group members (McCoy & Major, 2007). Indeed, the belief that America is a meritocracy leads to a strong consistency pressure to further believe that individuals and groups who do less well lack the traits needed for success. Importantly, the influence of traditional Puritan-Protestant values on the feelings, judgments, and actions of contemporary Americans is frequently implicit (Quinn & Crocker, 1999).

Summary

The ethic of individual merit is among the most important and noteworthy aspects of the American creed, and reveals the strong influence of traditional Puritan-Protestant moral values. Specifically, the Protestant emphasis on a personal relationship with God is one important source of American individualism, whereas the Protestant notion of earthly reward and punishment contributes to the American conviction in meritocracy.

AMERICAN TRADITIONALISM

A considerably less studied—but no less important—way in which America is exceptional is its systematic departure from the developmental path that most other societies are following. Whereas other historically Protestant countries have secularized as their economies developed, America maintains an extremely high rate of religiosity in the face of enormous prosperity. A self-selection process, in which especially devout Protestants left England to settle in the New World, helps explain the persistent prominence of religion in American life (Bellow, 2003; Fisher, 1989). High rates of religiosity in turn explain contemporary Americans' strikingly traditional values and absolutist view of morality.

Traditional Values

High levels of religiosity go hand-in-hand with traditionalist positions on many key moral issues. Although America has become the world's wealthiest country and an economic superpower, in many respects, its values remain as traditional today as they were many years ago (Baker, 2005; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). This includes not only an emphasis on religion, but also traditional family values, nationalism, sexual repression, moral absolutism, and a tendency to reject divorce, homosexuality, abortion, euthanasia, and suicide. (These values make up the index of "traditional values" from the World Values Survey; Inglehart, 1997.)

In *America's Crisis of Values*, Baker (2005) argues that, contrary to popular myth (not to mention the title of his own book), there is no real crisis of values in America. Comparing across countries, the United States is one full standard deviation above the mean when it comes to traditionalism. American values are more traditional than those of any other industrialized country, and in fact more traditional than most countries in the world. As data from the World Values Survey further indicate, Americans were just as traditional in 2000 as they were in 1981. Other wealthy countries all became less traditional over this same period, and were further less traditional than America

even in 1981.² And, in contrast to other wealthy countries, in which young people are less likely to endorse traditional values than older people, young Americans are just as traditional as their parents' generation. Among other things, this suggests that American moral exceptionalism should persist well into the future. Below, we discuss an aspect of traditional American morality that is particularly pertinent to the issues and conflicts of today.

Moral Absolutism

A key aspect of moral thinking is whether ethical dilemmas are characterized as black and white, or in shades of gray. Religions that make unambiguous moral prescriptions (e.g., Judaism, Protestantism, Catholicism, and Islam) contribute to absolutism (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Lipset, 1996). Several waves of the World Values Survey asked participants to choose between an absolutist and relativist position on morality:

- A. There are absolutely clear guidelines about what is good and evil. These always apply to everyone, whatever the circumstances.
- B. There can never be absolutely clear guidelines about what is good and evil. What is good and evil depends entirely upon the circumstances at the time.

In contrast to position A, position B suggests that morality depends greatly on the vantage point of the observer (see Baumeister, 1997). As expected, people from impoverished, highly religious societies were more likely to endorse an absolutist position on morality than people from wealthy, secular societies (Baker, 2005; Hofstede, 2001). For example, while 60% of Nigerians endorsed the absolutist position, only 19% of Swedes did.

Consistent with the high levels of religiosity observed in the United States, Americans today score closer to Nigerians than they do to Swedes. Once again, American values depart markedly from what would be expected based on level of economic development. Americans have actually become *more* absolutist over the years covered by the World Values Survey. Whereas, in 1981, one-third of Americans were moral absolutists, by the 1990s, half were. This increase in absolutism occurred among Americans from all walks of life—men

² Ireland is a partial exception to this process, having retained its traditional values despite an increase in wealth. However, Ireland has been torn by political turmoil for over half a century. The sense of insecurity fostered by such social upheaval leads to the adoption and preservation of traditional values (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). At the same time, Ireland is a historically Catholic country, and Catholic countries are on average more traditional than Protestant countries (Baker, 2005).

and women, wealthy and poor, and all races and ages (Baker, 2005). Walter Lippman insightfully called sharp distinctions between good and evil “one of the great American traditions” (as quoted in Singer, 2004, p. 209).

American absolutism even spills out in everyday evaluations. Consistent with the Buddhist and Confucian emphasis on finding a “middle way” in response to dilemmas (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Nisbett et al., 2001), Japanese and Chinese were more likely to use the midpoint on response scales than were Americans and Canadians (Chen, Lee, & Stevenson, 1995). But, at the same time, Americans were more likely than even the *Canadians* to mark the extreme values on the scale. This is striking, given the strong cultural influence the United States exerts on Canada, which renders comparisons between Americans and Canadians among the most conservative tests of American exceptionalism (Lipset, 1990).

This evaluative extremism contributes to the American tendency to moralize social and political conflicts (Lipset, 1991). It is not enough for American foreign policy to serve the national interests; a broader moral justification or rationalization is required. When World War II broke out, Churchill openly stated that he was willing to work with Stalin, and would even ally himself with Satan if it helped destroy the Nazis. In contrast, U.S. leaders and propaganda characterized Stalin positively—as “Uncle Joe”—and described the Soviet Union as a free country.

Moral absolutism is especially relevant to the issues of present-day America, among them two close presidential elections and the war on terror. In *The President of Good and Evil*, Singer (2004) documented the moral absolutism of President George W. Bush. Singer noted that President Bush had used the word evil in 319 speeches, about 30% of the speeches since he took office. The President has stated, “Moral truth is the same in every culture, in every time, and in every place,” and even uses evil as a proper noun: “We are in a conflict between good and evil, and America will call evil by its name” (both as quoted in Singer, 2004, p. 1). The President’s willingness to characterize issues in terms of good and evil may have played a role in his political victories over the less absolutist Senator John Kerry and Vice President Al Gore. The American public may perceive politicians who consider multiple perspectives on moral issues as wishy-washy and unprincipled (Tetlock, 1998).

Further examples of American moral absolutism include the U.S. policies of never negotiating with terrorists, demanding the unconditional surrender of nations with which it is at war (e.g., Japan and Germany in World War II; Lipset, 1996, 2001), and refusing to officially recognize governments perceived as enemies (Lipset, 2001). Of course, America’s foreign policy has been shaped not only by idealists but also by realists such as Henry Kissinger, who openly sought to preserve American interests. It is often observed,

however, that American leaders tend to frame foreign policy initiatives as part of a battle of good versus evil (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Lipset, 1996; Singer, 2004). Regardless of whether their true motives are idealistic or realistic, that American leaders feel it necessary to characterize foreign policy as a moral crusade highlights something important about American values.

Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) argued that the American willingness to characterize individuals as evil contributes to the explosive growth of the U.S. prison population. If an individual is intrinsically evil, he or she must be separated from non-evil people for as long as possible. This essentialistic view of evil may further explain why America is the only wealthy nation that still employs the death penalty. Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) are not alone in suggesting that a distinct streak of retributive justice exists in American moral cognition (for empirical evidence, see Carlsmith, Darley, & Robinson, 2002).

In sum, America has an absolutist mentality regarding morality along with the economic, political, and military might of a global superpower. Although tempered somewhat by pragmatic concerns, this combination of absolutism and power has implications for both America's friends and enemies. It means that the United States can be as quick to demonize moral opponents as it is capable of destroying them. We have therefore identified another implicit manifestation of Puritanism in contemporary American culture.

IMPLICIT PURITANISM IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICA

As noted earlier, America is the only major Protestant country that has not secularized. This is critically important because, as research on implicit social cognition has demonstrated, the prevailing attitudes of the broader society powerfully influence the feelings, judgments, and actions of each and every member of that society (Dijksterhaus & Bargh, 2001; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Prentice & Miller, 1996; Rudman, 2004). Even individuals who do not consciously endorse prevailing attitudes nonetheless internalize them at an implicit, intuitive level.

This leads to the prediction that contemporary Americans should exhibit implicit responses surprisingly similar to those of the early colonists. In addition, non-Protestant and less religious Americans should show implicit reactions similar to those of devout Protestants. In contrast, members of other cultures should not exhibit implicit Puritanism—either because their culture is not historically Protestant, or because it was at one time but has since become predominantly secular. Our recent research has tested this hypothesis regarding beliefs about work as a means of divine salvation, as well as the relationship between work and sexual morality.

Linking Work with Divine Salvation

Perhaps the most strikingly unique aspect of traditional Protestant beliefs is the explicit link made between work and divine salvation. Calvin, most notably, believed that material success revealed that the individual was among God's chosen. Although Protestants eventually did away with Calvin's doctrine of predestination, his emphasis on work as a source of divine salvation remained. Unlike other religions, which typically frowned on the accumulation of personal wealth, Protestantism actively encouraged it. The Protestant work ethic made an important contribution to the economic success of Northwestern Europe and the United States (Landes, 1998).

Whereas members of other cultures—most notably, East Asian cultures—have likewise developed a strong work ethic, it is typically a secular one. For example, the famed Japanese work ethic was and is based on collectivistic nationalism and family responsibility, not religion (Fukuyama, 1995; Landes, 1998). During the Tokugawa period, the Japanese people lacked a strong national identity. The imperial state tried to both increase patriotism and link it to work (Landes, 1998, 2000; Sanchez-Burks, 2002). One 1930s Japanese textbook advised, "The easiest way to practice one's patriotism [is to] discipline oneself in daily life, help keep good order in one's family, and fully discharge one's responsibility on the job" (as quoted in Landes, 2000, p. 10).

The unique Protestant link between work and divinity, coupled with contemporary America's unusual status as a devoutly religious Protestant country, leads to the prediction that Americans—but not members of other cultures—should implicitly associate work with divine salvation. To test this hypothesis empirically, Uhlmann, Poehlman, and Bargh (2007a; Experiment 3) implicitly primed American, Canadian, Italian, and German participants with words related to salvation (i.e., *divine*, *heaven*) using a sentence unscrambling task (Srull & Wyer, 1979). Other participants were primed with nonreligious words pretested to be equivalent in valence. Subsequently, all participants completed a task requiring them to solve anagrams. As expected, American participants primed with salvation subsequently worked harder on the anagram task, as evidenced by the number of anagrams they solved. Also consistent with expectations, Canadian, Italian, and German participants did not respond to salvation primes by working harder. Importantly, follow-up questions employing the funneled debriefing technique (Bargh & Chartrand, 2000) suggested that participants were not consciously aware of the influence of the primes. We interpret these results as reflective of implicit Puritanism in American moral cognition.

Further consistent with research on implicit social cognition, non-Protestant and less religious Americans were just as likely to work harder

in response to the salvation primes as were devout Protestants. (Indeed, only 15 of the 109 American participants in this particular study were Protestants, and the observed effects remained significant when the data from Protestant participants were removed.) This mirrors earlier work on implicit stereotypes and prejudice, which found that both consciously prejudiced and egalitarian individuals harbor implicit biases against Black Americans and other low-status groups (Greenwald et al., 1998). Automatic associations (e.g., between Black Americans and criminality, between work and divine salvation) are picked up from the environment and implicitly guide judgments and behaviors. This occurs because associations are readily learned from and implicitly activated by the surrounding environment (Dijksterhuis & Bargh, 2001; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Rudman, 2004; Sperber, 1985). Dominant cultural values even influence individuals who consciously reject them (Banaji, 2001; Rudman, 2004). As a result, non-Protestant and less religious Americans exhibit implicit responses similar to those of devout Protestants.

An Implicit Link Between Protestant Work Values and Sexual Morality

Although many other countries—often economically underdeveloped ones, as it happens—share traditional attitudes regarding sexuality with the United States, American culture's implicit link between work and divine salvation is potentially unique. Because Americans link both sex and work to divinity, sex and work morality should likewise be linked as part of an overarching American ethos.

This hypothesis is derived from principles of cognitive balance (Greenwald et al., 2002; Heider, 1958). Heider's (1958) Balance Theory proposed that attitudes toward multiple target objects shift to remain consistent with each other. For example, if Larry likes Sue, and Sue likes folk music, Larry's attitudes toward folk music should shift in a positive direction to remain consistent (i.e., achieve balance). As Greenwald and his colleagues (2002) have shown using the Implicit Association Test (Greenwald et al., 1998), implicit cognitions obey the principles of cognitive balance. For instance, if a woman implicitly associates herself with the category Female, and the category Female with Humanities (as opposed to Math), she is likely to associate herself with the category Humanities rather than Math (Nosek, Banaji, & Greenwald, 2002). To the extent that Americans associate sexual morality with divinity (an association shared with most other cultures), and work with divinity (an association that may be uniquely American), they should associate sexual morality and work morality with each other. If so, then priming work morality should implicitly activate sexual morality, and vice versa.

To examine this possibility, Uhlmann, Poehlman, and Bargh (2007b; Experiment 2) recruited a sample of bicultural Asian-American participants. Asian cultures are known for having conservative attitudes toward both work and sex, yet do not connect both sex *and* work to divine salvation. This makes them ideal for a conservative test of the hypothesis that American culture uniquely links work and sex morality. First, participants' Asian versus American identity was made salient using questions like "What is your favorite Asian food?" Next, they were primed with either work or neutral concepts using a sentence unscrambling task. Finally, participants reported their positions on a number of political issues. Mixed in among filler scenarios (e.g., the debate regarding hurricane relief) were scenarios designed to assess traditional attitudes toward sexuality. The first scenario dealt with a school principal who had canceled the annual prom because of sexually charged dancing the year before. A second scenario involved a debate over whether a stricter school dress code should be instituted to do away with sexually revealing clothing. As expected, priming traditional work values led Asian-American participants to endorse traditional values regarding sex, but only when they were first led to think of themselves as Americans. Although there was a sizable and statistically significant difference between the work and neutral prime conditions in the American identity condition, the work prime had no effect on sex values in the Asian identity condition. This experiment was a conservative test of our hypothesis because participants were, after all, Americans, and yet only displayed an implicit link between sex and work values when their American identity was made salient.

Uhlmann and colleagues (2007b, Experiment 1) further investigated whether the link between Protestant work values and sexual morality in American moral cognition is bidirectional. In other words, would priming sexual values activate Protestant work values (just as priming work values had activated sex values in the previously described experiment)? We focused on values regarding conspicuous consumption, which is strongly linked to the Protestant work ethic (Weber, 1904/1958). Traditionally, American social norms have censured the public consumption of hedonic goods (Fisher, 1989). American students and French participants were recruited for the experiment. For some participants, traditional values regarding sex were subtly activated by having them read about a school that had recently instituted a more conservative dress code. Participants in the control condition read a similar article on an innocuous topic. Next, in an ostensibly unrelated task, participants rated the attractiveness of consumer products that were either utilitarian (e.g., vacuum cleaner, Timex watch) or hedonic (e.g., hot tub, Rolls-Royce), and either publicly consumed (e.g., Timex watch, Rolls-Royce) or privately

consumed (e.g., vacuum cleaner, hot tub). As expected, American participants primed with traditional sex values subsequently rated publicly consumed hedonic products as unattractive. There was no evidence of such an interaction when it came to French participants' ratings of the consumer products.

The implicit link between American work and sex morality was further explored using a memory error paradigm borrowed from Barrett and Keil (1996). Participants read vignettes about target persons who violated or upheld a traditional American value (Uhlmann et al., 2007b, Experiment 3). For instance, in one of the vignettes, participants read about Julia, a recent college graduate who lived with her parents and refused to get a job. Ambiguous information about Julia's sexual values was further provided—specifically, she had spent the night at a guy's house after a recent party he hosted. After completing a filler task, participants' memory was tested. As expected, American participants who read about a target person who violated traditional work values falsely remembered the target as violating traditional sex values, and vice versa. For example, they falsely remembered Julia as having had sex with the host of the party, even though that was not explicitly stated. These effects were not only statistically significant, but large (average $d = .84$). A comparison sample of Chinese participants evidenced no such pattern of memory errors.

Once again, non-Protestant and less religious Americans were just as likely to show the observed effects as were devout Protestants. This is again consistent with prior work on implicit social cognition indicating that the surrounding environment, and especially the cultural context, can influence judgments and behaviors independently of conscious endorsement (Banaji, 2001; Bargh & Chartrand, 1999; Rudman, 2004).

In sum, both priming (Bargh et al., 1996) and memory error paradigms (Barrett & Keil, 1996) suggest that work and sex morality are linked together as part of an overarching American ethos. This ethos is rooted in America's heritage as a Puritan-Protestant nation and its current status as the only major Protestant nation that has not secularized. It also reflects the profound influence of culture on implicit feelings, judgments, and behaviors. Thus, contemporary Americans exhibit implicit responses that can be surprisingly consistent with those of their deeply religious forebears.³ We have therefore

³Importantly, these effects were not limited to Americans from New England. Our samples of American adults were just as often from outside of New England (e.g., Georgia in the case of the Asian-American identity study) as from within it. In addition, the vast majority of American college student participants were freshmen and sophomores at Yale University, who come from all over the country.

again identified manifestations of Puritanism in contemporary American moral cognition, and provided evidence that their influence is implicit. Still, much has changed in American culture since the time of the early settlers, leading to a certain degree of a tension between traditional moral intuitions and contemporary social norms. It is to this tension that we now turn.

AMERICAN AMBIVALENCE

An obvious contrast can be made between traditional Puritan-Protestant values and certain contemporary American social norms. One has only to turn on a television to encounter evidence that America's religious heritage is losing some of its grip on popular culture. The empirical evidence suggests this change in American values has been somewhat exaggerated (Baker, 2005). Notably, cognitive biases lead people to perceive society as constantly devolving (Eibach, Libby, & Gilovich, 2003). Moreover, popular media designed to shock and titillate may not always reflect the average American's explicit moral values.

At the same time, it seems obvious that substantial changes in American values and norms regarding hedonism have occurred. Puritan-Protestant values regarding consumption and frugality began to be replaced by pro-consumption values in the 1920s (Henretta, Brody, Ware, & Johnson, 2000). Contemporary America is marked by a proclivity for excess (e.g., big houses, cars, and meals) and unparalleled mass consumption (Cohen, 2002; Schlosser, 2001). A typical American meal today is certainly a far cry from the joylessly nutritious food of the New England Puritans (Fisher, 1989; Schlosser, 2001). Americans' orientation toward hedonism appears ambivalent, as illustrated by the recent uproar when a television actress appeared in a sexually suggestive commercial for Monday night football. The commercial caused much consternation. But it was later revealed that those parts of the country that accounted for the majority of complaints were also the areas in which ratings for her television show rose most sharply.

Research on implicit social cognition suggests that the influence of traditional values should be weakest at a deliberative, explicit level, and strongest at an implicit, intuitive level (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Rudman, 2004). Accordingly, we would expect that even Americans who explicitly endorse the pursuit of pleasure implicitly censure individuals who violate Puritan-Protestant values. This may lead to a degree of implicit-explicit ambivalence among contemporary Americans.

Uhlmann and colleagues (2007a) carried out several experimental tests of this hypothesis. In one study (Uhlmann et al., 2007a; Experiment 2), American participants were implicitly primed with either words related to

deliberation, intuition, or neutral concepts. These primes were designed to put participants in either a deliberative, intuitive, or neutral mindset. Next, in an ostensibly unrelated task, participants read about a young woman who had just informed her boyfriend she was either a virgin or sexually promiscuous. Participants in the intuition and neutral prime conditions reported much less respect for the promiscuous woman than the virgin. This bias was significantly reduced in the deliberation condition. Presumably, participants in a deliberative mindset were more likely to act based on their explicitly endorsed beliefs, and therefore less likely to judge in accord with traditional Puritan-Protestant intuitions.

In an additional study (Uhlmann et al., 2007a; supplemental study), American participants read about two potato peelers who recently purchased a winning lottery ticket together. The first potato peeler retired young, while the second continued to work peeling potatoes even though he was now a millionaire. Participants were asked to provide both their intuitive gut feelings toward the targets and their more deliberative judgments. Gut feelings toward the potato-peeling millionaire were significantly more positive than toward the early retiree. Yet, when providing deliberative judgments, participants viewed the two potato peelers as morally equivalent individuals. Taken together, these studies provide evidence that Americans exhibit—and perhaps also subjectively experience—a degree of conflict between their implicit and explicit moral values.

CONCLUSION

The unique cultural history of the United States has continuing implications for present-day social cognition. As we have argued throughout this chapter, this Puritan-Protestant heritage continues to implicitly shape the feelings, judgments, and behaviors of contemporary Americans. More so than even members of other Western countries, Americans maintain a conviction in individual merit. This stems from both the Protestant emphasis on an individual covenant with God and the Calvinist principle of earthly reward and punishment. At the same time, while wealth and democracy have given rise to secular values in other developed countries, Americans remain both deeply traditional in their moral values and absolutist regarding those values. Finally, as a consequence of living in the only major Protestant country that has not secularized, Americans are truly exceptional in certain implicit cognitions, for example in automatically linking hard work with divine salvation.

Consistent with prior theory and research on varieties of implicit social cognition (Bargh, 1994; Gawronski et al., 1996; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995),

different aspects of the American creed are “implicit” to varying degrees. The principle of individual merit is often consciously endorsed, but can also be implicitly primed and influence social judgments outside of conscious awareness. And, although Americans are aware of their absolutist view of morality, they are likely unaware that this is a culturally specific perspective on morality, implicitly shaped by the nation’s historic religiosity. It is empirically possible that certain aspects of implicit Puritanism—for example, the aforementioned link between work and salvation—are not accessible to conscious introspection at all. (It seems doubtful that even the most hardcore Calvinist would have consciously endorsed the idea that working hard on an anagram task would help her get into heaven!) But the unmistakable pattern is that Americans’ less deliberative, controlled, effortful, intentional, and conscious—i.e., “implicit”—cognitions are especially likely to reflect traditional Puritan-Protestant morality.

Perhaps most strikingly, non-Protestant and less religious Americans were just as likely as devout Protestants to exhibit implicit Puritanism. It is exposure to American culture, and not necessarily devotion to a particular religion, that underlies these phenomena. Although somewhat surprising, this is consistent with earlier work on the epidemiology of cultural beliefs (Blackmore, 1999; Sperber, 1985), the implicit use of cultural stereotypes by consciously egalitarian individuals (Banaji, 2001; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Rudman, 2004), and data from the World Values Survey and other sources indicating that national culture explains dramatically more variability in moral values than personal religion does (Baker, 2005; Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 1993; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). For example, the values of German Catholics are more similar to those of German Protestants than they are to French and Italian Catholics (Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). In general, the values of people from Protestant cultures hang together, and the values of people from Catholic cultures hang together, much more so than people of the Catholic religion think alike and people of the Protestant religion think alike.

At the same time, there are important differences between American Protestants and non-Protestants in domains like implicit workplace norms (Sanchez-Burks, 2002, 2005). Thus, the present research by no means implies that there are no differences in the judgments of American Protestants and non-Protestants. What it does show is that, just as one *does not have to be* consciously prejudiced to engage in implicit racial stereotyping, one *does not have to be* an American Protestant to exhibit implicit responses consistent with traditional Puritan-Protestant values. One may only have to be an American.

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On the Automaticity of Nationalist Ideology: The Case of the USA

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Abstract

How do people typically form opinions and make choices about national matters? What factors influence how people behave in the political realm? The majority of work on these questions in psychology and political science has emphasized the role of consciously accessible influences on political behavior, such as political party affiliation and an assortment of principles and values. Although there is no doubt that people consciously consult their nationalist ideologies in order to make decisions in the political arena, we focus in the present chapter on the possibility that nationalist ideological knowledge also operates automatically to guide and influence opinions and actions. Much work in social, cognitive, and political psychology would suggest that stored representations of nationalist-relevant knowledge, attitudes, goals, and behaviors can be activated by nationalist symbols and cues outside of people's awareness and intention, and then shape and influence their behavior. We consider this possibility in detail, and also summarize recent empirical findings in support of it.

ON THE AUTOMATICITY OF AMERICAN NATIONALIST IDEOLOGY

In so many little ways, the citizenry are daily reminded of their national place in a world of nations. However, this reminding is so familiar, so continual, that it is not consciously registered as reminding. The metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building. (Billig, 1995, p. 8)

The results of a massive Zogby poll on the views of American voters in the months before the 2004 presidential election were summarized in a report entitled "E Pluribus Duo: Red State versus Blue State America" (Zogby, 2004). The play on the American national motto of "E Pluribus Unum" (*From Many, One*) reflects the theme evident throughout the polling results, which is that Americans showed remarkable divergence in their opinions on issues related to war, religion, the economy, and many others, according to whether they

identified as Republican or Democrat. This political divide continues today, in the lead-up to the 2008 presidential election, with Democrats and Republicans disagreeing strongly on the same basic issues. For example, whereas 77% of Republicans said they thought the Iraq Surge was making the situation better, only 28% of Democrats thought so according to a recent Gallup Poll (Saad, 2008). Another recent Gallup poll found that whereas the majority of Republicans (60%) believe that humans were created in their present form by God 10,000 years ago, only 38% of Democrats agreed (Newport, 2008). And, whereas nearly three-quarters of Republicans (72%) said they approve of the job President Bush is doing, only 9% of Democrats said so, according to a Gallup poll (Jones, 2008). These polling numbers, and others like them, would seem to suggest that political expression and behavior in the United States is determined largely by party-based ideologies, an impression that is supported by decades of research on the predictive validity of party identification for voting behavior (e.g., Bartels, 2000; Bassili, 1995; Brady & Sniderman, 1985; Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960; Cohen, 2003; Conover & Feldman, 1984; Green, 1988; Green, Palmquist, & Schickler, 2002; Miller & Schanks, 1996; Petrocik, 1989).

If party affiliation is the ideological engine that drives much political behavior in the United States, it is notable that it is often understood as a consciously accessible and intentional influence. People can report it easily (e.g., Green et al., 2002; Miller & Shanks, 1996), and intentionally base their political decisions on it (e.g., Bassili, 1995; Cohen, 2003). At first glance, this would seem to imply that much political expression and behavior proceeds in a conscious and intentional manner. And yet, there is also a rapidly growing literature on how choice and behavior can also proceed automatically (e.g., Bargh, 2007; Dijksterhuis, 2004; Ferguson & Hassin, 2007; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Hassin, Uleman, & Bargh, 2005; Quattrone & Tversky, 1988; Todorov, Mandisodza, Goren, & Hall, 2005; Zaller, 1992). This literature would predict that, whereas people might consciously behave in line with their explicitly avowed political ideologies and values, they may also be unintentionally and nonconsciously moved by subtle political and ideological cues in their environment. This possibility would indicate that people might answer polling questions, or make voting decisions, in line with ideological cues of which they are unaware, and by which they would prefer to remain uninfluenced (Wilson & Brekke, 1994).

In the current chapter, we first consider research and theory that suggest how ideological knowledge might influence people in an automatic fashion and then discuss how nationalist ideologies in particular might operate implicitly. We then review recent findings concerning American nationalist ideology and consider directions for future research.

THE AUTOMATICITY OF IDEOLOGY

The word “ideology” (idéologie) was created by the French philosopher Count Destutt de Tracy in the late 18th century to denote a “science of ideas” (de Tracy, 1817–1818), and has since been one of the most widely studied topics across the social sciences (e.g., see Augoustinos, 1999). Although its definition varies somewhat according to the specific discipline, an ideology can generally be understood as “a set of consensually shared beliefs and doctrines that provide the moral and intellectual basis for a political, economic, or social system” (Jost, Fitzsimons, & Kay, 2004, p. 265). One important element of such a definition concerns the prescriptive nature of the knowledge. This definition signifies that a set of political opinions, values, principles, attitudes, and behaviors that together point toward a particular political system or perspective can be considered ideological in nature (see also Althusser, 1994; Hawkes, 2003; Minar, 1971; Mullins, 1972; Zizek, 1994).

How are people influenced by their ideologies? There is no doubt that people are sometimes knowingly and purposefully influenced by their explicitly avowed ideologies and values. When considering national policies, people often deliberately consult the platform of the political party with which they identify (e.g., see Bassili, 1995; Cohen, 2003). However, there is a long history in sociology, social theory, political science, and social psychology of the idea that people might also be influenced by ideological knowledge in a more automatic manner. In seeking to explain the influence of ideology on thought and action, sociologists, social psychologists, and political scientists alike have converged on the metaphor that ideologies are like habits or practices that people perform spontaneously and unintentionally (e.g., Bem & Bem, 1970; Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Freedman, 2000). Like all habits, ideologies effectively narrow down choices and “free the individual from the burden of ‘all those decisions’” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 53). More directly, Althusser (1994) argued that “Ideology has very little to do with ‘consciousness’—it is profoundly unconscious” (see also Altemeyer, 1998; Bem & Bem, 1970; Brewer, 1979; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1994, p. 999; Tajfel, 1982). From this widely shared perspective, an ideology might be likened to an invisible guide, which not only efficiently shapes a person’s thought and behavior, but also ultimately prescribes and helps to maintain a certain economic or cultural order.

Interestingly, although numerous scholars across the social sciences have *speculated* on the automaticity of ideology, little empirical support exists for such claims. One notable exception is recent work by Jost and colleagues on system justification (e.g., Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Jost, Fitzsimons, & Kay, 2004; Jost & Kay, 2005; Jost, Pelham, & Carvallo, 2002; Kay & Jost, 2003;

Kay & Jost et al., 2007; see also Devos & Banaji, 2005). These researchers have argued that people possess ideologies that (implicitly) justify the economic, cultural, and social systems of society, even at the expense of personal or group interests. Such an ideology, for example, leads to disadvantaged members of society holding the very stereotypes and beliefs about their group that would seem to perpetuate their marginality. Those classified in the lower strata of personal income may be especially likely to react to an instance of injustice (and thus, a perceived threat to the legitimacy of the system) by implicitly activating a stereotype that mollifies or invalidates that injustice. For instance, when people hear about the fact that 1% of people in the United States possess more than 38% of the wealth in this country (Wolff, 2000), they may implicitly generate the stereotype of “poor but happy, rich but miserable” and thereby feel less threatened by their “economically poor” but “psychologically rich” situation (see Kay & Jost, 2003). This work suggests that the perception of an injustice might automatically activate a principle or axiom that mitigates that injustice. We seek to expand on this work by investigating other kinds of implicit ideological effects, and we describe this approach below.

IDEOLOGY FROM A SOCIAL COGNITIVE STANDPOINT

How might ideological knowledge exert its influence in an implicit manner? Research in social and cognitive psychology over the last two decades demonstrates that a range of information is typically associated in memory with a given stimulus and can become activated on the mere perception of that stimulus (e.g., Bargh, 2007; Ferguson & Bargh, 2004; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Hassin et al., 2005). For instance, people possess associations in memory between group members and attitudes, stereotypes, behaviors, and goals related to that group. This body of work implies that a range of cues in our environment, such as political icons and symbols, might be associated with various types of ideological knowledge and information. These types of information would likely be diverse, and could include values, principles, exemplars, beliefs, expectations, behaviors, emotions, and motives (e.g., Carlston & Smith, 1996; Smith & Queller, 2001). Furthermore, the perception of one element of that array of knowledge should serve to activate the other elements, even without the person’s awareness or intention (e.g., Devine, 1989). This then suggests that the (conscious or nonconscious) perception of any of the cues interconnected with such ideological information should inevitably activate that information.

What happens once such a potentially rich array of information has been unknowingly and unintentionally activated in memory? Research suggests

that this activated information can then influence not only the specific stimuli to which the perceiver then attends, but also the ways in which the perceiver will interpret and react to subsequently encountered stimuli more generally (e.g., Bargh, 2007; Dijksterhuis, Chartrand, & Aarts, 2007). For example, the subliminal perception of a member of a stereotyped group can activate in memory specific trait information, which can then influence how the perceiver interprets the ambiguous behaviors of an interaction partner (Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996; Higgins, 1996). In a similar way, the perception of nationalistic symbols or icons, such as the American flag, would be expected to activate associated attitudes, beliefs, goals, and behaviors, which would then have the potential to implicitly influence one's subsequent thought and behavior.

It is important to note that the kinds of information that can become associated with political icons do not necessarily have to be endorsed by the perceiver. A long history of psychological research suggests that people spontaneously, easily, and sometimes nonconsciously learn about the covariation among stimuli. For example, research on implicit learning suggests that people can encode sophisticated and complex relations among nonsense stimuli according to an artificial grammar, even while remaining unaware of such learning (e.g., Anderson, 1983, 1996; Howard & Howard, 1992; Kelly, 2003; Reber, 1993; Seger, 1994). The notion of unintentional learning also manifests in social psychological work on stereotypes and prejudice. Through a variety of channels, people unknowingly learn about various beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors in relation to certain groups. And, importantly, even though people can actively disagree with such implicit associations, the associations can nevertheless influence both subtle and overt behavior toward group members (e.g., for reviews see Bargh, 2007; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Has-sin et al., 2005). The fact that implicit attitudes, beliefs, goals, and behaviors can be dissociated from intentional ones more generally suggests that people may also possess implicit ideological knowledge with which they would explicitly disagree. One guiding objective of our research on this topic is to examine the existence and scope of this kind of dissociation. We now turn to more specific questions about the characterization, content, and operation of nationalist ideology. We also discuss whether and why knowledge that becomes associated with nationalist symbols would tend to be ideological in nature—that is, supportive of the respective systems.

AMERICAN NATIONALIST IDEOLOGY

Given our discussion of how ideologies in general might operate implicitly, what are the potential characteristics of nationalistic ideologies in particular?

Although nationalism has been defined in myriad ways across disciplines and scholars (e.g., Billig, 1995; Breuilly, 1992; Gellner, 1983; Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989; Skitka, 2005; van Dijk, 2005), we view a nationalistic ideology as consisting of beliefs, attitudes, goals, and behaviors that together prescribe certain economic, political, and social systems for a particular nation. That is, a nationalistic ideology consists of the constructs that characterize a particular nation, distinguish it from others, and support its continued existence. For example, nationalistic ideology might consist of information that supports a given nation's existing form of government (e.g., democracy, dictatorship), economic system (e.g., capitalism, socialism), and various social institutions (e.g., marriage, education, religion, family). It should be noted that we are therefore not limiting our examination of nationalist ideology to citizens' expressed positive attitudes toward, and commitment to, their nation, as has been the case with previous research on "nationalism" in particular (e.g., Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989; Skitka, 2005). Instead, we consider a range of constructs that are implicitly associated with one's nation, which can include both positive attitudes toward the nation as well as the variety of constructs mentioned previously. It is for this reason that we refer throughout this chapter to "nationalist ideology" rather than "nationalism."

It is perhaps worth reiterating that we do not characterize as implicit nationalist ideology *anything* that is implicitly associated in memory with the nation. Instead, in line with the definition of ideology we described earlier, we only consider as nationalist ideology those memories associated with the nation that are *supportive of or consistent with current, national systems*. This would include memories that could conceivably endorse and preserve the institutions, programs, policies, and perspectives of the respective nation. This distinction means, for example, that we would not consider the memories underlying the colors red, white, and blue to be by themselves ideological in nature, even though they are surely closely associated in memory with the American flag. However, any memories that are *consistent* with key American foreign or domestic policy (e.g., aggression) or values would qualify as ideological. Moreover, any information that *increases regard* for such policies or values would also be considered ideological. For instance, we discuss in the section on recent empirical work the prediction that the perception of U.S. cues implicitly evokes greater positive regard and endorsement for the materialistic values and behaviors theorized to be an inherent component of capitalistic/market-based systems (e.g., see Kasser, Ryan, Couchman, & Sheldon, 2003).

Although we are therefore making a distinction between ideological and nonideological nation-associated knowledge (i.e., prescriptive versus

nonprescriptive), we should emphasize that the information that people tend to learn about the nation is not randomly generated. The *sources* of much of the information that gets disseminated about the nation within the respective populace should by and large consist of national systems (e.g., media, government, corporations). As such, the nation-related information that is widely dispersed within a citizenry can, on some level, be expected to be largely supportive of the systems of that respective nation (e.g., see Herman & Chomsky, 1988).

We should also note that while there presumably is a great deal of unanimity across citizens (at least within stable nation-states) with regard to their attitudes toward broad governmental and economic systems (e.g., capitalism, materialism), people should nevertheless vary in the degree of their support for both broad principles, as well as more specific political stances, positions, and current events. What would predict or explain such differences in nationalistic ideological knowledge of citizens of the United States?

Although we have tested for multiple moderators, as we discuss throughout the empirical section below, the moderator that has so far proven important in explaining the variance in the results is the participants' reported exposure to American political news. Why would news exposure matter? We argue that the primary source of information about the nation (in the case of the United States) is the national news media. People acquire information about the country through news programs on television, magazines, radio programs, and the Internet. Whereas some people follow political news about the nation closely, such as news concerning the war in Iraq and the war on terror, for example, others are less politically engaged and watch the news only rarely, if at all. In this way, the information that becomes associated with the United States, and in turn with national cues, should be affected to some extent by whether people pay attention to current events and national politics. We discuss this moderator in more detail in the empirical section below, as well as in the discussion section.

Empirical Evidence for Implicit American Nationalist Ideology

How do nationalistic ideologies become activated? Ideological knowledge concerning one's nation is typically explicitly measured. For example, researchers might ask respondents to indicate their support of various governmental or economic systems, or the degree to which they value the nation, on Likert-type scales (e.g., Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989). Instead of asking people to knowingly and intentionally provide their opinions and attitudes concerning the nation, however, we are interested in those types of knowledge and information that are associated with the nation in memory and that can become implicitly activated in memory on the perception of nationalistic

stimuli. Thus, for our main experimental paradigm, we use symbols of the nation (e.g., the national flag) as primes, and then test the types of knowledge and information that become activated and influential on subsequent attitudes, beliefs, and behavior.

In most of the research reported here, we used one of the most ubiquitous national cues in the United States—the national flag. Although the flag has been a highly visible national symbol since the founding of the country, its presence has greatly increased since the terrorist attacks on the United States in September of 2001 (Gerstenfeld, 2002; Kellner, 2003). The pervasive presence of the flag in the lives of Americans enhances the ecological validity of any findings that emerge. In the research we summarize here, we examined three constructs—power, materialism, and aggression. More specifically, in each of the experiments we describe here, we subtly primed participants with either the American flag or a control stimulus, then measured their responses in terms of one of these three constructs. In each section, we review our predictions and then the findings. First, however, we briefly discuss political news exposure as a moderator.

News Exposure

Does reported exposure to the news actually predict knowledge about current events? To the extent that people report following U.S. political news, we expected them to possess more knowledge about current political events, as well as political knowledge in general, compared with those who say that they rarely follow the news. In one study that took place in July of 2005 (see Ferguson & Hassin, 2007), participants were first asked to report the extent to which they followed U.S. political news on average, according to a 10-point scale. To validate this item, we also asked them to provide details about their weekly intake of news from a range of sources including television news programs (e.g., CNN, *The Daily Show*, network news programs), newspapers (e.g., *The New York Times*), and news websites. They were also asked a number of other questions such as their grade point average (GPA) and political affiliation.

Participants then were asked to indicate their knowledge of current events and political facts. For example, they were asked to answer questions about a variety of current events, such as the announcement of the retirement of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, a recent insurgency attack in Iraq, and the coverage surrounding the leak concerning CIA operative Valerie Plame. Participants were also asked to answer questions that assessed their knowledge of people in key political positions. For example, participants were asked to identify the governor of their home state, the Secretary of State, and the people commonly referred to by the press as “Neo-Cons.”

What News Exposure Is Not. We assessed whether reported news exposure, according to the one item, correlated with potentially confounding variables. News exposure was not correlated with political affiliation or party, GPA, gender, non-news TV watching, or type of news source (conservative versus liberal). We have replicated the null relationship between news exposure and these and other constructs (e.g., math SAT, religiosity, verbal SAT) across multiple studies (Carter, Ferguson, & Hassin, 2006a; Carter, Ferguson, & Hassin, 2006b; Ferguson & Hassin, 2007).

What News Exposure Is. As expected, reported news exposure according to the one item was correlated with watching a variety of news programs (FOX, CNN, ABC, NBC, CBS, *The Daily Show*) and reading a national newspaper (*The New York Times*). Also, importantly, it significantly predicted participants' knowledge of current events and also political facts. In fact, those high in news exposure (according to a median split) correctly answered more than double the number of questions about current events compared with those low in news exposure, as one would expect.

These results indicate that reported news exposure, according to the single item described earlier, reflects the degree to which participants know about current events and political figures. The results also suggest that those with high media exposure may be exposed to information about national topics mainly through TV news, but also to some extent through newspaper and website reading. We now turn to research examining the construct of power in implicit American nationalism.

Power

America is regarded as the closest thing to a superpower remaining in the new multipolar world (e.g., see Von Drehle, 2006). Its military might and global economic force are respected and feared the world over (e.g., see Young, 2000; BBC News, 2006). One of the most familiar symbols of this power is the American flag, which is firmly affixed to every military aircraft and tank, and flies high over the offices of America's most powerful corporations. The most powerful men and women in America are its politicians, who are most commonly seen by the general public behind podiums draped in the stars and stripes, wearing flag lapel pins and brilliant red or blue ties on crisp white shirts. All of these images collude to associate America (and, by extension, the American flag) with the concepts of power. We thus predicted that the perception of American cues would lead to an increased desire for power.

The first study was designed to examine the impact of the presence of the American flag on the accessibility of the concept of power (Carter et al., 2006a). Based on the idea that people associate the American flag with

powerful positions and politicians, we predicted that, when primed with the flag, participants would show an increased accessibility of the concept of power. For the dependent measure of accessibility of power, we used a word fragment task, in which participants filled in the missing letters to a number of word fragments that could be completed with either a power-related or -unrelated word. We also expected that this effect might be moderated by individuals' political news exposure. After all, a major source of information about the military, economic, and cultural power of America over other countries is the American news. Thus, we predicted that the association would be strongest in those individuals who reported high exposure to political news, whereas those individuals low in news exposure would show a weaker association.

For this first study, we brought participants into the laboratory, ostensibly to perform an experiment on the relationship between visual acuity and individual differences in abstract thinking. Upon arriving in the laboratory, participants first completed a questionnaire on their political ideology and news following habits. Next, participants performed a computer-based priming measure, which they were told was the "visual acuity task." It actually contained subliminal flashes of either the American flag or a control figure immediately before the target stimuli to which participants were responding. The target stimuli were images containing either curved or straight lines, and participants were asked to determine, as quickly as possible, whether the lines were curved or straight. The subliminal exposure to the American flag ensures that any effects of the American flag would be implicit. Participants then completed the word fragment task. The measure consisted of 12 words, each with some letters missing, and participants were told to fill in the missing letters to form complete words. Six of these word fragments could either be filled in to form a word related to power (e.g., power, leader, boss) or a word unrelated to power. The other six words were filler words.

We found that participants who had been subliminally primed with the American flag filled in significantly more of the word fragments with words related to power—but only if they followed U.S. political news. Participants who reported low news exposure were equally likely to fill in power and non-power words. Thus, as predicted, the subliminal perception of the American flag activates the concept of power, and this activation is moderated by news exposure (Carter et al., 2006a).

The first study demonstrated an implicit association between America and the concept of power for news followers, but we were also interested in determining whether this would lead to a greater desire for power. To examine this possibility, a second study was designed to examine the impact of the

presence of the American flag on the desire for powerful roles. We predicted that, when primed with the flag, participants would show an increased desire for power. For the dependent measure of a desire for power, we used a questionnaire developed by Smith and Trope (2006), in which participants express a preference for more or less powerful roles in a series of vignettes. Similar to the previous experiment, we believe this effect may be moderated by the extent to which individuals expose themselves to political news.

Participants were approached on campus to complete a packet of ostensibly unrelated surveys in exchange for a candy bar. The survey packet contained the political ideology and news following habits questionnaire, a priming measure, and a measure of desire for power and a suspicion probe. The priming measure was a "Visual Geography Quiz" that asked participants to identify four locations from black and white photographs and indicate their confidence in that identification. Two of the pictures included an image of the American flag, although for half of the participants, those same pictures had the flags digitally removed. The measure of desire for power describes three scenarios, each with two different roles (Smith & Trope, 2007). One role in each scenario had relatively high power, and one had relatively low power. For example, one scenario described two roles in a construction company. Employees (the low-power role) would be responsible for construction/architecture tasks and interior design tasks. Supervisors (the high-power role) would be responsible for selecting employees, assigning them tasks, and evaluating their performance. Participants were asked to rate each role for its desirability, then choose which role they would prefer in that scenario, using a five-point scale.

Finally, participants responded to a suspicion probe, which asked them about the strategies they had used during the Visual Geography Quiz, and whether or not they had noticed anything odd about the surveys. No participant mentioned anything about the presence of the American flag in any of their responses. Thus, we can presume that any influence the flag may have had on participants was unnoticed and unintended, and therefore implicit.

We found that participants who were primed with the American flag rated the more powerful roles as significantly more desirable than the less powerful roles, and also tended to choose the more powerful roles than participants in the control condition, although again, only for those who followed U.S. political news. Participants low in news following showed no difference in their desire for a more or less powerful role between the flag and control conditions. Thus, a subtle exposure to the American flag implicitly increases the desire for powerful positions, and this was again moderated by news exposure. We should add that the participants' explicitly expressed political ideology and party affiliation did not have any moderating

effect in either of the two experiments, and that the moderating role of news exposure holds even when controlling for political ideology.

What are the implications of an association between America and the construct of power? It could imply that people might attempt to assert their power or authority in a nationalistic context, thus escalating a delicate situation. Would a union negotiator in the presence of the American flag be less likely to reach an important compromise if her concessions threatened her authority? Would a voter choose a candidate based on the candidate's explicit expressions of power, rather than on his explicit expressions of policy? Although the current studies examined the accessibility of, and desire for, power, we are currently examining whether the perception of American cues leads to behavioral effects in line with a desire for power.

We will also examine the potential boundaries of this association between the nation and power. For example, would news-watching participants primed with American cues show negative or socially undesirable expressions of power, such as making a weaker individual suffer? The high- and low-power roles in the study just described were all in relatively benign contexts, and this raises the question of whether the effect would extend to more important or less socially acceptable contexts. Moreover, we also will examine whether the implicit association just demonstrated represents a uniquely implicit association, or whether people maintain similar explicit associations. That is, whether a dissociation exists between implicit and explicit associations of America and the concept of power.

Another question for future research concerns the moderating effect of news exposure on the association between America and power. Namely, is the effect due to self-selection or learning (or some combination)? The first possibility is that those who possess a strong association in memory between America and power also happen to follow the news more so than those who do not possess that association. This would mean that the moderator of news exposure is merely incidental. Or, it could be the case that those who tend to follow the news eventually learn the association between America and power, and this would mean that the content of the news is a causal factor in this story. It could also be the case that both are true to some degree. Although people who possess the American–power link may for whatever reasons tend to follow the news, that association should eventually become strengthened from the exposure to repeated pairings in the news between American images and expressions of power (see discussion in Ferguson & Hassin, 2007). Future research employing a direct manipulation of news exposure will be one way to distinguish these possibilities. We now move on to findings concerning implicit effects of American symbols on materialism, a concept certainly related to power, in that they are both concerned with status.

Materialism

One way in which America exerts its power is through its vast economic might. As the world's wealthiest country, with the largest share of the wealthiest 10% of citizens (Davies, Sandstrom, Shorrocks, & Wolff, 2006), the buying power of Americans is at an all-time high. Furthermore, behavior and values related to the consumption of goods remain an integral part of American culture. For example, in recent research (Kasser & Sheldon, 2000), participants under mortality salience found money and material goods more attractive, and also acted more greedily in a shared resource game than control subjects. In a review of related research, Arndt, Solomon, Kasser, and Sheldon (2004) concluded that this is in part because participants under mortality salience cling to their worldview to escape thoughts of death, and materialism is part of the dominant cultural worldview (see also Kasser & Kanner, 2004, Schor, 1998).

The predominant role of materialism in American culture is also sometimes made explicit by national leaders. For instance, President Bush said the following at a press conference, shortly after the tragedy on September 11th, 2001:

We cannot let the terrorists achieve the objective of frightening our nation to the point where we don't conduct business, where people don't shop . . . Mrs. Bush and I want to encourage Americans to go out shopping. (Bush 2006)

Given this kind of explicit link between the nation, patriotism, and shopping, it may be that such values and behaviors become activated implicitly on the mere perception of American cues. It should also be the case that news exposure moderates the association between the nation and materialism. Those who closely follow the news may be the most likely to have internalized the connection President Bush made explicit in the speech cited above, and thus directly associate participating in the economy as an act of nationalism. Moreover, one of the major sources of information about America's wealth and concerns with money is the national news. Thus, we predicted that a desire for wealth and spending would become associated with America more closely for those who are high in news exposure, whereas those low in news exposure would be less likely to have this association.

Based on the idea that people associate America with wealth and consumerism, we predicted that participants covertly primed with the American flag would place a higher importance on material values. For the dependent measure of materialism, we asked participants to rate the importance of various factors they might consider when looking for a new job. This allows participants to place more or less importance on money and status without violating social desirability norms.

Participants were approached on campus to complete several unrelated surveys in exchange for a candy bar. The packet contained a questionnaire on news following and political ideology, the flag priming task (the “Visual Geography Quiz” described earlier), the materialism measure, some filler questionnaires unrelated to the present prediction, and finally, a suspicion probe. For the dependent measure of materialism, we asked participants to imagine they were looking for a new job and to rate eight different job attributes for how important each would be for their decision. Four of the eight job attributes were pretested to be associated with materialism (salary, possibilities for a raise in salary, prestige of job title, having subordinates to supervise). The other four attributes were pretested to be unrelated to materialism, and served as control items (intellectually stimulating, flexible hours, friendly atmosphere/co-workers, opportunity to work with people). A composite rating of the materialistic attributes was created, as well as a difference score subtracting the nonmaterialistic attributes from the materialistic attributes, which served as a measure of the comparative importance of the materialistic attributes.

In the suspicion probe, no participants mentioned anything about the presence of the American flag in any of their responses. Thus, we can presume that any influence the flag had on participants was unintentional. We found that, compared with participants in the control condition, participants who were primed with the American flag rated the materialistic attributes significantly higher, but only if they reported high news exposure. Similarly, participants primed with the American flag had a significantly higher difference score (indicating a greater relative weighting of the materialistic over the nonmaterialistic attributes) than participants in the control condition, but again, only if they were high in news following. Participants low in news following showed no difference on these two measures. Thus, as predicted, the subtle and covert exposure to the American flag implicitly led participants to express more materialistic values, and this effect was moderated by news exposure (Carter et al., 2006b). Also, as found in the power studies, the participants’ explicitly expressed political ideology did not moderate the effect, and controlling for it statistically did not alter the moderating role of news exposure.

These findings first suggest that expressions of value can be influenced by the covert perception of nationalistic cues. This could influence various types of decisions, particularly those that concern money. For example, a person making a purchase decision might be persuaded to choose the more luxurious option if its packaging contains a subtle reminder of America, even when the person does not have the money to do so. It may also be the case that people who are making decisions about national policies and programs

consider the financial burden more so when in a nationalistic context, versus not. For example, is the prospect of higher taxes and social program spending more objectionable when presented in a nationalistic context? And, beyond attitudes and values, are there implicit effects of American cues on actual purchasing or voting behavior?

Another issue is the potential distinction between acquiring money and spending it. That is, do such nationalistic cues lead participants to place a greater value on money, leading to a hoarding instinct, or does the acquisition of money merely represent the ability to spend it conspicuously? Does it lead to a greater value of money only because it means the ability to spend it immediately? If the association is indeed about spending money, is it about spending more generally, or is it limited to more conspicuous expressions of wealth? We are investigating all of these possibilities currently. Furthermore, we are also investigating whether the moderating role of news exposure is due to self-selection factors or learning, as discussed in the previous section on power. We now turn to the last group of empirical findings concerning the implicit effects of American cues on aggression.

Aggression

Beyond the notions of power and materialism being implicitly associated with America, we have also tested for the possibility that the construct of aggression is linked with the nation in memory and is able to become activated on the perception of subtle nationalistic cues (Ferguson & Hassin, 2007). The theme of aggression is prevalent within public discourse on American current events (e.g., Von Zielbauer & Marshall, 2006; El-Naggar, 2006; Kocieniewski, Dewan, Hamill, & Gately, 2006), in terms of America aggressing on others (e.g., in Iraq, Afghanistan), other groups or entities aggressing on America (e.g., terrorists), and Americans showing aggression toward each other (e.g., school shootings). The association between American cues and war might be particularly strong currently, given the ongoing war between the United States (and other countries) and Iraq, as well as the well-publicized "war on terror" initiated by the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in September, 2001.

Furthermore, America has a reputation as a violent society. The violent homicide rate in America dwarfs that of other industrialized nations (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2002), and we are still plagued by school shootings and other violent crime. This violence seems to be part of American culture. For example, violence in America (and especially the prevalence of guns in America) is one of the central themes of Michael Moore's 2003 Oscar winning film "Bowling for Columbine." Also, interestingly, immediately before major and minor sporting events, many of them violent and aggressive

in nature, Americans stand and salute the flag while singing the national anthem in a striking display of national unity. Together, these examples suggest that simply perceiving a symbol of the nation may be sufficient to activate aggression-related knowledge in memory, with potential downstream effects on behavior.

Should such an association emerge for everyone? Just as the variable of news exposure moderates the implicit effects of national symbols on power and materialism, we also expected that it would do the same for aggression. As before, the main argument here is that the news provides a constant stream of details about America and aggression across a variety of domains and events (for reviews, see Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Bushman & Cantor, 2003). This should mean that those who report high news exposure should possess stronger links between the nation and aggression compared with those who report little or no news exposure.

In the first of three experiments (Ferguson & Hassin, 2007), participants were covertly primed with the American flag as they walked into the lab room. Specifically, they signed in to a "participant log" sheet, and a nearby text was either face-up, showing a color image of the American flag, or was face-down, with no flag or American images visible. Thus, the image of the American flag was present in the room in a highly naturalistic manner, in a way that likely mimics everyday exposure to nationalistic images in the real world. After signing in, participants then sat at nearby desks and completed a series of word fragments, as well as other filler questionnaires. Among the word fragments were ones that measured aggression ("hi_" and "gu_") and war ("wa_"). Participants then eventually reported their news exposure, among other demographic information.

None of the participants reported noticing anything about the flag, even when told that a political cue had been placed in the room. The results showed that, for those who reported high news exposure, those primed with the flag were significantly more likely to complete the word fragments with the aggression and war words, compared with those not primed with the flag. This effect was absent for those low in news exposure. This first experiment demonstrated that, for those who follow the news, the covert perception of a nationalistic cue made aggression and war more accessible in memory than for those not exposed to such a cue. We should also note that the interaction between news exposure and priming condition was not moderated by party affiliation, suggesting that this effect emerged for Democrats and Republicans alike, as long as they watched the news.

What might be the downstream effects of such accessibility? We tested this in the next two experiments. In the first, participants completed a scrambled sentence task (e.g., Srull & Wyer, 1979) in which American cues were placed

(e.g., *America, nation, flag*) alongside many nationalist-unrelated words. After completing this task, they were then asked to read a vignette about a target who was acting in an ambiguously aggressive manner (Srull & Wyer, 1979), and asked to rate the target on a series of personality traits that were either directly or evaluatively consistent with the construct of aggression. After this task and some filler questionnaires, they then reported their news exposure habits, as well as other demographic information.

None of the participants reported noticing any connection between the scrambled sentence task and the vignette task. There was only the expected interaction between news exposure and priming condition, which was not moderated by participants' political party affiliation. The results showed that, for those who reported high news exposure, those primed with the flag rated the target as significantly more aggressive than those not primed, on both the aggressive-related traits and the traits evaluatively consistent with aggression. This effect was absent for those low in news exposure.

In the next experiment, we sought to test for potential behavioral effects. Participants first began a computer task in which they had to decide whether an array of dots was odd or even (Bargh et al., 1996). In between the displays of the dots, an American flag or a control image was subliminally presented. After about 80 trials, an error message appeared on the screen, and the experimenter then informed the participant that the computer had not saved the data and that the participant would need to do the dot task a second time. This mild provocation has been used in previous research by Bargh and colleagues (Bargh et al., 1996). A hidden video camera recorded each participant's reactions to the news, then two independent judges coded each participant for the extent to which he responded with aggressiveness. Participants also completed a mood measure, then filled out a number of questionnaires, including one about their news exposure habits. They then were told that they would not have to do the task a second time, and were thanked and dismissed.

As expected, the results showed an interaction between priming and news exposure. (There was no effect of party affiliation on the results.) For those high in news exposure, those primed with the flag were rated as relatively more hostile than those not primed. As was found in the studies reported earlier, this effect was not evident for those low in news exposure. Thus, this pattern of data suggests that the perception of American cues automatically increases one's tendency to respond to a mild provocation with relatively more aggression, as long as one is high in news exposure. Moreover, there were no effects on participants' mood, suggesting that even though they were acting in a relatively more aggressive fashion, they remained consciously unaware of it. Together, these three experiments on the implicit link

between America and aggression showed effects on construct accessibility, judgment, and behavior (Ferguson & Hassin, 2007).

These findings suggest that the covert perception of American cues might be able to influence how (news-watching) Americans disambiguate their world. A phrase or statement or action that might otherwise seem neutral might be interpreted as more aggressive if it is perceived within a subtle nationalistic context. But, importantly, is the nation linked with aggression generally? Or, is it the case that news-watchers who encounter nationalistic cues are more likely to see aggression in potential threats to the nation, or enemies, or foreigners in particular? Such an effect would show the selectivity of the kinds of knowledge implicitly linked with America. In current research, we are examining whether this is the case. Moreover, we are also exploring the extent to which people are aware of this kind of effect, and whether they would knowingly act in such a way.

Finally, it should be noted, as was the case with power and materialism, that people with high news exposure may have stronger associations between aggression and America for a couple of reasons. First, it may be the case that those who follow American news learn these kinds of associations, and, in this way, the news can be thought of as a source for this aspect of implicit American nationalism. However, it is also possible that those who are particularly concerned with the role of America in aggressive pursuits might be particularly interested in watching the news, and, in this way, the moderating role of news exposure would be due to self-selection factors. And, of course, these two explanations are not mutually exclusive.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we considered a social cognitive approach to implicit ideology. Based on theory and research in social cognition showing how thought and behavior can occur nonconsciously and unintentionally (Bargh, 2007; Bargh & Ferguson, 2000; Greenwald & Banaji, 2005; Hassin et al., 2005; Wilson & Brekke, 1994), and theory across the social sciences concerning the possibility that ideological knowledge operates “below the radar” (e.g., Altemeyer, 1998; Althusser, 1994; Bem & Bem, 1970; Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Brewer, 1979; Freeden, 2000; Jost, Pelham, & Carvalho, 2002; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1994, p. 999), we described some ways in which ideological knowledge might be able to become activated in memory implicitly, and then influence the person’s attitudes, judgment, and behavior without his or her knowledge, intention, or awareness.

Against this general background of how ideologies might operate implicitly overall, we considered nationalistic ideologies in particular. We proposed

a definition of implicit nationalist ideology and discussed the case of American ideology. Specifically, we summarized recent findings showing that the types of nationalistic knowledge that become activated on perception of American cues depend on the person's level of political news exposure. For news-watchers, the perception of such cues leads to more support for power (Carter et al., 2006a) and materialism (Carter et al., 2006b) and more evidence of aggressive judgment and behavior (Ferguson & Hassin, 2007). Next, we discuss some implications of these findings.

Relation to Other Research on Implicit American Ideology

Whereas the present findings speak to the potentially implicit effects of ideological symbols in general, they focus on the effects of American cues specifically. In this way, the results expand on the work by Devos and Banaji (2005) showing the implicit association between the American identity and White ethnicity. These researchers found an interesting dissociation between the extent to which participants consciously rated groups and ethnicities as "American" and whether they actually possessed implicit associations between national symbols and those same groups. Even though participants occasionally reported that non-White ethnic minorities were more American than Whites, their implicit associations showed the reverse pattern. Such a dissociation has meaningful implications for behavior, as implicit associations are likely to guide interpretations, attitudes, and behavior in spontaneous, or cognitively busy, situations (e.g., see Fazio & Olson, 2003).

Interestingly, Butz, Plant, and Doerr (2007) found that American flag primes activated egalitarian attitudes and decreased hostility toward Arabs for those participants high in nationalism. These findings would seem on some level to be at odds with the Devos and Banaji (2005) findings, as well as with the studies reported earlier, showing an increase in aggressive behavior for news followers primed with the flag (Ferguson & Hassin, 2007). However, it should be noted that a considerable amount of psychological research shows that highly familiar stimuli (such as ethnic groups or cultural icons) are associated with diverse arrays of memories, some of them contradictory in nature (e.g., people holding both prejudice as well as egalitarianism toward a group). The kinds of memories that become activated depend on both situational as well as personal variables. It is our contention that national symbols are similarly complicated and likely will elicit very different kinds of effects depending on the circumstances. Future research can continue to identify and document such effects and the moderators that matter for them.

The present pattern of results is consistent with recent work on how system justifying ideologies exert their influence implicitly (e.g., Jost et al., 2004;

Kay & Jost, 2003; Kay & Jost et al., 2007). Jost and colleagues have argued that people possess ideologies that serve to strengthen the legitimacy of cultural, social, and economic systems. When people encounter an instance of injustice that might threaten the legitimacy of the system, they spontaneously generate stereotypes and beliefs that mollify that injustice and restore legitimacy to the system(s). People are unlikely to be aware that their interpretation and reaction to an injustice are guided by a collection of such stereotypes and beliefs, and this implies that ideological knowledge can operate without awareness or intention. In a similar way, the current work demonstrates that political expression and behavior can be unknowingly guided by an ideology that is temporarily activated by a mere situational cue.

Jost and colleagues have argued that certain ideologies ultimately increase support for the status quo (e.g., Jost, 2006; Jost et al., 2004; Kay & Jost et al., 2007), and the present findings can be tentatively interpreted from this perspective. This research demonstrates how everyday, subtle reminders of America can activate knowledge and information that would seem consistent with current and predominant American policies (aggression, power) and economic systems (materialism). Once activated, this information influences judgments and behavior in ways that bolster the American nationalist ideological system, thus increasing the desire for power, material status, and displays of aggression. Even though these associations and behaviors may not be explicitly endorsed by the participants as consistent with their personal view of what America should be, we argue that any behavior expressing a sentiment consistent with American nationalist ideology helps to support the system. Thus, the influence of American symbols in the studies we report earlier is not merely an expression of implicit ideological knowledge, but an implicit expression of American *nationalist* ideology.

One critical question that remains, however, is whether these effects are due to the present government and administration, or are more chronic, and perhaps orthogonal to the temporary political constituency of the government. Moreover, the effects of American cues on power, materialism, and aggression emerged most strongly for news watchers. One possible interpretation of the effect of this moderator is that the (mainstream) media ultimately propagate support for some of the policies of the status quo (e.g., Alterman, 2003; Bagdikian, 2004; Herman & Chomsky, 2002; cf. Kuypers, 2002; McGowan, 2002), a conclusion that is speculative and warrants further research.

The Development of Ideological Knowledge

Another interesting question for work in this area is how different ideologies might develop (see Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003). Some

ideologies may be actively and intentionally learned initially, then eventually operate efficiently in the background, thus providing a nonconscious context for more deliberate and conscious thinking, in much the same way that a skill becomes automatized (e.g., Smith & Lerner, 1986). For example, someone who begins to identify with the Democratic party may initially think through the positions and stances quite carefully; eventually, however, those positions and principles may automatically influence that person's interpretation of subsequent, even ambiguous, political events and statements (Cohen, 2003).

Other ideologies, on the other hand, may develop in a more passive manner. For instance, one possibility in the current research is that people who follow the news unknowingly absorb associations between the nation (and national symbols) and various values and principles. People may be unaware that such ideological knowledge becomes attached to the flag, or any political cue, and thus may not feel the need to monitor the influence of that cue during political expression and behavior. This suggests that the nature of the development of ideological knowledge might influence the ease with which one might become aware of, and thus potentially control, the influence of that knowledge on thought and behavior (see also Wilson & Brekke, 1994).

Political Party Affiliation and Implicit American Nationalist Ideology

These findings together suggest that, although decades of research show that party affiliation guides much political behavior (e.g., Bartels, 2000; Bassili, 1995; Brady & Sniderman, 1985; Campbell et al., 1960; Cohen, 2003; Conover & Feldman, 1984; Green, 1988; Green et al., 2002; Miller & Schanks, 1996), it apparently does not determine whether power, materialism, and aggression become automatically activated upon perception of the American flag, at least according to these initial studies. This suggests a potential disconnect between people's explicit thoughts, feelings, and behaviors concerning national matters, and their implicit responses. Whereas people's political party affiliation strongly predicts many aspects of their explicit nationalism, as described at the outset of the chapter, it does not seem to predict at least some elements of implicit nationalist ideology. Future research can further explore the scope and extent of this kind of dissociation.

It is important to note that these results clearly represent only the initial examination of implicit American nationalist ideology, and it may be the case that party affiliation does matter for particular attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. For instance, whereas it may not moderate the link between the nation and power, materialism, and aggression, it may moderate the association between the nation and the support for some policies and principles. The

influence of party affiliation might also be diminished within politically homogeneous samples. Namely, it may be the case that party affiliation would moderate some of the effects if we tested them with a more politically diverse sample. Given that college students in the United States often affiliate more strongly with the Democratic than Republican party (and this was true in each of our experiments described earlier), it is necessary to examine more conservative-leaning samples in order to explore more fully the influence of party affiliation.

News Exposure and Implicit American Nationalist Ideology

In addition to investigating whether news-watchers develop their unique set of associations with the nation as a function of watching the news (as opposed to other individual differences), it also seems critical to examine the specific types of news that people follow. One noteworthy aspect of the current research is that few participants closely followed clearly conservative news sources, such as FOX news. (The vast majority of participants reported following CNN and the major network news programs.) It would therefore be informative to sample participants who vary more widely on party affiliation as well as the types of news they follow. One pertinent question would be whether the observed effects would be especially pronounced for those who follow conservative news sources, and whether the effects would be mitigated for those who follow exclusively progressive news sources (e.g., National Public Radio). Another question would be whether some associations exist that all Americans would have, regardless of news exposure. That is, everyone who grows up in America might learn to associate some specific concept with American nationalist ideology. Although this is an intriguing possibility, the present results suggest that what we would consider to be some of the basic tenets of American culture (power and capitalism) were, in fact, moderated by news following. Future research should bear this out.

Generality of the American Findings

Regardless of the causal direction of news following as a moderating variable, we believe that the influence of the primes in our studies is based on the activation of implicit knowledge of American nationalist ideologies. As such, we would expect that the expression of these implicit associations would have little to do with being American per se, but rather a function of one's knowledge of American nationalist ideology. Thus, just as liberals and conservatives did not differ in the way that they were influenced by the flag prime in the studies reported earlier, we would expect that non-Americans who have a firm understanding of American nationalist ideology would show the same types of effects that Americans do. The associations that

develop would likely be somewhat culturally dependent, as the information would be filtered through each individual culture. For example, when the source of American nationalist knowledge is highly skewed, as is often the case in state-controlled media markets such as China or Iran, the implicit associations (and thus the effects of an American nationalist prime on attitudes and behavior) would reflect that skewed information. Citizens of countries whose information about America is primarily concerned with its military actions abroad would perhaps show even stronger associations with power and aggression than would Americans, who may have a more extensive set of associations than non-Americans. Similarly, the influence of other countries' national symbols on Americans would be a function of Americans' knowledge of the ideologies of the other countries, and directly related to how strongly the symbol is associated with that knowledge.

The causal direction of news following as a moderator is important in determining whether it would generalize as a moderator to other countries. If news exposure is the primary source of American nationalist ideological information, then we would expect it to be an important factor in non-American samples as well. If, on the other hand, news exposure is a moderator as a proxy for some other individual difference, then the influence of American nationalist symbols on non-Americans would be somewhat unpredictable, and likely subject to different and unique moderators in each different culture.

Examining Other Nationalist Ideologies

We have also recently conducted a series of experiments on the nationalist ideology of Israel. In this research, we focused on examining the effects of the subliminal presentation of the national flag on political attitudes and behavior, rather than on general constructs such as aggression and power. We assumed that the Israeli flag in particular represents mainstream Zionism. We also assumed that, given that flags are often used to express unity and patriotism (Skitka, 2005), the mere perception of such flags may implicitly elicit unity (Billig, 1995; Firth, 1973). On the basis of these two premises, we hypothesized that Israeli participants who are subliminally primed with the Israeli flag should express more mainstream Zionism or, in other words, should become more moderate in their political attitudes and judgments.

As reported in a recent empirical article (Hassin, Ferguson, Shidlovsky, & Gross, 2007), this was indeed the case. That is, after having been primed, both liberals and conservatives became more moderate across a range of national policy issues. Most strikingly, the subliminal priming also influenced participants' intentions to vote, as well as their actual voting behavior, in the

Israeli national election (held in March, 2006). To our knowledge, this is the first evidence of a subliminal priming effect on voting behavior.

Coda

In his work on banal nationalism, Billig (1995) suggested that mere environmental stimuli—such as national flags—activate and maintain the ideology of nationalism. Billig not only accepted the idea that ideologies work like habits, but explicitly stated (a) that they may operate nonconsciously and (b) that many “innocuous” stimuli, such as a flag on a public library, are crucial for the maintenance and pursuit of a national ideology. The current research is an attempt to begin empirically testing these propositions, and the findings thus far suggest that ideological knowledge can be activated quite subtly, and serve as an invisible lens through which the person views and interacts with the world.

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PART III

The Psychological Power of the Status Quo

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A Psychological Advantage for the Status Quo

Scott Eidelman and Christian S. Crandall

Abstract

This chapter discusses a host of psychological phenomena and their supporting mechanisms that favor status quo maintenance. We place these phenomena into two loose clusters: those that describe cognitive processes, and those that describe evaluative processes. We argue that these processes work in tandem, providing existing states with a psychological advantage; relative to alternatives, the status quo requires less effort, intention, control, and/or awareness for support and/or endorsement. As such, status quo maintenance is more ubiquitous and subtle than often believed.

ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ADVANTAGE OF THE STATUS QUO

Effecting social change is notoriously difficult. Change can be expensive; it can be risky. There are also many and sundry interests invested in protecting the status quo, and people who profit from the status quo often have significant resource advantages to protect these interests. And sometimes the way things are represents the best option among alternatives.

In this chapter, we suggest another category of barriers, distinctly psychological, that advantage the status quo over all other alternatives. Because of these psychological barriers, the legitimate consideration and endorsement of alternatives may require more effort, control, awareness, or intention than does supporting the status quo.

The status quo refers to the existing state of affairs, or the way things are. The phrase often has a political or historical meaning, and it is often used in a negative context—as a failure to innovate and as a hindrance to change. Although an affective component to the status quo certainly exists, our definition of the status quo is neutral, broad, and psychological—the way things are understood to be at the present. Generally, there is an implication that the status quo has some history; that the status quo has had some time to be in place. We are interested in how understanding something—an opinion, status relations, political procedures, arrangements of color, the proportion

of spices in a curry dish, nearly anything—as being part of the status quo affects how people think and feel about it. In common parlance, the status quo refers to an actual state of affairs. However, in our treatment, we focus on its subjectivity; we define the status quo as what people construe to be an existing state, not what is so in an objective sense.

We review a number of psychological processes that privilege the status quo over alternatives. These proclivities vary in a number of ways; we loosely arrange them into cognitive processes and evaluative processes. Because of space limitations, our chapter reviews only a sampling of these processes that lead to pro status quo biases; we provide a fuller review elsewhere (Eidelman & Crandall, 2009).

PSYCHOLOGICAL PHENOMENA PROMOTING THE STATUS QUO

A host of psychological phenomena advantage the status quo. We consider two general forms of this advantage, one concerning cognitive process and the other evaluation. These mechanisms operate in tandem, promoting existing states over alternatives. Our organization is expository, not theoretical—to the extent that multiple cognitive and affective processes can proceed simultaneously; then, processes that favor the status quo may also co-occur.

Cognitive Processing Advantages of the Status Quo

Extant states are more likely to be encountered and considered than alternatives. Indeed, people may be unaware that alternatives are even possible (Slovic, 1996). Even with awareness of alternatives, existing states are more available, and therefore cognitively accessible. The status quo is likely to be recognized and processed earlier than alternatives, and used as a start value when considering alternatives. The status quo is also likely to be a point of comparison, securing its mental dominance. Additional processes increase the difficulty of recognizing and accepting alternatives. We elaborate on all of these points in this section.

Accessibility. The status quo is relatively ubiquitous by comparison; people have a longer history and more experience with existing states than with alternatives. We are more familiar with leaders of dominant political parties, products of established companies, and the norms and customs of the cultures of which we are a part. Exposure to and experiences with existing states should be frequent and recent, and they should be more chronically accessible in memory than other alternatives as a result (Higgins, 1996). The presence of the many affiliated cues of the status quo will make status quo

exemplars easier to draw on at any given point. New alternatives, by virtue of their distinctiveness, may capture attention in the short-run, but what is more frequent and chronic seems positioned to “win” over time (Bargh, Lombardi, & Higgins, 1988).

Accessibility in turn can affect other downstream cognitive processes. As has been demonstrated countless times, accessible constructs tend to have an assimilative influence on subsequent judgment (e.g., Higgins, Rholes, and Jones, 1977).¹ Because of their accessibility, status quo alternatives should also be seen as more numerous and as more likely to occur in the future (Tversky & Kahneman, 1973). Accessibility of status quo features may also result in overconfidence in judgments (Lichtenstein, Fischhoff, & Phillips, 1982) and biased hypothesis testing (Devine, Hirt, & Gehrke, 1990; Skov & Sherman, 1986), two additional processes that should secure the stability of what has already been established.

Primacy Effects. Another process that favors the status quo is that of *primacy*; information that comes early has an advantage over subsequent information. Research has shown that early experiences are often remembered better than later experiences (Ebbinghaus, 1885; Waugh & Norman, 1965; Wright, Santiago, Sands, Kendrick, & Cook, 1985) and early-formed impressions predominate over the implications of later information (Asch, 1946; Jones & Goethals, 1972; Anderson, 1996). Once reasons for an outcome are considered, alternative reasons are difficult to generate and lead to predictions biased in favor of that which came first (Hoch, 1984). Compared to later options, what comes first is also perceived as more stable and less mutable (Kahneman & Miller, 1986; Miller & Gunasegaram, 1990). Primacy effects have even been shown in the voting booth; political candidates whose names appear first on the ballot tend to receive more votes (Koppell & Steen, 2004; Miller & Krosnick, 1998). As these examples illustrate, primacy effects are wide-ranging, important, and powerful. So powerful, in fact, that decision makers can be induced to choose (personally) inferior alternatives when information supporting this option comes first (Russo, Carlson, & Meloy, 2006).

By definition, information based on the status quo comes first; it is the default that exists in the present. Accordingly, existing states will be easier to remember and recall, dominate impression formation, and inhibit the generation of reasons for alternatives, while tempering expectations for future

¹ Although some argue that assimilation is the most typical effect of cognitively accessible constructs (e.g., Higgins, 1989), a number of factors make contrast the more likely outcome in social judgment (see Biernat, 2005, for a review).

outcomes that are discrepant from what is already established. Primacy is also implicated in the biasing effects of anchoring and contributes to the placement of the status quo as a reference point against which alternatives will be judged. These points are described next.

Anchoring. Because status quo alternatives come first, they are also likely to serve as a start value from which people may (or may not) move. In fact, a substantial literature on the anchoring heuristic suggests that people insufficiently adjust from that which is mentally accessible. For example, Tversky and Kahneman (1974) asked participants to estimate the percentage of African countries making up the United Nations immediately after being presented with a 0–100 “wheel of fortune” rigged to land at either 10 or 65. Demonstrating the powerful effects of anchoring, on average participants estimated 25% when landing on 10, and 45% when landing on 65.

Anchoring effects are not limited to numerical estimates. Judgments of the self (e.g., Ross, Lepper, and Hubbard, 1975) and others (Tversky & Kahneman, 1980) are not revised in light of subsequent information, and additional evidence suggests that people anchor on dispositional attributions during impression formation (Gilbert, Pelham, & Krull, 1988; Quattrone, 1982). The effects of anchoring can also have profound social consequences. Greenberg, Williams, and O’Brien (1986) provided mock jurors in a murder trial with one of two sets of instructions, to consider either the harshest possible verdict first (first degree manslaughter) or the most lenient possible verdict first (not guilty). Those asked to consider the harshest possible verdict first demonstrated a bias toward guilty verdicts, recommending harsher sentences than those instructed to consider the most lenient verdict first.

The connection between anchoring and the status quo is clear; existing states will serve as an arbitrary anchor, and one with greater underlying legitimacy than a random number. For example, it is common in most criminal cases in the United States for jurors to be instructed to consider the harshest sentence first. In this case, current practice biases the consideration of alternatives; rarely is the adjustment from this start value sufficient (Greenberg et al., 1986).²

² Not all anchoring effects need be understood in terms of insufficient adjustment. Instead, evidence suggests that a combination of priming and selective hypothesis testing (e.g., Mussweiler, 2003) may be responsible for such effects. An important determinant of which process is operating is whether the source of the anchor is external or self-generated, with self-generated anchors being more likely to be insufficiently adjusted (Epley & Gilovich, 2001). We note that both priming and biased hypothesis testing are processes likely to favor existing states.

Cognitive Reference Points. When making comparisons, it is necessary to conceive of a referent against which a target may be compared. Three determinants of whether something serves as a referent are familiarity (Karylowski, 1990; Tversky & Gati, 1978), frequency of exposure (Polk, Behensky, Gonzalez, & Smith, 2002), and primacy (Agostinelli, Sherman, Fazio, & Hearst, 1986; Bruine de Bruin & Keren, 2003), all characteristics that distinguish the status quo from other alternatives. For these reasons, existing states are likely to serve as reference points against which alternatives are judged and compared. Given their respective political systems, Americans will consider communism in reference to democracy; the Chinese will consider democracy in reference to communism.

Being the referent in social judgment carries several advantages. For example, it is the referent of comparison that determines the dimensions on which evaluation will occur (Medin, Glodstone, & Gentner, 1993). Another important consequence is that alternatives will be more easily assimilated to the referent than vice-versa. Rosch (1975) found support for this claim with the natural and nonsocial categories of color, line orientation, and numbers. For example, participants were more likely to indicate (with linguistic hedges) that nonprototypic numbers within the decimal system, such as 11, are closer to (“basically” and “essentially”) prototypic numbers like 10 than the other way around. Perceptions of similarity are greater when familiar entities, such as well-known countries (Tversky, 1977) and social categories (Holyoak & Gordon, 1983), are referents in a forced comparison (“How similar is Ivory Coast to the United States?”) than when the target is the referent (“How similar is the United States to Ivory Coast?”), also suggesting assimilation to that which has been established. Because the status quo entities are more familiar, more frequently encountered, and more prototypic, other alternatives will be assimilated to them.

Feature-Positive Effect. The status quo is more available and accessible than are other alternatives. As such, “nonoccurrences” of other alternatives lack the salience that occurrences provide. Because it is difficult to recognize that the absence of a feature is informative (Jenkins & Sainsbury, 1970; Newman, Wolff, & Hearst, 1980; Ross, 1977), the importance of nonoccurrence is often underappreciated or overlooked entirely, and alternatives to the status quo may go unnoticed.

The feature-positive effect is a case in point (Jenkins & Sainsbury, 1970; Newman et al., 1980). Animals, young children, and adult humans all have been found to learn more quickly when a feature is present than when it is absent. For example, college students were substantially better at discriminating between cards that were “good” and “not good” when the pres-

ence of a symbol indicated goodness than when it indicated the “absence” of goodness (Newman et al., 1980). The same findings have been found when the positive outcome is indicated by the presence of food, the occurrence of a light, or the addition of points; when a negative outcome is indicated by the absence of these events, people learn more poorly. Because reinforcement, payoffs, and learning about them occur in status quo environments, we learn well about the features that are present, but we fail to learn from what is missing. As a result, alternative strategies, payoffs that may be much greater on untested practices, and so on, are much harder to learn. Because alternative states are feature-negative, they will be less informative, and learning from them will be more difficult. Unlike Sherlock Holmes, most people quite easily miss the importance of the dog *not* barking in the night.

Blocking and Overshadowing in Classical Conditioning. Other learning processes advantage the status quo as well. For example, Kamin (1969) demonstrated that the prior conditioning of a stimulus may block the subsequent conditioning of cues with which the stimulus had been paired; a second, conditioned stimulus does not produce a conditioned response if previously paired with the first conditioned stimulus (Kamin, 1969; Rescorla & Wagner, 1972). Because the status quo precedes other arrangements, the learning of other alternatives is likely to be obstructed. Similarly, learning alternatives to the status quo should be hindered through the process of overshadowing: the more salient of two simultaneously presented stimuli is more likely to be conditioned (Bouton, 2004; Kamin, 1969). Given their cognitive dominance, existing states will be more salient and tend to overshadow other possibilities. In short, the availability, accessibility, and primacy of the status quo will inhibit the pairing of alternatives with stimuli for which it is already associated.

Evidence that blocking promotes existing social arrangements comes from Sanbonmatsu, Akimoto, and Gibson (1994), who demonstrated the inhibiting power of stereotypes on the learning of an alternative causal relationship. Participants read descriptions of students who took a course in a gender-typed domain. Various pieces of information were provided, including students’ gender, course load, and grades. When a covariation consistent with stereotypes was present (e.g., gender and academic performance), recognition of nonstereotypic covariation (course load and academic performance) was blocked; participants were less likely to notice an actual relationship inconsistent with the cultural stereotype. As culturally shared expectations that justify existing social arrangements, stereotypes maintain and promote the status quo (Jost & Banaji, 1994, see also Crandall &

Eshleman, 2003). In this case, such a process occurred through the blocking of new, alternative associations.

Counterfactual Thinking. Counterfactual thinking is a cognitive process in which one simulates “alternatives to past or present factual events or circumstances” (Roese & Olson, 1995). The ability to endorse a non-status quo position requires that one invests some time in counterfactual thinking—people are unlikely to endorse a novel process, procedure, or politics without imagining what some of the outcomes would be (Roese & Olson, 1995). Although some counterfactual thinking appears automatically in response to unexpected or negative events, counterfactual thoughts are typically more effortful than thinking about the status quo, and require a motivational source to initiate them (e.g., unhappiness, a failure in understanding the world) (Roese, 1997). In the absence of an instigating motive, counterfactual reasoning is unlikely to take place, and the probability and value of alternatives to the status quo do not enter consciousness or decision making. Counterfactual reasoning occurs only after a significant impetus; it requires a motivational trigger (Roese, 1997). In this way, the research on counterfactual reasoning (which is effectively “counter-status quo reasoning”) provides a good analogy for some elements of our argument. The status quo has several cognitive advantages, but under the proper motivating conditions, alternatives can be considered, evaluated, and preferred. But also like counterfactual reasoning, in the absence of these triggers, consideration of alternatives is unlikely.

Summary. Existing states are psychologically prominent; they are more likely to be available and to be cognitively accessible. At the same time, alternatives to the status quo are placed at a disadvantage because they are harder to recognize, process, and learn from. These cognitive processes advantage what has already been established. In addition, imagining cognitive alternatives is more difficult, time-consuming, and effortful. It requires imagination and motivation, and an energy-conserving organism without sufficient motivation will avoid it. It is only under the appropriate motivating conditions that alternatives to the status quo will be considered.

Although advantageous, these above-mentioned findings do not necessitate an evaluative advantage for the status quo. Many thoughts and ideas that are available and accessible are disliked and devalued, and people work hard to avoid their consideration (e.g., Wegner, 1994; Wilson & Brekke, 1994). Yet, there is good reason to think that existing states will also benefit from several evaluative biases that favor existing states. We now turn to affective processes that, in combination with cognitive processes, create a fairly strong advantage for the status quo.

Evaluative Advantages of the Status Quo

Acting in concert with these cognitive processing advantages is a series of evaluative biases: existing states seem to be assigned worth, value, and goodness by virtue of their existence. Research also demonstrates the devaluation of nonexisting states; options are dismissed, disregarded, and/or devalued when they represent alternatives to the status quo. We discuss several findings to make these points, giving special attention to our own research.

Mere Exposure Effect. Since Zajonc (1968) published his influential monograph on the mere exposure effect, hundreds of experiments have demonstrated that simple, unreinforced exposure to stimuli enhances positive affect toward these stimuli (for reviews, see Bornstein, 1989; Harrison, 1977). As an early demonstration, participants were shown pictures of faces (Zajonc, 1968). The frequency of exposure to the pictures was varied, such that some were shown one or two times, others as many as 25 times. Participants then rated how much they liked the faces in the picture, as well as how much they thought they would like to meet the person. The more frequent was participants' exposure to the face, the more they said they liked it, and the more they thought they would enjoy meeting the person.

The range of stimuli affected by mere exposure is impressive, including names, drawings, words, polygons, and musical selections. Attitudinal effects of mere exposure have been demonstrated with actual people as stimuli (Brockner & Swap, 1976; Saegert, Swap, & Zajonc, 1973), even in naturalistic settings (Moreland & Beach, 1992). Although boundary conditions exist (e.g., the stimuli must not be initially aversive), increased liking as a result of simple, unreinforced exposure is a strong and robust finding. The biasing consequences in favor of the status quo are clear. Since existing states will be encountered more frequently, mere exposure will lead them to be evaluated more positively.

Post-decision Dissonance Effects. The status quo is often determined by the choices we make. Post-decision dissonance will enhance our commitment to the outcomes that result from these decisions. According to Festinger (1957), any two elements (cognitions) are dissonant if one follows from the obverse of the other. The recognition of this inconsistency is thought to produce psychological tension (dissonance), motivating the person to reduce it. Regarding decisions, unfavorable attributes of what is ultimately chosen and favorable attributes of rejected alternatives are inconsistent with one's choice. To reduce tension thought to result from this recognition, chosen options should be enhanced and rejected alternatives devalued.

A classic study by Brehm (1956) tested these ideas. As part of what was ostensibly a consumer research project, participants were asked to indicate their preference for eight objects (e.g., a toaster, desk lamp, etc.). As remuneration for their time, participants were asked to choose between one of two objects they rated, either between two initially high-ranked objects or between a high-ranked object and one of lesser desirability. In addition, a control condition was run in which participants were simply given a high-ranked object. After making their selection (or being given their gift), participants were asked to re-rank the objects. Although no change in rankings were found in the control condition, a “spreading of alternatives” emerged when participants made a choice: the chosen option was upgraded and the rejected alternative was downgraded, although overall upgrading of the chosen object was a much weaker effect. However, other research points to conditions that enhance chosen options. For example, it seems that it is the less favorable aspects of chosen alternatives that get better (Gerard & White, 1983), and that enhancement of what is chosen is most likely when options are initially unattractive (Shultz & Lepper, 1996; Shultz, Léveillé, & Lepper, 1999). Similarly, devaluation of that which has been rejected is strongest when initial attractiveness between/among alternatives is high. In either case, the result is an increase in the relative preference for chosen alternatives. Since the status quo typically represents a “chosen” alternative, its more negative components are likely to be biased upward in a favorable manner, and alternatives not chosen are likely to be downgraded. Implications for this process in the ratings of winning and losing political candidates are powerful and straightforward; presidential winners gain in positivity, losers gain in negativity (Beasley & Joslyn, 2001; see also Kay, Jiminez, & Jost, 2002).

Status Quo Bias, Loss Aversion, and Regret Avoidance. Also relevant to decision making is research on status quo bias. In an initial set of studies, Samuelson and Zeckhauser (1988) asked participants to consider a number of hypothetical decisions and manipulated which of several options represented the status quo. Results were clear: participants chose alternatives designated as the status quo (e.g., retaining investment in a moderate risk company) at a higher rate than when the same choice was framed as a non-status quo alternative (newly investing in a moderate risk company). Just describing an option as the status quo had the effect of increasing the likelihood that it was chosen. Similar findings were found in the context on ongoing, real-world decisions. University employees are more likely to remain enrolled in their existing health plans, even though the distribution of new enrollees matched for age tend to select different plans, indicating that fresh eyes make different choices than those already committed to a course of action

(Samuelson & Zeckhauser, 1988). These findings demonstrate that decision makers prefer previous or currently chosen alternatives, as determined by their own decisions or the decisions of others.

A psychological mechanism that seems implicated in this process is *loss aversion* (Anderson, 2003; Kahneman, Knetsch, and Thaler, 1991; Ritov & Baron, 1992). People seem to be loss averse, giving more weight to losses than to corresponding gains (Kahneman, Knetsch, & Thaler, 1990; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Tversky & Kahneman, 1991). A consequence of this tendency is that people imagine greater regret for action than for inaction. For example, Kahneman & Tversky (1982) found that most people imagine greater regret for acts (e.g., switching stock from Company B to A) than for nonacts (not switching stock from Company A to Company B), even when the outcomes were identical (see also Landman, 1988). The effect is that people do nothing, or maintain their current or previous decision (Samuelson & Zeckhauser, 1988).

Taken together, research on status quo bias, loss aversion, and regret avoidance indicates that decision makers avoid change and stick with what is familiar. These processes carry important implications for status quo maintenance in the domains of bargaining and negotiations, and provide a distinctly psychological explanation for the advantage that incumbent politicians have over their challengers (Quattrone and Tversky, 1988).

Biased Perception of Reformers. Change is also devalued in another way. A number of studies demonstrate biased perception of those seeking to alter existing states, such that reformers are effectively disparaged. Although partisans on both sides of social conflict tend to exaggerate disagreement, this tendency is enhanced among those who represent the status quo (e.g., Robinson, Keltner, Ward, & Ross, 1995). Of particular interest, those seeking change—e.g., pro-lifers in the abortion debate, conservative observers of a racial conflict, and revisionists within English departments—are judged by both sides as more extreme and less reasonable compared with those who represent the status quo (Keltner & Robinson, 1997; Robinson & Keltner, 1996; Robinson et al., 1995; see also Kray & Robinson, 2001).

O'Brien and Crandall (2005) found that reformers seeking to change the status quo (e.g., an activist who wanted to repeal an election law or a low-status worker who wanted increased representation for her group) were rated as more self-interested than their status quo-supporting counterparts (an activist who wanted to keep an existing law or a high-status worker who wished to increase her group's representation). These findings indicate that advocates of change are more likely to be perceived in negative terms than those who support or wish to maintain the current state of affairs. In

addition, their position appears to have less merit, being based not in rational argument, but in mere self-seeking. The result is another advantage for the status quo.

A Mere Existence Bias. Our own research suggests another means by which existing states are advantaged; people seem to assume that existing states are good (Eidelman, Crandall, & Horstman Reser, 2009). This linking of existence with goodness is fundamental to how we construct values, evaluate options, and consider change. From our perspective, neither frequent exposure nor any learning process is necessary in order to connect existence and liking (Zajonc, 2004). We argue instead for a “mere existence” effect, whereby prescription and value follow just from thinking that an outcome represents the status quo. We also part ways with rationalization theories (e.g., Brehm, 1956; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Lerner, 1980) by arguing that the “existence = goodness” effect requires no particular motivation for its occurrence. Finally, we argue that the tendency to assume goodness from existence is more general and encompassing than outcomes of personal choice, distinguishing such effects from post-decision dissonance (Brehm, 1956) and status quo bias (Samuelson & Zeckhauser, 1988). In sum, we suggest that a positive value is quickly and effortlessly attached to entities and outcomes that represent the status quo. Although other processes can overrule this value assignment, we suggest a straightforward positivity main effect for existing states.

Research on Mere Existence Bias. In a series of studies, we have found that people seem to assume the goodness of existing states. In one study, we gave participants a brief summary of (bogus) degree requirements at their university (Eidelman et al., 2009, Study 1). Participants were led to believe that a requirement of either 32 or 38 credit hours in one’s major was required in order to graduate. Participants were also informed of a possible change to these requirements, either up to 38 credit hours (if the status quo was 32) or down to 32 credit hours (if the status quo was 38) in order to graduate. To minimize relevance (and motivations for rationalization), we told participants that changes would be implemented well after they would have graduated. Brief arguments for each side were presented, and participants were then asked to evaluate both alternatives in terms of being “good,” “right,” and whether they represented “the way things ought to be.”

Prescription followed our status quo manipulation; 32 credit hours was favored relative to 38 credit hours when the former represented the way things were, but preferences flipped when 38 credit hours was said to be the status quo. In other words, we found a main effect for the status quo: participants evaluated the existing requirement as good, right, and the way

things ought to be, irrespective of which requirement was described as the way things were.

In other studies, we found that participants preferred an existing state over an alternative when costs associated with change were controlled for statistically, and when change was held constant across options (Eidelman et al., 2009). This suggests that our findings were not simply due to risk aversion or regret avoidance (cf. Anderson, 2003; Kahneman et al., 1991; Samuelson & Zeckhauser, 1988).

In a recent study, we eliminated choice from the research design entirely, to go beyond the domain of decision-making and to remove the possibility of regret as responsible for the effect. Participants were given brief descriptions of theories from the biological, economic, and social sciences. They were told that experts in the field agreed that the theory described the way the body, the economy, or social interaction worked with 30%, 60%, or 90% accuracy. In this way, we manipulated “what was” in domains lacking choice between alternatives (cf. McGuire, 1960; Kay, Jimenez, & Jost, 2002). Our dependent measure simply asked participants to indicate the extent to which the theory they read about was the way the body, economy, or social behavior *ought* to work.

As shown in Figure 4.1, “ought” was a function of the likelihood of “is,” and a linear contrast testing this effect was significant, $F(1, 390) = 7.48$, $p < .007$. The more likely a theory was true, the more it was thought that the theory described how a function or process *ought* to work; our participants equated reality with positive value.

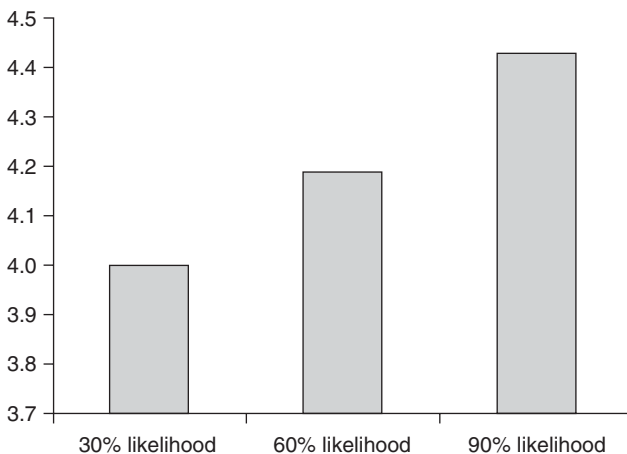


Figure 4.1 Extent to which the body, economy, or social behavior (collapsed over domain) ought to work as a function of the likelihood behavior described by the theory is correct.

Summary. A number of psychological phenomena link value and goodness with existing states: frequent (mere) exposure to stimuli enhances their favorability, outcomes are upgraded once they are chosen, and past decisions are likely to be repeated. People are also averse to risk, avoid regret, and devalue those seeking change, and they seem to equate existence with goodness. To this list we could add findings from a number of other literatures, including research on the propinquity effect (Festinger, Schachter, & Back, 1950), system justification theory (Jost & Banaji, 1994), belief in a just world (Lerner, 1980), and neophobia in taste and preference. All converge on the same point: the status quo is more likely to be favored than are other alternatives.

A PSYCHOLOGICAL ADVANTAGE FOR THE STATUS QUO?

As reviewed earlier, several psychological processes advantage existing states. Some of these processes imply conscious intent. For example, post-decision dissonance effects are thought to result from people's desire to justify the outcomes of their decisions. The undesirable aspects of what is chosen and the desirable aspects of forgone alternatives are inconsistent with the choice that has been made. Aware of these discrepancies, people work to eliminate the inconsistency (e.g., Brehm, 1956). As others have noted, such rationalization seems to require deliberate effortful thinking "if only to live up to its name" (Lieberman, Ochsner, Gilbert, & Schacter, 2001, p. 138).

Yet, what strikes us is the ease and subtlety with which the status quo is maintained and supported. Status quo maintenance is often initiated without intent, and it occurs regardless of people's ability to stop it. In addition, often these processes occur outside of awareness and proceed with little or no effort. Processes that share one or more of these characteristics—that is, that require relatively less intent, control, or awareness, or that are relatively efficient—are typically considered to be automatic (Bargh, 1994). By these criteria, many status quo maintenance processes seem to occur automatically. Because their support and endorsement require less effort, intention, awareness, or control, we suggest that existing states carry a psychological advantage over other alternatives (Eidelman & Crandall, 2009).

Automaticity and the Status Quo

Examples suggesting an automatic component to status quo maintenance abound. As noted, research on priming finds that judgment is often assimilated to that which is made cognitively accessible. Importantly, these assimilation effects are strongest when awareness is at a minimum (Lombardi, Higgins, & Bargh, 1987; Strack, Schwarz, Bless, Kubler, & Wanke, 1993).

Automaticity in the form of efficiency is demonstrated by work on primacy. For example, primacy effects are enhanced under time pressure (Kruglanski & Freund, 1983) and mental fatigue (Webster, Richeter, & Kruglanski, 1996). More generally, primacy effects are more likely when people process information in an automatic, heuristic fashion (Freund, Kruglanski, & Schpitzajzen, 1985; Heaton & Kruglanski, 1991; Tetlock, 1983; see also Ybarra, Schaberg, & Keiper, 1999).

Anchoring also appears to be a relatively automatic process. Anchoring is enhanced under time pressure (Kruglanski & Freund, 1983), and warning people of an anchor's influence does not disrupt the process (Wilson, Houston, Etling, & Brekke, 1996). The effects of anchoring also occur when anchors are presented subliminally (Mussweiler & Englich, 2005).

Evidence of automaticity regarding cognitive reference points comes from Karylowski (1990), who found that comparisons of any prototypic person with a less prototypic other were made more slowly than vice versa. His data indicate that people are more efficient at placing a prototypic (rather than non-prototypic) entity in the referent position for comparative judgments.

These examples highlight the automaticity of several cognitive processes, but many evaluative biases also show evidence of automaticity. For example, status quo bias increases as a function of the number of alternatives to choose among, establishing it as a simple and efficient strategy requiring relatively less effort (Kempf & Ruenzi, 2006; Samuelson & Zeckhauser, 1988).

Research on mere exposure indicates that effects of exposure on liking occur in the absence of recognition (Wilson, 1979) and when presentation of stimuli occurs subliminally (e.g., Bornstein, Leone, & Galley, 1987; Kunst-Wilson & Zajonc, 1980). In fact, exposure effects are *more* pronounced when obtained under subliminal conditions than when subjects are aware of repeated exposure (Bornstein, 1989; Bornstein & D'Agostino, 1992).

Even status quo maintenance processes that seem to imply awareness and control as part of a motivational process of justification appear to have an automatic component. Research from the perspective of system justification theory demonstrates system-justifying attitudes on the part of low-status group members on implicit measures (Jost, Pelham, & Carvallo, 2002; see also Rudman, Feinberg, & Fairchild, 2002). Similarly, recent findings make a strong case for an automatic component to post-decision dissonance reduction. Lieberman and his colleagues found that anterograde amnesiacs and those under cognitive load upgraded what was chosen/downgraded as the rejected alternative following a decision between two equally liked options on par with control participants, even though the former two groups were severely restricted in their ability to remember making a choice (Lieberman et al., 2001).

Our own research provides another example of the automaticity of status quo maintenance. We again misled participants regarding degree requirements at their university. This time, some were led to believe in a 34-credit major requirement, whereas others were led to believe in a 40-credit requirement. Participants were told of a proposed change to these requirements (40 credit hours if the status quo was 34, and 34 credit hours if the status quo was 40). In this study, we presented all participants with arguments supporting 40 credit hours (this was done as a means of exploring a possible boundary condition of the evaluative effects of mere existence, i.e., persuasive appeals opposed to a status quo alternative). Participants then indicated whether they thought each alternative was “good,” “right,” and “the way things ought to be.”

We also manipulated whether participants’ cognitive resources were taxed. This was done by asking half of the participants to simultaneously work on a second task as they answered their questionnaires. *Load* participants were instructed to listen to a tape of tones varying in pitch, to count the number of tones that preceded each change in pitch, and to indicate this number on the bottom of their questionnaires (see Skitka, Mullen, Griffin, Hutchinson, & Chamberlin, 2002). *No Load* participants were not given these instructions, nor did they listen to tones while working on their questionnaires.

Because status quo amounted to a counterbalancing factor, we recoded items assessing each option to form “current” (when an option represented the status quo) and “proposed” (when an option represented change) indexes. These indexes were treated as a within-subjects factor in a mixed-model ANOVA with cognitive load as the between-subjects factor. Only the predicted Index \times Load interaction was significant, $F(1, 52) = 4.89, p < .04$. Participants showed no preference for either requirement when cognitive load was low ($F < 1$). In contrast, load participants thought the current requirement was better (more right, good, and the way things ought to be) ($M = 6.48$) than the alternative ($M = 4.88$), $F(1, 52) = 7.78, p < .01$. A comparison of load and no-load conditions within each index indicated that load significantly increased favorability toward the current law but did not decrease favorability toward the proposed law. In other words, cognitive load increased favorability toward an existing state.

CONCLUSION

The biases described here appear to be broad, subtle, and significant. They are based in a wide range of psychological phenomena that include cognitive as well as affective processes. They appear in judgments of probability, in choice paradigms, and liking judgments. They affect policy preferences, social relations, and perceptions of what is right and what is wrong.

The main focus of this volume is on how people justify systems, primarily in a political context. The connection between status quo support and political ideology is very clear; the defense and support of the status quo represents a core component of political conservatism (Jost, Glasser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003; Stone, 1994). We suggest that preference for the status quo, and by extension one important component of political conservatism, is basic, privileged, and psychologically ascendant. To the extent that defense of the status quo is the native state of the organism, then any other set of beliefs or values that is inconsistent with the status quo requires more effort, more energy, and more attention than other alternatives.

Social change is difficult for a wide variety of reasons. It requires expense, it requires leadership, and it can require the consent of the governed. Change makes risk explicit. But social change faces another difficulty—it is harder to imagine an alternative universe, and this alternative is likely to feel colder and less appealing than the status quo. There is a wide range of ways that people work in a motivated way to support, justify, and defend the status quo, as system justification theory makes clear. In addition, a wide variety of relatively unmotivated cognitive and affective processes makes the status quo seem more prevalent, more appealing, more correct, more the way things ought to be. Any serious attempts at social change must overcome this initial barrier.

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Belief in a Just World, Perceived Fairness, and Justification of the Status Quo

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Abstract

Our primary focus in this chapter is on the system-justifying properties of a belief in a just world (BJW); that is, a belief that people get what they deserve. First, we review research on the relation between individual differences in the strength of BJW and attributions and attitudes that justify the status quo by increasing one's sense that outcomes are fair or deserved. Second, we examine one implication of the system-justifying properties of a strong BJW; namely, that a strong BJW is related to less perceived discrimination. We present an example from our own laboratory suggesting that a strong BJW might lead to less perceived discrimination directed at one personally when the presence of that discrimination is relatively ambiguous. Finally, we look at system-justifying beliefs more generally by discussing moderators and mediators of the relation between these various beliefs (including a BJW) and justification of the status quo.

Countless instances occur wherein individuals behave in ways that are seemingly inconsistent with their own or their group's best interests. Individuals from lower socio-economic groups tend to support conservative economic policies that may contribute to the maintenance of their lower economic status and oppose policies that could alleviate their circumstances (e.g., income redistribution; Kluegel & Smith, 1986). Despite the fact that a substantial proportion of the wage gap between men and women cannot be accounted for by variables such as worker, job, or workplace characteristics (Drolet, 2002), women seem satisfied with their lot and relatively unengaged in efforts to change the system (Crosby, 1982; Major, 1994). A number of researchers, including ourselves, have attempted to understand some of the processes that contribute to such behaviors. As suggested by several chapters in this volume, beliefs and ideologies that legitimize the status quo are one set of contributors. In the present chapter, we focus on one particular legitimizing belief—belief in a just world (BJW).

Numerous beliefs and ideologies may contribute to the justification of the status quo (Jost & Hunyady, 2005). These include, but are not limited to, a belief in individual mobility (e.g., Major, Gramzow, McCoy, Levin, Schmader, &

Sidanius, 2002), political conservatism (for a review, see Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003), control beliefs (e.g., Crandall, 1994), the Protestant work ethic (e.g., Crandall, 1994; Katz & Hass, 1988), and opposition to equality (e.g., Jost & Thompson, 2000). For example, Jost and Thompson (2000) found that, overall, the more African Americans were opposed to equality in society, the more favorably they felt toward White European Americans relative to African Americans, and the less they supported affirmative action programs aimed at African Americans. Similar trends were found for European-American respondents. Possessing relatively favorable feelings toward the dominant group in society can justify the dominant group's place (or at least does not delegitimize it). The outcome of such justification might be decreased motivation to change the existing hierarchy by, for example, promoting policies aimed at improving the lot of certain disadvantaged groups, such as African Americans.

A BJW can also contribute to the justification of the status quo (Jost & Hunyady, 2005; Olson & Hafer, 2001). Our discussion of this topic is divided into three sections. First, we review past literature suggesting that a strong BJW is related to justification of the status quo, mediated by attitudes and attributions that increase perceptions of deservingness and fairness. Second, we discuss in detail one potential implication of this process; namely, that a strong BJW promotes less perceived discrimination. We present a recent study testing the association between individual differences in BJW and reactions to personal experiences with discriminatory treatment, as well as the moderating effect of situational ambiguity on this association. Third, we discuss more broadly the role that moderators and mediators might play in the link between beliefs and ideologies, and justification of the societal status quo.

BELIEF IN A JUST WORLD AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STATUS QUO

A BJW is an assertion that the world is a fair place wherein people get what they deserve and, often, deserve what they get (Lerner, 1980; Rubin & Peplau, 1975). Although, according to just-world theory, the vast majority of people hold a BJW to some degree and in some form (Lerner, 1980), individual differences exist in the strength of people's explicitly professed BJW (for reviews of the individual difference literature, see Furnham, 2003; Furnham & Procter, 1989). Individual differences in the strength of people's BJW are assessed with the use of various explicit self-report measures. Rubin and Peplau's (1975) Just World Scale has been the most popular such measure in past research, although newer scales with better psychometric properties

are overtaking the use of this older tool (for a review, see Furnham, 2003). Example items from one of the more recent scales—Lipkus's (1991) Global Belief in a Just World Scale—are "I feel that people get what they deserve" and "I basically feel that the world is a fair place." Respondents rate the degree to which they agree or disagree with each statement. (For examples of two other recent just-world measures, see Dalbert, 2001.)

Individual differences reflected in varying scores on just-world scales might arise from a number of different sources. For example, the trajectory of intrinsic developmental forces linked to an underlying *need* to believe in a just world (Lerner, Miller, & Holmes, 1976), direct personal experiences (Schmitt, 1998), and socialization (see Dalbert & Sallay, 2004) all might lead to variability in the strength of people's BJW. Related to the issue of the origins of a BJW, a strong BJW may partly reflect a relatively cold cognitive structure for viewing the world and partly a more motivational construct—a belief that people are motivated to maintain in the face of contradictory evidence (see Hafer & Bègue, 2005). Regardless of the source of a BJW and regardless of its more or less motivational nature, a number of studies have presented evidence that a BJW contributes to the justification of the status quo.

One source of evidence that a strong BJW may justify the status quo comes from studies documenting a negative relation between the strength of individuals' BJW, as assessed by the aforementioned scales, and social action-related variables. Endorsement of a BJW has been found to relate to less involvement in political and social activism in general (e.g., Rubin & Peplau, 1973) and to a belief that political involvement is ineffective (Smith, 1985). With respect to action aimed specifically at one's own disadvantaged group, Hafer and Olson (1993) surveyed women in the workforce and found that a strong BJW was associated with fewer behaviors directed at changing the situation of working women as a whole. Engagement in actions directed at improving one's own job situation was also negatively correlated with individual differences in BJW, whether those actions constituted attempts to change one's situation directly or through protest (Hafer & Olson, 1998). These associations between a strong BJW and less motivation to alter a current situation (or more pessimistic beliefs about such attempts) indicate that people with a strong belief in a just world often see the status quo as justified and, therefore, see change as unnecessary.

A strong BJW might lead to justification of the status quo in many ways. First, a strong BJW has been related to *attributions* that legitimize the negative or positive circumstances of certain individuals and groups (see Olson & Hafer, 2001). For example, with respect to negative circumstances, researchers have found a positive correlation between some form of BJW and a greater tendency to hold the elderly at fault for their poorer financial and

health situations (Bègue & Bastounis, 2003; MacLean & Chown, 1988), attribute poverty to poor people's character and behavior (e.g., Campbell, Carr, & MacLachlan, 2001; Smith, 1985) or downplay the role of external factors (e.g., Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001), and blame sexual harassment victims for unwanted advances (De Judicibus & McCabe, 2001). With respect to positive outcomes, Smith (1985) found that a strong BJW predicted attributions of wealth to internal causes. Regardless of the valence of the target's outcomes, people who strongly endorse a BJW presumably see the existing situation as more fair because targets are seen as simply getting what they deserve, as a function of their complicity in their fate (see Feather, 1999; Heuer, Blumenthal, Douglas, & Weinblatt, 1999). These increased perceptions of fairness (compared to the perceptions of those with a weaker BJW) would act to justify the situation and maintain the societal status quo (see Kay, Jost, & Young, 2005; Olson & Hafer, 2001; Tyler, 2006).

Second, studies have also shown, although somewhat less consistently, that individual differences in BJW are related to *evaluations* of targets reaping a negative (c.f., Ambrosio & Sheehan, 1991; Cozzarelli et al., 2001; Crandall & Martinez, 1996; Maes, 1998) or positive fate (e.g., Dion & Dion, 1987; Rubin & Peplau, 1973) that would seem to legitimize the status quo. For example, Crandall and Martinez (1996) found that American participants expressed greater dislike of fat people the higher their scores on a just-world scale. With respect to positive circumstances, Rubin and Peplau (1973), in their classic study of the 1971 U.S. draft lottery, found that men who scored higher on a just-world scale were more likely to prefer individuals (in terms of liking, favorable feelings, etc.) who were assigned to relatively desirable rather than relatively undesirable draft numbers, even though the assignment was random. Again, regardless of the positive or negative nature of the target's fate, those with a strong BJW presumably see the person's situation as more fair than do those with a weak BJW, because it is perceived as relatively deserved. The deservingness in this case, however, is not a function of any direct responsibility the individual is perceived to have for his or her outcomes, but rather because she or he is simply a good or likable person (e.g., Appelbaum, 2002; Feather, 1999).

Aside from these mostly correlational investigations, a number of experiments have presented participants varying in the strength of their BJW with explicit evidence of injustice (for a review, see Hafer & Bègue, 2005). The reasoning is usually that people scoring higher on the individual difference measure of BJW have a particularly strong need to maintain this belief and, thus, will be more motivated to engage in strategies for restoring the belief when it is threatened by contradictory evidence. Although the success of individual differences in this context is sporadic, some studies show that, under conditions of presumed threat, those with a strong BJW express more

than do weak believers the kinds of attributions and attitudes that are found in the correlational literature. For example, Correia and Vala (2003, Study 2) conducted a study in which participants were presented with an interview of a victim of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). When the victim contracted the disease through no fault of her own—that is, when her situation was more unjust and, therefore, threatening the belief in a just world—participants who strongly endorsed a BJW gave more negative evaluations of her on a number of personality traits compared to those with a weak BJW. When the victim's situation was less threatening to a BJW (i.e., she was partly responsible for her fate), those with a strong or weak BJW did not differ in their evaluations. The reactions of those with a strong BJW to the innocent victim presumably justified the status quo by increasing perceptions of fairness through interpreting the victim's character as undesirable and, therefore, less undeserving of a negative fate. In this case, however, participants are responding to a specific contradiction to a BJW (which is presumably threatening) rather than to generally positive or negative outcomes, as is the case for many of the correlational studies noted earlier.

We have argued that strong endorsement of a BJW is related to attributions and attitudes that can legitimate the status quo. Moreover, we have reasoned that these processes do so by increasing the perceived deservingness of targets and, therefore, the perceived fairness of the situation. A growing body of literature supports our assertion that a strong BJW is ultimately connected to increased perceptions of fairness in a variety of contexts (Hafer & Olson, 1998; Olson & Hafer, 2001). Furthermore, because a strong BJW is related to perceived fairness in contexts that are not explicitly covered by the content of just-world scales, this relation is not likely due simply to overlap between BJW scales and criteria measures.

Evidence of a relation between individual differences in BJW and perceived fairness can be found in both correlational and experimental research. In correlational investigations, individual differences in BJW are related to the perceived fairness of broad societal systems, such as the distribution of wealth (Ng & Allen, 2005), as well as the perceived fairness of more specific criteria, including students' perceptions of their grades and teachers (Dalbert & Maes, 2002) and prisoners' perceptions of their treatment by the courts (Otto & Dalbert, 2005). A strong BJW has also been shown to predict greater perceived fairness of explicitly negative outcomes, both those of others (e.g., Dalbert, Fisch, & Montada, 1992) and of oneself (e.g., Ball, Trevino, & Sims, 1994). Hafer and Correy (1999), for example, examined the relation between individual differences in BJW and students' reactions to a grade they had received that was lower than expected. Not only did these authors find a relation between a stronger BJW and greater perceived fairness of the grade, but,

consistent with our theoretical reasoning, attributions mediated this relation. Specifically, the stronger participants' BJW, the less they relied on external attributions and the more they relied on internal attributions for their negative outcome (although the latter correlation was only marginally significant). These internal and external attributions were in turn related to higher or lower perceptions of fairness, respectively.

Experimentally induced negative outcomes (either of the participant or of a hypothetical third party) also tend to be interpreted by those with a strong BJW as more fair when compared with those with a weak BJW, overall or sometimes in interaction with moderator variables (e.g., Correia & Vala, 2003, Study 1; Hafer & Olson, 1989; Hagedoorn, Buunk, & Van de Vliert, 2002). In two such experimental studies, Hafer and Olson (1989) had participants complete a computer task that led to a negative outcome. Results from both experiments showed that a stronger BJW predicted higher ratings of the fairness of the experiment. In Study 1, this effect was most pronounced in the condition in which there were cues that participants were partly responsible for their deprivation because they chose the task that led to their negative outcome, a finding that was consistent with the notion that those with a strong BJW are often more likely to attribute negative outcomes to internal causes.

In summary, endorsement of a BJW, overall and sometimes in the face of explicit contradictions to a BJW, is associated with attributions and attitudes that increase the perceived deservingness of targets, and, thus, the perceived fairness of the situation. Increased perceptions of fairness add legitimacy to the situation and, thus, justify existing social circumstances. This analysis implies that a strong BJW can lead one to accept a situation that otherwise might appear illegitimate and unacceptable. One example of such a situation is group-based discrimination (i.e., negative treatment of people in a particular group that is based solely on their membership in that group). If individuals who strongly endorse a BJW tend to see situations as more fair (and, therefore, legitimate) compared to those who only weakly endorse a BJW, then a strong BJW might be related to less perceived discrimination, especially in the face of specific cues for discriminatory treatment. In the following section, we discuss the relation between individual differences in BJW and perceptions of discrimination, focusing on results from a recent study conducted in our own laboratory.

BELIEF IN A JUST WORLD AND PERCEPTIONS OF DISCRIMINATION

Individual differences in BJW have been studied in the past with respect to general measures of discrimination. For example, stronger endorsement

of a BJW has been associated with decreased perceptions of discrimination against a variety of groups, including gays and lesbians in Toronto, Canada (Birt & Dion, 1987), racial groups in the United States (Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Brown, 2000), and women in the workforce in Europe (Dalbert et al., 1992). A few investigations have yielded a similar negative correlation between BJW and perceptions that one has personally been the victim of discrimination (Lipkus & Siegler, 1993; Major et al., 2002, cited in Major, Quinton, & McCoy, 2002).

Data from a larger experimental project on reactions to discrimination (Hafer, Crosby, Foster, & Choma, 2006) allowed us to expand on these previous investigations by examining people's BJW and reactions to a specific act of discrimination directed toward them personally. We also tested whether the relation between individual differences in BJW and reported discrimination was moderated by a situational variable—the ambiguity of cues to discrimination (for a review, see Major et al., 2002). We operationally defined ambiguity in the present study in terms of the nature of available comparison information. Foster and Matheson (1995) argued that members of disadvantaged groups are more likely to perceive themselves as victims of group-based discrimination (and engage in collective action) if they not only see themselves as receiving lesser outcomes than outgroup members, *but also* believe that other members of their ingroup have similar experiences (see also Foster & Matheson, 1999). This argument implies that, although a member of a disadvantaged group might perceive negative outcomes resulting from a system that is biased against his group as ambiguously discriminatory, far less ambiguity should exist if the individual is exposed to other ingroup members who have experienced similar incidents.

In the present study, then, we manipulated the ambiguity of cues to discrimination by independently varying the presence of personal gender bias (i.e., gender bias experienced by the participant) and group gender bias (i.e., gender bias experienced by other members of the participant's gender group). Essentially, female participants were given bogus failure feedback on a supposed cognitive ability test, an outcome they believed would lead to lesser prestige, comfort, and material resources than if their score on the test had been higher (for similar procedures, see, for example, Foster & Dion, 2003; Taylor, Wright, & Ruggiero, 1991). All participants were led to believe that the test was biased against women. The manipulations were achieved by varying whose scores supposedly received a standard adjustment for this bias. In the personal gender bias conditions, participants were led to believe that their *own* score would not be adjusted; in the no personal gender bias conditions, participants believed that their own score either had been or would be adjusted. In the group gender bias conditions, participants

were led to believe that the scores of other women in the study had not been adjusted; in the no group gender bias conditions, participants believed that the scores of other women in the study had been adjusted.

Crossing these two manipulations yielded four conditions: personal gender bias only, personal and group gender bias, group gender bias only, and no gender bias. Presumably, cues to personal discrimination in the absence of cues to discrimination against other ingroup members (i.e., the personal gender bias only condition) would make the presence of personal discrimination more ambiguous compared to a situation in which cues for sex discrimination are directed at both oneself *and* the rest of one's group (i.e., the personal and group gender bias condition). The other two conditions (group gender bias only and no gender bias) can be considered control groups.

The primary dependent variable was a three-item measure of perceived personal discrimination (e.g., "To what extent was the procedure that was used discriminatory to you personally?", "To what extent was the procedure that was used fair to you personally?"). A similar three-item measure of perceived group discrimination served as a check for the group gender bias manipulation. Both measures were collected, among other items, via an anonymous questionnaire. Individual differences in BJW (using Lipkus's, 1991, Global Belief in a Just World Scale) and the related variables of political conservatism (self-placement from very liberal to very conservative) and belief in control (from Janoff-Bulman's, 1989, World Assumptions Scale) were assessed in separate and earlier sessions. We expected that those with a strong BJW would report less discrimination than those with a weak BJW in the face of cues for personal discrimination. Furthermore, we expected this difference to occur especially when cues for personal discrimination were more ambiguous (i.e., in the personal gender bias only condition) than when they were less ambiguous (i.e., in the personal and group gender bias condition). We also tested whether results involving individual differences in BJW could be accounted for by political conservatism or beliefs about control (for a review of the relation between scores on just-world scales and these other individual differences, see Furnham & Procter, 1989).

Preliminary analyses showed that participants perceived the manipulation of group gender bias as anticipated. Participants reported more discrimination against women as a whole in the group gender bias conditions ($M = 2.62$) than in the no group gender bias conditions ($M = 1.82$).

To examine the role of BJW in perceived personal discrimination, we conducted an analysis of covariance with personal gender bias (present versus absent), group gender bias (present versus absent), and BJW (strong versus weak; based on a median split) as between-subject independent variables, and control beliefs as a covariate (because control beliefs were associated

with perceived personal discrimination). This analysis yielded a significant three-way interaction (Figure 5.1). As expected, results showed that those with a strong BJW in the high-ambiguity (i.e., personal gender bias only) condition reported less perceived discrimination against them personally than did those with a weak BJW, whereas there was no significant difference between strong versus weak BJW in the low-ambiguity (i.e., personal and group gender bias) condition, nor in either of the control groups. Although the difference between those with a strong and weak BJW in the low-ambiguity condition was nonsignificant, an interesting trend was noted for those with a strong BJW to report *more* personal discrimination than those with a weak BJW. This pattern is consistent with a few previous studies that suggest people scoring high on just-world scales could be more attuned to cues for justice and injustice (see Hagedoorn, Buunk, & Van de Vliert, 2002; Maes & Schmitt, 1999; Schmitt, Gollwitzer, Maes, & Arbach, 2005).

Our results could not be accounted for by the overlap between BJW and political conservatism or control beliefs. Although, as anticipated, individual

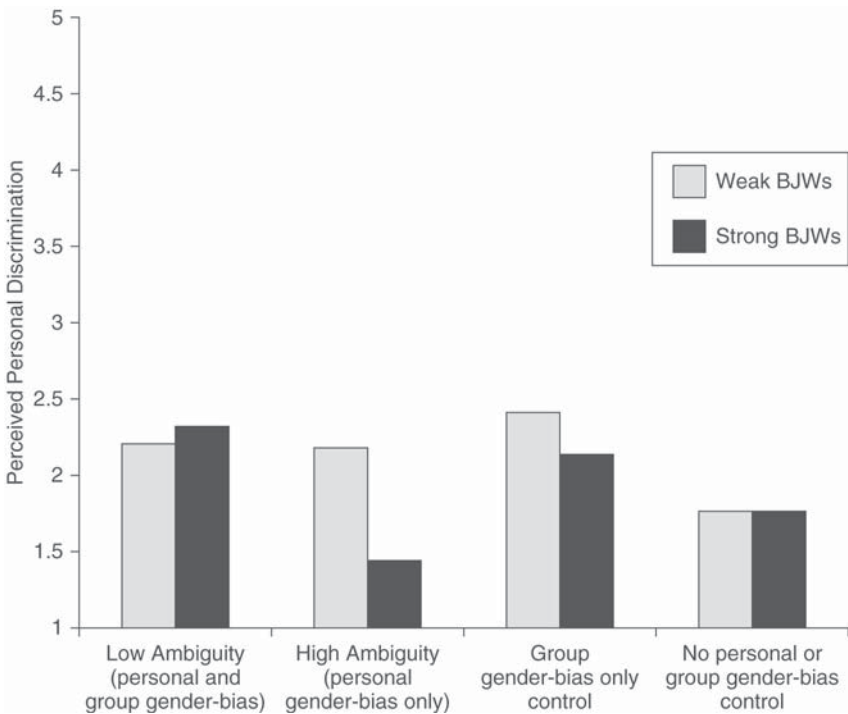


Figure 5.1 Interaction between personal gender bias, group sex bias, and belief in a just world on perceived personal discrimination. BJWs, believers in a just world.

differences on the just-world scale were significantly associated with greater political conservatism and stronger beliefs about control, results of analyses of variance with personal gender bias, group gender bias, and either political conservatism (strong versus weak) or control beliefs (strong versus weak), as between-subject variables showed no significant interaction effects involving the individual differences.

Our data add to previous research on BJW and perceived discrimination by offering evidence that those with a strong BJW can perceive less discrimination than those with a weak BJW within the context of a *specific incidence of personally experienced* discrimination, at least when the discriminatory nature, and therefore the fairness, of the situation is relatively ambiguous. The decreased perception of discrimination on behalf of people with a strong BJW would justify the given procedure or system, in that a system appearing to be non-discriminatory and fair also seems justifiable and legitimate (see Tyler, 2006). Our data also show, however, that the system-justifying effect of a strong BJW did not extend to a less ambiguous case of personal discrimination, thus highlighting the importance of moderators in the link between certain beliefs and ideologies, and system justification. Finally, the effects summarized in our study were specific to individual differences in BJW, rather than being generalizable to other system-legitimizing variables (i.e., political conservatism, control beliefs).

To summarize our discussion thus far, in the first section of this chapter, we reviewed literature suggesting that a strong BJW is associated with justification of the existing social system, partly through attitudes and attributions that increase perceptions that people's fate is deserved and, therefore, fair. In the second section, we discussed one implication of this system-justifying process—that a strong BJW might be associated with lesser perceived discrimination, overall and in specific situations, at least when those situations are ambiguous. We believe the information presented thus far anticipates several broader questions regarding moderators and mediators of the association between beliefs and ideologies (including BJW) and justification of the status quo. In the next section, we discuss these broader issues as well as ideas for future research.

MODERATORS AND MEDIATORS OF THE RELATION BETWEEN BELIEFS AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STATUS-QUO

Moderators and System-Justifying Beliefs

One moderator of the relation between beliefs and justification of the status quo appears to be the ambiguity of the situation. In our study of personal

discrimination, a stronger BJW was related to less perceived discrimination and unfairness, which presumably would justify the existing system. However, this association was moderated by the ambiguity of cues for personal discrimination, more specifically, by the nature of available comparison information. System-justifying effects of other beliefs might also be moderated by the ambiguity of situational cues—cues either for unfairness or for alternative indicators of system legitimacy (for alternative indicators, see the following section on mediators). For example, a study by Major and colleagues (2002, Study 2) showed that, among members of low-status groups, stronger endorsement of a belief in individual mobility (a presumably legitimizing ideology) was associated with reduced perceptions that negative outcomes were discriminatory. However, this relation only occurred when the negative outcome was delivered by an outgroup member, not when the outcome was delivered by a member of their ingroup. Perhaps negative outcomes from outgroup members are ambiguously discriminatory, whereas those from ingroup members are less ambiguous, in that they are seen as clearly nondiscriminatory. If so, the differential relation between low-status group members' belief in individual mobility and their perceptions of discrimination might have been caused, as in our own research with BJW, by the moderating influence of situational ambiguity (for the moderating influence of ambiguity on the relation between group identification and attributions of discrimination and prejudice, see Major, Quinton, & Schmader, 2003; Operario & Fiske, 2001).

Moderators other than ambiguity of situational cues are also likely. In the same article by Major and colleagues (2002) for example, the status of one's group moderated the relation between a belief in individual mobility and perceptions of discrimination (see Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004 for a different moderating effect of group status in the context of the system-justifying ideology of political conservatism). The stronger the belief in individual mobility, the less members of low-status groups attributed negative outcomes delivered by an outgroup member to discrimination. Decreased perceptions of discrimination should help to justify the status quo. However, as we found for BJW, a belief in individual mobility was not always associated with a system-justifying perception. Among members of high-status groups, the stronger the belief in individual mobility, the *more* negative outcomes delivered by an outgroup member were attributed to discrimination, an attribution implying system illegitimacy. Both Major and colleagues' (2002) and our own results suggest that we cannot assume all apparently system-justifying beliefs act as such across situations and individuals. We encourage researchers to investigate other moderator variables in the future.

Another point regarding moderator variables is that certain moderators may have varying effects depending on the particular belief being studied. For instance, consistent with the findings of our discrimination study, when cues to discrimination are less ambiguous, individual differences, such as in the strength of one's BJW, may play less of a role in perceived discrimination than when cues are more ambiguous, perhaps because the strength of the situation overwhelms individual differences (see Snyder & Ickes, 1985). However, we also noted a nonsignificant trend in the low-ambiguity condition for those with a strong BJW to report more personal discrimination than those with a weak BJW. Beliefs other than BJW might show this alternative form of interaction more clearly.

Different moderators may also be relevant only for certain beliefs. In our own study, for example, individual differences in control beliefs were related to perceptions of personal discrimination. Our operationalization of the ambiguity of cues to discrimination, however, did not moderate the relation between control beliefs and the dependent variable. The varying relevance of moderator variables might, in part, be due to the specific mediating processes that serve to justify the status quo for different beliefs and ideologies. The issue of mediators between beliefs and system justification is discussed next.

Mediators and System-justifying Beliefs. We argue in this chapter that perceived fairness (as well as attributions and attitudes that increase perceptions of fairness) can mediate the relation between individual differences in BJW and system justification, in that a system that is perceived as fair seems legitimate and, therefore, in no need of change. Although fairness is probably one of the most common legitimizing perceptions, there are likely additional reasons for a system to seem legitimate and justified (see Tyler, 2006).

Alternative reasons for perceiving the status quo as justified may be more or less relevant to certain beliefs. For example, conservative political ideology, although sharing some variance with BJW and predicting to some similar attributions and attitudes toward victims (e.g., Skitka, 1999; Skitka et al., 2002), may implicate a process of system justification other than a tendency to see the world as fair. One alternative basis for system justification is tradition (Weber, 1968), in that a system may be seen as more legitimate if it involves longstanding conventions (see Feather, 2002). Conservatism, often characterized as a system-justifying ideology (e.g., Jost & Hunyady, 2005), is associated with a strong preference for tradition (e.g., Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003). Thus, a conservative ideology may justify the status quo, in part through its association with preference for tradition.

Another basis for legitimacy is authority. Social psychological research has repeatedly demonstrated the influence that a given authority figure can have

on the perceived legitimacy of requests, demands, rules, opinions, and the like emanating from that authority figure (e.g., Haney, Banks, & Zimbardo, 1973; Kelman & Hamilton, 1989; Milgram, 1974; Petty, Cacioppo, & Goldman, 1981; Raven, 2001). Individuals high in right-wing authoritarianism are especially prone to unquestioning acceptance of authority (e.g., Altemeyer, 1998). Thus, right-wing authoritarians may justify a current system through the legitimacy they place on the actions and opinions of authority figures (Altemeyer, 1988).

A third basis for justification of the status quo is religious doctrine. What is legitimate may be seen, for example, as whatever God has ordained as laid down in religious texts and taught by religious leaders. Individuals high in religious fundamentalism (see Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992) and related variables are especially prone to accepting such arguments as justifications of the status quo.

A final basis for justification of the status quo that we mention here (although others likely exist) is suggested by recent work by Kay and his colleagues (Jost & Kay, 2005; Kay & Jost, 2003; Kay et al., 2005)—perceived equality. These researchers have shown evidence that certain compensatory qualities attributed to “winners” and “losers” serve to justify the existing social system, apparently by ensuring a sense of equality or balance such that no one person or group has substantially more or less than another in society. Such compensatory attributions include, for example, “poor but happy” and “rich but unhappy” (Kay & Jost, 2003), as well as “unattractive but intelligent” and “attractive but unintelligent” (Kay et al., 2005). We wonder if this balance- or equality-based legitimacy is more likely for those with a liberal ideology or those low in social dominance orientation (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), given that one of the key components of both is egalitarianism (Bobbio, 1996; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994). Interestingly, Kay and Jost (2003) found that the effect of exposure to compensatory versus noncompensatory portrayals on a measure of system justification seemed to be greater for people who either weakly or strongly endorsed the Protestant work ethic, depending on the compensatory/noncompensatory trait used. Thus, aside from our suggestion that liberals or low social dominance people may justify the status quo partly through perceptions of equality and balance, certain *kinds* of balance may be more or less relevant to people high in other ideologies.

The various bases of legitimacy are surely often correlated with one another, as are the beliefs with which they are associated (e.g., Altemeyer, 1996; Crowson, Thoma, & Hestevold, 2005; Furnham & Procter, 1989), but it may be that the bases for justifying a system vary somewhat between beliefs. To the extent that this is true, it will be useful in the future to at times examine

system-justifying beliefs as separate entities (rather than incorporating several beliefs into a composite measure of a general system justifying ideology) and to do so within one study. Such an approach will help us to better understand varying processes of system justification.

CONCLUSION

We opened this chapter with examples in which a disadvantaged individual or group acts to maintain the status quo, even when the existing social system is not in their own best interests. One belief that might contribute to such behavior is a strong belief that the world is a just place in which people get what they deserve. A BJW might ultimately increase the perceived fairness of a given state of affairs. Perceived fairness would legitimate what might otherwise be considered an illegitimate and unjustifiable system. One implication of this process is that strong endorsement of a BJW can be associated with less perceived discrimination, even in the context of specific cues that one has personally been the target of group-based discrimination. A strong BJW, however, will not always be linked to such justification of the status quo. When unfairness (e.g., discrimination) is particularly unambiguous, for example, those with a strong BJW might report similar (or perhaps greater) degrees of injustice than will those with a weak BJW. Beliefs other than a BJW also contribute to system justification, and we suggest that alternative beliefs, although often related to one another, may have some unique moderators and mediators that indicate a different process of justification. Understanding these varying processes and the extent to which they do and do not co-occur is a challenge for future research on beliefs and justification of the status quo.

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Disentangling Reasons and Rationalizations: Exploring Perceived Fairness in Hypothetical Societies

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Abstract

Political psychologists often treat explicit explanations for political views as rationalizations rather than reasons and favor unconscious motives and cognitive processes as the key determinants of political ideology. We argue that “transparent-motive” theories are often dismissed too quickly in favor of “subterranean-motive” theories. We devote this chapter to finding common methodological ground for clarifying, testing, and circumscribing the claims of both the transparent-motivational theorists and the subterranean-motivational theorists, and we pose a series of empirical questions designed to explore predictions that might provide evidence that justifications are not mere by-products of the functional imperative to defend the status quo but rather functionally autonomous constellations of ideas capable of independently influencing policy.

Over the last 150 years, behavioral scientists have repeatedly revealed their deep skepticism of the reasons that ordinary mortals offer for their political views. As an epistemic community, we have shown a marked preference for “subterranean-motivational theories”—theories predicated on the assumption that people have little access to the true drivers of their judgments. Indeed, under this subterranean rubric we include a truly diverse mix of scholars, ranging from the Freudian to the evolutionary to the Marxist: psychodynamic scholars, such as Lasswell (1930) and Adorno and colleagues (1950), who view political attitudes as the product of the displacement of private motives onto public objects rationalized in terms of the common good; evolutionary and social-dominance theorists who argue that people derive psychic gratification from exercising symbolic dominance over those below them in the pecking order (Sidanius, Levin, Federico, & Platto, 2001); system justification theorists who posit a deep-rooted psychological tendency to justify existing status hierarchies (a tendency that bears a marked family resemblance to the classic Marxist notion of false consciousness—Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost, 1995); and social identity theorists who maintain that

self-esteem needs guided by rapid-fire categorization processes are responsible for the widespread phenomenon of invidious ingroup-outgroup stereotyping (Rubin & Hewstone, 2004).

We do not doubt that good reasons often exist for doubting the reasons people offer for their policy stands—and for suspecting that these reasons do not capture the true causal dynamics behind their opinions. We readily concede that there are serious cognitive limits on our introspective access to mental processes—and powerful sources of social desirability distortion operating on what people are willing to say. But, like the plain-spoken sociologist, C. Wright Mills (1940), we worry about “motive-mongering.” Indeed, if we were inclined to subterranean-motivational speculation of our own, we might suggest that subterranean motives drive the intense curiosity of social scientists in subterranean motives—be it the preventive goal of ensuring that their research conclusions not be labeled obvious or the promotional goal of being proclaimed profound. We also worry that in a discipline as ideologically lopsided as political psychology, the subterranean-motivational speculation can easily become skewed against groups in collective disfavor (Arkes & Tetlock, 2004; Haidt & Graham, 2007; Mitchell & Tetlock, 2006; Redding, 2004; Sniderman & Tetlock, 1986; Suedfeld & Tetlock, 1991).

Whatever the merits of such speculation, we are acutely aware of how difficult it is to resolve disputes over the merits of transparent versus subterranean-motivational theories—and distinguish reason from rationalization in social, personality, organizational, and political psychology. (One of us wrote many years ago on the indeterminacy problems that bedeviled far less politically charged efforts to distinguish cognitive from motivational, and “intrapyschic” from impression management, explanations in a variety of experimental paradigms; Tetlock & Levi, 1982; Tetlock & Manstead, 1985.) But we do think it vital—for reasons laid out later—to try. And we devote this chapter to finding common methodological ground for clarifying, testing, and circumscribing the claims of both the transparent-motivational theorists and the subterranean-motivational theorists.

We divide our chapter into three sections. In the first, we make our case for an underutilized methodology: transforming political-philosophical thought experiments into psychological experiments. In the second section, we describe a series of hypothetical-society laboratory studies that we have conducted over the last 15 years to explore the value judgments that guide people when they make “macro-distributive” judgment calls about the fairness of resource allocations on a societal and even global scale. These studies allow us to compare how closely the belief and value systems of actual human beings resemble a host of conceptual ideal types, including intuitive Rawlsians (who give priority to raising the guaranteed safety net income),

intuitive libertarians (who give priority to minimizing redistribution and maximizing aggregate wealth), intuitive Marxists (who reject all forms of class subjugation), intuitive Durkheimians (who place a premium on the solidarity-expressive functions of punishment), and value-pluralist pragmatists (who strike varying compromises between equality and efficiency—and other values). In the third section, we pose a series of questions designed to explore what, if any, predictions can be derived from system justification theory (SJT) and kindred subterranean formulations in the hypothetical-society context—and to determine the types of evidence necessary to induce advocates of such theories to change their minds: to view justifications not as by-products of the functional imperative to defend the status quo but rather as functionally autonomous constellations of ideas capable of independently influencing policy. The theoretical debate is as old as that between Marx and Weber: How do interests (traditionally stressed by Marxists) and ideas (traditionally stressed by Weberians) interact to shape our vision of who we collectively are and what we should collectively aspire to achieve?

TURNING THOUGHT EXPERIMENTS INTO LAB EXPERIMENTS

Carefully conducted thought experiments help philosophers clarify the role of competing principles and assumptions in their normative arguments, much like laboratory experiments help psychologists clarify the role of different variables in cause–effect relationships. In the mind of a philosopher committed to working out the logical implications of propositions in alternative worlds, the thought experiment can be a rigorous means to an end: “She follows through all the relevant implications of altering one part of her worldview and attempts to construct a coherent model of the situation she is imagining. The rigor with which thought experimenters attempt to answer ‘what if’ questions is what differentiates thought experiments from daydreams and much fiction. . . . The thought experimenter is committed to rigorously considering all relevant consequences in answering the ‘what if’ questions” (Cooper, 2005, p. 337).

Thought experiments, however, even when done carefully and with a mind open to possibilities rather than searching for confirmation, lack the transparency and replicability deemed essential to scientific research (Bunge, 1961). These weaknesses lead many to dismiss the thought experiment as a path to reliable knowledge (see Sorenson, 1992, Chapter 2). Thus, when scientists successfully employ thought experiments—Galileo, Newton, and Einstein come quickly to mind—the resulting theories must be couched in publicly testable terms to qualify as scientific (Dennett, 2003).

Thought experiments also present serious external validity concerns. Whereas laboratory researchers can make some claim that their findings represent the views of a cross-section of college students reacting to real, if simulated, situations, thought experimenters can make no claim that their findings represent the views of people in general, or even philosophers specifically, reacting to realistic simulations. Indeed, many philosophical debates persist because philosophers reach different conclusions about hypothetical cases or the validity of background assumptions in these cases (e.g., Coleman, 2000), and the very purpose of many thought experiments is to create *unreal* situations that can exist only in the imagination (Souder, 2003).

For the empiricist who finds a thought experiment interesting but doubts the reliability and generalizability of its product, a simple solution exists: reduce the thought experiment to concrete terms that can be reproduced as written scenarios and ask subjects to react to the scenarios to see what trends emerge (e.g., Machery, Mallon, Nichols, & Stich, 2004). The emerging field of experimental philosophy seeks to do just this with a variety of conundrums (Knobe, in press). But that view emphasizes what laboratory studies can do for thought experiments and philosophical explorations. In our view, thought experiments can do much for laboratory studies and the social-psychological explorations of a variety of topics, including the psychological foundations of lay conceptions of justice.

Empirical studies into the perceived justice of real-world outcomes and procedures confront difficulties that may be partially remedied by incorporating elements of thought experiments into these studies. First, and almost impossible to control in empirical studies of public reasoning on current controversies, is the problem that public opinion often depends on mixtures of emotionally charged political values (such as liberty, equality, religious purity, and national sovereignty) and technically complex matters of fact (such as whether individual or societal conditions are greater determinants of economic outcomes or whether tying welfare benefits to work requirements will encourage self-sufficiency). When causal relations and policy effects are difficult to determine, a powerful temptation exists to arrange one's beliefs about the facts in convenient ways that minimize dissonance and mental strain (e.g., Herrmann, Tetlock, & Diascro, 2001; Mitchell, Tetlock, Mellers, & Ordóñez, 1993; Skitka, 1999). For instance, Skitka and Tetlock (1992, 1993) found that liberals and conservatives held different preexisting beliefs about the causes of public assistance and, as a result, made different trade-offs in a mock public aid allocation task. Thus, surveys that find different views about distributive justice between liberals and conservatives, but fail to check for differences in background beliefs, may mistakenly attribute response differences to value differences. Conversely, surveys that find agreement across

groups regarding distributive justice and the propriety of redistribution may simply reflect widespread mistaken beliefs about underlying facts, such as the degree of economic mobility in a society (see Ferrie, 2005; Fong, 2005) or the proportion of families in different socio-economic categories (see Kluegel, Csepeli, Kolosi, Orkeny, & Nemenyi, 1995). These problems become particularly acute when one studies the impact of macroeconomic variables and system-level conditions on individual judgments of justice, but informational problems may arise whenever key facts are vague or disputed (e.g., the bargaining studies of Babcock, Loewenstein, Issacharoff, & Camerer, 1995).

To overcome such confusion, we took a page from the philosopher's book on thought experiments and developed a "hypothetical-society paradigm," in which experimental participants judge the justice of different economic and legal arrangements in hypothetical societies (Mitchell et al., 1993).¹ This paradigm turns the classic weakness of thought experiments, their unreality and subjectivity, into a strength: because the experimenter is the creator of the hypothetical societies, the experimenter controls the structure of these societies down to the tiniest technical details, including the location of the poverty line and percentage of persons below it, mean income and income variance within the society, levels of redistribution and welfare services, the level of meritocracy (i.e., the degree to which individual merit versus other factors determine economic outcomes), and whether the hypothetical society is in the "original position" or considering changes to existing procedures and distributions. Using the hypothetical-society approach, an investigator can examine which features of societies are most important to people's judgments of social justice and determine how these judgments change as features of the societies change. In short, the paradigm allows

¹ The inspiration for the hypothetical-society paradigm was Rawls' impartial reasoning device, the "veil of ignorance," which seeks to "nullify the effects of specific contingencies which put men at odds and tempt them to exploit social and natural circumstances to their own advantage" (Rawls, 1971, p. 136). Behind the veil, "no one knows his place in society, his class position or social status; nor does he know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence and strength, and the like" (Rawls, 1971, p. 137). Because we cannot divest participants of self-knowledge as required by a true veil of ignorance, we chose instead to remove narrow self-interest as an influence on judgments by having participants disinterestedly evaluate hypothetical societies. Our efforts to approximate Rawls' original position were predated by Brickman (1977) and Frohlich and Oppenheimer (1992). Appendices in Mitchell et al. (1993) and Mitchell, Tetlock, Newman, and Lerner (2003) provide detailed descriptions of the hypothetical societies, the instructions given to participants, and the participants' tasks.

researchers to unconfound the influence of factual beliefs from that of value orientations in judgments of justice. Because individuals tend to avoid value trade-offs, often by interpreting ambiguous or disputed facts in a favorable light (e.g., Tetlock & McGuire, 1986), this ability to manipulate value conflict confers considerable experimental advantages.

One key benefit of importing hypothetical societies into the laboratory is the control one gains over otherwise complex and sharply contested matters of fact. A second, arguably equally important, benefit involves the control one gains over the influence of selfish interests. A common problem in empirical studies of justice is that of distinguishing biased from unbiased judgments (see Fong et al., 2006; Konow, 2005; Liebig, 2001). The hypothetical-society paradigm allows researchers to place participants in the position of impartial spectator: researchers who want to eliminate or minimize the role of material self-interest and social influence on judgments ask participants to make anonymous judgments about hypothetical societies with no material implications for themselves. Alternatively, researchers interested in the role of social influences can ask participants to explain or justify their judgments under various accountability conditions, or can manipulate the group identities involved, whereas researchers interested in the influence of material self-interest can alter the method to have participants imagine themselves inside the society or ask them to allocate resources within the society (using either hypothetical or real pay-offs).

In our hypothetical-society studies, we have favored experimental manipulations that place the participant in the role of impartial spectator, in order to capture unbiased judgments of justice. As a number of studies have shown, when participants have a stake in the distribution at hand, egocentric and ingroup biases will often influence participants' judgments about the fairness of these distributions (Bar-Hillel & Yaari, 1993; Epley & Caruso, 2004; Frohlich & Oppenheimer, 1997, 2000; Greenberg, 1983; Konow, 2005; Messick & Sentis, 1983; Pillutla & Murnighan, 2003). We cannot trust that unbiased judgments of justice will be given when individuals judge their own situations, and so, if we seek to know what people believe justice ideally requires, "thought experiments trump real experiments (Cooper, 2005, p. 344)."²

² Cooper (2005) makes this point in the context of thought experiments involving trade-offs between avoiding torture to oneself versus avoiding harm to others, where what we seek to know is not what the tortured person would actually do but what a rational person should do in such a situation: "The judgments of people contemplating what should be done under torture are more reliable than the judgments of people actually being tortured (p. 344)."

That said, judgments about justice by detached observers of hypothetical societies may still be useful guides about judgments of justice in real societies. Most obviously, to the extent that hypothetical societies and real societies possess common features important to lay conceptions of justice, judgments about justice in the hypothetical societies may generalize to real societies. Even with highly artificial scenarios, judgments about hypothetical societies can identify pivotal points of agreement and disagreement and explain how factual beliefs and value differences combine to produce either ideological convergence or divergence. For instance, in our first set of hypothetical-society studies (Mitchell et al., 1993), we found surprisingly wide agreement on the importance of minimum safety nets, even in perfect meritocracies. Hypothetical-society studies also shed light on which social arrangements may have the greatest “psychological stability” (see Elster, 1995). Our studies have found, for example, that conservatives are more sensitive to waste in income redistribution policies (“leaky buckets”) than liberals when the redistribution was meant for deserving recipients (Mitchell et al., 2003), suggesting that the psychological stability of policy arrangements depends on the mix of liberal and conservative decision makers, the perceived deservingness of would-be recipients in the applicant pool, and the leakiness of the income transfer process (Skitka & Tetlock, 1992, 1993).

More ambitiously, to the extent that the judgments individuals reach as impartial spectators cause individuals to reflect on just distributions in their own societies, the hypothetical-society paradigm could be used as a device to foster deliberation about social policy (e.g., Fishkin, 1992). If used in this sense, the hypothetical-society paradigm performs a “reflective equilibrium” function (Rawls, 1971; see Daniels, 1996), possibly leading persons to abandon their initial intuitions or change their views about what justice requires once they are compelled to work their way through a series of controlled thought experiments.

In sum, the hypothetical-society paradigm can be a powerful tool for overcoming the limitations of alternative methods, including the problems of replication and “idiosyncratic intuition” that plague philosophical thought experiments on justice, and the problems of partiality—with respect both to facts and motivations—that plague lab and field studies of justice.³

³ A closely related device for studying justice judgments is the vignette study (e.g., Bukszar & Knetsch, 1997; Konow, 2003). Vignette studies typically ask experimental or survey participants to judge whether justice occurred in some realistic but imaginary event (e.g., pay distribution in a hypothetical work setting). The advantage of a vignette study over a hypothetical-society study is that the former possesses greater external validity. The

TAKING STOCK OF THE CURRENT EMPIRICAL YIELD FROM HYPOTHETICAL-SOCIETY STUDIES

Most studies using the hypothetical-society paradigm examine the perceived justice of societal-level patterns of distribution or rules for distributing resources within a society, and so we begin with findings from these studies on social justice. We first utilized the paradigm to examine how people make macro-level trade-offs between equality and efficiency. Specifically, we described for participants three different societies that differed in their levels of meritocracy, with the correlation between effort and outcome being high (a correlation of 0.9), medium (a correlation of 0.5), or low (a correlation of 0.1), and we displayed income distributions within each society that varied in terms of their equality (income variance) and efficiency (average income). (For a full description of the hypothetical-society instructions and stimuli, see the Appendix to Mitchell et al., 1993.) Participants were asked to imagine themselves as outside observers of the societies and to make pair-wise comparisons of all possible income distributions for one of the societies, choosing which distribution in each pair was fairer, so that a fairness ranking of income distributions could be derived for each individual within a society and for groups of individuals across all three hypothetical societies. These fairness rankings were then compared to a variety of ideal-type fairness rankings for the income distributions derived from competing theories of distributive justice, namely, egalitarianism (emphasizing equality), utilitarianism (emphasizing efficiency), a Rawlsian maximin principle (emphasizing quality subject to efficiency constraints), and Boulding's (1962) compromise theory (emphasizing efficiency subject to equality constraints—in which minimum equality is required by the government ensuring a safety net for the poor, but the goal of prosperity is encouraged by rewarding individual effort above this social safety net).

Consistent with Boulding's (1962) compromise theory, as well as with later value-pluralism ideas (Tetlock, 1984, 1986), both liberals and conservatives were willing to accept considerable inequality of wealth in high-meritocracy societies but with the reservation that distributions allowing people to fall below the poverty line remained unpopular for both ideo-

disadvantage of the vignette study relative to the hypothetical-society study is that, because the participant may find the vignette more realistic and familiar, the participant may find it more difficult to imagine or accept the stipulated facts and detach herself from the situation about which she is supposed to be an impartial judge, and the researcher has less freedom when creating hypothetical situations.

logical groups even in high-meritocracy societies (a finding similar to that of Frohlich and Oppenheimer, 1992, whose experimental groups favored utilitarianism above a floor constraint). However, a majority of liberals and conservatives favored a Rawlsian “maximin” approach (Rawls, 1971) to the distribution of wealth in low- and moderate-meritocracy societies (a finding at odds with Frohlich and Oppenheimer [1992] and one that suggests that implicit assumptions of meritocracy may have driven Frohlich and Oppenheimer’s groups to favor a modified utilitarianism). Liberals and conservatives disagreed most sharply when the reward structure in the hypothetical society was most ambiguous (i.e., in the moderate-meritocracy society), with liberals tending toward greater equality and conservatives toward greater efficiency in such societies. Thus, we found that, for both ideological groups, beliefs about the level of meritocracy in the hypothetical society moderated value trade-offs, suggesting that ideological disagreements about social justice may arise just as often from different beliefs about the nature of the reward structure in society as from value differences (compare Fong, 2004, reporting that target-specific beliefs regarding individual responsibility for economic outcomes drove attitudes toward redistributive policies).

In a subsequent hypothetical-society study using similar experimental stimuli (Mitchell et al., 2003), we again found that the perceived level of meritocracy in a society greatly affected judgments about the justice of distributions in that society, with support for greater equality (and less prosperity) strongest at low levels of meritocracy and support for greater prosperity (and less equality) strongest at high levels of meritocracy. In this study, we also manipulated whether participants were judging the fairness of income distributions as if they were alternative *original distributions* for each society versus as if they were *redistributions* of income from an existing distribution in each society. When participants judged *redistributions* (i.e., when it was clear that income would be taken from one group and redistributed to another), both liberals and conservatives became more sensitive to the level of meritocracy in the society, and considered redistributions in the moderate- and high-meritocracy societies to be significantly less fair than equivalent distributions viewed as alternative starting distributions in the same societies. Further, for all three societies, including a “no-meritocracy” society with no relation between effort and outcomes, participants judged redistributions that led to losses in equality or losses in prosperity to be less fair than when they simply judged the fairness of these distributions as possible “original positions,” suggesting a vicarious type of loss aversion at work even in judgments about hypothetical redistributions.

These findings highlight both the practical problems faced by advocates of redistributive policies and the conceptual problems faced by political phi-

losophers grappling with whether (or when) the distributive–redistributive distinction should count in normative theories of justice. These findings also highlight interpretive ambiguities that arise for psychological theorists in characterizing the true causes of resistance to redistribution. If people resist redistribution because they have a tendency to adopt the status quo as their reference point and to be loss-averse (directly or vicariously), as prospect theory predicts, is it accurate or fair to characterize such automatic psychophysical processes with as politically charged a label as system justification?⁴

Providing further empirical evidence against a unidimensional conception of distributive justice such as utilitarianism and in favor of a multidimensional conception such as in Boulding’s compromise theory, Ordóñez and Mellers (1993) used the hypothetical-society paradigm to examine whether individuals make trade-offs when judging social fairness. They found that the great majority of participants did make trade-offs between different principles, but the principles that most concerned their participants were need and desert, with participants wanting to ensure a minimum salary for all members of the hypothetical society but also wanting to provide just deserts to those who worked hard in the society; equality and efficiency were of little concern to participants in this study. This study is also interesting because Ordóñez and Mellers asked participants to make judgments about the fairness of societies, but also to express preferences for societies as places to live. They found that most participants rated high-meritocracy societies as fair, but they preferred to live in societies with high minimum incomes (a finding that applied particularly to participants with self-reported low socio-economic status). This finding is consistent with the view that the hypothetical-society paradigm can be used to elicit both refined justice judgments and preference judgments reflecting self-interest rather than ethical concerns.

Recently, Scott and his colleagues (Scott, Matland, Michelbach, & Bornstein, 2001) employed a variant of the hypothetical-society paradigm to compare the role of equality, efficiency, merit, and need in people’s judgments

⁴ Although system justification theorists draw on status quo bias research to support their theory (Jost, 2001), we see nothing intrinsically system justifying about prospect theory. Prospect theory processes can just as easily fuel moral outrage as moral complacency toward the status quo (e.g., Kahneman, Knetsch, & Thaler, 1986). For instance, prospect theory identifies factors that should make it easier to mobilize the losers in an earlier “illegitimate” round of redistribution to take big risks to restore the status quo ante (McDermott, 1998). Similar processes could also be at work driving intense resistance to the impact of global capitalism on climate change or driving Islamic radicals to restore the original Islamic state. From our standpoint, the “system” in system justification is underdefined.

of distributive justice, finding that each principle proved influential to some extent, except that merit considerations only influenced women's judgments of justice in this study. In a second study, this research group (Michelbach, Scott, Matland, & Bornstein, 2003) replicated their finding that individuals try to balance equality, efficiency, need, and merit in their justice judgments, but they failed to replicate the gender gap in meritocracy concerns found in their first study. However, this second study did find a racial gap in meritocracy concerns, with the nature of equality-efficiency trade-offs by White participants dependent on their merit assumptions but not those of racial minorities. Also, Michelbach and colleagues (2003), with a refinement to the hypothetical-society paradigm that provided a cleaner test between egalitarianism and Rawls' maximin principle than that employed in our original study (Mitchell et al., 1993), found that a significant number of participants endorsed the maximin principle, but many others deemed merit an important principle and deviated from a strict adherence to the maximin principle.

These studies by Scott and others support our original finding (Mitchell et al., 1993) that impartial spectators often place considerable weight on equality and the maximin principle when making justice judgments, especially when meritocracy is lacking. However, these studies and their findings of gender and racial gaps in the weight placed on meritocracy in justice judgments also caution against generalizations about the role of meritocracy in justice judgments and suggest that White men, women, and minorities, who may have had very different experiences with meritocracy in the United States, may have difficulty divesting themselves of their life experiences and placing themselves in the position of impartial observer.

Most recently, we used the hypothetical-society paradigm to examine the longstanding debate in legal theory on the relationship between corrective justice and distributive justice (Mitchell & Tetlock, 2006).⁵ Some legal philosophers claim that corrective justice is parasitic on distributive justice, with the one who has caused a harm (the "tortfeasor" in legalese) having a duty only to repair the harm imposed on another if the underlying distribution of goods disturbed was just, whereas others claim that corrective justice and distributive justice impose independent moral demands on mem-

⁵ Corrective justice stipulates, roughly, that a person who wrongfully causes harm to another has a duty to repair the harm (see Forde-Mazrui, 2004). The concept of corrective justice goes back to Aristotle and his distinction between justice in transactions, or arithmetic forms of justice, and justice in overall distributions within a polity, or geometric forms justice (see Weinrib, 2002).

bers of a society that cannot be traded off against one another. To test the competing views, we constructed distributively just and unjust hypothetical societies—with distributive justice operationalized in terms of meeting needs, equality, and desert—and told participants of certain intentional and unintentional torts occurring in these societies that upset the distribution of resources in these just and unjust societies. The task for participants was to declare whether justice required the tortfeasor to make the victim of the tort whole, as a norm of corrective justice would require.

We found, somewhat to our surprise in light of much empirical research showing the context sensitivity of competing norms of justice (see Miller, 1999), that the norm of corrective justice consistently trumped distributive justice norms, even where enforcing the norm of corrective justice would lead to a more unjust distribution of resources in the community (i.e., in a society with no meritocracy, where an undeserving poor man had to compensate an undeserving rich man for harm negligently done by the poor man, leading to greater inequality and greater unmet needs). Indeed, in many conditions, there was near unanimity that the tortfeasor should make the victim whole, even when participants judged the society to be unjust and the victim had insurance that would cover the harm done.

Only under conditions of extreme injustice in the distribution of resources did most participants deem it just that tortious harm go unrepaired. Thus, in a hypothetical society in which a racial minority perpetuated its hold over power through discriminatory policies, most liberal participants and some conservative participants felt that justice did not require that an impoverished member of the oppressed majority compensate a wealthy member of the racially oppressive minority who had been harmed by the former's negligence. However, when the poor member of the racially oppressed class intentionally stole a valuable watch owned by the rich man, most participants judged this action out of bounds as a matter of justice, even though it arguably is a form of self-help that would lead to a more just distribution of wealth in this racially unjust society (with half of the liberal participants and more than half of the conservative participants judging justice to require compensation for this intentional tort).

Such findings are significant in at least two ways. First, they demonstrate the importance of adding corrective justice norms to the list of justice concerns that may be triggered by context (see Konow, 2003), and they illustrate that this norm will be potent, and likely dominant, in contexts that emphasize transactional harms. These findings emphasize the importance placed on personal responsibility for rectifying harms done, at least among our sample of Americans, and cast into doubt the popularity of social compensation schemes for accidents, such as New Zealand's taxpayer-funded,

no-fault accident fund. To date, there has been little research into corrective justice, but our findings point out the need to understand the scope, source, and function of the norm of corrective justice and its relation to retributive justice, which has received more empirical attention (e.g., Darley & Pittman, 2003; Tetlock et al., 2007), but both of which have received less attention than distributive and procedural justice.

Second, these findings further illustrate the malleability of the hypothetical-society paradigm. Outside the admittedly highly stylized hypothetical-society paradigm, it would be very difficult to disentangle competing theoretical positions on the relationship between norms of distributive and corrective justice. The simplicity of the paradigm makes it easy to eliminate confounding variables and test alternative explanations for why people view certain social arrangements to be just or unjust. We explore some of the untapped potential of the hypothetical-society paradigm in the next section.

USING HYPOTHETICAL SOCIETIES TO CLARIFY RIVAL THEORETICAL POSITIONS

The hypothetical-society paradigm arguably gives us a chance to glimpse relatively pure value judgments, undistorted by the usual real-world mix of either clashing interest groups or clashing ideological views of the magnitude and causes of social problems. We find that, although some respondents do fit sharply defined ideological ideal types—committed egalitarians and libertarians—the aggregate data are more consistent with an alternative portrait of how most people make decisions in these spectator roles: a value pluralism account (Berlin, 1990; Tetlock, 1986; Tetlock, Peterson, & Lerner, 1996). It is as if people were trying—not necessarily successfully—to balance competing values, with the relative importance of certain values holding quite firm against the counter-pressures thus far applied and the relative importance of other values showing considerable lability and context specificity.

The stablest commitments so far seem to be to a safety net and corrective justice. Like good egalitarian collectivists, people care a lot about ensuring that no one falls below a basic-need safety net across a wide range of circumstances (Frankfurt, 1987), and like good property-rights individualists (and also Durkheimians, in Tetlock et al., 2007), people care a lot about ensuring that norm violators are punished across a wide array of socio-economic background conditions. If we gave voice to these sentiments, they might sound like this: “Give us safety nets (for we know that people can fall far through no fault of their own—and in any event, it pains us to see others suffer), but hold all norm violators, even the poor, accountable to the precepts of corrective justice, lest we revert to the law of the jungle.”

By contrast, other values oscillate more in importance across background societal conditions. Like good egalitarian collectivists, people give heaviest weight to equality when they think the society has deviated from the ideals of meritocracy, but like good capitalist individualists, people give heaviest weight to efficiency and wealth maximization—and resist redistribution most intensely—when society is highly meritocratic and the wealth transfer process inefficient (a “leaky bucket” for transferring assets). Also, intriguingly, people are most likely to polarize along ideological lines when there is greatest ambiguity about meritocracy—arguably the most realistic of the conditions in hypothetical-society experiments, as our participants consistently liken American society to the moderate-meritocracy society in our studies—perhaps a sign that real-world conditions create the most room for implicit ideological values (better to err in the leftward or rightward direction) to come into play.

Skeptics of the hypothetical-society paradigm could argue, however, that it only taps into relatively superficial psychological processes to which people have ready conscious access and that people are not embarrassed about revealing. The skeptics would be correct that we have thus far tended to take the intuitive political philosophies of our respondents at face value. If respondents say that they are Rawlsian egalitarians (Rawls, 1971) or Nozickian libertarians (Nozick, 1974) or value pluralists in the mold of Isaiah Berlin (1990), and respond in that spirit to our instruments, we classify them accordingly. These ideal-type belief system models are best classified as transparent-motivational theories that make the working assumption that people are lay political philosophers struggling to make sense of the world and balance reasonable arguments against each other. From the skeptics’ perspective, we have yet to explore seriously the possibility that motives to which our respondents do not have conscious access (or might be embarrassed to admit) are swaying their judgments of macro-level distributive justice. It is useful, therefore, to consider how a system justification theorist might explain our data—and explore how we might reconfigure hypothetical-society experiments to clarify and eventually disentangle the predictions we might expect from SJT and alternative accounts, such as our own.

System justification theorists could argue that our findings are simply a special case of their own demonstrations that people will accept explanations that justify the status quo, regardless of the objective accuracy of the explanation (Haines & Jost, 2000). But our finding that respondents often favored changes to a status quo that they judged unjust seems hard to square with an authoritarian–acquiescence version of SJT. Nonetheless, system justification theorists could counter that the motive to system-justify operates only when one’s own status or societal hierarchy is at stake, in which case the

hypothetical-society paradigm will be dismissed as too hypothetical to be relevant.⁶ However, if cognitive and motivational components of system justification are triggered automatically by status-relevant stimuli (e.g., Jost & Hunyady, 2002), if system justification processes are triggered regardless of personal responsibility for the status quo (Jost & Hunyady, 2002), and if system justification beliefs comprise an “ideology” that people rely on to interpret, respond to, and assimilate new stimuli (e.g., Blasi & Jost, 2006; Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004), then the hypothetical nature of our societies—in which we can simulate inequalities in existing societies but remove all ambiguity about causation—should not be a barrier to our experiments serving as a testing ground for SJT.⁷

Alternatively, system justification theorists could argue that hypothetical-society researchers have merely reconfirmed that people have a moral preference for social orders roughly similar to the world they currently inhabit: democratic capitalist states, with safety nets of varying height, committed to individualistic norms of justice. Indeed, we would never dispute that the societal status quo is a powerful anchor for moral-political judgment (even in hypothetical societies, as our distribution/redistribution mindset manipulation showed): we strongly suspect that if we could bring the vast numbers of antebellum Americans who regarded slavery as a reasonable

⁶ To address this specific concern, we note that the hypothetical-society approach could be modified to fit a number of systems about which the experimenter could credibly claim to have undisputed factual information, but that are much less hypothetical or unreal than in our studies to date. Most promising would be a “hypothetical class action” study in which the parties have stipulated to all relevant factual matters and agree on the future impact of different remedies but disagree on the desirability of, or need for, different remedies. Participants then would be tasked with setting policy for the organization going forward, with the policy options set along a continuum anchored by status quo preservation on one end and radical reform on the other.

⁷ Indeed, the experimental paradigm employed by Jost and Burgess (2000) and discussed in Jost (2001) bears some resemblance to our hypothetical-society studies. In that paradigm, the experimenters manipulate participants’ perceptions of the relative socioeconomic success of alumni of their own university and a competing university to examine how these perceptions affect explanations for differential success and evaluations of these groups. Studies along these lines, in which arcane matters of public policy are chosen such that participants may be led to believe that facts associated with different policies are real, may be additional good candidates for some of the “stress testing” of system justification theory that we propose in the next few subsections.

accommodation in the mid-19th century into contemporary America, those individuals would bear little psychological resemblance to whatever pathological fringe of the current population endorses race war and the oppression of minorities.⁸

We would counter that, at minimum, the hypothetical-society paradigm has already revealed a good deal about what varying viewpoints consider plausible justifications for varying social orders. For instance, it is telling that even many hard-core conservatives embrace equality when confronted with a hypothetical society in which one's socio-economic status has been determined randomly, not by skill and hard work. And even many hard-core liberals embrace efficiency when confronted with a hypothetical society in which one's socio-economic status has been determined entirely by hard individual work, with no role for chance. If even the belief systems of hard-core ideologues (who might be hypothesized to resemble in profile extreme low and high scorers on the system justification scale) acknowledge boundary conditions on their belief systems, so, too, should researchers who are trying to model the political-psychological functioning of these belief systems. Indeed, we would argue that our studies, which focus on choices between alternative social systems, provide more direct evidence on the operation of putative system justification motives than do system justification studies that focus on attitudes toward high- versus low-status groups that typically are subject to both false- and veridical-consciousness interpretations.⁹ From this standpoint, the largest lacuna in system justification research is the paucity of research into the motive-behavior linkage—it is one thing to argue

⁸ We acknowledge, however, that the psychological similarities may be more pronounced between support for slavery in antebellum America and support for anti-redistributive policies in the early 21st century. But we caution against the historicist fallacy that those similarities shed light on who has the normative high ground in policy debates in the early 21st century. For instance, the same integratively simple style of reasoning that led Churchill to oppose self-government for India also led him to see Nazi Germany as an existential threat to the British Empire—and the same absolutist reasoning that led fire-eater defenders of slavery to secede from the United States also led abolitionists to pressure Lincoln to define the Civil War as a war against slavery (Tetlock, Armor, & Peterson, 1994).

⁹ Certainly some system justification studies employ behavioral measures (e.g., Jost, Pelham, & Carvalho, 2002) and assess preferences and beliefs potentially relevant to the social order (e.g., Kay, Jimenez, & Jost, 2002; Jost, 1997), but many examine attitudes and stereotypes about ingroups and outgroups that vary in their socioeconomic status and do not directly examine system-justifying behaviors.

that humans are adept at rationalizing outcomes and quite another to argue that these rationalizations have deleterious effects on low-status groups (as Blasi & Jost [2006] suggest is true with respect to underutilization of the legal system by disadvantaged groups; see also O'Brien & Major [2005] and Jost & Thompson [2000] for evidence on the positive and negative effects of system-justifying beliefs on psychological well-being, respectively, for high- and low-status groups).

We would also counter that existing hypothetical-society research has barely scratched the surface of the conceptual complexities of macro-level distributive justice—and of how ordinary people reason their way through these dilemmas. The more we grapple with these complexities, the more sharply we will understand both the strengths and limitations of subterranean-motivational theories, such as SJT, and more transparent-motivation theories, such as the value pluralism model. Blasi and Jost (2006, p. 1124) stake out a provocative position on the generality of the system justification motive: “Most of the time, people have a general, inherently conservative tendency to accept the legitimacy of whatever ‘pecking order’ is in effect and to perceive existing institutions and practices as generally reasonable and just, at least until proven otherwise.” We are unsure how much we disagree with this claim, but we do believe that the hypothetical-society paradigm provides a useful vehicle for clarifying the key points of ambiguity that cause us to withhold judgment. Accordingly, we devote the remainder of this chapter to identifying how the paradigm can be used to clarify and test the predictions of the rival theoretical camps.

Clarification is the critical first step because verbal theories can often be read in many ways, and this is true both of our belief system ideal types derived from hypothetical-society work and of SJT. With that key caveat, our reading of SJT is that the ideal-type system justifier should be automatically sympathetic, across a broad range of background conditions, to any hierarchy that resembles the system onto which that individual imprinted during political socialization (Jost, Fitzsimons, & Kay, 2004), whereas the ideal-type antithesis of a system justifier in the United States should strongly prefer equality (or rebelliousness) across an equally broad range of societal background conditions. Insofar as ideologues at either end of this continuum qualify their support for, or rejection of, inequality, we have evidence either that these observers are mindlessly allowing for exceptions already permitted in their home society or that these observers are thoughtfully qualifying their original one-size-fits-all ideological templates by taking individuating information into account. This difference is, in our view, a big one. If the latter, we have evidence for what we view as value-pluralism boundary conditions on system justification: people may justify the status quo only up to

the point at which they feel the status quo is justifiable given their internalized schemata and values for judging fair play. Put differently, such data would show that the justifications in system justification theory should not be viewed as merely epiphenomenal; there may be a critical feedback linkage between the justifications that people articulate and the changes to the systemic status quo they are willing to consider.

HOW RESOLUTELY SUPPORTIVE OF INEQUALITY MUST ONE BE TO QUALIFY AS A SYSTEM JUSTIFIER?

Unless system justification theorists adopt the orthodox positivist position that system justifiers are simply high scorers on the system justification scale—a position that hobbles cross-theory dialogue—we see a need to clarify the boundary conditions for distinguishing reflexive (mindless) system justifiers from political observers whose value systems and sense of fair play lead them to approve certain types of social-systemic arrangements—and condemn others. Here, we see value in turning to the hypothetical-society paradigm, because there are many ways to adapt this paradigm to probe how far system justifiers are prepared to go in defending inequality (and the types of dissonance-reduction strategies that they are prepared to use to trivialize awkward facts and to eliminate any need to change their minds). Here, we consider the possible reactions of high system justifiers to two categories of dissonant data: (a) those on intergenerational mobility, and (b) those on the effects of free trade on national security.

“Tormenting” Conservatives with Dissonant Data on Intergenerational Mobility

In the first generation of hypothetical-society research, we were content with crude operational definitions of meritocracy that manipulated the relative importance of hard work versus luck in determining income. But many observers find it difficult to view a society as meritocratic if one’s status is determined by genetic lottery—and the children of the relatively poor have virtually no chance of rising into a higher class, whereas the children of the relatively wealthy are virtually guaranteed of remaining in that class (Rawls, 1971; Fishkin, 1983). It follows that social science research on intergenerational mobility has relatively high political stakes. As we saw in the earlier hypothetical-society studies, most people move in an egalitarian or leftward direction on income transfers when they are confronted with a low-meritocracy society.

This raises the question of how high scorers on system justification, or—as we suspect they are—conservatives (for the view that political conservatism

largely is system justification, see Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003), respond to hypothetical societies in which meritocracy is not specified but must be inferred from data on intergenerational mobility. We conjecture that the first cognitive reaction of high system justifiers should be to assume that the observed patterns of inequality are legitimate (or justified), and that cognitively sophisticated system justifiers should be predisposed to defend the status quo by invoking the currently politically acceptable justifications for inequality—namely, the system follows the norms of meritocracy and equality of opportunity. The hypothetical-society paradigm allows us, however, to “stress test” this belief system by manipulating key background facts on intergenerational mobility that cut off favorite conservative dissonance reduction strategies. Promising manipulations include: (a) inequality is growing (the distance between the economic cellar and economic penthouse), thus cutting off the argument that things are getting better; (b) it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to rise from poverty to prosperity in one or even two generations, thus cutting off the Horatio-Alger-style anecdotes of rags-to-riches success; (c) there is no evidence that richer children have better prospects than poorer children because they have genetic endowments better suited to facilitate success in competitive market economies or because their parents do a better job bringing them up and inculcating character traits conducive to success (more intelligent, more optimistic, higher energy levels, etc.), thus cutting off arguments of either biological or cultural superiority; and (d) there is evidence that stereotypes and prejudice are key factors restraining upward mobility among the poor.

From our value-pluralism perspective, which holds that people rely on simple modes of dissonance reduction until they are forced by circumstances to embrace more complex modes, this series of factual constraints in the hypothetical society should drive conservatives to adopt more integratively complex (and centrist) policy positions. This is so because we have now narrowed the range of plausible explanations for social inequality in the hypothetical society to two salient candidates: better schools for the rich and better networking opportunities for the rich. We suspect that when the trade-offs are made this transparent, only the hardest-core conservatives and system justifiers will still resist egalitarian policy interventions designed to improve schooling opportunities and networking opportunities for the poor (e.g., generous vouchers and affirmative action outreach—although not de facto or de jure quotas—which activate a new set of value trade-offs). These hard-right dissenters might argue—in Burkean fashion—that previous generations of parents worked hard to ensure that their descendents would have advantages, so it is a bad idea to destabilize that societal expectation. But

we also suspect that most conservatives and system justifiers will, at this juncture, make policy concessions and accept the need for egalitarian interventions of some form.

An unresolved question is how system justification theorists should react to such a result. We obviously cannot speak for them but we favor the following accommodation: people tend to be system justifiers up to the point at which they feel they can no longer justify the system because it violates an internalized ethical schema of fair play. If there remains a difference between our position and that of system justification, it is our objection to labeling any ethical schema that happens to favor the status quo as merely serving a system justification function. Here we see a classic fuzzy-set functionalist judgment call (Tetlock, 2002), with tough questions for both camps. The tough question for us is: How far must perceptions and reality diverge before we grant that the perceptions serve a system justification rather than an object appraisal function? The tough question for them is: How grounded in reality must perceptions be before they grant that perceptions serve an object appraisal as opposed to a system justification function?

*“Tormenting” System Justifiers with Dissonant Data
on the Effects of Trade on National Sovereignty*

In the first generation of hypothetical-society research, we brought the values of economic and market efficiency into conflict with the values of social equality, but we never brought market efficiency into conflict with another value also likely to rank high in the moral-political priorities of conservatives and, by implication, high system justifiers. National sovereignty and security are promising candidates.

Consider the problems posed by international trade. For orthodox, free market theorists, the logic of comparative advantage holds that the surest method of promoting prosperity is by permitting the free flow of goods, services, capital, and human beings across borders. If only rich countries would just quit erecting protectionist barriers that prevent poor people from working their way out of poverty, there would be much less poverty in the world today. Of course, this surgically simple solution can have painful side effects—international trade can produce major dislocations within societies. American blue-collar workers accustomed to earning \$25 per hour run the risk of losing their jobs to Mexican workers glad to make \$5 per hour—and these Mexican workers, in turn, risk losing their jobs to Chinese workers glad to make only \$2 per hour.

We suspect that conservatives, and especially libertarian conservatives, are much less worried than those on the left about the power of trade to

increase inequality within their home society (see parallel section below on “tormenting” system critics). But there may well be conditions under which conservatives do become alarmed about the effects of international trade. Consider how the following combination of facts in a hypothetical-society paradigm would become increasingly dissonant for a conservative: (a) the target society has a mutually beneficial trading relationship with another society, but the other society is reaping much larger economic growth benefits from the trade; (b) the other society is a potential military rival that is translating significant fractions of its rapidly growing economy into greater military strength; and (c) the dominant social class in the target society has a strong vested interest in the continuation of the trading relationship with the other society (a disproportionate share of the benefits of the trade flow to this elite group within the target society) (see Herrmann, Tetlock, and Diascro, 2001).

Here, again, our suspicion would be that even high system justifiers will be hard-pressed to justify supporting the interest of the dominant class in a society so configured. There comes a point at which enough is enough: the status quo loses its legitimacy, and even those predisposed to justify the global free market status quo give up the cause. Again, although one may dismiss this stress testing of system justification theory on grounds that observers are judging a hypothetical status quo, not their own—the real—world, this approach at least promises evidence on the boundary conditions of SJT: Are system justification tendencies so automatic, and unconscious rationalization tendencies so strong, that system justification continues even when the obvious routes to rationalizing the legitimacy of the status quo have explicitly been cut off and the system in question is nominally hypothetical, or can these tendencies be overridden by cutting off normal rationalization routes at the conscious level and, if so, how easily may people be divorced from their system justifying ideologies (or, in the case of the disadvantaged, freed from the fog of false consciousness) (Jost, 1995)?

How Resolutely Opposed to Inequality Should One Be to Qualify as a System Critic?

Fair play requires subjecting those on the left to the functional equivalent of the dissonance-maximizing treatments inflicted on those on the right: How far are left-leaning respondents prepared to go in opposing all forms of inequality? And what types of dissonance-reduction strategies are they prepared to adopt to deflect bothersome facts that pressure them to change their minds? We focus on two examples: (a) reactions to increasingly dissonant data on the sources of social inequality within the home society, and (b) reactions to increasingly dissonant data on the impact of protectionist barriers

designed to protect workers in one's own society but at the price of inflicting great suffering on much poorer workers in other societies.

*"Tormenting" System Critics with Dissonant Data
on Social Inequality*

In the first generation of hypothetical-society work, we explored the willingness of those on the left to reject increasingly meritocratic hypothetical societies by manipulating the importance of effort/ability as causes of socio-economic status. But we never subjected the left to tougher ideological tests that probed just how far they were willing to go in pursuit of equality as an end goal that trumps all other competing ends. Imagine, therefore, a hypothetical society in which we preempt arguments for a wide range of egalitarian policy interventions by stipulating that: (a) the society already rigorously enforces equality-of-opportunity laws, thus undercutting the dissonance-reduction strategy that inequality could be eliminated if only more aggressive action were taken against ongoing discrimination; (b) the society has no history of ethnic or racial prejudice, thus undercutting the strategy of arguing that inequality could be eliminated if only aggressive action were taken against the residual effects of past injustices; (c) the inequalities create powerful incentives for efficiency and economic growth from which all benefit, thus undercutting the strategy of arguing that inequality could be eliminated (without making everyone poorer) if taxation policy reallocated wealth; (d) the relatively poor are, by current objective standards of purchasing power, already very well-off, further undercutting need-based humanitarian arguments for equality; (e) the poor are satisfied with the fairness of the system or even that the poor are more satisfied with the conditions of their lives than the wealthy and are making work-leisure trade-offs in favor of leisure and less income (in other words, the poor realize that, beyond a certain point, which they feel they have reached, higher income does not buy greater happiness; Kahneman, Krueger, & Schkade, 2006); (f) scientific evidence has revealed that children from wealthier families have genetic endowments that are, on average, better adapted for success in competitive market economies and that, whenever lower-class children have the "right stuff," they do indeed rise into higher socio-economic classes (thus reaffirming that equality of opportunity does exist); (g) scientific research indicates that, short of mandating poverty for all, there are only two remaining mechanisms for breaking down social class barriers—nature or nurture—either genetic engineering designed to level the DNA playing field or socializing the task of socializing children and requiring that all children be raised in state-run institutions that prevent higher-class parents from giving special advantages to their

children (from elaborate bedtime stories to excessive homework help) and lower-class parents from teaching their children impulsive and hedonistic values detrimental to success.

Choreographing the background facts to maximize dissonance for egalitarians is obviously a complex, iterative process, best done in adversarial collaboration with rival theoretical camps. Here, though, we are most interested in the choices that egalitarians make when the only economically and technologically feasible method of achieving egalitarian goals requires acknowledging the tension between the values of social equality and family autonomy.

Radical egalitarians—from Rousseau to Marx—have long recognized this tension: as long as the family is the social unit primarily responsible for socializing children, and as long as some families are (even holding income constant) prepared to make much greater sacrifices to ensure the success of their children, it is logically impossible to achieve equality of opportunity. Socializing children is a relatively easy choice from this radically egalitarian point of view—and many socialist governments have indeed pursued this “it-takes-a-village” option (from Israeli kibbutzim to Scandinavian day care to Chinese communes). Conservative and libertarian philosophers have long resisted such arguments and warned that transferring the task of socializing children to the state is both a violation of parental rights and a dangerous step toward totalitarianism and collective mind control. Rejecting a prominent state role in childcare is a relatively easy choice from these points of view.

Our working hypothesis is, however, that, for most people, the choice is a tough one. We suspect that most people—system critics and system justifiers alike—are value pluralists who are deeply torn by this value conflict and oscillate erratically between favoring family autonomy versus equality of opportunity as a function of horror stories of child neglect and abuse (favoring the left) and horror stories of state mind control and parents losing parental rights for “trivial” reasons (favoring the right). Extrapolating from earlier work on the value pluralism model (Tetlock, 1986; Tetlock et al., 1996), we also suspect that people (especially egalitarians now) can be motivated to invest the necessary cognitive effort to generate complex compromise solutions to the dilemma only to the degree that we have systematically blocked off simple modes of dissonance resolution in the hypothetical societies. These tempting simpler modes of dissonance reduction include challenging the “fact situation” posited in the hypothetical society (such as “the poor aren’t really as happy as the rich; that is just false consciousness” and “behavioral-genetics claims are just racist”) and trying to find a trade-off-free solution (creating a state-funded system in which social class distinctions disappear

because everyone develops to her full potential). The key question is: What value trade-offs do egalitarians make when constrained by the factual and causal ground rules of the hypothetical society—and when they cannot make up facts of their own liking? The value pluralism model predicts that the more highly respondents value both equality and the family, the more excruciatingly complex the judgment calls will become of balancing parental control and social equality in designing exact institutional rules. If integratively complex policy reasoning is a reasonable approximation of one's ideal cognitive process outcome (and that seems to be the case for advocates of deliberative democracy; e.g., Fishkin, 1992), this would be how to achieve it via the hypothetical-society paradigm.

The process may seem torturous because the goal is to explore the conditions under which even unrelenting system critics relent. Or, framed as a question for system justification theorists, how dogmatic (principled) an opponent of inequality must system critics be to avoid reclassification as system justifiers? For instance, and we doubt that system justification theorists take this extreme a position, if the price of avoiding the label "system justifier" is compelling all families to accept a one-size-fits-all child-rearing system that guarantees equality of outcome, we suspect that 90% plus of the population will qualify as system justifiers. Simply put, would a system justification theorist consider adherence to the existing American family structure, which vests considerable autonomy and responsibility for child development in the parents and which surely breeds societal inequality, evidence of the system justification motive at work? If not, why not? In any event, if system justification is to be more than a vague expression of political disapproval, as system justification theorists surely mean it to be, we need much tighter specification of the value and policy litmus tests being used—implicitly or explicitly—by system justification theorists.

"Tormenting" System Critics with International Trade Scenarios

In the first generation of hypothetical-society research, we were content to rely on crude operational definitions of the poverty line, assuming that everyone shared an understanding of, and aversion to, poverty. What counts as poor, however, in one society at one point in history may count as wealthy for that same society at a previous point in history or for other societies at the same point in history. Upper middle class professionals in parts of sub-Saharan Africa in the early 21st century have per capita incomes substantially lower (even using a purchasing-power-parity standard) than the average factory worker in Western Europe or the United States.

In the hypothetical-society paradigm, we can require subjects to assume—as noted earlier—that the logic of comparative advantage in international trade

holds: the surest method of reducing large income gaps across societies is by promoting the free flow of goods, services, capital, and human beings across borders. How, then, should one respond if one is an egalitarian asked to judge the acceptability of a trade agreement that will increase inequality within one's own wealthy society (because the paychecks of one's "own" working class are in decline as the result of lower labor cost competition in poorer societies) but will also raise the absolute standard of living of the poorest people in poor societies, as well as decrease inequality between societies (by raising the overall per capita income of poorer societies closer to that of wealthier societies)? The predictions we can extract from SJT presumably hinge on whether we choose to define the system critics as cosmopolitan egalitarians, concerned more with inequality on a global scale, or as parochial egalitarians, concerned solely with inequality within their own society. And the data we can extract from the study will probably hinge on the escape routes that we offer respondents in hypothetical societies from this dissonance-inducing problem (escape routes such as reserving some wealth generated by free trade for transfer payments to help those in one's own society most adversely affected by free trade, the solution preferred by value-pluralistic neo-liberals such as Robert Rubin [Rubin & Weisberg, 2004] and Thomas Friedman [2005]).

Again, the "system" in system justification theory is underdefined.¹⁰ The theory offers little guidance on how to apply it to complex debates that activate clashing values—and on which reasonable people disagree. We see roughly equally strong arguments for classifying "egalitarian" protectionists in wealthy countries as either system justifiers or system critics—and no good reason to suppose that psychologists deserve any special deference in the answers they might give as to which systems should count, except to the extent that their answers are founded on empirical data. If conservatives become system critics and liberals become system justifiers in the "America becoming more open to international trade" scenario, and if other similar reversals can be identified, then it becomes difficult to argue that the perpetuation of economic inequality or the defense of the status quo per se generally triggers system-justifying tendencies in those deemed high system justifiers in the United States, namely, conservatives (Jost, Blount, Pfeffer, & Hunyady, 2003; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003). In such a case, we see the benefit of the hypothetical-society approach as pushing toward a more con-

¹⁰ Blasi and Jost (2006) recognize this problem and note the need for studies to determine when one system will prevail over another in cases of system conflict, but to our knowledge, little or no research addresses this question.

textualized theory about the conditions under which system-justifying, and system critical, tendencies should occur.

CONCLUSION

The hypothetical-society paradigm may well be the best of the many imperfect methodological means at our disposal for testing the relative merits of more transparent-motivational and more subterranean-motivational theories of public policy reasoning. Here, it is instructive to recall just how deep the indeterminacy problems are in testing a theory such as system justification in the real world. We repeatedly run into variations on C. Wright Mills' vocabulary-of-motives problem: one person's reason for holding a belief (say, about social class differences in achievement values or about the wisdom of the market) can typically be dismissed by others as a mere rationalization (say, as a means of justifying existing inequality or as evidence of insensitivity to the residual effects of past and current discrimination). Rubin and Hewstone (2004) make a somewhat analogous point when they argue that system justification theory should not get explanatory credit for phenomena, such as attributional favoritism toward higher-status groups, that could simply be the result of people observing depressing patterns of covariation between group membership and outcomes in society at large (e.g., the higher levels of crime, family breakdown, drug abuse, school failure, and so on among the poor). To use their analogy to a football game, should we conclude that members of the losing team who attribute their defeat to their own shortcomings are, ipso facto, guilty of outgroup favoritism and system justification? Or, should we conclude that they are engaging in highly adaptive forms of self-criticism? Indeed, it is worth asking what happens to disadvantaged groups that develop political cultures that censure all self-critical commentary as evidence that the commentator has been co-opted by the oppressors. Do they not risk trapping themselves in an ideology of victimology?

The list of Millsian reason-rationalization riddles is a long one. For instance, if one believes that prosperity and economic efficiency require creating incentives for hard work and risk-taking (incentives that inevitably create inequality), does that belief count as evidence for the operation of a system justification motive (one's belief that the wealthy are being rewarded for merit) or as evidence simply that one understands a fundamental scientific principle of economics (for the former view, see Jost et al., 2003)? If one believes that a social system with stable, secure property rights is essential for promoting prosperity and economic efficiency, does that count as evidence of a desire for unequal relations among social groups, or does it count as evidence that one

has drawn correct lessons from history—at least according to one influential school of economic history (North, 1981, 2005)? If one believes that ego resilience, intelligence, the capacity to delay gratification, and a strong work ethic are found more often among the economically successful, does that count as evidence that one has been gulled into accepting system-justifying Horatio Alger stories (cf. Wakslak, Jost, Tyler, & Chen, 2007), as evidence that one is in touch with sociological reality (as Herrnstein & Murray, 1994, suggest), or as evidence that one has embraced an adaptive illusion (Taylor & Brown, 1988)?

These questions are unanswerable in real-world debates because it is so easy for advocates—motivated reasoners that we all are to some degree (Kunda, 1999)—to invent facts and double standards that conceal potential trade-offs (an invention process that, if it is to serve its subterranean-motivational function, should occur out of awareness and be invisible to others). But these questions become answerable in the hypothetical-society paradigm because it is so difficult for advocates to conceal the same trade-offs in a world in which all of the key factual parameters have been specified by experimental fiat. The hypothetical-society paradigm then becomes the platform for previously impossible conversations between theorists. For instance, even if we are right and if transparent-motivational theories can outmaneuver subterranean-motivational theories in carefully choreographed hypothetical societies that compel conscious acknowledgment of complex value trade-offs, subterranean-motivational theorists still have a number of reasonable counterarguments. They can posit that socially undesirable motivational forces only come into play when enough attributional ambiguity exists to permit rationalization covers—or that such motives only come into play in settings that better simulate real-world status relationships. We do not dismiss such arguments as patch-up operations of a degenerating research program. Such defenses may well be defensible, and the best way to tell is by gradually adding the requisite complexity and realism to hypothetical-society studies.

In brief, if we want to escape otherwise intractable disputes over political motive attribution, we need to explore human judgment in imaginary social worlds that we can experimentally manipulate in precisely targeted ways that reflect the key conceptual parameters of real-world political debates.

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A Contextual Analysis of the System Justification Motive and Its Societal Consequences

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Abstract

In this chapter, we review recent theory and empirical evidence demonstrating the effects of the system justification motive on consequential social and psychological phenomena, as well as the conditions under which these effects are likely to be most pronounced. First, we review theory and evidence demonstrating three conditions that increase the activation of the system justification motive: system threat, perceived system inevitability, and perceptions of personal and system control. Second, we describe how, under these conditions, the system justification motive manifests itself in processes of explicit system defense, interpersonal and intergroup perception, and resistance to social change. Throughout, we emphasize the contextual nature of these effects as well as their consequences for the maintenance of social inequality.

It goes without saying that people prefer to participate in social systems that mesh with their abstract ideals. When this does not occur, however, they show an impressive ability to adjust and move on. Indeed, the psychological literature is rife with examples of the human ability to adapt to and cope with the constraints of reality. Once a particular arrangement is firmly entrenched in society, even if originally undesirable, it often benefits from a slew of psychological biases (Kay, Jimenez, & Jost, 2002). Whether through the construction of beliefs and preferences that cast one's social reality in a more positive light, or the reconstrual of social reality itself, people are excellent at, as the saying goes, "turning lemons into lemonade."

SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION THEORY

System justification theory (SJT; Jost & Banaji, 1994) suggests that this tendency is equally applicable to the way in which people relate to the external systems with which they interact—that is, the overarching institutions, organizations, and social norms within which they live and the rules that they, to at least some extent, are required to abide. According to SJT, people are

motivated to view these systems as just, legitimate, and desirable (see also Eidelman & Crandall, this volume). This is not to say that people will always feel entirely favorable toward the social systems within which they function, but that, all else being equal, they will view these systems more favorably than the objective data may warrant.

According to SJT, system justification tendencies are, in a sense, natural psychological responses instigated to reduce epistemic and existential sources of threat and anxiety—that is, an adaptive, evolved process of psychological coping. Acknowledging that one is forced to conform to the rules, norms, and conventions of a system that is illegitimate, unfair, and undesirable is likely to provoke considerable anxiety and threat (Kay et al., 2008a); it makes perfect sense, therefore, that when little can be done to change this reality (see Laurin & Kay, 2008), people would be highly motivated to view the system as less undesirable, unfair, and illegitimate—that is, to justify or rationalize it. Such a process of coping is akin to several others previously addressed in the social psychological literature, most notably, Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance and Lerner's (1980) belief in a just world, both of which suggest that when reality does not necessarily fit with our preferred view of it, we can engage in a number of psychological strategies to correct the mismatch.

An important implication of this theoretical position is that societal systems of inequality are *not* justified solely as the result of the powerful desire to maintain their own position of relative privilege, or people, in general, preferring hierarchy (although it does not deny that these things may also occur). Rather, SJT focuses on the more basic epistemic and existential needs that lead people, regardless of group status, to be motivated to view their social systems (however these systems may be structured) as just, legitimate, and desirable (see Jost & Hunyady, 2002, 2005; Kay et al., 2008a). From this perspective, then, system justification phenomena are not solely the consequences of those in power attempting (consciously or otherwise) to encourage subordinate group members to accept and legitimize their place in the hierarchy (see Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), but also the result of a general motivation to defend and bolster those external systems within which they are forced to operate. Indeed, recent research under the umbrella of SJT has now demonstrated many different ways in which people engage in system-justifying tendencies that are not easily explicable in terms of specific motivations for social dominance or preferences for hierarchy in general (e.g., Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Kay, Jimenez, & Jost, 2002; Kay et al., 2008b; Laurin & Kay, 2008).

Last—and of special importance to the goals of the present chapter—much like other theories of motivated social cognition, SJT suggests that

system-justifying tendencies are *context dependent*. Cognitive dissonance reduction, for example, becomes much more likely to occur as the perception of free choice on the part of actors increases (Holmes & Strickland, 1970); social identity effects are often highly dependent on contextual variables such as the legitimacy and permeability of group boundaries (for a review, see Brown, 2000); and motivated psychological processes aimed at preserving the belief in a just world, such as victim derogation, are most likely to surface when other options, such as actually helping the victim, are blocked (see Lerner & Miller, 1978). A key focus of this chapter is on demonstrating the similar contextual nature of the system justification motive. In the next section, we theoretically outline the contexts in which the system justification motive is most likely to be active. Afterward, we describe recent research demonstrating how, in these contexts, the system justification motive can lead to the maintenance and perpetuation of inequality, as well as a reduction in attempts at social redress.

THE CONTEXTUAL NATURE OF SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION: CIRCUMSTANCES THAT INCREASE SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION TENDENCIES

Given that the system justification motive is assumed to help people cope with the existential and epistemic threats of being more or less “forced” to operate within a system that one has little control over, it makes sense that certain conditions—in particular, those conditions most likely to exacerbate the potential threat—would be more likely than others to activate this motivation. In our research, we have focused on three facilitating conditions: (a) perceptions of system threat, (b) perceptions of system inevitability, and (c) perceptions of system dependence and/or control.

System Threat and Affirmation

Much as self-threat (affirmation) manipulations increase (decrease) the proclivity to engage in self-defensive processes (e.g., Fein & Spencer, 1997; Sherman & Cohen, 2002; Steele, 1988; Steele & Liu, 1983), threatening (affirming) the system justification motive should increase (decrease) the proclivity to engage in processes of system justification (see Hafer, 2000; Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Jost, Kivetz, Rubini, Guermandi, & Mosso, 2005; Kay, Jost, & Young, 2005). This prediction is consistent with recent research demonstrating the extent to which meeting a desired end-state greatly reduces those motivated processes generally used to achieve that end-state (e.g., Förster, Liberman, & Higgins, 2005), and research demonstrating the extent to which blocking pursuit of a particular goal results in increased efforts to reach it (Atkinson & Birch, 1970; Bargh, Gollwitzer, Lee-Chai, Barndollar, &

Troetschel, 2001). Thus, to the extent that a given psychological phenomenon originates from the motive to defend a particular social system, a threat to the legitimacy of that system should increase the need to engage in this phenomenon, and an affirmation of the legitimacy of the system should decrease this need.

Such threats can occur in the real world in many forms, ranging from (the threat of) terrorist attacks to economic turmoil to public criticisms of the legitimacy of a particular system, and so forth (cf. Sales, 1972). In the laboratory, manipulations of system threat or system affirmation generally involve exposing participants to (fictitious) news articles describing someone's opinion regarding the socio-political climate of a particular system (see Jost et al., 2005; Kay et al., 2005; Lau, Kay, & Spencer, 2008) but research has also, on occasion, involved other threats, such as reminders of terrorism (Ullrich & Cohrs, 2007). In the case of the former, care is generally taken to ensure the threats or affirmations are specific to the system, and do not threaten other related constructs such as self- or group-esteem (see Kay et al., 2005; Laurin & Kay, 2008).

System Inevitability

Motivated rationalizations can occur for many reasons and in many different forms. One factor common to all these, however, appears to be the *inevitability* of the outcome being rationalized. In studies on cognitive dissonance, people rationalize their past, not future, decisions—presumably because their future decisions are not yet inevitable (e.g., see Blanton, George, & Crocker, 2001). Kay, Jimenez, and Jost (2002) demonstrated that the more likely an outcome was—inevitability being the most extreme form of likelihood—the more likely it was to be justified. Finally, the wide array of effects noted by terror management researchers is presumably due to the overwhelming inevitability of the focus of the terror, namely, death (see Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 2004).

Social systems, once entrenched, are not easily changed. Although they may be less certain than death (and maybe taxes), leaving or changing a social system—whether it be one's country, religion, family, university, or place of employment—is, in many circumstances, not considered to be a feasible option. Although it is not entirely inevitable, in most circumstances, people are unlikely to be exiting, switching, or changing their social systems any time soon. This is likely a key reason why such systems are so frequently justified and rationalized (Laurin & Kay, 2008). That is, given that people will be somewhat forced to abide by the rules and norms of their systems, and to acknowledge the extent to which their outcomes in life are dependent on these rules and norms, the psychological advantages of not constantly thinking ill of these systems are obvious.

As Stephen Stills (1970) sang many years ago, "If you can't be with the one you love . . . love the one you're with." Indeed, this folk rocker displayed some excellent social psychological intuition with these lyrics, as decades of social psychological research has since demonstrated that tendencies to rationalize and bolster *relationships* and *relationship partners* are determined, in part, by perceptions of the extent to which other romantic options are available (e.g., Rusbult, 1980; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Similar processes, we suggest, play a role in dictating the activation of tendencies to rationalize and bolster the broader *social systems* within which people function.

All else equal, those systems perceived as relatively inevitable are most likely to be defended by their constituents. Two obvious determinants of this are (a) perceptions of the extent to which the system is likely or unlikely to change (that is, its stability) and (b) perceptions of the relative ease or difficulty with which the individual can exit the system and enter a new one (that is, its escapability). Recent research has generally focused on the latter of these, demonstrating the role that perceptions of escapability play in heightening system-justifying tendencies (Laurin & Kay, 2008). The literature we ultimately review, therefore, will also focus on conditions of perceived escapability, rather than perceived stability.

System Dependence and Control

People tend to downplay the role of chance and happenstance in determining social outcomes and prefer to imbue their social worlds with order, reason, and balance (e.g., Heider, 1958; Langer, 1975; Lerner, 1980; Peterson & Seligman, 1984; Taylor & Brown, 1999). As Lerner (1980, p. vii) explained in the preface to his now-classic book, *The Belief in a Just World*:

We (humans) do not believe that things just happen in our world; there is a pattern to events which conveys not only a sense of orderliness or predictability, but also the compelling experience of appropriateness expressed in the typically implicit judgment, Yes, that is the way it should be.

Several lines of research converge on this notion that people prefer to endorse the belief that events will not randomly befall them—a belief that has been shown to be key to healthy psychological functioning (Biner, Angle, Park, & Mellinger, 1995; Dalbert, 2001; Davis, Sundahl, & Lesbo, 2000; Friedland, Keinan, & Regev, 1992; Langer, 1975; Peterson & Seligman, 1983, 1984; Plaks, Grant, & Dweck, 2005; Rotter, 1990; Taylor & Brown, 1999; Taylor et al., 2000). Psychological theories of religion have often cited the need to believe in a safe, predictable, and fair social world (Allport, 1966; Batson & Stocks, 2004; Weber, 1958), and it has been demonstrated that members of different religions explicitly explain injustices via different models of causality

(Young & Morris, 2004). Finally, research suggests that a crucial psychological consequence of random trauma, such as stranger rape, is the unusually strong challenge these extreme events pose to the view that we live in a fair, nonrandom world (Janoff-Bulman, 1989, 1992, 1998). Traumatic events, it is said, “shatter survivors’ fundamental assumptions about the world” (Janoff-Bulman & Yopyk, 2004, p. 123). Implicit in this approach is the notion that, until trauma survivors experience these jarring events, they have maintained their beliefs in a predictable and orderly world in which punishments and rewards are doled out fairly.

The main theme across these research programs is that people possess a motivation to view things as predictable, orderly, and under control, as opposed to random and chaotic. The social systems within which people function, it has been suggested, can provide this feeling of order (see Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Kay et al., 2008a). Thus, to the extent that one feels subsumed by a given system—that is, the extent to which he or she operates within its rules and norms and believes her welfare is somewhat dependent on that system—she or he should be motivated to defend it. That is, given that a just system ensures rewards and punishments are distributed rationally and reasonably, as opposed to randomly or haphazardly, not justifying the system would force the individual to acknowledge the role of chance and randomness in his or her life.

This logic leads to the identification of two contextual factors that should increase system justification tendencies. First, the more people feel dependent on a given system—that is, the more it is presumed to be an influence on the social and economic outcomes of an individual’s life—the more they should be motivated to defend and justify it. Indeed, manipulations that increase feelings of system dependence have been demonstrated to increase the defense of those specific systems (Laurin & Kay, 2008).

Second, when feelings of personal control are temporarily decreased, processes of system defense should be heightened—a process we have referred to as *compensatory control* (Kay et al., 2008a; see also Rothbaum, Weisz, & Snyder, 1982). The logic underlying this prediction is as follows: As we described earlier, people are motivated to perceive control and order and to guard against feelings of randomness and chaos. The primary mode for doing so, at least in Western cultures, is through the belief in personal control. We know from a variety of sources, however, that feelings of personal control tend to fluctuate both situationally and chronically (e.g., Burger, 1989; Burger & Cooper, 1979; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Iyengar & Lepper, 1999; Ji, Peng, & Nisbett, 2000; Pepitone & Saffiotti, 1997; Rodin, Rennert, & Solomon, 1980; Weisz, Rothbaum, & Blackburn, 1984; Wohl & Enzle, 2003). Given these fluctuations in beliefs about personal control, how

do people maintain their motivated beliefs in an orderly, predictable, and just world? According to the model of compensatory control, we suggest they do so by increasingly relying on external sources of control, such as social systems, to compensate for lowered levels of personal control (Kay et al., 2008a). Such an idea is consistent with the notion that perceptions of personal control may be subsumed under the more general belief that *things are under control* (Antonovsky, 1979).

Thus, the system justification motive should also be increasingly active under conditions of decreased personal control. Indeed, several studies (which will be described in considerably more detail in a later section) have now demonstrated that situational manipulations designed to temporarily lower feelings of personal control do lead to temporary increases in system justification (Kay et al., 2008a).

Summary

To summarize, then, we have outlined three broad contexts in which the system justification motive will be most likely to surface and impact judgment and behavior. These are (a) situations of heightened system threat, (b) perceptions of system inevitability, and (c) increased feelings of system dependence or lowered feelings of personal control. In this next section, we turn our attention to a discussion of how, in these contexts, the activation of the system justification motive can lead to increased rationalization of inequality and reduced efforts at system redress.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION MOTIVE FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF THE STATUS QUO

As alluded to earlier, we believe that the system justification motive evolved to help people cope with the existential and epistemic threats that can ensue from operating within a social system that is perceived as illegitimate and/or unfair (see Jost & Hunyady, 2002, 2005). From this perspective, the motive is highly adaptive, representing another example of the impressive *psychological immune system* (Gilbert, Pinel, Wilson, Blumberg, & Wheatley, 1998). From a societal-level perspective, however, the system justification motive has the potential to produce many consequences of more questionable utility. Social systems are not always structured in the most fair or equitable manner; thus, to create more fair social systems, change, evolution, and forward progress are necessary. However, it is easy to imagine how the system justification motive might interrupt this process and, therefore, hinder improvement. That is, the individual motivation to adapt to and rationalize the faults of one's system is in direct conflict with motivations to change and better it. Although

there are, of course, many instances in which people's motivations for social change outweigh their individual motivations to justify the status quo, all else being equal, the system justification motive is unlikely to facilitate this process. Acquiescence is especially likely to occur in those contexts (listed earlier) in which system justification needs are most salient to the individual.

Theoretically, the system justification motive can lead to a number of effects that should reduce the proclivity for people to seek systemic changes in the social order. For example, people show a tendency to criticize and derogate those who explicitly challenge the fairness and legitimacy of the social system (Kaiser, Dyrenforth, & Hagiwara, 2006). Such social costs—which may very well be the result of the system justification motive—inevitably decrease the likelihood that people will publicly argue for systemic changes. As another example, it has been demonstrated that the activation of system justifying ideologies—such as “rags to riches” stories—indirectly lead to decreased support for programs aimed at achieving social equality (Wakslak, Jost, Tyler, & Chen, 2007).

In this chapter, we will focus on two broad areas of research that demonstrate the consequences of the system justification motive for the support of social inequality. First, we will describe instances of the general motivation to simply prefer the status quo (that is, whatever form the current regime takes). In this section, the dependent measures of interest will generally be gauging attitudes toward policies and the status quo in general, as opposed to attitudes toward individuals and/or groups. In the second section, we will describe research demonstrating the impact of the system justification motive on perceptions of and attitudes toward different people and groups of varying status and characteristics. In both of these sections, we will focus exclusively on research that demonstrates the contextual nature of such phenomena—that is, demonstrations of *when* such instances of support for inequality are more and less likely to occur. In doing so, we hope to offer the reader a nuanced understanding of the boundary conditions surrounding these phenomena. Because such approaches to the study of system justification have only recently begun to gain momentum, this will limit our discussion primarily to very recent programs of research.

MOTIVATIONAL BASES AND CONSEQUENCES OF VIEWING WHAT “IS” AS WHAT “OUGHT TO BE”

Although improved, the current state of affairs for women hoping to succeed in high-ranking and prestigious sectors remains bleak. According to the Status of Women Canada, for example, “women occupy only 20 percent of the highest-paid occupations in the corporate sector in Canada, and are

under-represented at senior management levels . . . in Parliament, the upper levels of federal, provincial, territorial and municipal public services, (and) international affairs. . . ." In the United States, the situation is perhaps even worse: as of 2001, women represented only 15.7% of the corporate officers in the 500 largest companies, and a mere 1.1% of the CEOs of the Fortune 1000 (2001 Census of Women Board, Directors of the Fortune 1000). Such a biased social structure presents women with many obvious obstacles to attaining equality, such as a reduced number of mentors, exclusion from networking opportunities, and the like. Beyond such objective barriers, however, this state of affairs may present women with an even more glaring disadvantage: perceptions that this is how it *ought* to be and, therefore, should not be changed. The system justification motive should make such a process particularly likely to occur (e.g., Jost, 1997). That is, so long as people are obliged to operate within a given structural system—whether it be an implicit or explicit social norm, a policy, or even a law—the system justification motive should lead people to defend it to a greater extent—even when grounds exist for regarding it as unfair. Across several recent programs of research we have determined when such a tendency is more and less likely to occur.

In one such program of research, we have focused on the role of perceptions of system inevitability (operationalized as perceptions of inescapability) in weakening the belief that the system is to blame for gaping societal inequalities (Laurin & Kay, 2008). Across three separate studies (Laurin & Kay, 2008), participants who were first made to believe that it had become increasingly difficult to emigrate out of their country of residence (i.e., Canada)—via an article describing the increasingly tightened immigration laws around the world—became significantly less likely to blame their system for an inequality, such as the gender discrepancy in salary. That is, participants in the *high inescapability* conditions viewed the system as significantly *less* culpable for the apparent injustice. Although the control conditions across the three studies differed, the pattern in each was identical: participants deemed the system as less responsible for creating injustice in conditions of high perceived inevitability. This is particularly noteworthy given that, before their judgments were offered in each of these studies, the participants were told that income disparity in gender is not explainable by level of education or job performance.

Given that, in conditions such as these (that is, when the system justification motive is increasingly engaged), the system is seen as less culpable for creating inequality, it is likely that people will also be much less likely to support policies aimed at correcting the system. Experimental evidence supports this contention. In particular, Laurin and Kay (2008) have demonstrated that the same inescapability manipulation that led participants to view the

system as less blameworthy in the experiments just described also, in a separate study, led participants to report less support for social programs aimed at helping the disadvantaged (programs such as soup kitchens, mentorships for disadvantaged youth, job training, and the like; see Wakslak et al., 2007). Thus, not only do manipulations of perceived system inevitability—that is, manipulations of the system justification motive—lead to increased defense of the system’s role in generating inequality, but they also produce a decreased willingness to support policies aimed at fixing inequality.

Support for the status quo, and reduced motivation to change, have also been observed following other manipulations of the system justification motive. Manipulations of system dependency have been found to lead participants to be more forgiving of the system in the context of societal inequalities, to more strongly endorse current unjust and inequitable public policies, and to more strongly resist policy change. In one such study (Kay et al., 2008a), participants were led to believe that their welfare (that is, their degree of social and economic success) was dependent on either the federal government or their university. Afterwards, participants were told about a group-based inequality that existed either at the national level (i.e., unequal federal funding across the various provinces) or within their university (i.e., unequal university funding across the various departments). As expected, participants justified whichever system on which they were temporarily made to feel dependent. Those participants who were told their welfare depended on the federal system viewed the nation-level inequality as less unjust than the university-level inequality. Those participants who were told their welfare depended on the university, however, showed the opposite pattern: they viewed the university inequality as less unfair than the nation-level inequality.

In another experiment (Kay et al., 2008b), participants were told about a particular public policy, namely, that the department of education had decided to distribute funds to various institutions based on performance (rather than principles of equality). The participants in this study were all university students at a public university in Ontario, Canada. To manipulate the extent to which these participants were dependent upon this policy, one-third were told that it was relevant only to universities in Ontario (high dependence), one-third were told it was relevant only to high-schools in Ontario (low dependence), and one-third were told it was relevant only to universities in the state of New York (low dependence). Participants were then asked a series of questions gauging their views of the policy’s legitimacy, as well as their desire to leave it as is or to have it altered. Compared to the two low-dependency conditions, participants viewed the policy as significantly more ideal and legitimate and were more resistant to changes to it when it

governed their lives—that is, in the high-dependency condition. In addition, the effect of the system dependency manipulation on resistance to change was entirely mediated by views of the policy's legitimacy.

Thus, once again, we have observed that conditions that are theoretically tied to the activation of the system justification motive have profound effects on preferences for the status quo and the maintenance of inequality. Manipulations of system dependence produce increased support for the status quo (Kay et al., 2008b), less concern for inequality (Kay et al., 2008a), and decreased interest in social change (Kay et al., 2008a; Kay et al., 2008b).

Before proceeding to the next section of this chapter, it is worth noting that manipulations of system threat and personal control—both of which are presumed to activate the system justification motive—have also been shown to lead to general increases in support for the status quo. Ullrich and Cohrs (2007), for example, demonstrated that, following reminders of the threat of terrorism, participants demonstrated considerably more support for the status quo on a translated version of the Kay and Jost (2003) system justification scale (sample items include: "In general, you find society to be fair" and "Most policies tend to serve the greater good"). Given that scores on this scale tend to be negatively correlated with willingness to engage in activities aimed at social redress, such as addressing postcards to their regional political representative (Kay, Gaucher, & Laurin, 2008), this phenomenon has obvious implications for the maintenance of inequality. Likewise, Kay and colleagues (2008a) demonstrated that a manipulation designed to induce lower feelings of personal control led to significantly higher rates of resistance to changes in the federal system of government. That is, participants first exposed to a reminder of instances in which they were unable to exert personal control subsequently reported less support for altering the governmental system.

Summary

Across several different manipulations designed to increase the strength of the system justification motive—that is, manipulations of system inevitability, system dependence, system threat, and personal control—substantial evidence suggests that the system justification motive can lead to both increased support for the status quo and, relatedly, decreased support for social change. Although support for one's system surely has many positive societal (see Feygina & Tyler, this volume) and individual (Jost & Hunyady, 2002) consequences, in situations in which the system is even partly responsible for creating or perpetuating inequality (as can be the case with segregated schools/neighborhoods, inflexible maternity leave policies, discriminatory hiring practices, differential funding policies, and the like), the consequences of this tendency are significant indeed.

We would like to remind the reader, however, that we are not suggesting that the system justification motive will never allow for system change or a rejection of unfair system-level procedures. Indeed, Title IX legislation—which made illegal any discrimination on the basis of gender in federally funded educational institutions—is an excellent example that such change can occur. Rather, we are suggesting that, in the various contexts in which the system justification motive is most likely to rear its head, the likelihood of people fighting to change the status quo is considerably reduced.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION MOTIVE FOR INTERPERSONAL AND INTERGROUP PERCEPTION

In the previous section we described evidence documenting when people are most likely to show increased support for their overarching socio-political systems—that is, when they will be more and less likely to exonerate the system from any blame in generating inequality, and when they will be more and less likely to resist changing it. System justification phenomena, however, can also occur in more indirect ways. When confronted with issues of unfairness and inequality, a particularly common way of defending the system is by finding other targets to blame for the relevant injustice. Most notably, these other “targets” tend to be the victims of the injustice themselves (see Lerner, 1980; Napier, Mandisodza, Andersen, & Jost, 2006). Indeed, assigning traits, characteristics, or competencies to a given individual or group as a mode of justification is perhaps the most widely documented process of social justification in the field of social psychology.

The most obvious example of interpersonal perception as a means for justification is *victim-derogation*, in which individuals or groups who suffer due to a given inequality or putative injustice are attributed traits and characteristics that portray them as *deserving* of their fate (see also Hafer & Bègue, 2005). From a system justification perspective, such a tendency is a particularly effective means of system justification, insofar as it deflects blame away from the system and toward individuals (see Kay et al., 2005; Napier et al., 2006). In fact, SJT largely originated from observations of this tendency—that is, observations of the general tendency for both low- and high-status group members to attribute more competence to members of high-status groups and less competence to members of low-status groups (Jost, 2001; Jost & Banaji, 1994; also see Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002 and, for an individual differences approach to similar phenomena, see O’Brien & Major, this volume, and Oldmeadow & Fiske, 2007).

Several recent programs of research have supported the presumed role of the system justification motive in producing these types of phenomena, while also demonstrating when they will be most and least likely to occur. Research on the effects of perceived inevitability is an excellent example. In the studies described earlier on the effects of perceived inevitability on system blame (Laurin & Kay, 2008), for instance, participants were not only asked to judge the extent to which they faulted the system for producing the relevant gender inequalities, but they were also asked to judge the extent to which these differences in economic status reflect genuine differences between men and women. Across all three studies, the same pattern of data was obtained: Participants led to believe the system was less escapable—that is, those participants who were told that it was becoming increasingly more difficult to emigrate—were significantly more likely to attribute the difference in pay between men and women as due to genuine differences between the sexes (as opposed to unfairness in the system). When participants were led to believe that it would be relatively easy to leave their system, however, this pattern of victim blame disappeared.

Similar findings of heightened victim blame have also been observed following other manipulations tied to the system justification motive. For example, following a manipulation of system threat—e.g., exposure to an article written by a foreign journalist who criticized the economic and social state of the participants' country of residence—participants attributed less intelligence to the powerless and more laziness to the obese (Kay et al., 2005; see also Jost et al., 2005; McCoy & Major, 2007). This general effect also applies to judgments of specific individuals, rather than groups. In one such experiment (Kay et al., 2008b), participants were informed that their female experimenter was pursuing an MBA degree. This was communicated in the context of a previous manipulation informing participants that women were either hugely or minimally under-represented in the business world, as well as a manipulation of system threat. Afterwards, participants rated the experimenter's performance at smoothly and efficiently running the experiment (in an anonymous, sealed questionnaire that the participants believed was being sent directly to the experimenter's MBA advisor). As expected, participants in the large inequality condition rated the experimenter's performance as significantly worse if they were first exposed to a manipulation of system threat. That is, in the context of specific beliefs regarding female under-representation in the business world, participants increasingly derogated the performance of this specific female experimenter following system threat. Importantly, for those participants who were led to believe that the gender disparity was considerably smaller, no similar effect of system threat emerged (see also McCoy & Major, 2007).

Victim derogation, however, is not the only manner in which the system justification motive can influence processes of interpersonal perception and judgment. Other recent research has demonstrated the system-justifying function of complementary stereotyping; that is, stereotypes that attribute specific positive traits or characteristics to disadvantaged groups and specific negative traits or characteristics to advantaged groups (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Jost & Kay, 2005; Kay & Jost, 2003; Kay et al., 2007). The theoretical assertion here is that such stereotypes, which portray an overall balance between the positive and negative consequences of being in high- and low-status groups, serve to justify the system by reminding people that the system ensures everything will “balance out in the end” (see also Lane, 1959/2003; Lerner, 1980). The original work in this domain demonstrated straightforwardly that the activation of such stereotypes does serve to increase perceptions of system legitimacy. For example, exposure to positive (but paternalistic, see Jackman, 1994 and Vescio, Gervais, Snyder, & Hoover, 2005) stereotypes concerning women—such as those that portray women as more communal and/or those that portray them in line with benevolent sexist ideals (see Glick & Fiske, 2001)—leads women to view the current system of gender relations, and the status quo in general, as more fair and legitimate (Jost & Kay, 2005). Similarly, exposing individuals to exemplars of poor people who are more happy and/or honest than their rich counterparts also leads to increased satisfaction with the status quo (Kay & Jost, 2003).

More recent experiments have focused on when such phenomena are more and less likely to occur. Kay, Jost, and Young (2005), for example, demonstrated that the tendency to ascribe positive characteristics to low-status groups (i.e., the obese) and negative characteristics to high-status groups (i.e., the powerful) were more pronounced following a manipulation of system threat. Expanding on this, other research has demonstrated that similar processes also apply to preferences for romantic partners. Under the guise of an experiment on Internet dating preferences, Lau and colleagues (2008) demonstrated that, following system threat, men are more interested in dating (and are more physically attracted to) women who portray themselves in a manner that is consistent with ideals of benevolent sexism (that is, as culturally refined, traditional, pure, etc.). Thus, not only do people (in contexts of heightened system justification needs) view people in more complementary stereotypical terms, but they also appear to prefer those who conform to these stereotypes (see also Rudman & Kilianski, 2000).

Last, we would like to briefly describe some recent research examining a separate phenomenon of interpersonal perception that is likely related to the system justification motive and that is especially relevant to the overarching concerns of the book, namely, judgments of political figures. Given that people

justify systems in part because these systems control important outcomes in their lives, it follows naturally that people should also justify the authority of those individuals who control those systems. Preliminary evidence suggests this may be the case. Willer (2004) noted that, as the terror alert in the United States increased (which can be viewed as a natural manipulation of system threat), so did support for the American president, George W. Bush.

In an attempt to bottle similar phenomena in the laboratory, Banfield and Kay (2008), in two separate studies, exposed participants to a manipulation of system threat—that is, an article describing the worsening state of the federal social and political system—or a control manipulation, and then measured levels of support for political leaders. In the first study, this manipulation was also crossed with a measure of chronic system satisfaction. Results indicated that participants do in fact respond to system threat by showing increased support for their political leaders: university participants who read a profile of the Minister of Education rated her as significantly more competent if that profile was preceded by a manipulation of system threat (which focused on the Canadian status quo, but said nothing about the educational system) rather than a control condition, despite the fact that participants in both conditions read the identical description of the relevant politician. Interestingly, though, this only occurred for those who were low in general satisfaction with the (Canadian) system. Those high in satisfaction with the system judged the politician very positively in both conditions and were therefore unmoved by our manipulation of system threat (Banfield & Kay, 2008).

The second study in this line of work sought to understand how citizens, especially in contexts that engage the system justification motive, cope with morally dubious behavior by their leaders. President Clinton's approval ratings remained high throughout his impeachment proceedings and attained an all-time high after their conclusion (CNN, 1998). Given the questionable conduct that produced the media whirlwind before and after the impeachment proceedings, how did people maintain faith in their leader? And did the system justification motive play any role in this?

One argument commonly heard in defense of President Clinton was that his behavior in his personal life, however immoral, should not be used to judge his competence as a President. Without debating the merits of such an argument, we would like to propose that it represents an excellent tool for maintaining faith in one's leader (and, by extension, one's socio-political system). To this end, we examined the extent to which participants who read about a political leader who admitted to an ethically questionable personal event (i.e., an affair) would become more likely to view personal behavior as *less* relevant to political competence following a manipulation of system threat. Results indicated that, as expected, following system threat—which

was manipulated via the same threat passages used in the previous study—participants who read about a leader (i.e., a provincial Minister) who was involved in an extramarital affair judged her personal behavior to be less relevant to her competence as a politician. Importantly, though, when the Minister was described as presiding over a province that was irrelevant to the participants (that is, in a low-dependence condition), the manipulation of system threat exerted no such effect. For this irrelevant leader (that is, a leader who controlled a system that the participants were *not* dependent upon), participants viewed her personal behavior as equally related to her professional competencies in both the threat and control conditions.

Summary

The system justification motive can have far-reaching effects on social psychological processes. As we have observed in this section, this also includes phenomena of interpersonal perception and judgment. In the context of social inequality, people tend to make interpersonal and intergroup attributions that either deflect blame away from the system and onto the individual (i.e., victim-derogation) and/or reaffirm the system's ability to ensure balance (i.e., through victim-enhancement). In addition, those who control these systems (such as political leaders) tend to receive rather generous attributions, as well. It is crucial to note, however, that these phenomena do not always occur. Rather, in each of the experimental programs just described, we have demonstrated that such phenomena are highly context-dependent; only in those conditions of heightened system justification needs—for example, conditions of system threat, chronic system concern, system dependence, and system inevitability—did these biases in interpersonal judgment surface.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have presented an overview of theory and research describing the consequence of the system justification motive for the maintenance of inequality and general social psychological functioning. Throughout all of this, however, our focus remained exclusively on research demonstrating when such consequences are most likely to arise. Reflecting on the development of the scientific study of attitudes, Zanna and Fazio (1982) noted that programs of research, at least within the field of social psychology, tend to progress through two clear generations. In the first generation, a phenomenon or psychological process is identified. The purpose of this stage is to clearly demonstrate that a theoretically predicted psychological effect does in fact occur. SJT research has spent a good deal of its young life making this precise point: that the system justification motive does exist (for reviews, see

Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Kay et al., 2007). As evidenced by the research presented here, the system justification motive does not merely exist, it holds important interpersonal and intergroup consequences.

In the second generation, according to Zanna and Fazio (1982), researchers move beyond this goal and begin to seek theoretical refinement. A key purpose of this stage is to demonstrate the boundary conditions surrounding the psychological phenomenon or process already identified: that is, when it occurs and when it does not (see also McGuire, 1983). Identifying the variables that strengthen an effect, or turn it “on and off,” so to speak, teaches us not only about the contexts in which we may be most likely to observe a given psychological phenomenon, but, just as importantly, about what causes it (cf. Spencer, Zanna, & Fong, 2005). Beyond demonstrating the consequences of the system justification motive for the maintenance of inequality, the research we presented in this chapter also represents the initial wave of this generation of research: that is, the second generation of system justification research.

That is, we hoped to provide evidence for the nuance of SJT and system justifying effects—evidence of the contextual nature of system-justifying responses. System justification theorists do not argue that system justifying tendencies will always be engaged. One only has to look at George W. Bush’s second term approval ratings, the many anti-war protests, or the countless worker strikes to note that people will not always engage in processes of system justification. Indeed, rarely does the first author of this chapter escape a talk without having to address the occurrence of events such as these to a skeptical audience member. It is important to recall that the system justification motive is believed to exist to help people cope with specific existential and epistemic threats (see Jost & Hunyaday, 2002, 2005). When these threats are not salient or other psychological needs are more pressing, therefore, the system justification motive should fade into the background.

The system justification motive, therefore, like most other sources of motivation, will not always dictate an individual’s psychology. Chronic personality variables, learned values, personal experiences, other sources of motivation, various situational contexts, and even the objective performance of the system itself all hold the potential to affect an individual’s behavior. This does not mean, however, that the system justification motive will not often do so, too. The research presented in this chapter provides some initial insights into when we might expect system-justifying responses to be relatively more likely to occur. As second-generation research in this domain continues to advance, both in the field and in the laboratory, so, it is hoped, will our understanding of when the system justification motive will be most and least active.

To conclude, we would like to offer one final observation. In the studies we have presented here—and, indeed, in most studies demonstrating the

consequences of the system justification motive—the focus has been on the justification of unequal and/or unfair norms, policies, and social arrangements. Theoretically, though, system justification needs should also facilitate the adoption of norms, policies, and social arrangements that uphold principles of fairness and equality, or that, in some way or another, improve upon the status quo (e.g., Blasi & Jost, 2006). Over the past century, we have seen several examples of the introduction of such policies and norms into society—women’s right to vote, affirmative action policies, increased tolerance of racial and ethnic diversity (for example, in universities), and the radically changing rules and norms regarding the acceptability of drinking and driving are but a few. As each of these was introduced, there were undoubtedly those who insisted that society would not accept these radical changes, and that they would never last.

For example, for years, governments resisted introducing bans on cigarette smoking in public venues for fear society would never comply (indeed, it was likely the case that most smokers themselves also assumed they would not stand for these bans); once these bans arrived, however, people were quick to adjust. Even in Ireland, where it was widely believed that such a ban could never alter behavior in the deep-rooted pub lifestyle, little resistance was encountered (Borland et al., 2006; Fong et al., 2006). Given the research we have presented here, it seems feasible that the system justification motive might have contributed in no small part to this seemingly overnight adjustment to the “new” (and, in the minds of all non-smokers, “better”) status quo (for a similar, and experimental, example in the context of a political election, see Kay et al., 2002).

Of course, in the case of imposed smoking bans, the absolute inevitability of this change (Laurin & Kay, 2008), coupled with the clear health benefits it held for literally everyone, may have been sufficient to trigger its adoption. But if a society’s goal is to promote something more abstract, less easily enforced, and less clearly beneficial to all, such as increased acceptance of women in traditionally male-dominated domains, the task is sure to be more complex.

Changing perceptions of the social landscape—whether through actual changes to social reality itself (e.g., affirmative action policies), changes in perceptions of social reality (e.g., media campaigns that portray considerable gender diversity), or even changes in perceptions of where social reality is inevitably heading—may represent a necessary condition for fostering increased acceptance of a more equal status quo. But, as we have hopefully made clear throughout this chapter, these changes, on their own, may not be enough. The psychological and societal contexts in which these changes are embedded are key determinants of how people will react to them.

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PART IV

Epistemic and Existential Motives

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The Social Psychology of Uncertainty Management and System Justification

Kees van den Bos

Abstract

This chapter reviews recent research findings on the social psychology of uncertainty management processes and the role these processes have in explaining system justification and other human reactions (such as people's behavioral reactions to homeless individuals and how people respond toward messages that violate or support their religious worldviews). In doing so, it is posited that (at least sometimes) uncertainty management may better explain people's responses than an important other account, namely, terror management theory (TMT). The text also focuses on the social psychological processes underlying uncertainty management effects and argues that personal uncertainty has strong effects on human reactions because personal uncertainty involves affective–experiential processes and typically constitutes an alarming experience to people. Thus, I suggest that the social psychology of uncertainty management and system justification involve processes of “hot cognition” and not “cold cognition.” I close by discussing the implications for the psychology of system justification and people's beliefs in a just world.

People are often faced with threats to the legitimacy of their socio-political system (Lau, Kay, & Spencer, 2008). According to system justification theory (SJT), when faced with such threats, people become motivated to restore their faith in the status quo by engaging in psychological processes that bolster its apparent legitimacy (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). Thus, a general social psychological tendency exists to see the status quo as good, fair, legitimate, and desirable (Kay, Jost, Mandisodza, Sherman, Petrocelli, & Johnson, 2007). Furthermore, there is consistent evidence for the psychological principle that people prefer to believe that their social system and the system's ideology are fair and legitimate, and that people detest social systems and corresponding ideologies that are believed to be unfair and illegitimate (e.g., Crosby, Pufall, Snyder, O'Connell, & Whalen, 1989; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Kay, Jost, & Young, 2005; Lerner & Miller, 1978; Major, 1994; Martin, 1986; Tyler & McGraw, 1986).

In this chapter, I focus on the social-cognitive and epistemic bases of ideology and system justification. More specifically, I will discuss recent research

findings on the social psychology of uncertainty management processes and will especially focus on how these processes predict how people react toward fair and unfair events and to other events that bolster or violate their cultural and ideological worldviews. Thus, I will examine the role uncertainty management processes play in understanding and explaining system justification, ideology, and other human reactions pertaining to worldview defense.

First, after introducing the core topics of this chapter, I will show that management of personal uncertainty concerns may be driving people's reactions to various social issues, including their responses to socially deviant people and their behavioral and other reactions to homeless individuals. I also will review research findings that reveal that salience of personal uncertainty is important in understanding the psychology of religion and how people react toward messages that violate or support their religious worldviews. I suggest that, at least sometimes, uncertainty management may better explain processes of system justification and worldview defense than another approach, namely, terror management theory (TMT).

I will subsequently focus on the social psychological processes underlying uncertainty management effects and will argue that a combination of experiential conditions with individual tendencies to show intense affective reactions determines people's reactions toward fair and unfair events, as well as their reactions to innocent victims of crimes and other misfortunes. I will discuss also the possible implications of recent insights regarding the human alarm system with respect to these processes. In discussing these issues, I will note the implications of these findings and theories may have for our understanding of the psychology of system justification, ideology, and related issues such as the belief in a just world. The next section introduces briefly the uncertainty management assumption that drives the core elements of this chapter.

THE UNCERTAINTY MANAGEMENT ASSUMPTION

People can encounter different types of uncertainties (Van den Bos & Lind, 2002), but the uncertainty management work I concentrate on here focuses on the experience of personal uncertainty, which involves the implicit and explicit feelings and other subjective reactions people experience as a result of being uncertain about themselves (see, e.g., Van den Bos, 2001, 2007; Van den Bos, Poortvliet, Maas, Miedema, & Van den Ham, 2005; see also De Cremer & Sedikides, 2005; Hogg, 2005; McGregor, Zanna, Holmes, & Spencer, 2001). I define personal uncertainty as a subjective sense of doubt or instability in self-views, worldviews, and the interrelation between the two (Van den Bos &

Lind, in press). Personal uncertainty entails both stable individual differences, such as differences in emotional uncertainty (Greco & Roger, 2001), and situational fluctuations, such as conditions in which people's personal uncertainties have (versus have not) been made salient (Van den Bos, 2001).

I work from the assumption that experiencing personal uncertainty is a "hot-cognitive" social psychological process (Abelson, 1963; Kunda, 1999; Stapel, 2003), involving a combination of both cognitive and affective reactions (Van den Bos, 2007). I also think that personal uncertainty more often than not involves visceral and intuitive (rather than more reasoned and rationalistic) reactions (Van den Bos & Lind, in press). Experiencing personal uncertainty about one's attitudes, beliefs, feelings, and perceptions, as well as about one's relationship to other people, is generally aversive (e.g., Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Hogg, 2000; Lopes, 1987; Sorrentino & Roney, 1986), and personal uncertainty therefore often motivates behavior that seeks to reduce it. Although experiencing personal uncertainty may sometimes be sought out and occasionally may instigate contemplation or introspection (see, e.g., McGregor & Marigold, 2003; Sorrentino, Bobocel, Gitta, Olson, & Hewitt, 1988; Weary & Jacobson, 1997), I argue that it is more common for people to find experiencing personal uncertainty an alarming event that does not allow for contemplation and introspection, but instead requires people to respond rather quickly to what is going on (Van den Bos, Ham, Lind, Simonis, Van Essen, & Rijpkema, in press).

Although a full review of uncertainty management models is beyond the scope of this paper (for more complete descriptions, see, e.g., Hogg, 2007; McGregor, 2004; Van den Bos & Lind, 2002), it is noteworthy that uncertainty management models start with the observation that the world is an uncertain place. For example, many people have jobs with indefinite tenure, and success at work often depends on adaptability and flexibility in the face of an uncertain future (Lord & Hartley, 1998). Rapid changes are happening everywhere, and news of layoffs as well as national and international conflicts reaches us almost daily. Furthermore, people are unpredictable, and most of us have experienced both unanticipated disappointments and unexpected successes in our personal, work, or political worlds.

Based on various social psychological theories and notions (see, e.g., Festinger, 1954; Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Hogg & Mullin, 1999; Lopes, 1987; Sorrentino & Roney, 1986; Weary, Jacobson, Edwards, & Tobin, 2001), uncertainty management models assume that people have a fundamental need to feel certain about their world and their place within it, that uncertainty can be threatening, and that people generally feel a need either to eliminate uncertainty or to find some way to make it tolerable and cognitively manageable (for some exceptions to this rule, see, e.g., Sorrentino & Roney, 1986).

Consider the threats that can accompany uncertainty: uncertainty deprives one of confidence in how to behave and what to expect from the physical and social environment within which one finds oneself. Uncertainty about one's attitudes, beliefs, feelings, and perceptions, as well as about one's relationship to other people, is generally aversive, and uncertainty therefore often motivates behavior that reduces subjective uncertainty (Van den Bos & Lind, 2002). Furthermore, epistemic motives related to uncertainty are important social psychological phenomena. Festinger (1954), for example, based social comparison theory on the proposition that knowing that one is correct is a critical human motivation that drives people to make interpersonal social comparisons when nonsocial means are unavailable.

Thus, uncertainty management models assume that managing uncertainty is an important motive that often drives people's reactions and behaviors. This is not to say that people want to reduce uncertainty all the time or that all uncertainties are the same. Of course, being completely certain about all or many aspects of one's life may make one's life rather dull, and there are clearly instances in which people strive for uncertainty rather than seek to reduce it. For example, sometimes people want to experience new, uncertain events, and on occasion some of them even seek the thrill of possible danger, like bungee jumping or parachuting. This may be true, but still, uncertainty management theories argue that even when uncertainty is sought, it usually is still managed, at least to some extent. Thus, bungee jumping or parachuting can be thrilling experiences, but most people who engage in these kinds of activities make damn sure that they have information that the ropes and parachutes they are using are safe and can be trusted.

PERSONAL UNCERTAINTY AND WORLDVIEW DEFENSE

Based on the above-reviewed literature, I propose that people want to protect themselves from being in or thinking of situations in which they were uncertain about themselves. One way in which people can do this is by adhering to their cultural norms and values (e.g., Van den Bos et al., 2005). That is, work that others and I have been doing proposes that an important psychological function of cultural worldviews is that these worldviews provide certainty and stability (e.g., Van den Bos, Euwema, Poortvliet, & Maas, 2007; Van den Bos, Van Ameijde, & Van Gorp, 2006). Worldviews make the world a more predictable place and constitute buffers against threats, thus giving people an opportunity to cope with threats to their socio-political system and corresponding ideologies. An implication of the psychological function of worldviews may be that experiences that are supportive of people's cultural

worldviews lead people to be less uncertain about themselves or to be able to better tolerate the uncertainty (e.g., Van den Bos, Heuven, Burger, & Fernández Van Veldhuizen, 2006). As a result, uncertainty management theories hypothesize that people who are uncertain about themselves or who have been reminded about their personal uncertainties will react very positively toward worldview-supportive experiences (e.g., Van den Bos, 2001). In contrast, experiences that threaten or impinge on people's worldviews do not help people to cope with their uncertainties, hence people will respond very negatively toward these worldview-threatening experiences (e.g., Van den Bos et al., 2005).

In this respect, it is noteworthy that fairness may be one of the most important social norms and values in human life (Folger, 1984; Folger & Cropanzano, 1998; Tyler & Smith, 1998). In most situations, most people judge unfair treatment to be in violation of cultural norms and values, and think of fair treatment as being in correspondence with norms and values of good behavior and conduct (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, Boeckmann, Smith, & Huo, 1997). In other words, unfair treatment violates people's cultural worldviews, whereas fair treatment bolsters people's cultural worldviews (Van den Bos & Miedema, 2000; see also Rosenblatt, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, & Lyon, 1989). This is not to say that people always expect or even appreciate fair events in the world. In fact, evidence suggests that sometimes unfairness best fits people's worldviews (Major, Kaiser, O'Brien, & McCoy, 2007) and that sometimes unfair treatment may have good aspects (Van den Bos, Bruins, Wilke, & Dronkert, 1999). That said, most of the time, people want to be treated fairly and detest being treated in an unfair manner. Combining this observation with the earlier mentioned uncertainty management hypothesis led me, in 2001, to test the prediction that people would react more strongly toward variations of fair and unfair treatment under conditions in which personal uncertainty was (versus was not) made salient (Van den Bos, 2001).

In the three experiments reported in this article (Van den Bos, 2001), personal uncertainty was made salient by asking university students to complete two simple questions: "Please briefly describe the emotions that the thought of your being uncertain arouses in you," and "Please write down, as specifically as you can, what you think physically will happen to you as you feel uncertain." People in the uncertainty nonsalient conditions were not asked these questions, or were asked to think about their watching television (an issue that does not make personal uncertainty salient among most university students). In some experiments, the uncertainty salience manipulation was followed by giving people an opportunity to voice their opinions about a decision that had to be made or not giving them such an opportunity. In another experiment, participants responded to a job selection process in which

either all of the relevant information was carefully taken into consideration (accurate procedure) or only some of the relevant information was taken into account (inaccurate procedure). Participants judged both the voice and accurate procedures to be more fair than the no-voice and inaccurate procedures. More interestingly, when personal uncertainty had been made salient, participants reacted with more positive affect toward the fair procedures and with more negative affect toward the unfair procedures. In correspondence with what was predicted by the uncertainty management hypothesis, this suggests that, when personal uncertainty is salient, people react more positively toward events (such as fair procedures) that bolster their cultural norms and values, and they respond more negatively toward events (such as unfair treatment) that violate their cultural norms and values.

In further correspondence with uncertainty management predictions, other research findings suggest that the experience of fairness can have ameliorative effects on uncertainty by making uncertainty more tolerable. We (Van den Bos, Heuven, et al., 2006) interviewed employees at a chemical business company who had survived an influential reorganization process in which the majority of the company's employees had been laid off. As expected on the basis of the uncertainty management hypothesis, the experience that the outcomes of the reorganization process were fair made people feel less uncertain about their current jobs. Thus, after reorganizations, outcome fairness can have ameliorative effects on job uncertainty, and this provides suggestive evidence for the uncertainty management model's claim that people may use fairness judgments to cope with the uncertainty resulting from reorganizations and co-worker lay-offs.

Because people's reactions to cultural norms and values encompass more than how they react to fair and unfair treatment, we also studied other worldview defense reactions in other research studies. More specifically, we noted that social groups and the values that they convey enable individuals to alleviate important human concerns by providing self-esteem resources, as well as epistemic knowledge (e.g., Dechesne, Janssen, & Van Knippenberg, 2000; Greenberg, Solomon, & Pyszczynski, 1997; Hogg, 2000). In correspondence with this notion, we (Van den Bos, Euwema, et al., 2007, Study 1) showed that asking (as opposed to not asking) people to think about their uncertainties may lead them to react more negatively toward a person who has been communicating negative things about their home country.

Uncertainty concerns also influenced how a representative sample of over 1200 citizens of Dutch society reacted to encounters with homeless persons. We argued that, for those citizens who hold negative attitudes about vulnerable people in society, homeless people deviate from the citizens' ideas about how people should behave in their socio-political system,

possibly representing a threat to their cultural worldviews. We further proposed that, especially when emotional uncertainty is a concern for those citizens, they would show strong negative responses toward homeless individuals. As hypothesized, findings reveal that especially those persons who have a relatively negative attitude toward vulnerable people and who consider uncertainty to be a relatively emotionally threatening experience react most negatively in terms of both affective and protest reactions toward interactions with a homeless individual (Van den Bos, Euwema, et al., 2007, Study 2). Uncertainty salience may also lead people with negative attitudes toward homeless people to objectively distance themselves from belongings and materials associated with homeless individuals (Van den Bos, Euwema, et al., 2007, Study 3), indicating that uncertainty concerns can reliably affect human behavior.

Furthermore, building on the observation that extremely antireligious statements may threaten most people's religious beliefs and/or may violate their views of how one should communicate about religious issues, we (Van den Bos, Van Ameijde, & Van Gorp, 2006) hypothesized and showed that personal uncertainty may also moderate the social psychology of religious worldview defense. An Internet study including more than 1500 respondents and a more controlled laboratory experiment among university students provided evidence for the hypothesis that salience of personal uncertainty concerns may lead people to have more negative affective reactions toward extremely negative statements about religion, especially when people are inclined to think of personal uncertainty as an emotionally threatening experience and when they are strongly religious.

Other studies also provide supportive evidence for the predictions of related uncertainty management models. Hofstede (2001), for example, showed that, compared to people who are low in uncertainty avoidance, those high in uncertainty avoidance are more conservative, less tolerant of diversity, less open to new experiences and alternative lifestyles, want immigrants to be sent back to their countries of origin, and reject people from other races as their neighbors. McGregor and colleagues (e.g., McGregor, 2004; McGregor & Marigold, 2003; McGregor, Zanna, Holmes, & Spencer, 2001) revealed that people who are made uncertain about themselves react more defensively toward events that threaten their cultural worldview, and that people do so because, in this way, they can restore their sense of self (i.e., being persons who can be certain about themselves; see also Martin, 1999). Related to this, Hogg showed in various publications that extreme self-uncertainty can motivate people to believe more strongly in ideological belief systems related to orthodoxy, hierarchy, and extremism (e.g., Hogg, 2000, 2004, 2005; see also Towler, 1984). Furthermore, some recent research findings suggest that, at

least sometimes, the uncertainty management model may better predict cultural worldview defense than a viable alternative model. I now turn to a discussion of these findings.

UNCERTAINTY AND TERROR MANAGEMENT

The uncertainty management model provides an important social psychological explanation of people's reactions to violations and bolstering of their cultural worldviews. However, when developing a theoretical framework (and our work is clearly work in progress), it is crucial to test the model against other accounts. In a 2005 publication, we set out to achieve this goal (Van den Bos et al., 2005). Toward this end, we contrasted the predictions of uncertainty management theories, suggesting that personal uncertainty is one of the key determinants of people's reactions toward transgressions and upholding of cultural norms and values, with another important framework that I admire and that has been very important for the understanding of ideology and system justification: TMT. An extensive review of this theoretical framework is beyond the limits of this chapter, and I refer the reader to Anson et al. (this volume) and other published reviews to gain further insight into the details of TMT (see, e.g., Greenberg, Solomon, & Pyszczynski, 1997; Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Solomon, 1999; Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 1991). This section focuses on one of the core topics of the theory: namely, that TMT highlights the impact of mortality salience as a key antecedent of people's reactions to upholding and violations of cultural norms and values (see, e.g., Greenberg et al., 1997; Rosenblatt et al., 1989).

Combining insights from the terror management studies we conducted (Van den Bos & Miedema, 2000) with insights from our earlier work on the social psychology of fairness judgments (e.g., Van den Bos, Lind, Vermunt, & Wilke, 1997; Van den Bos, Wilke, & Lind, 1998) led to the proposition that important elements of TMT seemed to fit into a broader framework of uncertainty management (Van den Bos, 2004; Van den Bos & Lind, 2002). Furthermore, this proposition converged with ideas aired in other papers published around the same time (especially Martin, 1999; McGregor et al., 2001). I argued, therefore, that it would be interesting to investigate within one experimental set-up the impact on worldview defense reactions of both uncertainty and mortality salience, the latter being another, perhaps even more influential antecedent of people's reactions toward transgressions and upholding of cultural norms and values (cf. Greenberg et al., 1997; Pyszczynski et al., 1999; Solomon et al., 1991).

In fact, the manipulation described earlier to make personal uncertainty salient in experiments (van den Bos, 2001) was inspired by the mortality salience

manipulations most often used in terror management studies. That is, in most previous terror management studies, participants in mortality salient conditions are asked to respond to two open-ended questions concerning their thoughts and feelings about their death (e.g., Arndt, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, & Schimel, 1999; Dechesne et al., 2000; Greenberg et al., 1990; Harmon-Jones, Simon, Greenberg, Pyszczynski, Solomon, & McGregor, 1997; Van den Bos & Miedema, 2000): "Please briefly describe the emotions that the thought of your death arouses in you," and "Please write down, as specifically as you can, what you think physically will happen to you as you die."

In all five experiments reported (Van den Bos et al., 2005), we compared conditions in which participants were asked to complete the two mortality questions with conditions in which they were asked the two questions pertaining to personal uncertainty (Van den Bos, 2001). By replacing "death" with "uncertain" in the most commonly used manipulations of mortality salience, and leaving everything else the same, the uncertainty salience conditions were constructed in such a way that they very closely resembled the mortality salience conditions. As a result, the influence these two types of conditions may have on people's reactions toward transgressions and upholding of important cultural norms and values could be investigated in a scientifically important way to yield a very clean comparison between the two types of conditions. In two of the experiments, we also had a third condition in which participants thought about watching television (an issue that typically does not induce mortality or uncertainty thoughts among student participants and that did not instigate these thoughts among our participants).

In all five experiments, the salience manipulation was followed by having participants respond to worldview-supportive or worldview-threatening experiences. In some experiments, this constituted experiences of fair or unfair treatment, such as giving or withholding voice from participants or having them respond to accurate or inaccurate procedures. Earlier research findings had shown that both mortality salience (Van den Bos & Miedema, 2000) and uncertainty salience (Van den Bos, 2001) may moderate people's affective reactions toward fair and unfair events. In other experiments, participants read and responded to articles in which a student from an important rival university was either positive or negative about the participants' own university. Earlier terror management research had suggested that praise of students' own university constitutes a bolstering of their cultural worldviews, whereas criticism of the university represents a violation of participants' worldviews, and had shown that mortality salience moderates students' reactions to praise and criticism pertaining to their university (e.g., Dechesne et al., 2000).

In all experiments, we assessed participants' affective reactions to the worldview-supportive or worldview-threatening experiences. In some of our experiments, we also measured to what extent participants agreed or disagreed with the opinions aired in the articles or during the fairness experiences. Agreement or disagreement with opinions aired often is used in terror management research to assess worldview defense (see, e.g., Dechesne et al., 2000).

What is interesting is that all five experiments reported (Van den Bos et al., 2005) show that both mortality and uncertainty salience influence people's reactions to violations and bolstering of their cultural worldviews, yielding evidence for both terror and uncertainty management theories. Interestingly, the five experiments consistently reveal that uncertainty salience has a bigger impact on people's reactions than mortality salience. The consistent findings of all five experiments indicate that mortality salience is important in predicting people's reactions to cultural worldview defense, but that uncertainty salience can be even more important—and, in fact, was more important in all studies presented (Van den Bos et al., 2005). The results thus provide supportive evidence for uncertainty management model's reasoning that uncertainty-related thought is a key cause of people's reactions toward events that bolster or threaten people's cultural worldviews, and even suggest (see also Martin, 1999; McGregor et al., 2001) that uncertainty salience, at least sometimes, can be a more important cause of people's reactions to these experiences than a strong other account (*viz.* TMT).

Even more interestingly, in all five experiments, uncertainty salience did not instigate death-related thoughts. Furthermore, in four out of five experiments, we found that, among participants in whom mortality salience spontaneously triggered uncertainty-related thought, reactions were more strongly influenced by the fairness or ingroup information manipulations. In contrast, for participants in whom mortality salience did not spontaneously activate uncertainty-related thought, weaker or nonsignificant differences between the procedure or ingroup information conditions were obtained. These findings show that—although mortality salience effects may not always be purely the result of uncertainty concerns (see, e.g., Landau et al., 2004; Routledge, Arndt, & Goldenberg, 2004)—at least sometimes it may be the uncertainty component of mortality salience manipulations that drives people's reactions to violations or bolstering of cultural worldviews. This suggests that, at least sometimes, processes of uncertainty management may be underlying the effects reported in the terror management literature. At a minimum, our (Van den Bos et al., 2005) findings indicate that uncertainty management processes are important when trying to understand the social psychology of people's worldviews.

I emphasize here that we remain very enthusiastic about TMT and believe that those social-cultural issues the theory studies are important, insightful, and among the best in modern social psychology (Van den Bos, 2004; Van den Bos & Miedema, 2000). Therefore, my purpose is certainly not to falsify or attack TMT. Rather, I want to see how and to what extent we can build on and extend the theory to encompass other issues (such as personal uncertainty) previously not explicitly explored by the theory. It is my belief that only such an open attitude may further the social psychology of ideology, system justification, and related issues (Van den Bos & Lind, *in press*).

Many issues pertaining to the relationship between uncertainty and terror management processes remain to be investigated. For example, ironically, it could be argued that the fact that one day we will die is the only certainty we humans have. This indeed may be the case, but contemplating your own death may still induce feelings of personal uncertainty (Van den Bos et al., 2005) and hence may trigger cultural worldview defense reactions.

Perhaps more interestingly, terror management researchers have failed to replicate stronger effects on worldview defense measures following uncertainty as opposed to mortality salience, and have found stronger effects for mortality salience instead (see, e.g., Landau et al., 2004). This may have something to do with the different sets of dependent variables used in the two studies (Landau et al., 2004; Van den Bos et al., 2005). It could also be that cross-cultural differences between the United States (where most terror management studies, including the Landau et al. work, have been done) and the Netherlands (where we have collected our data) may be partly responsible for these differential findings. Recent data suggest that occasionally quite different fairness effects can be found in these two countries (Van den Bos, Stein, Brockner, Steiner, Van Yperen, & Dekker, 2007).

I would applaud future research that focuses on the appropriate issue of when uncertainty is a prime determinant of cultural worldview defense and when other concerns (such as terror management processes) may be a stronger determinant. Furthermore, it is important to examine in considerably more detail the precise social psychological processes and mechanisms that may explain why uncertainty salience and mortality salience yield such strong effects on people's reactions to fair and unfair events and other events that bolster or threaten their cultural worldviews (Van den Bos & Lind, *in press*). Helpful in this respect may be consideration of the many complex issues that terror management theorists have thoroughly explored and explained well (such as the proximal/distal and conscious/nonconscious distinctions, and the underlying processes of worldview defense; Pyszczynski et al., 1999). These issues may help to formulate and test models of psychological processes that underlie the empirical findings reviewed here.

I emphasize here that the point of our research (Van den Bos et al., 2005) was not to argue that uncertainty salience always will or should instigate stronger effects than mortality salience concerns. I would regard it as unfortunate if the science of cultural worldview defense and the social psychology of the uncertain and mortal self were to focus too much on conducting "horse races" to see which type of salience (uncertainty or mortality salience) wins most frequently (Van den Bos & Lind, in press). Instead, I believe, as do others (e.g., Heine, Proulx, & Vohs, 2006), that it is far better to focus on investigating the social psychological processes and mechanisms that explain why and when uncertainty salience, mortality salience, or other stimuli (see, e.g., Miedema, Van den Bos, & Vermunt, 2006) lead to strong effects on people's reactions to fair and unfair events and on their reactions to other events that bolster or threaten their cultural worldviews. That said, the results discussed in this section suggest that, at least sometimes, the uncertainty management account may work pretty well and that uncertainty management processes may be definitely worthwhile to study when one is interested in the social-cognitive and epistemic bases of ideology and system justification. We now turn to a further examination of the social psychological processes of uncertainty management.

THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF UNCERTAINTY MANAGEMENT: AFFECTIVE-EXPERIENTIAL PROCESSES

Much work has been conducted to explain the social psychological processes that may underlie uncertainty management effects (see, e.g., Hogg, 2000, 2004, 2005; Martin, 1999; McGregor et al., 2001; Murray, Rose, Bellavia, Holmes, & Garrett Kusche, 2002; Sorrentino & Roney, 1999; Van den Bos & Lind, 2002; Weary et al., 2001). My research group focuses especially on how these processes and effects may pertain to the social psychology of fairness judgments (e.g., Maas & Van den Bos, 2006a; Van den Bos et al., in press). In the next two sections, I discuss recent research lines that may be conducive to our understanding of the social psychology of uncertainty management processes.

One very interesting line of work in this respect has been developed by Marjolein Maas. A core assumption driving the line of research by Maas and Van den Bos (2006a) was that personal uncertainty often leads people to react more strongly toward fair and unfair events because being uncertain or being reminded about things one is uncertain about may instigate strong affective-experiential processes. Thus, in terms of cognitive-experiential self-theory (Epstein, 1994; Epstein & Pacini, 1999), the idea was that experiencing feelings of uncertainty may lead people to start processing information they subsequently receive in experiential-intuitive ways.

In correspondence with other lines of research (e.g., Chaiken & Trope, 1999; Shweder & Haidt, 1993; Smith & DeCoster, 2000; Strack & Deutsch, 2004), cognitive-experiential self-theory distinguishes between two conceptual systems that people use to process information, namely experiential-intuitive and rational-cognitive systems (Epstein, 1994; Epstein & Pacini, 1999). The experiential way of processing information is intuitive, preconsciously encodes information into concrete images or metaphors, and makes associative connections. In experiential modes, events are experienced passively, and people can be seized by their emotions. The rational way of processing information, on the other hand, is analytic, encodes information in abstract ways, is based on making logical cause-and-effect connections, and requires intentional, effortful processing. In rational modes of information processing, people experience events actively and consciously while thinking things over and making justifications for what happened in these events, and in these modes, people are in control of their thoughts.

Cognitive-experiential self-theory also assumes that the operation of experiential mindsets is intimately associated with affect-related experiences (see, e.g., Epstein & Pacini, 1999). If experiential mindsets indeed make people's fairness reactions more susceptible to affect-related processes, then the intensity with which people react affectively to daily life events (Larsen, Diener, & Cropanzano, 1987; Larsen, Diener, & Emmons, 1986) should interact with people's mindsets. Earlier fairness studies have shown that individual differences in affect intensity can moderate people's fairness reactions (Van den Bos, Maas, Waldring, & Semin, 2003). Integrating this line of work with cognitive-experiential self-theory led Maas and Van den Bos (2006a) to predict that, under conditions of uncertainty, individual differences in affect intensity (Larsen et al., 1986, 1987) should moderate people's fairness reactions, especially when they use experiential (as opposed to rationalistic) modes of information processing.

Introducing a new manipulation of experiential versus rationalistic mindsets to the research literature, the findings of the studies reported by Maas and Van den Bos (2006a) indeed suggest that, in uncertain conditions, people who use experiential mindsets react more strongly toward fair and unfair events when they score high on the affect intensity scale (compared to those who use rationalistic mindsets and/or who score low on affect intensity).

As noted by Kay and colleagues (2007), several social psychological theories assume that human beings are motivated to believe in a predictable and controllable social world (Allport, 1966; Janoff-Bulman & Yopyk, 2004; Kluegel & Smith, 1986; Langer, 1975; Lerner, 1980; Major, 1994; Plaks, Grant, & Dweck, 2005). This motivation is thought to be so strong that when people encounter evidence that some events are uncontrollable, chaotic, or randomly

determined, they generally respond by construing things as to minimize the threat to feelings of controllability (Hafer & Bègue, 2005). Building and extending on this line of reasoning, another paper suggests that the combination of individual differences in affect intensity and experiential or rationalistic mindsets influences how people respond toward innocent victims of crimes or other misfortunes (Maas & Van den Bos, 2006b). These findings thus suggest that focusing on affect intensity (e.g., Larsen et al., 1986, 1987) and experiential versus rationalistic mindsets (e.g., Epstein, 1994; Epstein & Pacini, 1999) may be important when trying to understand the cognitive and epistemic bases of ideology and system justification (e.g., Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost, Fitzsimons, & Kay, 2004), as well as how people use their beliefs in a just world to cope with the uncertainties they encounter (e.g., Lerner, 1980; Van den Bos & Lind, 2002).

Interesting in this respect is that the research findings we reported (Van den Bos, Euwema, et al., 2007, Study 2; Van den Bos, Van Ameijde, & Van Gorp, 2006, Study 1) show that individual differences in *emotional* uncertainty (as measured by the scale developed by Greco & Roger, 2001) moderated people's worldview reactions toward homeless individuals (Van den Bos, Euwema, et al., 2007) and their reactions toward extremely negative statements about religion (Van den Bos, Van Ameijde, & Van Gorp, 2006). The Greco and Roger (2001) measure of *cognitive* uncertainty did not show significant effects on people's reactions in these studies nor in other studies in which we included this scale. This suggests that the influence of uncertainty concerns on worldview defense and system justification may best be understood from a perspective that focuses on the emotional components that the experience of uncertainty entails.

THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF UNCERTAINTY MANAGEMENT: THE HUMAN ALARM SYSTEM

This final section discusses another very recent line of research that may also further our insights into the social psychology of uncertainty management, system justification, and fairness judgments. This research program was driven by the working hypothesis that people may show strong reactions following the experience of personal uncertainty because experiencing feelings of uncertainty may constitute an alarming experience for them. More specifically, in this line of research (Van den Bos et al., 2008), we examined a possible connection between, on the one hand, the augmentation of justice effects in the presence of personal uncertainty (e.g., Van den Bos, 2001; Van den Bos et al., 2005) and other self-threatening conditions (Miedema, Van den Bos, & Vermunt, 2006) and, on the other hand, related phenomena in social cognition and social neuroscience showing the possible existence

of a “human alarm system” (Eisenberger & Lieberman, 2004; Eisenberger, Lieberman, & Williams, 2003; see also Murray, Holmes, & Collins, 2005).

As noted earlier, it is well-established in the justice literature that personal uncertainty (Van den Bos, 2001; Van den Bos & Lind, 2002; Van den Bos et al., 2005) and other self-threatening conditions (Miedema et al., 2006) lead to more extreme reactions toward fair and unfair events. Interestingly, in the literature on close relationships and social neuroscience, personal uncertainty and self-threats recently have been suggested to lead to the activation of a “human alarm system,” a psychological system that people use to detect and handle alarming situations and that prompts people to process more alertly what is going on in the situations in which they find themselves. For example, Murray and colleagues (2005) suggested that personal uncertainty (Murray et al., 2002) and perceived insecurity in close relationships (Murray, 2005) activate the human alarm system so that, among other things, people process more alertly what is happening in their relationships.

Related to this, Eisenberger and colleagues (2003) have argued that being ostracized or experiencing other self-threatening events activates parts of the human brain that they labeled the *human alarm system*. Furthermore, Eisenberger and Lieberman (2004) proposed that the alarm system is responsible for detecting cues that might be harmful to survival and, after activation, for recruiting attention and coping responses to minimize threat. For example, Eisenberger and colleagues (2003) have argued that experiencing social exclusion or other self-threatening events may be an experience of social pain. Like physical pain, the experience of social pain may trigger the human alarm system, hence “alerting us when we have sustained injury to our social connections” (Eisenberger et al., 2003, p. 292). From an evolutionary perspective, the working of such an alarm system would be adaptive (see Eisenberger & Lieberman, 2004) insofar as it prompts the human organism to act and respond more quickly to what is going on in the environment and hence make the organism’s survival more likely (see, e.g., De Waal, 1996).

We proposed (Van den Bos et al., in press) that one way to triangulate the relationships between personal uncertainty (Miedema et al., 2006; Van den Bos, 2001; Van den Bos et al., 2005), the human alarm system (Eisenberger & Lieberman, 2004; Eisenberger et al., 2003; Murray et al., 2005), and social justice judgments is by conceptualizing an overlap between the alarm system and the justice judgment process. A hypothesis that can be derived from such a postulated overlap is that factors that people associate with alarming conditions should enhance the sensitivity of the alarm system and thus, given the postulated overlap, potentiate sensitivity to the justice-related events people subsequently experience. So, just as Eisenberger and Lieberman (2004) postulated that the brain bases of social pain are similar to those of physical

pain and hypothesized that “factors that enhance the sensitivity to one type of pain should enhance the sensitivity of this alarm system and thus potentiate sensitivity to the other type of pain as well” (p. 297), we postulated that presenting to people alarm-related symbols should activate the human alarm system and hence potentiate sensitivity to other types of processes associated with it as well, including enhanced sensitivity to the justice judgment process, thus making people react more sensitively toward subsequently experienced fair or unfair events.

More specifically, from the literature reviewed here at least two things can be concluded: personal uncertainty and other self-threatening conditions activate the human alarm system (Eisenberger et al., 2003; Murray et al., 2005); and personal uncertainty and self-threatening conditions lead to more extreme judgments about procedural and outcome justice (Miedema et al., 2006; Van den Bos 2001; Van den Bos et al., 2005). Thus, it is known that the same conditions that may activate the human alarm system may also lead to more extreme justice judgments. This suggests that activating the human alarm system directly, by presenting alarm-related stimuli to people, may lead to more extreme reactions toward fair and unfair events.

An intriguing hypothesis that follows from the alarm-system perspective, laid out in detail in our report (Van den Bos et al., 2008), is that the presentation of cues closely or even subtly related to alarming conditions may lead people to form more extreme judgments about subsequently presented fair and unfair events. Findings of various experiments (scenario studies, an experiential experiment, and functional magnetic resonance imaging [fMRI] testing) indeed provide evidence for this line of reasoning both inside and outside the psychology lab. That is, research findings reveal that viewing large exclamation points prior to making evaluations of the justice of accurate or inaccurate procedures, good or bad outcomes, and voice or no-voice procedures indeed made participants react more extremely toward the procedures or outcomes (Van den Bos et al., 2008, Experiments 1–3). Furthermore, another experimental study replicated and extended these findings by showing that a flashing warning light produced similar effects on outcome justice judgments among participants with various educational backgrounds and from different age groups who were walking in the shopping center of a typical Dutch city (Van den Bos et al., 2008, Experiment 4). In correspondence with the alarm-system view of the justice judgment process, the findings reveal that the mere presence of a flashing light can lead people to show more extreme justice judgments in response to variations in good and bad outcomes.

The studies reported (Van den Bos et al., 2008) were in part inspired by the conjecture that uncertainty management findings reported in the justice

literature (see, e.g., Van den Bos, 2001; Van den Bos & Lind, 2002; Van den Bos et al., 2005) may be explained by the notion that experiences of personal uncertainty may often constitute alarming events to people, and that it is this alarm-related component of uncertainty manipulations that may largely drive the uncertainty effects reported in the social psychological literature (e.g., Hogg, 2005; McGregor et al., 2001; Murray et al., 2002). Very interesting in this respect are some auxiliary findings from fMRI testing (Van den Bos & Rijpkema, 2007) showing that watching an exclamation point leads to a brain activation pattern that shares areas (medial frontal gyrus, Brodmann area [BA] 9) with those brain regions found to be active in personal moral judgment tasks and that is known to be sensitive to tapping the combined effects of human cognitive and emotional responses (Greene et al., 2001, 2004). This may indicate that a combination of cognition and emotion may best predict how people will form justice judgments (cf. Van den Bos et al., 2008) and make personal moral decisions (cf. Greene et al., 2001, 2004). In other words, the social psychology of uncertainty management and system justification may be a process of “hot cognition,” and not “cold cognition” (see, e.g., Abelson, 1963; Kunda, 1999; Stapel, 2003). Future research should pursue and test this line of thinking.

CONCLUSION

In closing, I would like to note that, as far as I know, the alarm-system perspective has not previously been integrated with the justice literature, so the union of the two lines of work may well give new insights into the process by which justice judgments are formed. Furthermore, there may be at least one other reason why the findings reported (Van den Bos et al., 2008) make a worthwhile contribution to the social justice literature. That is, in the literature, it has been assumed frequently that one important reason to study the concept of justice is that, compared to other social motives, there is something unique about the justice concept—something that makes the process of how justice judgments are formed stand out, when compared to the processes with which people form judgments of related yet different constructs (see, e.g., Lerner, 1977, 1980, 2003; Montada, 1998, 2002). What may be an important aspect of the line of reasoning and the findings we present (Van den Bos et al., 2008) is that they may cast doubt on whether this assumption is, in fact, warranted. That is, the continuing attempts in the justice literature to focus on what makes the justice concept different from other concepts may have come at the expense of neglecting a thorough examination of the basic processes that also may play a pivotal role in how people form justice judgments.

The explicit goal of our research program is to focus on the basics of the justice judgment process, and an important implication of this line of thinking is that the justice judgment process may share important similarities with the processes used to determine other human judgments and responses. Thus, one explicit aim of our work is to show that the justice judgment process may be affected by sometimes subtle cues in people's environments—cues that may not be revealed when justice judgments are unique. So, following the advice of Bem (1987) to end a paper with a bang and not a whimper, and to paraphrase a well-known justice article (Lerner, 2003) and often-repeated conference presentation (e.g., Lerner, 1997, 2002): If we continue to study the justice judgment processes as something unique, and not as something that is part of more general social psychological processes and principles (such as processes of uncertainty management, system justification, and the human alarm system), it may lead justice researchers to lose their connection with contemporary social psychology and not find this connection again. In this chapter, I have tried to show that more closely linking the justice judgment process with the social psychology of uncertainty, system justification, affective-experiential processes, and the human alarm system may be a good way to go.

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Political Ideology in the 21st Century: A Terror Management Perspective on Maintenance and Change of the Status Quo

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Abstract

This chapter uses terror management theory (TMT) to explore the psychological functions of political ideology and those factors that produce stability and change in ideologically relevant attitudes and behaviors. We compare and contrast the TMT perspective with system justification theory and discuss points of agreement and disagreement between these conceptualizations. We discuss the relationship between “external” cultural ideologies and individual interpretations and how such external belief systems interact with psychological forces to create individualized cultural worldviews. We consider the impact of individual ideological changes on the collective mainstream worldview of a culture. We explore the possibility that some ideological positions may be better at providing existential comfort than others, conditions under which this is likely to be the case, as well as conservative and liberal ideological shifts. We conclude with a consideration of variables that determine which aspects of one’s worldview people gravitate toward when their need for protection is aroused.

Rokeach (1968) defined ideology as “an organization of beliefs and attitudes—religious, political, or philosophical in nature—that is derived from external authority and more or less institutionalized or shared with others” (pp. 123–124). Ideologies function to give life meaning, frame the individual’s experience, and provide an overarching set of assumptions and values that guide and regulate the functioning of a society. Ideologies also lie at the root of a great deal of human conflict, controversy, and violence. History provides a litany of examples of wars and other forms of violence erupting as a result of ideological clashes: communism versus capitalism; slavery versus abolition; democracy versus fascism; Christianity versus Islam. In this chapter, we explore the psychological functions served by ideology and the determinants of when specific ideological elements will become more and less influential in motivating the behavior of individuals and groups. To this end, we will con-

sider two of the most prominent contemporary psychological theories of ideology: our own terror management theory (TMT; Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1986; Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 1991) and Jost and colleagues' system justification theory (SJT; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). Although these theories share some common assumptions and offer insights into many of the same types of behavior, they are different in several important ways. Accordingly, we will compare and contrast TMT and SJT explanations for understanding stability and change in ideology.

Terror management theory posits that the uniquely human capacity for self-awareness led to knowledge regarding the inevitability of death. This knowledge, couple with a host of biological systems oriented toward continued survival, create an enormous potential for existential terror. People manage this terror by adopting meaningful cultural worldviews and seeking self-esteem, as measured by the extent to which they view themselves as living up to the standards of value prescribed by those worldviews. As such, TMT posits that people cling to and defend their own individualized cultural worldviews in order to manage the existential anxiety that is distinctively associated with the human condition. These individualized cultural worldviews draw on the social, economic, and political ideologies of the culture into which one is born, but from the perspective of TMT, are very clearly unique and individualized creations derived from the wide range of information and experiences to which the individual is exposed throughout his life (Greenberg et al., 1986). Terror management theory views the motivation to maintain and defend one's worldview as rooted in the protection it provides against the fear of death, and thus specific responses to existential threat are dependent on the extent of protections that the various elements of these ideologies provide. In this chapter, we will explore the determinants of this protection to further explicate the TMT analysis of political ideology.

System justification theory posits that people within a given cultural system are motivated to perceive existing social structures as legitimate, fair, and valid. Building on cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957), just world theory (Lerner, 1980), and lay epistemic theory (Kruglanski, 1989), SJT posits that the tendency for system-justifying behavior is motivated by cognitive and epistemic needs for consistency and certainty. System justification theory conceptualizes the system-justifying motive as distinct from and sometimes more potent than the motives for self-esteem and group enhancement (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). This leads to the rather counterintuitive SJT prediction that people often defend existing external systems even when these systems are responsible for keeping them in subordinate status and even though such system-justification undermines their self-esteem, group pride, and general psychological well-being. The individual satisfies this

system-justifying motive by performing cognitive work that enables him to view the existing external system as fair, just, and as it should be. By so doing, the person can more easily construe society and its authorities as orderly, consistent, meaningful, and just (Jost, Fitzsimons, & Kay, 2004).

Jost and colleagues have used SJT to account for much of the same social behavior that TMT seeks to explain, including allegiance to and defense of one's cultural worldview, the tendency of mortality salience cues to increase such allegiance, and the way Americans reacted to the 9/11 terrorist attacks (e.g., Jost, et al., 2004). From the SJT perspective, behavior that TMT theorists have interpreted as defense of a person's individualized cultural worldview is viewed as a shift toward justifying the existing (external) social system. We will discuss these divergent interpretations of the TMT and SJT perspectives on ideology and suggest some clarifications of our own analysis of political ideology that were inspired, in part, by questions raised by Jost and colleagues. We will also discuss the relationship between "external" ideologies, people's interpretations of these ideologies, and how external ideological systems interact with various psychological forces to create individualized cultural worldviews. Because cultural worldviews are complex, multifaceted cognitive constructions, we consider what determines which aspects of one's worldview people lean on most heavily when their need for protection is aroused. We also explore the possibility that some ideological positions may be better at providing existential comfort than others, and when this is likely to be the case. Finally, the issue of conservative and liberal ideological shifts will be explored from the perspective that emerges out of this analysis.

TERROR MANAGEMENT THEORY

Following Ernest Becker, in books such as *The Birth and Death of Meaning* (1962), *The Denial of Death* (1973), and *Escape from Evil* (1975), TMT posits that individuals within a culture assuage the potential angst created by the knowledge of the inevitability of death by creating and subscribing to beliefs about the nature of reality that provide a sense of meaning and value, which in turn provide hope of literal immortality, symbolic immortality, or both. Freud (1961) designated such group-shared beliefs as "illusions," derived directly from "human wishes" for a desired but unlikely or at best uncertain reality: "we call a belief an illusion when a wish-fulfillment is a prominent factor in its motivation, and in doing so we disregard its relation to reality, just as the illusion itself sets no store by verification" (p. 40). In other words, because people live in continuous subconscious fear of death, they create shared illusions (e.g., life continues after death) to fulfill the wish that they will not die. Because many beliefs are devised to answer otherwise impen-

eternal “riddles of the universe” (e.g., what happens when we die) that can never be wholly authenticated, they are open to varied interpretations and heated debate. Terror management theory provides an explanation as to why people are motivated to sustain faith in the beliefs and values that they use to protect themselves from existential dread. These beliefs and values serve as protective illusions that are effective in managing fear only when they are held with great confidence, because they cannot be verified in an objective and impartial manner.

Accordingly, TMT posits that people manage the potential terror that results from awareness of the inevitability of death through an anxiety-buffering system consisting of an internalized version of the cultural worldview and self-esteem. The individual’s worldview is composed of: (a) a system of beliefs about the nature of reality that provides a sense that the universe is meaningful, orderly, and stable; (b) a set of standards for what is valuable; and (c) provisions for immortality for those who believe in the worldview and live up to its standards. Self-esteem is obtained, and subsequently maintained, by living up to the standards of value that are part of the social roles inhabited by individuals in the context of their cultures, and renders people eligible for safety and security in this life and immortality thereafter. Although cultural worldviews are complex multifaceted cognitive constructions, all elements of worldviews share some common psychological functions. Among the most important of these is to provide meaning and value and, by so doing, bestow psychological equanimity in the face of death.

Worldviews and self-esteem originate in those attachment relationships with one’s parents or primary caregivers that manage distress and ensure that life-sustaining needs are met in early life (for a thorough discussion, see Solomon et al., 1991 or Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Goldenberg, 2003). Mikulincer, Florian, and Hirschberger (2003) reviewed a large body of evidence suggesting that close interpersonal attachments provide protection against death-related fears well into adulthood (see also Cox et al., 2008). Terror management theory specifies that self-esteem is attained by living up to the standards of value of one’s internalized version of the cultural worldview and maintaining the love and approval of others, especially those with whom one has attachment relationships. Thus, the three components of the anxiety-buffering system—worldview, self-esteem, and attachments—work together to manage the potential for anxiety that is inherent in the human condition.

As noted at the outset, all cultural worldviews are ultimately “shared fictions” in the sense that none of them are likely to be literally true. As such, their existence is generally sustained by social consensus, which can only be

maintained when others share these fictions, thus substantiating their veracity (Hardin & Higgins, 1996). Similarly, the sense of personal value or self-esteem that people use for protection is also illusory, in that no objective yardstick exists for assessing the value of a person or his behavior (Festinger, 1954). Indeed, the very idea of all people having value is a cultural construction, one that is not shared by all cultures. And although close interpersonal attachments control distress and increase the chances that our needs will be met, thereby prolonging our lives, they do nothing to change the fact that life is finite and death is inevitable. Thus, all three components of the anxiety-buffering system are illusory, in that they help us control our emotional reactions to harsh existential realities, but they in no way change these realities.

Difficulties arise because not all persons or groups share the same fictions. All perceptions of reality are filtered through the lenses of our culture and individual experiences, resulting in widely varying conceptions of the world and the self, which are troubling to a species that depends on certainty of the absolute truth of its own conceptions to control its fears. Consequently, when alternative worldviews or assessments of one's value are encountered, they are viewed as challenges to the established death-denying belief systems. This is why people are generally uncomfortable around, and are often hostile toward, those who do not share their cherished religious and political values or rosy views of their value as persons.

Over 350 experiments, conducted in 17 countries, provide support for TMT's central proposition that cultural worldviews and self-esteem function to buffer the potential for anxiety created by knowledge of the inevitability of death (for recent reviews, see Greenberg, Solomon, & Arndt, 2007; Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Greenberg, 2003). For example, empirical studies have shown that reminders of death (mortality salience) increase adherence to and defense of one's worldview. In some of the earliest mortality salience studies, Rosenblatt, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, and Lyon (1989) found that reminders of death increased punitive reactions to moral transgressors, and Greenberg and colleagues (1990) demonstrated that mortality salience led Christians to evaluate other Christians more positively while evaluating Jewish people more negatively. Terror management theory research has also shown that mortality salience consistently instigates self-esteem enhancement and increases ego-defensive behavior (e.g., Greenberg, Simon, Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Chatel, 1992; Heine, Harihara, & Niiya, 2002; Taubman Ben-Ari, Florian, & Mikulincer, 1999). Further, TMT research has shown that bolstering faith in one's cultural worldview or increasing self-esteem reduces one's susceptibility to anxiety and anxiety-related behavior (e.g., Greenberg et al., 1993; Greenberg et al., 1992), attenuates the effects of death reminders on worldview defense and self-esteem striving, and diminishes the ac-

cessibility of death-related thoughts (e.g., Arndt, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, & Simon, 1997; Greenberg, Arndt, Schimel, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 2001). In contrast, *threatening* one's self-esteem or cultural worldview increases the accessibility of death-related thoughts (e.g., Mikulincer & Florian, 2002; Schimel, Hayes, Williams, & Jahrig, 2007). These effects of death reminders have been obtained in a wide variety of cultures, both Western and non-Western. Of particular relevance to current global conflicts, Abdollahi (2004) has replicated the effects of mortality salience on evaluations of moral transgressors, charitable giving, and self-esteem striving among Shiite Muslims in Iran.

SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION THEORY

System justification theory posits that, because people depend heavily on their social system for meaning, stability, and security, they are motivated to support and perpetuate the system as it stands. To explain *why* people are driven to justify the existing social system under which they live, SJT theorists cite such factors as “preferences for cognitive consistency, uncertainty reduction, conservation of effort and of prior beliefs, fear of equality, belief in a just world, and the need to reduce dissonance associated with inaction” (Jost, Fitzsimons, & Kay, 2004, p. 267), as well as the need to reduce anxiety, guilt, negative affect, and cognitive-emotional dissonance (Jost & Hunyady, 2002, 2005). Whereas the first set of motivators share the common theme of an epistemic need for structure, the latter set entail coping with the emotional consequences of threats of various sorts—that is, the “palliative function” of system justification. Jost and colleagues also discuss dispositional factors (cognitive needs for order, structure, and closure, openness to experience, and intolerance for ambiguity) and situational factors (system threat and MS) that affect tendencies to engage in system-justifying behavior (e.g., Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003a; Jost & Hunyady, 2005). From the perspective of SJT, a broad range of diverse epistemological and existential threats are all posited to motivate people to view the external system in which they live and work as fair and just.

Many psychological theories, especially those that emphasize the need for self-esteem, lead to the prediction that those who benefit from a system would be motivated to justify that system, because this portrays them as deserving their good fortune and thus boosts their self-esteem. A unique claim made by SJT is that people will be motivated to rationalize the existing system *regardless* of whether it is in the best interest of the individual or the group to do so (see also Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994). Consistent with this view, Jost, Pelham, Sheldon, and Sullivan (2003) report

system-justifying behavior among several American minority and low-status groups in the form of endorsement for meritocratic systems and economic inequality (see also Henry & Saul, 2006, for a conceptual replication). Evidence that low-status groups often show a bias toward outgroups over their own ingroup on explicit and especially implicit measures is also taken as evidence of a system-justifying motive (for a review, see Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). Indeed, Jost, Fitzsimmons, & Kay (2004, p. 267) stated that “according to the most extreme form of system justification hypothesis . . . people who are most disadvantaged by a given social system should paradoxically be the most likely to provide ideological support for it, insofar as they have the greatest need to justify their suffering.” However, the more typical finding that members of low-status groups simply display less ingroup favoritism, more attitudinal ambivalence concerning the ingroup, and more outgroup favoritism than do members of high-status groups (Jost & Burgess, 2000; Jost, Pelham, & Carvallo, 2002) seems at odds with this extreme form of the theory. This more common finding might reflect the operation of competing self- and group-enhancing motives, which are acknowledged as additional influences by SJT.

COMPARING SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION AND TERROR MANAGEMENT THEORIES

It appears then that SJT and TMT attempt to explain similar behavioral outcomes (i.e., the support and defense of an existing system or the support and defense of a cultural worldview), albeit from different theoretical foundations. System justification theory views such behavior as aimed at justifying an existing system that is in some ways external to the individual, in order to meet a variety of epistemic and existential needs related to consistency, certainty, justice, structure, and reassurance. Terror management theory views such behavior as aimed at shoring up elements of the person’s internalized cultural worldview that gives life meaning and oneself value, in order to quell death-related anxiety in particular. Although the two perspectives are generally compatible, they differ regarding the source of the threats that motivate the fortification of a psychological structure. Whereas SJT emphasizes epistemic needs for certainty, structure, and justice—along with conservation of cognitive effort—and the existential reduction of guilt, anxiety, and dissonance as motivating system-justifying behavior, TMT is focused on the death-denying aspects of these and other psychological motives (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Solomon, 1997) and argues that people cling to conceptions of the world and themselves that protect them from the fear of

death. Thus, the two theories ask somewhat different questions at different levels of abstraction, with TMT focused on *why* people need the psychological entities that are posited by SJT: that is, viewing the current system as just and legitimate.

In accordance with SJT, a number of other theorists and researchers have argued that it is not death per se that people are motivated to defend against, but rather uncertainty, which is viewed as the most threatening aspect of death and thus responsible for instigating defensive responses to thoughts of death (McGregor, Zanna, Holmes, & Spencer, 2001; van den Bos & Miedema, 2001). We agree that uncertainty can be unsettling and can motivate defensive behavior. However, the purpose of TMT is to explain *why* people need certainty, consistency, structure, justice, order, self-esteem, and related social psychological outcomes. Terror management theory posits that people need stable, certain, well-structured conceptions of the world and themselves because their worldviews and self-concepts function to protect them from death anxiety. These entities are most effective in providing this protection when they themselves are stable, certain, are well-structured. Although we agree that there are other reasons why people seek certainty and structure, such as the need for clear guides for action (cf., Becker, 1962) emphasized by epistemologically rooted approaches (e.g., Kruglanski, 1989), TMT suggests that the links between confidence in one's worldview, self-esteem, interpersonal attachments, and protection from existential fear give the need for structure much of its driven and sometimes irrational quality.

From the perspective of TMT, death is frightening and motivating because it is the most certain of all life events, it entails the end of physical life (which people are strongly motivated to preserve), and people are keenly aware of the possibility that death may entail the end of their existence and thus the frustration of all other goals and motives. People are protected from this fear by maintaining subjective certainty regarding the absolute validity of a worldview that gives life meaning, value, and permanence. Indeed, although some studies have shown that reminders of uncertainty produce effects similar to mortality salience (e.g., McGregor et al., 2001; van den Bos & Miedema, 2000), many others have shown that reminders of death exert different effects than do reminders of uncertainty and many other potential threats (for a review, see Greenberg, Solomon, & Arndt, 2007). Uncertainty about the defensive beliefs and values that protect people from mortality concerns is threatening because it undermines the protection that they provide. Recent research has shown that inductions that undermine certainty in one's worldview can indeed increase the accessibility of death-related thoughts (e.g., Schimel et al., 2007).

EXTERNAL REALITY AND INTERNALIZED CULTURAL WORLDVIEWS

One of the most important differences between the TMT and SJT perspectives on ideology lies in where the psychologically active element of ideology resides: is it internal or external to the person? System justification theory posits that people are motivated to maintain and justify the external social system because this system provides meaning and order to their lives. Terror management theory views people as motivated to maintain their own unique individualized versions of the cultural worldview.

In most previous writings, we have used the general term *cultural worldview* to refer to both the individual's internalized set of values and the norms and values that exist outside of the individual in the cultural milieu. We did this to emphasize the dependence of the individual's internal experience and concepts on the external culture within which he resides. However, from early on (Greenberg et al., 1986; Solomon et al., 1991), we have maintained that each person abstracts his own individualized worldview out of the many distinct worldview elements that he encounters from the external culture throughout life. The process of abstracting an individualized worldview from these diverse influences involves an integration of new information and experiences with existing internalized cognitive structures. This integration process is especially constricted and biased toward one's existing worldview and those of others who are depended on for protection when the individual is in a state of high vulnerability, threat, or anxiety (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Goldenberg, 2003), as children are in their early years and many people continue to be throughout their lives. Thus, although people have the potential to craft their own worldviews by integrating their diverse experiences, the extent to which they are able to do this in a creative and self-determined manner depends on how well they are protected from anxiety by their attachments, existing worldview, and self-esteem.

According to SJT, social systems are meant to refer to "the actual objective, structural features of the family, government, [and] economy" (Jost, personal communication, 2007). It strikes us as problematic, though, to posit that people respond directly to objective aspects of an external social structure. Because social systems are complex, often ambiguous, and sometimes contradictory, individuals within a given culture interpret and interact with the external, objective system in different ways. Thus, the psychologically active component of any external system is necessarily an individualized interpretation. For example, people understand the meanings of democracy, communism, Christianity, and Islam in diverse ways, and the many

controversies regarding the “true meanings and values” of those institutions illustrate this inherent subjectivity.

This subjectivity is magnified by differences in people’s approaches to what should be done with the original intentions of the founders of these ideologies. Further subjectivity is added by the fact that, in today’s complex, multicultural world, people’s beliefs and values, either intentionally or not, reflect a unique, individualized combination of ideas from a multitude of diverse sources. Should the original meanings be preserved as faithfully as possible, as fundamentalists would have it, or should they be adapted to the exigencies of the current time and place? Although some attempt to stay as true as possible to the original intentions of their ideological founders, others favor combining influences from diverse systems of thought to create new hybrid ideologies that they believe are better suited to contemporary realities. This latter tendency is probably especially true of those living in individualistic cultures or those who have internalized individualistic values, as opposed to collectivistic ones that tend to be, but are not always, more respectful of tradition (an example of the variation in the process we are discussing). Indeed, for many (especially political liberals), the “American Way” entails the creative construction of one’s own worldview, and in some cases even involves the eschewal of any attempt to explicitly mirror the diverse cultural sources from which it is drawn.

For these reasons, we think it important to focus on the individual’s own unique interpretation of the external social system. Terror management theory posits that individuals abstract diverse elements of their interpretations of worldviews to create their own individualized versions of these external influences, which vary in their fidelity to the original external sources and which are the psychologically active structures that protect them against existential fear. Indeed, the first published set of TMT studies (Rosenblatt et al., 1989) examined the question of whether reminders of death led people to defend broadly accepted cultural values or only those values to which they personally ascribe, and showed that mortality salience led to harsher judgments of prostitutes only among those who viewed prostitution as immoral—despite the fact that it is illegal in this country and construed as immoral both within mainstream American culture and by most Americans. Given the diversity of sources that people draw on to create their worldviews, and the diverse interpretations of these sources that form the raw materials for these creations, it is apparent that the individualized worldviews that provide psychological equanimity are complex and multifaceted cognitive structures that vary considerably within a social or cultural system.

It is also important to recognize that the relation between external cultural systems and internalized cultural worldviews is not unidirectional in

nature. Inherent in the conceptualization of an individualized worldview is the operation of a feedback process by which the external culture and the individual interact. The external culture contains a broad and diverse array of elements and ideals that serve as raw material for the individual worldview. The individual selects from his interpretations of those bits of raw material to create and internalize an individualized worldview, which becomes the psychological anxiety buffer that protects him from the potential for existential anxiety. Because people require consensual validation in order for their worldviews to provide the certainty that enables these beliefs and values to adequately protect them from their fears, these individualized worldviews rarely deviate too far from those held by a significant number of people in the individual's social environment. Thus, we agree with SJT that external social reality exerts a powerful effect on the individual (see also Jost, Ledgerwood, & Hardin, 2008). However, given the complex, diverse, and stratified nature of large-scale modern societies, it is typically possible to find reference groups that will provide at least some degree of validation for many diverse sets of beliefs and values. When these worldviews are effective in controlling anxiety, and contain elements that are appealing to others, these once deviant ideas can slowly (and sometimes rapidly) be absorbed into the mainstream culture and become a source of ideas for other people to adopt as bases for meaning, value, and ultimately security, a process referred to as *accommodation* in previous TMT writings (Greenberg et al., 1986). Thus, although individualized worldviews build on the ideas and values of diverse mainstream cultures, subcultural elements sometimes find their way into the mainstream, leading to a constantly evolving source of mainstream beliefs and values.

The Contents of Worldviews and Systems

Another important distinction between TMT and SJT is the breadth or specificity of what is referred to by the worldview or system concepts. Both concepts are rather broad and diffuse, with "fuzzy boundaries." It appears, however, that the worldview concept is considerably broader and its functional components are perhaps more clearly specified. The individual's cultural worldview refers to the sum total of the person's "theory of reality," including an explanation for how the world works that provides answers to basic cosmological questions, a set of standards of value that specify what is good and bad or right and wrong, and the assumption that one will be protected from death in either a literal or symbolic way if one's worldview is correct and one lives according to the dictates of its standards. Thus, although not all elements of a person's worldview are equally important for providing protection from death-related anxiety, the TMT conception of the

worldview encompasses beliefs and values about things as mundane as cuisine and table manners, as pervasive as basic morality, and as elusive as life after death. In contrast, the SJT concept of system has a more specific content focus, referring to objective cultural, social, economic, religious, or legislative structures that pertain to the social structure and norms and practices of one's society. System justification theory emphasizes the concept of the status quo, a Latin term literally translated as the "*state in which*" and more commonly understood as the existing state of affairs within a particular social system. As such, the system represented by the status quo will likely correspond to a portion of the available collective worldviews from which a person can build his individualized worldviews. An important challenge for TMT is to more precisely characterize the determinants of which worldview elements are most influential in providing protection from anxiety, an issue that will be addressed later in this chapter.

Although terror management theorists have yet to create a complete list of the concrete contents that make up the collective or individual cultural worldview, many of the key elements are clear. Research in anthropology and cross-cultural psychology shows that all cultural worldviews include creation myths, values regarding what is good and bad, roles and rules that allow its members to acquire and sustain a sense of self-worth, and beliefs about death which include literal and/or symbolic modes of transcending one's death (cf., Greenberg et al., 1986). Recent TMT research reveals that worldviews also include perceived consistencies within and between individuals; stereotypes; beliefs in a just world; orderly, consensually validated conceptions of time; and connections between one's past and present self (e.g., Greenberg et al., in press; Landau et al., 2004). In addition, we know from studies focusing on derogation or aggression that mortality salience provokes derision of people unlike oneself—people with different religious affiliations, people with unconventional beliefs regarding morality, people from other nations, and people with dissimilar political ideologies. From this, we can infer that nationalism, religion, political ideology, and morality are important components of cultural worldviews.

WHERE IS SECURITY TO BE FOUND?

A particularly important question that arises out of TMT's growing body of research is whether people are more likely to respond to pressing existential threats by seeking security in the worldviews that they have chronically used to provide security or, instead, by moving toward particular types of worldviews that seem especially comforting. This issue was first raised by Wicklund (1997), when he asked whether people are more likely to respond to the

problem of death by clinging to their existing worldviews or shifting toward whatever ideology seems to best resolve ambiguity. Jost, Fitzsimons, and Kay (2004) took this question a step further by arguing that conservative ideology seems to be inherently more comforting than liberal ideology, because it provides more absolute answers and a clearer, more definitive structure for the world, and therefore, that people generally shift toward conservative ideologies when confronted with threat.

Indeed, starting with Adorno, Frenkel-Bruswick, Levinson, and Sanford's (1950) pioneering work on the authoritarian personality, a long tradition has existed within the social sciences of viewing conservative ideology as especially comforting and rooted in a desire to reduce insecurity. The authors of *SJT* agree with this line of reasoning, arguing that conservatism is a "paradigm case" of a system-justifying ideology (Jost et al., 2004b, p. 270), and that under threat, people will tend to shift to a more "conservative" orientation regardless of their baseline political orientation. For example, Bonanno and Jost (2006) reported that predominantly liberal survivors of the 9/11 attacks in New York City reported a "conservative shift" 18 months after the attacks. This "shift" was measured using a single self-report item that asked 45 participants to indicate whether their political attitudes had become: (a) more conservative; (b) more liberal; or (c) neither since 9/11. Of these, 17 reported becoming more conservative, 6 more liberal, and 22 reported no change. Given this diversity of responses, it seems premature to interpret these findings as evidence for a unidirectional conservative shift in response to threat and important to ask why more than half of the participants did not show this pattern. Moreover, in the absence of a control group that was not exposed to the terrorist attacks, it is imprudent to attribute any shifts solely to the threat posed by the 9/11 attacks. Other factors (e.g., post 9/11 media coverage, the post 9/11 economic crisis, the search for bin Laden, etc.) could have precipitated this purported conservative shift. Or, perhaps it was not a conservative shift per se, but rather a shift toward the position that was receiving the most media coverage at the time. Jost and colleagues (2004b, pp. 275–276) also reported an experiment showing that reminders of death produced a shift toward conservative attitudes that was statistically independent of preexisting political orientation. However, the small number of participants in this study (36) made sensitive tests of this hypothesis impossible, and inspection of the data they report (Jost et al., 2004b, Fig. 17.3, p. 276) suggests that this shift may have been slightly stronger for conservatives and moderates, with what appears to be modest movement in that direction among liberals.

We agree that there likely are elements of conservative ideology that are particularly comforting, and for this reason, people may in some cases shift to-

ward more conservative positions when faced with existential threat. However, TMT does not view conservative shifts as a necessary or dominant response to threat. The logic of TMT implies that people will respond to threats to their existential security by moving toward whatever element of their worldview provides the quickest, most efficient, and most secure buffer against the potential for anxiety, given the constraints of the situation in which it is needed.

To date, research has documented mortality salience-induced shifts both in the direction of, and away from, one's dominant preexisting worldview. For example, in studies conducted within a few years after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Landau and colleagues (2004); Cohen, Ogilvie, Solomon, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski (2005); and Gailliot and colleagues (2006) all demonstrated that reminders of death increased support for President Bush among Americans, regardless of their political orientation. This, of course, is consistent with Bonanno and Jost's (2006) idea of a threat-induced conservative shift. However, in studies assessing support for aggressive military policies, Pyszczynski and colleagues (2006) found that mortality salience led to increased support for the use of extreme American military might to combat terrorism among political conservatives but not among political liberals. Hirschberger and Ein-Dor (2006) found that mortality salience increased agreement that the use of military force against the Palestinians was justified only among Israelis who held "right-wing" ideologies that denied the possibility of turning the Gaza Strip over to the Palestinians. Other studies have shown significant mortality salience-induced shifts in a conservative direction among conservatives but nonsignificant trends toward a liberal shift among liberals. For example, Weise, Pyszczynski, Rothschild, and Greenberg (2007) found that mortality salience increased the importance that political conservatives placed on conservative moral issues, such as gay marriage and abortion, but a nonsignificant trend toward increased importance ratings of liberal moral issues, such as education and affirmative action, among liberals. Other studies conducted in more liberal countries have shown significant mortality salience-induced shifts toward liberal positions among liberals but only marginal effects among conservatives. For example, Weise, Arcizewski, Verhilliac, Pyszczynski, and Greenberg (2007) found that reminders of death led to a marginal shift toward more negative attitudes toward immigration among high-authoritarian Parisians but a significant shift toward more accepting attitudes toward immigration among low-authoritarians. These studies suggest that the effects of mortality salience on political ideology likely depend on cultural and historical context and cannot be reduced to a unidirectional shift to the right.

These findings seem to suggest that, within a few years of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, American conservatives showed clear and predictable responses

in the direction of their preexisting worldviews, but liberals showed more variable and less clear responses. But very different patterns emerged in countries such as France, where conservative ideology is less popular. More recently, in a study conducted in the Spring of 2006, Weise and colleagues (2008) found that mortality salience led liberals to show significantly less support for aggressive military tactics by the United States in the Middle East, a position that is clearly in line with mainstream liberal ideology, but it led conservatives to show only a nonsignificant trend toward a position consistent with their ideology. Similarly, Rothschild, Abdollahi, and Pyszczynski (2007) found that mortality salience led low fundamentalists (who tend to be liberal) to significantly lower levels of support for the use of military might in the Middle East, but led to only a nonsignificant trend in the opposite direction for high fundamentalists. We suspect that differences in the information regarding the effectiveness, extremity, and morality of U.S. military policies available across the times of these studies likely account for these differences in whether conservatives or liberals are most prone to become more extreme in their ideology when threatened.

Charisma, Confidence, and Resolve

Terror management theory researchers have also found that affection for a charismatic leader, one who expressed a great deal of confidence in his position and praised the values of the ingroup (rather than a task-oriented or relationship-oriented leader) increased after reminders of death (Cohen, Solomon, Maxfield, Pyszczynski, & Greenberg, 2004). This finding appears to entail a shift toward a leader who provides security through nationalistic rhetoric about the superiority of one's people. Although this could be interpreted as a conservative shift, because in the West (but not in China, Cuba, or the former Soviet Union) nationalistic rhetoric is more commonly associated with right-wing than left-wing ideology, this does not seem to be the case. Note that although Landau and colleagues (2004) and Cohen and co-workers (2005) found that mortality salience increased support for President Bush, self-reported political orientation was assessed after the mortality salience manipulation in both of these studies, and in neither was it affected by mortality salience.

Greenberg and colleagues (2007) recently provided evidence suggesting that Bush's "charisma"—his self-confidence and emphasis on the greatness and superiority of the nation—rather than his conservative policies was responsible for the mortality salience-induced surge in his popularity. In this study, the researchers manipulated mortality salience among liberal and conservative American participants. They were then presented with hypothetical liberal and conservative candidates who projected either high or low levels

of charisma, operationalized as it had been by Cohen and colleagues (2004). The results revealed two effects of mortality salience. First, mortality salience increased support for the liberal candidate among liberals and increased the support for the conservative candidate among conservatives. Thus, rather than a conservative shift, mortality salience increased preference for the candidate who supported the individual's preexisting political orientation. Second, this effect of preference for candidates supporting one's own position was stronger for charismatic leaders than for those lacking charismatic qualities. These findings highlight the difficulties of drawing conclusions about the effects of political orientation based on studies of real political figures who project a variety of characteristics and positions. Studies of the effect of death reminders on support for hypothetical candidates (Cohen et al., 2005; Greenberg et al., 2007) suggest that people gravitate toward candidates who support their worldviews while projecting patriotic preference for the ingroup, confidence, and resolve. Although these charismatic tendencies may more often be associated with contemporary right-wing politics in the United States, and many other countries, the findings of Greenberg and colleagues (2007) show that this is not necessarily always the case.

Consistent with these findings, Thorisdottir, Jost, Liviatan, and Shrout (2007) found that, whereas in Western Europe, openness to experience was associated with preference for left-wing ideology and need for security was associated with right-wing ideology, in Eastern Europe, the opposite was found: openness to experience was associated with right-wing ideology and need for security was associated with left-wing ideology. This pattern of results suggests that, as Greenberg and Jonas (2003) argued, in cultures traditionally dominated by communism, left-wing ideology may be associated with rigidity and leaned upon for security.

The Appeal of Simplicity and Structure

None of this is to deny the possibility that conservative ideology, particularly in Western democracies, may at times provide more comfort and protection than liberal positions. Consistent with Jost and colleagues' (2004b) suggestions that conservatism is appealing because of the structure it provides, research has shown that death reminders increase preference for well-structured information, early closure on information processing, and scenarios that imply justice (Hirschberger et al., 2006; Landau et al., 2004), and they decrease liking for unstructured information and abstract art, unless a meaningful label is provided for it (Landau et al., 2006). However, in most of these studies, death reminders only led to a preference for simple structure among participants dispositionally high in personal need for structure. We agree that the structure, certainty, simplicity, and support for tradition provided by right-wing

ideology are all reasons that people may sometimes turn in that direction when threatened. It is important to realize, however, that many other factors determine where people will turn when facing elevated threat, and that increased preference for a conservative candidate or position could reflect aspects other than the political ideology of that candidate or position.

SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION OR RIGHT-WING SHIFT?

We also question the link between a shift toward right-wing ideology and a motive to justify the existing system. The idea of a universal conservative shift in response to threat is logically inconsistent with the notion of a motive to justify the existing system. Consider the following mental exercise. Imagine for a moment an existing, stable, and legitimate cultural system that fully embraced liberal values such as tolerance, equality, sharing of resources, peace, and justice for all people. We realize that many past and current social systems that outwardly proclaimed liberal or left-wing values, such as the former Soviet Union or Red China, actually promoted low levels of equality and tolerance, and that there may be forces that push social systems toward inequality and intolerance, but this in no way means that a liberal status quo is an impossibility. Socialist democracies in many European countries, especially those in Scandinavia, are better examples of government systems that embrace such liberal ideals. We suspect that liberal egalitarian systems may be even more common and feasible in smaller social organizations, such as traditional societies, agricultural communities, and perhaps smaller countries. The logic of SJT implies that when people living within such systems face threatening situations, they would work to justify the existing system. But, this system-justifying behavior would entail endorsing the dominant liberal system or worldview.

We agree that liberal systems are not all that common in today's world. But even shifts to the right in conservative social environments are not necessarily shifts toward the status quo. Support in recent years for the Bush administration's enhanced interrogation techniques, wiretapping without court supervision, disregard for the long-held principles of the Geneva Convention, suspension of the right of habeas corpus, dismantling of environmental regulations, and many other recent right-wing policies were distinct departures from the status quo, although it is true that many of these were designed to maintain American hegemony. Right-wing politicians often campaign as reformers who want to increase the role of religion in government, change tax laws, and repeal restrictions on business and commerce. More extreme examples of right-wing deviation from long-held status quos

can be found in the Nazi and Fascist movements that swept Europe in the 1930s and 1940s—surely the systematic extermination of European Jews was a major shift away from the system that existed in Central Europe prior to the Third Reich, yet many scholars have interpreted it as a response to the threat, humiliation, and uncertainty that the German people faced at that point in history (e.g., Fromm, 1941).

Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, and Sulloway (2003a, 2003b) argued that many of these right-wing causes were motivated by the desire to return to an earlier (perhaps imagined) historical status quo. Perhaps it is not the liberal or conservative content of the worldview that provides the buffer against anxiety, but simply the stability and rigidity inherent in any existing system that provides protection. It is possible that the mere concrete, consensually validated presence of any system will stave off uncertainty and existential anxiety. Greenberg and Jonas (2003) argued and cited empirical support for the idea that the same individual differences associated with the adoption of conservative ideology in America lead to support of such left-wing ideologies as communism or socialism in other countries. We view this as a viable possibility that is consistent with the logic of SJT. The individual relies on and justifies the system prevalent in the individual's culture, whether that system is right-wing or left-wing in its ideology.

Although we agree it is plausible that increased allegiance to one's existing worldview or one's interpretation of the existing external system *might* reflect a motive to justify that system or worldview, a shift in this direction cannot be taken, in and of itself, as evidence for the operation of a system-justifying motive. There are many reasons a person might shift support toward either a particular political position or leader or toward or away from an existing external system or dominant aspect of his individualized worldview. Such shifts might reflect conformity motives related to fitting in with one's reference group (normative social influence) or believing that the majority position must be right because of the broad support it receives (informational social influence); both of these types of shifts might be more likely to occur under conditions of threat. Ideological shifts might also reflect reasoned responses to persuasive arguments put forward by those in power, perhaps biased by the greater access to media exposure, information, and credibility for one's positions that power often provides. They might reflect being fooled by false claims put out by those in power (e.g., the Swift Boat Veterans campaign against presidential candidate John Kerry) or association of the dominant system with religious authority or approval by the deity (e.g., G. W. Bush's claim that he was chosen by God to fight evil at this particular juncture in history; such claims of direct connections between

those in power and the deity have a long history throughout most of the world and may have been the original basis for political power). Although such claims may reflect system-justifying motives in those who make them, they do not necessarily reflect such motives in those who believe them—it seems more likely to us that buying into religious teachings regarding the divine rights of kings (and presidents) more likely reflects a desire for the literal immortality typically promised by those religious teachings. Shifts toward the status quo could also reflect elements of the dominant system's policies that are believed to be particularly effective in resolving the threat at hand (e.g., many Americans believed that aggressive military action was the most effective way to prevent future terrorist attacks). It could reflect a basic prejudice or ethnocentrism that is associated with the system currently in power (e.g., anti-Muslim prejudice, fear of foreigners, general hostility toward outgroups). Although a shift toward support for the currently dominant ideological system *might* reflect a motive to see that system as right and just, such shifts do not necessarily imply the operation of a system-justifying motive.

Ultimately, the question of what motivates shifts toward or away from a given ideology is an empirical one—and a very important one at that. It seems to us that proponents of SJT have interpreted evidence of shifts to the right as evidence for a particular motive underlying these shifts. Although evidence exists regarding the relationship between personality variables, threat, and socio-economic status and preference for conservative or right-wing ideologies (Jost, Napier, Thorisdottor, Gosling, Palfai, & Ostafin, 2007; Jost, Pelham, Sheldon, & Sullivan, 2003), these studies do not directly implicate a system-justifying motive in promoting such ideological preferences. Evidence also suggests that when people perceive benefits of the existing social structure to those less well off and costs to those more well off, they perceive the system as more just. For example, Kay and Jost (2003) found that when people were presented with information perpetuating the “poor but honest” or “poor but happy” stereotype, they rated the system as more just. Although these studies showed that people take information about such trade-offs into account when making judgments of whether a system is just, they do not imply a motivation to perceive systems as just. Indeed, to the extent that SJT posits that threats to the system motivate system-justifying behavior, one might have derived predictions opposite to the findings of this research: for example, that presenting information linking poverty to unhappiness would have been threatening to the idea of a just system and therefore motivated greater system-justifying beliefs. An important challenge for future SJT research will be to provide evidence that directly implicates a system-justifying motive in the appeal of conservative ideology.

WHICH ASPECTS OF WORLDVIEWS ARE RELIED UPON FOR SECURITY?

From the perspective of TMT, people respond to existential threat by clinging to whatever aspect of their worldview is likely to be most effective in quickly defusing the threat. This implies that people will often gravitate toward worldviews from which they have been best able to derive security in the past. Thus, in most cases, an individual's dominant worldview will be the one that is best able to provide security, and it is in that direction that people will shift when their need for protection is elevated. This is complicated, however, by the theory's central propositions that worldviews provide protection by providing "meaning, stability, permanence, and some hope of transcending death." Thus, cases may exist in which beliefs and values other than those dominant from one's past are most able to provide these psychological entities, and in such situations, people might respond to increased needs for protection by shifting away from their preexisting worldviews toward new beliefs and values that meet these needs. This idea can help explain ideological shifts such as those experienced by persons who join cults, and cultures that experience radical shifts, such as the 20th century examples of Germany's shift to Nazism, Italy's shift to Fascism, and Russia's and China's shifts to and away from Communism. Although this is a direct deduction from the logic underlying TMT, it begs the question of what determines which of the diverse array of worldview elements will be relied on for protection in any given situation.

It is clear that an individual's cultural worldview is not a single monolithic cognitive structure, but rather a set of related ideas, conceptions, and values that vary in terms of how much protection they provide, how accessible they are, and how well integrated they are with each other. Current thinking regarding the organization of knowledge structures, attitudes, and values generally assumes such loose multifaceted cognitive structures (cf., Kunda, 1999). Such a perspective implies that people hold a variety of beliefs and values, some of which are logically and emotionally consistent with each other, and some of which are not. Such an analysis raises interesting questions about the processes through which existential fear might influence the preference for some elements of one's worldview over others.

According to the TMT analysis, the guiding principle predicting which worldview elements people will rely on when the need for protection arises is that they will gravitate toward those elements of their anxiety buffers that will provide the most protection at the time. Because TMT posits a tri-partite system of interacting sources of security—one's worldview, self-esteem, and interpersonal attachments—there may be situations in which the pursuit of

one source of security conflicts with another, and the person may have to forsake one to maintain another. The existing literature suggests that people will turn to those aspects of their anxiety buffering system that are especially accessible, that have particular advantages in providing security, and to which they have longstanding, chronic commitment.

Accessibility of Worldview Elements

One of the most consistent findings to emerge out of the social cognitive research of the last two decades is that people's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors are strongly affected by the accessibility of beliefs, values, and external influences. A large body of research has documented priming effects, whereby recently activated information exerts a disproportionate effect on subsequent behavior (for reviews, see Bargh, 2006; Kunda, 1999). Terror management theory research has also shown that both situationally induced and chronically accessible worldview elements exert especially powerful effects on how people respond to mortality salience. In the first study demonstrating this effect, Greenberg and colleagues (1993) found that, although political conservatives respond to death reminders with increased attraction to fellow conservatives and decreased attraction to liberals, political liberals showed the opposite pattern, becoming more accepting of those with worldviews different from their own and less enamored with those who share their ideology. The authors considered the possibility that this finding reflected a threat-induced shift toward increased affinity for conservative values. However, they argued that a more likely interpretation was that these findings reflected the greater importance that liberals place on the value of tolerance, the chronic accessibility of this value for liberals, and the tendency of mortality salience to encourage behavior in line with important and accessible standards. A follow-up study supported this reasoning by showing that priming the value of tolerance completely eliminated the effect of mortality salience on ingroup bias, regardless of political orientation. Walsh and Smith (2007) conceptually replicated this finding, demonstrating that gender role primes direct the effects that mortality salience has on women's gender-relevant behavior.

Recent studies have provided further evidence of the effect of the accessibility of values in determining ideological responses to mortality salience by showing that situational primes can determine whether reminders of death lead to increased or decreased support for violent solutions to pressing international conflicts (which are espoused by conservative leaders in all of the countries studied). Hirschberger, Pyszczynski, and Ein-Dor (2007) found that the effect of mortality salience on Israelis' support for a preemptive nuclear strike on Iran to disable its nuclear program depended on rhetoric from Iranian leaders to which they had recently been exposed. When exposed to

fierce anti-Israeli rhetoric, mortality salience increased support for such attacks, but when exposed to conciliatory statements that signaled hope that all nations could share the Middle East, mortality salience decreased support for such attacks. Research by Rothschild, Abdollahi, and Pyszczynski (2007) demonstrated similar effects of priming compassionate religious values. In two studies conducted in the United States, they showed that although religious fundamentalism (a politically conservative tendency) is positively associated with support for extreme military interventions in the Middle East, reminders of death reversed this tendency when coupled with exposure to compassionate quotes from Jesus taken from the Christian Bible. This finding was replicated in Iran in a study that showed that reminders of death led to increased hostility toward the United States and Western World, but that priming people with compassionate teachings from the Koran reversed this effect such that mortality salience led to more pro-Western attitudes. Motyl and colleagues (2007) showed in two studies that although mortality salience increased implicit anti-Arab prejudice and anti-immigration attitudes, these effects were eliminated when participants were primed with a sense of "common humanity," by exposing them to pictures of families from diverse cultures or recollections of cherished childhood experiences from people from diverse cultures. Weise and colleagues (2008) demonstrated that, unlike previous findings that mortality salience increases support for President Bush, among persons with high levels of dispositional attachment security, mortality salience actually decreased support for Bush. A follow-up study demonstrated that priming memories of interactions with caring attachment figures reversed the effect of mortality salience, so that it led to decreased support for extreme military measures among Americans. These studies document the important role that the accessibility of specific worldview elements has in determining how people respond to threat. Rather than reflecting a univocal shift to the right, mortality salience appears to lead to behavior that lives up to salient standards of value, even in persons who typically do shift toward right-wing positions when reminded of death in the absence of other salient standards (e.g., American fundamentalists in the research of Weise et al., 2008).

Content of Worldview Elements: Self-Definition, Structure, Certainty, Consistency, and Literal Immortality

It is also likely that some worldview contents provide more security than others. Terror management theory implies that, in most cases, the dominant, self-identifying aspects of a person's worldview would provide more security than other less dominant elements. This is in part because people are likely to define themselves by and find most appealing those worldview

elements that provide them with the most security. Much of the research reviewed earlier supports the idea that there is a strong, although not inexorable, tendency for people to respond to threat by defending and leaning more heavily on the dominant, self-defining aspects of their worldviews (e.g., Greenberg et al., 1993; Hirschberger & Ein-Dor, 2006; Pyszczynski et al., 2006; Rothschild et al., 2007; Weise et al., 2008).

Despite this general tendency to rely on worldview elements that are central to one's self-definition, there are also likely certain specific characteristics of worldview elements that make them especially comforting. As Jost and colleagues (2003ab, 2004b) have argued, structure, certainty, consistency, and justice may be especially comforting to people in times of threat, especially for people who value these entities. Their review of those personality characteristics associated with conservative ideology supports this advantage for these types of worldview elements. Similarly, research by Landau and colleagues has shown that mortality salience increases preferences for well-structured, consistent, just, and certain arrays of information, and decreases attraction to stimuli that are difficult to perceive meaning in, such as abstract art (e.g., Landau, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, & Martens, 2006; Landau et al., 2004). Most of these effects of mortality salience on preferences for well-structured information were exclusive to individuals with high needs for structure; indeed, participants with low personal need for structure tended to exhibit reduced preference for structure after mortality salience, albeit nonsignificantly so.

As described earlier, Cohen and colleagues (2004) and Greenberg and colleagues (2007) found that mortality salience increased preferences for a worldview supporting a charismatic leader, one who emphasizes the group's greatness. This suggests that ideologies that boost collective self-esteem have some advantage, perhaps because, as social identity theory (Turner, Brown, & Tajfel, 1979) suggests, the value of one's group is intimately tied to one's value as a person. Given the role that self-esteem plays in managing existential terror, it seems likely that ideologies that boost self-esteem would have some advantages. However, circumstances likely exist in which people will forgo a boost to self-esteem in order to maintain treasured beliefs that are especially important to their security.

Worldviews that provide hope of literal immortality are also likely to be favored because of the special kind of security that they provide. Dechesne and co-workers' (2003) research demonstrated that even atheists provided with information implying the existence of life after death (in the form of bogus summaries of a scientific conference on the "near death experience") were less likely to respond to mortality salience with the worldview defense and self-esteem striving that were found in the absence of such information.

Taken together, these lines of research suggest that elements of worldviews that imply structure, certainty, justice, ingroup value, and literal immortality may be particularly effective for terror management purposes, and thus become increasingly popular when people's need for protection is high. These features seem to be well-represented in the neo-conservative ideology of the Republican party in the United States over the last three decades. This may, in part, account for the rise in support for such ideology in response to the threat posed by the 9/11 terrorist attacks. However, as we have argued throughout this chapter, a preference for such ideologies may reflect a wide variety of motives and does not, in and of itself, implicate a system-justifying motive.

Pyszczynski and colleagues (2003) referred to this sort of rigidly structured authoritarian and traditionalist ideology as "the Rock," and argued that the certainty and structure it provides makes it a relatively easy place to find protection, at least for persons with strong affinities for these psychological entities. However, they also discussed the appeal of a less rigid and less authoritarian liberal ideology that seems more consonant with the values of freedom, equality, open scientific inquiry, and other Enlightenment ideals. They referred to such less certain liberal ideologies as "the Hard Place," because of the uncertainty and ambiguity with which its adherents must learn to cope. Despite the ambiguities and uncertainties of "the Hard Place" liberal ideology, it has the advantages of fitting well with many of the ideals of modern Western civilization, science, and humanistically oriented interpretations of religious teachings from many faiths. Thus, although the well-structured, simple, and certain answers provided by contemporary extreme right-wing and left-wing ideologies have a great deal of appeal to many people with particular psychological orientations, needs, and socialization experiences, more moderate liberal ideologies may appeal to people with different personalities, experiences, and values. Findings that certain personality variables correlate with allegiance to right-wing ideologies, which are interpreted as meeting the needs associated with these personality variables, implies that low levels of these personality variables are associated with preference for left-wing ideologies. We strongly suspect that such individuals do not lack satisfaction of psychological needs or are suffering from the lack of satisfaction of their needs, but rather that they are oriented toward other ways of finding security, which bias them toward liberal ideologies.

As noted earlier, research has demonstrated threat-induced shifts toward both right- and left-wing positions, and that these shifts depend on both individual differences in political orientation and situational factors. In addition to the priming of particular values that encourage alignment with right- or left-wing positions (e.g., Rothschild et al., 2007), it seems likely that events and information available in the current historical milieu also affect

the appeal of different ideological positions. Political preferences often seem to resemble pendulums that swing back and forth from right to left with changing times and events. This metaphor suggests an inherent *instability* in political ideology and the existence of forces that promote changes over relatively short periods of time.

Recent changes in the political fortunes of G. W. Bush and his neo-conservative policies in the United States provide a good example of the impact of events and information on political preferences. Although over 90% of Americans approved of Bush's performance and policies for several months following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, by spring of 2007, his approval ratings had dropped below 35%, dipping into the 20s in some polls (About.com:US Politics, 2007). Although we can only speculate about what caused this dramatic reversal in Bush's fortune, it seems likely that news about the lead-up to the war in Iraq, the violence and bloodshed that continued there long after he declared "mission accomplished," the inept response to Hurricane Katrina, and the long list of scandals surrounding the use of torture, wiretaps, secret prisons, and politically motivated firing of attorney generals provided evidence that only his most diehard supporters could discount or ignore. Motivated social cognition theorists generally agree that although attitudes and judgments are most certainly biased by people's motives and expectations, people must maintain an "illusion of objectivity" regarding the informational bases for their conclusions in order for these biases to be effective (e.g., Kunda, 1999; Pyszczynski & Greenberg, 1987). Available information and evidence must play at least some role in politically relevant cognition.

An additional pathway by which existential concerns might influence ideological beliefs and judgments is suggested by Gailliot, Schmeichel, and Baumeister's (2006) recent findings that coping with thoughts of death deplete self-regulatory resources. To the extent that self-regulatory resources are needed to process, integrate, and use complex information, these findings suggest that coping with death concerns might also lead to a preference for simple solutions and emotionally satisfying beliefs because it requires less self-regulatory effort to sustain such conclusions. Whereas TMT posits that death concerns lead to a preference for ideologies that provide maximal protection, and a large body of evidence has supported this proposition, the finding that mortality salience depletes self-regulatory resources suggests that the problem of death may also make it more difficult for people to evaluate complex arguments and may bias people toward simple answers to complex problems. The upshot of this is that coping with death-related thoughts might create a bias for both previously held and simple explanations by undermining complex thinking. Landau

and colleagues' (2004) research on the effect of mortality salience on preference for simple and well-structured information is consistent with this possibility.

CONCLUSION

In sum, research has documented a diverse set of variables that determine which aspects of one's worldview people will rely on when their need for protection is heightened. To the extent that worldviews are complex and multifaceted, it follows that the more accessible a worldview element, the more likely people will turn to it when protection is needed. Although chronic, self-defining aspects of worldviews are often preferred because they are the ones that people have long relied on for security, and are thus likely to be chronically high in accessibility, other variables also influence this process. Recently primed elements have been shown to be especially influential—such priming can result from the individual's choices of what information to seek and avoid; intentional influence attempts by friends, media, or powerful others; or mere happenstance. Worldview elements that provide structure, meaning, stability, self-esteem, and the promise of immortality are also likely to be especially influential. Because people's beliefs and inferences reflect a compromise between their biases and the information to which they are exposed, information about significant events in the world, whether presented by the media in objective or biased ways, also likely plays an important role.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of factors that influence which aspects of one's worldview a person will turn to for security. And at this point, we are providing more of a list of influences that have been supported by empirical research than a thorough conceptual analysis of how these factors interact with each other to determine attitudes and behavior. A much clearer theoretical specification of these processes is sorely needed and should be a high priority for future theory development and research.

Unfortunately, death is a fact of life that will never go away. Ideologies, regardless of whether they are steeped in religious, political, humanistic, or scientific traditions, provide a buffer against the anxiety inherent to the human condition. From the perspective of TMT, the ideological rift currently plaguing America may be traced, at its root, to the different ways in which people cope with the existential terror that is part and parcel of the human condition. Although we might be able to reduce the weight that human aggression adds to our existential burden, the fear of death is a problem that will always be with us. What is needed, then, are less fragile and more constructive ways of defusing this most basic of all human fears.

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No Atheists in Foxholes: Motivated Reasoning and Religious Belief

Robb Willer

Abstract

Although explanations of the existence of religious beliefs in terms of their satisfaction of psychological needs date back centuries, limited empirical research exists linking motivated reasoning to religious belief. I review past research on the role of motivation in the formation of religious belief systems, specifically research related to the relationship between fear of death and belief in the afterlife. I then present the results of two original experimental studies investigating the hypothesis that fear of death leads to greater religious belief. In Study 1, participants who were asked to write short essays about death reported greater belief in an afterlife than did participants who wrote essays on a neutral topic. Study 2 replicated this finding and also showed that increased fear of death leads to greater belief in God. The results of the studies suggest that a more parsimonious motivated reasoning account may explain the relationship between fear of death and afterlife belief better than one based on terror management theory. Taken together, findings support the notion that some religious beliefs can be usefully explained in motivational terms.

If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him.
—Voltaire

The investigation of factors driving religious belief is of central importance to social scientists (Batson & Ventis, 1982; Christiano, Swatos, & Kivisto, 2002; Sherkat & Ellison, 1999). Evidence exists that religion is nearly as old as human society, with religious beliefs common among hunter-gatherer societies of the past and present. Evidence also suggests that religious beliefs are likely to persist in the future, even as societies modernize (Stark, 1999). Contrary to the so-called “secularization thesis,” religious belief remains high in most industrialized societies, including the contemporary United States (Hout & Fischer, 2002; Hout & Greeley, 1987; Stark, 1999).

The ubiquity of religious belief across cultures and history is intriguing in light of the lack of direct evidence cited for many religious claims. Religion is often associated with *faith*, that is, reasoning based on trust and belief, rather than formal logic and empirical evidence. In fact, religious beliefs are

sometimes defined in terms of their basis in faith. In this respect, religious thinking is challenging to sociology and psychology, for its epistemological basis is usually thought of as different from that of other belief systems. If religious belief is not typically based on direct empirical evidence, why are religious beliefs so strong and so widespread? Can mechanisms used for understanding other aspects of human nature be useful in understanding religious belief?

It is very likely that religious beliefs are multiply determined, having bases in many social and psychological mechanisms. Sociological scholars of religion have focused on the social functions of shared religious beliefs in promoting community and solidarity (Durkheim, 1995 [1912]). Indeed, religion has historically rivaled, if not bested, all other bases of group identity and membership in strength and influence (Christiano et al., 2002). Psychological researchers have also posited several factors that may drive various religious beliefs (e.g., Batson & Ventis, 1982; Gilbert, Brown, Pinel, & Wilson, 2000; James, 1902). More recently, evolutionary theorists have joined the fray, offering explanations of the possible biological evolution of predispositions toward religious thinking (e.g., Atran & Norenzayan, 2004; Boyer, 2001; Dennett, 2006; Sapolsky, 1997; Wilson, 2003).

Consistent with Voltaire's famous claim, religious beliefs may to a large extent be the products of motivational factors. In this article, I argue that religious beliefs can be understood in part as a motivated psychological response to fear of death. Specifically, I argue that fear of death increases belief in an afterlife, and religious belief in general, as a result of a motivated psychological process. In turn, increased afterlife belief should serve to mollify mortality concerns. In the sections that follow, I first present two competing theoretical accounts of this relationship. Then, I review past correlational and experimental research on the theorized bidirectional relationship between fear of death and afterlife belief. I then present the results of two studies investigating the effects of fear of death on afterlife belief. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of these results, their implications, and limitations.

THEORY

Motivated Bases of Religious Belief

Recent research on political ideology has primarily explained the formation of political attitudes in motivational terms (e.g., Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Jost et al., 2007). For example, politically conservative attitudes have been recently explained in terms of a variety of individual psychological motivations, such as needs for certainty, cognitive closure, unambiguous and just worldviews, and the need to manage mortality concerns (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway,

2003). Although this approach has increasingly come to dominate the explanation of political belief, comparatively less research has used the same approach to explain religious belief. Nonetheless, such an approach seems potentially very fruitful, and is presaged by the speculations of scholars for centuries. To address this gap, I present and test a theoretical explanation of afterlife belief based on individuals' motivations to address their fear of death.

Humans are unusual among animals in that their self-consciousness allows them awareness of the inevitability of their own death. Research and theory suggest that thoughts related to one's mortality are a significant source of anxiety (Becker, 1973; Wahl, 1959). If death awareness tends to promote fear and anxiety, then individuals will have strong motivations to adopt beliefs that serve to neutralize or moderate these responses, such as belief in life after death.

A multitude of scholars have cited fear of death as central to the existence of religious belief. For example, Malinowski (1965 [1935]) proposed, "Death, which of all human events is the most upsetting and disorganizing to man's calculations, is perhaps the main source of religious belief." William Durant (1954) reported that Schopenhauer described death anxiety as the "beginning of philosophy and the cause of religion." Gordon Allport (1950) described religious belief as functioning to reduce the concerns brought about from anxiety over the knowledge of one's own death. Lucretius (1947 [50 B.C.E.]) put it simply, "fear begets Gods." Perhaps this function is why afterlife beliefs are so fundamental to religions, so much so as to become even part of the definition: "most religions have taught in one form or another that the 'soul' or 'spirit' of the individual does not perish when his body dies, but goes on living in another world" (Ducasse, 1961, p. 14).

Here, I present two theoretical accounts of the relationship between fear of death and afterlife belief. Although both accounts rely on psychological motivations to explain afterlife belief, they are based on distinct theoretical rationales. One account is based on a relatively simple and parsimonious application of motivated reasoning, the other on terror management theory (TMT). Although the simpler motivated reasoning account argues that fear of death promotes afterlife belief directly (because afterlife belief neutralizes the finality of death), TMT offers a more nuanced theoretical logic for the same prediction based on "cultural worldview defense."

Motivated reasoning describes the tendency of individuals to come to conclusions that are desirable to them (Kunda, 1990). Motivational influences on human reasoning have been observed in a variety of forms, including motivated self-characterization (Dunning, Leuenberger, & Sherman, 1995), motivated group affiliation (Cialdini et al., 1976), motivated recall (McFarland & Buehler, 1997), motivated stereotyping (Sinclair & Kunda,

1999), and motivated political reasoning (Westen, Blagov, Harenski, Kilts, & Hamman, 2006). Despite these and other examples of judgments being biased by preferences, it is also worth noting that the effects of motivation have limits. People prefer plausible, justifiable conclusions and are often motivated by judgmental accuracy.

The logic of the parsimonious motivated reasoning account is as follows: Fear of death creates significant anxiety in individuals. Individuals are motivated to come to conclusions that avoid negative arousal states. Therefore, greater fear of death should lead to greater belief in ideas that offer an escape from death anxiety, such as belief in an afterlife. Further, afterlife belief should reduce fear of death. This reciprocal relationship between fear of death and afterlife belief is portrayed in Figure 10.1.

But, would motivated reasoning predict that fear of death is related to other religious beliefs, such as belief in God? Here, I see little in the way of a direct motivational relationship between mortality concerns and other religious beliefs (but see also Norenzayan & Hansen, 2006). However, belief in an afterlife is itself strongly associated with other religious beliefs, such as belief in God or other supernatural agents. As a result of cognitive consistency mechanisms (Festinger, 1954), individuals should generally hold associated religious beliefs at comparable levels. Thus, my application of motivated reasoning predicts that fear of death leads not only to greater afterlife belief, but also in turn to greater religious beliefs in general (e.g., belief in God). This relationship is also given in Figure 10.1.

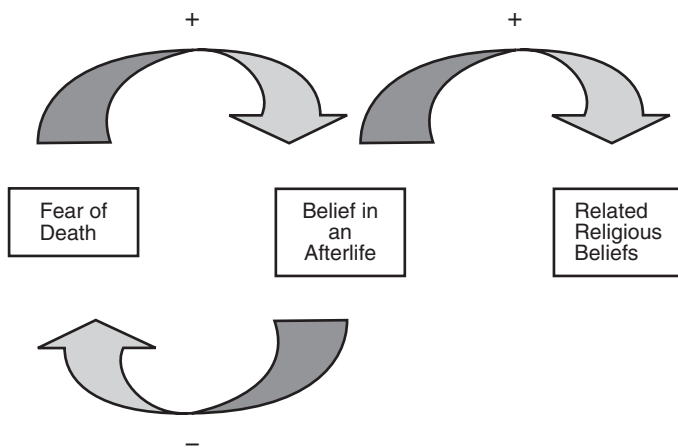


Figure 10.1 Theorized bidirectional relationship between fear of death and belief in an afterlife predicted by basic motivated reasoning account.

An alternate theory that also predicts that fear of death leads to greater afterlife belief, although for different reasons, is TMT (Greenberg et al., 1990; Greenberg, Solomon, & Pyszczynski, 1997; Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Solomon, 1999; Rosenblatt, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, & Lyon, 1989). Briefly, TMT asserts that humans are strongly motivated toward self-preservation. As a result, thoughts of death produce mortal terror. However, a person's "individualized version of the cultural worldview" and self-esteem help to buffer against this anxiety by providing individuals a sense of value, order, and symbolic immortality (Greenberg et al., 1994). Because one's cultural worldview provides an anxiety buffer against mortality concerns, the salience of mortal thoughts tends to lead to worldview defense (Rosenblatt et al., 1989). Examples include the tendency of individuals for whom thoughts of their own death have been made salient to exhibit increased ingroup affiliation and biases (Harmon-Jones, Greenberg, Solomon, & Simon, 1996), hostility and aggression toward outgroup members (McGregor et al., 1998), system-justifying stereotypes (Schimel et al., 1999), and increased liking of fellow ingroup members who conform to cultural expectations (Greenberg et al., 1990).

Thus, TMT would also predict that fear of death leads to increased belief in an afterlife. To the extent that afterlife belief is part of an individual's cultural worldview, this belief should be strengthened following mortality salience because an individual's cultural worldview serves as a buffer against death anxiety. The theory's argument for the relationship between fear of death and afterlife belief is also based on individuals' psychological motivations to reduce fear of death. But, the theoretical argument is different because of the theorized mediating role of worldview defense.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Correlational

Perhaps because of the limitations of studying reciprocal relationships with cross-sectional research designs, correlational studies of the relationship between fear of death and afterlife belief are mixed in their results, variously suggesting a positive, negative, curvilinear, or no relationship between these variables. Several studies have shown that lower fear of death or death anxiety is correlated with religious belief or attendance (Alexander & Alderstein, 1960; Jeffers, Nichols, & Eisdorfer, 1961; Swenson, 1961; Martin & Wrightsman, 1965; Richardson et al., 1983). In a meta-analysis, Spilka, Hood, and Gorsuch (1985) found that in 24 of 36 studies, fear of death was lower among religious individuals.

Despite this, a variety of correlational studies are suggestive of a *positive* relationship between mortal fear and afterlife belief. For instance, research

shows that those with greater "death experience" (defined as the number and recency of deceased loved ones) exhibit greater levels of religious behavior and stronger religious views (Peterson & Greil, 1990). Also, a study of gay men with and without acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) showed that, among the men with AIDS, greater death anxiety was correlated with greater church attendance (Franks, Templer, Cappellety, & Kauffman, 1990). Studies of people reporting near-death experiences show that these individuals afterward tend to report greater belief in God, the afterlife, and reduced fear of death, although this research is based on small samples (Wulff, 1991). Research on Israeli soldiers in the 1982 Lebanon War shows that nonreligious soldiers reported greater fear of death, and greater responsiveness to higher death-risk experiences in war, than did nonreligious soldiers (Florian & Mikulincer, 1993). Anecdotal reports suggest greater religious observance and rates of baptism among U.S. soldiers awaiting deployment to Iraq (Finer & Baker, 2003).

Results of some studies are ambiguous in the direction of the observed effect or find no effect. In a cross-sectional survey study, Hoelter and Epley found that seven of eight dimensions of fear of death correlated with at least one religiosity measure, but that the correlation was at times positive and other times negative (1979). Other cross-sectional research has failed to find any correlation between religious belief and death anxiety (Aday, 1984; Christ, 1961; Lester, 1970). Also, although it is generally assumed that religious beliefs increase with age, a relationship possibly attributable to greater fear of death among the elderly, evidence also exists that age and afterlife belief are unrelated (Harley & Firebaugh, 1993).

Still other research has shown a more complex relationship moderated by the nature of individuals' religious beliefs. Spilka and colleagues found that the intrinsically religious tended toward a benevolent view of the afterlife, whereas the extrinsically religious had a more negative view (1977). Others have found a similar pattern, including research showing that the intrinsically religious report less death concern (Kahoe & Dunn, 1975; Wulff, 1997), and greater fear of death has been reported among the extrinsically religious (Wulff, 1997). Leming (1980) found a curvilinear relationship between fear of death and religious belief, concluding that "religiosity may serve the dual function of afflicting the comforted and comforting the afflicted."

One way to understand these diverse and apparently contradictory findings is to look closer at the characteristics of the studies. Based on the model presented in Figure 10.1, we would expect individuals high in fear of death to adopt greater afterlife beliefs, and then subsequently fear death less. This model would predict that longitudinal and experimental research will find a positive relationship (as fear of death leads to afterlife

belief), whereas cross-sectional studies should find a negative relationship (as adopted afterlife beliefs leave the individual less afraid of death).

This model is generally consistent with the past research presented here. The Spilka and colleagues' (1985) meta-analysis indicates that cross-sectional research tends to find a negative relationship between religiosity and fear of death. Meanwhile, several of the studies that have found a positive relationship involve quasi-longitudinal designs in which individuals who should be higher in fear of death because of some shared, common factor are surveyed with respect to their afterlife or general religious beliefs.¹ Research cited earlier, studying the attitudes of servicemen anticipating deployment, gay men with AIDS, and people with recently deceased loved ones, has found that members of these groups report greater afterlife belief than comparison groups. However, because these designs are nonexperimental, significant alternative explanations are possible for the findings. Thus, I next review relevant experimental research on this relationship.

Experimental

The research reviewed in the prior section was nonexperimental and therefore is limited in its ability to speak to the causal relationship(s) between individuals' fear of death and belief in an afterlife. Because of the possibly bidirectional relationship between religious belief and fear of death, experimental approaches offer more promise for understanding how these concepts are related. Researchers have employed experimental designs to study both sides of the theorized reciprocal relationship between fear of death and afterlife belief portrayed in Figure 10.1.

Most applicable to the current investigation is experimental research on the effects of fear of death on afterlife belief. In a seminal study, Osarchuk and Tatz (1973) first classified participants as high or low in afterlife belief based on responses to one of two forms of an afterlife belief survey. Participants were then assigned to one of three conditions: (a) a Death treatment condition wherein participants watched a presentation of death-related imagery (e.g., photos of corpses and auto wrecks) while a tape played an exaggerated presentation on the high likelihood of death for individuals aged 18–22 set to dirge-like music; (b) a Shock threat treatment condition designed to increase

¹ Note, however, that not all research finding a positive correlation involves quasi-longitudinal designs (e.g., Berman & Hays, 1973). Kurlychek found that afterlife belief was greater among those with greater fear of death of others, but not fear of one's own death (1976). A classic interview study found greater reported fear of death among religious individuals (Faunce & Fulton, 1958).

fear, but not mortal fear, wherein participants spent a comparable amount of time anticipating participation in a study involving electric shocks; or (c) a Control condition in which participants played with a child's toy for a comparable amount of time. Following the manipulation, all participants completed the other form of the afterlife belief survey.

Osarchuk and Tatz found the greatest change in afterlife belief among participants initially high in afterlife belief who were exposed to the Death threat condition. No other conditions of the study produced notable results. This is the only known experimental study to show an effect of fear of death on afterlife belief. However, Osarchuk and Tatz's finding has not yet been replicated. In one subsequent study, Ochsmann (1984) had groups of theology students and students of other subjects fill out a questionnaire on death and dying (or not). Following this manipulation, all participants filled out a belief in afterlife scale. Participants did not show increased afterlife belief as a result of the mortality salience manipulation.

Other research suggests that fear of death may lead to greater religious beliefs besides afterlife belief, consistent with the motivated reasoning account given in Figure 10.1. Norenzayan and Hansen (2006) found that a mortality salience manipulation led to greater general religiosity and belief in God. Follow-up studies showed that study participants expressed greater belief in supernatural agents that were outside of their own cultural worldview (e.g., Buddha, Shamanic spirits), apparently contrary to the predictions of TMT (see Anson et al. this volume).

Additionally, Greenberg and colleagues (1995) showed that participants who wrote short essays about their death were more reluctant to make inappropriate use of a crucifix (for hammering) on a task, an effect suggestive of greater religiosity. Greenberg and colleagues interpret their results as supportive of TMT, since mortality salience led to apparently more respectful treatment of culturally significant objects in general, but this result could also be interpreted as consistent with the parsimonious motivated reasoning account presented here.²

Experimental research has also investigated other aspects of the motivated reasoning account of the relationship between fear of death and afterlife belief, specifically the possibility that afterlife belief serves to decrease fear of death. Friedman and Rholes (2007) tested the idea that religious belief functions to suppress thoughts of death among believers. They presented evidence of inconsistencies in the Bible to both fundamentalist and non-fundamentalist

² Still other research has failed to find an effect of experimentally manipulating mortality salience on reported religious belief (Burling, 1993).

Christians. They then measured posttreatment accessibility of death-related thoughts via a word-stem completion task. Fundamentalist Christians presented with evidence of Biblical inconsistency showed greater death thought accessibility, but non-fundamentalist Christians were unaffected by the manipulation. The findings suggest that fundamentalist Christianity's teachings function to keep death-related thinking out of consciousness.

Working in the TMT tradition, Dechesne and colleagues (2003) conducted a series of studies in which they successfully manipulated participants' belief in an afterlife via an essay arguing that scientific research on near-death experiences supports (or contradicts) the existence of life after death. The result of the manipulation was to nullify the previously discovered link between mortality salience and self-esteem striving. Participants tended to positively distort negative personality feedback under mortality salience, but not if they had previously been assured that scientific research supports the existence of an afterlife. This research shows how belief in an afterlife can suppress effects from thoughts of death.

Taken together, experimental research relating fear of death and religious beliefs has produced results generally consistent with the parsimonious motivated reasoning account, although with some exceptions and ambiguities. Research has shown a positive effect of fear of death on afterlife belief (Osarchuk & Tatz, 1973), as well as belief in God and general religiosity (Norenzayan & Hansen, 2006), yet many questions remain unanswered. In particular, Osarchuk and Tatz's effects were only observed among participants initially high in afterlife belief, and alternative explanations of their findings based on the accessibility of religious thoughts in the Death threat condition are possible. Most problematic, Osarchuk and Tatz's findings have not been replicated, and have even been contradicted by subsequent research (Ochsmann, 1984). Thus, further, controlled experimental research is called for to more carefully assess the validity of the claim that fear of death increases afterlife belief.

Additionally, the theoretical explanation for the relationship between fear of death and religious belief remains ambiguous. For example, Norenzayan and Hansen found increased belief in culturally foreign supernatural agents, a contradiction of TMT's predictions. On the other hand, Osarchuk and Tatz's finding that only those initially high in belief in an afterlife responded to mortality salience with increased afterlife belief is consistent with TMT's prediction of cultural worldview defense in reaction to mortality salience. The present studies are intended to address these ambiguities and extend research on the effects of fear of death on religious beliefs, especially belief in an afterlife, while testing a motivated reasoning account of the relationship against one based on TMT.

STUDY 1

Overview

The purpose of Study 1 was to test the prediction that greater fear of death leads to greater belief in an afterlife. I also wanted to study whether this effect would be greater for individuals with more or less initial religiosity, since motivated reasoning and TMT accounts diverge in their predictions for these groups. TMT would predict that the effects of fear of death on belief in an afterlife would be greatest for those who consider the afterlife part of their cultural worldview (i.e., initially religious people). On the other hand, the more parsimonious motivated reasoning account presented here would predict the effect to be greatest among those low in religious belief, since those without substantial prior belief in an afterlife should be most threatened by the salience of death-related thoughts, whereas those high in prior afterlife belief should be buffered from the effects of mortality salience.

In the study, I used a mortality salience induction used in several prior studies (e.g., Greenberg et al., 1990; Greenberg, Pyszczynski, Solomon, Simon, & Breus, 1994) to manipulate the salience of participants' fear of death. The mortality salience induction involves asking participants to write two short essays about their death. Following the mortality salience induction, participants were asked to respond to several survey questions regarding, among other things, their belief in an afterlife. By manipulating the salience of participants' mortal thoughts, I was able to test my predictions about the effects of fear of death on afterlife belief.

Methods

Participants. Forty-four undergraduates (23 women, 21 men) at Cornell University participated in the study in return for \$8.³

Design. The study featured a two-condition (participant wrote Death/Television essays), between-subject design.

Procedure. Participants were recruited by fliers advertising payment for participation in a "Miscellaneous Surveys Study." Upon reporting to the laboratory, a research assistant gave each participant a series of materials to complete. After completing a survey packet for another study, participants filled out a demographic questionnaire. The questionnaire included an item

³ There was no effect of gender or age ($M = 19.5$ years) of participants, nor did these variables interact with any of the results presented, and they are thus not discussed further.

asking participants how religious they were on a 10-point scale ranging from “Extremely Religious” to “Not Religious at All.”⁴

After completing the demographic questionnaire, participants were asked to write short essays in response to two essay prompts on a computer. Half of the participants were randomly assigned to respond to essay prompts regarding death, and half were assigned to respond to essay prompts regarding watching television (Greenberg et al., 1994). The exact wording of the prompts was:

- Briefly describe the feelings and emotions that the thought of your own death (watching television) arouses in you.
- Please describe in as much detail as possible what your thoughts would be as you physically die (watch television).

After participants finished writing the short essays, they were given a survey with miscellaneous questions, including one asking “How likely do you think it is that there is life after death?” Participants responded on a 10-point scale ranging from “Extremely Unlikely” to “Extremely Likely.” The survey also asked participants to answer a series of 10 questions regarding characteristics of the afterlife adapted from the General Social Survey; for example, participants were asked how likely it was that the afterlife would be “A paradise of pleasure and delights.”

Finally, participants were debriefed regarding the true purpose of the study, paid, and thanked for their participation.

Results

Participants who wrote essays regarding death rated the existence of an afterlife as more likely ($M = 7.30$, $SD = 2.53$) than did participants who were assigned to write essays about television ($M = 5.62$, $SD = 3.51$), although this effect was only marginally significant ($t = 1.84$, $p < .08$). I next conducted a regression analysis of the effect of the essay manipulation on reported belief in the afterlife while controlling for participants’ pre-manipulation levels of reported religious belief. This analysis showed a highly significant effect of initial religiosity ($\beta = .558$, $p < .001$) and a significant effect of condition ($\beta = .329$, $p = .01$) on participants’ stated belief in an afterlife. The

⁴ Random assignment was successful in creating two groups that were roughly equal in their initial levels of religious belief. There was no significant difference in the reported level of religious belief, as measured on the demographic questionnaire prior to the manipulation, between participants assigned to the Death essay and those assigned to the Television essay condition ($p > .50$).

results of the regression analysis indicate that participants who wrote essays about death tended to report greater belief in life after death than did participants who wrote essays about TV, not of initial religious belief. This finding supports the prediction that greater fear of death leads to greater belief in the afterlife

To investigate whether this effect varied by participants' initial level of religious belief, I performed a median split dividing participants into two groups based on how religious they reported being on the demographic questionnaire. Among participants initially low in religious belief, those assigned to write the Death essay reported greater belief in an afterlife ($M = 6.42$, $SD = 2.78$) than did those who wrote the Television essay ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 2.77$) ($t = 2.40$, $p < .03$). But, among those initially high in religious belief, those assigned to the Death essay condition did not report significantly greater belief in an afterlife ($M = 8.27$, $SD = 1.90$) than did those assigned to the Television essay condition ($M = 7.08$, $SD = 3.40$) ($t = 1.02$, $p > .30$). Although this pattern of means suggests that those low in initial religiosity were most affected by the mortality salience manipulation, the results of a regression analysis of the effects of the essay manipulation, initial religiosity, and their interaction on afterlife belief did not yield a significant interaction effect ($p > .40$).

I found no significant effects of condition on participants' responses to any of the 10 survey questions regarding characteristics of the afterlife.

STUDY 2

Overview

Study 2 was designed to address a significant alternative explanation for the results of Study 1, and also to help determine what theoretical mechanism best explains the observed effect. Although the results of Study 1 support the predicted relationship between fear of death and afterlife belief, various alternative explanations could also be advanced. First, it is possible that the effect of the Death essay condition was simply to make afterlife thoughts more accessible to participants because of cultural associations between the concepts of death and afterlife. Later, when participants reported the likelihood of an afterlife, they may have answered based on the subjective accessibility of thoughts related to the afterlife, and as a result reported a higher probability in the Death essay condition. This alternative account based on semantic associations leading to biased probability estimates could also explain the findings of Osarchuk and Tatz's prior study (1973). Osarchuk and Tatz played a funeral dirge prior to measuring participants' belief in an afterlife. It is very possible that participants in their study, in thinking about death and funerals, also thought more about religion-related topics (e.g., churches)

and then reported greater afterlife belief as an artifact of the salience of these thoughts.

To address this possibility, I added an additional control condition to Study 2. In addition to having some participants write short essays about death and television watching, I also had some participants write essays about their thoughts regarding the afterlife. My thinking was that in this condition, the salience of thoughts about the possibility of an afterlife would be maximized for participants. Thus, if participants who wrote essays about death reported greater afterlife belief than did those who wrote essays about the afterlife, it would offer convincing support for a motivational rather than a semantic association account.

Additionally, Study 2 was designed to further assess which of motivated reasoning or TMT better accounts for the relationship between fear of death and afterlife belief. I again measured prior religiosity to see if the effect observed in Study 1 is stronger among those initially high or low in religiosity. Also, I measured other religious beliefs in addition to belief in an afterlife, specifically belief in God, heaven, and hell.

Terror management theory would predict that fear of death would lead to increased religious beliefs in general, to the extent that they are associated with an individual's cultural worldview. However, motivated reasoning would predict that fear of death would first lead to increased afterlife belief, and thereafter other religious beliefs as a result of cognitive consistency. Thus, one theory predicts a direct effect of mortality salience on religious beliefs in general and the other predicts these effects will be mediated by afterlife belief.

Finally, I included an additional condition in which participants were asked to write essays about the death of a loved one. The inclusion of this condition was exploratory. Past research has shown that writing an essay about a loved one does not have the same impact on participants that writing about one's own death has (Greenberg et al., 1994). Thus, both TMT and motivated reasoning would likely predict that participants writing essays about their own death would report greater afterlife belief in comparison to those who wrote essays about the death of a loved one.

Methods

Participants. One hundred and eleven undergraduates (73 women, 38 men) at Cornell University participated in the study in return for \$8. Three participants did not provide answers to questions regarding religious beliefs and were omitted from the following analyses.

Design. The study featured a four-condition (participant wrote Death/Television/Afterlife/or Death of a Loved One essays), between-subject design.

Procedure. The procedure was generally identical to Study 1. Participants were again recruited by fliers advertising payment for participation in a “Miscellaneous Surveys Study.” Upon reporting to the laboratory, a research assistant gave each participant a series of materials to complete. After completing a survey packet for another study, participants again filled out a demographic questionnaire measuring their self-reported level of religious belief prior to the manipulation.⁵

After completing the questionnaire, participants were asked to write short essays on one of four randomly assigned topics. Two of the topics were the same as in Study 1 (death, watching television). Two additional topics were added, one on the afterlife and the other on the death of a loved one. The exact wording of the two new essay prompts was:

- Briefly describe the feelings and emotions that the thought of the afterlife (death of a loved one) arouses in you.
- Please describe in as much detail as possible what your thoughts would be if you were to experience the afterlife (as a loved one physically dies).

After participants finished writing the short essays, they were given a survey including several religious views questions. In addition to the prior question regarding belief in the afterlife, three other questions of interest were added to the survey: specifically, participants were asked how likely they thought it was that heaven, hell, and God exist. Participants responded to each on 10-point scales ranging from “Extremely Unlikely” to “Extremely Likely.”

Finally, participants were debriefed regarding the true purpose of the study, paid, and thanked for their participation.

Results

Belief in an Afterlife. Table 10.1 gives results by condition for the primary dependent variables: reported belief in an afterlife, heaven, hell, and God. Participants who wrote essays regarding death rated the existence of an afterlife as more likely ($M = 7.29, SD = 2.48$) than did participants who were assigned to write essays about television ($M = 5.40, SD = 3.11$) ($t = 2.45, p = .02$), the afterlife ($M = 5.55, SD = 3.19$) ($t = 2.29, p = .03$), and the death of a loved one ($M = 6.00, SD = 2.55$) ($t = 1.93, p = .06$). These results replicate the effect of fear of death on belief in an afterlife found in Study 1.

⁵ Random assignment was again successful in creating groups that were roughly equal in their initial levels of religious belief. There were no significant differences in the reported levels of religious belief between any two conditions.

Table 10.1 Mean reported belief in afterlife, heaven, hell, and God by essay condition in Study 2.

	Death Essay Mean (SD)	Television Essay Mean (SD)	Afterlife Essay Mean (SD)	Death of a Loved One Essay Mean (SD)
Belief in an Afterlife	7.29 (2.48)	5.40 (3.11)	5.55 (3.19)	6.00 (2.55)
Belief in Heaven	7.75 (2.10)	5.48 (2.95)	5.49 (3.39)	5.97 (2.85)
Belief in Hell	6.54 (2.60)	4.60 (3.07)	4.13 (3.12)	4.17 (2.83)
Belief in God	8.18 (2.11)	6.88 (3.17)	6.72 (3.12)	6.83 (3.08)

Next, I analyzed the effects of condition on participants' reported belief in heaven and hell. Participants who wrote essays regarding death rated the existence of heaven as more likely ($M = 7.75$, $SD = 2.10$) than did participants who were assigned to write essays about television ($M = 5.48$, $SD = 2.95$) ($t = 3.26$, $p < .01$), the afterlife ($M = 5.43$, $SD = 3.39$) ($t = 3.10$, $p < .01$), and the death of a loved one ($M = 5.97$, $SD = 2.85$) ($t = 2.68$, $p = .01$).

The same results obtained for the effects of condition on reported belief in hell. Participants who wrote essays regarding death rated the existence of hell as more likely ($M = 6.54$, $SD = 2.60$) than did participants who wrote essays about television ($M = 4.60$, $SD = 3.07$) ($t = 2.48$, $p = .02$), the afterlife ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 3.12$) ($t = 3.18$, $p < .01$), and the death of a loved one ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 2.83$) ($t = 3.28$, $p < .01$).⁶

Also, I found that participants across all conditions reported greater belief in heaven ($M = 6.16$, $SD = 2.98$) than in hell ($M = 4.85$, $SD = 3.04$) ($t = 6.22$, $p < .001$). This finding supports a motivated reasoning account of religious belief, since participants tended to invest greater belief in the more positive form of the Christian afterlife than in the more negative one, although the two are typically communicated as part of the same religious system.

Belief in God. I also analyzed the effects of condition on reported belief in God. Generally, participants who wrote essays regarding death rated the

⁶ In addition, I also conducted alternate regression analyses of the effects of each condition on participants' reported belief in an afterlife, heaven, and hell using dummy variables for each condition. Results of these analyses converged with the t -test results presented here. For all three dependent variables, only the participants who wrote essays about their own death reported significantly greater belief in an afterlife. The same analysis of participants' reported belief in God showed that participants who wrote essays about their own death reported higher afterlife belief; however, this result was not significant ($p = .11$).

existence of God as more likely ($M = 8.18$, $SD = 2.11$) than did participants who were assigned to write essays about television ($M = 6.88$, $SD = 3.17$) ($t = 1.77$, $p = .08$), the afterlife ($M = 6.72$, $SD = 3.12$) ($t = 2.06$, $p = .04$), and the death of a loved one ($M = 6.83$, $SD = 3.08$) ($t = 1.92$, $p = .06$). However, two of these effects only approached statistical significance.

Next, I tested the claim, based on motivated reasoning, that the effects of fear of death on belief in God are mediated by belief in the afterlife. In other words, the direct effect of fear of death is on afterlife belief, which in turn leads to greater belief in God's existence. This contrasts with the reasoning of TMT, which would predict that both result from cultural worldview defense without one mediating the other. To test this mediational argument, I ran a series of regression analyses. I created a dummy variable for whether participants wrote the essay about death or responded to one of the other three essay prompts. Combining the other three conditions into a single reference group was justified, since the death essay condition was at least marginally different from all three conditions in both reported belief in an afterlife and God, but there were no significant differences between any of the three.

First, I analyzed the effect of writing the essay about death on reported belief in an afterlife. As the above t -test results imply, participants who wrote essays about their death reported significantly greater afterlife belief ($\beta = .244$, $p = .01$). Further, participants who wrote essays about their death also reported significantly greater belief in God ($\beta = .205$, $p = .03$). Finally, in a regression analysis on participant's reported belief in God, with both reported belief in an afterlife and whether the participant wrote essays about her own death as independent variables, belief in an afterlife predicted belief in God ($\beta = .608$, $p < .001$), but the effect of writing the essay about death was insignificant ($\beta = .056$, $p > .45$). A Sobel test indicated that this mediation was statistically significant ($p < .02$). These findings suggest that the effect of fear of death on belief in God operated through increased afterlife belief and support a motivated reasoning theoretical account.

Moderating Effects of Worldviews. To investigate whether the effects of the essay writing manipulation on religious beliefs varied by participants' initial levels of religious belief, I again performed a median split to create high- and low-religiosity groups. I again combined the three control conditions and compared participants by whether they did, or did not, write essays about their own death.

Among participants initially low in religious belief, those assigned to write the Death essay reported greater belief in an afterlife ($M = 6.25$, $SD = 2.42$) than did those who responded to one of the other three essay prompts

($M = 4.60$, $SD = 2.69$) ($t = 1.93$, $p = .06$), although this effect was marginally significant. But among those initially high in religious belief, participants assigned to write essays about their death did not report significantly greater belief in an afterlife ($M = 8.06$, $SD = 2.29$) than did the participants in the other conditions ($M = 7.11$, $SD = 2.64$) ($t = 1.24$, $p = .22$).

Although these results are consistent with the idea that individuals low in initial religiosity were more responsive to the mortality salience manipulation, it is important to note that the results might also be caused by ceiling effects for the high-religiosity participants. It may simply be the case that all participants were more or less equally affected by the mortality salience manipulation, but those initially high in religious belief did not report significantly higher belief because their counterparts who did not receive the mortality salience manipulation had themselves indicated very high religiosity. Further, the results of a regression analysis of the effects of the essay manipulation, initial religiosity, and their interaction on afterlife belief did not yield a significant interaction effect ($p = .95$).

DISCUSSION

Two experimental studies showed that making thoughts of their own death salient to participants increased reported belief in an afterlife. Participants in Study 2 also reported greater belief in God as a result of writing essays about their own death, and this effect of the essay manipulation was mediated by increased belief in an afterlife. In Study 2, mortality salient participants also reported greater belief in heaven and hell. In both studies, the effects of mortality salience on afterlife belief were greater among those initially low in religiosity, although support for this pattern was mixed and possibly driven by a ceiling effect for high-religiosity participants' reported religious beliefs.

The only known experimental demonstration of an effect of fear of death on level of afterlife belief is that of Osarchuk and Tatz (1973). However, that study only showed an effect among participants initially high in religious belief, whereas the present studies showed main effects of fear of death. The study also replicates Norenzayan and Hansen's (2006) finding that fear of death increases belief in God. The effect of fear of death on reported belief in God was mediated by reported afterlife belief.

Study 2 helps address a previously presented alternative explanation for Osarchuk and Tatz's findings. It is possible that their use of dirge-like music and imagery related to funerals may have made religious thoughts more accessible to participants and, in turn, created higher estimates of the likelihood of religious notions, such as an afterlife. Likewise, my Study 1, by making

death thoughts salient to participants, may have also led religious thoughts to be salient to people via cultural and other associations between the two. To address the possibility that the salience of thoughts related to religion and an afterlife biased estimates of the probability of an afterlife, Study 2 contrasted a Death essay condition with an Afterlife essay condition. The Afterlife essay condition should have promoted even greater thinking related to the idea of an afterlife than the Death essay condition, but nonetheless participants who wrote Death essays rated the afterlife as more probable.

Motivated Reasoning and Terror Management Theory. Results presented here generally support the claim that religious beliefs are driven in part by motivational factors. When participants' fear of death was made salient to them, they exhibited greater belief in an afterlife, heaven, hell, and God. However, the evidence is mixed on whether these effects are best understood in terms of TMT or a more parsimonious motivated reasoning account.

On balance, most results supported the parsimonious motivated reasoning explanation given in Figure 10.1. In both studies, the effects of fear of death on afterlife belief appeared to be strongest among those low in religiosity. However, this pattern did not yield significant interaction effects and could have been driven by ceiling effects for those high in religiosity. It could be argued that TMT would predict that only those high in religiosity would respond to mortality salience manipulations with increased religious belief, since only those high in religious belief would see religion as central to their cultural worldview. If one interprets TMT in this way, it clearly does not account well for the pattern of data found here.⁷

Additionally, the effect of fear of death on belief in God, a result first shown experimentally by Norenzayan and Hansen (2006), suggested that this relationship was mediated by afterlife belief. This causal sequence was predicted by the simple motivated reasoning account, but not by TMT. It is also worth noting that participants in Study 2 reported greater belief in heaven than in hell, even though these beliefs are typically paired, also consistent with a motivated reasoning explanation of afterlife beliefs. Additionally, Norenzayan and Hansen (2006) showed that the effect of mortality

⁷ Note that it is unclear whether the meaning of the term "cultural worldview" in TMT refers to the "dominant cultural worldview" or the "individualized cultural worldview," i.e., an individual's beliefs or beliefs held more generally in the culture. Consistent with Popper's falsifiability criterion (1959), vagueness of key terms in theories undermines scientists' efforts to assess their validity in empirical tests. Future theoretical work should clarify the meaning of this central concept of TMT.

salience on belief in supernatural agents extends to even culturally foreign ones, a finding also at odds with TMT.

Other evidence from the two studies, though, supports TMT. The increased belief in hell among mortality-salient participants in Study 2 does not fit well with motivated reasoning. However, it makes sense from the perspective of TMT, which would predict mortality salience to lead to cultural worldview defense, including increased belief of even aversive cultural beliefs. Also, although I found the effects of mortality salience to be driven by those low in religiosity, it is worth noting that Osarchuk and Tatz (1973) found an effect of fear of death on afterlife belief exclusively among individuals initially high in afterlife belief, consistent with TMT.

Future research should extend the present studies and address their limitations. For example, it would be best to more thoroughly classify participants' pre-manipulation religious beliefs, for example by surveying participants' intrinsic versus extrinsic religiosity. Another limitation of the current research is its strict reliance on survey measures of religious belief. Self-reported attitudes are often unreliable and poor predictors of behavior (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). Thus, future research could extend the present research by demonstrating effects of fear of death on behaviors related to afterlife belief.⁸ It also would be valuable for future research to explore nonconscious mortality salience inductions both to better understand the role of conscious vs. nonconscious processing in the phenomena studied here, but also to avoid participants' awareness of the manipulation and the possibility of incumbent demand effects.

Another limitation of the present research is its exclusive focus on one basis of motivational basis of religious beliefs: fear of death. It is likely that other motivations may also lead individuals to adopt religious beliefs. For example, Koole, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski (2006) identify four additional existential concerns—*isolation, identity, freedom, and meaninglessness*—all of which may contribute to religious belief. Also, the same motivational bases of political conservatism (Jost et al., 2003) may also apply to religiosity, as the two are often paired in cultural discourse.

⁸ An initial study attempting to show effects of fear of death on behaviors related to afterlife belief was conducted by the author (Willer, 2007). The experiment failed to show an effect of fear of death on study participants' willingness to sign a statement transferring possession of their soul to the experimenter in return for \$3. It was predicted that participants who had written essays about their death would be less willing to sell their souls (because of greater belief in an afterlife). Although this effect was not observed, willingness to sign the statement was negatively related to self-reported religious belief.

CONCLUSION

Although more than two centuries have passed since Voltaire famously pronounced that belief in God could be attributable to psychological motivations, research has only begun to keep pace with theoretical speculations on the motivated bases of religiosity. Whereas research on political ideology has increasingly come to focus on the role of psychological motivations in the formation of political attitudes (e.g., Jost et al., 2003, 2004, 2007), the trend is more recent and smaller in social psychological research on religiosity. Taken together, the present studies contribute to a recent emergence of research on the significance of motivational factors, especially fear of death, in the explanation of religious beliefs (e.g., Dechesne et al., 2003; Friedman & Rholes, 2006; Norenzayan & Hansen, 2006).

Future research should continue this emphasis, as it has so far proven fruitful. Future research should also pay greater heed to the complexity of human religious beliefs. Past findings are mixed and often contradictory, and such closely held beliefs are quite difficult to change with experimental manipulations.

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PART V

Personality and Individual Differences

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Motivated Social Cognition and Ideology: Is Attention to Elite Discourse a Prerequisite for Epistemically Motivated Political Affinities?

Christopher M. Federico and Paul Goren

Abstract

Political psychologists have long searched for links between citizens' personality characteristics and their political worldviews. In particular, much research has examined the relationship between *epistemic motivation*—the needs or motives that lead individuals to acquire and use information in order to construct a view of reality—and ideological self-placement. Most notably, this line of work suggests that the *need for closure*, or the need for “any firm belief on a given topic, as opposed to confusion and uncertainty” is associated with greater political conservatism. Extending and qualifying this argument, we argue that the connection between epistemic motivation and ideology may depend on the extent to which citizens are familiar enough with key political ideas and debates—as propounded by political elites—to “correctly” select the orientation that satisfies their epistemic needs. Using data from a student and an adult sample, we find support for this hypothesis, demonstrating that the relationship between the need for closure and ideological orientation is stronger among those high in political expertise.

Political psychologists have long searched for links between citizens' psychological characteristics and the political orientations they adopt. In particular, a great deal of research has examined the relationship between individual differences in *epistemic motivation*—the needs or motives that lead individuals to acquire and use information in order to construct a view of reality—and self-placement along various ideological and ideologically linked dimensions (e.g., Jost et al., 2003a; Kermelmier, 1997; Kossowska & Van Hiel, 2003; Van Hiel, Pandalaere, & Duriez, 2004). Most notably, this line of work suggests that the desire to avoid uncertainty, ambiguity, and change is associated with higher levels of political conservatism.

Although this literature has provided the study of ideology with numerous insights, it has not devoted much attention to the issue of *how* epistemic needs get mapped onto the ideological choices available in particular political contexts. As a long line of research in political science suggests, ideologies

and the broader belief systems associated with them do not spring fully formed from the minds of individuals in the mass public. Rather, they are typically constructed by a highly involved group of political elites, and then filter downward to the mass public (e.g., Converse, 1964; Zaller, 1992). Importantly, research suggests that the ideological “packages” put together by elites diffuse rather unevenly through the mass public: in general, the most knowledgeable and attentive segments of the mass public are more likely to acquire, understand, and use them (see especially Converse, 1964, 2000). What this suggests is that, for psychological characteristics to operate as motives for the adoption of particular ideological contents, individuals may need to be familiar enough with key political ideas and debates—as propounded by political elites—to “correctly” select the orientation that satisfies their epistemic needs (cf. Sniderman & Bullock, 2004). In this chapter, we outline and test a model based on this central hypothesis. We begin our discussion with a brief review of previous work on the intersection between epistemic motivation and ideology.

EPISTEMIC MOTIVATION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH IDEOLOGY

Although research on the link between motivation and ideology has been guided by a variety of theoretical considerations (e.g., Adorno et al., 1950; McClosky, 1958; Rokeach, 1960), recent work has been particularly influenced by the theory of *lay epistemics* (Kruglanski, 1989, 1996). This theory proposes a “general cognitive-motivational orientation toward the social world that is either open and exploratory, on the one hand, or closed and immutable, on the other hand” (Jost, et al., 2003a, p. 348; see also Jost, Kruglanski, & Simon, 1999; Kruglanski & Webster, 1996). Perhaps most importantly, this perspective argues that individuals differ in their *need for cognitive closure*, or the manner and extent to which they are motivated to possess knowledge that is secure, stable, and permanent (Kruglanski, 1996). These differences can stem from both stable personality characteristics and features of particular situations (Webster & Kruglanski, 1994).

In general, the need for closure is associated with a tendency to “seize” on closure-providing information and to “freeze” on the resulting conclusions once they have been attained. Accordingly, the need for closure has been linked with a heavier use of stereotypes, a proneness to primacy effects in impression formation, a tendency to make the fundamental attribution error, resistance to persuasion, and hostility toward opinion deviates (Kruglanski & Freund, 1983; Kruglanski, 1989, 1996; Webster & Kruglanski, 1994; see also Jost et al., 2003a). Thus, in its focus on the need for closure, the

lay-epistemics approach suggests that individual and situational differences exist in the degree to which perceivers are open to new information and willing to entertain the possibility of “cognitive alternatives” to an existing state of affairs (Jost et al., 1999, 2003a).

This suggests that the need for closure may have important consequences for predispositions, attitudes, and judgments in the political realm, especially those linked to ideology. In particular, a “matching process” may exist, in which people adopt the ideological orientations (e.g., liberalism or conservatism) and associated political attitudes most consistent with their location on the need-for-closure continuum (Jost et al., 1999, 2003a; see also Golec & Federico, 2004). At the simplest level, the theory of lay epistemics suggests that the need for closure—insofar as it leads people to seize and freeze on any and all available constructs—may be associated with an acceptance of *whatever* ideological contents are dominant in particular context or to a particular individual. However, persons at various points along the need for closure continuum are also attentive to the specific *contents* of particular ideologies. As such, contents that promise stability, clarity, and a sense of order should be particularly appealing to individuals with a high need for closure. So, although the need for closure can be thought of as a *nonspecific* motivation, it can in fact produce a *specific* affinity for contents that are clearly closure-providing (Jost et al., 2003a,b; Kruglanski, 1989). Thus, to the extent that a conservative orientation suggests stability, clarity, and order, the logic of this argument implies that right-wing ideological content should be especially appealing to citizens with a high need for closure.

Consistent with this argument, a great deal of evidence suggests that a correlation exists between the need for closure (and related indices of cognitive motivation) and right-wing predispositions and attitudes. Among other things, a high need for closure appears to be associated with (a) a right-wing ideological orientation, (b) right-wing policy attitudes (e.g., strong support for the death penalty, hawkish foreign-policy positions, etc.), (c) greater authoritarianism, (d) higher levels of nationalism and militarism, and (e) greater religious conservatism (see Jost et al., 2003a, for a thorough review; see also Adorno et al., 1950; Federico, Golec, & Dial, 2005; Golec & Federico, 2004; Jost, 2006; Jost & Hunyady, 2005; Jost et al., 1999, 2007; Kimmelmeier, 1997; McClosky, 1958; Webster & Kruglanski, 1994). Moreover, whereas this body of work has focused heavily on the need for closure, its basic logic—focused on the notion of motivationally guided political choice—suggests that just about any motivational variable with distinct effects on the acquisition and use of knowledge about the world may also have an impact on individuals’ ideological affinities (Jost et al., 2003a). For example, a number of studies now suggest that the personality trait of openness to experience is reliably

associated with self-placement on the left–right spectrum (see Jost et al., 2003a, 2007; see also Rentfrow, Jost, Gosling, & Potter, this volume). Thus, rather than being psychologically random, affinity for various forms of ideological content appears to be reliably associated with variance in individuals' fundamental orientations toward how different kinds of knowledge should be acquired and used to construct a view of reality.

THE ROLE OF ELITE POLITICAL DISCOURSE

As the preceding review suggests, past and present research makes a strong empirical case for the role of epistemic motivations—particularly the need for closure—in the shaping of individuals' ideological orientations. Nevertheless, although this body of work sheds light on the motivational bases of ideology, it actually tells us very little about the *mechanics* of the relationship between epistemic motivation and ideology. Besides suggesting a basic affinity between a “closed” orientation toward the construction and use of knowledge and right-wing preferences, studies of this sort have had very little to say about the processes connecting them. In particular, they have generally avoided a detailed treatment of the role played by the broader social and cultural contexts in which epistemically motivated political affinities arise (but see Jost et al., 2003b).

In this vein, the new psychological look at ideology tends to ignore some of the points political scientists have made about the *social origins* of ideology. One of the most important of these conclusions is that a large portion of the mass public does not structure its political attitudes or perceptions in ideological terms, despite being aware of labels like “liberal” and “conservative.” As many studies have shown, the attitudes of most citizens do not display ideological constraint (i.e., they are not ideologically consistent with one another or with broader predispositions; see Bennett, 2006; Converse, 1964, 2000; Erikson & Tedin, 2003; Judd & Krosnick, 1989; Kinder & Sears, 1985; Luskin, 1987; Zaller, 1992), and only a relatively small portion of the mass public *actively* and *accurately* conceptualizes political life in terms of the content inherent in abstractions like liberalism and conservatism, even though a majority may identify themselves with one of these orientations (see Bennett, 2006; Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960; Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Erikson & Tedin, 2003; Nie, Verba, & Petrocik, 1976; Page & Shapiro, 1992; Stimson, 2004; but see Jost, 2006). Nevertheless, research of this sort also consistently indicates that political elites—elected officials, activists, political commentators, and the like—*do* identify with and make use of ideological constructs (Campbell et al., 1960; Jennings, 1992). Similarly, members of the mass public with *high levels of political expertise*—who are

more likely to attend to what elites have to say about politics—also tend to make greater use of ideology in organizing their political attitudes and perceptions (Converse, 1964, 2000; Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Erikson & Tedin, 2003; Federico, 2004, 2007; Federico & Schneider, 2007; Judd & Krosnick, 1989; Kinder, 2006; Lavine, Thomsen, & Gonzales, 1997; Layman & Carsey, 2002; Zaller, 1992).

Together, these findings lead to two important conclusions about ideology. The first of these is that ideology is socially constructed by a discursively specialized minority within the body politic, namely, a highly involved stratum of political elites. For most citizens of advanced democracies, ideology is not an *unmediated* political expression of individual psychological needs; rather, it is a social representation made available to them ahead of time by a political culture constructed largely, although not completely, by others. The second of these conclusions is that the ideological contents articulated by elites diffuse only partially to the mass public, shaping opinion formation and organization to a much greater extent among those most aware of what elites actually have to say.

In turn, we believe these conclusions have important but largely unexamined implications for the role of epistemic motivation in attraction to different ideological packages. Above all, if ideology is primarily an elite construction that filters down unevenly to various segments of the mass public, then some citizens may be more capable than others of “selecting” the ideological content that matches their underlying epistemic needs. Specifically, a closed orientation toward the construction and use of knowledge should lead to an affinity for conservative ideological content, primarily among individuals who are likely to have attended closely to elite political discourse and incorporated it into their own cognitive structures—that is, those high in political expertise. Because of their familiarity with the elite conversations in which ideological constructs are articulated and used to make sense of political issues, these individuals should be able to match their epistemic orientation up with the “correct” ideological positions. In contrast, individuals who are low in political expertise should be less familiar with how political elites define and use ideological constructs, making it more difficult for them to appropriately identify the ideological positions consistent with their epistemic orientation. In other words, epistemic motives may have weaker ideological consequences among those who are less likely to attend to, understand, or fully internalize the abstract political concepts enunciated by elites.

Unfortunately, this hypothesis has yet to receive a great deal of attention. Although the relationship between different epistemically relevant motivations and ideology has been investigated in a variety of populations (see Jost et al., 2003a), most of the work in this area has had a “main effects” focus: it

has documented the relationship between motivation and ideology without examining potential boundary conditions or moderators, such as citizens' awareness of elite discourse. Of course, the strength and robustness of the relationship between epistemic motivation and ideology in previous studies suggest that a sizable number of citizens *do* manage to connect motivation with politics, regardless of their individual characteristics or features of the situations they find themselves in. Nevertheless, these results tell us little about which segments of the population account for this relationship and why. Moreover, the few studies that have looked at moderators of the relationship between epistemic motivation and political attitudes have not directly addressed the hypothesis advanced here. For example, recent studies on moderators of the relationship between the need for closure and attitudes toward political conflict have not focused on ideology as a dependent variable (e.g., Federico, Golec, & Dial, 2005; Golec & Federico, 2004). Similarly, a recent analysis of archival data on American foreign policy officials by Kemmelmeier (2007) found that cognitive rigidity is more strongly associated with conservatism among those with a greater interest in politics. However, this study focused on a small, self-selected sample of individuals who were already far more involved in politics than the average citizen (i.e., government officials) and relied on indirect measures of the need for closure (i.e., cognitive rigidity) and political expertise (i.e., frequency of political discussion with friends and family). Thus, the question of whether of the relationship between epistemic motivation and ideology is moderated by attention to and understanding of elite discourse (as provided by political expertise) remains a largely open one.

OVERVIEW

In this chapter, we provide a test of the hypothesis that political expertise should moderate the relationship between epistemic motivation and ideology. Using data from two relatively recent surveys, we look at whether the political impact of the epistemic motivation most often linked to ideology—the need for closure (Jost et al., 1999, 2003a)—varies as a function of political expertise. In each data set, we expected the relationship between the need for closure and a composite index of general ideological orientation to be stronger among those individuals presumably most attuned to and likely to have absorbed elite political discourse—that is, those high in political expertise.

DATA AND METHODS

The first of the two data sets used in this study is a 2000 student survey. The data for this study came from a study of undergraduates at the Univer-

sity of California, Los Angeles (UCLA; $N = 221$). Participants were recruited through the undergraduate subject pool, and received partial course credit for their participation. However, since much of the extant research on the relationship between epistemic motivation and ideology has relied on student samples (see Jost et al., 2003a), we wanted to replicate our analyses in a sample taken from a population more likely to vary extensively in political expertise. Therefore, the second data set we used comes from a national survey of adults: the 2006 Core Predispositions Study (CPS). The 2006 CPS ($N = 1201$) interviewed respondents using a representative sample of the U.S. population in the 48 contiguous states between February 1 and April 26 of that year. All interviews for this survey were conducted via telephone.¹ The measures derived from each data set are described below.

Variables from the 2000 UCLA Student Survey. In the 2000 UCLA student survey, our key epistemic motivation—the *need for closure*—was operationalized using the full 42-item Need for Closure Scale (Webster & Kruglanski, 1994). Examples of items included “I don’t like situations that are uncertain,” “Any solution to a problem is better than remaining in a state of uncertainty,” and “I prefer activities where it is always clear what is to be done and how it needs to be done.” Participants responded to each item on a 6-point scale ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree.” All items were recoded, so that high scores indicated a high need for closure ($\alpha = .85$; $M = 3.59$, $SD = .51$).

In turn, our moderator variable, *political expertise*, was measured using standard factual items, which are regarded as the most valid indicators of expert–novice differences in political cognition and awareness of elite discourse (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Fiske, Lau, & Smith, 1990; Zaller, 1992). Sixteen items were used: “What job or political office does Al Gore currently hold?”; “What job or political office does William Rehnquist currently hold?”; “What job or political office does Tony Blair currently hold?”; “What job or political office does Dennis Hastert currently hold?”; “Which political party currently has the most members in the Senate in Washington D.C.?”; “Which political party currently has the most members in the House of Representatives in Washington D.C.?”; “How long is the term of office for a U.S. Senator?”; “How many justices are there on the U.S. Supreme Court?”; “How many times can a president be re-elected?”; “Whose responsibility is it to nominate judges to the federal courts—the President, the Congress, or the Supreme Court?”; and

¹ In the 2006 CPS, the response rate was 11.6%. Although low by historical standards, this rate is similar to those reported for other recent surveys (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2004). All response rates are AAPOR standard definition RR1.

"Which political party do each of the following figures belong to," with six target individuals: "Bill Clinton," "John McCain," "Newt Gingrich," "George W. Bush," "Richard Gephardt," and "Ted Kennedy." All items were scored on a 0/1 basis, with 0 indicating no answer or an incorrect answer and 1 indicating a correct answer. Each participant's scores on the 16 items were then summed to create a single index ($KR-20 = .75$; $M = 9.37$, $SD = 2.96$).

To operationalize the key dependent variable, two *ideological orientation* measures were used. Each of these variables is linked to the general left-right ideological dimension associated with epistemic motivation in previous work (Jost et al., 2003). Liberalism-conservatism was assessed using respondents' self-placement on a 7-point ideology scale, similar to the one used in the National Election Studies (NES) ($M = 3.32$, $SD = 1.31$). Partisanship was assessed using respondents' self-identification on a comparable 7-point measure of party identification, also similar to the one used in the National Election Studies ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 1.65$). Both of these items were coded, so that a higher score indicated a greater ideological tilt to the right and then averaged to form a composite ($\alpha = .68$; $M = 3.32$, $SD = 1.30$).

Finally, four demographics were considered: *age* (in years), *family income* (in raw dollar amounts), *race* (not White = 0, White = 1), and *gender* (female = 0, male = 1).

Variables from the 2006 Core Predispositions Study. In the 2006 CPS, the *need for closure* was operationalized using a short six-item form of the Need for Closure Scale (Webster & Kruglanski, 1994). The items were: "In case of uncertainty, I prefer to make an immediate decision, whatever it may be," "I get very upset when things around me aren't in their place," "When I need to solve a problem, I generally do not waste time in considering diverse points of view about it," "Generally, I do not search for alternative solutions to problems for which I already have a solution available," "Any solution to a problem is better than remaining in a state of uncertainty," and "I prefer activities where it is always clear what is to be done and how it needs to be done." All items used a 4-point scale, ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." All responses were recoded, so that higher scores indicated a higher need for closure, and the responses were averaged to form a scale. Unfortunately, the reliability of this short measure was considerably lower than that of the full scale ($\alpha = .49$; $M = 2.50$, $SD = .60$); we return to this problem in the analyses below.

Political expertise was again measured using standard factual items. In this survey, the items had a multiple-choice format, with an explicit "don't know" option. Six items were included, based largely on recommendations made by Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996): "Who has the final responsibility

to decide whether a law is constitutional?"; "If the president vetoes a law passed by Congress, what kind of a majority is required by Congress to override the veto?"; "What political office is currently held by Dick Cheney?"; "What political office is currently held by Bill Frist?"; "Do you happen to know which political party has the most members in the House of Representatives in Washington D.C.?" and "Do you happen to know which political party has the most members in the U.S. Senate in Washington D.C.?" These items were scored and summed just as they were in the 2000 UCLA survey. Again, though, the scale produced a lower reliability than was found for the larger scale used in the UCLA data ($KR-20 = .54$; $M = 4.38$, $SD = 1.39$); as with the Need for Closure Scale, we return to this problem below.

Finally, several *ideological orientation* measures were used. Liberalism–conservatism was measured using respondents' self-placement on a 7-point ideology scale similar to the one used in the NES ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 1.95$), while partisanship was measured using respondents' self-identification on a 7-point party identification scale similar to the one used in the NES ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 2.16$). These two measures were coded so that a higher score indicated a greater tilt to the right and then averaged to form a composite ($\alpha = .76$; $M = 4.21$, $SD = 1.85$).

Finally, five demographics were considered. Four of these were identical to those used in the 2000 student survey: *age* (in years), *income* (in \$10,000 units), *race* (not White = 0, White = 1), and *gender* (female = 0, male = 1). However, since the adult population drawn on in the 2006 CPS obviously differed more in its level of educational attainment, we also created a dummy variable indicating *completion of a college degree* (no = 0, yes = 1).

RESULTS

In both data sets, we tested our hypothesis using regression methods. More specifically, our analysis involved looking at whether the interaction between the need for closure and political expertise explained variance in respondents' ideological orientation over and above the main effects of the need for closure and political expertise. In each data set, we began by examining our hypothesis using a series of ordinary least-squares regression models. However, since measures of our key independent variables—the need for closure and political expertise—did not always attain optimal levels of reliability, we supplemented these basic analyses with a series of latent-variable regressions conducted in a structural-equation modeling framework.

Results: 2000 UCLA Student Survey

Intercorrelations between key variables. As a preliminary step, we examined the correlations between our three key variables: the need for closure,

political expertise, and ideological orientation. These analyses indicated that the two main independent variables, the need for closure and political expertise, were not significantly correlated, $r(221) = -.04, p > .50$. Consistent with prior findings (e.g., Jost et al., 2003a; Jost, 2006), the need for closure had a significant positive correlation with conservatism, $r(220) = .27, p < .001$. Expertise was also associated with greater conservatism, albeit weakly and nonsignificantly, $r(220) = .10, p > .10$.

Regression analyses. As noted previously, our key hypothesis is that a high need for closure should be more strongly associated with a right-wing ideological orientation among those individuals who are most familiar with the elite discussions in which ideology is formulated—that is, those high in political expertise. We conducted an initial test of this hypothesis in the UCLA data using a series of ordinary least-squares regressions. In the actual regressions, composite ideological orientation was regressed on the need for closure, political expertise, and Need for Closure \times Political Expertise interaction. To control for additional background factors, age, income, race, and gender were also included in the regressions. To guard against possible effects of heteroscedasticity—which may be introduced by the effect of differing levels of expertise on the precision of political choice (e.g., Alvarez & Brehm, 2002)—HC3 robust standard errors were used in the analyses (as generally recommended by Long & Ervin, 2000, for all regression models). Finally, all predictors were centered, as suggested for interactive models (see Aiken & West, 1991).

The results are summarized in Table 11.1. Model 1 examined the main effects of the need for closure and expertise, while controlling for the aforementioned demographics. Replicating the traditional finding in this area, the estimates revealed that the need for closure was strongly and significantly associated with a greater tilt to the right ($b = .70, p < .001$). Moreover, higher levels of expertise were marginally associated with a greater tilt to the right ($b = .05, p < .10$). None of the other effects reached significance (all $p > .10$).

In turn, Model 2 added the critical Need for Closure \times Political Expertise Interaction to the equation. As expected, this interaction was significant and in the predicted positive direction ($b = .12, p < .05$). To probe this interaction, simple slopes for the relationship between the need for cognition and composite ideological orientation were computed at expertise levels one standard deviation above and below the latter variable's mean, using Aiken and West's (1991) method. These analyses indicated that the relationship between need for closure and composite ideological orientation was positive and highly significant among those high in expertise ($b = 1.04, SE b = .27$,

Table 11.1 Interactive effects of the need for closure and political expertise on composite ideological orientation: Regression analysis (2000 UCLA Student Survey).

Predictor	Composite Ideological Orientation			
	MODEL 1		MODEL 2	
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>
Age	-.01	(.04)	.002	(.04)
Income	.0000005	(.000001)	.0000004	(.000001)
Race (1 = white)	.07	(.23)	.11	(.23)
Gender	-.02	(.18)	-.06	(.18)
Need for closure	.70***	(.21)	.69***	(.19)
Political expertise	.05 ⁺	(.03)	.05 ⁺	(.03)
Need for closure × Political expertise	–	–	.12*	(.06)
Constant	3.46***	(.87)	3.38***	(.83)
<i>F</i> (df)	2.27 (6, 202)*		2.69 (7, 201)*	
<i>R</i> ²	.088		.106	
<i>N</i>	209		209	

Note. Entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients and HC3 robust standard errors.

⁺*p* < .10. **p* < .05. ***p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

p < .001), but nonsignificant among those low in expertise (*b* = .35, *SE b* = .25, *p* > .10). A graph of this interaction pattern, based on the preceding ordinary least squares (OLS) estimates, is shown in the left panel of Figure 11.1. In sum, then, the regression analyses confirm our primary hypothesis: although the need for closure is indeed associated with a stronger tilt to the right, this relation is more pronounced among those high in political expertise.

Latent variable regressions. Although these results are instructive, OLS regression estimates can be biased by measurement error. This concern is particularly relevant when relationships are compared across levels of expertise, a variable that can affect the level of error with which key predictors are measured (see Goren, 2004; Judd, Krosnick, & Milburn, 1981; Judd & Milburn, 1980). Thus, we opted to replicate our OLS results using a series of interactive latent-variable regression models implemented via structural-equation modeling. To this end, we used Little, Bovaird, and Widaman's (2006) technique for estimating latent variable models that include interaction terms. To minimize the number of parameters we needed to estimate, we began by combining the need for closure items and the expertise items into three "item

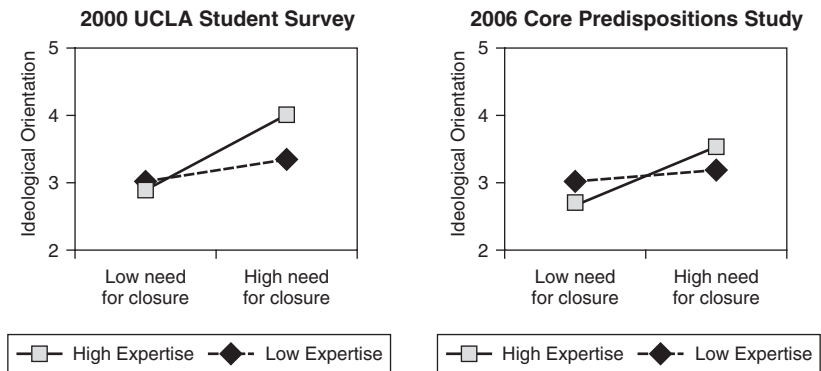


Figure 11.1 Moderation of the relationship between the need for closure and ideological orientation by political expertise in the 2000 UCLA Student Survey and the 2006 Core Predispositions Study (predictions based on OLS model estimates).

parcels" each, which were then mean-centered.² These centered item parcels were then used as the three respective indicators of the need for closure and expertise. Next, indicators for the latent interaction were generated by (a) computing each pairwise combination of the centered need for closure and expertise indicators, (b) regressing each of the nine resulting product terms on all centered first-order latent variable indicators (i.e., the three need for closure parcels and the three expertise parcels), and (c) saving the residuals from each of these nine regressions as the "orthogonalized" scores for each individual on the nine latent-interaction indicators. This procedure produces a series of latent-interaction indicators that are purged of any variance shared with the indicators of the first-order term, eliminating the need for complex nonlinear constraints in the actual structural-equation model (Little et al., 2006).

Using these indicators, we estimated a series of structural equation models in which ideological orientation was regressed on latent variables corresponding to the need for closure, expertise, and the Need for Closure \times Expertise interaction. The estimates were obtained in Mplus 4.1 (Muthen & Muthen, 2007), using Satorra and Bentler's (1994) mean-corrected maximum

² The three UCLA need for closure parcels were created by (1) averaging items 1–14, (2) averaging items 15–28, and (3) averaging items 29–42, whereas the three expertise parcels were created by (1) averaging items 1–6, (2) averaging items 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, and (3) averaging items 12, 13, 14, and 15. Particular sets of items were chosen so as to maximize the internal consistency of each.

likelihood technique and robust standard errors to correct any non-normality in the observed indicators. The measurement scale of each latent independent variable was established by fixing the variance of each to unity. The first-order latent variables for the need for closure and expertise were allowed to correlate, but the correlations between the interaction and each first-order latent variable were fixed to zero since the indicators for the interaction are already purged of variance shared with the first-order latent variable indicators. Finally, since we have only two available indicators of ideological orientation, the composite ideological orientation variable was entered into the model as an observed variable in order to avoid convergence problems (Kline, 1998).

The results of these analyses are summarized in Table 11.2; estimates for the measurement models are not shown. Paralleling the OLS analyses, two models were run. The first constrained the effect of the latent interaction to zero, approximating a “main effects” model; the second freely estimated the path coefficient for the effect of the interaction as well. As the results indicate, both models produced showed an excellent global fit (with nonsignificant chi-squares and CFIs equaling 1). Replicating the OLS results, Model 1 indicated a significant first-order effect of the need for closure ($\gamma = .39, p < .001$), with those high in the need for closure showing greater conservatism; and a marginal effect of expertise ($\gamma = .18, p < .10$), with those high in expertise also showing a slightly stronger tilt to the right. More importantly, the Model 2 estimates indicated a significant effect of the latent interaction ($\gamma = .21, p < .05$). To probe this interaction, methods described by Aiken and West (1991) were used to compute simple slopes for the relationship between the need for closure and ideological orientation at high and low levels of expertise.³ These analyses indicated that the relationship between need for closure and ideological orientation was significant and relatively large among those high in expertise ($\gamma = .60, SE \gamma = .14, p < .001$), but smaller and nonsignificant among those low in expertise ($\gamma = .18, SE \gamma = .11, p > .10$). Thus, our structural-equation analyses—which disattenuate the effects of the independent variables for measurement error—perfectly replicate our

³ In Aiken and West’s (1991) method, values for “high” and “low” levels of a moderator are usually obtained by taking values one standard deviation above and below the mean of the centered moderator (i.e., 0). In the present case, equivalent values were obtained by taking the square root of the estimated variance of the latent variable corresponding to expertise. This variance was fixed to 1 in the models, meaning that the standard deviation of latent expertise also comes to 1. Thus, values of 1 (high expertise) and -1 (low expertise) were used in the calculations.

Table 11.2 Interactive effects of the need for closure and political expertise on composite ideological orientation: Structural equation model (2000 UCLA Student Survey).

<i>Predictor</i>	Composite Ideological Orientation			
	MODEL 1		MODEL 2	
	γ	<i>SE</i> γ	γ	<i>SE</i> γ
Need for closure	.39***	(.08)	.39***	(.08)
Political expertise	.18 ⁺	(.09)	.18 ⁺	(.09)
Need for closure × Political expertise	–	–	.21 [*]	(.10)
Satorra-Bentler χ^2 (df)	17.75 (84), <i>ns</i>		14.37 (83), <i>ns</i>	
CFI	1.00		1.00	
R^2 for ideological orientation	.107		.134	
<i>N</i>	209		209	

Note. Entries are unstandardized mean-corrected maximum-likelihood estimates with robust standard errors.

⁺ $p < .10$. ^{*} $p < .05$. ^{**} $p < .01$. ^{***} $p < .001$.

OLS analyses.⁴ Taken together, the UCLA survey results provide a clear pattern of support for our hypothesis.

Results: 2006 Core Predispositions Study

Although the results from the UCLA student study are thus supportive, we also wanted to provide evidence for our hypothesis using data from a sample of adults drawn from the general population. Here, our goal was to obtain greater confidence about the generalizability of our results to the citizenry at large. To do so, we turned to the 2006 CPS data. In this data set, we pursued an analytic strategy similar to the one used with the UCLA data. Unfortunately, the CPS data confronted us with far more serious measurement problems than the UCLA data. As noted previously, the need for closure and political expertise items did not form scales that were

⁴ To ensure that our structural-equation results were robust with respect to estimation procedure, we replicated this analysis using a second method for the testing of interactions between latent variables: Klein and Moosbrugger's (2000) latent moderated structural (LMS) model approach, as implemented in Mplus 4.1 (Muthen & Muthen, 2007). This method also revealed a significant interaction between the need for closure and expertise ($\gamma = .22$, $SE \gamma = .09$, $p < .05$), suggesting that our original result was not an artifact of the procedure used.

adequately reliable according to conventional criteria. Therefore, our dual-track strategy—in which both OLS and latent-variable techniques were used to run the regressions—was particularly useful in this case.

Intercorrelations between key variables. Prior to further analysis of the 2006 CPS data, we again examined the correlations between our three key variables. In contrast to what we found in the 2000 UCLA data, the need for closure and political expertise were significantly and negatively correlated, $r(1197) = -.20, p < .001$, such that those who were high in need for closure tended to be lower in expertise. As before, though, the need for closure had a significant positive correlation with conservatism, $r(1182) = .13, p < .001$, whereas expertise was essentially uncorrelated with ideological orientation, $r(1186) = .04, p > .15$.

Regression analyses. As before, we began by examining our hypothesis using ordinary least squares regressions. These regressions were similar to those run using the UCLA data: ideological orientation was regressed on the need for closure, political expertise, and Need for Closure \times Political Expertise interaction, with age, income, race, gender, and completion of a college degree included as demographic controls. Again, HC3 robust standard errors were used, and all predictors were centered prior to the analyses. The results are summarized in Table 11.3. As before, Model 1 looked at the main effects of the need for closure and expertise. Again confirming earlier results, the estimates indicated that the need for closure was strongly and significantly associated with a greater tilt to the right ($b = .43, p < .001$), despite the low reliability of the need for closure measure.⁵ Of the other predictors, income ($b = .04, p < .01$), White racial identification ($b = .94, p < .001$), and male gender ($b = .22, p = .05$) were significantly associated with greater conservatism. None of the other first-order effects reached significance (all $p > .10$).

Model 2 added the Need for Closure \times Political Expertise interaction, which proved to be significant and in the predicted positive direction ($b = .19, p < .001$)—again, despite the error involved in measuring the need for closure and expertise. This interaction was broken down by computing simple slopes for the relationship between the need for closure and composite ideological orientation one standard deviation above and below the mean of the expertise variable. Replicating the pattern found in the UCLA data, these estimates indicated that the relationship between need for closure and ideological

⁵ The effect of measurement error in independent variables is to bias OLS coefficient estimates *downward*, meaning that the error actually works against us finding large effects of the need for closure or its interaction with expertise (see Cohen, Cohen, Aiken, & West, 2003).

Table 11.3 Interactive effects of the need for closure and political expertise on composite ideological orientation: Regression analysis (2006 Core Predispositions Study).

<i>Predictor</i>	Composite Ideological Orientation			
	MODEL 1		MODEL 2	
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>
Age	.002	(.003)	.001	(.003)
Income	.04**	(.02)	.04**	(.02)
Race (1 = white)	.94***	(.12)	.93***	(.12)
Gender	.22*	(.11)	.22*	(.11)
College degree	-.18	(.12)	-.16	(.12)
Need for closure	.43***	(.10)	.43***	(.10)
Political expertise	.01	(.04)	-.003	(.04)
Need for closure × Political expertise	—	—	.19*	(.06)
Constant	3.08***	(.23)	3.13***	(.83)
<i>F</i> (df)	14.13 (7, 1125) ***		12.87 (8, 1124) ***	
<i>R</i> ²	.066		.073	
<i>N</i>	1133		1133	

Note. Entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients and HC3 robust standard errors.

* $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$. **** $p < .001$.

orientation was positive and highly significant among those high in expertise ($b = .69$, $SE b = .14$, $p < .001$), but nonsignificant among those low in expertise ($b = .17$, $SE b = .11$, $p > .10$). A graph of this interaction, based on the aforementioned OLS estimates, is shown in the right panel of Figure 11.1.

Latent variable regressions. The OLS analyses provide clear support for our hypothesis in the 2006 CPS data. However, as noted previously, the high level of error in our measures of the two key independent variables—the need for closure and political expertise—undoubtedly biases the estimates provided by these analyses. Therefore, we again replicated our results using a series of interactive latent-variable regression models. We began by again combining the need for closure items and the expertise items into three-item parcels each, which were then mean-centered.⁶ From there, we followed an

⁶ The three CPS need for closure parcels were created by (1) averaging items 1 and 2, (2) averaging items 3 and 4, and (3) averaging items 5 and 6, whereas the three expertise

estimation procedure identical to the one used with the UCLA data. The models were specified in the same fashion, and the analyses again relied on Satorra and Bentler's (1994) mean-corrected maximum likelihood technique and robust standard errors.

Results for the 2006 CPS structural-equation analyses are shown in Table 11.4; estimates for the measurement models are not displayed. Again, two models were run: the first constrained the effect of the latent interaction to zero, whereas the second freely estimated the path coefficient for the effect of the interaction as well. Both models produced showed an excellent global fit (with nonsignificant chi-squares and CFIs equaling 1).⁷ Replicating the OLS results, Model 1 indicated a significant first-order effect of the need for closure ($\gamma = .44, p < .001$), with those high in the need for closure showing greater conservatism; and in a reversal, a *negative* effect of expertise ($\gamma = -.25, p < .01$), with those high in expertise tilting to the left. In turn, the estimates for Model 2 again indicated a significant effect of the latent interaction ($\gamma = .22, p < .05$). To probe this interaction, simple slopes for the relationship between the need for closure and ideological orientation at high and low levels of expertise were computed using the same Aiken and West (1991) procedure as before. These analyses indicated that the relationship between need for closure and ideological orientation was significant and relatively large among those high in expertise ($\gamma = .65, SE \gamma = .16, p < .001$), but smaller and only marginally significant among those low in expertise ($\gamma = .21, SE \gamma = .11, p < .10$).⁸ Thus,

parcels were created by (1) averaging items 1 and 2, (2) averaging items 3 and 4, and (3) averaging items 5 and 6. In this case, the choice of which items to pair within each construct made little difference with respect to the internal consistency of each parcel. Thus, the items were simply combined in order.

⁷ Note that the two structural-equation models show smaller sample sizes than the corresponding OLS regression models. This is due to the different way in which missing values impact the effective sample size in the structural-equation analyses: since matrices of moments must be computed for *all* pairs of observed variables prior to the analyses, more opportunities are present for missing data on different variables to cause a case to drop out of the analyses. In any case, when the two models in Table 11.4 were rerun using the Mplus 4.1 full-information maximum-likelihood procedure for missing data (Muthen & Muthen, 2007), the estimates were similar in terms of significance, direction, and magnitude.

⁸ To ensure that the 2006 CPS results were also robust to estimation technique, we again replicated our analysis using the aforementioned LMS approach. As before, the LMS estimates revealed a significant interaction between the need for closure and expertise ($\gamma = .34, SE \gamma = .06, p < .05$), attesting to the robustness of our original result.

Table 11.4 Interactive effects of the need for closure and political expertise on composite ideological orientation: Structural equation model (2006 Core Predispositions Study).

Predictor	Composite Ideological Orientation			
	MODEL 1		MODEL 2	
	γ	$SE \gamma$	γ	$SE \gamma$
Need for closure	.44***	(.10)	.43***	(.10)
Political expertise	-.25**	(.10)	-.29**	(.10)
Need for closure \times Political expertise	--	--	.22*	(.09)
Satorra-Bentler χ^2 (df)	34.68 (84), ns		30.96 (83), ns	
CFI	1.00		1.00	
R^2 for ideological orientation	.049		.062	
N	1047		1047	

Note. Entries are unstandardized mean-corrected maximum-likelihood estimates with robust standard errors.

* $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

the structural-equation analyses again provide reinforcing support for our hypothesis.⁹

DISCUSSION

Interest in the relationship between psychological needs and citizens' political orientations has experienced something of a resurgence in recent years (e.g., Jost, 2006). In particular, recent work suggests that various *epistemic motivations*—needs related to the acquisition and use of social information—are especially relevant to the construction of ideologically linked preferences (Jost et al., 2003a; Van Hiel et al., 2004; see also Webster & Kruglanski, 1994). According to this perspective, individuals whose epistemic motivations are

⁹ An alternative hypothesis would suggest that those who are high in the need for closure and high in expertise should simply be more extreme in their orientation, regardless of whether it tends toward the left or right (cf. Jost et al., 2007; Kruglanski & Webster, 1996). To examine this possibility, we folded the ideological orientation scale at its midpoint of 4 in each data set and regressed this "extremity" measure on the full set of predictors from each data set. In both data sets, the interaction between the need for closure and expertise failed to significantly predict variance in the folded extremity measure (both $p > .30$), ruling out this alternative hypothesis.

closed, rigid, or simplistic—those with a *high* need for closure, for example—should be particularly likely to adopt a right-wing ideological orientation.

This prediction has received relatively consistent support over several decades' worth of empirical research (Jost et al., 2003a, b). However, little effort has been made to connect this useful psychological approach to ideology with a broader tradition of research on the social construction and diffusion of ideological constructs. This research tradition, rooted primarily in political science, argues that ideology is created largely by highly involved political elites, and that it is more likely to diffuse to those members of the mass public who are most aware of elite discourse—that is, those high in political expertise (Converse, 1964; Judd & Krosnick, 1989; Zaller, 1992). Thus, for the average citizen, the development of an ideological orientation—if one is developed at all—is not likely to be a *direct* response to particular psychological needs. Rather, it is best thought of as attraction to one of a set of preexisting “menu” items offered by political elites (Sniderman & Bullock, 2004).

In our opinion, this body of findings has critical implications for the hypothesis that ideology reflects “motivated social cognition.” Namely, if ideology is more likely to be understood and used among those who are most attuned to and who have best internalized the content of elite discourse, then epistemic motivation should be more strongly predictive of citizens' ideological orientations among those high in political expertise. In this chapter, we have provided two tests of this hypothesis with respect to a key epistemic motivation, namely, the *need for closure*. Across two different data sets and two different regression methodologies, the analyses provided a clear pattern of support for our basic hypothesis. In the 2000 UCLA student survey, individuals with a high need for closure were more likely to display a right-wing political orientation when they were also relatively high in political expertise. Moreover, analyses using data from our 2006 CPS survey revealed a similar result: survey respondents with a high need for closure were more likely to lean to the right at high levels of political expertise. Taken together, these findings suggest that the political implications of epistemic motivation do not manifest themselves in a discursive vacuum. Rather, the relationship between right-wing politics and a closed cognitive–motivational orientation appears to be most pronounced among those who are “in the know” with regard to elite ideological discourse. Whereas those who are politically knowledgeable have the information needed to match up their epistemic orientation with the “appropriate” ideological orientation, those who are lacking in political expertise—and less aware of the ideological “packages” constructed by elites—appear to choose more haphazardly.

More broadly, the interactive model we develop here points toward a useful integration of the differing perspectives on ideology provided by

psychology and political science. Like the psychological perspective, our model suggests that ideological orientations may be shaped by generalized needs and motivations whose relevance and operation extend well beyond the realm of politics. However, echoing conclusions reached by political scientists interested in the (uneven) diffusion of belief systems, it also notes that psychological variables may be of little or no relevance to ideological orientation in situations in which political socialization—in particular, exposure to the ideological constructs central to elite political discourse—is incomplete. As such, the model outlined here helps fill the gaps in each discipline's approach to study of ideology. With respect to the psychological approach, our model adds an awareness of the elite construction of ideological packages and their somewhat fragmentary diffusion to the public at large. In particular, by considering the role of political expertise, the perspective developed here provides clues about *when* motivated social cognition is likely to matter in the construction of ideologically linked preferences. In turn, with respect to the political-science approach, our model provides psychological insight—rooted in current work on the political implications of epistemic motivation—into *why* citizens who are aware of elite ideological packages might be more attracted to one rather than another. In other words, our perspective helps reinforce a point sometimes overlooked by work on belief systems in the mainstream of research on public opinion: namely, that ideological affinity is not a purely accidental or stochastic process; rather, it varies systematically as a function of deeply rooted psychological needs (see Jost, 2006).

Despite these contributions, the present study does raise a couple of questions for future research. First, although our results clearly suggest that political expertise moderates the relationship between epistemic motivation and orientations linked to the *left-right ideological dimension*, other studies suggest that this may not be the case with regard to *all* politically relevant orientations and attitudes. For example, a variety of analyses indicate that *core values*—durable normative beliefs about desirable end states or modes of action—inform the political judgments of citizens both low and high in political expertise (e.g., Feldman, 1988; Goren, 2004). That is, unlike use of the left-right dimension, “successful” value-based judgment does not appear to be dependent on a keen awareness of elite political discourse. Thus, insofar as certain widely understood value orientations suggest order, clarity, and simplicity, individuals with a closed epistemic orientation may be able to “select” them regardless of how familiar they are with elite discourse. If this is the case, then we might expect variables like the need for closure to have the usual main-effect relationship with values that promise order, stability, and the like, but no interaction with expertise.

Second, in spite of our model's focus on the role of political elites in the construction of the ideological packages "consumed" by the mass public, it has very little to say about the processes that lead elites to construct particular ideologies in the first place. Although the elite construction of ideology is heavily shaped by strategic interactions among party leaders and opinion makers (e.g., the formation of strategic coalitions between elites with different policy interests; Aldrich, 1995; Downs, 1957), it may also be governed by a less-instrumental desire to see certain issues linked together as part of an overall ethical or philosophical posture (Noel, 2004). Insofar as the psychological processes highlighted by current work on epistemic motivation and ideology are universal, then we might expect the ideology-building activities of elites to be shaped by many of the same motivations known to affect ideological preferences in the mass public. Thus, psychological needs—particularly those linked to epistemic motivation—may have an influence not just on how members of the mass public choose between the "menu items" offered by a political culture, but also on how elites construct the menu itself. Although an investigation of this possibility is beyond the scope of this chapter (and our data), it strikes us as an ideal and largely unexplored avenue for future work on interface between psychological functioning and political ideology.

CONCLUSION

Drawing on approaches derived from work in psychology and political science, we have argued that the relationship between psychological needs—especially *epistemic* ones relevant to the acquisition and use of information—and individuals' ideological orientations may be critically dependent on the extent to which they are attuned to, understand, and have internalized the categories of elite ideological discourse. On one hand, a "closed" epistemic orientation leads to the usual affinity for right-wing ideological content among individuals who are highly aware of elite discourse—that is, those high in political expertise. Given their understanding of how elites define and make use of ideological constructs, these individuals are able to choose the ideological orientation consistent with their epistemic orientation. On the other hand, individuals who are low in political expertise are less aware of the elite discussion in which ideology takes shape, making it more difficult for them to adopt a stance consistent with their epistemic needs. Given this novel integration of divergent lines of work on the psychological *and* socio-political bases of ideological affinity, we believe that our interactive model provides a unique and more comprehensive approach to the analysis of belief systems.

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A Dual Process Motivational Model of Ideological Attitudes and System Justification

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Abstract

This chapter reviews recent theory and research on the dual process cognitive-motivational model of ideology and prejudice. Consistent with a dual process model perspective, the authors argue that Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) and Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) assess dual ideological attitude dimensions that are made salient for the individual by competitive and dangerous world-views, respectively, which in turn result from the combination of socio-structural factors (resource scarcity, danger and threat) and individual differences in personality (primarily low agreeableness and low openness to experience). Finally, the authors extend the model by arguing that SDO and RWA elicit dual ideologies that stratify and position groups based on qualitatively different stereotype characteristics. A competitively driven motivation (indexed by SDO) should cause the individual to endorse legitimizing myths or ideologies that are explicitly tailored toward maintaining hierarchical relations between groups. A threat-driven security-cohesion motivation (indexed by RWA) should, in contrast, cause the individual to endorse legitimizing myths that emphasize the maintenance of ingroup norms and values. Recent experimental and longitudinal research supporting the model is described.

The issue of how sociopolitical attitudes, or ideological attitudes, are structured and organized is clearly one that is fundamental for understanding the social and psychological bases of these attitudes. Historically, social psychologists have favored a unidimensional approach, seeing ideological attitudes as organized along a single left (liberal) to right (conservative) dimension. During the past few decades, however, the weight of empirical evidence has shifted in favor of a two-dimensional approach. Increasingly research has shown that there seem to be two quite distinct dimensions of ideological attitudes that have very different social and psychological origins. These two dimensions may sometimes be strongly related, but often are not. They often have similar effects and outcomes, producing similar political affiliations

and stances on socio-political issues, but these are typically differentially caused or mediated.

THE CLASSICAL UNIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH TO PSYCHOLOGY AND IDEOLOGY

The first major investigation of the psychological basis of ideology was that by Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, and Sanford (1950), reported in their influential book, *The Authoritarian Personality*. The findings from their research indicated that people's socio-political attitudes seemed to be highly correlated. Thus, they found that anti-Semitism, prejudice toward other outgroups and minorities, politically conservative attitudes, and excessive and uncritical patriotism all covaried strongly to form a unitary attitudinal syndrome. This provided what appeared to be powerful empirical support for the idea that ideological beliefs were organized along a single unidimensional continuum, with liberal or socialist attitudes at one pole and conservative and pro-fascist attitudes at the other.

A second major finding from their research suggested that clear individual differences existed between persons high and low in prejudice and ethnocentrism. Adorno and colleagues (1950) characterized this as an *authoritarian personality dimension*, and saw the high (authoritarian) end of that dimension comprising a tightly clustered set of nine interrelated traits, including traits such as conventionalism, authoritarian aggression, authoritarian submission, a preoccupation with power and toughness, destructiveness, and cynicism. They therefore argued that this dimension of personality caused people to adopt particular ideological attitudes, with persons low on this dimension tending to adopt liberal, left-wing ideological attitudes, and persons high on this dimension adopting conservative, ethnocentric, nationalistic, and pro-fascist attitudes.

Several prominent alternative theories of the psychological bases of ideological beliefs followed Adorno and colleagues' original theory. Instead of Adorno et al.'s (1950) complex set of underlying psychodynamics and inner conflicts, Allport (1954) saw the core underlying characteristic of the authoritarian personality as ego weakness, that is, fearfulness, psychological inadequacy, and personal insecurity. As a result, authoritarian personalities needed structure, order, and control in their personal life and social environments; feared unconventionality, novelty, and change; desired coercive, repressive social control; and supported tough, anti-democratic right-wing leaders and political parties. This emphasis on submissive, fearful "authoritarian" traits, rather than the dominant, power, and toughness traits, which Adorno and

colleagues (1950) had also included in the syndrome, was largely followed by later theorists such as Wilson (1973) and eventually also adopted by Altemeyer (1981).

OVERVIEW OF UNIDIMENSIONAL MODELS

Overall, early approaches to the study of ideological attitudes and their psychological basis showed a considerable degree of agreement. They shared two major assumptions: that ideological attitudes were unidimensionally structured along a single left–right or liberal–conservative dimension, and that a particular coherent cluster or dimension of personality traits or individual differences was a major causal determinant of the individuals' location on this dimension. A major problem for this approach has been the refusal of measures of ideological attitudes to conform consistently to unidimensionality. This has been largely responsible for a retreat from these unidimensional approaches during the last few decades, during which new research has seriously undermined the idea that ideological attitudes might be unidimensionally structured and have common causes.

The second assumption of this approach that ideological attitudes are causally determined by a common set of causal factors, such as an authoritarian personality, has gained somewhat more support. This was shown by a recent meta-analysis of research by Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, and Sulloway (2003). Their analysis evaluated a number of likely correlates of right- versus left-wing political orientation and attitudes, which were operationalized as involving attitudes and actions expressing both resistance to change and justifying inequality. They found significant correlations with perceived social threat; death anxiety; dogmatism and intolerance of ambiguity; openness to experience; uncertainty tolerance; needs for order, structure, and closure; integrative complexity; fear of threat and loss; and a weak although significant correlation with low self-esteem.

SOCIAL DOMINANCE ORIENTATION AND RIGHT-WING AUTHORITARIANISM AS TWO DIMENSIONS OF IDEOLOGICAL ATTITUDES

During the past two decades, the idea that there might be two distinct dimensions of ideological social attitudes has gained increasing empirical support. First, Altemeyer (1981) developed the Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) scale, which, unlike its failed predecessor, the F-scale, was clearly unidimensional and had a high level of internal consistency. Altemeyer limited the scope of his RWA scale to attitudinal expressions of just three of the original nine characteristics investigated by Adorno and colleagues (1950): conventional-

ism, authoritarian submission, and authoritarian aggression. Later, in the 1990s, Jim Sidanius and Felicia Pratto (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994) developed a second measure that seemed to pertain to a different cluster of Adorno and colleagues' (1950) original nine authoritarian characteristics. This Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) scale taps a "general attitudinal orientation toward intergroup relations, reflecting whether one generally prefers such relations to be equal, versus hierarchical" (Pratto et al., 1994, p. 742).

Research has shown that both SDO and RWA powerfully predict a range of socio-political and intergroup behavioral and attitudinal phenomena such as right-wing political party support, anti-democratic sentiments, generalized prejudice, and ethnocentrism (Pratto, 1999; Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1994). Although this might have initially suggested that RWA and SDO were both measuring very similar or perhaps the same dimension of ideological attitudes, research has not supported this. The findings indicate that SDO and RWA scales measure different dimensions that are often independent of each other (Altemeyer, 1998; Duckitt, 2001).

First, the item content of the two scales is clearly different. RWA items express beliefs in coercive social control, obedience and respect for existing authorities, and conforming to traditional moral and religious norms and values. SDO items, on the other hand, pertain to beliefs in social and economic inequality as opposed to equality, and the right of powerful groups to dominate weaker ones.

Second, research has indicated that RWA and SDO scales correlate differently with important other variables (Altemeyer, 1998; Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt & Fisher, 2003; Duckitt, Wagner, du Plessis, & Birum, 2002; McFarland, 1998; McFarland & Adelson, 1996). RWA is powerfully associated with religiosity and valuing order, structure, conformity, and tradition, whereas SDO is not. SDO, on the other hand, is strongly associated with valuing power, achievement, and hedonism and being male, whereas RWA is not. RWA is influenced by social threat and correlates with a view of the social world as dangerous and threatening, whereas SDO is powerfully correlated with a social Darwinist view of the world as a ruthlessly competitive jungle in which the strong win and the weak lose.

And third, the correlations between RWA and SDO scales suggest that they are substantially independent dimensions. Although some studies, notably in Western European countries, have reported strong positive correlations (e.g., Duriez & Van Hiel, 2002; Van Hiel & Miervelde, 2002), most research, and particularly that in North America, has found weak or non-significant correlations (see the reviews and meta-analyses by Duckitt, 2001 and Roccato & Ricolfi, 2005). Some studies, notably in ex-communist East European countries, have found nonsignificant or even significant negative

correlations between RWA and SDO (e.g., Duriez, Van Hiel, & Kossowska, 2005; Krauss, 2002; Van Hiel & Kossowska, 2007).

These findings indicate that, whereas SDO and RWA both predict attitudinal and behavioral phenomena associated with the political right as opposed to the left, they seem to be quite distinct and independent dimensions of ideological attitudes.

Earlier Research Supporting Two Dimensions of Ideological Attitudes

The idea that there may be two distinct dimensions of ideological attitudes is not new. Although the unidimensional approach to ideological attitudes has been widely accepted until recently, over the years, many empirical investigations have found that socio-political attitudes and values were organized along two primary dimensions that seem to correspond very closely to RWA and SDO. The RWA-like dimension has been labelled *authoritarianism*, *social conservatism*, or *traditionalism*, at one pole, versus *openness*, *autonomy*, *liberalism*, or *personal freedom* at the other pole. The SDO-like dimension has been labelled *economic conservatism*, *power*, or *belief in hierarchy and inequality* at one pole versus *egalitarianism*, *humanitarianism*, or *social welfare and concern* at the other pole. These findings were reviewed earlier (Duckitt, 2001) and are summarized in Table 12.1, with several more recent investigations added (i.e., Ashton et al., 2005; Stangor & Leary, 2006).

Overall, therefore, a great deal of evidence from a large number of empirical investigations suggests that there seem to be two primary dimensions of socio-political or ideological attitudes and values. Although these investigations have used a variety of measures and terms for each of these two dimensions, recent research does suggest that RWA and SDO scales may be particularly strong and direct measures of them (Altemeyer, 1998, pp. 55–60, 1998; McFarland, 1998; McFarland, 2006). When RWA and SDO have been used together with other measures of these dimensions, they have invariably been the strongest and most consistent predictors of socio-political behaviors and reactions, possibly because RWA and SDO scales tap the crucial core aspects of these dimensions most directly, or because of their better psychometric properties and higher degree of unidimensionality.

Research Suggesting Differential Bases of RWA and SDO

If there are two distinct, often relatively orthogonal dimensions of ideological attitudes, it seems likely that these dimensions may express different motives or values and have different social and psychological bases. There is a good deal of evidence for this, and this has led to the formulation of a *dual process cognitive-motivational model* of ideology and social attitudes.

Table 12.1 Research indicating two primary ideological attitude or value dimensions.

Study	RWA equivalent	SDO equivalent
Eysenck (1954)	Conservatism vs. liberalism	Tough vs. tender (humane vs. inhumane) (Brown, 1965)
Tomkins (1964)	Normative (conservatism)	Humanism
Hughes (1975)	Social conservatism vs. liberalism	Economic conservatism vs. social welfare
Rokeach (1973)	Freedom	Equality
Hofstede (1980)	Collectivism vs. individualism	Power distance
Kerlinger (1984)	Conservatism	Liberalism (i.e., humanism-egalitarianism)
Forsyth (1980)	Relativism (i.e., group orientation)	Idealism (altruism/social concern)
Katz & Hass (1988)	Protestant ethic	Humanitarianism/egalitarianism
Middendorp (1991)	Cultural conservatism vs. openness	Economic conservatism vs. equality
Trompenaars (1993)	Group loyalty vs. individualism	Hierarchy vs. egalitarianism
Braithwaite (1994)	National strength and order	International harmony
Schwartz (1996)	Conservatism vs. openness	Power vs. egalitarianism
Triandis & Gelfand (1998)	Collectivism vs. individualism	Vertical vs. horizontal values
Saucier (2000)	Alpha-isms (conservatism-authoritarianism)	Beta-isms (SDO/Machiavellianism)
Jost et al. (2003)	Resistance to change	Acceptance of inequality
Ashton et al (2005)	Moral regulation vs. individual freedom	Compassion vs. competition
Stangor & Leary (2006)	Conservatism	Egalitarianism

First, research has linked RWA and SDO to different motives and values. Numerous studies using Schwartz's (1992) well-validated values inventory (developed to measure universal values that express basic human motivational goals) have shown that the conservative values of security, conformity, and tradition correlate strongly with RWA but not with SDO, whereas power and self-enhancement values correlate with SDO but not with RWA (Altemeyer, 1998; Duriez & Van Hiel, 2002; Duriez, Van Hiel, & Kossowska, 2005; McFarland, 2006).

Second, research has also linked RWA and SDO to two very different sets of beliefs about the nature of the social world. For example, research by Altemeyer (1998) and others (Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt et al., 2002) suggests that RWA, but not SDO, tends to be associated with a belief that the social world is dangerous and threatening. On the other hand, SDO, but not RWA,

was associated with measures such as Machiavellianism (Saucier, 2000), and Altemeyer's (1998) "personal power, meanness, and dominance" and "exploitive manipulative, amoral, dishonesty" scales. These all tap a competitive, manipulative, cynical, social Darwinist view of the world.

And third, research has also found that RWA and SDO correlate with quite different personality traits. Heaven and Bucci (2001) found that RWA correlated with personality trait measures of dutifulness, orderliness, and moralism. This was consistent with Altemeyer's (1998) earlier observation that persons high in RWA are self-righteous, conscientious, agreeable, and low on openness. These findings suggest a coherent trait pattern, which Duckitt (2001; Duckitt et al., 2002) captured in a single personality construct, refined from one of Saucier's (1994) Big Five personality dimensions: social conformity. This social conformity scale included items such as *obedient*, *respectful*, and *moralistic* versus *nonconforming*, *rebellious*, and *unpredictable*, and correlated very strongly with RWA but not with SDO.

In contrast, studies have found SDO to be associated with low scores on personality measures of empathy, and high scores on Eysenck's psychoticism scale (Altemeyer, 1998; McFarland, 1998; McFarland & Adelson, 1996), which is indicative of being tough-minded, unempathic, cold, and hostile (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975). Heaven and Bucci (2001) similarly found that SDO was correlated with low scores on traits of sympathy, cooperation, agreeableness, and morality. Duckitt (2001) developed a tough versus tender-mindedness trait rating scale to capture this trait pattern, consisting of items such as *tough-minded*, *hard-hearted*, and *uncaring* versus *sympathetic*, *compassionate*, and *forgiving*, which correlated strongly with SDO but not with RWA.

Overall, therefore, a good deal of research suggested that RWA and SDO were associated with different motivational goals and values, and might be influenced by different social worldview beliefs and personality trait dimensions. These factors were therefore integrated in a dual process motivational model of the psychological bases of RWA and SDO (Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt et al., 2002).

A DUAL PROCESS MOTIVATIONAL MODEL

The dual process motivational model proposes that RWA and SDO represent two basic dimensions of social or ideological attitudes, with each expressing motivational goals or values made chronically salient for individuals by their social worldviews and their personalities (Duckitt, 2001). High RWA expresses the motivational goal of establishing or maintaining societal security, order, cohesion, and stability, which is made salient for the individual by the schema-based worldview belief that the social world is

an inherently dangerous and threatening (as opposed to safe and secure) place. The predisposing personality dimension is social conformity (as opposed to autonomy), which leads individuals to identify with the existing social order, be more sensitive to threats to it, and so value order, stability, and security.

In contrast, SDO stems from the underlying personality dimension of tough versus tender-mindedness. Tough-minded personalities view the world as a ruthlessly competitive jungle in which the strong win and the weak lose, which makes salient the motivational goals of power, dominance, and superiority over others, which is then expressed in the social attitude of SDO.

These two social worldviews should generally be relatively stable, reflecting the influence of individuals' personality and socialization, but they should also be influenced by social situations. When the social world becomes markedly more dangerous and threatening, and is perceived as such, individuals' attitudes should become more authoritarian. Social situations characterized by high levels of inequality and competition over power, status, and resources should cause individuals to see their social worlds as competitive jungles, and so cause stronger endorsement of social dominance attitudes. This causal model of how individuals' personalities, their social situations, and their social worldview beliefs influence their ideological attitudes is summarized in Figure 12.1.

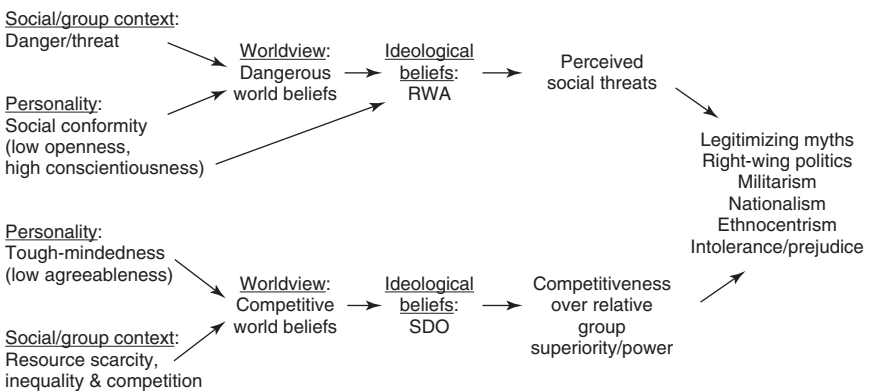


Figure 12.1 A causal model of the impact of the social situation, personality, and social worldviews on the two ideological attitude–value dimensions of right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) and social dominance orientation (SDO) and their impact on legitimizing myths, socio-political behavior, and attitudes as mediated through perceived social threat or competitiveness over dominance, power, and resources.

NEW RESEARCH ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BASES OF RWA AND SDO

New research has also supported the dual process motivational model's hypotheses about the different personality and worldview bases of RWA and SDO, as depicted in Figure 12.1. This evidence has been particularly compelling in the case of the personality bases of RWA and SDO, because this new research has used entirely different, but well-validated measures, and has obtained findings completely consistent with those initially reported.

The original test of the dual process model used somewhat ad hoc personality measures of social conformity and tough-mindedness, neither of which had been systematically validated. Both were, however, expected to be directly related to the Big Five personality dimensions, with social conformity expected to be strongly related to low openness to experience, and somewhat less strongly with high conscientiousness. Tough-mindedness was expected to be strongly related to low agreeableness. This was empirically confirmed with data from 259 New Zealand students. When the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP; Goldberg, 1999) Big Five measures were simultaneously regressed on tough-mindedness, the only significant, though very powerful, predictor was low agreeableness ($\beta = -.72, t = -15.23, p < .01$). Social conformity, as expected, was predicted by low openness ($\beta = -.39, t = -6.99, p < .01$) and somewhat less strongly by high conscientiousness ($\beta = .29, t = 5.36, p < .01$), but also weakly by high agreeableness ($\beta = .25, t = 4.50, p < .01$).

This suggested that low agreeableness should predict SDO, and low openness, high conscientiousness, and perhaps high agreeableness should predict RWA. Findings from four recent studies that investigated the relationship of well-validated Big Five personality measures with RWA and SDO are summarized in Table 12.2. The averaged effects over these four studies were as expected. Low agreeableness was clearly associated with SDO, and controlling RWA did not affect this. Low openness was also associated with SDO, but this association was considerably reduced when controlling for RWA. Low openness and high conscientiousness were associated with RWA, and controlling for SDO did not alter these effects. High agreeableness was also associated with RWA, but only when controlling for the effect of SDO, suggesting that, once shared variance with SDO had been controlled, people high in agreeableness tend to be slightly more prone to RWA. No other partialled effects (necessary because of strong relationships between RWA and SDO in most of these studies) suggested notable or significant effects (in treating effects of .10 or greater as noteworthy).

These findings are therefore clearly consistent with those initially reported. They support the proposition that two very different sets of personality traits,

Table 12.2 Summary of bivariate and partial correlations between Big Five personality dimensions with SDO and RWA.

Source	E	A	C	N	O
ASSOCIATION WITH SDO (CONTROLLING FOR RWA)					
Akrami & Ekehammar (2006) (<i>N</i> = 332)	-.03 (-.02)	-.46 (-.47)	.01 (-.04)	-.06 (-.06)	-.35 (-.20)
Duriez & Soenens (2006) (<i>N</i> = 320)	-.01 (-.01)	-.29 (-.31)	.02 (-.12)	-.04 (-.01)	-.24 (-.12)
Ekehammar et al. (2004) (<i>N</i> = 185)	.03 (-.06)	-.25 (-.34)	.10 (-.04)	-.12 (-.03)	-.07 (.09)
Heaven & Bucci (2001) (<i>N</i> = 215)	.07 (.08)	-.42 (-.41)	-.04 (-.11)	.01 (.01)	-.26 (-.13)
Mean effect (N = 1 052)	.01 (-.01)	-.36* (-.39*)	.02 (-.08)	-.05 (-.03)	-.25* (-.11*)
ASSOCIATION WITH RWA (CONTROLLING FOR SDO)					
Akrami & Ekehammar (2006) (<i>N</i> = 332)	-.03 (-.02)	-.08 (.12)	.11 (.12)	-.01 (-.01)	-.49 (-.41)
Duriez & Soenens (2006) (<i>N</i> = 320)	.00 (.00)	-.03 (.11)	.29 (.31)	-.07 (-.06)	-.33 (-.26)
Ekehammar et al. (2004) (<i>N</i> = 185)	.15 (.16)	.08 (.25)	.25 (.23)	-.18 (-.14)	-.28 (-.29)
Heaven & Bucci (2001) (<i>N</i> = 215)	-.01 (-.04)	-.11 (.06)	.17 (.20)	.00 (.00)	-.40 (-.34)
Mean effect (N = 1 052)	.01 (.01)	-.04 (.13*)	.21* (.22*)	-.06 (-.05)	-.39* (-.33*)

Note. * Mean effect size significant at $p < .001$. Values in brackets represent partial correlations. Partial correlations between The Big Five and SDO controlled for RWA, whereas partial correlations between The Big Five and RWA controlled for SDO, expressed as: $r_{12.3} = (r_{12} - (r_{13} \cdot r_{23})) / \text{square root of } (1 - r_{13}^2)(1 - r_{23}^2)$; r coefficients were transformed to z-scores using the formula: $z' = .5 \log_e((1+r)/(1-r))$ then weighted by their inverse variance $(n-3)$ and averaged before being converted back to r-values.

originally measured as social conformity and tough-mindedness, seem to underlie RWA and SDO. New research has also supported the dual process model's proposal that two very different social worldview beliefs also differentially influence RWA and SDO.

Duckitt's (2001) original research, which differentially linked dangerous world beliefs and competitive world beliefs with RWA and SDO, respectively, did so using cross-sectional data. Subsequent research has taken this

further by showing, first, that two worldview beliefs do seem to have causal impacts on RWA and SDO, and, second, that they mediate different social environmental effects on RWA and SDO.

Consistent with the model, a good deal of research over many years has shown that social situational threat seems to cause or be associated with higher levels of authoritarian attitudes or societal indicators of authoritarianism (e.g., Doty, Peterson, & Winter, 1991; McCann, 1997; McCann & Stewin, 1990; Perrin, 2005; Sales, 1973; Sales & Friend, 1973). More recently, longitudinal and experimental research has also shown that membership in competitively dominant social groups and high levels of societal resource scarcity and competition seems to increase levels of SDO (e.g., Guimond, Dambrun, Michinov, & Duarte, 2003; Huang & Liu, 2005; Schmitt, Branscombe, & Kappen, 2003). However, this research on social situational effects has typically looked at either indicators of authoritarianism or social dominance attitudes separately, and therefore not shown differential effects directly.

Three more recent studies have provided more direct evidence of differential effects. First, cross-national research comparing White Afrikaners in South Africa with New Zealanders of European descent indicated that differences in overall level of RWA and SDO in these two social groups might have different social causes that were mediated through different social worldview beliefs (Duckitt, 2004). This research found that Afrikaners were very much higher in RWA, and this was directly linked to their very high levels of dangerous world beliefs, presumably reflecting the higher levels of social threat experienced by White Afrikaners at the time. New Zealand Europeans, on the other hand, were significantly higher in SDO than Afrikaners, and this was associated with them having a higher competitive worldview, probably reflecting the higher levels of inequality and intergroup competition perceived by New Zealand Europeans.

Second, an experiment by Duckitt and Fisher (2003) provided direct evidence of social context effects on RWA that were mediated by social worldview beliefs. This experimental research found that reading a hypothetical scenario depicting a dangerous and threatening future increased RWA, but not SDO, and the increase in RWA fully mediated by heightened dangerous worldview. Finally, results from a recent longitudinal study indicated that competitive worldview predicted change in SDO but not RWA over a five-month period. Dangerous worldview, in contrast, predicted change in RWA but not SDO over the same timeframe in an undergraduate sample (Sibley, Wilson, & Duckitt, 2007a).

Overall, therefore, a good deal of new research has supported a dual process model proposing that two distinct and relatively independent ideological attitude dimensions, represented by RWA and SDO, are determined by

two very different sets of personality traits, two very different social world-view schemas, and two very different kinds of social situational influences.

THE DUAL PROCESS MODEL AND THE EFFECTS OF THE TWO IDEOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS

A great deal of empirical research has shown that the two ideological attitude dimensions, represented by RWA and SDO, have powerful and pervasive effects on socio-political behavior and phenomena. Thus, both RWA and SDO powerfully predict support for right- versus left-wing political parties, policies, issues, causes, attitudes of chauvinistic nationalism, ethnocentrism, generalized prejudice, and intolerance (Adorno et al., 1950; Altemeyer, 1981, 1998; Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

A dual process approach to ideological attitudes makes important predictions about these effects that differ markedly from those suggested by a more traditional unidimensional approach. Because the dual process approach sees the two ideological attitude dimensions represented by RWA and SDO as having different origins and expressing different motivational goals and values, it proposes that, although these two dimensions may often have the same effects, they should do so for different reasons, and as an expression of different motives. According to the dual process model, RWA expresses the motivation to maintain or establish societal order, security, cohesion, and stability; that is, to manage social uncertainty and threat. The perceived threat of a particular outgroup should therefore be an important mediator of the effect of RWA on political behavior and prejudice directed toward that specific group. SDO expresses tough-minded competitive motivation to maintain or establish group dominance and superiority over other groups, and these concerns should therefore be important mediators or causes of its effects on attitudes toward those groups.

Several recent studies have supported this differential mediation or causation hypothesis of the effects of RWA and SDO. A correlational study by McFarland (2005) found that both RWA and SDO were significantly related to American students' support for the attack on Iraq. However, a structural equation model analysis indicated that these effects were differentially mediated. The effect of RWA was fully mediated by perceived threat from Iraq. On the other hand, the effect of SDO was fully mediated by a lack of concern for the human costs of war, a finding that fits with the tough-minded, hard, competitive motivational orientation expected to be characteristic of those high in SDO.

In addition, several experimental studies have tested whether the effects of RWA and SDO on prejudice or outgroup negativity might be differentially

caused. First, Dru (2007) investigated the effects of priming an ingroup-norm preservation orientation or a competitiveness orientation on French students' attitudes to various immigrant groups (Arabs, Blacks, Asians). Dru found that when an ingroup-norm preservation orientation was salient, RWA was a significant predictor of anti-immigrant attitudes, whereas SDO was not. On the other hand, when group competitiveness was made salient, SDO significantly predicted anti-immigrant attitudes, whereas RWA did not.

Second, Cohrs and Asbrock (in press) investigated the effect of depicting an immigrant group (Turks) as either threatening or competitive on German students' attitudes to that group. There was a significant interaction between perceived threat and RWA, and not SDO, such that persons high in RWA became more negative to Turks when they were depicted as threatening. Depicting Turks as competitive did not, however, produce the expected interaction with SDO, possibly because this manipulation may have made personal competitiveness salient (which high SDOs should admire) rather than intergroup competitiveness.

And third, research by Duckitt, Nasoordeen, and Sibley (2007) investigated New Zealand (NZ) students' attitudes toward a bogus new immigrant group ("Sandrians"). Sandrians were depicted as either culturally different and threatening to NZ values (threat condition), likely to compete for jobs and resources with New Zealanders (competitive condition), low in status and power (disadvantaged condition), or as similar in status and culture to New Zealanders (control condition). As expected, neither RWA nor SDO predicted negativity to Sandrians in the control condition; only SDO predicted negativity in the disadvantaged condition; both RWA and SDO predicted negativity in the competitive condition (this was expected, because the competitive manipulation should elicit both perceived threat and competitiveness over relative dominance); and RWA predicted negativity to Sandrians in the threat condition. There was one unexpected finding, however: SDO also predicted negativity to Sandrians in the threat condition. The manipulation checks revealed that the threat conditions increased both perceived threat from Sandrians, as had been expected, and competitiveness to Sandrians, which had not been expected but which may have been due to the heightened salience of intergroup differences produced by the description of Sandrians as culturally very different.

In addition to this differential mediation and causation hypothesis, the dual process approach makes another important prediction: a differential effect hypothesis that is also radically different from that which a uni-dimensional approach would make. Because the two ideological attitude dimensions represented by RWA and SDO express very different motives,

they should sometimes have very different effects, particularly in domains directly relevant to these motivational differences.

For example, persons high in RWA and SDO will both tend to support right-wing conservative political parties in general (Jost et al., 2003). However, they should differ in their relative preference for different kinds of right-wing parties. Persons high in RWA should prefer right-wing parties that emphasize law and order, and defend traditional and religious values. Persons high in SDO should prefer right-wing parties that emphasize free market capitalism and anti-welfare policies. When right-wing parties espouse both sets of policies, RWA and SDO should predict their support similarly, though, as already noted, there should be differential mediation of this support.

In the case of foreign policy, both RWA and SDO should predict support for tough, aggressive, militaristic foreign policies, but do so for different reasons, as shown by McFarland's (2005) study of support for the attack on Iraq. However, differential effects for RWA and SDO on support for aggressive foreign policy are also possible. For example, SDO should be more strongly associated with support for blatant wars of conquest than RWA, whereas RWA should be more strongly associated with purely defensive military policies and expenditures in the absence of direct external threats.

Similarly, whereas both RWA and SDO are associated with prejudice or generalized intolerance, this should be so for different reasons. Persons high in RWA should dislike outgroups because they are seen as threatening social order, stability, cohesion, and security. Persons high in SDO, on the other hand, are motivated to maintain or establish intergroup dominance or superiority. Therefore, persons high in SDO should dislike low-status or socially subordinate groups, since derogating them would justify their subordination. They should also dislike outgroups seen as directly competing for dominance or resources. Such directly competing groups would also tend to be seen as socially threatening (threatening to disrupt social order and stability) and would thus elicit both RWA- and SDO-motivated dislike.

These predictions about differential effects on prejudice for RWA and SDO were tested in two recent studies. In the first study, an exploratory factor analysis of attitudes to 24 different social outgroups revealed three distinct outgroup attitude dimensions (Duckitt & Sibley, 2007). One dimension comprised attitudes toward dangerous and threatening outgroups (violent criminals, terrorists, people who disrupt safety and security in society), a second comprised attitudes to derogated or disadvantaged groups (unattractive people, mentally handicapped people, obese people, psychiatric patients), and a third comprised attitudes to dissident groups (protestors, people who cause disagreement in society, feminists). As the dual process model would predict, only RWA significantly predicted attitudes toward

dangerous groups, only SDO predicted attitudes to disadvantaged groups, and both RWA and SDO predicted attitudes to dissident groups, which was expected since these groups would be socially threatening and, in most cases, also challenged social inequality.

A second study has also investigated both the differential effects and the degree to which these different effects for RWA and SDO are differentially mediated by threat and competitiveness (Duckitt, 2006). Results indicated that RWA, but not SDO, predicted negative attitudes toward two groups selected as likely to be seen as socially deviant and therefore threatening established norms and values, but not as socially subordinate (drug dealers, rock stars), and the effect of RWA was mediated by perceived threat from these groups rather than competitiveness to them. In addition, SDO, but not RWA, predicted negative attitudes to three groups selected as likely to be seen as socially subordinate and therefore likely to activate competitive motives to maintain their relative subordination, but not as socially deviant or threatening (physically handicapped people, unemployment beneficiaries, housewives), and the effect of SDO was mediated by competitiveness over relative dominance toward these groups and not by perceived threat from them.

Overall, therefore, new research has provided important support for the dual process hypotheses that the two ideological attitude dimensions represented by RWA and SDO will have the same effects on socio-political behaviors and attitudes for different reasons and as expressions of different motives, and may sometimes have different effects as well, particularly in domains directly relevant to these motivational differences.

A Dual Process Approach to Legitimizing Myths and System Justification

The dual process model also has implications for how different societal and individual difference factors may jointly predict the kinds of discourses and legitimizing myths that most effectively enhance and attenuate system justification toward different groups within society. Specifically, it suggests that the dual personality, social worldview, and motivational goal dimensions underlying the two dimensions of ideological attitudes should generate broadly corresponding dual domains of legitimizing myths (Pratto et al., 1994; see also Jost & Banaji, 1994) that justify social inequality and discrimination. Following Sidanius and Pratto (1999, p. 104), legitimizing myths are conceptualized as providing the moral and intellectual justification for social practices that either increase or maintain levels of social stratification and inequality between social groups.

Legitimizing myths come in many different forms. We suggest that the content of these ideologies in a given domain should be the joint product of two factors:

- the social representations used to build consensus and manage debate about intergroup relations in that context, and
- the degree to which social stratification and inequality is motivated by the competitive-driven need for intergroup dominance and superiority (SDO) and/or the threat-driven need for collective security and social control (RWA).

On the one hand, the content of legitimizing myths stemming from group-based motivations for dominance and superiority (indexed by SDO) should be explicitly tailored toward justifying and maintaining hierarchical relations between groups. This is suggested by Sidanius and Pratto's (1999) research describing the function of ideologies that position fairness and equality as meritocracy, and hence justify opposition toward affirmative action policies in America. Saucier (2000, p. 378) has neatly summarized the motivations of people who score high in SDO and on empirically similar dimensions when he stated that "it may be that such individuals have only relationships of convenience with belief systems: They endorse beliefs that seem likely to justify their current behavior patterns—patterns that make sense from a fitness maximization standpoint but do not garner much societal approval."

In contrast, the content of legitimizing myths stemming from group-based motivations for ingroup security and conformity (indexed by RWA) seems likely to be tailored toward maintaining ingroup norms and social roles. These ideologies are likely to be anchored in notions of (ingroup) morality and values, portraying outgroup threats to ingroup values and way of life, and prescriptions of the roles that specific subgroups may perform within society.

The motivational goals indexed by SDO and RWA, then, should result in ideologies that justify existing and desired social arrangements by emphasizing quite different characteristics of outgroups and that stratify and position groups based on qualitatively different stereotype characteristics. Accordingly, legitimizing myths motivated by the competitive-driven desire for group-based dominance and superiority should tend to differentiate groups on the basis of status and competence. This should result in categorizations along the lines of "us," who are superior, strong, competent, and dominant (or should be) and "them," who are inferior, incompetent, and worthless and not deserving of any special treatment or help. Legitimizing myths motivated by the threat-driven need for collective security and social cohesion should, in contrast, tend to differentiate groups on the basis of morality and subjective warmth versus

coldness. This should result in categorizations along the lines of “them,” who are bad, dangerous, immoral, and deviant and who threaten “us,” who are normal, morally good, decent people.

Recent research examining the dual motivational bases of sexism, for example, is consistent with the premise that SDO and RWA predict different legitimizing myths anchored in different ideologies or societally elaborated discourses (Sibley, Wilson, & Duckitt, 2007b). With regard to sexism, Glick and Fiske (1996) argued that sexist attitudes toward women can be summarized in terms of two interrelated dimensions. One dimension assesses individual differences in *hostile sexism* (HS), which, according to Glick and colleagues (2004, p. 715), is consistent with notions of sexism-as-antipathy, and reflects “hostility toward women who challenge male power, whether directly (e.g., feminists) or through ‘feminine wiles.’” The other dimension, termed *benevolent sexism* (BS), has a seemingly more positive tone, and is defined as attitudes toward women that are “subjectively benevolent but patronising, casting women as wonderful but fragile creatures who ought to be protected and provided for by men” (Glick et al., 2004, p. 715). *Ambivalent sexism theory* posits that BS and HS form an integrated ideological system that justifies and maintains men’s greater status and power in society by emphasizing both subjectively positive (BS) and subjectively negative (HS) evaluations of women depending upon their social role (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Sibley and colleagues (2007b) presented meta-analytic and longitudinal data suggesting that individual differences in men’s HS attitudes toward women were caused by a competitively driven motivation for intergroup dominance, indexed by SDO, whereas men’s BS attitudes toward women were caused by a threat-driven security-cohesion motivation, indexed by RWA. According to Sibley and colleagues (2007b), men high in RWA endorse BS because it positions women’s ideal role *relative* to men within the broader context of patriarchal society. Thus, men’s endorsement of BS is a result of the motivation to maintain social cohesion and establish clear boundaries for the prescriptive roles that men and women should perform within society. Men’s endorsement of HS, in contrast, is at least partly motivated by the desire to directly subjugate women, which stems from a competitive-driven motivation for group-based dominance (i.e., SDO). Men high in SDO are highly sensitive and reactive to competitiveness in gender relations, resulting in negative attitudes toward women because they are perceived as competitively challenging male dominance within society. These initial findings therefore provide good evidence for the premise that SDO and RWA may cause the individual to subscribe to different domains of legitimizing myths, one concerned with maintaining hierarchical relations between groups, and the other concerned with maintaining ingroup norms and values.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have presented new theory and research extending the dual process motivational model. Overall, the available research supports the causal sequence proposed by the model, and suggests that the combination of socio-structural characteristics of the situation (resource scarcity and danger or threat) and certain personality traits (namely, low openness and low agreeableness) causes the individual to develop schematized views of the social world as more dangerous and competitive, respectively. These worldviews then heighten the cognitive accessibility of motivational goals for social cohesion and security and intergroup dominance and superiority. RWA and SDO appear to provide the most reliable and valid measures of these two constructs currently available. Finally, extending the dual process cognitive-motivational model, we have presented new evidence suggesting that these two motivational goals result in dual ideologies that justify existing and desired social arrangements by emphasizing quite different characteristics of outgroups and that stratify and position groups based on qualitatively different evaluations. To understand the process by which ideologies legitimate social systems, then, it is necessary to understand the motivational bases of these two different ideological dimensions, the conditions under which they will cause the individual to espouse different legitimizing myths, and importantly, the conditions under which these different domains of legitimizing myths may combine to form an integrated ideological system that maintains the existing social order through multiple ideological mechanisms.

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Statewide Differences in Personality Predict Voting Patterns in 1996–2004 U.S. Presidential Elections

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Abstract

Political regionalism is commonly attributed to differences in historical settlement patterns, social class, and racial diversity. The present work provides evidence for the importance of another factor—state-level personality—in understanding regional differences in political ideology. Drawing on research in personality and social psychology, we propose that geographical differences in voting patterns partially reflect differences in the psychological characteristics of individuals living in different states. Specifically, we examine associations between state-level personality scores and voting patterns in the 1996, 2000, and 2004 U.S. Presidential elections. Results show that mean levels of openness and conscientiousness within a state predict the percentage of votes for Democratic and Republican candidates. Furthermore, state-level personality scores account for unique variance in voting patterns, even after adjusting for standard sociodemographic and political predictors. This work demonstrates the value of investigating psychological variables at a regional level to better understand political culture and ideology.

The results from the 2004 Presidential election revealed once again that the United States is politically divided. Many political pundits have offered explanations for the “Red state/Blue state divide” (how and why Republican-leaning and Democrat-leaning states differ), with most explanations focusing on discrepancies in social and economic conditions. Others have alluded to the importance of psychology for understanding the links between geographic location and political orientation. For example, Brooks (2004) has suggested that individuals “cluster in places where people share their cultural, aesthetic and, as it turns out, political values. So every place becomes more like itself and the cultural divides between places become stark” (p. A27). What is especially provocative about this account is that it implies that individuals across the country possess different psychological characteristics and that these characteristics are strong enough to influence how

individuals in a state vote. A growing body of work in personality and social psychology suggests that there may be some truth to this claim.

In this article, we build on previous research on personality and political orientation in proposing that regional differences in voting patterns can be understood in terms of regional differences in modal personality. More specifically, we seek to integrate work in psychology, political science, and cultural geography to develop and investigate the hypothesis that regional differences in voting patterns reflect regional differences in the psychological characteristics of individuals living in those regions. After all, values, including political values, are in large part psychological in nature (e.g., Barnea & Schwartz, 1998; Feldman, 2003; Rokeach, 1973).

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN POLITICAL ORIENTATION

Regional differences in political orientation have existed for quite some time. Indeed, political geographers and scientists have shown that American regions and states have voted in fairly stable ways for over a century (Agnew, 1987a; 1987b; Bense, 1984; Elazer, 1994; Heppen, 2003; Hero, 1998). Explanations for these differences generally emphasize regional differences in historical settlement patterns (Elazer, 1994), cultural and racial composition (Hero, 1998; Heppen, 2003), and local economic conditions (Heppen, 2003).

Elazer (1994), for example, argued that regional differences in political ideology are the result of historical settlement and immigration patterns. The synthesis of religion, politics, and culture brought by early settlers gave rise to different political subcultures, each of which regarded government as serving different functions. Three political subcultures identified in Elazer's research are: individualistic, moralistic, and traditionalistic. The individualistic subculture is a result of the commercialism and social pluralism of the English, Eastern European, and Mediterranean immigrants to the North Mid-Atlantic and eventually the West Coast. In this subculture, the sole purpose of government is to maintain a healthy economy. The moralistic subculture is a product of the religious convictions of early Puritan, Jewish, and Western European settlers of New England (and later the Midwest and Northwest). This subculture considers government to be an instrument for achieving the greatest good for all individuals. The traditionalistic subculture is a result of the plantation agrarianism of the South and accepts a hierarchical social structure in which government is entrusted to uphold social order.

Others have emphasized the importance of ethnic diversity for regional voting patterns (Heppen, 2003; Hero, 1998). According to Hero (1998), class

differences between majority and minority ethnic groups shape the political climate of a state. Racially homogenous regions (with high percentages of Whites) tend to have simple social structures and are concerned with community development. In contrast, racially heterogeneous regions (with high percentages of non-White minorities) tend to have more complex social structures and are concerned with maintaining social order and economic prosperity.

In an analysis of U.S. Presidential elections from 1892 to 2000, Heppen (2003) identified four fluid political regions that were differentiated according to the degree of social diversity, economic status, and political behavior: the East and West Coasts, Middle America, the Sun Belt, and the Capital. The Coastal states and Washington D.C. are historically liberal regions with large populations, high percentages of non-White residents, and relatively high per capita income levels. The Middle American and Sun Belt states are historically conservative regions with smaller populations, less cultural and racial diversity, and poorer economies in general.

Taken together, this research suggests that regional differences in political orientation can be understood in terms of the historical, social, and economic differences among regions. These regional differences in turn appear to moderate how individuals in those regions react to various political issues. This work is consistent with the notion that the psychological characteristics of individuals (e.g., attitudes, beliefs, and values) inhabiting different regions affect local political preferences. Regional social climates may (a) attract individuals with similar personality characteristics and belief systems, and (b) increase the degree of similarity among inhabitants in a given area. It is therefore conceivable that regional differences in personality could inform our understanding of the Red state/Blue state divide.

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN PERSONALITY

Early investigations of geographic differences in personality attempted to provide explanations for the anti-Semitism displayed before and during World War II. This work spawned several theories about the nature of national differences in personality or character (e.g., Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Lewin, 1936; Peabody, 1985). For example, in *The Authoritarian Personality*, Adorno and colleagues (1950) sought to integrate dynamic personality theory with the study of social attitudes and political ideology. They identified an authoritarian syndrome, which was defined in terms of conservatism, intolerance of ambiguity, narrow-mindedness, conventionalism, and obedience to authority. This work was very influential, and sparked numerous international projects that revealed national

differences in authoritarianism among Americans, Germans, Japanese, and Russians (e.g., Inkeles, Hanfmann, & Beier, 1958).

Although work on national character was a useful starting point for understanding cross-national differences, most of this research treated entire nations as homogenous entities. It was assumed that individuals within various regions of a country were more similar to each other than to individuals in other countries (Bock, 2000). This work failed to take into account the possibility that individuals living in different regions of the same country could be quite different from one another. There has, however, been some research in social psychology on regional differences within countries. This research has focused on regional differences in self-concept (Vandello & Cohen, 1999), well-being (Plaut, Markus, & Lachman, 2002), and violence (Cohen, 2001; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). For example, work by Vandello and Cohen (1999) suggests that regional differences exist in individualism and collectivism, such that collectivism is highest in the Southern states and lowest in the Mountain and Great Plains states. Moreover, research by Cohen (e.g., Cohen, 2001; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996) reveals that the Southern United States embraces a culture of honor, in which individuals are willing to resort to violence to protect their reputation.

Perhaps the first study to directly examine regional variation in personality within the United States was conducted by Krug and Kulhavy (1973). Their findings revealed striking differences: individuals living in urban, industrial regions (Northeast, Midwest, and West Coast) were significantly higher in "creative productivity" (defined in terms of creativity, imagination, intelligence, tolerance, and unconventionality), than were those living in rural regions (Great Plains and South). Midwesterners appeared to be higher in traits associated with conscientiousness (e.g., hardworking) than were people in the West Coast and Southwest. Finally, individuals living in the Northeast were higher in extraversion (defined by traits such as urgency and energy) than were individuals living in the Western Mountain states.

Krug and Kulhavy (1973) attributed geographic personality differences to immigration patterns, but the emergence and persistence of such differences are likely due to a myriad of factors (Rentfrow, Gosling, & Potter, 2008). Historical immigration patterns could have caused regional differences in personality to emerge by way of genetic and social founder effects. Specifically, the genetic predispositions of immigrants who settled in particular regions could have restricted the variety of personality traits available in the gene pool, which, in turn, could have caused certain regions to develop disproportionate numbers of individuals with certain personality traits (Hofstede & McCrae, 2004). Moreover, the intellectual histories, customs, lifestyles, and daily practices of early settlers could have contributed to the establishment

of certain social norms within particular regions, which, in turn, could have influenced the prevalence of particular behavioral tendencies and personality traits within the region (Hofstede & McCrae, 2004; Kitayama, Ishii, Imada, Takemura, & Ramaswamy, 2006). Thus, it is plausible that the genetic predispositions and social customs of early immigrants could have both caused regional differences in personality to emerge. But once those differences do emerge, how might they persist over time?

Three mechanisms that probably have the biggest impact on maintaining regional differences are self-selection, social influence, and environmental influence. First, regional personality differences could persist as a result of individuals migrating to places that satisfy and reinforce their psychological needs. For instance, open-minded individuals might move to cosmopolitan areas, where their needs for diversity and cultural stimulation are more easily met than in small-town environments. Similarly, members of minority groups might choose to live in regions where the residents are believed to be open-minded and tolerant of diversity. Support for this idea comes from work indicating that individuals seek out environments in which their attitudes, beliefs, and personalities are valued and shared by others (Buss, 1987; Florida, 2002; Swann, Rentfrow, & Guinn, 2002).

Second, regional differences could persist as a result of social influence. According to social dynamic influence, local clustering of attitudes and beliefs can occur when individuals engage in repeated social interaction with others (Bourgeois & Bowen, 2001; Latané, 1981). As a result, “attitudes become geographically clustered not because [people] choose to live with others who share common interests but rather as a result of social influence” (Bourgeois & Bowen, 2001, p. 434). For instance, the degree of cultural diversity in a region could influence the attitudes that individuals in that region have about different racial and ethnic groups (e.g., Allport, 1954). Indeed, similar arguments have been made about the geographic clustering of political attitudes (Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1995). Similarly, regional psychological characteristics, such as industriousness or creativity, could influence various sociodemographic characteristics of a region, like unemployment rates and median income.

Third, regional differences in personality could persist as a result of environmental influence. Specifically, aspects of the physical environment influence the types of activities (e.g., professions, leisure pursuits) in which individuals can engage, which could influence various psychological characteristics of individuals in that region. For example, urbanization in general and neighborhood characteristics in particular—housing quality and proximity to basic necessities like hospitals and markets—appear to influence

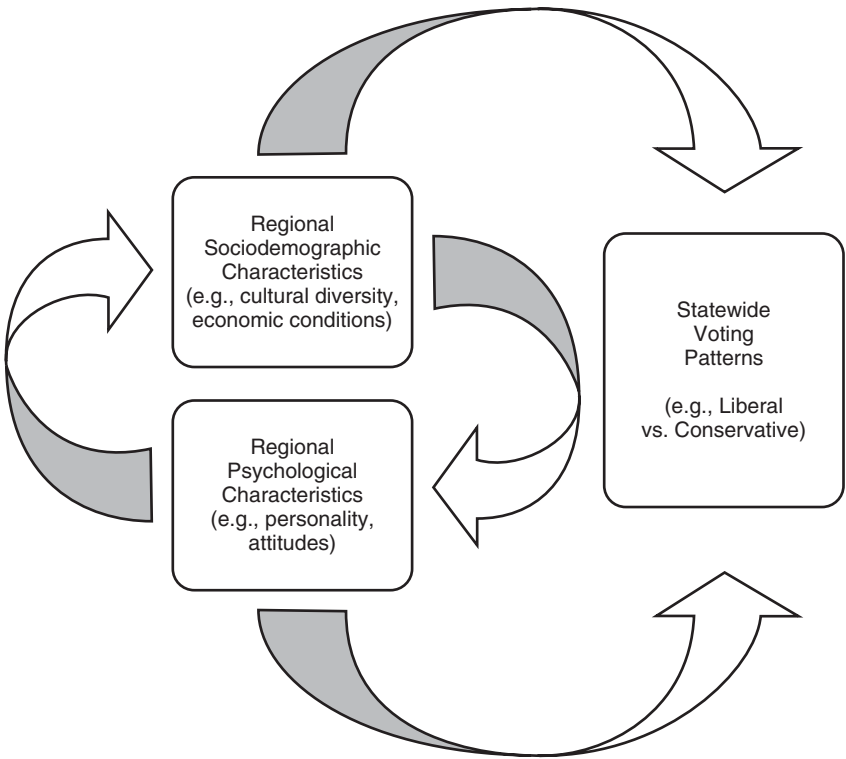


Figure 13.1 Mutual reinforcement between regional sociodemographic characteristics and regional psychological characteristics and their influence on statewide voting patterns.

rates of depression over and above the effects of family income (Cutrona, Wallace, & Wesner, 2006). Thus, it is conceivable that certain environmental aspects of regions could cause specific psychological characteristics to persist there over time.

We are suggesting that the psychological, sociological, and environmental aspects of regions are mutually reinforcing and could each influence regional variation in a number of geographic social indicators, including political preferences. Self-selection, social influence, and environmental influence are three of the possible mechanisms that could create and sustain differences in regional characteristics that could, in turn, affect voting patterns. But what are the processes underlying the expression of personality at the geographic level? That is, how might regional variation in personality and voting patterns become linked?

In line with recent work by Rentfrow and colleagues (2008), it is possible that regional differences in personality and political orientation could become linked through a series of dynamic processes. Specifically, the dominant personality characteristics in a region could have a direct, or additive, effect on the political views at the regional level. For instance, if a disproportionately large number of people in a region have personality traits associated with liberalism, then it is reasonable to suppose that there would be more votes cast for Democratic than Republican political candidates, simply because there are more people with a predisposition for liberalism. Yet, it is also conceivable that the psychological characteristics dominant in a place could produce a unique psychosocial environment in which liberal values are the norm. If so, then that psychosocial environment could, in turn, affect the political views of other people in the environment who do not possess the modal personality traits. But what are the personality traits that could play a role in this dynamic process?

PERSONALITY AND POLITICAL ORIENTATION

The study of personality and politics goes back at least three-quarters of a century, and may be said to originate if not with Freud then with the publication of Lasswell's (1930) *Psychopathology and Politics*. This work, like many that followed it, defended a psychoanalytic theory of personality structure as emanating largely from unconscious drives and motivational conflicts. From this perspective, political ideology was generally regarded as a result of early life experiences and unconscious motives. Although psychoanalytic contributions were influential and popular (e.g., Adorno et al., 1950; Erikson, 1950; Lane, 1962; Smith, Bruner, & White, 1956; Wolfenstein, 1967), they often lacked conclusive scientific evidence and were open to a wide range of conceptual and methodological criticisms (see, e.g., Greenstein, 1992).

More recent applications of personality theory to political science have been more directly based on quantifiable measures of personality and political variables. Many of these studies focused on personality differences between liberals (or leftists) and conservatives (or rightists) (e.g., Costantini & Craik, 1980; Di Renzo, 1974; Elms, 1976; McClosky, 1958; Milbrath, 1962; Sidanius, 1985; St. Angelo & Dyson, 1968; Tetlock, 1983, 1984). Traits under investigation ranged from self-control, restraint, negativity, endurance, and order (higher among conservatives) to open-mindedness, impulsivity, tolerance of ambiguity, and integrative complexity (higher among liberals). This work was extremely important because it confirmed suspicions in both psychology and political science that personality traits underlie support for specific types of ideological and policy outcomes (see also Jost,

Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003a, 2003b). However, this work began to fade from view in political psychology, largely because of the isolated and fragmented nature of personality psychology at the time. As noted by Caprara, Barbaranelli, and Zimbardo (1999), “in the absence of a general theory of personality or consensual agreement about its standardized assessment, research focused on multiple individual constructs without being guided by an integrated conceptual vision” (p. 176).

It was not until the 1990s that a suitable conceptual and empirical framework for classifying and measuring personality dimensions emerged and began to garner scientific consensus. Factor analyses of large numbers of trait ratings made by native speakers of several different languages provided evidence for the existence of five broad personality dimensions that can be reliably measured and used to predict behavior in multiple situations (e.g., Goldberg, 1992; John & Srivastava, 1999; McCrae & Costa, 1999; Ozer & Benet-Martínez, 2006; Wiggins, 1996). Different authors prefer slightly different terms for the “Big Five” dimensions, but the most popular labels spell the acronym OCEAN: *openness* (also referred to as culture or intellect), *conscientiousness*, *extraversion* (or energy), *agreeableness*, and *neuroticism* (or emotional instability). In the remainder of this article, we develop and investigate the hypothesis that regional differences in the prevalence of particular personality styles (as measured in terms of the Big Five dimensions) are related to differences in political orientation (as reflected in voting patterns).

THE FIVE-FACTOR MODEL OF PERSONALITY AND POLITICAL ORIENTATION

Based on research in personality and social psychology, the Big Five dimension that is most likely to predict voting patterns is openness (Carney, Jost, Gosling, & Potter, 2008; Jost et al., 2003a; McCrae, 1996). Numerous studies suggest that self-described political liberals tend to score higher than conservatives on measures of stimulus-seeking and preferences for novelty, creativity, curiosity, imaginativeness, and broad-mindedness—all of which are aspects of openness (e.g., Barnea & Schwartz, 1998; Caprara et al., 1999; Feather, 1979; Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003; Levin & Schalmo, 1974; Peterson, Smirles, & Wentworth, 1997; Riemann, Grubich, Hempel, Mergl, & Richter, 1993; Trapnell, 1994; Van Hiel, Mervielde, & De Fruyt, 2004). In a meta-analytic review of psychological predictors of political orientation, Jost and colleagues (2003a) estimated, on the basis of 21 studies, that the overall effect size (r) for the relation between openness and political liberalism was between .28 and .35, assuming a 95% confidence interval (CI). The sheer consistency of the research findings led McCrae (1996) to conclude

that “a case can be made for saying that *variations in experiential Openness are the major psychological determinant of political polarities*” (p. 325, emphasis in original).

The conscientiousness personality dimension is associated with being organized, self-disciplined, orderly, efficient, dependable, responsible, hard-working, persistent, and likely to engage in rule-following behavior. These traits are reminiscent of Silvan Tomkins’ (1963) depiction of the “normative orientation,” which he associated with conservative and right-wing personality styles in general. Although fewer studies have examined conscientiousness than openness, some evidence suggests that it, too, is related to political orientation (e.g., Carney et al., 2008). Using both short and long versions of Big Five scales, Gosling and colleagues (2003) obtained weak but significant positive correlations between conscientiousness and self-reported conservatism (with r values ranging from .06 to .11) and weak but significant negative correlations between conscientiousness and self-reported liberalism (ranging from $-.08$ to $-.13$). Similar results were obtained in a study by Caprara and colleagues (1999) with regard to voting behavior in the 1994 Italian national election; people who scored higher on conscientiousness were slightly more likely to support the center-right party than the center-left party. Caprara, Barbaranelli, Consiglio, Picconi, and Zimbardo (2003) administered personality questionnaires to Italian members of regional, national, and European parliaments and found that center-right politicians scored higher on conscientiousness than did center-left politicians.

Caprara and colleagues (1999, 2003) also found that center-right politicians and voters scored higher on energy or (extraversion) than did center-left politicians and voters. It is conceivable that such differences reflect varying degrees of self-confidence, especially in light of the electoral success of the rightist National Alliance party headed by Silvio Berlusconi and Gianfranco Fini in Italy over the last several years. In the American context, Gosling and colleagues (2003) obtained no association between extraversion and political orientation. Insofar as this personality dimension captures how active, energetic, dynamic, enthusiastic, enterprising, and happy a person seems to be, it may be relevant to political success, although it may not be consistently related to left- versus right-wing differences in personality across time and place. In any case, this is an empirical question.

No consistent evidence indicates that the other two Big Five dimensions of personality, agreeableness and neuroticism (or emotional instability), are associated with political orientation per se. However, Gosling and colleagues (2003) did find that agreeableness was negatively correlated with scores on Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, and Malle’s (1994) social dominance orientation (SDO), which measures a preference for group-based inequality that tends

to be associated with other right-wing attitudes (see Chapter 12). This suggests that agreeableness, which involves warmth, kindness, trust, generosity, sympathy, and unselfishness, might be more prevalent among liberals than conservatives. Evidence also indicates that voters' perceptions of candidates are strongly affected by their perceptions of candidates' levels of agreeableness (as well as their levels of extraversion), regardless of whether those candidates are left- or right-wing (Caprara et al., 2002).

Neuroticism refers to emotional instability and is associated with anxiety, moodiness, and an inability to cope with stressful situations. Jost and colleagues (2003a) found that conservatives were more likely than liberals to worry about potential losses and to be sensitive to threat-related stimuli, but the effect size for this relation was considerably weaker when fear of threat and loss was measured in terms of neuroticism. Studies by Caprara and colleagues (1999, 2003) in Italy yielded no evidence that neuroticism was associated with preferences for center-left versus center-right political parties and candidates, but it may be relevant that third-party candidates were excluded from consideration in these studies. Effects of neuroticism may be more likely to emerge in the context of a wider range of political views, including those of third-party candidates. To assess this possibility, the present study included data on the percentage of votes cast for third-party candidates (i.e., Reform and Green party) as well as for Democratic and Republican candidates.

By integrating previous research on personality and political orientation with recent observations concerning the geographic clustering of political attitudes, a number of novel research questions can be generated and addressed. For example, are residents of politically liberal states higher, on average, in openness than residents of conservative states? Are residents of conservative states higher in conscientiousness than residents of liberal states? And, most critically, do statewide differences in personality explain voting patterns above and beyond standard sociological and political variables?

OVERVIEW OF THE PRESENT RESEARCH

The purpose of the present research is to determine whether regional differences in political orientation reflect differences in the personalities of the individuals living in a particular region. To investigate this issue, we examined connections between state-level personality scores on each of the Big Five personality dimensions and the percentage of votes cast for Democratic, Republican, and third-party candidates in the 1996, 2000, and 2004 Presidential elections.

Our predictions concerning the correspondence between state-level personality scores and voting patterns were based largely on extrapolations from research undertaken at the individual level of analysis (e.g., Caprara et al., 1999; Gosling et al., 2003; Jost et al., 2003a, 2003b; McCrae, 1996). As summarized earlier, previous studies have identified clear links between openness and conscientiousness and political orientation. The evidence connecting extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism to political orientation is less clear. Therefore, we expected that state-level openness and conscientiousness scores would significantly predict state-level voting patterns, but we made no explicit predictions about the other three personality dimensions. More specifically, we hypothesized that states with populations that are relatively high in openness and low in conscientiousness would be more likely to vote for Democratic candidates (Bill Clinton in 1996, Al Gore in 2000, and John Kerry in 2004) and less likely to vote for Republican candidates (Bob Dole in 1996 and George W. Bush in 2000 and 2004). Given the dearth of available research on the psychological correlates of preferences for independent and third-party candidates, we did not make explicit predictions about how state-level personality would be related to preferences for Ross Perot in 1996 and Ralph Nader in 2000 and 2004. However, given that Perot seemed to appeal most to right-of-center voters, whereas Nader mainly appealed to left-of-center voters, we expected the patterns of personality correlates to match those of the Republican and Democratic candidates, respectively.

Although we expect statewide personality differences to account for significant proportions of variance in voting patterns, it is reasonable to assume that the effects will be weaker after adjusting for standard sociodemographic characteristics and past election results. Consistent with the research literatures on electoral coalitions, migration patterns, political regionalism, and social influence (e.g., Axelrod, 1972, 1986; Bourgeois & Bowen, 2001; Brooks & Manza, 1997; Cohen, 2001; Erikson, Wright, & McIver, 1993; Heppen, 2003; Hero, 1998; Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1995; Latané, 1981; Vandellos & Cohen, 1999), it is to be expected that variables like education, income, social class, ethnic diversity, proportion of state population residing in large cities, and past voting behavior could be related to both the personalities and political preferences of individuals living in a given region. To assess whether the relations between state-level personality and political preferences persist even after adjusting for such factors, we examined three models on regional voting patterns. First, the *state-level personality* model included the Big Five personality estimates for each state. Second, the *sociodemographic* model included for each state the median family income, percentage of residents with at least a college degree, percentages of white- and blue-collar workers, percentage of Black residents, and proportion of

a state's population living in cities with 1 million or more residents (U.S. Census, 2000). Third, the *political* model included the change in state-wide voting patterns from the two elections preceding the one under investigation (e.g., the difference in the Democratic vote from 1988 to 1992 to predict voting outcomes in 1996; Leip, 2005).¹ Together, these data permitted analyses of the independent and shared contributions of each model on state-level voting patterns, thereby enabling us to determine whether state-level personality accounted for unique variance in political preferences when variables from the other models were held constant.

Testing the predictions required that we obtain reliable and representative personality estimates for each state. We therefore needed a methodology that would (a) provide a sufficiently large sample to investigate our hypotheses, (b) enable us to collect equivalent data from individual respondents around the country, and (c) provide a diverse sample of respondents that would be reasonably representative of the population of the United States. To achieve these aims, we decided to use the Internet as the vehicle for collecting personality data. Research on web-based studies indicates that Internet users may not be perfectly representative of the general population (Lebo, 2000; Lenhart, 2000), but Internet-based samples are much more diverse than convenience samples commonly used in social science research (Birnbaum, 2004; Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, & John, 2004). Furthermore, researchers typically obtain very similar results across Internet and non-Internet samples, especially with regard to personality variables (e.g., Srivastava, John, Gosling, & Potter, 2003).

The Internet is still a rather novel methodological tool, and no other studies have used this methodology to examine regional differences in personality. Therefore, we were concerned that the findings might not be reliable. Our concern was particularly acute for the early analyses because, in

¹ The political variable chosen to represent the impact of state-wide political behavior was a measure of change in voting patterns, or the difference in the percentages of votes from the two previous elections. This variable sheds light on whether change in state-wide Democratic votes between 1988 and 1992, for example, influenced votes for the Democratic candidate in 1996. A political variable like this is more illuminating than the percentage of votes in the previous election because (a) state-wide presidential voting patterns are very highly correlated across elections, and (b) a political change variable measures variations in the political behaviors of state residents. Thus, if changes in previous voting patterns predict the percentage of state-wide votes, this would suggest that there is a shift in the overall political orientation of state residents.

1999, the Internet was not nearly as widely used as it is today (Lebo, 2000; Lenhart, 2000). To determine whether the findings were generalizable, we gathered two independent personality samples at two different time periods and sought to replicate the findings across samples. Data for Sample 1 were collected from January 1999 to December 2000, and data for Sample 2 were collected from January 2003 to December 2004. Big Five state-personality estimates from Sample 1 were used to predict voting patterns in the 1996 and 2000 elections, and estimates from Sample 2 were used to predict voting patterns in the 2004 election. This approach enabled us to determine whether the effects of state-level personality on voting patterns would replicate across the independent samples and, simultaneously, to evaluate the viability of our methodology.

Cross-level Analysis Considerations

When working with variables that can be measured at multiple levels of analysis (e.g., at the levels of individuals and states), researchers may be tempted to generalize findings from one level to another. However, although findings at one level can match findings at another level, the different levels are logically independent, so that generalizations across levels are not always warranted. The well-known *ecological fallacy* refers to one class of such mistakes, in which aggregate-level findings are incorrectly generalized to individual-level phenomena (Duncan, Cuzzort, & Duncan, 1961; Robinson, 1950; Shively, 1969). For example, Robinson (1950) showed that the ecological correlation between the percentage of foreign-born state residents and the percentage of illiterate state residents was $-.53$, but that the individual correlation between foreign-born status and illiteracy was $.12$. In this example, the ecological correlation suggests that illiteracy rates are higher in *states* where there are fewer foreign-born residents than native-born residents; however, it *does not* follow that illiteracy is higher among native-born *individuals* than foreign-born individuals. Indeed, the individual correlation reveals just the opposite. A similar, albeit less common error is the *individualistic fallacy*, in which findings from individual-level analyses are assumed to generalize to aggregate-level analyses; for these reasons, it cannot be assumed that the relationships between personality and political ideology identified at the individual level will generalize to state-level analyses. Of course, findings at one level may in fact generalize to another level, and they often do; the ecological and individualistic fallacies merely highlight the fact that the two levels are logically independent.

The decision to rely on ecological or individual levels of analysis rests primarily on how researchers intend to use the variables and the level of analysis they are most concerned with describing (Shively, 1969). The pres-

ent research is concerned with the connection between regional personality and political orientation at the state level. Therefore, we used aggregate-level data to examine the relationship between regional personality and political orientation at the aggregate level. We merely used previous individual-level findings to identify promising candidate traits for our analyses.

Method

Procedure. The personality data were part of an Internet personality project, a personality study of volunteers assessed over the World Wide Web (for details see Gosling et al., 2004; Srivastava et al., 2003). The website used is a noncommercial, advertisement-free website containing a variety of personality measures. Potential respondents could find out about the site through several channels, including search engines or unsolicited links on other websites. For both samples, respondents volunteered to participate in the study by “clicking” on the personality test icon and were then presented with a series of questions about their personalities, demographics, and state of residence. After responding to each item and submitting their responses, participants were presented with a customized personality evaluation based on their responses to all the items.

Participants. Only participants indicating that they lived in the United States were included in the analyses. Data for Sample 1 were available for 238,709 participants (58% female); the average age was 24.1 years ($SD = 9.6$ years). Of those who disclosed information about their ethnicity, 11,580 (4.9%) respondents were Asian; 7,651 (3.2%) were African American; 5,073 (2.1%) were Latino; 3,974 (1.7%) were Middle Eastern; 201,148 (84.8%) were White; and 7,700 (3.2%) indicated “Other.” Data for Sample 2 were available for 273,685 participants (59% female); the average age was 24.9 years ($SD = 10.7$ years). Of those who disclosed their ethnicity, 13,018 (4.8%) respondents were Asian; 15,667 (5.8%) were African American; 16,025 (5.9%) were Latino; 2,711 (1.0%) were Middle Eastern; 207,849 (76.8%) were White; and 15,315 (5.7%) indicated “Other.”

Measures

Respondent location. Given our interest in the relations between state-level personality and voting patterns, respondents in both samples were asked to indicate the state in which they currently reside. Respondents could choose from a list of all 50 states as well as Washington, D.C.

Personality. We used the Big Five Inventory to assess personality (BFI; John & Srivastava, 1999) in both samples. The BFI consists of 44 short statements designed to assess the prototypical traits defining each of the Big

Five dimensions. Using a 5-point Likert-type rating scale with end-points at 1 (*Disagree Strongly*) and 5 (*Agree Strongly*), respondents indicated the extent to which they agreed with each statement. The BFI scales have shown a robust factor structure, substantial internal and temporal reliability, and considerable convergent and discriminant validity with other Big Five measures (Benet-Martinez & John, 1998; Gosling et al., 2003; John & Srivastava, 1999).

Voting patterns. To assess regional political preferences, we gathered voting data for each of the 50 states and Washington, D.C., from *Dave Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections*, an online database consisting of Presidential election results obtained from publications by official election agencies within each state (i.e., Secretary of State offices, State Board of Election offices, *Congressional Quarterly*, and the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration). For the 1996, 2000, and 2004 Presidential elections, we obtained data on the percentage of votes cast in each state for major party candidates (Clinton, Dole, Gore, and Bush) and third-party candidates (Perot and Nader).

Sociodemographic characteristics. To determine the unique contribution that state-level personality has on voting over and above sociodemographic variables, we gathered relevant data for each state from the U.S. Census Bureau (2000). On the basis of previous research on political regionalism and political coalitions (Agnew, 1987a; Axelrod, 1972, 1986; Brooks & Manza, 1997; Heppen, 2003; Hero, 1998; Shelly, Archer, Davidson, & Brunn, 1996), which has identified several robust sociodemographic predictors of state-wide voting patterns, we obtained data on median family income, percentage of the population 25 years and older with at least a college degree, percentage of working-aged individuals with white-collar jobs, percentage of working-aged individuals with blue-collar jobs, percentage of population that is African American, and proportion of the population living in a city with one million or more residents.

Sample Characteristics, Reliability, and Data Aggregation

Sample characteristics. To ensure that each state was fairly represented in terms of geographic region, we correlated the number of respondents from each state in Sample 1 with the population for each state using data from the U.S. Census Bureau (2000). The number of respondents from each state in our sample was directly proportional to the population of each state, $r = .98$.

Past research on Internet-based surveys suggests that many ethnic minority groups are under-represented on the Internet (e.g., Lebo, 2000; Lenhart, 2000). To determine whether our sample under-represented particular ethnic groups, we compared the ethnic population of respondents from our

Internet sample with the ethnic population of residents in each of the 50 states. Specifically, we correlated the percentage of respondents from each ethnic group in the Internet samples with the percentage of the population of that group within each state. For example, we correlated the percentage of Asian respondents from each state with the actual percentage of Asians in each state. These analyses indicated that our Internet-based samples were remarkably representative of the population at large. Specifically, the correlations for Samples 1 and 2, respectively, were: .99, .97 for Asians; .57, .93 for African Americans; .96, .96 for Latinos; and .98, .87 for Whites. Thus, with the exception of African Americans in Sample 1, the ethnic composition of our samples matched almost perfectly the ethnic populations in each state.

Scale reliabilities. Reliabilities of the Big Five personality dimensions at the individual and state levels were of particular interest in this study. If there were problems administering the BFI on the web (e.g., random or unreliable responses), the internal reliabilities of the five scales would be low. Moreover, because we were developing personality estimates for each state using the BFI, it was important to determine whether the personality scales were reliable at the state level. We found that the scales were reliable across both levels and samples, with alpha (α) reliabilities very similar to those reported in previous research (see John & Srivastava, 1999). Specifically, the coefficient α at the individual level for Samples 1 and 2, respectively, were: .79 and .70 for openness; .82 and .82 for conscientiousness; .86 and .85 for extraversion; .80 and .80 for agreeableness; and .83 and .83 for neuroticism. The coefficient α at the state level for Samples 1 and 2, respectively, were: .95 and .94 for openness; .86 and .91 for conscientiousness; .88 and .88 for extraversion; .85 and .91 for agreeableness; and .94 and .89 for neuroticism.

Data aggregation. Given that our Internet samples accurately represented each of the 50 states in terms of both overall and ethnic population and that state-level responses to the BFI were reliable, it was reasonable to aggregate participants' responses to develop personality estimates for each state. For Samples 1 and 2, we scored the five personality scales at the state level using the unit-weighted scale scores of every respondent from each state.

Results

Our primary objectives were to determine: (a) whether state-level personality was related to the percentage of votes cast for each Presidential candidate in each election, and (b) the extent to which state-level personality accounted for voting patterns after adjusting for the effects of sociodemographic and political variables. We addressed these issues in a series of multiple regression analyses that examined the independent and combined effects of three

models (state-level personality, sociodemographic, and political) on the percent of votes cast for each candidate in each election period.² Because we were concerned with the degree of covariance between state-level personality and political orientation that arises through self-selection and social influence processes, r was selected as the measure of effect size.³ All numerical variables were standardized prior to conducting analyses.

Democratic Candidates

State-level personality model. Analyses of the percentages of Democratic votes cast in the three elections revealed that the state-level personality model shared significant proportions of variance with votes cast for Clinton (in 1996), Gore (in 2000), and Kerry (in 2004) ($R = .634, .682, \text{ and } .718$, respectively). As shown in the top portion of Table 13.1, the partial regression coefficients for each of the Big Five personality dimensions were strikingly similar across all three elections. As hypothesized, openness was positively

² Votes for Democratic candidates are strongly negatively related to votes for Republican candidates. Therefore, we also analyzed the data using two bipolar political-preference variables as the criteria: a Democrat versus Republican variable (excluding the percent of votes cast for third-party candidates) and a third-party versus major parties variable. The results from these analyses were virtually identical in every respect to the results reported here, in which the raw percent of votes cast was used as the primary criteria. We used the raw percentage of votes cast for each candidate as the criteria, instead of the bipolar political preference variables because these analyses are more straightforward to interpret.

³ Although r^2 is commonly thought to reflect the percent of shared variance between measured variables, this interpretation is correct only in certain circumstances. Jensen (1980) provided clarification for the difference between r^2 and r by pointing out that r^2 reflects the percent of variance in one variable that can be predicted by another variable, whereas r reflects the percent of variance common in two variables. Ozer (1985) extended this work by describing two analytic models, the variance decomposition and variance composition models, to delineate the appropriate conditions for using r and r^2 as effect size estimates. The variance decomposition model assumes that the predictor variable is contained within the criterion variable, and requires that the predictor variable is corrected for attenuation (which is seldom the case). In this model, r^2 represents the amount of variance in the criterion variable that is accounted for by the predictor variable, and should therefore be used as the effect size estimate. In contrast, the variance composition model assumes that a latent variable is responsible for the covariance between measured variables. In this model, r is the appropriate effect size estimate because it represents the covariance of measured variables by a latent variable (or the percent of variance common in the variables measured). For detailed discussions of the uses and misuses of r and r^2 , see D'Andrade and Dart (1990), Jensen (1971, 1980), and Ozer (1985).

related to the percentage of votes cast for each of the Democratic candidates, and it accounted for the most variance. Conscientiousness was a significant negative predictor of votes cast for each candidate. In addition, extraversion was a positive predictor of the percentage of votes cast for the three Democratic candidates. Although we made no specific predictions about the effects of neuroticism, it significantly predicted the percentage of votes for Kerry (but not for Clinton or Gore).

Sociodemographic model. The sociodemographic model also shared substantial proportions of variance with the percentages of votes cast for

Table 13.1 Multiple regression analyses of the state-level personality, sociodemographic, and political models for the Democratic Presidential candidates in the 1996, 2000, and 2004 elections.

	Democratic Candidate			MEAN
	1996 ^a CLINTON	2000 ^a GORE	2004 ^b KERRY	
<i>State-level personality:</i>				
Constant	-2.05E-14 (.114)	-2.44E-14 (.108)	-1.13E-14 (.103)	-1.87E-14
Openness	.601*** (.134)	.686*** (.127)	.708*** (.123)	.665
Conscientiousness	-.382* (.164)	-.435** (.155)	-.521** (.155)	-.446
Extraversion	.297* (.146)	.316* (.138)	.381** (.131)	.331
Agreeableness	.082 (.147)	.146 (.139)	.231 (.170)	.153
Neuroticism	.175 (.129)	.122 (.122)	.260* (.107)	.186
<i>R</i>	.634***	.682***	.718***	.678
<i>Sociodemographic:</i>				
Constant	-7.60E-17 (.102)	-2.90E-16 (.095)	-6.90E-16 (.098)	-3.52E-16
Median family income	-.276 (.165)	-.122 (.153)	-.135 (.158)	-.178
College degree	.337+ (.198)	.319+ (.184)	.456* (.190)	.371
White collar	-.188 (.176)	-.299+ (.164)	-.164 (.169)	-.217

Table 13.1 Multiple regression analyses of the state-level personality, sociodemographic, and political models for the Democratic Presidential candidates in the 1996, 2000, and 2004 elections. (*Continued*)

	Democratic Candidate			MEAN
	1996 ^a CLINTON	2000 ^a GORE	2004 ^b KERRY	
Blue collar	-.611** (.196)	-.646*** (.182)	-.479* (.188)	-.579
African American	.264* (.122)	.293* (.114)	.203+ (.118)	.253
Urban	-.027 (.125)	-.007 (.117)	.054 (.120)	.007
<i>R</i>	.730***	.772***	.755***	.752
<i>Political:</i>				
Constant	-1.40E-16 (.135)	-3.70E-16 (.137)	-7.40E-16 (.116)	-4.17E-16
Change in votes	.298* (.136)	.244+ (.139)	.570*** (.117)	.371

Note. Cell entries are nonstandardized partial regression coefficients (and their standard errors). State-level personality estimates for 1996 and 2000 were derived from Sample 1; state-level personality estimates for 2004 were derived from Sample 2.

^a Sample 1, ^b Sample 2;

* $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Democratic candidates ($R = .730$, $.772$, and $.755$, for Clinton, Gore, and Kerry, respectively). As can be seen in the middle portion of Table 13.1, the percentage of blue-collar workers accounted for more variance than any of the other sociodemographic predictors and was negatively related to votes for each of the candidates. Two variables that accounted for slightly smaller proportions of the variance were percentage of residents with college degrees and percentage of African Americans, which were both positively related to votes in each election.

Political model. The political model included a political behavior change variable, which was the difference between the percentage of votes for the Democratic candidate in the two previous elections (i.e., 1988 and 1992 to predict 1996 votes, 1992 and 1996 to predict 2000 votes, and 1996 and 2000 to predict 2004 votes). Analyses of the political model revealed that it shared substantial proportions of variance with votes for the three candidates ($R =$

.298, .244, and .570, Clinton, Gore, and Kerry, respectively). The bottom portion of Table 13.1 shows that the changes in statewide Democratic votes in the two elections prior to those under investigation were significant positive predictors of the percentages of same-party votes in the 1996 and 2004 elections and a marginally significant positive predictor in the 2000 election.

Comparison of the models. Each of the three models accounted for significant proportions of variance in the percentage of votes for the Democratic candidates in all three elections. To determine whether state-level personality accounted for unique variance in voting patterns after adjusting for the effects of sociodemographic and political variables, we conducted a series of stepwise regressions comparing changes in the R between the state-level personality model and each of the other two models.

We first examined the combined and unique effects of the state-level personality and sociodemographic models on the percentages of votes for each Democratic candidate. When combined, the two models shared 82%, 84%, and 85% of the variance in votes for Clinton, Gore, and Kerry, respectively. Comparisons of the changes in the R s showed that, even when the sociodemographic model was included, the state-level personality model still explained significant proportions of variance in the percentage of votes for Clinton ($\Delta R = .09$, $F(5, 39) = 3.479$, $p < .01$), Gore ($\Delta R = .07$, $F(5, 39) = 3.053$, $p < .05$), and Kerry ($\Delta R = .10$, $F(5, 39) = 4.340$, $p < .01$).

We next examined the unique and combined effects of the state-level personality and political models. When both models were combined, they accounted for 64%, 69%, and 84% of the variance in votes for Clinton, Gore, and Kerry, respectively. Analyses of the proportions of variance accounted for by the state-level personality model when the political variable was controlled revealed that it accounted for significant proportions of unique variance in the percentage of votes cast for Clinton ($\Delta R = .34$, $F(5, 44) = 4.697$, $p < .01$), Gore ($\Delta R = .45$, $F(5, 44) = 7.028$, $p < .001$), and Kerry ($\Delta R = .27$, $F(5, 44) = 11.089$, $p < .01$).

Republican Candidates. State-level personality model. Analyses of the percentages of Republican votes cast in the three elections revealed that the state-level personality model shared significant proportions of variance with votes cast for Dole (in 1996) and Bush (in 2000 and 2004) ($R = .614$, $.672$, and $.728$, respectively). As shown in the top portion of Table 13.2, the patterns of relations between each of the Big Five personality dimensions and the percentage of Republican votes cast in each election were virtually identical across the three elections. The partial regression coefficients revealed that openness again accounted for the most variance, but this time it was negatively related to votes cast for each candidate. Conscientiousness was a significant and

positive predictor of votes for each of the Republican candidates. Extraversion was a significant negative predictor of the percentages of votes cast for Dole and Bush. Neuroticism was a significant (negative) predictor of the percentage of votes cast for Bush in 2004 but not in 2000. Thus, the findings from our analysis of Republican candidates were precisely opposite to those obtained in the analysis of Democratic candidates.

Table 13.2 Multiple regression analyses of the state-level personality, sociodemographic, and political models for the Republican Presidential candidates in the 1996, 2000, and 2004 elections.

	Republican Candidate			MEAN
	1996 ^a DOLE	2000 ^a BUSH	2004 ^b BUSH	
<i>State-level personality:</i>				
Constant	-2.54E-14 (.116)	-2.85E-14 (.109)	-1.10E-14 (.101)	-2.16E-14
Openness	-.588*** (.137)	-.695*** (.128)	-.711*** (.121)	-.665
Conscientiousness	.493** (.167)	.540*** (.157)	.541*** (.153)	.525
Extraversion	-.305* (.149)	-.299* (.140)	-.397** (.129)	-.334
Agreeableness	-.096 (.150)	-.132 (.141)	-.202 (.167)	-.143
Neuroticism	-.078 (.131)	.009 (.123)	-.238* (.105)	-.102
<i>R</i>	.614***	.672***	.728***	.671
<i>Sociodemographic:</i>				
Constant	-2.60E-16 (.115)	-2.20E-17 (.094)	1.25E-15 (.098)	3.23E-16
Median family income	.229 (.187)	.078 (.152)	.124 (.158)	.144
College degree	-.304 (.224)	-.325+ (.183)	-.448* (.190)	-.359
White collar	.132 (.200)	.158 (.163)	.121 (.169)	.137
Blue collar	.617** (.222)	.615*** (.181)	.461* (.188)	.564
African American	-.025 (.139)	-.159 (.113)	-.179 (.118)	-.121

Table 13.2 Multiple regression analyses of the state-level personality, sociodemographic, and political models for the Republican Presidential candidates in the 1996, 2000, and 2004 elections. (*Continued*)

	Republican Candidate			MEAN
	1996 ^a DOLE	2000 ^a BUSH	2004 ^b BUSH	
Urban	.049 (.142)	.009 (.116)	-.058 (.120)	.000
<i>R</i>	.634***	.776***	.754***	.753
<i>Political:</i>				
Constant	-1.90E-16 (.138)	6.70E-17 (.111)	1.94E-15 (.110)	6.06E-16
Change in votes	-.211 (.140)	.622*** (.041)	.631*** (.111)	.347

Note. Cell entries are nonstandardized partial regression coefficients (and their standard errors). State-level personality estimates for 1996 and 2000 were derived from Sample 1; state-level personality estimates for 2004 were derived from Sample 2.

^a Sample 1, ^b Sample 2;

* $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Sociodemographic model. The sociodemographic model significantly predicted the percentage of votes for the Republican candidates in all three elections ($R = .634, .776$, and $.754$, respectively). As shown in the middle portion of Table 13.2, the percentage of blue-collar workers accounted for significant proportions of variance, and was positively related to the percentage of votes for the Republican candidates in each election. Percentage of residents with college degrees was the only other variable that accounted for substantial proportions of variance, and was negatively related to votes for Republican candidates.

Political model. The bottom portion of Table 13.2 shows that the political model accounted for significant proportions of variance in votes for Bush in 2000 and 2004 ($R = .622$ and $.631$, 2000 and 2004, respectively), but not Dole ($R = .211$). In both 2000 and 2004, change in same-party votes was positively related to votes for Bush, but negatively related to votes for Dole in 1996.

Comparison of the models. Comparisons of the state-level personality and sociodemographic models indicated that, when both models were combined,

they shared 77% of the variance with votes for Dole and 85% of the variance in votes cast for Bush in 2000 and also in 2004. Comparisons of changes in the R s showed that even after adjusting for sociodemographic variables, the state-level personality model still explained a significant proportion of variance in the percentages of votes for Dole ($\Delta R = .14$, $F(5, 39) = 3.855$, $p < .01$) and Bush in both 2000 ($\Delta R = .07$, $F(5, 39) = 3.232$, $p < .05$) and 2004 ($\Delta R = .10$, $F(5, 39) = 4.597$, $p < .01$).

When the state-level personality and political models were combined, they accounted for 66% of the variance in votes for Dole, 84% of votes for Bush in 2000, and 86% of Bush votes in 2004. Furthermore, analyses of the unique contribution of the state-level personality model indicated that it remained a significant predictor of votes for Dole in 1996 ($\Delta R = .45$, $F(5, 44) = 6.170$, $p < .001$) and Bush in 2000 ($\Delta R = .221$, $F(5, 44) = 9.900$, $p < .001$) and 2004 ($\Delta R = .226$, $F(5, 44) = 11.086$, $p < .001$). Overall, the portrait that emerged from our analyses of Republican voting patterns almost perfectly complemented the picture derived from the Democratic data.

Third-Party Candidates. Our analyses of third-party candidates focused only on the candidate who received the highest percentage of third-party votes in each of the three elections. Unfortunately, because there was not always a Reform, Green, or Independent party candidate in the two consecutive elections preceding those under investigation, we were not able to compute political behavior variables for any of the third-party candidates. Therefore, we examined the independent, shared, and unique effects of the state-level personality and sociodemographic models on the percentages of votes cast for Perot in 1996 (Reform Party), Nader in 2000 (Green Party), and Nader in 2004 (Independent). Analyses of Nader votes in 2004 were based only on the 35 states in which he was on the ballot.

State-level personality model. Analyses of the percentages of third-party votes cast in the three elections revealed that the state-level personality model shared significant proportions of variance with votes cast for Nader in 2000 and 2004 ($R = .604$ and $.624$, respectively) but not for Perot in 1996 ($R = .325$). As shown in the top portion of Table 13.3, state-level openness was a marginally significant negative predictor of the percentage of votes for Perot, but not for Nader in either 2000 or 2004. Conscientiousness and neuroticism were negative predictors of the percentages of votes cast for Nader in both elections, but they had no effect on support for Perot.

Sociodemographic model. The results displayed in the middle portion of Table 13.3 show that the sociodemographic model shared significant proportions of variance with the percentages of votes cast for Perot in 1996 and Nader in 2000 and 2004 ($R = .751$, $.755$, and $.740$, respectively). The partial

Table 13.3 Multiple regression analyses of the state-level personality, sociodemographic, and political models for the third-party Presidential candidates in the 1996, 2000, and 2004 elections.

	Third-Party Candidate			MEAN
	1996 ^a PEROT	2000 ^a NADER	2004 ^b NADERS	
<i>State-level personality:</i>				
Constant	3.54E-15 (.140)	2.30E-14 (.118)	-5.08E-15 (.143)	7.15E-15
Openness	-.303+ (.164)	.212 (.138)	-.044 (.175)	-.045
Conscientiousness	-.090 (.200)	-.567** (.169)	-.454* (.223)	-.370
Extraversion	-.018 (.179)	-.064 (.151)	.145 (.191)	.021
Agreeableness	.064 (.180)	.041 (.151)	-.262 (.255)	-.052
Neuroticism	-.030 (.157)	-.513*** (.133)	-.291+ (.153)	-.278
<i>R</i>	.325	.604***	.624**	.518
<i>Sociodemographic:</i>				
Constant	7.01E-16 (.100)	2.54E-17 (.098)	-5.90E-16 (.125)	4.55E-17
Median family income	.148 (.159)	.148 (.158)	-.019 (.210)	.092
College degree	-.208 (.192)	.146 (.190)	.031 (.253)	-.010
White collar	.016 (.171)	.469** (.169)	.776** (.228)	.420
Blue collar	.065 (.190)	-.065 (.188)	.298 (.255)	.099
African American	-.672*** (.118)	-.511*** (.117)	-.668*** (.160)	-.617
Urban	-.127 (.121)	-.034 (.120)	.245 (.161)	.028
<i>R</i>	.751***	.755***	.740***	.749

Note. Cell entries are nonstandardized partial regression coefficients (and their standard errors). State-level personality estimates for 1996 and 2000 were derived from Sample 1; state-level personality estimates for 2004 were derived from Sample 2.

^a Sample 1; ^b Sample 2; § N = 35

+ $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

regression coefficients reveal that the percentage of African Americans was negatively related to the percentage of votes cast for Perot and Nader in 2000 and 2004. In the 2000 and 2004 elections, the percentage of white-collar workers was a significant positive predictor of votes cast for Nader.

Comparison of the models. Analyses of the shared effects of the state-level personality and sociodemographic models on third-party votes revealed that together they accounted for 81%, 82%, and 85% of the variance in votes for Perot in 1996, Nader in 2000, and Nader in 2004, respectively. Comparisons of changes in the R s showed that when the sociodemographic model was included in the regression equation, the state-level personality model accounted for a marginally significant proportion of unique variance in the percentage of votes for Perot ($\Delta R = .058$, $F(5, 39) = 2.070$, $p < .1$) and Nader in 2000 ($\Delta R = .060$, $F(5, 39) = 2.192$, $p < .1$), and a significant proportion of the variance in votes for Nader in 2004 ($\Delta R = .110$, $F(5, 23) = 2.827$, $p < .05$).

General Discussion

Previous research indicates that differences in historical settlement patterns, cultural diversity, and local economic circumstances contribute to regional voting patterns (Agnew, 1987a, 1987b; Bensele, 1984; Elazer, 1994; Heppen, 2003; Hero, 1998). The present work set out to examine an additional potential influence on voting patterns. Using multiple samples, elections, and sources of data, our results converged to indicate that statewide differences in basic personality traits account for variation in Presidential election voting patterns.

The results were largely consistent with previous research on the links between personality and political orientation at the individual level (Caprara et al., 1999; Carney et al., 2008; Gosling et al., 2003; Jost et al., 2003a, 2003b; McCrae, 1996; Ozer & Benet-Martinez, 2006) and shed new light on the psychological characteristics of individuals inhabiting different geographical regions and their relations to voting patterns. Consistent with our predictions, state-level openness and conscientiousness scores differentially predicted the percentages of votes cast for Democratic and Republican candidates in the three presidential elections between 1996 and 2004. More specifically, states with higher average levels of openness and lower levels of conscientiousness were more likely to vote for Democratic candidates and less likely to vote for Republican candidates. On the basis of these findings, people living in "blue states" would be characterized as more curious, creative, imaginative, intellectual, and tolerant of differences than people living in "red states." At the same time, residents of "red states" will tend to

be more traditional, reliable, organized, efficient, and self-disciplined than residents of "blue states."

Although no explicit predictions about the relation between extraversion and political orientation were made, state-level extraversion scores were positively related to preferences for Democratic candidates and negatively related to preferences for Republican candidates. Thus, inhabitants of "blue states" could be characterized as more talkative, enthusiastic, energetic, and sociable and less inhibited, quiet, and reserved than people living in "red states." Our extraversion findings are inconsistent with those of Caprara and colleagues (1999, 2003), who found that energy was associated with center-right (rather than center-left) political preferences in Italy. Future research is needed to better understand the causes of cross-national differences in psychological predictors of political orientation (see Thorisdottir, Jost, Liviatan, & Shrout, 2007).

With regard to independent and third-party candidates, at least two general patterns seemed plausible. First, the same personality characteristics (e.g., high openness or low agreeableness) could have predicted statewide support for minority party candidates in general, to the extent that all third-party candidates are likely to depart from the political mainstream. Alternatively, the personality characteristics that predicted support for Republican candidates could have also predicted support for relatively conservative third-party candidates (like Perot), and the characteristics that predicted support for Democratic candidates could have predicted support for liberal third-party candidates (like Nader). We found more evidence in support of the latter possibility. Specifically, individuals in states in which Perot received stronger support in 1996 were somewhat lower in openness (like Republican states), whereas individuals in states where Nader received more support were lower in conscientiousness (like Democratic states).

The results from our analyses comparing the relative contributions of personality, sociodemographic, and political variables provide further evidence for the robust effects of state-level personality on political preferences. Out of a total of 15 model comparison analyses, the state-level personality model accounted for significant proportions of unique variance in 13 (87%) of them. These findings strongly suggest that personality traits common in a region affect how individuals in the region vote, independent of the sociodemographic, economic, and political characteristics of the region. Although the other two models accounted for substantially more unique variance, the present findings nevertheless suggest that state-level personality can inform our understanding of regional voting patterns over and above the information provided by more traditional variables. It is worth emphasizing

that the patterns of findings were replicated in two separate personality samples and three presidential elections.

Limitations of the Present Research

As in most studies that rely on self-report methodologies, it is possible that responses to the BFI were affected by social desirability concerns. That is, participants might have attempted to answer the personality items in such a way as to present themselves in a favorable light (Borkenau & Amelang, 1985; Paulhus, 1991); the problem with this is that the findings could reflect social desirability rather than personality per se. Given that responses were completely anonymous and that participants' primary incentive for completing the questionnaire was to receive feedback on their personalities, it is unlikely that self-presentational concerns drove their responses. Nonetheless, to rule out this possibility empirically, we adopted the well-known strategy of computing for each participant a social desirability index from the mean of all personality items after recoding the items in a socially desirable direction (Paulhus, 1991). We then recalculated state-level personality estimates after removing the top 20% of scorers on this social desirability index and re-ran the multiple regression analyses to predict voting patterns. The effects were virtually identical to those obtained when all respondents were used, suggesting that socially desirable responding did not drive the effects of state-level personality on voting patterns.

Another potential limitation of the present work is that the samples were gathered using a relatively novel Internet methodology, raising the question of whether our findings would generalize to the population as a whole. The samples were not representative because they were based on self-selected groups of participants who chose to complete the personality measure online. However, recent work comparing self-selected Web-based samples to traditional convenience samples of non-self-selected participants suggests that this problem is not as serious as one might expect. For one thing, the Big Five scale reliabilities in the present work were very similar to those obtained in research using non-self-selected participants (Gosling et al., 2003; John & Srivastava, 1999), suggesting that our participants were not responding less carefully or systematically than participants from other samples. In addition, research demonstrates that self-selected online respondents tend to provide clearer and more complete responses than do respondents who are not similarly self-selected (Gosling et al., 2004; Walsh, Kiesler, Sproull, & Hesse, 1992). Research also shows that participants are less likely to engage in socially desirable responding when completing Web-based surveys than paper-and-pencil questionnaires or telephone interviews (Richman, Kiesler, Weisband, & Drasgow, 1999). Moreover, we found that our samples were

more culturally representative of the population than are most convenience samples. At the same time, we recognize that future research on the effects of state-level personality on voting patterns would benefit from work using even more representative sampling methods.

CONCLUSION

The present work demonstrates that personality variables can be used to illuminate regional voting patterns. We found that the psychological characteristics of people inhabiting certain geographical regions independently contribute to their political preferences, even after adjusting for standard sociodemographic and political indicators. Importantly, the effects of state-level personality on statewide voting patterns generalized across two different personality samples and three presidential elections. Our findings provide empirical support for previous observations that individuals “cluster in places where people share their cultural aesthetic and, as it turns out, political values” (Brooks, 2004, p. A27). That is, “blue states” are disproportionately high in openness, and “red states” are disproportionately high in conscientiousness. By taking into account the aggregate effects of individual-level personality estimates, our work sheds light on the complex interplay between regional and psychological characteristics in shaping electoral outcomes.

From our perspective, the main advantage of research on the effects of state-level personality is that it provides information about the psychological processes underlying regional differences in political preferences. Whereas most macro-level research generally draws inferences about the psychological characteristics of individuals on the basis of aggregate-level data (e.g., Elazer, 1994; Florida, 2002), state-level personality research allows for a direct test of these inferences. For example, Elazer’s description of “traditionalistic” political culture suggests that people living in the agrarian South should be especially concerned with respecting authority and maintaining social order and tend to vote for conservative rather than liberal candidates. This description is supported by our empirical findings, which show that residents of “red states” are relatively conventional, concerned with order, and less tolerant of new and diverse ideas.

Among the many variables that distinguish regions from one another is the availability of certain forms of human capital and economic growth. Whereas metropolitan regions generally have strong economies with large proportions of creative human capital (i.e., individuals who encourage and support innovation), rural regions tend to have comparatively less economic growth and higher rates of social capital in terms of family-, community-, and civic-oriented participation (Florida, 2002; Putnam, 2000). Both of these

forms of capital can be linked to political orientation and voting behavior. For example, regions that are high in creative capital (e.g., California, Massachusetts) are generally more likely to support liberal policies and candidates than are regions high in social capital (e.g., North Dakota, South Dakota). To the extent that differences in the types and amounts of human capital are related to personality traits, studies of regional and psychological characteristics have the potential to identify mechanisms that link specific cultural, economic, and technological factors to voting behavior and other political outcomes. Research programs that fuse insights and methods from different disciplines, including psychology and political science, will help broaden our understanding of the dynamics underlying voting behavior and regional differences in political ideology.

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PART VI

Perspectives on Justice and Morality

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Procedural Justice and System-Justifying Motivations

Irina Feygina and Tom R. Tyler

Abstract

Findings from system justification theory (SJT) suggest that procedural justice information processing may be subject to motivational influences, and therefore may not always be accurate. In particular, experiencing procedural injustice may pose a threat to beliefs about the legitimacy and benevolence of the groups and systems a person belongs to, and motivate an inaccurately positive reinterpretation of the experience in line with one's beliefs. This hypothesis was tested among 997 respondents who experienced personal interactions with legal authorities. Results indicate that more conservative respondents, who tend to exhibit a stronger motivation to justify the system compared with more liberal respondents, reported greater overall satisfaction with the authority figure, adjusting for outcome favorability, and greater overall decision acceptance. Moreover, while all respondents reached similar evaluations in response to just experiences, as procedural justice decreased conservatives showed less of a decrease in satisfaction with and acceptance of the authority. Implications for the perceived legitimacy of authorities and systems are discussed.

A central concern for research on social justice is how people perceive and respond to the institutions and systems within which they live, and how people interact with the authorities who represent those systems. Several lines of research address these issues by investigating people's perceptions of legitimacy. *Legitimacy* is the belief that authorities, institutions, and other social arrangements (i.e., individual and group-based hierarchies) are appropriate, proper, and ought to be voluntarily deferred to (Jost & Major, 2001; Tyler, 2006a, 2006b). The perceived legitimacy of authorities and institutions is important because it elicits support and voluntary cooperation, and is essential for successful maintenance of institutions (Tyler, 2006a, 2006b). Therefore, a vital concern in groups, organizations, and societies is what gives rise to perceptions of legitimacy of institutions and systems, and how such perceived legitimacy, once established, is maintained and strengthened.

PROCEDURAL JUSTICE AS A SOURCE OF LEGITIMIZING INFORMATION

Evaluations of the legitimacy of social systems could potentially be based on many sources of information. One approach is for people to focus on the material resources they receive from the system, such as salary or wealth. Models of social exchange, which root people's connection to other people and groups in the resources they derive from such associations, would suggest that people would primarily focus on outcomes in forming their legitimacy judgments. Furthermore, research indicates that people tend to believe they are motivated by material gains and losses, which would imply a concern with outcomes received from the system. However, social psychologists have argued that this self-perception is a "myth of self-interest," and that people's reported focus on gains and losses exaggerates the degree to which behavior is actually driven by material issues (Miller & Ratner, 1996, 1998).

Another way that people may evaluate legitimacy is by focusing on the fairness of outcomes received—that is, on distributive justice. Distributive justice researchers argue that people are motivated by the desire for material gains, but recognize that in social settings they cannot always have what they want. So, instead of focusing on personal gains and losses, they direct their attention to the rules according to which outcomes are distributed. Distributive rules provide people with an assurance of the fairness of outcome allocations over time, and of a just distribution of outcomes across interactions (Deutsch, 1985). The application of fair distribution rules, it is argued, can assure people that their material interests are protected (Walster, Walster, & Berscheid, 1978). Hence, fairness of outcomes can be used as one potential source of information about the legitimacy of a system.

Alternatively, people can focus on the fairness of procedures utilized by authorities and systems, rather than the fairness of outcomes, to determine their legitimacy (Thibaut & Walker, 1975; Tyler, 1997). Evaluations of procedural justice are based on the quality and fairness of treatment received from authorities, including neutrality, lack of bias, respect, and ability to have voice and express oneself to the authority. Research indicates that procedural experiences provide people with information relevant to the trustworthiness and reasonableness of the system, which reduces uncertainty and insecurity about social environments (Van den Bos & Lind, 2002). Thus, procedures provide a sense of protection and certainty about a variety of important processes, including whether one is receiving appropriate levels of resources as well as one's identity and status, leading to security about belonging to a system or group.

Research strongly corroborates the argument that procedural elements are focal in people's evaluations of experiences with authorities. Despite the

wide variety of information that can be used in evaluating authorities and institutions, the key antecedent of legitimacy turns out to be the fairness of procedures through which institutions exercise their authority. Influences of procedural justice are widespread, and include shaping people's willingness to defer to decisions, satisfaction with outcomes and decisions, affective responses, and views and opinions about authorities and systems (Tyler & Blader, 2000).

The procedural justice effect has been widely documented in studies of authority conducted in legal, political, and managerial settings (Tyler & Blader, 2000). For example, Tyler and Blader (2000) explored antecedents of legitimacy among a sample of employees, and found that legitimacy was shaped primarily by issues of procedural justice. Similarly, Sunshine and Tyler (2003) found that procedural justice was a key factor in shaping the institutional legitimacy of the police and subsequent willingness to cooperate with the police. On a national level, Tyler and Mitchell (1994) showed, in a study of public evaluations of the United States Supreme Court, that people viewed the Court as a legitimate institution because of its use of fair decision-making procedures. As a result, people deferred to the Court's decisions on abortion rights, even if these contradicted their own position.

MOTIVATIONAL INFLUENCES ON LEGITIMACY JUDGMENTS

The powerful effect of procedural justice on the legitimacy of authorities and institutions raises questions about how people make use of procedural justice information to form legitimacy judgments. Is the processing and interpretation of fairness information purely cognitive, or is it subject to motivational influences? Are people driven to reach the most accurate conclusions possible about the systems they inhabit, or do alternative motivations exist that can lead to inaccurate or biased processing and conclusions?

One line of research suggests that procedural justice is processed in a relatively neutral manner, and is used by all people in the same way to derive information about authorities and systems. Tyler (1994, 2000) suggests that people of varying ethnicity, age, gender, income, and education levels, as well as people of varying ideological convictions, place a similar weight on procedural justice when reacting to decisions and policies. Further evidence indicates that people generally share a common view of key procedural elements, such as neutrality, lack of bias, and treatment with respect (Tyler, 2000). Similarities in perception and interpretation of procedural justice stand in contrast to diversity in beliefs about what constitutes distributive justice and deservingness held by people of varying demographic and ideological

backgrounds (Tyler, Boeckmann, Smith, & Huo, 1996). These findings suggest that focusing on procedural justice is a good way for authorities to manage diverse groups and bridge across demographic and ideological divides. By focusing on the use of fair procedures, rather than distributive principles, authorities can gain general agreement about policies even when they are dealing with a diverse group that might not have a common view about what people deserve.

However, research also indicates that justice information processing may be subject to motivational influences. One line of research, conducted by Van den Bos and colleagues, has proposed that being confronted with social and cognitive uncertainty motivates people to be particularly attentive to the fairness of the procedures they encounter in forming their evaluations and judgments (Van den Bos & Lind, 2002). Uncertainty can be related to a multiplicity of social or personal factors, such as trustworthiness of authorities or institutions, identity issues of inclusion or status, or personal well-being, and can pose a serious threat to conceptions about one's environment and the self. This threat motivates people to engage in "uncertainty management" through forming solid procedural fairness judgments, which allow people to cope with and remove the discomfort associated with uncertainty (Van den Bos & Lind, 2002). The uncertainty management approach suggests that the motivation to reduce uncertainty is best served by developing an accurate understanding of the world, rather than by seeking reassurance of its legitimacy and security. Therefore, although this work suggests that the importance of and attention to procedural justice information can increase as a result of motivation, it does not explore whether motivational factors may influence and distort the interpretation of procedural information.

However, some evidence suggests that the interpretation of fairness is subject to motivational influences other than seeking an accurate understanding of the world. Equity researchers have argued that self-serving motivations influence people's distributive fairness judgments (Walster, Walster, & Berscheid, 1978). For example, people who receive "too much" remuneration initially work harder to compensate, but over time change their views about the quality of their work, making their "overpayment" justified by viewing the task as harder and their work as better. Distortions in people's valuations of the fairness of their own and others' outcomes also occur when principles of fairness are vague or hard to define (Allison, McQueen, & Schaerfl, 1992; Herlocker, Allison, Foubert, & Beggan, 1997). In addition, people are generally found to view their own actions as more fair than those of others (Messick, Bloom, Boldizar, & Samuelson, 1985), a pattern of judgment that is consistent with self-enhancement. And, although motivational influences are more extensively documented with distributive justice, several lines of research have

provided evidence of similar processes in procedural judgments. For instance, Lind and Lissak (1985) showed that attributions about the causal role of procedural fairness in a judgment were influenced by whether the judgment was in the direction of a possible violation of procedural justice or in line with it. Similarly, Schroth and Shah (2000) suggested that outcomes can influence perceptions of procedural justice, and that procedural justice judgments can be influenced by ego needs, so that performance concerns can lead procedures to be interpreted in a self-interested way that acts as protection from threats to self-esteem. In sum, these findings suggest that complex motivations underlie people's interpretation of justice information. These may be concerned not only with accurately understanding the world, but rather may be oriented toward interpreting justice experiences in ways that allow people to maintain positive feelings about themselves and reassurance about their situations.

MOTIVATIONS TO JUSTIFY THE SYSTEM

More recently, system justification theory (SJT) has extended research on the processes by which people engage in motivated distortion of social information in an effort to make sense of their world, often leading to biased perceptions. Motivations to accurately understand the social world compete with other types of motivations (e.g., Kruglanski, 1996; Kunda, 1990), particularly with epistemic and existential needs to perceive existing authorities and institutions as appropriate, legitimate, and just (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). People engage in system justification even in the face of unfairness and disadvantage because of its palliative capacity to reduce dissonance, anxiety, and epistemic uncertainty, and to provide a sense of order and justice in the world (Jost & Hunyady, 2002, 2005). System-justifying motivations may lead to subjective interpretations of society and social institutions that are biased and do not necessarily reflect actual conditions.

The notion of legitimation of unjust systems and social arrangements goes back to Marxist theories of "false consciousness," which share similarities with the interpretations of social systems discussed by SJT (see also Jost, 1995; Tyler & McGraw, 1986). The idea of false consciousness suggests that subjective beliefs can differ from objective reality in systematic ways. In particular, it implies that people can be led to view social arrangements as more legitimate than they actually are through distorted messages perpetuated by society and social institutions. System justification theory similarly posits that people may form inaccurate subjective beliefs about the legitimacy of a system, but argues that people are intrinsically motivated to distort their processing of social information in order to create a view of the world as reasonable, ordered, predictable, and just (Jost et al., 2004).

The system justification argument has important implications for the dynamics of authority in groups, organizations, and societies. It has already been noted that people do not simply comply with authorities because they fear punishment for noncompliance, or to obtain the material rewards that authorities can provide. Rather, people are motivated by a need to experience the world as fair and just and to perceive extant power arrangements and institutional structures as legitimate (Tyler & Jost, 2007). Motivations to justify the status quo shape beliefs about legitimacy by encouraging perceptions that existing power and status differences have reasonable justifications and ought to be accepted (e.g., Haines & Jost, 2000). The belief that existing authorities and institutions “ought to be as they are,” in turn, leads people to seek out information to confirm this legitimizing belief.

Such beliefs in institutional and systemic legitimacy provide an important source of support for authorities and allow them to maintain social order, especially when they lack resources to provide incentives or threaten punishments (Tyler, 2006a). Hence, people’s motivations to view authorities as legitimate, irrespective of what an “objective” look at the social environment might support, contribute to the stability of systems of authority and encourage acceptance of the status quo.

INDIVIDUAL AND SITUATIONAL VARIABILITY IN SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION

Research suggests that the strength of the motivation to justify the system can vary at the individual level, as well as in response to contextual factors. Research on justification of the general social system, as well as the economic system, indicates that people differ in the extent to which they engage in system justification, as assessed by self-report measures (Jost & Hunyady, 2005; Jost & Thompson, 2000). Such individual differences relate to an array of psychological factors, including need for cognitive closure and resistance to change.

At the same time, the need to justify the system can be elicited and intensified due to contextual factors. Research on situational influences on motivations to justify the system shows that threats to the legitimacy of the social system or the status quo enact a motivation to defend and bolster the system through justification. For example, Kay, Jost, and Young (2005) showed that threatening the system led to an increase in two forms of system justification: engaging in victim derogation on status-relevant traits, and engaging in compensatory victim enhancement on status-irrelevant traits. Both of these processes have been shown to restore a sense of justice and legitimacy of the system (Kay et al., 2007). Furthermore, Lau, Kay, and Spencer (2008)

showed that, among male participants, threatening the system increased the motivation to bolster the legitimacy of the system, which led to a preference for romantic partners who conformed to system-justifying stereotypes. Such stereotypes consist of benevolent sexist ideals of women as weak, lovable, and pure, and they are associated with endorsement of gender inequality and hostile attitudes toward women. By endorsing benevolent sexist partner preferences, threatened participants reestablished a sense of balance and fairness in relation to the social system (Lau et al., 2008).

PROCEDURAL JUSTICE AND THE MOTIVATION TO JUSTIFY THE STATUS QUO

The system justification argument suggests that the processing of procedural justice information, like the processing of information about the social environment more generally, may be influenced by motivations to perceive the system as legitimate and just. This argument is consistent with the already mentioned suggestion that interpretation of procedural information can be influenced by outcomes and self-interested concerns (Schroth & Shah, 2000), as well as the pervasive evidence of motivational effects on perception and interpretation in many domains of social cognition (Kruglanski, 1996).

Based on the variability of system justification motivations discussed earlier, we would expect that motivational effects on interpretation of procedural justice would be particularly strong for people who have a greater tendency to engage in system justification, and especially under conditions of threat. In particular, under some circumstances the motivation to distort procedural information may be activated to a greater degree. When people receive fair treatment, which provides support for a positive view of the system, there should be no need to engage in motivated or biased processing of procedural information. However, a situation of unfair treatment comes into conflict with people's needs to perceive the system in a positive way and threatens the legitimacy of the system (Hafer, 2000; Lerner, 1980). Insofar as people are motivated to see authorities and systems as fair and legitimate, they are likely to find accurate processing of instances of *injustice* emotionally upsetting and problematic.

Applying findings from SJT suggests that when procedural injustice poses a threat to the legitimacy of the status quo, the needs to defend the system and reestablish a sense of legitimacy and justice may become activated, and system justification motivations may be engaged. The need to justify the system may lead to a reappraisal of one's experience in a more positive light, which can be expected to ameliorate the negative impact of injustice on evaluations of legitimacy (see also Haines & Jost, 2000). The stronger a

person's need to justify the system, the more she can be expected to engage in motivated processing of injustice information.

CURRENT STUDY AND PREDICTIONS

Prior research has not directly addressed the potential influences of motivated reasoning on interpretation of procedural justice information and its use in legitimizing institutions and systems. In this chapter, we build on the extensive research demonstrating people's motivation to justify social, organizational, or political arrangements by viewing those arrangements as legitimate (Tyler & Jost, 2007). Specifically, we focus on the relationship between motivations to justify the system and people's use of fairness information to evaluate authorities and institutions. In particular, we examine the impact of motivated processing of procedural fairness information on people's evaluations of and satisfaction with authorities who represent the social system.

The current study examines the impact of motivated reasoning on procedural information processing using a secondary analysis of an extensive investigation of people's interactions with and evaluations of police and legal authorities. Overall, people are expected to evaluate their experiences by relying heavily on the perceived fairness of procedures the authorities use to make decisions, and the fairness of treatment received, in line with widespread findings from research on procedural justice. Prior analysis of the data examined in this chapter reveals the presence of strong procedural justice effects (Tyler & Huo, 2002). However, as procedures become increasingly unjust and unfavorable, we expect that the need to justify the system will lead some people to engage in motivated reinterpretation of procedural justice information in line with their legitimizing beliefs. Moreover, we expect that evidence of motivated reasoning will be revealed by distinguishing between groups that are expected on theoretical grounds to have stronger compared to weaker needs to justify the system.

We want to begin by acknowledging that the current data set does not contain a direct measure of system justification tendencies. As a consequence, we rely on a measure that has been shown to be consistently associated with the strength of such tendencies—namely, liberal-conservative ideological orientation. System justification motivation has been shown to vary in strength across the ideological spectrum. Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, and Sulloway's (2003) meta-analysis of the literature on political orientation has shown that conservatives report greater needs for order, resistance to change, opposition to equality, and a stronger tendency to engage in system justification (see also Jost, Nosek, & Gosling, 2008). On the basis of these findings, we predict that,

whereas both liberals and conservatives will make use of procedural justice information and may experience psychological conflict when this information threatens the legitimacy of the system, this conflict will be stronger for conservatives than for liberals. We expect that people who identify themselves as more conservative will find evidence of systemic injustice especially difficult to accept and will be more likely to engage in motivated information processing to reduce perceptions of injustice. As a result, we expect conservatives to experience less impact of negative procedures, and to show a smaller decrease in evaluations of the authority compared to liberals.

The current analysis focuses on two forms of evaluation of authorities and the systems they represent, which constitute different manifestations of legitimacy. The first is the satisfaction people reported with respect to the authority figure they interacted with, either a police officer or judge. This variable indicates how favorably people evaluate the authority and his actions above and beyond the favorability of one's experience and outcomes. The second variable is the degree to which people are willing to accept the decisions reached by the authority figure. A key issue in the legal domain entails understanding the means to encourage people to accept and defer to decisions made by authorities representing legal institutions (Tyler, 2006a). Similarly, theories of system justification emphasize that a central goal of authorities is to gain acquiescence and the acceptance of existing institutions (Jost, 1995; Tyler & McGraw, 1986). Accordingly, (a) satisfaction with the authority and (b) decision acceptance capture two important facets that comprise the legitimacy of legal institutions.

In sum, we predict that people who have a greater need to justify the system (conservatives) will engage in more motivated processing of procedural information than will people who report less need to justify the system (liberals). Motivated processing, in turn, is expected to result in more favorable overall evaluations of and satisfaction with the authority figure, as well as decision acceptance. Motivated processing is also predicted to result in a smaller negative impact of procedural injustice on evaluations of one's experience with authorities and the institutions they represent.

Method

The foregoing hypotheses were tested using a study of personal encounters with legal authorities conducted by Tyler and Huo (2002) in Oakland and Los Angeles, California. All respondents in this study had recent personal experiences with police officers or judges in the court system ($N = 997$). The sample consisted of 495 women (49.6%), 281 African-American respondents (28.2%), 241 Latino respondents (24.2%), and 475 European-American respondents (47.6%), of an average age of 40.1 years.

Measures: Independent Variables

Respondents were asked about four elements of procedural justice of their treatment by the legal authority: overall procedural fairness judgments (two items; e.g., "How fair were the procedures that the person you dealt with used to make decisions about how to handle the situation?"; $\alpha = .90$); evaluations of neutrality (three items; e.g., "The person I dealt with treated me the same as he/she would treat anyone else in the same situation."; $\alpha = .80$); evaluations of trustworthiness (five items; e.g., "The person I dealt with tried hard to do the right thing by me."; $\alpha = .94$); and evaluations of interpersonal treatment (three items; e.g., "The person I dealt with treated me with dignity and respect."; $\alpha = .91$). These four judgments were combined into an overall index of procedural justice ($\alpha = .94$).

Political orientation was assessed by asking respondents to place themselves in one of three ideological categories: liberal ($n = 482$), conservative ($n = 204$), and moderate ($n = 311$).¹ Those participants who reported a conservative orientation were asked whether they thought of themselves as strongly conservative or not very strongly conservative, and likewise those who reported a liberal orientation were asked whether they thought of themselves as strongly liberal or not very strongly liberal. Those who initially reported a moderate orientation were asked whether they thought of themselves as more liberal, more conservative, or moderate. These responses were combined to create a 7-point scale, ranging from highly liberal (low values) to highly conservative (high values).

Finally, all analyses presented here adjusted for the following variables: objective outcome favorability (based on researchers' coding of participants' reported experiences and outcomes); distributive justice; whether the encounter was voluntarily initiated by the respondent; and which type of authority the respondent dealt with (police or courts); as well as demographic variables of racial group membership, income, education, gender, and age.

Measures: Dependent Variables

The first dependent variable was satisfaction with the decision maker. Respondents were asked to respond to four items: "I thought the decision maker did a good job"; "I was satisfied with the way that they handled the situation"; whether "He or she could have handled the situation better" (reverse-scored); and whether "In a similar situation in the future, I would

¹ The sample included 628 respondents who chose not to report their ideological orientation or replied that they "Haven't thought about it." All of these participants were excluded from subsequent analyses.

like to see the situation handled in the same way" ($\alpha = .94$). Satisfaction with the decision maker was linked to certain perceptions of general legitimacy, namely trust and confidence in legal authorities ($r = 0.51, p < .001$) and obligation to defer to the law ($r = 0.29, p < .001$).

The second dependent variable measured respondents' acceptance of the decision that was reached by the authority figure (either the police officer or the court representative). Respondents' level of agreement with the statement: "I willingly accepted the decisions that the authority figure made" was assessed on a 4-point scale ranging from "agree strongly" to "disagree strongly."

RESULTS

Two predictions were tested in the following analyses. The first prediction was that people with stronger (compared to weaker) system justification motivation would report greater overall satisfaction with the authority based on procedural justice, and less decrement in satisfaction due to procedural injustice. The second prediction was that people with a stronger system justification motivation would be more willing to accept the decisions reached by the authority figure and show less decrement in decision acceptance as procedures become unjust. To test these hypotheses, we conducted two sets of hierarchical linear regression analyses focused on the effects of ideological differences.

The first regression analysis was conducted to assess the extent to which procedural justice and ideological orientation predicted overall satisfaction with the authority figure, and the extent of interaction between ideology and procedural justice in predicting satisfaction (Table 14.1). Results indicate, as expected based on prior research, that each evaluation was primarily shaped by procedural justice ($B = 0.960, SE = .021, \beta = 0.807, t(932) = 45.13, p < .001$), rather than outcome favorability ($B = 0.140, SE = .014, \beta = 0.158, t(932) = 10.06, p < .001$). In line with predictions, there was a significant effect of ideology (higher numbers indicate more conservative ideology): $B = 0.064, SE = 0.026, \beta = 0.122, t(932) = 2.44, p < .05$. Conservative respondents reported a higher overall level of satisfaction with the authority figure than did liberal respondents, after adjusting for objective favorability.

Moreover, greater satisfaction with the authority figure was reported by respondents who received more favorable outcomes ($B = 0.140, SE = .014, \beta = 0.158, t(932) = 10.06, p < .001$), as well as respondents who perceived greater distributive justice ($B = 0.061, SE = .015, \beta = 0.061, t(932) = 3.95, p < .001$). There were no significant effects of race, gender, income, education level, or age on reported satisfaction with the authority figure.

In addition, there was a significant interaction between ideology and procedural justice: $B = -.018, SE = .008, \beta = -.108, t(932) = -2.16, p < .05$.

Table 14.1 Effects of ideology and interaction of procedural justice with ideology in predicting satisfaction with decision maker.

	Satisfaction with authority
Main effects	
Procedural justice	0.960***
Ideology	0.064*
Interaction with ideology	
Procedural justice* Ideology	-.018*
Adjusted variables	
Outcome favorability	0.140***
Distributive justice	0.061***
Race: African American	.031
Race: Latino	-.013
Education	0.007
Income	0.004
Gender	-.025
Age	0.000
Voluntary	-.119**
Type of authority	0.006
Adjusted R^2	81.7%

Note. * = $p < .05$

** = $p < .01$

*** = $p < .001$

To interpret this interaction, we conducted a follow-up analysis to compare the effect of procedural justice on satisfaction separately for liberals and conservatives. Following Preacher and colleagues (2006), we calculated the simple slopes for procedural justice at one standard deviation above and below the center point of the scale for ideology. Results indicate that the fairness of procedures had a greater influence on liberal respondents: $B = 0.997$, $SE = .022$, $t(932) = 44.93$, $p < .001$, than on conservative respondents: $B = 0.923$, $SE = .031$, $t(932) = 30.28$, $p < .001$. Therefore, the interaction between procedural justice and ideology indicates that decreasing fairness of procedures resulted in a greater decrease in satisfaction for liberals than for conservatives (Fig. 14.1). In other words, as people experienced greater levels of injustice, they became less satisfied. However, liberals became significantly less satisfied in response to evidence of injustice than did conservatives.

A second regression analysis was conducted to assess the extent to which procedural justice and ideological orientation predicted acceptance of the decision reached by the authority figure, and the extent of interaction be-

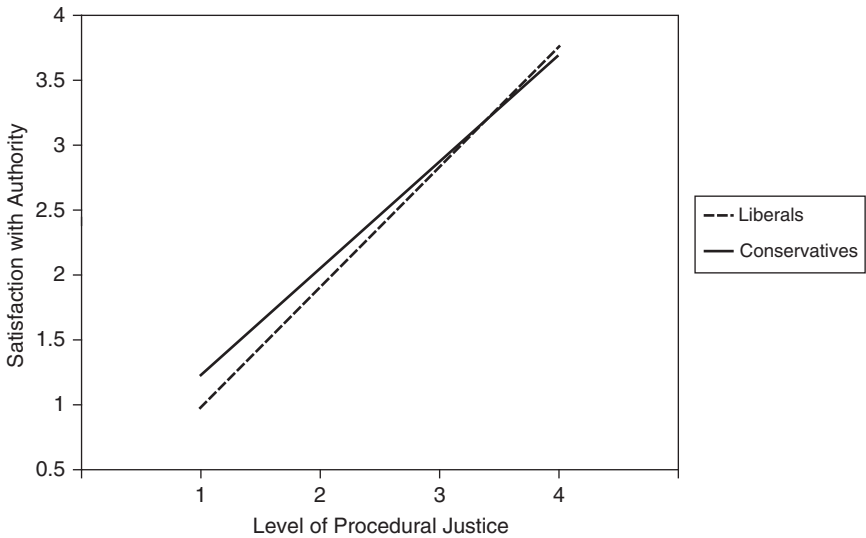


Figure 14.1 Interaction of procedural justice and ideology in predicting satisfaction with the authority figure.

tween ideology and procedural justice in predicting acceptance (Table 14.2). Results indicate that acceptance was shaped primarily by procedural justice ($B = 0.493$, $SE = .035$, $\beta = 0.483$, $t(919) = 14.03$, $p < .001$), rather than outcome favorability ($B = 0.088$, $SE = .023$, $\beta = 0.116$, $t(919) = 3.83$, $p < .001$). In line with predictions, there was a significant effect of ideology (higher numbers indicate more conservative ideology): $B = 0.093$, $SE = .044$, $\beta = 0.206$, $t(919) = 2.13$, $p < .05$. Conservative respondents reported a greater overall willingness to accept the decisions made by the authority figure than did liberal respondents, after adjusting for objective outcome favorability.

Moreover, greater decision acceptance was reported by respondents who received more favorable outcomes ($B = 0.088$, $SE = .023$, $\beta = 0.116$, $t(919) = 3.83$, $p < .001$), as well as by respondents who perceived greater distributive justice ($B = 0.059$, $SE = .026$, $\beta = 0.069$, $t(919) = 2.31$, $p < .05$). Latino respondents reported greater levels of decision acceptance than did European-American respondents ($B = 0.148$, $SE = .074$, $\beta = 0.074$, $t(919) = 1.995$, $p < .05$). There were no other significant effects of race, gender, income, education level, or age on reported decision acceptance.

In addition, there was a significant interaction between ideology and procedural justice: $B = -.026$, $SE = .013$, $\beta = -.190$, $t(919) = -1.97$, $p < .05$. As in the prior analysis, to interpret this interaction, we conducted a follow-up test to compare the effect of procedural justice on acceptance for liberals and conservatives separately. Following Preacher and colleagues (2006), we calculated

Table 14.2 Effect of ideology, and interaction of procedural justice with ideology, in predicting decision acceptance.

	DECISION ACCEPTANCE
Main effects	
Procedural justice	0.493***
Ideology	.093*
Interaction with ideology	
Procedural justice* Ideology	-.026**
Adjusted variables	
Outcome favorability	0.088***
Distributive justice	0.059*
Race: African American	-.027
Race: Latino	0.148*
Education	-.006
Income	0.004
Gender	-.020
Age	-.001
Voluntary	-.229***
Type of authority	0.104
Adjusted R^2	33.1%

Note. * = $p < .05$

** = $p < .01$

*** = $p < .001$

the simple slopes for procedural justice at one standard deviation above and below the center point of the scale for ideology. Results indicate that the fairness of procedures had a greater influence on liberal respondents: $B = 0.546$, $SE = .044$, $t(919) = 12.41$, $p < .001$, than on conservative respondents: $B = 0.440$, $SE = .044$, $t(932) = 9.99$, $p < .001$. Therefore, the interaction between procedural justice and ideology indicates that decreasing fairness of procedures resulted in a stronger decrease in acceptance for liberals than conservatives (Fig. 14.2). In other words, as people experienced greater levels of injustice, they became less accepting of the decision reached. However, liberals became significantly less accepting in response to evidence of injustice than did conservatives.

Is the Pattern Symmetrical?

Based on prior theory and research, we expected that negative experiences with authorities would create psychological conflict and lead to an increase

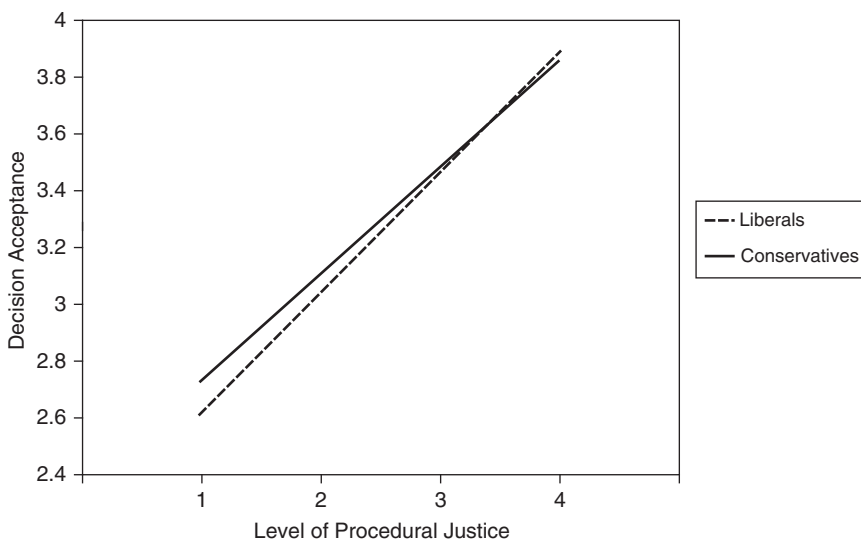


Figure 14.2 Interaction of procedural justice and ideology in predicting acceptance of decision reached by the authority.

in system justification motivation to reinterpret negative information in a more positive light. That is, dealing with polite and respectful police officers or judges would not create psychological conflict, insofar as this does not undermine support for the law and legal authority, whereas negative experiences would threaten the legitimacy of the system. Moreover, we predicted on theoretical grounds that conservative respondents would be more resistant than liberal respondents to lowering their evaluations in the face of negative experiences with authorities.

In line with these predictions, the preceding analyses revealed that conservatives changed their evaluations less than liberals did in response to experiences of injustice (as indicated by a shallower slope in the regressions). In addition, the divergence between liberals and conservatives in degree of adjustment of evaluations was strongest for negative experiences. To look at this more closely, we focus on the graphs representing the regression slopes for satisfaction with the authority figure (Fig. 14.1) and acceptance of decisions (Fig. 14.2). The scale for procedural justice ranges from 1 to 4, with 2.5 indicating neutrality. An examination of the figures shows that in both cases, but especially with respect to decision acceptance, increasing divergence occurred with greater injustice. When people had relatively fair experiences, liberals and conservatives were generally similar. But when experiences became negative, the ideological differences emerged.

This pattern is consistent with our argument concerning motivational effects on interpretation of justice information. If liberals were simply more responsive, they would decrease more in response to injustice, and increase more in response to justice. They would, in other words, simply react more strongly to whatever experience they had. But the regression pattern does not support this view. The divergence occurs with respect to negative experiences only, suggesting that people are reacting differently to the threat posed by unjust experiences as a function of their chronic motivation to justify the system.

DISCUSSION

Accurate Versus Motivated Interpretations of Procedural Justice Information

Prior research has shown that people place a great deal of emphasis on procedures in forming evaluations and legitimacy judgments of authorities and social institutions. Extensive research demonstrates that people use procedural justice to derive socially relevant information needed to make sense of one's social settings and to evaluate groups and institutions (Tyler & Blader, 2000; Van den Bos & Lind, 2002). However, the current study suggests that processing and interpretation of procedural justice information may be subject to motivational biases. When faced with injustice from authorities and systems, people may be threatened and experience conflicts between the motivation to veridically process information about social reality and the motivation to justify extant institutions and the status quo.

On the basis of research on SJT and political orientation we hypothesized that people with a conservative orientation would experience more conflict in the face of injustice because of a greater need to view the world as just and reasonable and because of less tolerance for uncertainty and inconsistent information. As a result, we predicted a divergence between liberals and conservatives in response to information that may discredit existing authorities and institutions. We suggested that liberals would process injustice information in a manner more consistent with the actual negative experience, whereas conservatives would be more resistant to recognizing and reacting to negative information about the unfairness of procedures in the social system.

The results of this study provide evidence of motivated social cognition, and indicate that people with different political orientations interpret procedural information in different ways. More conservative respondents appeared to be less sensitive to negative experiences and evaluated authorities in a more positive light. Specifically, conservatives reported more positive overall evaluations of satisfaction with their experience, as well as willingness to accept the

decisions reached by the authority. In addition, increasing system justification tendencies were associated with a smaller negative impact of procedural injustice. Respondents who were more motivated to justify the system (i.e., conservatives) were less sensitive to decreases in procedural justice, and evaluated authorities and decisions more positively in the face of injustice, as compared with those who were less motivated to justify the system (i.e., liberals).

These findings provide support for the argument that a greater need to perceive the extant system as just gives rise to motivated processing and interpretation of justice information (Haines & Jost, 2000; Jost et al., 2004; Kay et al., 2007). As the available information increasingly threatens the view of institutional procedures as just, and thereby the legitimacy of institutions and authorities, respondents with a greater need to justify the system show a positively biased interpretation of procedures.

Implications for Legitimacy of Authorities and Systems

Models of justice judgments suggest that motivations to justify the status quo may interfere with an accurate understanding and evaluation of social institutions. By engaging in motivated reasoning, people become unable to veridically process and react to justice information, and as a result may fail to acknowledge procedural or distributive failures or take actions to address these. As a result, the injustices that social institutions perpetrate may not result in disapproval or negative evaluation. Thus, system justification may prevent responses that challenge institutions or attempt to alleviate unjust situations (see also Wakslak, Jost, Tyler, & Chen, 2007). In other words, motivated reasoning that results in distorted information processing may lead to inhibition of collective action and institutional change.

The Palliative Function of System Justification

Another conclusion suggested by the results of this study is that engaging in system justification serves a palliative function by improving evaluations and providing a sense of reassurance and legitimacy that is not necessarily warranted (Jost & Hunyady, 2002). Respondents who were more highly motivated to justify the system reported more satisfaction with the authority and a greater willingness to accept the decisions reached by the authority, even under conditions of injustice. Although further studies are needed to assess the accuracy and impact of these positive evaluations, they can be expected to lead to more positive emotional states (see Napier and Jost, 2008).

Limitations and Future Directions

The analysis presented here is based on subjective evaluations of procedural justice. In the same way that system justification motives influence

interpretation of procedural justice information, they may also lead to distortions in the extent to which people *perceive* their experiences with authorities as procedurally just. To the degree that such distortions occur, they are not captured in the analysis we report. Hence, we might well be underestimating the magnitude of the motivated reasoning that is occurring. In other words, motivated reasoning driven by system justification needs can be expected to influence both the perception of procedural information, as well as its interpretation in forming evaluations. Although the current analysis focused on motivated interpretation of justice information, a more complete analysis is needed to assess both facets of influence of system-justifying motivations on evaluations of authorities and institutions.

In addition, the current analysis did not include a direct measure of system justification, but relied instead on individual differences in ideological orientation that have been shown to be consistently associated with system-justification tendencies (Jost et al., 2008; Napier & Jost, 2008). These shortcomings need to be addressed by studies that directly assess respondents' system justification needs and experimentally manipulate procedural justice, to assess the effects of motivation to justify the system on the perception of procedural information and its interpretation in evaluating the fairness and legitimacy of authorities, institutions, and systems.

CONCLUSIONS

In sum, the present research demonstrates that motivation to justify the system influences the way people form judgments about authorities and institutions on the basis of procedural justice information. Greater motivation to justify the system decreases the negative impact of injustice on evaluations and leads to a more positive reinterpretation of unjust procedures. As a result, those who are motivated to justify the system are able to maintain more positive evaluations of the system and the authorities who represent it, even in the face of injustice.

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Planet of the Durkheimians, Where Community, Authority, and Sacredness Are Foundations of Morality

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Abstract

Most academic efforts to understand morality and ideology come from theorists who limit the domain of morality to issues related to harm and fairness. For such theorists, conservative beliefs are puzzles requiring non-moral explanations. In contrast, we present moral foundations theory, which broadens the moral domain to match the anthropological literature on morality. We extend the theory by integrating it with a review of the sociological constructs of community, authority, and sacredness, as formulated by Emile Durkheim and others. We present data supporting the theory, which also shows that liberals misunderstand the explicit moral concerns of conservatives more than conservatives misunderstand liberals. We suggest that what liberals see as a non-moral motivation for system justification may be better described as a moral motivation to protect society, groups, and the structures and constraints that are often (although not always) beneficial for individuals. Finally, we outline the possible benefits of a moral foundations perspective for system justification theory (SJT), including better understandings of (a) why the system-justifying motive is palliative despite some harmful effects, (b) possible evolutionary origins of the motive, and (c) the values and worldviews of conservatives in general.

It has not yet been revealed to the public, but we have it on good authority that intelligent life was recently discovered on a planet several light years away. The planet has been given an unpronounceable technical name, but scientists refer to the planet informally as “Planet Durkheim.” Judging by the television signals received, Durkheimians look rather like human beings, although their behavior is quite different. Durkheimians crave, above all else, being tightly integrated into strong groups that cooperatively pursue common goals. They have little desire for self-expression or individual development, and when the requirements of certain jobs force individuals to spend much time alone, or when the needs of daily life force individuals to make their own decisions or express their own preferences, Durkheimians feel drained and unhappy. In extreme cases of enforced individualism, they

sometimes commit suicide. Durkheimians have a biological need to belong to tight groups with clear and widely shared norms for behavior.

Given this need, it is not surprising that Durkheimian ethics revolves around groups. For any action, they ask: Does it undermine or strengthen the group? Anyone whose actions weaken social cohesion is evil and ostracized. For first offenders, the ostracism is brief, but for the most serious offenses the offender is tattooed with the word "Individualist" and is expelled from the group. Durkheimian societies are hierarchically organized by hereditary occupational castes, and most of the ostracism cases involve individuals who fail to perform their caste duties. These individuals seem to prefer their own comfort or own projects to the needs of their highly interdependent groups.

Within a few weeks of the discovery of Planet Durkheim, Google found a way to translate and index all Durkheimian academic journals. We used Google Durkheim to examine the state of social psychology research, and we found a fascinating debate taking place over the puzzle of "The Dissenters." The Dissenters are a social movement that disagrees with the frequent use of permanent ostracism. The Dissenters point out that the penalty is applied overwhelmingly to members of the lower castes, for whom work is often dull or dangerous. They argue that these individuals are not traitors, they are innocent victims who should be given compassion, more societal resources, and better work. The Dissenters even suggest that society should be changed, so that each individual rotates through all the high and low caste positions. The Dissenters acknowledge that such rotations would be less efficient than the current system of lifelong specializations assigned at birth, but they say it would be somehow right or good to do it anyway.

The Dissenters are a puzzle because most of them come from the upper castes. Why would an upper-caste Durkheimian press for a change to society that would harm not just himself (through loss of privileges) but also society as a whole (through loss of efficiency)? There is no justification for such a position within Durkheimian morality, so Durkheimian social psychologists recently proposed a theory—called "victim justification theory"—to explain the unconscious motives that impel Dissenters to defend traitors and challenge the legitimacy of the social system.

Of course, Planet Durkheim does not really exist, but our reactions to it can be illustrative. It seems obvious to terrestrial readers that the Dissenters are trying to act in accordance with moral concepts such as fairness, rights, and justice, which the rest of their hive-like, group-oriented society does not include as part of the moral domain. In this paper, we suggest that an analogous situation holds here on Earth: many people who justify the political/economic system even when it seems to work to their detriment are trying to act in accordance with moral concepts such as loyalty, tradition, hierarchy,

order, respect for one's superiors, and sacredness. The politically homogeneous discipline of psychology, however, does not at present consider such traditional concepts to be a part of the moral domain. For example, the most widely used definition in moral psychology says that "the moral domain refers to prescriptive judgments of justice, rights, and welfare pertaining to how people ought to relate to each other" (Turiel, 1983, p. 3). Rules and practices related to sexual purity, patriotism, and respect for authority are often dismissed as social conventions.

To develop this analogy into an argument, we will first discuss three of the most important ideas from classical sociology—community, authority, and sacredness—as described by Emile Durkheim, Ferdinand Tönnies, and Max Weber. We believe these sociologists offer to psychology analytical tools that are essential for understanding the moral concerns of American social conservatives in *moral* terms, rather than (or in addition to) being expressions of non-moral processes. Next, we will present our own theory of how and why the moral domain varies across cultures, which we call *moral foundations theory* (MFT; Haidt & Graham, 2007; Haidt & Joseph, 2004, 2007). In the third section of this chapter, we will present evidence in support of MFT, evidence that shows an unexpected but explainable result: that political conservatives are more accurate than political liberals in characterizing the explicit moral beliefs of the other side. And finally, we will suggest a reinterpretation of system justification theory (SJT; Jost & Banaji, 1994) that integrates it with MFT to provide a more complete account of the motives and motivated reasoning of partisans on both sides of the political spectrum.

THREE GREAT IDEAS

According to the sociologist Robert Nisbet (1993), two great revolutions—the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution—were the largest steps in the long transformation of European society from medieval/feudal to modern/democratic. During this transition, the individual took on much greater importance as the unit of society and the unit of value; the centralized state became ever more powerful; and there was a hollowing-out of everything in between. The many low- and mid-level associations and institutions that had proliferated in medieval Europe (guilds, extended families, the church, local feudal authorities) were weakened or destroyed. These cataclysmic changes to the social order greatly increased the liberty of most individuals, but the loss of social structure and social integration imposed costs on individuals as well. Sociology has its roots in the study of these changes (e.g., Marx, 1977/1867; Tocqueville, 1988/1835). Political conservatism has its roots in the opposition to them (e.g., Burke, 2003/1790).

Nisbet (1993) presents five “unit-ideas” of sociology—fundamental concepts developed in the 19th century that are still essential for sociological work today. We will focus our discussion on three of these ideas¹—community, authority, and sacredness—for these three ideas match closely the three foundations of morality that (we believe) psychologists often fail to recognize as moral foundations (Haidt & Graham, 2007). In arguing that community, authority, and sacredness are foundations of morality, we are making a *descriptive* claim only, not a normative one. We claim that most people across cultures and throughout history have considered community, authority, and sacredness to be sources of moral value in their own right, not derived from their ability to promote other values such as the welfare of individuals or justice. If this descriptive claim is true, then a moral psychology that examines only the psychology of welfare and justice is incomplete as an empirical exercise.

Community

Many theorists have contrasted two basic modes of relationship, one warm and personal, exemplified most perfectly in the closeness and lasting interdependence of family, the other cooler and more calculating, based on the mutual usefulness of the partners at a given time. The philosopher Buber (1937/1996) called these two forms “I-You” and “I-it.” Psychologists Clark and Mills (1979) contrasted “communal” and “exchange” relationships. People in all cultures have the capacity and the opportunity to engage in both kinds of relationship, yet cultures differ greatly in their valuation and relative frequency of the two types. Imagine that you were raised in a society in which, on average, 90% of your daily interactions were of the “warmer” type and only 10% involved the “cooler” type. What would you think of a neighboring society in which the ratios were reversed? Now imagine that your historically communal culture was undergoing changes, forced upon you by outside economic and political forces, that were pushing inexorably toward a market-based, exchange-oriented society. Might you be alarmed? Might something valuable be lost in the transition, even if these changes brought greater economic efficiency, wealth, and liberty?

The analysis of such transitions was the life-work of Ferdinand Tönnies (1887/2001), who saw this process unfolding in 19th-century Europe. Tönnies

¹ The other two are alienation and status. Alienation is what happens to people when they are cut off from ties of community and shared moral purpose. This is clearly not a foundation of morality but an effect of its loss. Status refers to the position of an individual within a hierarchy. We consider the moral ramifications of status in our discussion of the authority/respect foundation.

referred to the traditional pattern of social relations as *Gemeinschaft*, which is usually translated as “community.” *Gemeinschaft* relationships rest on the three pillars (whether real or imagined) of shared blood, shared place, and shared mind or belief. The prototype of *Gemeinschaft* is the family, and the family (particularly the patriarchal family) is easily scaled up to create larger *Gemeinschaft* institutions such as the Catholic Church or the feudal system. Tönnies labeled the new, more impersonal kind of relationship *Gesellschaft*, which is usually translated as “society” or “civil society.” *Gesellschaft* is what happens when the social restraints of community are weakened, mid-level institutions are eliminated, and people are largely free to pursue their own goals as they see fit. *Gesellschaft* relationships are “characterized by a high degree of individualism, impersonality, [and] contractualism, and [they proceed] from volition or sheer interest rather than from the complex of affective states, habits, and traditions that underlies *Gemeinschaft*” (Nisbet, 1993, p. 74).

Modern social scientists, who are likely to feel repugnance toward concepts such as patriarchy and feudalism, may find themselves equating *Gemeinschaft* with oppression and *Gesellschaft* with equality, freedom, and progress. Yet even if you are a proud *Gesellschafter*, devoted to the scientific study of how to structure society, the legal system, and the family to improve the lives of individuals, you might soon discover that there is a dark side to *Gesellschaft*. That is what happened to Emile Durkheim. Durkheim was politically liberal (Coser, 1977), but he spent his career investigating the importance of some rather conservative and system-justifying ideas.

In his famous study of suicide, for example, Durkheim found that the suicide rate in European countries “varies inversely with the degree of integration of the social groups of which the individual forms a part” (Durkheim, 1951/1897, p. 208). Factors that increased social integration (having a large family, being Catholic or Jewish rather than Protestant, being in a nation at war) decreased suicide rates; factors that increased the degree to which people relied upon themselves (e.g., wealth and education) were associated with higher rates of suicide. Durkheim rejected the atomism of social theory in his day, which focused on individuals and the processes by which those individuals create larger groups. Durkheim, in contrast, gave analytical priority to the group. Many groups exist for centuries or longer; they have lives of their own, and their behavior follows laws that are not reducible to laws of psychology (hence the need for sociology). Individuals are born into these groups and made into human beings by them. Events or policies that weaken groups increase *anomie*—the unhealthy state in which norms are unclear or unshared—and therefore raise suicide rates. (For evidence that national suicide rates in Western nations are still related to Durkheimian variables, see Eckersley & Dear, 2002.)

In other words, if Durkheim is right, then we are all, to some extent, residents of Planet Durkheim. Strong, cohesive groups help us flourish.² And if this is true, then moral systems that aim to strengthen groups and that value group loyalty might, under some circumstances, be better for individuals overall than a moral system that aims to maximize individual rights and liberties.³

Authority

Which bumper sticker are you more likely to find in a faculty parking lot: “Question Authority” or “God said it, I believe it, that settles it!” We believe that academics have generally negative associations to the word “authority,” associating it easily with authoritarianism and oppressive power. Nisbet, however, argues that in the history of sociology, authority is conceptually *opposed* to power. Authority refers to “the structure or the inner order of an association, whether this be political, religious, or cultural, and is given legitimacy by its roots in social function, tradition, or allegiance” (Nisbet, 1993, p. 6). Power, on the other hand, “is commonly identified with military or political force or with administrative bureaucracy and which, unlike the authority that arises directly from social function and association, raises the problem of legitimacy” (Nisbet, 1993, p. 6). It makes sense that academics in so many university departments are suspicious of power, which is often used to brutalize the powerless and enrich the powerful. (As Lord Acton said, “all power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”) But authority might deserve a second look.

A foundational question in cosmology is: Why is there something rather than nothing? The same can be said for sociology: Why is there such a profusion of intricate societies in which people restrain themselves and cooperate with others, rather than a planet full of self-interested individuals living in social anarchy? Tönnies, Durkheim, and Weber all investigated the willing submission of people to the rules and restraints that make social life possible. Tönnies found the answer in the natural sociability of the family, extended outward to create *Gemeinschaften* in which the authority of tribal, religious, or other leaders is experienced using the same psychological systems that make people feel respect for their fathers. Traditional authority is embedded

² Up to a point. Durkheim also noted that when groups bind too tightly, a different kind of suicide—altruistic suicide, often motivated by intense shame—rises in frequency.

³ Group-based moralities might be beneficial for happiness, civic engagement, and mental health for those who fit into groups, but we note that they may be oppressive to those who do not fit in, and they often increase the likelihood of intergroup conflict.

in personal relationships: people feel respect for the *people* in positions of authority; they owe loyalty and obedience to them, and in return can expect protection and guidance from them.⁴

One of Tönnies' concerns about the transition from *Gemeinschaft* to *Geellschaft* was that this natural, interpersonal kind of authority is lost. When personal relationships are replaced by administrative and bureaucratic entities backed by the force of law and threat of punishment, then traditional authority is replaced by something cold, impersonal, and weak. Max Weber (1947) called this new kind of authority "rational" authority, in contrast to "traditional" authority.⁵ These labels may suggest to modern readers that rational authority is reasonable authority, whereas traditional authority is patriarchal oppression, but Weber focused his analyses on the dark side of the unstoppable force of rationalization. Weber acknowledged that rational authority, in concert with the bureaucratization of government and the rise of an impersonal legal system, were necessary for the efficient administration of large modern states. But he pointed out that this very rise in efficiency necessitated a loss of humanity. For example, conflict resolutions provided by traditional authorities are tailored for the particularities of each case (think of King Solomon), but modern legal proceedings, said Weber, are cold, mechanical, and often unsatisfying to all sides. In political relations, in the workplace, and even in religious and private life, Weber consistently warned about the unexpected and alienating consequences of requiring all arrangements and all actions to be justifiable with reference to efficiency, utility, and means–ends rationality.

Durkheim also stressed the loss to humanity that accompanied the loss of traditional authority and strong community. When mid-level associations and institutions are weakened, when the only remaining authority is the state, when social distinctions are erased and individuals engage mostly in temporary relationships of their own choosing, the result is not egalitarian liberty but anomic anarchy:

Man cannot become attached to higher aims and submit to a rule if he sees nothing above him to which he belongs. To free himself from all social pressure is to abandon himself and demoralize him . . . While the state becomes

⁴ Authority relationships, at their best, are mutually beneficial (see Fiske, 1991). However, when authority becomes distant and freed from checks and balances, it often devolves into power and oppression. See Abu-Lughod (1986) for an example of how women in a patriarchal Bedouin society impose some limits on the authority of males in their families.

⁵ Weber's third kind of authority—charismatic—is not as important, for it exists only briefly, during the reign of a charismatic individual. Authority always reverts, Weber said, to a rational or traditional form.

inflated and hypertrophied in order to obtain a firm enough grip upon individuals, but without succeeding, the latter, without mutual relationships, tumble over one another like so many liquid molecules, encountering no central energy to retain, fix, and organize them. (Durkheim, 1951/1897, p. 389)

Durkheim tells the story of modernity as a centrifugal force flinging people out from tight communities maintained by respect for traditional authority, into a more open, freer, individualistic world in which people often have difficulty finding connection, order, and meaning. (See Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985, for a portrait of Americans still engaged in these struggles.)

Sacredness

Historically and cross-culturally, the strongest opposition to that centrifugal force has been religion. But religion and its central concept of sacredness are, like authority, often misunderstood by psychologists. Many scientists today think of religion primarily as a set of *beliefs* about God, the world, and the origins of humankind. Because many of these beliefs are demonstrably false, religion is then dismissed as a foolish and virulent delusion (Dawkins, 2006; Harris, 2006). But many of the great sociologists, most of whom were atheists or agnostics, thought that religious beliefs were the surface manifestation of something deeper.

Durkheim, from his analyses of traditional religions, concluded that one of the most fundamental distinctions in human thought is that between the sacred and the profane. As Nisbet (1993, p. 6) summarizes the sociological use of the word: "*The sacred* includes the mores, the non-rational, the religious and ritualistic ways of behavior that are valued beyond whatever utility they may possess." Sacredness hints at the existence of another world. The opposite of the sacred is the profane, an orientation to objects, places, and actions that is purely utilitarian and practical. Durkheim thought that the origin of sacredness was humanity's experience of moral authority. People *feel* that moral truths are far more than personal preferences; they exist outside the self and demand respect:

[Because authority] speaks to us in an imperative tone we certainly feel that it must come from some being superior to us; but we cannot see clearly who or what it is. This is why, in order to explain this mysterious voice that does not speak with a human accent, people imagine it to be connected with transcendent personalities above and beyond man, which then become the object of a cult. (Durkheim, 1973/1925, p. 89)

The source of this superhuman voice is society, and so, as Durkheim famously argued, God is really society, symbolized in many ways by the world's religions. The social function of religion is not to give us a set of

religious beliefs per se; it is to *create a cult*, to forge a community out of individuals who, if left unbound and uncommitted, would think and act in profane (practical, efficient, self-serving) ways. On this view, the shared rites, shared movements, shared calendar, and shared mental maps of sacred versus profane space are more important in creating this community than are the shared factual beliefs about the nature of God and the origin of the world. (For more on the power of synchronized motor movements to create transcendent experiences that bond people together, see McNeill, 1995; Haidt, Seder, & Kesebir, in press.)

As the West continued its long (although uneven) progression from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*, its process of rationalization, and its dismantling of traditional sources of moral authority, is it any wonder that some critics—even nonreligious sociologists—lamented the loss of something important? The historian of religion Mircea Eliade (1959/1957) argued that the perception of sacredness is a human universal. (See also Tetlock, Kristel, Elson, Green, & Lerner, 2000, on people as “intuitive theologians.”) Most people passionately want to live in a “sacralized cosmos,” a world that is more than just matter swirling around, with no value beyond its usefulness in providing pleasure to individuals. (See Kass, 1994, on how the act of eating can be dignified and elevated above its utilitarian functions.) Eliade suggested that the cosmopolitan centers of the modern West are the first fully profane, fully desacralized societies ever created. Modern social scientists are, for the most part, secular cosmopolitans; we find pleasure and freedom in our desacralized lives and our pursuits of self-expression. We must understand, however, that many of our fellow citizens find the ethos of tolerance, individualism, and anything-goes-as-long-as-it-doesn’t-hurt-anyone to be ugly, antisocial, and profoundly immoral. How can there be such a fundamental disagreement about morality within a modern Western nation?

MORAL FOUNDATIONS THEORY

Modern moral psychology is decidedly un-Durkheimian. In fact, Jean Piaget (1965/1932) specifically disagreed with Durkheim on the value of adult constraint and “heteronomous” relationships of hierarchy and obedience. Piaget thought that children constructed much of their morality for themselves, rather than learning it from their parents or from society. If adults would just step back and grant them more autonomy, children would reach moral maturity more quickly, including especially an understanding of justice. Lawrence Kohlberg (1969, 1971) developed Piaget’s ideas further and proposed that moral development is, essentially, the individual’s development of ever more adequate reasoning about justice.

However, Kohlberg's attempt to ground all of morality on a single foundation met with resistance: Carol Gilligan (1982) argued that women have an additional "ethic of care" derived from their experience of close relationships. The debate between Kohlberg and Gilligan dominated the field of moral psychology in the 1980s, but in the end most participants came to a consensus: Gilligan was correct that care was a separate foundation of morality, not derived from justice concerns, although she may not have been correct that the two ethics are gendered (see Gibbs, 2003; Walker, 1984). The field converged on a definition of the moral domain that accommodated both Kohlberg and Gilligan: "prescriptive judgments of justice, rights, and welfare pertaining to how people ought to relate to each other" (Turiel, 1983, p. 3).

The idea that there were two separate foundations, systems, or sets of skills with independent developmental trajectories fit with the then-emerging sociobiological idea that morality is the product of two evolutionary processes: kin altruism and reciprocal altruism (see Dawkins, 1976; Wilson, 1975). The idea that we evolved to be sensitive to the needs and welfare of our children and close kin bears an obvious affinity to Gilligan's ethic of care, while Trivers' (1971) explanation of reciprocal altruism and the origins of the human obsession with fairness bears an obvious affinity to Kohlberg's emphasis on justice and rights.

But once the rationalist dream of a single principle—a unified moral theory—is lost, then why stop at two? In the 1980s and 1990s, several anthropologists objected that Western moral psychology was essentially the psychology of modern cosmopolitan Westerners, and that it could not accommodate many of the moral concerns found in other cultures. Richard Shweder (1991; Shweder, Much, Mahapatra, & Park, 1997) proposed that there are three "ethics" in which moral discourse occurs around the world: the ethic of *autonomy*, in which the autonomous individual is the unit of value (this is Turiel's moral domain); the ethic of *community*, in which the group and its stability and cohesion are of fundamental importance; and the ethic of *divinity*, in which God is thought to be present in each person, rendering it morally necessary that individuals live in a pure, holy, and dignified way, rather than following their carnal desires wherever they please. In terms of Nisbet's (1993) unit-ideas from sociology, the ethic of community obviously includes both community and authority, whereas the ethic of divinity maps neatly onto sacredness.

Haidt and Joseph (2004, 2007) and Haidt and Graham (2007) have developed Shweder's (1991) theory further, connecting it to recent evolutionary thinking and making it more specific about the developmental processes and cognitive mechanisms involved. The result is MFT, which has three parts: (a) a nativist claim that natural selection prepared the human mind to learn

easily to detect and respond to (at least) five sets of patterns in the social world, (b) a developmental account of how children reach moral maturity by mastering culturally variable virtues that are related to the five foundations, and (c) a cultural/historical account of why groups and societies vary in the degree to which they construct virtues, laws, and institutions upon each of the five foundations.

In its briefest form, the nativist claim is that human beings have long faced a set of adaptive challenges in their social lives and that natural selection favored individuals who were better able to meet those challenges by noticing certain patterns and responding to them in particular ways. The five foundations, along with the adaptive challenges that might have shaped them, are as follows:

1. *Harm/care*: The challenge of protecting and caring for vulnerable offspring and kin made it adaptive for individuals to notice suffering and harm-doing, and to be motivated to relieve suffering.⁶ (This is essentially the theory of kin altruism [Hamilton, 1964], augmented by research on empathy/compassion [Hoffman, 1982].)
2. *Fairness/reciprocity*: The challenge of reaping the benefits of cooperation with individuals who are not close kin made it adaptive for individuals to be cooperative while being vigilant about and punitive toward cheaters. (See Trivers' [1971] theory of reciprocal altruism, which suggests that a set of moral emotions is the psychological mechanism by which reciprocity is implemented. See also Brosnan, 2006.)
3. *Ingroup/loyalty*: The challenge of reaping the benefits of cooperation in groups larger than dyads, particularly in the presence of intergroup competition for resources, made it adaptive for people to value belonging to groups while being vigilant about and hostile toward cheaters, slackers, free-riders, and traitors. (See the emerging literature on the evolution of "coalitional psychology," e.g., Kurzban, Tooby, & Cosmides, 2001. See also Wright [2000] on the ever-expanding "non-zero-sumness" of social life.)
4. *Authority/respect*: The challenge of negotiating rank in the social hierarchies that existed throughout most of human and earlier primate evolution made it adaptive for individuals to recognize signs of status and show proper respect and deference upward, while offering some

⁶Of course, humans now extend this care beyond their kin, but it is striking how quickly caring declines as one moves from family to fellow citizen to foreigner, and how sharply concern intensifies when the sufferer is neotenous (e.g., children and baby seals).

protection and showing some restraint toward subordinates. (Note that human hierarchies depend much more strongly on “freely conferred deference” [Henrich and Gil-White, 2001] than on the threat of force, which plays such a large role in chimpanzee hierarchies. See Boehm, 1999,⁷ and Fiske, 1991, on how human authority ranking is a two-way street with mutual obligations and limitations on power.)

5. *Purity/sanctity*: The challenge of avoiding deadly microbes and parasites, which are easily spread among people living together in close proximity and sharing food, made it adaptive to attend to the contact history of the people and potential foods in one’s immediate environment, sometimes shunning or avoiding them. This foundation is different from the others in that its origins are in our physical nature—as omnivores—rather than in our social nature (see Rozin, Haidt, & McCauley, 2000). However, once human beings developed the emotion of disgust and its cognitive component of contagion sensitivity, they began to apply the emotion to other people and groups for social and symbolic reasons that sometimes had a close connection to health concerns (e.g., lepers, or people who had just touched a human corpse), but very often did not (e.g., people of low status, hypocrites, racists). When moral systems are built upon this foundation, they often go far beyond avoiding “unclean” people and animals; they promote a positive goal of living in a pure, sanctified way, which often involves rising above petty and carnal desires in order to prepare one’s mind and body for contact with God (see Haidt, 2006, Ch. 9).

The developmental component of moral foundations theory posits that the foundations make it easy for children to learn some virtues and hard to learn others. When we say that the foundations are innate, we do not mean that they are visible in infancy or unchanged by experience. *Innate* means, as Marcus (2004, p. 40) puts it, “organized in advance of experience.” The genes create the first drafts of our brains, but experience in our families and cultures then edits those drafts to produce unique individuals and divergent cultures. Haidt and Joseph (2007) considered five ways that moral knowledge might be organized in advance of experience and concluded that, whereas all five

⁷ Boehm, 1999, suggests that human beings are naturally hierarchical creatures who have developed mechanisms (through cultural and biological co-evolution) that enable them to band together to suppress bullying and live in egalitarian societies. If this is true, then egalitarianism/anti-oppression would be a good candidate for a sixth moral foundation. So far, however, we have assumed that egalitarianism is based primarily on the fairness foundation.

approaches were probably correct about some aspects of moral knowledge, the most promising approach was to think of the five foundations as innate “learning modules” (Marler, 1991; Sperber, 2005), which generate a host of specific acquired modules during the course of development. A small set of moral learning modules could explain the high degree of preparedness (Seligman, 1971) that moral reactions show: some moral rules are so easily learned that it is not clear that anyone needs to teach them (e.g., the tit-for-tat rule: “don’t hit first, but if someone hits you, hit back”). Other moral rules are so hard to learn that it is not clear that they can be inculcated by any means yet discovered (e.g., “if someone hits you, turn the other cheek with love in your heart”). Parents and religions may propose such a rule, but children will learn it only explicitly, and it will not become part of their automatic intuitive morality.

Moral development on this view is not about children figuring out natural law (e.g., justice and rights) for themselves, as Kohlberg thought. Rather, moral development is a part of normal enculturation in which the child gradually learns to recognize specific cultural patterns (most of which are variants of evolutionarily prepared patterns), has the right intuitive reactions to those patterns, and then engages in culturally appropriate behaviors. (For more detail see Haidt & Bjorklund, 2008.)

The cultural/historical component of moral foundations theory is largely the story developed by Tönnies, Durkheim, and Weber in their analyses of the transformation of European society from the Middle Ages to modernity. In brief: the historical and cross-cultural prevalence of *Gemeinschaft* suggests that this form of association is in some sense the human default—it is the form of social structure in which human evolution took place, and the context in which intuitive ethics became a part of the human mind. The great sociologists put forth many ideas about what drives the shift toward *Gesellschaft*, and a common theme is the weakening of social constraints upon individuals and the empowering of individuals to make their own choices. Wealth, mobility, technology, education, and cultural diversity—all of these factors weaken the historical interdependence of people within a longstanding community and free individuals to construct lives for themselves guided by their own preferences. As that happens, the relative importance of the five foundations shifts.⁸

⁸ Of course, history does not move in a straight line. The second World War, for example, seems to have greatly increased the interdependence and civic engagement of those Americans who lived through it (Putnam, 2000).

Moral foundations theory says that people in all cultures are born with the *capacity* to cultivate virtues based on all five foundations. Furthermore, people in all cultures *do* cultivate virtues based on the first two foundations: harm/care and fairness/reciprocity (see Brown, 1991, and Hauser, 2006, on moral universals). But as a society becomes more modern and more individualistic, the first two foundations become ever more important in daily life and in moral and political philosophy, while the last three become less important. (And after the horrors of 20th-century fascism, the concepts of ingroup, authority, and purity became particularly and deservedly suspect.) Because modernity increases the value of the first two foundations while decreasing or even reversing the value of the last three foundations, we refer to harm and fairness as the two “modern” or “individualizing” foundations, and we refer to ingroup, authority, and purity as the three “traditional” or “binding” foundations. (For a similar distinction, see Hunter, 1991, on the culture war between those who follow the “progressive” impulse and those who follow the “orthodox” impulse with regard to moral truth.)

We stress, however, that the conflict between modern and traditional moralities is really between a morality based mostly (although not entirely) on two foundations and a morality based firmly on all five foundations. The same division, we find, holds true for the conflict between socially liberal and socially conservative moralities, although we note that political identities are often complex and multifaceted. For example, many groups on the political left believe strongly in the moral importance of community (e.g., communitarians, socialists, and the anti-free-trade left) and may even have a moral identity as a righteous ingroup battling an evil outgroup. Many greens and environmentalists seem to ground part of their morality on notions of purity applied to the Earth and its ecosystems. And most libertarians and free-trade conservatives would reject purity concerns outright. So, no division, including our two versus five division, can neatly separate all people who self-identify as liberals from those who self-identify as conservatives. But we believe (and have found) that the two versus five formulation works well as a first pass.

ASYMMETRIC EXAGGERATIONS

The words “liberal” and “conservative” each refer to families of political and moral ideologies. Varieties of liberalism generally share the view that liberty and equality are fundamental political goods, and so liberals typically support individual rights and the use of government programs or changes in social institutions to extend such rights as widely (and as equally) as possible. The fundamental goods of conservatism, in contrast, are harder to define

because conservatism is generally said to arise as a reaction to the changes promoted by liberals, and those changes vary widely depending on the society being changed (Muller, 1997). Nonetheless, conservatives are typically united in their desire to conserve the status quo (i.e., in their opposition to change) and by the belief that long-existing institutions, norms, and traditions embody the wisdom of many generations and should not be tampered with lightly (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003a, 2003b). Combined with a view of human nature that is usually darker than that of liberals and a belief in the limits of human knowledge, conservatives tend to believe (as Durkheim did) that strong institutions and social constraints are necessary for children's socialization, valuable for human welfare, and hard to replace once called into question or delegitimated (Burke, 2003/1790; Muller, 1997).

There are many kinds of conservatives and liberals in the United States today, but Jost (2006) argues that as a first cut, a simple one-dimensional spectrum of left-right or liberal-conservative does a surprisingly good job of arranging political attitudes and orientations. People in the United States freely talk about how liberal or conservative they are, usually without adding qualifications (e.g., distinguishing social from fiscal domains). What do they mean when they make such ratings? What moral values and virtues are associated with these terms, or with the "culture war" that is sometimes said to be raging between the two sides?

To find out, we created the Moral Foundations Questionnaire (MFQ), which asks participants to rate how relevant each of 20 concerns (four for each of our five foundations) is to their moral judgments and decisions. Item examples include whether or not another person: cared for someone weak or vulnerable (harm), ended up profiting more than others (fairness), put the interests of the group above his/her own (ingroup), showed a lack of respect for legitimate authority (authority), and was able to control his or her desires (purity). Data from six samples totaling more than 5,000 respondents have supported our basic political hypothesis with these relevance ratings: participants who had earlier identified themselves as liberal (below 4 on a 1-7 scale) rated items related to the two modern foundations as being more relevant to their moral judgments than items related to the three traditional foundations, whereas participants who had identified themselves as conservative (above 4) rated all five foundations as being equally relevant to their moral judgments (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2008; Haidt & Graham, 2007).

After our first two studies, we added a second section to the MFQ asking participants to agree or disagree with specific moral statements. Four different types of moral statements were used: normative ideals (e.g., "It can never be right to kill a human being" for harm), hypothetical scenarios (e.g., "If I were a soldier and disagreed with my commanding officer's orders,

I would obey anyway because that is my duty" for authority), positive virtues (e.g., "Chastity is an important and valuable virtue" for purity), and, because government policies are often the focus of moral debates, statements about laws or policies (e.g., "When the government makes laws, the number one principle should be ensuring that everyone is treated fairly" for fairness). Data from four samples totaling more than 3,000 respondents have shown the same pattern as did the relevance ratings. Figure 15.1 shows this basic pattern, for all 5,392 online participants who took either version of the MFQ. In all samples we have looked at, we have found that scores on the harm and fairness subscales slope downward as participants get more conservative, whereas scores on the ingroup, authority, and purity subscales slope upward.

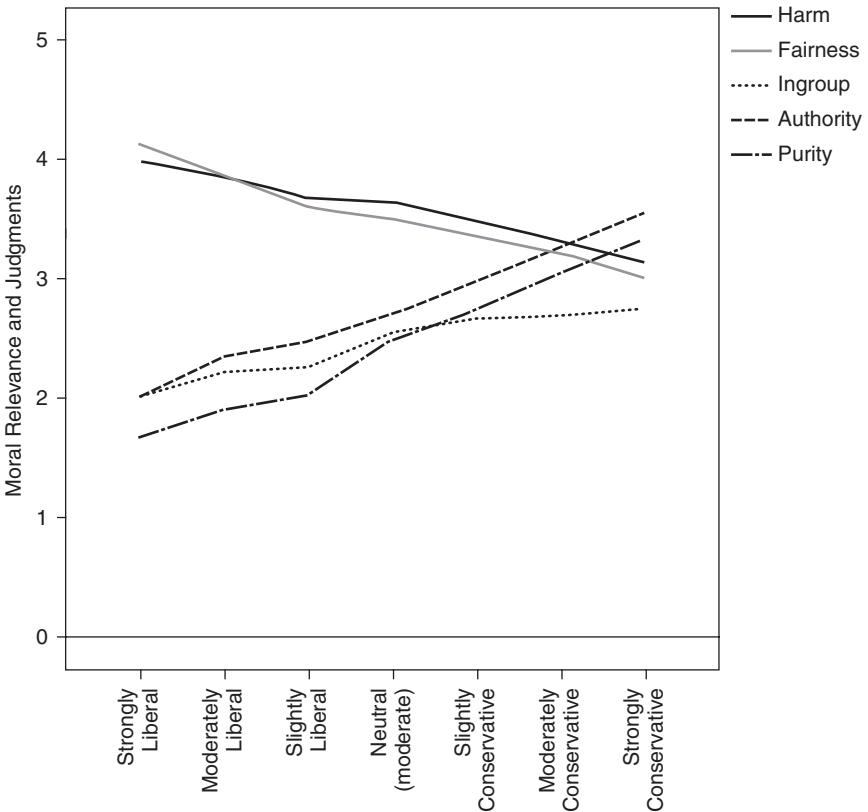


Figure 15.1 Moral foundations (relevance and statements averaged together) across the political spectrum. $N = 5,392$. The two modern foundations are indicated in solid lines, which are higher for liberals, and the three traditional foundations are indicated with dashed lines, which are higher for conservatives.

We are currently extending this research by examining the moral stereotypes that liberals and conservatives have of each other, to see whether political partisans misunderstand the moral concerns of the other side. In a web-based study, we asked participants to fill out the MFQ for themselves, as the “typical liberal” would fill it out, and as the “typical conservative” would fill it out.⁹ Participants were 2,212 U.S. residents and/or citizens. When we looked at the questionnaires for which people answered as themselves, we found the usual pattern (shown in Figure 15.1, which includes these participants).

Our main goal, however, was to see whether liberals, moderates, or conservatives were most accurate in filling out the questionnaire as the “typical liberal” or “typical conservative” would. Our design allowed us to test three competing predictions about accuracy. First, studies on ideological polarization (e.g., Chambers, Baron, & Inman, 2006; Cohen, 2003), the ideological extremity hypothesis (e.g., Rokeach, 1956; Greenberg & Jonas, 2003), and naïve realism (Robinson, Keltner, Ward, & Ross, 1995) suggest a *symmetrical* inaccuracy when liberals and conservatives try to look at the world through the eyes of the other. Both should distort equally because both sides think the other side does not truly care about morality. On this view, political moderates should be the most accurate. A second prediction comes from social psychological work on conservatism (see Jost et al., 2003a, for review and synthesis), which describes conservatives as being more intolerant, closed-minded, and mentally rigid. These findings suggest that conservatives might be less able to see the world from an alternate moral standpoint and therefore could be more motivated to demonize the other side. Just as Jost and colleagues (2003b) found more evidence for a “rigidity of the right” hypothesis than an ideological extremity one, this view predicts that accuracy would be *asymmetrical*, with *conservatives* the least accurate. A third possibility is suggested by MFT: *liberals* may be the least accurate because they do not understand or recognize three of the five foundations of conservative morality. When trying to fathom how conservatives see the world, liberals may conclude that conservatives simply do not care about harm and fairness, because conservatives favor policies that seem (to liberals) to hurt people and increase injustice for no morally valid reason. But, asymmetrically, if conservatives understand all five foundations, they may report (accurately) that liberals primarily value two of them.

⁹ The design was a bit more complicated: in a planned missingness design, each participant was randomly assigned to complete four of the six possible questionnaires (relevance or moral statements sections, answered for oneself, as a “typical liberal,” or as a “typical conservative”).

To quantify accuracy, we took the difference between each participant's ratings made as a typical liberal and those made as a typical conservative (their moral stereotype difference) and compared this to the actual mean differences between liberals and conservatives who were answering as themselves in this study. This difference score gave us a "moral stereotype inaccuracy" score for each participant. Figure 15.2 graphs these scores by ideology and shows how much participants exaggerated liberal-conservative moral differences. The results suggest three conclusions:

1. Participants at all points on the spectrum hold moral stereotypes that are accurate in direction. On average, participants correctly guessed

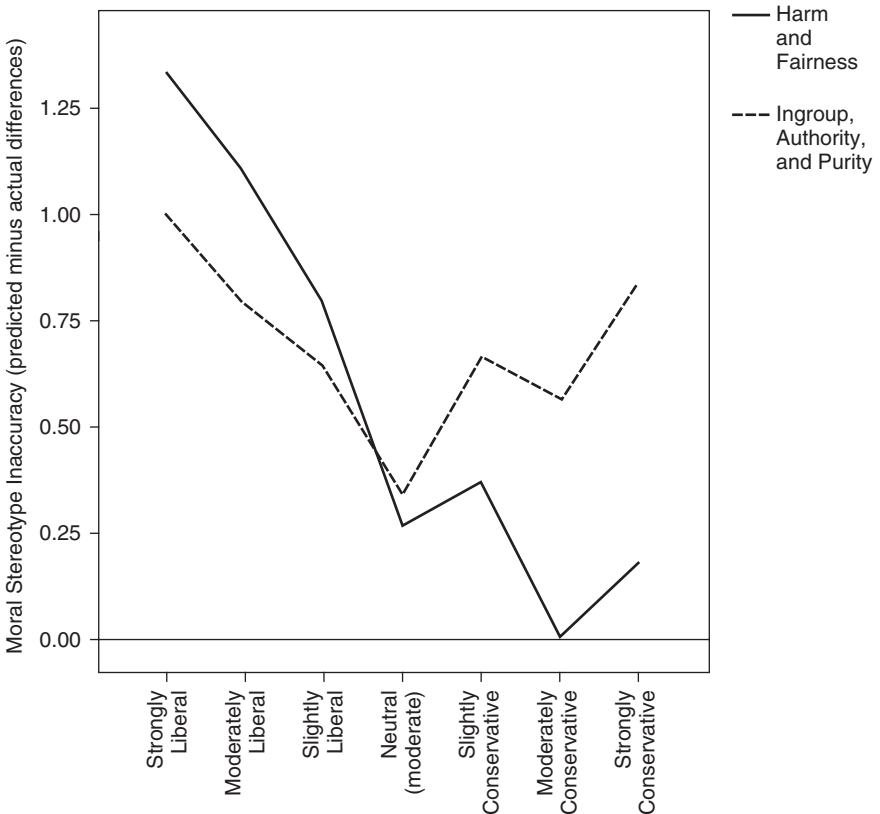


Figure 15.2 Moral stereotype inaccuracy across the political spectrum. Higher values indicate greater exaggeration of liberal-conservative differences, measured by comparing predicted/stereotyped differences against actual differences in self-reports. The units on the Y axis are the same 0–5 scale shown in Figure 15.1.

- that liberals would give the highest ratings to harm and fairness items, whereas conservatives would give higher ratings than liberals on ingroup, authority, and purity items.
2. There was some support for the ideological polarization hypothesis, but only on the three traditional foundations (see Figure 15.2): those on the extreme left and right exaggerated ingroup, authority, and purity differences more than did moderates. This exaggeration was largely symmetrical across the political spectrum.
 3. There was also support for the moral foundations prediction that liberals would be least accurate. As Figure 15.2 shows, liberals exaggerated the most overall, and they were particularly inaccurate about items related to the harm and fairness foundations. This asymmetrical exaggeration consisted almost exclusively of liberals guessing that conservatives would be less concerned about matters of harm and fairness than they actually were.

Do these data suggest a “rigidity of the left” hypothesis? No, but they do suggest the possibility of a “moral color-blindness” of the left, particularly the extreme left. When thinking about why conservatives generally oppose gay marriage, immigration, and stem cell research, for example, liberals simply cannot see any moral reasons. They are therefore free to assume the worst—that conservatives are really motivated by homophobia, racism, xenophobia, and ignorant fear of new technologies. If conservatives are motivated by such immoral forces, it must therefore be the case that conservatives don’t care very much about moral concerns such as harm to innocent victims, the rights of oppressed people, or justice more generally. If one believes this, and one is asked to complete the MFQ as a “typical conservative” would, then one would give inaccurately low ratings to items related to the two modern foundations.

But, before we suggest a color-blindness hypothesis, we note two limitations of our study. First, because our Internet-based sample was skewed to the liberal side, it is possible that those who said “strongly liberal” included more extremists and activists than was the case for our participants who rated themselves as “strongly conservative.” The most dogmatic and ideologically rigid conservatives might turn out to be just as morally color-blind, if we could find them and test them. Second, our study asked only about explicitly held beliefs, and it presented moral concerns cleanly separated as single items. In real life, moral concerns conflict and compete, and people make trade-offs (Tetlock, 1986). People then justify their choices and actions using convenient lofty principles, but those principles are often disconnected from the motives that really drove their decisions (Haidt, 2001, 2007). Therefore,

although liberals were fairly inaccurate about conservatives' explicit values, it is not yet known whether liberals are also inaccurate about conservative behavior.

Nevertheless, these findings suggest that liberals don't appreciate the extent to which issues such as gay marriage are morally conflicting for conservatives; it's not that conservatives don't care about fairness and equal rights, it's that they *also* care about ingroup loyalty, traditional family structures, and spiritual purity. Recognizing that conservatives have a variety of moral concerns that liberals do not share and often do not recognize as legitimate moral concerns can help liberals better understand conservatives and respond to their arguments. It can also help us to improve SJT.

SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION IS PART OF (A FIVE-FOUNDATION) MORALITY

System justification theory examines the widespread motivation to rationalize the status quo and justify the existing social system, even among those who seem to be disadvantaged by the system (Jost & Banaji, 1994). Although directly normative claims are seldom made in the literature, the implicit message is that system justification is a lamentable and ethically troubling motivation. In a two-foundation (harm and fairness) morality, system justification is problematic because it perpetuates existing inequalities and implicates people of low status as complicit in their own victimization. System justification research has largely concentrated on empirical demonstrations of the detrimental effects this motivation can have for low-status group members (e.g., lowered self-esteem, internalized inferiority; see Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004, for a review). It has been proposed that despite these negative effects, system justification occurs in part because it makes people feel better by reducing their anxiety, uncertainty, and (for high-status people) guilt (Jost & Hunyady, 2002).

We agree with the central claims of SJT that a system-justifying motive is widespread and that it cannot be explained as a by-product of ego justification or group justification. We also agree with its more specific claim that this motivational tendency is most often manifest nonconsciously and may be best observed using implicit measures (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). In stressing the importance of automatic and intuitive processes, SJT fits neatly with the social-intuitionist model of moral judgment (Haidt, 2001; Haidt & Bjorklund, 2008). However, although we agree with most of SJT, we see the justification of existing systems in a different light: it is a normal part of human morality, no more in need of psychological explanation than are concerns about harm and fairness.

In any culture that builds on the authority foundation, traditions and longstanding institutions are vested with moral importance and seen as embodying the collective wisdom of many generations. Changes should not be made readily or radically (see Burke, 2003/1790, on the excesses of the French Revolution; and see Sunstein, 2006, on the wisdom of Burkean Minimalism for modern law). In any culture that builds on the ingroup foundation, loyalty to the group is the supreme virtue, and criticizing it can, particularly in times of external conflict, be seen as a kind of betrayal. In any culture that builds on the purity foundation (along with authority or ingroup), the group, its leaders, its traditions, and its land may become sacred. Revisionists and reformers who want to implement changes based on the latest scientific findings or political trends treat everything as profane and open to tinkering. Their goal is usually morally worthy from a two-foundation perspective (e.g., decreasing suffering and increasing fairness), but it is often seen as sacrilegious and harmful (to individuals and to the nation) from a five-foundation perspective.

We think that a five-foundations perspective on system justification can benefit SJT in three ways: (a) it can help explain how rationalizing the status quo can reduce anxiety, even for those oppressed by it; (b) it can provide insights into potential evolutionary origins of system justification; and (c) it can provide a more complete explanation of why conservatives (and liberals) favor the policy positions that they do.

Benefit 1: Morality as a Mechanism of Meaning

To explain why people justify the systems in which they participate, Jost, Fitzsimons, and Kay (2004) point to a long list of cognitive, social, motivational, and structural factors including uncertainty reduction, fear of equality, belief in a just world, needs for control and cognitive consistency, dissonance, reduction, political socialization, and mass media influences. Many of these factors have in common that they make people feel better about the status quo in the face of external threats and internal inconsistencies. Similarly, Jost and Hunyady (2002) point out the palliative (pain-reducing) functions of system justification as a coping strategy. But why exactly is it that justifying existing arrangements has so many psychological benefits, and why exactly are these benefits able to outweigh the many negative opposing effects that system justification has for members of low-status groups (e.g., dissonance, low self-esteem, depression, neuroticism, etc.)?

A moral foundations perspective suggests that the benefits of justifying the system are not just palliative, they are meaning-providing and can often be important for human flourishing. Happiness, health, and longevity are all correlated with income in Western nations, but this first-order correlation

cannot be taken as evidence for the harmful effects of system justification on the poor. It is possible that the correlation would be even steeper for those who do not believe they are part of a stable and legitimate moral order. Modernization involves a decline in the importance of community, authority, and sacredness, and a corresponding rise in individualism and contractualism. This pattern of changes brings many benefits, but it has also been linked to an increase in depression and suicide. Eckersley and Dear (2002, p. 1892), in analyzing these increases, suggest that “modern Western culture may be failing to do well what cultures do: provide a web or matrix of stories, beliefs, and values that holds a society together, allows individuals to make sense of their lives and sustains them through the trouble and strife of mortal existence.” On this Durkheimian view, the motive to justify socially shared systems begins to seem as fundamental as the motive to tell and retell culturally shared stories or to search collectively for meaning in misfortune. People often want to understand their lives in a social context, and that context is normatively saturated—it has clear dimensions of good and bad, right and wrong. A reflexive or unconscious tendency to find virtue in one’s nation or group may indeed make individuals feel better, but it misses the collective aspects of morality to say that people seek out such virtue *in order to* reduce their own discomforts.

Benefit 2: The Origins of the System-Justifying Motive

Jost and Hunyady (2002) suggest that “there is a *socially acquired* motive to justify and rationalize the existing social system” (p. 148, emphasis added). This claim is echoed by Jost, Banaji, and Nosek (2004), who oppose the idea that “hierarchy and inequality are genetically mandated at the individual or species level” (p. 912), but do allow for the speculative “possibility that human beings have developed generally adaptive capacities to accommodate, internalize, and even *rationalize* key features of their socially constructed environments” (p. 912). In our analysis, however, a five-foundation morality should be seen as the human default (Rozin, 2007). Community, authority, and sacredness are key ideas in sociology because they are so prevalent cross-culturally and historically. Cultures and subcultures depart from defaults in hundreds of ways, and these departures must be explained by social scientists: Why exactly did Western nations develop novel and less binding moralities in just a few hundred years?

It is notoriously difficult to determine whether human needs and abilities are entirely learned or are partially innate (“organized in advance of experience”). But it can be done. We suggest that the situation is much like the old question about why children cling to their mothers. Harry Harlow’s famous wire-mother/cloth-mother experiments (Harlow & Zimmerman,

1959) demonstrated that the need for contact comfort was innate and was part of a larger and more complex attachment system that could only be understood as an evolutionary adaptation. It was not a by-product of other processes, as Freudians and Behaviorists had argued. We think the same is true here. We suggest that human beings are by default Durkheimians who want to live in a thick social world full of shared meanings, symbols, traditions, and communal goals. These are basic human needs, not products of social learning or unconscious conflict resolution. These needs emerge from the “first draft” of human nature, although the draft is modifiable, as when a child grows up in an anti-authoritarian subculture in which inequality and oppression are frequently discussed and condemned. To test this claim, we might examine the development of children’s play groups and social structures to see whether hierarchy and displays of deference emerge at similar ages across cultures (especially in modern versus more traditional cultures), and with similar ethologies (e.g., subordinates averting gaze, making themselves smaller, and showing other signs of appeasement upward; Fessler, 1999; Keltner & Buswell, 1997).

The system justification motive may have been shaped by the same adaptive considerations as group justification—namely, both served to bind small communities together in the face of cross-group competition, promoting group cohesion while providing anxiety-reducing shared meanings. For high-status groups, group justification and system justification are generally identical in their consequences and effects, but the two motivations are sometimes opposed for low-status groups (Jost & Hunyady, 2002). It seems possible that group justification and system justification came into conflict only with the advent of very large multigroup systems, a development quite recent in our evolutionary history.

Benefit 3: Making Sense of Conservatives

In their reply to Greenberg and Jonas (2003), Jost and colleagues (2003b) raised a puzzle about the variety and apparent contradiction of policies that American conservatives support:

We now take it for granted in the United States that political conservatives tend to be for law and order but not gun control, against welfare but generous to corporations, protective of cultural traditions but antagonistic toward contemporary art and music, and wary of government but eager to weaken the separation of church and state. They are committed to freedom and individualism but perennially opposed to extending rights and liberties to disadvantaged minorities, especially gay men and lesbians and others who blur traditional boundaries. There is no obvious political thread that runs through these diverse positions (or through their liberal counterparts) and no logical principle that renders them all consistent. (p. 391)

Jost and colleagues suggest that, instead of a political thread or logical principle, two psychological principles unify conservative positions: resistance to change and acceptance of inequality. We are persuaded by Jost and colleagues' (2003a) meta-analysis that these two principles are the most concise way to capture the main axis of political ideology using the language of psychological traits. However, this kind of description roots conservatism in traits that are unattractive (e.g., rigid, dogmatic, authoritarian, afraid of change and ambiguity) and immoral from a two-foundation perspective (e.g., preferring inequality to equality). When conservatism is seen as the product of amoral and immoral needs, then system justification is seen as one of the amoral and immoral processes by which these needs are satisfied (see Jost et al., 2003a, Figure 1). This is one description of conservatism, but is it the most fair and accurate?

If anthropologists were studying American social conservatives as a culture, they would try to offer a "thicker" description, one that first tried to empathize rather than reduce, one that offered an account of "what the devil they think they are up to" (Geertz, 1973). MFT grew out of anthropological work on cultural variation in morality (e.g., Shweder et al., 1997), and it can be used to derive a very different solution to the puzzle raised by Jost and colleagues (2003b). We agree that conservative positions seem contradictory to those with a modern or individualizing morality, but we believe they become coherent and consistent once grounded in the three traditional foundations of ingroup, authority, and purity. In Table 15.1 we have laid out the apparent paradoxes of American conservatism raised by Jost and colleagues (2003b). For anyone with a modern (two-foundation) morality, the positions in the left-hand column are obviously better—they are closely connected to virtues and concerns related to harm and fairness. The positions taken by conservatives therefore seem immoral, and so they cry out for a psychological explanation. What motives could lead a person to support these positions? How about protecting oneself from psychological threats and uncertainty?

But if you grant that many people—or, at least, most American social conservatives—have a five-foundation morality, then the puzzle is solved in a different way. Social conservatives make appeals to fairness and harm too, but most of the positions they take on culture war issues are coherent because, as shown in Table 15.1, they are attempts to reinvigorate community (versus *Gesellschaft* and big government), authority (versus anarchy and anomie), and sacredness (versus profanity). The moral foundations of ingroup, authority, and purity are therefore central to social conservatism, just as they are to system justification.

The system-justifying impulse is therefore a part of normal or default human morality. It reflects a widespread human tendency to believe that the

Table 15.1 Conservative and liberal disagreements may reflect differential reliance upon the ingroup, authority, and purity foundations.

Liberal position	Conservative position
<p>For gun control Harm: opposition to violence</p>	<p>For law and order Harm: protection from criminals Authority: favoring police powers to keep order and punish deviants Fairness: punishment should fit the crime</p>
<p>Against corporations Harm: concerned about exploitation of workers and the environment Fairness as equality: suspicious of massive wealth accruing to top management Fairness as fair play: concerned about corporate manipulation of government</p>	<p>Against welfare Authority: favoring hierarchy based on hard work and earned wealth Fairness: against giving something for nothing Ingroup: dislike of freeloaders within the group*</p>
<p>For contemporary art and music Fairness as anti-authoritarianism: dislike of traditions, preference for new and “subversive” art Fairness as anti-bias, anti-ingroup: preference for works by members of oppressed groups within the United States, and from non-Western cultures</p>	<p>For protecting cultural traditions Ingroup: valuation of “our” traditions Purity: dislike of overtly sexual or “degrading” art Authority: fear that “subversive” art and music encourages rebellion in youth</p>
<p>For big government programs Harm and Fairness: most big programs are intended to help victims or increase equality. This is the essence of the <i>Gesellschaft</i> approach to social problems.</p>	<p>Against big government Ingroup and Authority: Belief that people should take care of their own; preference for local control and <i>Gemeinschaft</i> solutions (e.g., church-based solutions to social problems).</p>
<p>Against mixing church and state Fairness as individual rights and autonomy in religious matters.</p>	<p>For mixing church and state Ingroup: America is a Christian nation Authority: Laws are most effective when they match the laws of God Purity: desire to live in a sacralized nation</p>
<p>For rights for gays and minorities Harm: concern for an oppressed minority Fairness: wanting all groups to have equal rights and if possible outcomes</p>	<p>Against rights for gays and minorities Ingroup: gays seen as outsiders Authority: gays seen as nonconformists and threats to traditional family structure Purity: gays seen as lustful sexual deviants</p>

Note. The policy positions are from Jost et al. (2003b). Links to moral foundations are speculative. On most culture-war issues, liberal positions appear to draw on harm and fairness concerns exclusively, while conservatives draw on all five foundations.

*We note that some of the ingroup-based opposition to welfare may be based on or magnified by anti-Black racism. Not all motives relevant to policy positions are moral motives.

existing social order is morally good, regardless of how that order treats us. Recognizing the system-justifying motive's basis in the traditional foundations of morality can help us better understand the tenacity of the motive, and perhaps help us prevent some of its detrimental effects for low-status group members.

CONCLUSION

In James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the novel's hero Stephen Dedalus gives voice to Western modernity's veneration of individual freedom: "When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets" (Joyce, 1916/1991, p. 206). In this worldview, language (ingroup), nationality (authority and ingroup), and religion (purity, authority, and ingroup) are not sacred at all; they are profane "nets" the individual soul must fly past to be free. This is a powerful expression of modern morality and what it holds sacred: the individual, freed from the oppressive bonds of community, authority, and religious sanctity.

In this essay, however, we have offered an account of traditional and conservative moralities in which ingroup, authority, and purity are not necessarily nets to trap and kill the human spirit; rather, they are foundations upon which some cultures build the structures that give lives order, value, and meaning. Our goal in offering this *descriptive* account is not to claim that conservative morality is superior to liberal morality, *normatively* speaking. Our normative position is a kind of consequentialism—we think moral systems should be judged by the quality of the worlds they lead to. We believe the benefits of modernity have been enormous, and that it is neither possible nor desirable to reduce ethnic diversity, eliminate existing technologies, or otherwise return to the *Gemeinschaft* social systems that prevailed centuries ago.

But our consequentialism leads us to ask whether there might be some hidden utility in the three traditional foundations. Even from a liberal perspective, in which all that matters is the welfare of individuals (particularly those who are least well off), might there be some paradoxical benefits to individuals of social policies that do not put the welfare of individuals first? The social policies favored by conservatives, shown in the right-hand column of Table 15.1, are, broadly speaking, Durkheimian policies. They increase the cohesion and stability of communities. They therefore also increase the social capital (Coleman, 1988) of communities, which includes the dense networks of obligation and trust, social information channels, and effective norms and sanctions for deviance. By extension, we might say they increase the symbolic capital, too—the culturally evolved network of shared symbols and

meanings from which people construct their identities and make sense of their worlds. (See Appiah, 2005, on the challenges of identity construction for liberalism.) Given the many arguments from psychology and sociology about the costs of anomie and hyperindividualism (Bellah et al., 1985; Leary, 2004; Schwartz, 1986), and the benefits of close, enduring social bonds and shared meanings (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), we believe that a modern society that makes *some* use of the three traditional foundations might—at least in theory—be a more humane, healthy, and satisfying place overall than a society that builds its values and policies *exclusively* on the first two foundations. We are not confident that the traditional foundations offer such benefits in practice, but we believe that traditional and conservative ideas are frequently mischaracterized, prematurely dismissed, or simply ignored by many psychologists, philosophers, and other academics.

In conclusion, we do indeed live on Planet Durkheim, where community, authority, and sacredness are foundations of morality. Or, at least, many Earthlings live on such a planet, so those of us who study morality, ideology, and system justification can benefit from conducting open-minded cross-planetary fieldwork.

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Ideology of the Good Old Days: Exaggerated Perceptions of Moral Decline and Conservative Politics

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Abstract

Beliefs in social and moral decline are widespread, and people sometimes perceive decline when conditions are actually improving. Our research seeks to explain such illusory perceptions of decline by linking them to a general judgmental bias that causes people to mistake change in the self for change in the external world. Many changes that people experience over the course of their lives alter their perspectives in ways that sensitize them to social threats. When people fail to realize that these personal changes have heightened their perceptions of threat, they may mistakenly conclude that threats are becoming more prevalent in society. We test this thesis by combining surveys of people actually undergoing relevant transitions with experimental analogues of these transition processes. We also review evidence linking the belief in social decline to politically conservative attitudes. After examining the judgmental biases that produce illusory perceptions of decline, we draw on broader models of ideology and system justification to explain how the rhetoric of decline may function to achieve wider public support for conservative social movements.

Top five problems in U.S. public schools:

1940:

1. Talking
2. Chewing gum
3. Making noise
4. Running in halls
5. Getting out of turn in line

1980:

1. Drug abuse
2. Alcohol abuse
3. Pregnancy

4. Suicide

5. Rape

These lists, contrasting the top problems facing U.S. public schools in 1940 and 1980, have been widely circulated by pundits, policy-makers, and journalists who cite them as evidence of our rapid social and moral decline (O'Neill, 1994). The vivid image of lost innocence that these lists convey was seized upon by ideologues to advance their critiques of modern life. For instance, William Bennett, a prominent conservative author and cabinet secretary in the Reagan and Bush administrations, cited the lists in his book on cultural decline, *The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators* (1994). Rush Limbaugh read the lists on his popular right-wing radio program. The conservative journalist Gorge Will and the anti-feminist crusader Phyllis Schlafly cited the lists in their op-ed columns. Tim LaHaye referred to the lists in a book advocating the restoration of traditional family values. In addition to these conservative authors and activists, the lists were also cited by moderates and liberals including Derek Bok, Jocelyn Elders, Ann Landers, and Anna Quindlen.

When Barry O'Neill, a management professor, saw the lists posted on a campus bulletin board, he was intrigued and investigated their origins. Using some careful detective work, O'Neill eventually traced the lists back to their source, a born-again Christian activist named T. Cullen Davis, who used the lists to critique the public education system. When O'Neill asked how he generated the lists, Davis admitted, "They weren't done from a scientific survey. How did I know what the offenses were in 1940? I was there. How do I know what they are now? I read the newspapers." Apparently the lists, which had been cited as frightening evidence of the declining trajectory of public morals by experienced journalists, intellectuals, and activists, were based on little more than one man's hunch.

The odd story of the creation and transmission of Davis' lists has three features that may help to illuminate the connections linking perceptions of decline, psychological biases, and political ideologies. First, many intelligent people seem to have fallen for this hoax even though it presented an implausibly stark contrast that should have been met with the kind of skepticism that prompted O'Neill to trace the lists back to their dubious origins. The first part of this chapter reviews evidence that exaggerated beliefs in social decline are actually quite widespread, and the lists thus may have been easy to believe because they fit a popular worldview that sees abundant evidence of moral and cultural decay. Second, the procedure Davis used to generate the lists has features that resemble a psychological bias that may be important for understanding why exaggerated beliefs in social decline are so ubiquitous. Davis indicated that his information about school conditions in the

1940s was based on his own direct experiences as a student, whereas his information about contemporary school conditions was derived from media accounts. This raises the intriguing possibility that the change in school conditions that Davis thought he perceived might instead be attributed to the change in his sources of information (direct experience in 1940 versus media accounts in 1980) and the change in his own perspective (student in 1940 versus born-again Christian adult in 1980). The second part of this chapter reviews evidence for a general bias that causes people to mistake changes in their own perspectives for changes in the external world. We argue that this bias can help explain widespread perceptions of decline, because many of the personal changes that people experience as they mature tend to sensitize them to social threats, thus contributing to the illusion that socially conditions are, in fact, getting worse. Finally, although the lists were occasionally used by moderates and liberals, they were originally designed to promote a socially conservative agenda. The concluding section of this chapter reviews evidence that perceptions of decline are associated with conservative attitudes, and explores how the illusion of decline provides a political advantage to conservative movements.

WIDESPREAD PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL DECLINE

“Things aren’t the way they used to be.” “It’s not like it was in the good old days.” “They don’t make things like they used to.” These and other familiar expressions from everyday life convey the impression that social conditions are changing for the worse. Perceptions of social decline are indeed widespread, and these perceptions are, in many cases, exaggerated when compared with actual trends.

Perceptions of moral decline are particularly common. “Moral decline” was one of the 10 most common themes that respondents listed in 1985 when asked what was the most important event or change that had occurred in the past 50 years (Schuman & Scott, 1989). When people are directly asked about moral change, the majority perceives decline. For instance, in a 1998 Tipp/Christian Science Monitor survey 66% of respondents judged that morality had declined since the 1950s and, in a 1988 CBS News/New York Times Poll, 72% of respondents agreed that there has been “a severe breakdown in moral standards in America.” People who are concerned about declining values often emphasize a shift from more socially responsible values to more self-centered values. For instance, in a 1996 survey, 66.5% agreed that “compared to twenty years ago, Americans have become more selfish” (Wolfe, 1998).

It is unclear exactly what people mean when they say that morality has declined. For this reason, it is hard to compare perceptions of moral decline

to objective trends. However, many of those who believe that Americans today are less moral and more selfish would no doubt be surprised to learn that rates of volunteering and inflation-adjusted charitable contributions have both increased in recent decades (Ladd, 1999). It seems that, contrary to popular impressions, we have hardly become a nation of selfish free-riders.¹

Even when judgments of decline are more specific and can more confidently be compared with objective trends, the evidence supports the conclusion that these impressions are often exaggerated. In a 1998/1999 survey (Sniderman, Brady, & Tetlock, 1998–1999), 73.7% of respondents judged that crime had increased during the preceding 10-year period despite the fact that crime rates had actually declined dramatically throughout the United States during that period (LaFree, 1999). The belief that children are increasingly neglected by their parents is also common, with 59.6% of respondents in the 1990 General Social Survey (Davis, Smith, & Marsden, 1972–2004) agreeing that the amount of time parents spend with their children is decreasing. However, the quantity of time parents spend with children has actually increased since the 1960s (Sayer, Bianchi, and Robinson, 2004). Widespread teenage pregnancy is often cited as an indicator of social decline, but people often exaggerate this problem. For example, in a 2003 poll, 68% of adults judged that teen pregnancy was increasing, despite the fact that teen births had declined by 31% from 1991 to 2002 (National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2003). Finally, many people seem to believe the popular “culture war” thesis, which suggests that Americans’ values have become increasingly polarized in recent years (Hunter, 1991). For instance, whereas 86% of respondents to a 1996 survey judged that Americans shared more values in the past than they do today (DiMaggio, Evan, & Bryson, 1996), studies tracking trends in American values (Baker, 2004) and political attitudes (DiMaggio, 2003; DiMaggio et al., 1996; Mouw & Sobel, 2001) find little or no evidence of increasing polarization (but see Hunter, 1996, 2006).

¹ When judging the magnitude of social change, people may disagree for a number of reasons, including differences in the temporal reference point they use to define change (Eibach & Ehrlinger, 2006) and whether the change is framed as a loss or a gain (Eibach & Keegan, 2006). In the case of judging moral change, people’s judgments may differ based on how they define what constitutes a moral issue. Haidt and Graham (2007; this volume) provide persuasive evidence that conservative morality is based on a broader set of basic values than the morality of liberals. Furthermore, many of the social changes associated with modern life seem to threaten distinctively conservative values (Haidt & Graham, this volume). Thus, social changes that would seem morally innocuous from a liberal perspective may constitute legitimate evidence of moral decline when considered from a conservative moral perspective.

The popular impression that social conditions are declining is not unique to modern times or Western culture (Murphy, 2005b). Expressions of concern about decline can be found in settings as varied as Ancient Greece and Israel, Confucian China, early Christian Rome, and late 19th century Europe (Herman, 1997; Murphy, 2005b). The prevalence of perceptions of decline over time and across cultures is a clue that these perceptions are often exaggerated, as Robert Bork (1996) argues:

Regret for the golden days of the past is probably universal and as old as the human race. No doubt the elders of prehistoric tribes thought the younger generation's cave paintings were not up to the standard they had set. Given this straight-line degeneration for so many millennia, by now our culture should be not merely rubble but dust. Obviously it is not: until recently our artists did better than the cave painters (p. 6).

If perceptions of social decline are often exaggerated, then the cross-generational and cross-cultural prevalence of these perceptions suggests that they may be rooted in a general psychological bias. In the next section, we review evidence that the perception of social decline is sometimes the product of the common tendency to mistake changes in oneself for changes in the external world.

MISTAKING CHANGE IN ONESELF FOR CHANGE IN THE WORLD

Throughout their lives, people undergo many changes, including relatively minor changes in expectations or attitudes and more extensive changes like major role transitions. All of these changes have the potential to alter the way a person perceives the world. For example, a person who wins the lottery perceives the mundane pleasures of everyday life to be less enjoyable after sampling the luxuries of wealth (Brickman, Coates, & Janoff-Bulman, 1978). The fact that people undergo changes that alter their perceptions complicates their attempts to judge how external conditions have changed during their lifetimes. Social scientists face an analogous problem in making inferences about change in the prevalence of a social problem when they have altered the methods they use to track that problem over time. For example, the recorded prevalence of autism has increased dramatically over the past four decades (Wing & Potter, 2002). This apparent rise in prevalence of autism has been attributed to many causes, including childhood vaccinations. However, the criteria for diagnosing autism have broadened substantially over this same period. Thus, at least some of the increased cases must be attributed to the broader diagnostic standards of today compared with the past.

Although professional social scientists can rely on sophisticated models to determine how much an apparent change in a social problem should be attributed to changes in measurement, lay perceivers must rely on the cruder tools of everyday inference when confronting the related problem of determining how much of a change they perceive in external conditions should be attributed to changes in their own attentiveness to those conditions. Much potential for confusion exists when a change in one's perceptions could be attributed to change in the perceiver, change in the external world, or some combination of both. When facing this confusion, we find that people are prone to exaggerate change in the external world when they themselves have changed in ways that have altered their perceptions. For example, participants whose eating habits became more restrictive over a period of time perceived a greater increase in the prevalence of advertisements for unhealthy foods during that period than did those whose eating habits had remained relatively unchanged (Eibach, Libby, & Gilovich, 2003). In another study, when participants' arms were fatigued over the course of an experimental session, they perceived an illusory increase in the weight of an object if they lifted that object with their fatigued arm but not if they switched to their other, nonfatigued arm (Eibach, Libby, Ehrlinger, & Johnson, 2008).

We argue that this tendency to mistake change in oneself for change in the external world is a consequence of naïve realism, the deep conviction that one's own perceptual experiences are veridical representations of external reality, unmediated by construal processes (Ross & Ward, 1996; Segall, Campbell, & Herskovits, 1966). When one's perceptions of external conditions change, naïve realism causes one to begin by assuming that this reflects a true change in the external objects of perception. It takes more active reflection to move beyond this realist assumption and consider the possibility that changes within oneself might be the true source. Consistent with this, we found that participants often will not take into account relevant self-changes as sources of changed perceptions unless they are explicitly prompted to consider how personal changes may have altered their perspectives (Eibach et al., 2003). Moreover, even when people do appreciate the need to take into account the influence of self-changes, they tend to underestimate the influence of these factors because their implicit self-theories often underestimate the magnitude of self-change over time (Ross, 1989). Indeed, experimental manipulations of participants' theories of self-change influence their judgments of change in the external world; the more participants believe their perspectives have changed over time, the less change they judge has occurred in external conditions (Eibach et al., 2003).

The process of mistaking change in oneself for change in the world is one mechanism that can produce exaggerated judgments of external

change. However, for this process to explain widespread illusions of social decline, we must assume that many of the changes that people undergo as they mature tend to darken their perceptions of the world. We have studied a number of common life transitions that have the potential to increase a person's sensitivity to the negative aspects of the social world. For each of these personal transitions, we have conducted survey studies of people actually undergoing the transitions and experimental analogue studies designed to test whether the processes of change involved in the transition cause people to perceive an illusory increase in the negativity of external stimuli.

The Transition to Parenthood

Parenthood is a common experience that has the potential to transform the way a person views the world. When a person becomes a parent, the responsibility of taking care of a vulnerable child requires a new type of vigilance, in which the parent is alert to sources of danger that a nonparent could safely ignore. The transition from a nonparental mindset to a more vigilant parental mindset might cause people to perceive an illusory increase in external dangers if they fail to take into account how changes in their vigilance have affected their perceptions. Previously, we documented that parents judge that crime rates are greater in the period after their transitions to parenthood than were crime rates in the period preceding their transitions (Eibach et al., 2003). We also found that people who first became parents in the 1990s believed that crime rates had increased during that decade, even though crime had actually dramatically decreased, as was recognized by both nonparents and those who transitioned to parenthood before the 1990s. These correlational studies suggest that, when people acquire the more danger-sensitive mindset of a parent, they can mistakenly conclude that dangers in the world are becoming more prevalent.

We recently conducted follow-up studies to experimentally test whether the transition from a nonparental to a parental mindset causes a person to perceive an illusory increase in the dangerousness of external stimuli (Eibach et al., 2008). In one of these studies, college students viewed visual stimuli that varied in their level of violent, disturbing content. The stimuli were presented in two blocks, and we manipulated the mindset participants adopted while viewing each block. One condition was designed to mimic the transition to parenthood. While viewing the first block of images, participants judged how peers their own age would be affected by each image. While viewing the second block, they judged how young children would be affected by each image, a task similar to one that actual parents face when they monitor the content of TV shows and Internet sites to protect their

children from harmful content. Because the sequence of tasks in this condition required participants to increase their vigilance from block one to block two, this condition represented an experimental analogue of the change in mindset that people undergo when they transition into the parental role. We compared these participants' judgments of change in the threat of the images to the judgments of control participants who had used the parental mindset while viewing both image blocks and participants who started with the parental mindset while viewing the first block and then shifted to a nonparental mindset while viewing the second block. We predicted and found that, compared with participants in the two control conditions, those who transitioned to a parental perspective judged that there had been a significantly greater increase in the violence and danger of the second block of images, analogous to the illusory perception of increasing crime that real parents perceived when they transitioned into the parental role in our earlier, correlational studies.

Increased Responsibility

Related to the transition to parenthood is the transition from a focus on opportunities in one's youth to a focus on security in adulthood, when people accumulate responsibilities to their families, workplaces, and communities. For the young person who is unencumbered by such adult responsibilities, the world often seems full of opportunities for new experiences and personal growth. However, for the mature person, the focus often shifts from exploring new options to securing one's status and fulfilling the more demanding responsibilities of adulthood. This shift from a focus on opportunities and personal growth in early life to a focus on responsibilities and security in adulthood has the potential to significantly alter a person's perceptions of external conditions. Specifically, the responsibilities and duties associated with adulthood should activate a prevention-focused mindset, sensitizing the person to external risks and dangers. By contrast, the more idealistic orientation of youth is associated with a promotion-focused mindset that is relatively less risk-sensitive (Higgins, 1998).

If the accumulation of responsibilities in adulthood shifts people into a more risk-attentive, prevention-focused mindset, and if people fail to appreciate that maturity changes their perspectives in this way, then this could help explain exaggerated perceptions of increasing threats. We tested this hypothesis in a survey in which adults reported how their goal orientations changed over time (Eibach et al., 2008). Specifically, participants reported whether they had become more focused on opportunities, more focused on responsibilities, more focused on both opportunities and responsibilities, or experienced no change in their goal-focus. Participants also reported their

level of agreement with a number of statements about changes in various social dangers. As predicted, participants who experienced an increase in responsibility-focus perceived a significantly greater increase in social dangers than participants who had not become more responsibility-focused.

We found converging evidence in a laboratory analogue study in which participants perceived an illusory increase in external threats when they were experimentally induced to transition from a promotion-focused to a prevention-focused mindset (Eibach et al., 2008). Participants played a card game with a deck that contained both reward and penalty cards. The critical condition was designed to simulate the transition from a promotion-focused to a prevention-focused mindset. Participants in this condition began the first half of the game with instructions to maximize their acquisition of points (promotion-focus) but then, in the second half of the game, they were instructed to shift to trying to retain as many of their accumulated points as possible (prevention-focus). These participants, who transitioned from a promotion-focused to a prevention-focused game strategy, perceived a significant increase in the quantity of penalty cards in the second half of the game compared with the first half, despite the fact that the quantity of penalty cards was held constant. Participants in two control conditions who were instructed to use a constant prevention-focused or a constant promotion-focused game strategy throughout the session did not perceive an illusory increase in penalty cards.

Physical Aging

We have also found that the effects of physical aging can influence perceptions of social decline. The aging of the body tends to increase the experience of daily frustrations. If people do not appreciate the extent to which increasing frustrations are a consequence of their own physical decline, they may conclude that external conditions are becoming more frustrating in various ways. We tested the specific hypothesis that aging can make driving more frustrating, thus contributing to the belief that other drivers have become more reckless. As predicted, we found that participants perceived a greater increase in the aggressiveness of other drivers over time, the more their own reflexes and coordination had declined with age (Eibach et al., 2008). If this result is a consequence of mistaking change in oneself for change in the world, then the association should be weakened when participants are prompted to take into account self-change as a source of changing perceptions. As expected, the correlation between declining reflexes and the perceived increase in reckless driving was significantly weakened when participants reported change in their own reflexes before judging change in the behavior of other drivers.

Cumulatively, these studies support our hypothesis that the tendency to mistake change in oneself for change in the external world is a source of

popular beliefs in social decline. These mistaken beliefs about social change are likely to have political consequences, because beliefs about conditions influence policy preferences, even when those beliefs are inaccurate (Gilens, 2001). In the next section, we explore whether exaggerated perceptions of decline not only affect people's specific policy preferences but also their broader ideological commitments.

CONSERVATIVE IDEOLOGY AND PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL DECLINE

Conservatism² often involves a nostalgic attitude toward the past and defense of traditional social and political arrangements in the face of modern trends (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003). In his survey of conservative intellectual history Nisbet (1986) writes, "Conservatives, knowing well the appeal of tradition, the depth in the human mind of nostalgia, and the universal dread of the ordeal of change, the challenge of the new, have rested their indictment of the present frankly and unabashedly on models supplied directly by the past" (p. 93). Sullivan (2006) succinctly captures this nostalgic tendency of conservatism when he writes, "All conservatism begins with loss" (p. 9). Indeed, a lament for the passing of the good old days is a prominent theme in right-wing rhetoric (Jendrysik, 2002), as can be observed in the titles of several popular books by conservative pundits and intellectuals, including William Bennett's *The De-Valuing of America* (1994), *The Death of Outrage* (1998), and *The Broken Hearth* (2001); Allan Bloom's *The Closing of*

² The label "conservative" is commonly used to refer to several different ideologies. Indeed, the New Right is an often tense marriage of distinct ideologies. One of the broadest distinctions within this movement, at least in the North American context, is the distinction between social and economic/libertarian conservatism (Klatch, 1991). Compared with economic/libertarian conservatives, social conservatives have a stronger commitment to traditional social norms and institutions and therefore are more likely to oppose reforms that introduce new norms or seek to reengineer basic institutions. Economic/libertarian conservatives often resist the conservative label in part because they do not share the traditional conservative's fear and distrust of social change, unless such change threatens the free market (e.g., Hayek 1960). Since our analysis concerns attitudes toward social change, we are mainly interested in the attitudes of social conservatives rather than those of economic conservatives. Thus, when we refer to conservatives in the text, we are referring primarily to social conservatives. We are also referring to conservatism in the political sense, not the psychological sense (see Jost et al., 2003).

the American Mind (1987); Robert Bork's *Slouching Towards Gomorrah* (1996); Patrick Buchanan's *The Death of the West* (2001); Francis Fukuyama's *The Great Disruption* (2000); Gertrude Himmelfarb's *The De-moralization of Society* (1996); Charles Murray's *Losing Ground* (1984); Kate O'Beirne's *Women Who Make the World Worse* (2005); and Diane West's *The Death of the Grown-up* (2007).

It is not just conservative elites who believe that society is on a rapid downward trajectory; rank-and-file conservatives share this view (Klatch, 1991). In a survey investigating the social sources of right-wing attitudes, Lipset and Raab (1970) noted that conservatives were more likely than liberals to agree that "morals are bad and getting worse" and "the U.S. is losing power." More recently, it has been demonstrated that right-wing authoritarianism, a construct consisting of conventionalism, submissiveness to traditional authority, and aggressiveness toward authority-sanctioned targets, correlates positively with scores on the dangerous world scale, which is comprised largely of statements about social decline (e.g. "If our society keeps degenerating the way it has been lately, it's liable to collapse like a rotten log and everything will be chaos.") (Altemeyer, 1988: $r = 0.50$; Duckitt, Wagner, du Plessis, & Birum, 2002: $r = 0.43$ in Study 1, $r = 0.45$ in Study 2).

Further evidence is found in nationally representative opinion surveys. For instance, in the 2000 National Election Study (Burns, Kinder, Rosenstone, Sapiro, & the NES, 2001) 80.2% of conservatives compared with only 59.4% of moderates, and 49.0% for liberals agreed that "the newer lifestyles are contributing to the breakdown of our society"; $\chi^2(2) = 67.87, p < .001$. Conservatives also seem to be more likely to perceive decline in national security. In the 2000 General Social Survey (Davis, Smith, & Marsden, 2000), 72.8% of conservatives compared with 65.5% of moderates, and 64.6% of liberals judged that the threat of terrorism by foreigners was greater than it had been 10 years ago; $\chi^2(2) = 7.77, p < .05$. When judging terrorism by U.S. citizens, 61.7% of conservatives compared with 53.2% of moderates, and 54.3% of liberals judged that the threat was greater than it had been 10 years ago; $\chi^2(2) = 7.45, p < .05$.

Ethnographic studies of conservative movements are another source of evidence linking conservatism to perceptions of social decline. In a study of social conservative women activists, Klatch (1987) notes that respondents made frequent reference to social decline to explain the underlying motives of their activism. For instance, one of Klatch's interviewees explained:

History has proven that a country can be destroyed by *moral decay*, from within. That's what's happening to this country today. . . . Why do you suppose that Rome crumbled? Because of moral decay. . . . The very poor and the very rich have always had loose morals. . . . But now it's Middle America, the mainstream. It's like a strong tree. It can withstand a lot, many things, but when you destroy its roots. . . . We're destroying the roots. (p. 26)

Complaints about moral and cultural decline were also at the heart of opposition to liberalism in the middle-class community studied by Rieder (1985), as the following interview excerpt illustrates:

We were strict, and we respected our parents, but now? This sexual permissiveness is disgraceful, it's like dogs in the street. . . . Back then we communicated with relatives, there was a terrific home life, but today they have the idiot box. We are losing respect for the family. . . . The way of living today, there are no values. People are drifting further and further apart. (pp. 133–134)

Themes of social decline are especially common in the rhetoric of the modern Christian right (Murphy, 2005a). Evangelical and fundamentalist Christian traditions often promote the view that moral decay is a consequence of the increasing exclusion of Christian values from the public square.³ Smith (1998) found that members of the more conservative evangelical and fundamentalist Protestant faiths were significantly more likely to agree that “Christian values are under serious attack today” and “We are seeing the breakdown of American society today” than were mainline and liberal Protestants. The worldview linking the perceived assault on Christian values with social and moral decay is illustrated in the following excerpt from an interview with a member of the Charismatic evangelical movement:

America started really turning away from Christianity back when Darwinism and evolution came in. Then they took the Bible out of the schools and ever since it seems like America has gone downhill. There used to be higher family values, higher morals, whereas today, you know, anything goes! Even twenty to thirty years ago it was quite different. It is gradually getting worse and worse and worse. (Smith, 1998, p. 137)

These correlational and qualitative findings support an association between conservative attitudes and the belief that society is declining, but they do not illuminate the dynamics of this association. Recent experimental studies provide more definitive evidence that the perception of social decline can influence people to become more conservative. For instance, Duckitt and Fisher (2003) found that people expressed more right-wing authoritarian attitudes after reading about a hypothetical future in which social stability had declined than when they read about a hypothetical future in which conditions had become more secure and another condition in which they read

³ Although religious fundamentalism and political conservatism are often overlapping ideologies, important distinctions exist. In particular, although the religiously orthodox, including fundamentalists, tend to take conservative stances on most social issues, they are sometimes more economically liberal than moral and religious progressives (Davis & Robinson, 1996, 1999, 2006).

about a future that was very similar to the present. Moreover, the effect of information about change in social conditions on authoritarian attitudes was mediated by the effect of this information on participants' scores on the belief in a dangerous world scale. In another study participants adopted a more punitive law enforcement stance typical of political conservatives after they read a story about a community in which crime and disorder had increased over time, compared with a control condition in which they read about a relatively stable community (Tetlock et al., 2007).

We recently conducted a study to further test whether a worldview emphasizing social decline can cause people to become more conservative. Specifically, we predicted that experimentally inducing people to endorse statements about social decline would change their political self-perceptions, causing them to see themselves as less liberal. Adult participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions designed to manipulate their agreement with statements about decline. We adapted a procedure in which the wording of statements is manipulated to force agreement or disagreement and thereby influence participants' self-perceptions (e.g., Andersen, Lazowski, & Donisi, 1986; Monin & Miller, 2001). In the *implausible decline* condition, participants read and evaluated statements about social decline that were so extreme that a reasonable person would be forced to reject them (e.g., "All aspects of the world today are more dangerous than when I was a child"). In the *plausible decline* condition, participants read and evaluated statements about social decline paralleling those in the *implausible decline* condition, but in this case they were phrased so mildly that a reasonable person would be forced to endorse them (e.g., "Some aspects of the world today are more dangerous than when I was a child").

After recording their agreement/disagreement with the statements in their assigned condition, participants rated their own political identification on a scale ranging from *very conservative* (coded -3) to *very liberal* (coded +3), and they also rated their likelihood of voting for a conservative versus a liberal candidate in an election on a scale ranging from *very likely to vote conservative* (coded -3) to *very likely to vote liberal* (coded +3). Scores on these two scales were significantly correlated ($r(88) = 0.75, p < .05$), and they were averaged together for an overall index of political attitudes. As predicted, participants in the *plausible decline* condition judged themselves to be significantly less liberal ($M = 0.46$) than participants in the *implausible decline* condition ($M = 1.07; t(88) = 2.14, p < .05$).

It may seem counterintuitive that participants were less liberal after being exposed to mild declensionist rhetoric than they were after being exposed to more extreme declensionist rhetoric. However, this finding is consistent with self-perception theory (Bem, 1972), which emphasizes that it is not the

information people are exposed to, but rather their behavioral reaction to the information that changes their attitudes. In our study, participants in the *implausible decline* condition were exposed to declensionist rhetoric that they could easily reject because it was so extreme, whereas in the *plausible decline* condition, participants were forced to agree with the milder declensionist rhetoric. And having agreed with these sentiments about decline they were then more accepting of conservatism.

WHY ARE PERCEPTIONS OF DECLINE LINKED TO CONSERVATISM?

The belief that social conditions are declining may influence people to become more conservative because decline represents a threat to the social order, and conservatism is often a psychological reaction to such threats (Duckitt, 2001; Jost et al., 2003; Sales, 1972). Right-wing authoritarian attitudes, in particular, are founded on a worldview that emphasizes the ubiquity of social threats and the corresponding need for assertive mechanisms of social control to keep deviance in check (Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt & Fisher, 2003). This is also consistent with Tetlock's social-functional framework, which hypothesizes that perceived threats to the social order motivate people to adopt a more conservative approach to controlling deviance (Tetlock, 2002).

At first glance, the emphasis on social decline may seem inconsistent with preference for the status quo, which is a core feature of conservative ideology (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost et al., 2003). However, by pointing to the alleged destabilizing effects of past social reforms, conservative emphasis on decline may function to defend the status quo from further reforms and "social experiments" (Hirschman, 1991). Moreover, conservative movements occasionally do overtly challenge the existing system (Jost et al., 2003), often in an effort to restore traditional social hierarchies, as in the George Wallace movement (Carter, 2000). An emphasis on social decline may be especially pronounced in these more reactionary versions of conservatism.

The conservative goals of shoring up the traditional social order may seem more sensible to people when they believe that society has lost its moral compass and is drifting toward chaos. Conservative social movements can attract popular support by giving voice to widespread perceptions of decline and offering political remedies. Throughout American history, from the jeremiads of Puritan preachers to Prohibitionism in the early 20th century to the family values campaigns of recent years, reactionary movements have voiced concerns about social and moral decline (Morone, 2003). The rhetoric of decline has also played a prominent role in right-wing movements in other settings. For example, the European eugenics movements in the early

20th century sought to reverse what appeared to be ominous trends toward cultural degeneracy (Schneider, 1991). Concerns about cultural decay also played a role in the rise of Nazism (Stern, 1974). In a study of essays written by 581 early Nazis explaining the motives and circumstances that drew them into the movement, Merkl (1975) found that the decline of German culture was a prominent theme in many essays. The following excerpt from a Nazi essay illustrates this theme:

Whatever virtues were once found among the Germans seemed to have sunk once and for all into the muddy flood. . . . Promiscuity, shamelessness, and corruption ruled supreme. German women seemed to have forgotten their German ways. German men seemed to have forgotten their sense of honor and honesty. Jewish writers and the Jewish press could "go to town" with impunity, dragging everything into the dirt. (p. 173)

A social movement that can represent itself as a response to social decline may have an edge in the competition for public attention because it is able to take advantage of the exaggerated perceptions of decline that people typically experience when they mistake changes in their own perspectives for changes in the external world. Social movements are more successful to the extent that their framings of problems resonate with people's preexisting beliefs and experiences (Babb, 1996; McVeigh, 2004; Snow & Benford, 1988). Our research examining the biases that lead people to mistake changes in themselves for changes in the external world helps explain why decline is such an effective master frame for social conservative movements. The proposition that disorder is increasing is easy for people to believe, because many have undergone changes that enhance the salience of threats to their families and communities, and they ordinarily fail to appreciate the extent to which such personal changes have altered their perceptions. This process produces exaggerated perceptions of decline that conservative movements are able to effectively align with their agenda of defending or restoring traditional social arrangements.

Emphasis on social decline may also offer advantages to conservative movements because decline represents a loss frame, and the motivation to prevent or undo losses is typically more powerful than the motivation to seek gains (Kahneman & Tversky, 1984; Snow, Cress, Downey, & Jones, 1998). The same social change appears more substantial when it is framed as a loss than when it is framed as a gain (Eibach & Keegan, 2006), and people are often willing to take more extreme actions to prevent or undo losses than to achieve new gains (Jervis, 2004; Snow, Cress, Downey, & Jones, 1998). For example, people will cheat on their taxes to avoid financial losses (Robben et al., 1990), and they are willing to make trade-offs involving otherwise protected values in order to avert social losses (Ritov & Baron, 1999). The belief

that extreme actions are justified to combat social decline was emphasized by Eric Rudolph, the Olympic Park bomber, explaining his motives for waging a campaign of terror against abortion clinics and gay bars: "The decision to act was the result of many years of my being confronted with the decline of Western civilization and the realization that only radical action would slow or halt this decline" (quoted in Vollers, 2006, p. 302).

Although the ability to represent their policies as remedies for social decline offers many advantages for conservative movements, it also entails certain vulnerabilities. Specifically, if the illusion of decline that forms a basis of support for conservative movements often is the product of a judgmental bias, then measures that correct that bias may dispel the illusion and thereby undermine the persuasiveness of movements founded on that illusion. The following section reviews a preliminary attempt to test whether interventions that prevent people from mistaking changes in themselves for changes in the external world can reduce the exaggerated perceptions of moral decline that are often prominent themes in conservative discourse.

CHALLENGING THE IDEOLOGY OF THE GOOD OLD DAYS

If the failure to consider self-change as a source of changing perceptions influences people to exaggerate social decline, then one strategy for counteracting these exaggerated perceptions is to direct the perceiver's attention to relevant self-changes. As we explained earlier, people are unlikely to spontaneously consider the influence of self-changes because they tend to be naïve realists. However, it may be possible to induce people to take into account relevant self-changes by instructing them to reflect on changes in their own perspectives before they evaluate changes in the external world. We tested this hypothesis in a study in which adult participants, who were recruited while attending reunion events at a northeastern U.S. university, judged whether present-day adolescents were more, less, or as moral as adolescents in the participant's own generation. Participants' judgments of moral change were recorded on a scale ranging from -4 (*adolescents in my day were much less moral*) to $+4$ (*adolescents in my day were much more moral*). Half of the participants were assigned to reflect on how their own perspectives on morality had changed since adolescence, immediately before they evaluated changes in the morality of adolescents. This reflection on self-change was designed to prompt participants to consider changes in their own perspectives as a possible cause of their perceptions of moral decline. The remaining participants were assigned to a control condition in which they were not prompted to consider changes in their own moral perspectives before evaluating changes in adolescent morality. Finally, after judging change in adolescent morality,

participants in both conditions evaluated the persuasiveness of three mildly conservative arguments that attributed moral decline to inadequate discipline, lack of upstanding role models, and the corrupting effects of popular entertainment. Persuasiveness judgments were made on a scale ranging from -4 (*very unpersuasive*) to $+4$ (*very persuasive*).

Participants who were induced to reflect on self-change judged that the morality of adolescents had declined significantly less ($M = -0.05$) than did participants in the control condition ($M = 1.17$; $t(34) = 2.19$, $p < .05$). As a consequence of their greater skepticism about moral decline, participants who reflected on self-change judged the conservative explanations of moral decline to be less persuasive ($M = -1.24$) than did participants in the control condition ($M = -0.26$; $t(34) = 2.11$, $p < .05$). Finally, in the sample as a whole, perceptions of moral decline were significantly correlated with judgments of the persuasiveness of explanations of decline ($r(34) = 0.33$, $p = .05$). These results support our hypothesis that it is the failure to take into account relevant changes in their own perspectives that causes people to develop exaggerated perceptions of decline. The fact that participants found conservative explanations of moral decline less persuasive when they took into account their own changed perspectives suggests that enhancing people's awareness of the perceptual consequences of their own personal changes might be a useful strategy for counteracting ideological interpretations of social decline.

CONCLUSION

The illusion that conditions are declining is often compelling, as David Hume (1777/1987) emphasized, writing, "The humour of blaming the present, and admiring the past, is strongly rooted in human nature, and has an influence even on persons endued with the profoundest judgment and most extensive learning." Hume attributed this illusion to human nature, but a modern social-cognitive analysis allows us to specify the underlying mechanisms more precisely. We provided evidence that exaggerated impressions of social decline are, in part, a product of the human tendency to mistake changes in one's own perspective for changes in the external world. Our research suggests that the illusion of decline is so compelling to people because something truly has changed—namely, their own perspectives. People can honestly claim to see more crime, disorder, and immorality in the world today than they did growing up. However, they fail to realize that they are seeing more of these things because they themselves are different now: now they are worried parents while then they were carefree teenagers, or now they have adult responsibilities while then they were free to explore life's opportunities.

Theory and research has often emphasized how ideology can be a source of biased perceptions (Bem, 1993; Boudon, 1989). Our research looks at the relationship between ideology and bias from the reverse angle, examining how ideologies exploit and give political meaning to preexisting biases in perceptions of social conditions. Specifically, we find that when people fail to realize that personal changes are the source of their perceptions of decline, they are receptive to conservative movements that treat these perceptions as though they are real, offering their own explanations for decline and proposing reactionary solutions. Nostalgia for the good old days may be a phenomenon rooted in illusion, but it is a common and often deeply felt experience that lends itself to ideological elaboration and political exploitation.

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PART VII

**Implications for Self,
Group, and Society**

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Group Status and Feelings of Personal Entitlement: The Roles of Social Comparison and System-Justifying Beliefs

Laurie T. O'Brien and Brenda Major

Abstract

The present chapter examines the relationship between group status and feelings of personal entitlement. We consider two mechanisms that affect feelings of personal entitlement: social comparison processes and system justification. Biases to compare one's outcomes with the outcomes of similar others and with one's own past outcomes lead to different reference standards for people from high-status versus low-status groups. The use of different reference standards creates group differences in feelings of personal entitlement. *System-justifying beliefs* (SJBs) are belief systems that justify hierarchical and unequal relationships among groups in society. System-justifying beliefs lead to the inference that groups that possess more social goods (high-status groups) must have greater inputs (e.g., intelligence, skill) than groups with fewer social goods (low-status groups). The inference that high-status groups have more inputs than low-status groups may lead to the belief that they deserve greater outcomes, and thus increase feelings of personal entitlement among members of high-status groups and decrease entitlement among members of low-status groups. We describe our recent program of research on the role of SJBs in creating group differences in personal entitlement. Finally, we discuss potential strategies for eliminating group differences in personal entitlement and directions for future research.

In virtually all societies, inequalities exist among social groups in the distribution of tangible and intangible social goods. Compared to low-status groups, high-status groups have greater access to material goods, such as land, money, food, and medical care, and social goods, such as political authority, power, and respect. An enduring question for political philosophers, sociologists, and psychologists is how these inequalities are maintained and perpetuated. Beliefs about entitlement and deservingness are essential elements of this process (Crosby, 1982; Lerner, 1987; Major, 1994).

Entitlement and deservingness are affectively laden cognitive judgments that someone, or some category of people, should receive a particular set of

outcomes by virtue of *who they are* (entitlement) or *what they have done* (deserving). People will judge an individual as receiving what he or she deserves when that individual's inputs are proportional to his or her outcomes. The term *inputs* describes an individual's contribution to a task, whereas the term *outcomes* refers to the consequences that an individual receives in exchange for his or her inputs (Walster, Berscheid, & Walster, 1973). The perception of behavioral inputs is highly influenced by the social groups to which people belong (Ridgeway, 2001). Therefore, judgments of entitlement and deservingness are closely intertwined. Furthermore, violations of deserving and entitlement lead to similar emotions. For these reasons, we use the terms entitlement and deservingness interchangeably (Major, 1994; but see Feather, 2002).

In this chapter, we begin by reviewing the research on the relationship between group status and entitlement. We consider two mechanisms that impact feelings of personal entitlement: social comparison processes and system justification. We describe our recent program of research on the role of system-justifying beliefs (SJBs) in creating group differences in personal entitlement. Finally, we discuss potential strategies for eliminating group differences in personal entitlement.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF GROUP STATUS FOR BELIEFS ABOUT ENTITLEMENT/DESERVINGNESS

Beliefs about personal entitlement and deservingness develop within social contexts that reward people differently on the basis of the social groups to which they belong (Ridgeway, 2001). For example, even after controlling for academic achievement, women and ethnic minorities earn less money than men and White people (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Unequal outcomes can affect beliefs about relative inputs through a number of processes. Cognitive biases, such as outcome bias, lead people to attribute characteristics to people that correspond to the outcomes that those people generate (Allison, Mackie, & Messick, 1996). Thus, it is not surprising that people who belong to some social categories (e.g., men and Whites) are widely perceived to be more socially worthy and competent than are those who belong to other categories (e.g., women and ethnic minorities, Jackman, 1994). In terms of entitlement theory, because of their greater assumed inputs, the former are seen as deserving of greater outcomes.

Pay differences between groups can also affect assumptions about relative inputs through status construction processes (Ridgeway, 2001). According to status construction theory, the mere recognition of a pay difference associated with group membership is enough to make people believe that the higher-paid group is more competent and worthy than a lower-paid group

(Ridgeway, 1991; Ridgeway, 2001). In one study, participants were randomly assigned to minimal groups. In the low-pay condition, participants learned that they and other members of their group were paid less compared to the other group. In the high-pay condition, participants learned that they and their group members were paid more than the participants from the other group. Next, participants engaged in dyadic interactions with confederates whom they believed to be members of the other group. Participants in the low-pay condition came to believe their group was less competent and lower in status (Ridgeway, Boyle, Kuipers, & Robinson, 1998). The mutually reinforcing nature of the relationship between status and entitlement helps to explain why status differences between groups are stable and difficult to change.

Unequal treatment of social groups can alter what people feel they personally deserve to receive (Major, 1994). Members of low-status groups, who regularly receive a disproportionately small portion of material and social goods, can come to believe they deserve less than members of high-status groups. In contrast, members of high-status and advantaged groups, who regularly receive all the benefits associated with their status, can come to believe they deserve more than members of low-status groups.

To date, the most direct evidence that group status affects perceptions of personal entitlement comes from research on gender differences in entitlement to pay (see Major, 1994 for a review). This research suggests that men experience an elevated sense of personal entitlement compared to women (Blanton, George, & Crocker, 2001; Bylsma & Major, 1992; Callahan-Levy & Messé, 1979; Crosby, 1982; Jost, 1997; Major, McFarlin, & Gagnon, 1984; Pelham & Hetts, 2001). In one study, Major and colleagues assigned male and female college students to work on a clerical task for 20 minutes (Major et al., 1984). Afterwards, under private conditions, participants were given \$4 in change and asked to pay themselves the amount that they thought was fair for their work. Male participants paid themselves over \$3 on average, whereas female participants paid themselves less than \$2, suggesting that, when men and women's actual inputs are equal, men believe they are entitled to greater outcomes (see Callahan-Levy and Messé, 1979, for similar findings). In a follow-up study, men and women were paid \$4 and asked to do as much work as they thought was fair in exchange for the payment they had received. Men worked for significantly shorter periods of time, did less work, and did less accurate work than women (Study 2, Major et al., 1984). This study suggests that, when men and women's outcomes are equal, men believe that they should contribute fewer inputs than women.

Status differences in feelings of personal entitlement affect cognition, emotion, and behavior. Gender differences in entitlement for pay have been proposed to underlie the "paradoxical contentment" displayed by working

women, who often report being just as content with their incomes as working men, despite the fact that they are paid less (Crosby, 1982). The belief that one is entitled to more than others may lead people to negotiate for higher salaries and to feel dissatisfied or angered when they fail to receive what they believe is their due. Feelings of personal entitlement can lead members of high-status groups to be blind to seeing when they are unfairly over-benefited, allow them to justify their privileged position, and lead them to regard efforts to “level the playing field” as grossly unjust. In contrast, a depressed sense of entitlement among members of low-status groups may prevent members of low-status groups from seeing when they are targets of discrimination (Major et al., 2002) and reduce the likelihood that they will engage in collective action to challenge the distribution of social goods (Crosby, 1982; Hafer & Olson, 1993). In this way, group differences in feelings of personal entitlement serve to perpetuate and maintain social inequality.

In the remainder of this chapter, we focus on social comparison processes and SJBs, which are two mechanisms through which group differences in status can be translated into group difference in feelings of personal entitlement.

The Role of Social Comparison

Biases to compare with others like the self and with one’s own past outcomes lead members of high- and low-status groups to derive and use different standards of comparison when evaluating their outcomes. In the case of gender, men and women prefer to compare their own outcomes to the outcomes of other members of their sex. Major and Forcey (1985) randomly assigned men and women to work on one of three different jobs. After working on the task, participants were all paid an identical wage. Next, participants were asked their preference for seeing the average wage for men, women, or the combined average for men and women. Participants also had to decide if they wanted to see these averages for people who performed the same job or one of the other jobs. The vast majority of participants chose to see the average wage for people of the same sex who performed the same job. This research demonstrates that people have a preference for intragroup as opposed to intergroup comparison.

This intragroup comparison bias can lead to lower reference standards when one’s own group is disadvantaged. In a study by Major and Testa (1989), participants worked on one of two tasks and were then privately paid an identical wage. They were then given the opportunity to see the wage received by one other student who had presumably participated in the experiment earlier. They could select this student from a list of eight participants—two males and two females for each of the two jobs. Unbeknownst to the participants, in one job, the pay to males was higher than that to females, whereas in the other

job, this pattern was reversed. Participants were given the wage information corresponding to whatever comparison target they had selected. They then indicated how much pay they thought others had received (comparison standards), how much pay they felt was fair for them to receive (personal entitlement), and how satisfied they were with their own pay.

Over 90% of participants chose to see the wage of a same-sex, same-job other. Because of this intragroup comparison bias, those assigned to a job in which their own sex was disadvantaged had a lower reference standard for pay than those assigned to a job in which their own sex was advantaged. Finally, those in the “disadvantaged” group experienced a lower sense of personal entitlement and were more satisfied with the wage they received.

In addition to a preference for intragroup social comparison, people are also affected by a tendency to compare their present outcomes with their past outcomes. Feelings of entitlement to pay are derived from the pay one has received in the past (Pelham & Hetts, 2001). People who have a history of being underpaid for their work will use different standards for evaluating the outcomes that they deserve than do people with a history of being overpaid for their work. Thus, differing standards can prevent people from becoming aware of their relative positions of advantage and disadvantage and can lead the disadvantaged to feel content with their disadvantage.

Biases in the construction of comparison standards can create and reinforce group differences in entitlement between low- and high-status groups. Because these comparison biases lead disadvantaged groups to feel satisfied with receiving less, the end result is that the current social system becomes justified in the minds of its participants. An important avenue for future research is to assess whether these comparison biases are affected by system justification motives (Jost & Banaji, 1994). In situations in which individuals are motivated to justify the social system, the choice of an intragroup as opposed to an intergroup comparison would satisfy this motivation. Major (1994) has argued that if people from low-status groups think outcome differences among groups are justified, they will be more likely to estimate their personal entitlement on the basis of intragroup rather than intergroup comparisons. In contrast, if people from low-status groups think outcome differences among groups are unjustified, they may be more likely to estimate their personal entitlement on the basis of intergroup, as opposed to intragroup, comparisons.

SYSTEM-JUSTIFYING BELIEFS

The second process proposed to lead to status-linked differences in personal deserving operates through SJBs (Major, 1994). Although a substantial

amount of research has examined how social comparison processes affect perceptions of deservingness, relatively little research has examined how SJBs affect perceptions of deservingness. Recent research from our laboratories aims to fill the gap in our understanding of how group status and SJBs affect perceptions of personal entitlement and deservingness (O'Brien & Major, 2006).

System-justifying beliefs are belief systems that justify hierarchical and unequal relationships among groups in society (Jost & Hunyady, 2002; O'Brien & Major, 2005). Different cultures have different belief systems to justify social inequality (e.g., the caste system in India). In the United States, examples of SJBs include the Protestant work ethic and beliefs in a just world, meritocracy, personal control, and individual mobility (Crandall & Eshelman, 2003; Lerner, 1980; Major et al., 2002; Major, Kaiser, O'Brien, & McCoy, 2007; Weber 1904/1958). These belief systems justify the social system by explaining differences in the distribution of social and material goods in terms of differences in individual effort, talent, and merit and by holding people responsible for their outcomes (Crandall, 1994; Furnham, 1990; Lerner, 1980; Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Major, 1994).

Although individuals differ in the extent to which they endorse them, SJBs are widely endorsed by individuals of all levels of social status (Crandall, 1994; Furnham & Proctor, 1989; Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Kluegel & Smith, 1986). The apparent consensus of these beliefs gives them social validity in the eyes of those who encounter them (Ridgeway, 2001; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Thus, SJBs gain their power to legitimize social inequality through their presumed collective endorsement within a culture (Major, 1994).

Justice scholars have offered three major explanations for why people endorse SJBs. First, people have a natural tendency to assume that what "is" is what "ought" to be (Heider, 1958). This tendency is commonly known as the *naturalistic fallacy*. Cognitive biases, such as the naturalistic fallacy and other status quo biases, lead people to assume that existing social hierarchies are good, and better than any possible alternatives (Eidelman & Crandall, this volume). Second, people are motivated to endorse SJBs because of a psychological need to believe that the world at large is a just and fair place (e.g., Jost & Banaji, 1994; Lerner, 1980). By legitimizing the social hierarchy, SJBs help individuals to maintain their belief that the world is a fair, predictable place. Third, high-status groups endorse SJBs because they reinforce their relatively privileged position in society (Jost, Burgess, & Mosso, 2001; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). People from high-status groups have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. They also have the power and means to see that SJBs are prominently represented in the culture and that they are the prevailing explanations for social inequality.

Scholars have speculated that SJBs play a role in maintaining group differences in feelings of entitlement (Major, 1994; Jost & Hunyady, 2002). System-justifying beliefs may lead people to infer that groups that possess more social goods (high-status groups) must have greater inputs (e.g., intelligence, skill) than groups with fewer social goods (low-status groups) (Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Major, 1994; O'Brien & Major, 2006; Ridgeway, 2001). The inference that high-status groups have more inputs than low-status groups may lead to the conclusion that high-status groups deserve greater outcomes than low-status groups. Consequently, even when people from low-status groups become aware of their own position of relative advantage or disadvantage, they may nonetheless appraise it as fair if they endorse SJBs.

System-justifying beliefs are thought to create group differences in perceived entitlement by enhancing the degree to which differential outcomes are seen as legitimate reflections of differential inputs. This leads to the hypothesis that SJBs will increase the sense of entitlement among people from higher-status groups and decrease the sense of entitlement among people from lower-status groups (Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Major, 1994). Some preliminary data consistent with the hypothesis that SJBs will decrease the sense of entitlement among people from low-status groups comes from work by Hafer and Olson (1989). Participants were denied an opportunity to obtain "bonus points" on a computer task that would have helped them to obtain a desirable outcome. On a subsequent questionnaire that purportedly provided the psychology department with feedback about the experiment, participants were asked to rate the fairness of the procedures used to assign bonus points. The belief in a just world, one type of SJB, was positively related to the perceived fairness of the procedures. Thus, under conditions of personal deprivation, a condition similar to that which people from low-status groups experience, the belief in a just world was related to perceptions of fairness. In the following sections, we describe two studies that more directly examine the effect of SJBs and group status on entitlement (O'Brien & Major, 2006).

Endorsement of System-Justifying Beliefs and Personal Entitlement

In an initial test of this hypothesis, we measured individual differences in endorsement of SJBs and examined how these beliefs interacted with group status to predict entitlement to pay. We predicted that the more men endorsed SJBs, the more pay they would feel entitled to receive for their work. In contrast, we predicted that the more women endorsed SJBs, the less pay they would feel entitled to receive for their work.

An experimenter approached 57 participants on the campus of the University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB) and asked them to complete a

short questionnaire. The questionnaire contained a short vignette that asked them to imagine that a professor hired them to work on a data entry project. Participants then indicated how much they deserved to be paid for the summer job. In addition, participants completed a shortened measure of SJBs adapted from O'Brien and Major (2005).

The results of the study were consistent with predictions. As expected, the more men endorsed SJBs, the greater their entitlement to pay for the summer job ($\beta = .36, p < .05$), whereas the more women endorsed SJBs, the lower their entitlement to pay for the summer job ($\beta = -.35, p < .07$).

Interestingly, we did not find gender differences in entitlement overall. The traditional gender difference in entitlement only emerged among individuals who strongly endorsed SJBs. The main effect of gender on entitlement may not have been significant because this study examined hypothetical future work, rather than work that has already been performed. Blanton and colleagues found that women were more likely to exhibit depressed entitlement relative to men for past work than for future work (Blanton et al., 2001). Integrating cognitive dissonance and system justification theories, they hypothesized that women would be more likely to exhibit depressed entitlement for past work than for future work, because the need to engage in effort justification applies to past, but not future work. Consistent with their hypotheses, they found that women paid themselves less money than men in a "past work" condition, but not in a "future work" condition. Realizing that they cannot change the past, women may be more likely to accept and rationalize the past than they are to justify outcomes that have not yet occurred. Thus, the hypothetical nature of this study may explain why there was no overall gender difference in entitlement. However, it is important to note that group status still interacted with individual differences in SJBs to affect entitlement in this hypothetical scenario, even in the absence of overall gender differences.

Although this initial study provided support for our hypotheses, the correlational nature of the study did not allow conclusions about the causal relationship between SJBs and entitlement. Therefore, we conducted another study in which we manipulated the salience of system justification motives and followed up on some of the ideas from our initial study.

Salience of System Justifying Beliefs and Personal Entitlement

Our second study on the relationship between SJBs and personal entitlement attempted to improve upon our first study in several ways (O'Brien & Major, 2006). First, in addition to asking participants how much they deserved to be paid for their work, participants were also asked to pay themselves a "bonus pay." Second, instead of asking participants to imagine working at a

summer job, participants actually performed work in the laboratory. Based on Blanton and colleagues' research (2001), we hypothesized that a gender difference in entitlement would emerge under conditions in which participants actually worked, instead of imagined hypothetical, future work as they did in our previously described study. Consistent with research by Major and colleagues (1984), we hypothesized that women would pay themselves less for their work.

Finally, and most importantly, instead of measuring endorsement of SJBs as an individual difference variable, we manipulated the salience of SJBs using a priming methodology developed by McCoy and Major (2007) that activates meritocratic beliefs. In the United States, meritocratic beliefs are one of the most powerful types of SJBs. If the status hierarchy is based on merit, the logical inference is that those who have higher status must also be more talented, valuable, hardworking, or in other ways more meritorious than those who have lower status. Meritocracy cues are ubiquitous in American society. From media advertisements (e.g., Nike's "Just do it" advertising campaign) to children's stories (e.g., *The Little Engine that Could*: "I think I can"), most Americans are regularly exposed to the central message that individual advancement is possible for anyone through hard work and talent. The pervasiveness of this message in American society means that most Americans are aware of meritocratic beliefs, even if they do not personally endorse them. Therefore, their thoughts, feelings, and behavior may be influenced by this message whenever cues in the environment (e.g., motivational posters, advertisements, etc.) make it salient. McCoy and Major (2007) demonstrated that when the belief in meritocracy is activated, people are more likely to engage in system-justifying behaviors. Thus, our second study examined the effect of situationally activating meritocratic beliefs, a type of SJB, on the experience of entitlement among men and women. We hypothesized that the SJB prime would increase the sense of entitlement for men, but decrease the sense of entitlement for women.

Forty college students at the University of California Santa Barbara agreed to participate in exchange for \$8, which they were paid immediately upon their arrival. After participants were paid, we asked them to work on a clerical task for 20 minutes. After 20 minutes, the experimenter stopped the participants and told them that it was time to move on to the second task, a scrambled sentence task that contained the prime manipulation. This prime was developed by McCoy and Major (2007) and requires participants to unscramble 20 sets of five words into four-word sentences (see also Bargh & Chartrand, 2000; Srull & Wyer, 1979). These sentences unscrambled to make SJBs or neutral content salient. For example, in the SJB prime condition, sample word sets include "effort positive prosperity leads to" (unscrambled to

“effort leads to prosperity”) and “deserve people rich house it” (unscrambled to “rich people deserve it.”). Participants in the neutral condition unscrambled sentences that were unrelated to SJBs (e.g., “a compute time calculator saves” and “cakes she fluffy likes cats”). Participants were told to notify the experimenter once they had unscrambled all 20 sentences. After participants completed the prime manipulation, they completed a short questionnaire that asked participants to indicate the hourly pay that they deserved for the kind of work they had just completed. In addition, participants were also given an opportunity to pay themselves bonus pay. The experimenter gave participants an envelope containing four \$1 bills and four quarters. The experimenter told participants to read the instructions inside the envelope and then left the room. The instructions told participants to “take what you think is fair for the work you completed. Please pay yourself the money that you feel you deserve.” Afterwards, participants put the envelope with any remaining change in a folder full of other envelopes. Thus, we made every effort to lead participants to believe that the amount of bonus pay that they paid themselves would be anonymous.

Consistent with predictions, the SJB prime interacted with participant gender to affect self-reported entitlement. Men said that they deserved significantly more hourly pay when they were primed with SJBs than in the control condition ($F(1, 36) = 5.27, p < .05$). In contrast, women said that they deserved less pay in the SJB prime condition than in the control condition, although this difference was not statistically significant. Contrary to our predictions, but consistent with the previous study we described, in the control condition there were no gender differences between men and women in self-reported entitlement. It was only in the SJB prime condition that gender differences in self-reported entitlement emerged.

We also examined the bonus pay that participants paid themselves. To correct for individual differences in work performed, we created an average bonus pay variable by dividing the total bonus pay that participants took by the units of work they completed. The pattern of results for average bonus pay differed from the pattern of results for self-reported entitlement. First, there was a significant main effect of gender, such that women gave themselves less average bonus pay than men. Second, to our surprise, the interaction between gender and SJB prime was not significant. These differences between average bonus pay and self-reported entitlement were particularly surprising in light of the fact that other research suggested that behavioral and self-report measures of entitlement are related (Pelham & Hetts, 2001). Social psychologists often view behavioral measures as superior to self-report measures (e.g., Crosby, Bromley, & Saxe, 1980). However, in this case, self-reports may actually be a purer measure of entitlement. Other than the

motivation to engage in socially desirable responding, participants have little incentive to lie about self-reported entitlement. In contrast, in addition to entitlement and social desirability concerns, participants' motivations to take the bonus pay may also be affected by other factors such as how much they need or desire the money. Therefore, the behavioral measure may be subject to more sources of error, which may explain why the SJB prime manipulation did not impact the behavioral measure. More research is needed to shed light on the relationship between self-report and behavioral measures of entitlement.

Summary

O'Brien and Major (2006) reported two studies generally supporting the hypothesis that SJBs will interact with group status to impact the sense of entitlement. An initial study showed that the more a man endorsed SJBs, the more pay he felt entitled to receive for a summer job. However, the more a woman endorsed SJBs, the less pay she felt entitled to receive for a summer job. A follow-up study showed that situationally activating SJBs had a similar impact on self-reported personal entitlement. Men believed that they deserved greater hourly pay for their work on a laboratory task when SJBs were salient relative to a control condition. Women believed that they deserved less hourly pay for their work when SJBs were salient relative to a control, although for women this effect did not achieve statistical significance.

Strategies for Reducing Group Differences in Entitlement

Many scholars have argued that group differences in feelings of personal entitlement help to perpetuate and maintain inequalities in the distribution of wealth (Major, 1994; Olson & Hafer, 2001; Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Ridgeway, 2001). Decreasing group differences in personal entitlement may help reduce widespread inequalities in the distribution of wealth by increasing discontent among the underprivileged and increasing their willingness to voice protest. One path to decreased group differences in entitlement may be through personal rejection of SJBs. Hafer and Olson (1993) conducted a longitudinal survey of a group of working women in Canada who ranged from low-wage clerical workers to higher-wage teachers and administrators. At time 1, researchers measured the strength of participants' belief in a just world. One month later, participants completed a self-report measure of whether or not they had performed behaviors directed at improving their own job status (e.g., "obtained information about courses I can take to improve my professional qualifications") and improving the status of working women within the previous month (e.g., "argued in favor of giving women special opportunities for jobs"). The more women rejected the belief in a just

world, the more likely they were to have taken assertive actions to improve both their own situation and the situation of women in general.

We believe these findings may be explained by the impact of SJBs on feelings of personal entitlement—when people feel they are not getting what they deserve, they are more likely to engage in personal or collective protest. The research we described earlier demonstrated that the traditional gender difference in feelings of entitlement only emerged among individuals who strongly endorsed SJBs (O'Brien & Major, 2006, Study 1). Women who rejected SJBs tended to have feelings of personal entitlement equal to or greater than their male counterparts.

Furthermore, removing system-justifying cues from the environment may also help to reduce the impact of system justification processes on group differences in feelings of personal entitlement. In our research, we found that gender differences in feelings of personal entitlement only emerged under conditions in which participants were exposed to system-justifying cues. Under control conditions in which these cues were absent, there were no gender differences.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Most of the research to date on status differences in entitlement has focused on gender. An important issue to address for future research is whether or not race and ethnicity impact entitlement in a similar manner as gender. Major (1994) hypothesized that group differences in outcomes are a necessary precondition for the emergence of group differences in entitlement. Like women, ethnic minorities are underpaid for their work relative to the high-status group; however, the pay gap between men and women is larger than the pay gap between ethnic minorities and whites (e.g., Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Moreover, ethnic minorities such as African Americans and Latino Americans are more likely than women to reject SJBs (Major, 1994; O'Brien & Major, 2005). Finally, many African Americans believe that their economic conditions are the result of discrimination (Sigelman & Welch, 1991; Kluegel & Smith, 1986). These factors suggest that ethnic differences in entitlement may be smaller than gender differences in entitlement, but definitive research in this area is desperately needed. Given the results of O'Brien and Major's research (2006), even if there are no overall ethnic differences in feelings of entitlement, ethnic differences in feelings of entitlement may emerge among individuals who strongly endorse SJBs and in circumstances in which situational cues activate SJBs.

In the present chapter, we have examined how SJBs perpetuate and maintain group differences in entitlement. The belief systems on which we

have focused all center on one core belief—the belief that we live in a meritocratic system that rewards individual differences in talent and effort. We chose to focus on these merit-reinforcing beliefs because they form the basis of the dominant ideology in America (Kluegel & Smith, 1986). Recent research, however, suggests that SJBs can take different forms (Jost & Kay, 2005; Kay & Jost, 2003; Kay et al., 2007). For example, Kay and colleagues have shown that compensatory stereotypes such as the “poor but happy” stereotype and the “dumb blonde” stereotype may also justify inequality by encouraging people not to worry about group differences in outcomes by reassuring them that “no one has it all.” Compensatory stereotypes typically depict high- and low-status groups as possessing their own unique strengths and weaknesses. For example, men are stereotyped as being agentic, but not communal, whereas women are stereotyped as being communal, but not agentic (Rudman & Glick, 2001).

To our knowledge, past research has not examined how compensatory stereotypes may affect personal entitlement among members of high- and low-status groups. We suspect that, like other SJBs, compensatory stereotypes may increase personal entitlement among members of high-status groups and decrease personal entitlement among members of low-status groups. High-status groups are typically stereotyped as being high in competence (although low in warmth), which may lead them to feel entitled to greater monetary compensation (e.g., Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). Low-status groups are frequently stereotyped as low in competence (although high in warmth), which may lead them to feel less entitled to monetary compensation. Finally, the compensatory nature of the stereotypes may lead low- and high-status groups to feel satisfied with these arrangements by reminding them that “no one has it all” (Kay et al., 2007). The effect of compensatory stereotypes on personal entitlement remains an interesting avenue for future research.

CONCLUSION

The issue of how status inequalities are maintained and perpetuated has become an important issue in psychological research (e.g., Jost & Major, 2001). The present chapter suggests that social comparison processes, SJBs, and the resulting sense of depressed (or elevated) entitlement play an important role in this process. Group differences in entitlement may have far-reaching implications for many life outcomes in that entitlement probably plays a strong role in the types of jobs for which people apply, salary negotiations, and more. It may also impact the decision to engage in forms of collective protest (e.g., Hafer & Olson, 1993). Research described in this chapter, however, does

offer a faint glimmer of hope for the eventual elimination of gender differences in entitlement because it suggests that, under circumstances in which people engage in intergroup comparison rather than intragroup comparison and under circumstances in which people explicitly reject SJBs or in which SJBs are not salient, gender differences in entitlement may decline or disappear altogether.

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Ambivalent Sexism at Home and at Work: How Attitudes Toward Women in Relationships Foster Exclusion in the Public Sphere

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Abstract

According to ambivalent sexism theory (AST; Glick & Fiske, 1996; 2001), sexism combines complementary gender ideologies, held by both men and women worldwide, which serve to justify social hierarchy. This chapter reviews how benevolent and hostile attitudes toward women operate in concert, ultimately maintaining gender inequity. Research specifically targets the relationship between sexism and system justification, as endorsed and enacted by men and women. Hostile and benevolent beliefs map onto widely held prescriptions and proscriptions for men and women; these beliefs shape men's and women's interactions in the private sphere (i.e., the home, close relationships). Finally, these system-justifying beliefs extend to the workplace and impede women from progressing in the public sphere.

We yield to none in our admiration, veneration, and respect for woman. We recognize in her admirable and adorable qualities and sweet and noble influence which make for the betterment of mankind and the advancement of civilization. . . . We would take from women none of their privileges as citizens but we do not believe that women are adapted to the political work of the world. . . .

Woman suffrage is inconsistent with the fundamental principles upon which our. . . . government was founded If woman suffrage should become universal . . . , in time of great excitement. . . . this country would be in danger of . . . insurrections . . . [We] should guard against emotional suffrage. What we need is to put more logic and less feeling into public affairs. . . .

Suffragists insist that if woman suffrage became universal "it would set in motion the machinery of an earthly paradise." It was a woman of high standing in the literary and journalistic field who answered, "It is my opinion that it would let loose the wheels of purgatory." . . .

There are spheres in which feeling should be paramount . . . the realm of gentler and holier and kindlier attributes that make the name of wife, mother and sister . . . but it is not in harmony with suffrage and has no place in government.

—*Nebraska Men's Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, Omaha, 1914*

Giving women the vote created neither heaven nor hell on earth. Nevertheless, we cite this admittedly quaint but sexist manifesto to illustrate the main themes of our chapter. In ambivalent sexist ideology, women are viewed as adorable and sweet, subjectively positive traits that suit them to hearth and home, but also as too emotional and insufficiently logical to accomplish the work of the world (the writers blamed even the French Revolution on women's passions). Ambivalent sexism theory (AST) reveals, like the quotation above, how attitudes about women within heterosexual romantic relationships are part and parcel of the justifications (both subjectively benevolent and hostile) that exclude women from high-status roles outside the home. Indeed, we argue that subjectively benevolent views about women within heterosexual relationships help to make sexist ideologies acceptable (and even attractive) to many women. Although contemporary women's (and men's) attitudes are less extreme than those of the "woman of high standing" who feared that women's suffrage "would let loose the wheels of purgatory," ambivalent sexism continues to justify limiting women's roles in the public sphere.

In this chapter, we review how benevolent and hostile attitudes toward women complement one another and give rise to discrimination against women, according to AST (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 2001). We also consider empirical findings that help to illustrate the relationship between sexism and system justification, as endorsed and enacted by men and women. Next, we examine how hostile and benevolent beliefs map onto romanticized ideals about what men and women ought (and ought not) to be, and how these beliefs shape people's mate preferences. Finally, we review how these system-justifying beliefs spill over into the workplace and how they work to block women's progress in the public sphere.

AMBIVALENT SEXISM: THEORY AND FINDINGS

Ambivalent sexism theory contends that sexism is not rooted in unalloyed antipathy. Rather, sexism is the combination of complementary gender ideologies, held by both men and women worldwide (Glick, et al., 2000), which serve to maintain the present social hierarchy. Benevolent sexism (BS) is a paternalistic ideology in which women are subordinate beings,

best suited for traditional, low-status roles, who need to be protected, cherished, and revered for their virtue. Hostile sexism (HS), which does express antipathy, is a combative ideology that is hostile toward women, who are viewed as seeking to control men, whether by using their sexuality or feminist ideology as a means to achieving status and power. The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996) is a 22-item self report measure, which includes both benevolent and hostile subscales and assesses the extent to which people maintain benevolent and hostile attitudes toward women. Examples of benevolent items are "Men are incomplete without women," "Women should be cherished and protected by men," and "Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess." Hostile items include statements such as "Women seek to gain power by getting control over men," "Many women get a kick out of teasing men by seeming sexually available and then refusing male advances," and "When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against."

Hostile and benevolent sexism are the predictable products of the power differences and interdependence between men and women, which determine the nature of patriarchy, gender differentiation, and heterosexual relations; each domain reinforces the structural foundations of ambivalent sexism. Patriarchy yields paternalism, the ideological justification of male dominance. The hostile elements of patriarchy are based in dominative paternalism, the belief that men ought to have more power than women and the fear that women might usurp men's power. In complement, the benevolent elements of patriarchy are based in protective paternalism, the belief that men need to protect and provide for the women on whom they depend.

Gender differentiation refers to the social distinctions all cultures make between men and women and the importance of gender identity in social hierarchy (Harris, 1991). Competitive gender differentiation justifies women's lower status through stereotypes of their inherent inferiority and incompetence, consistent with the assumptions of antipathy theories of prejudice (e.g., social identity theory; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). On the other hand, complementary gender differentiation stresses the functionality of women in gender-conventional roles and accounts for the view that women are "wonderful" because they are nurturing and supportive (Eagly & Mladinic, 1993).

Finally, heterosexual relations and sexual reproduction highlight the interpersonal interdependence of men and women. The hostile interpretation of this interdependence is that women are purportedly able to "use" sex to control men, whereas the benevolent interpretation asserts that women are a

valuable resource (e.g., essential for true happiness), even if they are (in some ways) inferior.

Both men and women report subscribing to these ideologies, albeit to varying degrees (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Kilianski & Rudman, 1998). Specifically, across six U.S. samples, men consistently scored higher than women on HS, presumably because it is not in women's self-interest to endorse the hostile components of patriarchy, gender differentiation, and heterosexual intimacy. Men also scored higher than women on BS (in five out of six samples); however, the gender gap for BS was significantly smaller (Glick & Fiske, 2001). More important, the two subscales were positively correlated in U.S. and cross-cultural samples. The HS–BS correlation, however, was significant for women in 18 out of 19 samples, whereas, it was significant for men in 13 out of 19 samples. Moreover, averaging across the 19 samples, the correlation was significantly higher for women as compared to men (average $r = .37$ versus $.23$; $t(18) = 5.02$, $p < .01$), suggesting that the relationship is stronger and more universal among female participants. Why do these attitudes persist even in the face of considerable social changes in gender relations? How, in particular, are women induced to accept these beliefs (even if to a lesser degree than men)?

Men are socially dominant by many measures (e.g., presence in high-status roles, greater income) (United Nations Development Programme, 2006). According to system justification theory, people are motivated to create beliefs that reinforce the status quo, so that they can see the social system in which they live as fair and legitimate (Jost & Banaji, 1994). Therefore, system-justifying gender ideologies emerge that reflect and stabilize the current system. Hostility alone, however, is a difficult strategy for keeping subordinates in check. This leads dominant groups to prefer paternalistic ideologies toward subordinates in order to justify the hierarchy, through conferring benefits upon subordinates to keep them complacent (Jackman, 1994). Subordinates, ever sensitive to their position and the cultural view, are influenced by status beliefs in their own behavior, and cooperate to maintain amicable conditions (Sechrist & Stangor, 2001). The preference for paternalism as a system-justifying strategy is energized and made particularly necessary in the case of gender because the dominant group has especially strong incentives to reward and mollify the subordinate group members on whom they rely, encouraging warmth and cooperation within intimate heterosexual relationships. Thus, BS is strongly rooted in the *intimate* interdependence of men and women (i.e., within heterosexual romantic relationships). Overtly paternalistic ideologies toward racial and ethnic groups have largely broken down and been exposed as exploitative in contemporary societies (e.g., consider how antiquated as well as racist older depictions of Blacks—e.g., the

“Uncle Tom” type of character in films that preceded the Civil Rights movement or White entertainers’ use of “black-face”—now seem). In contrast, paternalism toward women remains quite strong (e.g., the notion that women ought to be rescued first in emergencies), especially within the context of romantic relationships (e.g., consider the likely reaction to a husband who takes the last seat in the lifeboat, abandoning his wife on a sinking ship).

These paternalistic beliefs about men and women probably also generate acceptance because they can be viewed as flattering toward both sexes. For men, being a “protector and provider” is a much more subjectively positive identity than being an “exploiter” and provides greater legitimacy for their social dominance. For women, the view that they are pure, morally superior, and deserving of men’s protection is also a subjectively positive (even if patronizing) view of their group. Thus, for women, BS potentially solves the conflict between ego justification, group justification, and system justification that Jost and Banaji (1994) suggest afflicts many subordinated groups (for whom justifying the system typically would entail embracing a negative view of themselves and/or their group).

Ambivalent sexism theory builds on the existing theories of gender-based system justification by demonstrating why it is that both hostile and benevolent ideologies contribute to persistent prejudice and discrimination against women. First, although BS is seemingly innocuous, and in certain situations is perceived as beneficial by women as well as men, it is problematic because it is yoked to HS. At the societal level, BS does not exist without HS and the resulting gender inequality. Comparisons of national averages from 19 countries illustrate that benevolent and hostile sexism are highly correlated with one another, and negatively correlated with other indicators of gender equality in economic and political life (Glick, Fiske, et al., 2000). Second, BS is selectively favorable toward women who occupy traditional female roles. Ambivalent sexists reconcile their presumably conflicting ideologies about women by directing benevolent beliefs toward traditional women (idealizing homemakers) and hostile beliefs toward nontraditional women (disliking career women) (Glick, Diebold, Bailey-Werner, & Zhu, 1997). Lastly, BS reduces women’s resistance to prejudice and discrimination, because benevolence can be used effectively to justify discriminatory acts (Moya, Glick, Expósito, De Lemus, & Hart, 2007).

Further, recent work reveals that benevolent and hostile sexism are related to a variety of correlates of political ideology. The evidence suggest that these individual differences validate sexism as system support, but in two distinct ways. Hostile sexism relates more to competition for status and power, whereas BS relates more to controlling women. For example, social dominance orientation and the Protestant work ethic (both of which relate

to concerns for status and intergroup competition) predict individuals' endorsement of HS (Christopher & Mull, 2006; Sibley, Wilson, & Duckitt, 2007). A symbolic example of how HS relates to diminishing women's status is that it predicts the likelihood of passing on female- and male-disparaging jokes, as well as how funny men think they are (Thomas & Esses, 2004). In contrast, right-wing authoritarianism, which has been shown to relate to concerns with maintaining control and traditional values, predicts BS (Christopher & Mull, 2006). Also along the lines of control and ambiguity intolerance, intrinsic religiosity, extrinsic religiosity, and scriptural literalism all positively relate to BS, but not HS (Burn & Busso, 2005), as does Catholicism (Glick, Lameiras, Castro, 2002).

Ambivalently sexist ideologies work together not only to justify gender hierarchy, but to maintain it by providing incentives (BS) for women to fulfill gender-traditional ideals and punishments (HS) for those who seek "too much" status and power. Further, AST, the content of Glick and Fiske's (1996) measure of ambivalent sexism, and the findings described earlier, are all consistent with the notion that BS accomplishes this goal mainly through the idealization of women within heterosexual romantic relationships and HS by derogating women who pose a threat to men's status and power, especially in the workplace (where women have increasingly assumed positions of authority). This is not to say that HS is irrelevant within relationships or that BS has no effect on how women are treated in the workplace. Indeed, we argue here that although BS is primarily sustained in contemporary society because of its connection to heterosexual romance, it both serves to legitimize HS and also itself spills over to the treatment of women at work. First, we consider how ambivalent sexism (especially BS) is related to how men and women conceive of and behave in heterosexual romantic relationships. We then consider how the idealization of women in the private realm plays into their exclusion from power and status in the public realm of the workplace.

AMBIVALENT SEXISM AT HOME, IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

Formed out of partners' interdependence, BS functions to maintain that interdependence by depicting men and women as complementary to each other: men need women as caretakers and mothers to their offspring; women need men to provide for them and keep them safe. These benevolent gender ideologies allow people to express positive views of their romantic partners while nevertheless endorsing system-justifying beliefs that perpetuate the power differential between men and women by idealizing traditional partners, transplanting men's greater power in society to heterosexual close relationships.

Benevolent sexism is associated with traditionalism (Christopher & Mull, 2006; Sibley et al., 2007). Specifically, BS is negatively related to Schwartz's (1992) self-direction values and positively associated with traditional values (Feather, 2004). Self-direction values include prioritizing independent thought and action, freedom, and choosing one's own goals. Traditional values, on the other hand, concern one's cultural and religious customs. Such traditionalism has very different consequences for women and men. Traditional values within heterosexual romantic relationships emphasize men's role as protector and provider, which requires success in the wider world. In contrast, traditional values idealize women as homemakers who place home life above worldly success, and BS promises them that they will achieve security and be provided for if they do so. Women high in BS, for example, are more likely to use cosmetics, presumably because they feel dependent on attracting a man who will provide (Franzoi, 2001). Furthermore, women who implicitly associate their partner with chivalrous images show less interest in education and career goals (Rudman & Heppen, 2003). In other words, a woman who tends to think of her partner as a kind of Prince Charming is less likely to pursue high-status or high-paying work. Not surprising then, BS is associated with paternalistic chivalry (Viki, Abrams, & Hutchison, 2003).

Benevolent sexism also predicts evaluations of women (and presumably, men also) depending on how they meet expectations of their gender. They predict both positive responses to women who fulfill traditional female roles (Glick, et al. 1997; Sibley & Wilson, 2004), and negative evaluations of women who violate societal expectations of a chaste and virtuous female, such as women who engage in premarital sex (Sakalli-Ugurlu & Glick, 2003). Benevolent sexism is also related to people's blaming of victims of acquaintance rape when their initial behavior violates ideals of feminine virtue (Abrams, Viki, Masser, & Bohner, 2003; Viki & Abrams, 2002). Thus, benevolently sexist ideology serves as a control strategy to keep women in check. Within close relationships themselves, this is especially evident in the prescriptions and proscriptions, or rules, that people hold about ideal romantic partners.

Lee, Fiske, and Glick (2007) investigated the intersection of sexist ideologies and close relationship ideals, especially how benevolent ideologies guide personal relationship preferences (in terms of prescriptive and proscriptive expectations of an ideal partner). Previous research has documented consistent gender differences in mate preferences, with men preferring younger women and women preferring men with resources and status (Buss, 1989; Eagly & Wood, 1999). Two studies have empirically linked BS to these gender differences. In one, BS predicted women's preferences for an older man with good earning potential and men's preferences for a younger woman who can cook (Eastwick et al., 2005). Likewise, BS predicted women's tendency to

look for a man with good earning potential and for men to look for a chaste partner (Johannesen-Schmidt & Eagly, 2002). Lee and colleagues (2007) examined, in addition to these gender differences in close relationship preferences, the rules that individuals establish for their partner, both the desired aspects and the boundaries for undesired characteristics.

Specifically, Lee and colleagues (2007) asked undergraduate students to describe the ideal close relationship partner's characteristics, including appearance (e.g., face, attractiveness), attributes (e.g., nice, funny), behavior (e.g., communicates with me, challenges me to be better), roles (e.g., confidante, caretaker), and origins (e.g., a particular ethnicity, a particular religious background). A reduced list of prescriptions was compiled from these responses. Likewise, a list of proscriptions was created from participants' responses to what the ideal partner should *not* be like or do. A different sample of participants rated the importance of these prescriptions and proscriptions, as well as their agreement with items from the short version of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Factor analysis revealed a great deal of overlap between women and men on prescriptive ideals, revealing a few common concerns among men and women. First, a prescription for a traditional partner emerged. In addition, both men and women had some version of a strength prescription (e.g., assertive). A warmth prescription describing a considerate and caring person, and an attractiveness prescription, including general descriptions of physical appeal (e.g., good-looking, striking appearance), were similar for both genders. Finally, women's preferences revealed a fifth dimension, a romantic prescription for the male partner to be good with kids and to complete her—also consistent with the notion that, due to dependence on men for resources, women have a strong need to assess how willing the male partner is to invest in her and her offspring.

Proscriptive ideals (i.e., clusters of undesirable traits prohibited in partners) received less agreement between the sexes. Both men and women did uphold some "general rejection" criteria, various characteristics that eliminated a potential partner on the spot. For example, an uncaring or manipulative partner would call for prompt rejection. Another concern men and women shared was a partner too stereotypically feminine (e.g., too girly).

The women were generally less likely to endorse sexist ideologies (such as HS and BS) than men. However, to the degree that they were sexist, it more strongly guided women's partner preferences than it did men's. Further, BS more strongly related to relationship ideals than did HS. Correlational and regression analyses showed that the perceived importance of most relationship ideals (both prescriptive and proscriptive) held by the female participants related to their belief in BS. The general pattern that emerged from

the analyses revealed that benevolent ideology uniquely explained more variance for more relationship ideals than did hostile ideology, especially for women. More specifically, among women, BS was positively related to desire for a romantic, strong partner who fulfills a traditional male role and is not too feminine, as well as negatively related to an abusive or clingy partner. Perhaps the most disturbing part is that the more a woman endorses benevolently sexist beliefs, the less she rejected partners who might be abusive. Possibly, she requires a higher threshold before considering her partner's acts as abusive or intolerable. Recent research shows that women who are high in BS were more likely to interpret a romantic partner's restrictions on their behavior as due to benevolent motives (he loves me and wants to protect me) (Moya et al., 2007).

In sum, Lee and colleagues' (2007) study demonstrates that benevolently sexist attitudes influence both men's and women's preferences for traditional partners, with stronger effects for women. The pattern of findings reveals that BS is related more strongly to women's ideals for a traditional partner (described in various ways as romantic, strong, and fulfilling a traditional male role) than men's ideals, and more than HS guides both men's and women's relationship ideals. Although women tend to reject overtly HS, they are more willing to endorse benevolently sexist beliefs (Glick, Fiske, et al., 2000). Women's endorsement of BS, in turn, predicts their preferences for traditional close relationship partners.

How important are women's adherence to benevolently sexist beliefs and, relatedly, their traditional partner preferences for the justification and maintenance of gender hierarchy? We suggest that the answer is "extremely!" In cross-national comparisons, women's endorsement of BS has been found to be strongly related (more so than men's) to their adherence to other gender-traditional ideologies, including HS (Glick, Fiske, et al., 2000; Glick, Lameiras, Fiske, et al., 2004). A recent longitudinal study more directly suggests that women's endorsement of BS leads them, over time, to be more likely to embrace HS (Sibley, Overall, & Duckitt, 2007). Finally, mere exposure to BS has been found to increase women's agreement with general system-justifying beliefs (Jost & Kay, 2005). Thus, women's endorsement of BS (which prominently features the conviction that a male partner will protect and provide for them) seems to be a key ingredient in getting women to accept a traditional role, presumably by sweetening the pot, so that many women are more content to value their domestic roles over work opportunities outside the home.

In addition to endorsement of BS itself, the traditional relationship values that BS reinforces are also important. The evolutionary view argues that women's mate preferences have selected men to be hypercompeti-

tive seekers of status and resources, resulting in patriarchy (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Trivers, 1972). Alternatively, the social structural view contends that women's preferences for powerful male partners is a response to patriarchy, because when women depend on men for resources, they have great incentive to prefer the men who are most successful at amassing them (Eastwick et al., 2005). Whether one embraces either (or both) of these views, women's partner preferences are important because they increase men's incentive to compete for status and resources, at the very least perpetuating a system in which men are likely to continue to dominate and to resent women's forays into powerful work roles (which shifts the balance of power both at work and in relationships, by reducing women's economic dependence on men).

Thus, women's benevolently sexist preferences in romantic relationships are intimately connected to sexist beliefs and behaviors that affect women's participation in the workplace. Benevolently sexist ideals of women in relationships are the flip side of hostile sexist views of the inappropriateness of women valuing careers over home life. The stereotypically sweet traits that suit women to their domestic role conflict with the harsher masculine traits associated with powerful work roles. Women who exhibit these highly masculine traits risk being viewed as unattractive to men (Prentice & Carranza, 2002). This, in combination with the subjective positivity of benevolently sexist ideals of womanhood, leads many women to accept BS and the notion that a powerful male partner (rather than an independent career) will protect and provide for their well-being. In the next section, we explore how the BS associated with the home sometimes spills over into the workplace, but also serves as a justification within the workplace context for the HS that excludes women from powerful work roles.

AMBIVALENT SEXISM IN THE WORKPLACE

By some accounts, women have closed the gender gap in the professional realm. In the United States, women constitute 46% of the paid labor force (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006a) and 50% of paid managers (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006b). In 2004, 51% of the bachelor degrees awarded went to women, as did 52% of advanced degrees, 35% of professional degrees, and 33% of doctorate degrees (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2004). However, in Fortune 500 companies, women represent only 15.6% of top officers, and 6.7% of most highly paid officers (Catalyst, 2006). In Congress, only 14% of Senators and 15% of Congressional Representatives are female (Center for the American Woman and Politics, 2006). Clearly, the ratio of women in powerful leadership positions falls disturbingly short of the population's ratio.

Some research suggests that these disparities originate in the difficulty some individuals have in reconciling their beliefs about women and their beliefs about the nature of elite professional positions. Like stereotypes about social groups, occupation stereotypes are seen as having well-defined gender and status dimensions. Participants' images of job types load on two orthogonal factors: prestige and gender type (Glick, Wilk, & Perreault, 1995). However, specific gender-related attributes (e.g., masculine personality traits) load on the perceived occupational prestige factor, indicating that these attributes are more closely related to prestige than to perceived gender-type of the job. Indeed, masculine traits predict the prestige and salary of jobs (Glick, 1991). Thus, if employers have to hire someone for a prestigious position, they are more likely to value masculine qualities and therefore more likely to look for a man as the appropriate candidate.

Unfortunately, despite the overall subjective positivity of stereotypes about women, which tend to be more favorable than stereotypes about men (Eagly & Mladinic, 1993), the traits assigned to women are not those that are typically valued at work (especially for prestigious jobs). Social-role theory (Eagly, 1987) posits that gendered division of labor is the source of the favorable elements of stereotypes about women; women are associated with domestic roles (e.g., mother), which require communal qualities (e.g., warmth, patience), whereas men are associated with high-status roles (e.g., professional), which require agentic traits (e.g., competence, independence). This theory is consistent with the notion that benevolently sexist beliefs are rooted in women's domestic and relationship roles and that these beliefs, in turn, lead people to view women as less suited to high-status jobs outside the home. Although the content of stereotypes for women are subjectively positive, they are low in status. In a workplace situation, this means that women are favored for low-status, feminine jobs, which include support positions that serve, mainly, male superiors (e.g., secretary) or paid versions of women's traditional domestic role (e.g., day care worker). When BS spills over into the workplace, women may be seen as warmer, but are presumed to be less competent than men, so that women are confined to feminine and low-status roles. Additionally, BS in the workplace may elicit patronizing discrimination (Glick & Fiske, 2007), which includes but is not limited to handicapping via overhelping, taking over, and limiting the responsibilities of targets (Rudman, Glick, & Phelan, 2007).

Patronizing discrimination, which is embedded in BS, maintains the dominant group's higher status. The double-edged nature of patronizing discrimination is precisely what makes BS so insidious. It is not overtly hostile and, in many cases, is seemingly beneficial to the recipient. Furthermore, the perpetrator may think he is helping the recipient. Women may accept

paternalistic gestures either because they are not aware that they reinforce the notion that women are suitable only for low-status roles, or because they understand that to cooperate and accept benevolent gestures is a better alternative to enduring overt hostility.

Consider the consequences of refusing benevolent gestures or violating feminine norms. If a woman elects to reject patronizing assistance, she is seen as uncooperative. As a result, the benefits of paternalism reserved for women who stick to traditional gendered behavior are revoked, and backlash rooted in HS can take its place. This is the paradox that women face in performance settings: they have to provide strong counter-stereotypical information (e.g., that they are agentic and competent) in order to demonstrate that they are qualified for high-status professional roles (Glick, Zion, & Nelson, 1988), but this deviation from prescribed and proscribed gender norms can elicit a *backlash effect* (Rudman, 1998). Manifestations of backlash effects include hiring discrimination (Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, & Tamkins, 2004), being judged more harshly (Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992), being sabotaged (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004), and being sexually harassed (Fiske & Glick, 1995). Research demonstrates that endorsement of HS, but not BS, is related to more negative evaluations and recommendations for female candidates for management positions, but more positive recommendations for male candidates (Masser & Abrams, 2004). Moreover, women are bound by workplace culture norms; research indicates that the social costs of making attributions to discrimination prevent stigmatized individuals from dealing with instances in which they have been discriminated against (Kaiser & Miller, 2001).

Gender stereotypes in concert with ambivalent sexism breed hostility toward men as well. Benevolent attitudes toward men are based on the belief that men must be instrumental and protective, whereas hostile attitudes toward men are based on resentment of men's social dominance (Glick & Fiske, 1999). Although HS is the origin of harassment for both genders, the motivation for the backlash against men and women differs. Women's harassment of men comes from female offenders' needs to challenge male dominance, whereas harassment of women arises from the need to reinforce female subordinate status (Berdahl, Magley, & Waldo, 1996). Same-sex sexual harassment of men occurs because targeted men do not fit offenders' gender-role stereotypes of heterosexual hypermasculinity; therefore, these men incur backlash effects similar to those of women who deviate from gender norms (Stockdale, Visio, & Batra, 1999).

Working mothers pose a paradox all their own. Research from the Stereotype Content Model (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002) demonstrates that homemakers are seen as cooperative and having low status and are therefore characterized as warm, but not competent. On the other hand, female

professionals are seen as competitive and having high status and are therefore characterized as competent, but not warm. Glick and colleagues (1997) have found that ambivalent sexists often reconcile their polarized attitudes toward women by reserving benevolence for traditional women (e.g., homemakers) and hostility for nontraditional women (e.g., business women).

What happens when a mother, normally a target of benevolence and paternalistic prejudice, works in a setting where women are more often the target of hostility and envious prejudice? Professional women exchange their perceived competence for perceived warmth when they become mothers. Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick (2004) found that a woman with a child was not only perceived as less competent than a woman without a child, she was perceived as less competent than she was before becoming a mother. Moreover, competence predicted the likelihood that participants would hire, promote, or further train an employee, whereas warmth did not, indicating that the gain in warmth does not aid women, but the loss in competence does detract from their appeal as an employee. Thus, having a child changes the stereotypes that are associated with that woman, placing her in the domestic, warm, and incompetent category, making her seem unfit for the work force. More recently, Heilman and Okimoto (2007) demonstrated another possible consequence of becoming a working mother. In this study, penalties toward competent (but cold) women were reduced when participants learned that the target was a mother. In this case, becoming a mother did not lead to a direct warmth–competence trade-off. Still, this finding again demonstrates how difficult it is for women to be seen as simultaneously warm and competent in the absence of explicit evidence that they are fulfilling gender-prescribed roles (e.g., mother). Working mothers are not the only example in which women’s gender roles inhibit the perception of their work roles, because gender is such a salient social category (Fiske, 1998).

Sex role spillover is the merging of gender roles with work roles (Gutek & Morasch, 1982). In male-dominated settings, sex role and work role merge for men by mere association, whereas women are highlighted as the visible minority because their gender is incongruent with the sex role normally associated with the job (Gutek & Cohen, 1987). Making gender salient activates associated status beliefs, which can lead perceivers to question a woman’s qualifications, e.g., “She must be an affirmative action hire.” Additionally, women in nontraditional jobs experience more aggressive manifestations of sex role spillover in the form of sexual overtures and harassment because “woman as sex object” is another obvious element of their sex role (Gutek & Morasch, 1982). A hostile interpretation of heterosexual intimacy can lead perceivers to infer that female coworkers acquired their positions illegitimately (e.g., by sleeping with a superior), because sexuality is supposedly

the domain in which women have the perceived ability to control men. Being perceived as “sexy” can elicit hostile reactions and lead people to perceive sexual harassment as justified (Muehlenhard & MacNaughton, 1988). Although women are less tolerant of harassment than are men, ambivalent sexism and hostility toward women predicts tolerance above and beyond gender (Russell & Trigg, 2004).

Unfortunately, being seen as submissive can also lead to exploitation (Richard, Rollerson, & Phillips, 1970). Because women do not believe that they can be seen simultaneously as competent and sexual (Gutek, 1989), flirtatiousness and harassment have negative consequences for women’s self-confidence (Satterfield & Muehlenhard, 1997). Moreover, if women internalize the objectification, it can impact their future performance (Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn, & Twenge, 1998).

The pernicious effects of benevolent and hostile attitudes, however subtle, have critical implications for gender relations and ratios in the workplace. Ambivalent sexism theory provides a useful framework by which to approach these issues and offers a way to explicate the intricacies of system justification enacted by women and men in the workplace.

CONCLUSION

We have suggested that ambivalent sexism shapes system-maintaining behavior in both the private and public spheres, although neither is earthly heaven nor purgatory, as the two sides of the suffrage movement predicted. Our central contention here is that the system justifying attitudes and the resulting discrimination that restricts women in the public sphere cannot be properly understood without considering well-entrenched, benevolently sexist beliefs about women’s and men’s roles in romantic relationships and home life. These romanticized ideals remain strong in contemporary society and—because they flatter each sex, although in very different ways—continue to be attractive to both women and men.

Because of its subjectively positive tenor, BS seems harmless. Further, because it primarily reflects attitudes about women and men in romantic relationships, it hardly seems like a prime candidate for explaining why women face a glass ceiling at work. Yet, benevolently sexist ideals reinforce the view that women’s priority should be hearth and home, as well as that men ought to excel in the competitive world of work, so that they can effectively protect and provide for their female dependents. These system-justifying beliefs not only set up the “soft bigotry of low expectations” for women as leaders, but the hard bigotry of backlash against women who fail to live up to benevolently sexist prescriptions. Hostile sexism and the exclusion of women who

seek or obtain power and status in the public realm is legitimated and justified by those seemingly innocuous, subjectively benevolent and romantic ideals of women as fragile damsels and men as their white knights. However, if we document the consequences of hostile and benevolent attitudes and emphasize the importance of social structure, individuals may be able to reduce the fallout of these system-justifying beliefs both in the home and at work. Disadvantage need not lead to system justification, and we would encourage resistance rather than denial or avoidance (e.g., see Reicher & Haslam, 2006; Schmitt, Branscombe, & Kappen, 2003).

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Acknowledging and Redressing Historical Injustices

Katherine B. Starzyk, Craig W. Blatz, and Michael Ross

Abstract

In this chapter, we present research and theory focusing on how individuals and governments respond to historical injustices. We propose that people and groups remember negative historical events more benignly, if they remember them at all, to maintain positive views of important groups and social systems. We focus on studies demonstrating that people's evaluations of reparations for past harms depend on situational variables, such as whether the harm happened in their own or another country. We also connect people's responses to reparations to the dual motivations to protect important groups and social systems. We examine the responses of members of a victimized minority and nonvictimized majority to a government apology for a historical injustice. Finally, we analyze the content of government offers of reparations to assess how these offers might enhance the social identities of both the victimized minority and nonvictimized majority, as well as affirm the current system of government and laws.

He who controls the present controls the past.

—Orwell, 1949, p. 32

Anecdotally, people are sometimes more concerned about righting wrongs in distant places than in their own backyard. One of us (MR) remembers that a store at the University of Waterloo once sold t-shirts lamenting the destruction of the Amazon rain forest. Meanwhile, loggers were systematically destroying the Pacific rain forest in Canada, but there was no protest on campus. Students were seemingly unaware of or unconcerned about events in their own country. Similarly, during the 1960s, Canadian university students (MR among them) attended meetings organized by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (the acronym, SNCC, was pronounced snick) and sang "We Shall Overcome" in support of the civil rights movement in the United States. At the same time, these caring students appeared unaware of or unconcerned about longstanding deprivations suffered by Aboriginals across Canada.

In this chapter, we present research that brings historical and personal memory together. We observe that, as the just-related anecdotes suggest,

members of religious, ethnic, and national groups often seem unaware of past harms committed by their own group. This knowledge gap is evident in histories presented in the media and educational settings, as well as in ordinary people's recollections of their group's history. The suppression of negative histories is sometimes inadvertent and sometimes deliberate. In either case, it can help group members to protect their social identities (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and justify their social systems (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Lerner, 1980).

Efforts to cover up negative histories are not entirely successful, however. Researchers regularly write revisionist histories that question people's cherished beliefs about the past (e.g., Loewen, 1995). Also, previously victimized groups often maintain memories of their suffering and sometimes seek reparations. In various countries, minority groups are now demanding that governments formally apologize on behalf of the majority for acts of legislative discrimination that occurred decades or even centuries earlier. How do current members of the majority respond to demands that their government atone for actions committed long ago? We discuss how identity and justice motives influence majority members' support for government apologies and other reparations for past harms.

In increasing numbers, governments are formally apologizing for historical injustices. In the concluding sections of the chapter, we examine the impact and content of government offers of reparations. We examine the responses of members of a victimized minority and nonvictimized majority to a government apology for a historical injustice. Finally, we analyze the content of government offers of reparations to assess how governments apologize. In particular, we examine whether governments are sensitive to the identity and system justification concerns of the majority and victimized minority.

WHEN IGNORANCE IS BLISS

Why are people seemingly unaware of wrongs that occurred in their own country? Biases in both historical accounts and individual memory help to explain a lack of knowledge. The history taught in schools and presented in the media is not an unbiased rendering of past events. A famous illustration of biases in the reporting of history occurred in Great Britain in the 19th century. At the time, British Whigs advocated a strong democratic parliament and a constitutional monarchy. Whig historians supported their political beliefs with bad history. They distorted, glorified, and omitted aspects of the past to defend their political preferences. Their biased portrayal of the past reflects a phenomenon that historians labelled "presentism" (Butterfield, 1959). Presentism occurs when writers or speakers alter the historical record to make it consistent with their current knowledge, ideology, and preferences.

As a consequence of presentism, conceptions of the past are flexible and succeeding generations rewrite history to reflect their own beliefs and achieve their current goals (Barkan, 2000; Mead, 1924/1964). A blatant example of presentism appears in Natan Sharansky's (1988) description of modifications to the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*. The first target of revision was Beria, a chief of the secret police who was executed for being a British spy. Subscribers to the encyclopedia were instructed to destroy the article on Beria and were provided with additional information on the Bering Strait to fill the gap in the pages. According to Sharansky, subscribers frequently received such missives.

Suppression and alteration of historical events is not limited to Communist dictatorships. In eras in which women were considered inferior to men, distinguished female scientists disappeared from the historical record of Western countries (Bodanis, 2006). Today, young people commonly learn versions of history in which the actions of their own national, ethnic, and religious groups are justified and glorified, while episodes potentially damaging to their groups' image are de-emphasized or omitted (Frijda, 1997; Paris, 2000). Also, religious and national groups are more likely to construct memorials and hold commemorative ceremonies for their achievements rather than their blunders or offences. Therefore, people may lack knowledge of wrongs committed by groups to which they belong (ingroups) because they never learned about the incidents or were taught to interpret them in ways more flattering to their ingroups.

Socio-political organizations (i.e., governments) may deliberately memorialize or acknowledge historical events that justify the present system. Individuals may exhibit similar system-justifying biases when reconstructing aspects of their groups' history, without being aware that they are remembering in a biased way. People often remember only a few elements of an episode, and their recollections of past events are reconstructions shaped in part by their current knowledge, motives, and goals (Bartlett, 1932; Mead, 1929/1964; Neisser, 1967; Ross, Blatz, & Schryer, 2008). As well, previous events are often sufficiently numerous, contradictory, and ambiguous that people can select which episodes they need or prefer to recall. Like Whig historians, ordinary people use the past as a resource, reconstructing and selecting events so as to achieve their personal and social goals.

Although a variety of goals might guide how historians, social groups, and individuals depict and recall past ingroup injustices, two general motivations of interest to social psychologists are particularly relevant. Social identity theorists reason that people are motivated to view the groups to which they belong (ingroups) favorably because they derive their identity

and self-regard partly from their group memberships (Branscombe & Doosje, 2004; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Belonging to a group that has wronged others may threaten this positive image. Group members may respond to the threat in a variety of ways that limit the psychological damage, including deleting the episode from history texts. Psychologists studying justice motivation also suggest that people prefer to regard their ingroups favorably, but these researchers focus on dimensions related to fairness. According to Lerner's (1980) just-world theory, people are motivated to perceive the world as a fair place where people are rewarded if they work hard, delay gratification, or bargain in good faith. People should be especially motivated to view the country in which they live as a place in which people get what they deserve, because their own outcomes are most dependent on local justice. Along the same lines, system justification theorists (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004) propose that people are motivated to view their own country's existing social, economic, and political arrangements as fair and legitimate. Past instances in which this system has acted unfairly threaten the legitimacy of the system. People may act to reduce the threat in a variety of ways, including denying that the system was unfair.

We have conducted several experiments to examine whether people's memories are biased in ways that would support favorable views of their ingroups. Blatz and Ross (2005) asked Canadian university students to recall events from the histories of different groups (e.g., Canadians, Americans, Jews, Christians, Arabs, and Chinese) based on whatever knowledge they possessed. All participants belonged to at least two of the groups in the survey. After recalling each event, participants indicated whether the event was positive, negative, or neutral, and how much they knew about the event. As expected, participants recalled more positive than negative past events for ingroups, but more negative than positive events for outgroups. Also, participants reported that they knew more about positive ingroup than about positive outgroup events.

Although both individual motivation and selective historical reporting probably contribute to such memory biases, it is possible to isolate experimentally the role of individual motivation. Sahdra and Ross (2007) experimentally varied Canadian participants' identification with Canada and then asked them to recall acts of violence and hatred committed by Canadians against members of other groups. According to social identity and justice theories, participants who identify highly with Canada should be strongly motivated to view Canadians as good people who rarely commit serious wrongs. As expected, participants who were experimentally induced to identify highly with Canada recalled fewer incidents of violence and hatred than did participants in the low-identity condition.

LOST IN TRANSMISSION

Much of what we remember about our country we have learned from others, rather than experienced directly. Memories are transmitted from person to person and from generation to generation. We have noted how writers of history sometimes alter or erase events to render the past more consistent with their preferences and beliefs. We now ask whether we can observe the emergence of similar biases as memories are transmitted from one person to another.

Psychologists have examined the transmission of memories from person to person using the method of serial reproduction (Allport & Postman, 1947; Bartlett, 1932; Lyons & Kashima, 2003). In a typical study, the first person in a chain reads a text and, after a brief delay, recalls this text as accurately as possible for a second participant. The second participant then reads the first participant's account and, after a brief delay, recalls it for a third participant. This process is repeated until the chain has three participants or more. The major finding is that accounts get shorter as they move down the chain; peripheral and obscure details vanish, and only core details remain.

Most studies of serial reproduction involve material of little personal relevance to the average participant (e.g., obscure folk tales, Bartlett, 1932). In everyday life, however, a memory is transmitted because it interests either the teller or the listener. In a recent study, we examined how information about a historical injustice is transmitted from individual to individual in a three-person chain (Blatz & Ross, 2006). An audio recording described an episode that allegedly occurred either in the participants' own country (Canada) or another country (Australia). The first participant in each chain listened to how the Canadian or Australian government forcibly removed Aboriginal children from their homes and communities and placed them in residential schools. The goal of the schools was to "civilize" the Aboriginal children, who were strictly disciplined for speaking their native language and robbed of their cultural identity. Many children were psychologically, physically, or sexually abused. The passage was based on episodes that actually happened in Canada (Krotz, 2007). The passage was transmitted down a three-person chain.

Story details will change and disappear as the description is passed from person to person. We expected that when the harm occurred in Canada, the alterations to the passage would be system justifying. We assessed memory errors that seemed to reduce the culpability of the current system and group. For example, some participants underestimated how many children were placed in the schools or recalled that the events happened longer ago than the original passage described. When the harm occurred in Canada, such

errors were rare for the first person, but became increasingly more common as the memory proceeded down the chain. Deletions and alterations also appeared when the harm occurred in Australia, but there was no increase in system-justifying memory errors as the passage was transmitted from person to person.

In our study, the system-justifying memory biases emerged despite the instruction to recall the passage accurately. Also, participants knew that the researchers possessed the original recording and would compare their recall to the original. Consequently, participants would have little to gain by deliberately falsifying their recall. Apparently, the kinds of biases observed in individual recall and historical accounts can arise inadvertently as memories are processed and transmitted.

REDRESSING GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED HISTORICAL INJUSTICES

It is not always possible to whitewash the past by altering and omitting details from history and individual memory. Public monuments and archives often contain alternative renderings of the past that are available for investigation and discovery. Also, members of previously victimized groups sometimes keep memories of their calamities alive and in the public eye. For example, North American Jews conduct annual remembrances of the Holocaust that include public lectures and educational materials for schools. In addition, increasing numbers of previously victimized groups are demanding reparations for past government-sponsored injustices. In Canada, groups representing people of Aboriginal, African, Chinese, Italian, and Ukrainian heritage have sought reparations for past acts of legislative discrimination directed at their groups. They contend that that their people cannot “purge” themselves of this experience without some type of official reparation (formal apology, financial compensation, etc.) from current governments (e.g., Krotz, 2007). Similarly, some African Americans argue for reparations on the grounds that a history of slavery and discrimination can explain why African Americans are relatively disadvantaged compared to their White counterparts (Bitker, 1973).

We next present research that examines how people respond to accounts of officially sanctioned discrimination against a minority. The injustices are real, although we sometimes modify details of the accounts for experimental purposes. The twin motivations to think favorably of ingroups and to perceive the current system as fair should influence how people react to historical harms. Our general experimental strategy is to provide participants with descriptions that vary the location of an injustice, among other factors. In

many of the studies, the participants were members of the majority group, rather than the minority, victim group, and were not alive when the harm happened.

Social identity and justice theories suggest that majority group members should be reluctant to regard their ingroup and system as responsible for inflicting harm on an innocent minority, but not exhibit the same reluctance for an identical government-sponsored harm perpetrated by another country. When harms are perpetrated outside rather than in one's home country, the fairness of one's own system and ingroup is not called into question. Accordingly, people should perceive harmful government-sponsored policies as more unjust and damaging and the victim group as less blameworthy when the episodes occur in a foreign country. In turn, such differing perceptions should lead people to be more supportive of reparations for victim groups harmed by other countries rather than their home country.

In a study evaluating these hypotheses (Blatz, Ross, & Starzyk, under review), participants learned of a government-sponsored harm against an Aboriginal Canadian community. We presented the harm accurately, except for the location. Participants learned that the government-sponsored harm occurred either in Canada or Australia. As expected, our Canadian participants blamed the Aboriginal group more and the government less for a harm that occurred in Canada rather than Australia. Participants also objected more strongly to reparations when the harm occurred in Canada.

How might victims of injustice evoke greater sympathy from the nonvictimized majority in their country? Matsuda (1987) suggested that, in pursuing reparations, previously victimized minority groups need to demonstrate that they are still suffering psychologically, physically, or materially as a consequence of the original harm (Matsuda, 1987). In contrast to Matsuda's suggestion, justice theorists (e.g., Jost & Banaji, 1994; Lerner, 1980) imply that connecting current suffering to a past injustice could reduce sympathy for the victimized minority. The majority should be reluctant to acknowledge that their system and ingroup perpetrated continuing harm. Instead of being sympathetic, the majority might respond to claims of persistent suffering by blaming the victims for their difficulties.

Suppose that members of the majority believe that reparations are possible and could help rectify the injustice. Would they then be more inclined to respond sympathetically and less disposed to blame the victims? Lerner and Simmons (1966) found that people responded more favorably to an innocent victim when they believed that they could effectively end the victim's suffering and provide her with rewards. Similarly, we hypothesized that people's sympathy for the victim group and support for reparations would depend on whether they believe the government could provide satisfactory

reparations. When reparations seem feasible, members of the majority might be sympathetic to victims who continue to suffer from an earlier injustice. Such suffering victims are likely to seem particularly deserving of support. Even when satisfactory material reparations are impractical, common sense might suggest that people should still feel sympathetic toward the victims and recognize the magnitude of the ongoing harm. However, social psychological theories of justice imply that, when material reparations are impractical, members of the majority will be motivated to restore justice in other ways, such as by downplaying the magnitude of the harm.

We evaluated these hypotheses in a study in which we focused on a government-sponsored harm against a Black community in Canada (Starzyk & Ross, 2008). The information provided to participants was based on an actual incident that occurred in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in the 1960s (Clairmont & Magill, 1999). City officials demolished the homes and confiscated the land of members of the Black Canadian community. Participants read a passage describing residents' reactions to their expulsion. Participants read that horrified residents watched bulldozers destroy their community; residents were moved to new homes that, unlike those destroyed, had running water, electricity, and sewage service. The passage informed participants that although city officials claimed that they relocated the residents for humanitarian reasons, the officials did not consult the residents about the relocation. In the passage, residents express their love for their former community and their belief that the city confiscated the land for economic rather than humanitarian reasons.

Canadians outside of Nova Scotia tend to be unaware of this episode, but former residents of the demolished community and their descendents are currently seeking reparations. We manipulated the feasibility of reparations. We described reparations as either feasible because the confiscated land was undeveloped and still available for the former residents or impractical because the land was unavailable. We also manipulated the former residents' present state; they were depicted as either continuing to suffer psychologically and materially from the relocation or as doing reasonably well.

When reparations were feasible, participants expressed greater compassion for victims who continued to suffer from effects of the relocation. Participants perceived the magnitude of the injustice to be greater, reported more sympathy for the victims, and judged reparations more favorably. When they can support righting an injustice, people respond benevolently toward suffering victims. When reparations were impractical, participants' assessments of the magnitude of the injustice and their expressions of sympathy were unaffected by whether the victims continued to suffer. The benevolence toward still suffering victims dissipated when people could not act to right

the injustice. This finding is consistent with just-world and system justification theories. The research also yielded an unpredicted result: Participants expressed more sympathy for nonsuffering victims when reparations were impractical rather than feasible. When reparations were feasible, participants objected to compensating nonsuffering victims. A feeling of sympathy is likely dissonant with their reluctance to award reparations to victims who are now doing well. To justify their reluctance and reduce dissonance, participants may come to regard the nonsuffering victims as undeserving of compassion.

HOW MEMBERS OF THE MAJORITY AND VICTIMIZED MINORITY RESPOND TO REPARATIONS

So far, we have described how members of the majority react to *demands* by a minority for reparations for historical injustices. Next, we discuss how members of the victimized minority and majority respond to actual offers of reparations. Members of previously victimized minorities often argue that government-sponsored reparations promote healing and allow them to feel better about their own group, the majority, and the political and economic system (Brooks, 1999). Many historians and legal theorists agree that official reparations benefit a victim group (e.g., Brooks, 1999; Minow, 2002). These scholars assume that, in the absence of a collective response, the wounds from the injustice continue to fester, causing resentment and conflict. As evidence, scholars note that Japan's unwillingness to apologize officially for war crimes it committed during World War II has prevented reconciliation with the harmed groups, whereas Germany's provision of reparations to some victim groups has facilitated favorable relations (Barkan, 2000). It is difficult to draw general lessons from such examples, however, because the situations and groups involved vary in many ways. Also, historians and legal theorists do not provide a theoretical framework to explain why reparations might have positive effects. Social psychological theories of justice provide a plausible explanation for the benefits of reparations for the minority group. By explicitly condemning past legislative discrimination, apologizing, and offering substantial financial compensation, a current government confirms that the victim group was treated unjustly and affirms the fairness of the present system.

Quite naturally, most of the speculation concerning the effects of reparations focuses on the victimized minority. There is much less discussion about how members of a majority group might respond to reparations. Yet, their reactions are important, because governments often avoid offering apologies or other reparations, in part, because they fear a backlash from the majority

(Brooks, 1999; Robbins, 2006; Viles, 2002). Nonetheless, members of the majority can benefit from reparations. Majority members may achieve improved intergroup relations and an end to costly litigation if the minority is seeking reparations through the courts. Reparations also demonstrate the commitment of present majority members and the system to fairness and justice. By dissociating the present group from the past group and the present system from the past system, apologies and other reparations can help majority members maintain a positive image of their current group and a belief that the current system is fair.

We focused our study on reparations offered by the Canadian government in 2006 for the Head Tax and Chinese Exclusion Act. The Head Tax was a substantial immigration tax that the Canadian government levied only on Chinese between 1885 and 1923 to limit Chinese immigration. The Exclusion Act, implemented by the Canadian government from 1923 to 1947, barred Chinese from entering the country altogether. For many years, Chinese Canadians lobbied for reparations from the government for these discriminatory policies. To understand the impact of reparations, we (Blatz, Ross, Day, & Schryer, 2006) surveyed Chinese Canadians and other Canadians before and after the Canadian government provided reparations.

Before the Canadian government officially apologized and provided compensation, we described the Head Tax and Exclusion Act to Chinese and non-Chinese Canadians and then assessed their perceptions of the victims and the government. For the sample surveyed after the reparations offer, we provided the same information and also included the complete text of the official apology, as well as information about the compensation package. Chinese and non-Chinese Canadians were more likely to report that the Head Tax reflected poorly on the Canadian system of government before than after reparations were provided. We also asked participants from each group to assess the degree to which they shared a common identity (belonged to the same group) with the victims. Non-Chinese participants reported greater shared identity with the Head Tax payers after than before reparations were provided. Chinese participants' reports of shared identity with the payers were high in either instance and not affected by reparations.

We asked additional questions only after reparations were offered to assess how Chinese and non-Chinese participants evaluated the government's offer. Both groups assessed the offer quite favorably, but non-Chinese Canadians were particularly enthusiastic. Non-Chinese participants were more likely than Chinese to agree that the apology was complete, that justice had finally been done, and that the reparations package was acceptable. Chinese participants were much more likely than non-Chinese to indicate that the

children of Head Tax payers should have received compensation if neither parent was alive (they did not). Chinese respondents were also more cynical about the intent of the reparations offer than were non-Chinese, showing greater agreement with the statement that the Prime Minister apologized mainly to win Chinese votes in the next election. These group differences in evaluations of the reparations package were all statistically significant, but let us be absolutely clear: On the whole, Chinese participants viewed the offer favorably, albeit less favorably than the majority, non-Chinese group. Also, although the apology was aimed at all Chinese Canadians, relatively few, and none of our respondents, received direct financial compensation. It remains to be seen how those who receive direct financial compensation would respond to an offer of reparations.

Why were Chinese-Canadian participants less approving of the reparations offer than their non-Chinese counterparts? We focus on three complementary explanations. First, reparations do not restore justice for the minority in the sense that they remove the harm or re-establish the status quo. For example, Japanese Canadians did not have their property returned when they were compensated for being interned during World War II, and the amount of compensation they received was, on average, only a small percentage of their actual financial losses (Brooks, 1999). Similarly, the Head Tax compensation was labelled a "symbol of regret" rather than genuine financial compensation. Indeed, how could any current government compensate for the effects of the Head Tax and Exclusion Act on individuals and their families? The degree of loss and the relative inadequacy of compensation are probably more salient to those who belong to the victim group than to majority group members.

Second, it was the majority and its government representatives who committed the wrong. As a result, the wrong is possibly more threatening to the majority group's social identity and their beliefs about the fairness of their system. As we have seen, members of the majority support reparations when they are feasible (Starzyk & Ross, 2008). Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper showed that reparations were feasible by providing them; in turn, members of the majority may have been eager to view the reparations package as a successful remedy for an earlier injustice.

Finally, the content of apologies may explain why majority members are more enamored with them. In the next section, we consider how government leaders apologize and how the content of their apologies might contribute to the majority group's greater enthusiasm. Formal government apologies for historical injustices are quite rare (Brooks, 1999), but there have been enough in recent decades for us to attempt an exploratory analysis.

How Governments Apologize

We begin this section by suggesting a template for how governments might devise an effective apology. We then assess, in detail, the degree to which the apology for the Head Tax conforms to this template. We also briefly consider several other government apologies.

In fashioning their apologies, government leaders probably have at least two audiences in mind: The victimized minority and the rest of the population. Government leaders need to make the case to an often sceptical majority that apology and compensation are warranted, especially if the financial package is large (Robbins, 2005; Viles, 2002). Typically, members of the minority will already regard reparations as justified (Viles, 2002). For them, the apology should have the characteristics of a sincere apology, an expression of regret that would satisfy an aggrieved party. Researchers (Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Meier, 1998; Scher & Darley, 1997; Tavuchis, 1991) suggest that an apology will appear sincere when it contains the following elements: Offenders acknowledge the injustice and the suffering it caused; explain their actions and accept responsibility for the harm; and express remorse, offer compensation, and promise to never commit the same injustice again. Most everyday apologies do not contain all of these elements. A simple "I'm sorry" or "sorry" is the norm (Meier, 1998), in part, perhaps, because everyday infractions are often minor rule violations. The historical injustices that result in apologies and material reparations are not trivial, however. As a result, leaders who apologize may go well beyond a simple expression of regret and offer a more complete apology.

The social identity and justice literatures also have implications for the content of government apologies. The apology should praise both the majority and minority group, so as to support positive social identities in both groups. The apology should also affirm the fairness of the current system and dissociate this system from past wrongs.

The apology offered by the Canadian Prime Minister Harper for the Head Tax effectively addresses these issues (Globe and Mail, 2006, June 22). He begins by emphasizing the gravity of the injustice committed against many hardworking, good Chinese immigrants, who were targeted for discrimination solely because of their "race." Apology and other reparations therefore seem warranted. His statement also includes all of the qualities of a sincere apology. He recognizes the suffering of Head Tax payers: "We acknowledge the high cost of the Head Tax meant many family members were left behind in China, never to be reunited, or that families lived apart and, in some cases, in poverty, for many years. . . . This was a grave injustice . . ." He then explains why the injustice occurred: "An attempt to deter immigration." He

accepts “moral responsibility,” for acknowledging “these shameful polices of our past.” He expresses “deep sorrow” . . . “over the racist actions of our past.” He offers “symbolic” financial compensation to the living Head Tax payers or their surviving spouses. He promises to “continually strive to ensure that similar unjust practices are never allowed to happen again.”

Harper also promotes the positive social identities of both groups. He asserts that the Chinese-Canadian community “continues to make such an invaluable contribution to our great country.” He addresses the social identity concerns of the majority by noting that every country makes mistakes and that Canadians are “good,” “just,” and “decent.” He affirms the current system by observing that the injustice happened long ago (“lies far in our past”) and in a different system (“a product of a profoundly different time” in which such discrimination was legal). He assures contemporary non-Chinese Canadians that neither they nor their government were responsible for the injustice, stressing that the apology is “not about liability today.” He also states that the current government and system are redressing past wrongs and will act to prevent future injustices of the same sort. As apologies go, Harper’s is a tour de force.

Is there anything in the apology that might be at least mildly disturbing to Chinese Canadians and contribute to the group differences that we observed in our Head Tax study? We have already noted one point: Chinese respondents in our survey were less satisfied with the government’s refusal to pay compensation to the descendents of Head Tax payers when the Tax payer and his spouse were deceased. We also wonder (and this is sheer speculation) whether there is a certain tension in trying to please two different constituencies and, in particular, whether Harper’s attempts to laud the majority group might have undermined the effectiveness of the apology for Chinese Canadians. Toward the end of his statement, Harper seemed to downplay the culpability of non-Chinese Canadians: “No country is perfect. Like all countries, Canada has made mistakes in its past, and we realize that . . . Canadians, however, are a good and just people, acting when we’ve committed wrong . . . it is the decent thing to do, a characteristic to be found at the core of the Canadian soul.” Non-Chinese Canadians might have appreciated this portrayal of the “decent” Canadian more than their Chinese Canadian counterparts, who might have wondered why such decent people behaved so deplorably in the past. Also, use of the term “mistakes” seems to minimize the injustice. The imposition of the Head Tax was not a minor gaffe (like a spelling mistake) or an isolated incident. The Head Tax was a key component of decades of deliberate legislative discrimination against Chinese immigrants.

The reparations package offered by Harper’s government was modeled on the apology and compensation package offered in 1988 to Japanese Canadians for their interment during World War II. Statements in that reparations

agreement and Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's official apology reflected similar efforts to affirm the system and maintain the positive social identity of the majority group (Government of Canada, 1988). The reparations agreement notes that "the principles of justice and equality in Canada are reaffirmed." In his apology in the House of Commons, Prime Minister Mulroney, like Harper, emphasized that to err is human: "Most of us in our own lives have had occasion to regret certain things that we have done. Error is an ingredient of humanity, so too is apology and forgiveness."

The apology and reparations to Japanese Canadians did not include explicit indications that the injustices occurred long ago and were perpetuated by a different system. In contrast, such distancing efforts were clearly evident in a statement of regret offered by Ralph Klein (Government of Alberta, 1999), then Premier of Alberta. In 1928, the provincial parliament in Alberta passed the Sexual Sterilization Act, which permitted the forced sterilization of individuals deemed to be mentally disabled. About 2,800 residents of psychiatric institutions were forcibly sterilized from 1928 to 1970. The act was repealed in 1999. Following a great deal of litigation, the provincial Parliament agreed to apologize and financially compensate surviving victims of the sterilization. In offering the "apology," then Premier Ralph Klein said, "We extend regrets for the actions of another government, in another period of time" (Government of Alberta Apology, 1999). Unlike Harper, Klein did not accept "moral responsibility" for the actions of his predecessors.

A far more generous apology for government-sponsored injustice was offered by former U.S. President Bill Clinton (Clinton Apology, 1993). In a letter addressed to Japanese Americans interned during World War II, Clinton wrote an apology that distanced the episode, expressed sincere regret, emphasized the magnitude of the injustice, condemned the actions of past governments, and affirmed the fairness of the current system:

Over fifty years ago, the United States Government unjustly interned, evacuated, or relocated . . . many . . . Japanese Americans. . . . I offer a sincere apology to you for the actions that unfairly denied Japanese Americans and their families fundamental liberties . . . we acknowledge the wrongs of the past and offer redress to those who endured such grave injustice. In retrospect, we understand that the nation's actions were rooted deeply in racial prejudice, wartime hysteria, and a lack of political leadership. We must learn from the past and dedicate ourselves . . . to renewing the spirit of equality and our love of freedom. Together, we can guarantee a future with liberty and justice for all.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we examined how social identity concerns and justice motivations influence responses to historical injustices. We found that people

not belonging to a victimized group often seem unaware of historical injustices in their own country. When past government-sponsored injustices against a minority are made salient, people in the majority group are more inclined to downplay the degree of injustice, blame the victim group, and oppose reparations when the injustices occur in their own country rather than elsewhere. We argued that these results reflect, in part, people's motivations to protect their social identity and the legitimacy of the social, economic, and political status quo. Our research shows that, when confronted with local historical harms, people can resolve threats to system integrity in a number of ways. They may erase the harm from the historical record, perceive the injustice as less severe, blame the victims for their problems, or dissociate the present system from the injustice. Alternatively, when government reparations for historical injustices are warranted and possible, people sympathize with still-suffering victims and support measures to alleviate the injustice.

In the final sections of the chapter, we examined the impact and content of government offers of reparations. Government apologies and compensation packages can lead members of both the victimized minority and nonvictimized majority to report more faith in the fairness of their political and economic system. Government reparations seem to produce an especially favorable response from members of the nonvictimized majority. The positive effects of government apologies are probably related to the actual content of the apologies. Governments often apologize in ways that address the identity concerns of both the victimized minority and the nonvictimized majority. Although they are generous in their praise of all of their people, governments seem less inclined to extol the fairness of their political and social system. Perhaps they suppose that the apology, itself, can serve this important psychological function.

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The Politics of Intergroup Attitudes

Brian A. Nosek, Mahzarin R. Banaji, and John T. Jost

Abstract

Ideologies that underlie concepts of ethnocentrism, authoritarianism, system justification, social dominance, and morality shape minds in sufficiently deep ways to bring about (a) congruence between implicit and explicit preferences, and (b) a consistently greater preference for socially advantaged groups among political conservatives than liberals on both explicit and implicit measures. Data from large web samples and representative samples from the American National Election Studies (ANES) provide support for these and two additional results: (a) liberals show greater mean dissociation between explicit and implicit attitudes than do conservatives, reporting more favorable attitudes toward the underprivileged groups than they demonstrate on implicit measures; and (b) over time, conservatives' racial preferences converge on those of liberals, suggesting that where liberals are today, conservatives will be tomorrow.

Intergroup attitudes are made up of complex strands of social preferences. They are held together by political ideologies that serve as orienting systems guiding personality, as well as responses to the environment such as decisions about the information one chooses to consume, the activities one pursues, and the policies one supports (Jost, 2006). They are sufficiently central to social cognition that they are visible in the neural markers that distinguish a politically similar other from one who is dissimilar (Mitchell, Macrae, & Banaji, 2006).

In this chapter, we rely on two large data sets that provide substantial evidence regarding attitudes toward multiple social groups (e.g., groups based on religion, sexuality, ethnicity/race, age, and gender). From these data, we examine the role of political ideology as an organizing concept for the structure and function of social attitudes; simultaneously, we examine intergroup attitudes to understand more about the liberal-conservative (or left-right) political divide.

In the last two decades, the idea that attitudes, like other mental processes, may reside in both conscious/explicit as well as less conscious/implicit forms has come to be well-accepted (e.g., Bargh, 1997; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). This distinction in attitudes may apply to philosophical and ideological belief systems as well (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Jost, Glaser,

Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003). That is, political ideology—an interconnected set of beliefs and attitudes that shape judgment—may not exist solely as a *reasoned* or *explicit* collection of beliefs and attitudes. Ideology has unconscious as well as conscious determinants, and the latter are well explicated elsewhere (Cunningham, Nezlek, & Banaji, 2004; see also Ferguson, Carter, & Hassin, this volume).

In this chapter, we examine the variation in ideological orientation in relation to implicit and explicit attitudes, with a specific focus on attitudes toward social groups. We start by revisiting Jost and colleagues' (2003) theoretical argument (and supporting meta-analysis) that liberals and conservatives differ on two key dimensions: *resistance to change* and *tolerance for inequality*. We then focus on the key prediction that conservatives are more likely than liberals to have and express more positive attitudes toward high-status or advantaged groups and more negative attitudes toward low-status or disadvantaged groups. This occurs on both conscious and less conscious measures of intergroup attitudes. In this sense, the intergroup attitudes of conservatives tend to be more *system-justifying* than those of liberals, insofar as they support and perpetuate the existing social hierarchy (see Jost et al., 2004; Jost, Nosek, & Gosling, 2008). We also find—using data from the American National Election Studies (ANES)—that liberals have at the forefront of the social movement toward racial egalitarianism, whereas conservatives' attitudes were slower to change.

IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LIBERALS AND CONSERVATIVES

The “classic” conception of the authoritarian personality (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950), its modern instantiation (Altemeyer, 1996), recent perspectives on ideology stressing motivated social cognition (Jost et al., 2003), system justification (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost et al., 2004, 2008), social dominance (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), and moral foundations (Haidt & Graham, 2007) provide accounts of differences between the political left and right, or, more commonly in the United States, liberalism and conservatism. These perspectives converge on the expectation that, compared to liberals, conservatives are less concerned with equality, more comfortable maintaining the status quo, and more likely to show favoritism for high-status or advantaged groups over low-status or disadvantaged groups.

To the extent that conservative, system-justifying attitudes are characterized by resistance to change and tolerance for inequality (Jost et al., 2003), their appeal should be maximized when stability and order are prioritized values. In the study of authoritarianism, psychologists have long observed

that societal crises (e.g., economic upheavals, terrorist attacks) often precipitate rightward political shifts, presumably because conservative, right-wing opinions typically resonate with heightened needs to manage uncertainty and threat (Doty, Peterson, & Winter, 1991; Sales, 1972, 1973; McCann, 1997; Ullrich & Cohrs, 2007). As Huntington (1957) put it, "When the foundations of society are threatened, the conservative ideology reminds men of the necessity of some institutions and desirability of the existing ones." In other words, system-level threats stimulate the motivation to justify the system.

A meta-analytic review of the psychological antecedents of political conservatism by Jost and colleagues (2003) supports this view. Specifically, they found that situational as well as dispositional variables associated with the management of threat and uncertainty predicted various manifestations of political conservatism (including economic system justification). The original studies were conducted in 12 countries between 1958 and 2002 and employed 88 different research samples involving a total of 22,818 individual cases. Results indicated that the tendency to endorse conservative (rather than liberal or moderate) opinions is positively associated with threat variables such as mortality salience (or death anxiety), system instability, and fear of threat and loss, and it is negatively associated (albeit weakly) with self-esteem. Conservatism is also positively associated with uncertainty avoidance, intolerance of ambiguity, and needs for order, structure, and closure, and it is negatively associated with openness to experience and integrative complexity.

Although the meta-analysis focused on explicit, self-reported attitudes and beliefs, recent research using implicit measures mirrors these ideological differences. For example, ideological differences in resistance to change were demonstrated by Jost, Nosek, and Gosling (2008), who found that implicit and explicit attitudes toward tradition, stability, and the status quo were predictors of political orientation. More specifically, conservatism was associated with greater implicit as well as explicit preferences for order compared to chaos, conformity compared to rebelliousness, stability compared to flexibility, tradition compared to progress, and traditional values compared to feminism. In simultaneous regressions, both implicit and explicit attitudes showed unique predictive validity of political orientation, suggesting that they are nonredundant indicators of ideological proclivities.

Ideological differences in implicit social cognition also relate to the tolerance of inequality and, specifically, favoritism for higher- over lower-status groups. Jost, Banaji, and Nosek (2004) found that individual differences in political orientation moderated implicit attitudes for social groups. Measured with the Implicit Association Test (IAT; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998), conservatives, compared to liberals, showed stronger preferences for White Americans over African Americans and for heterosexuals

over homosexuals (see also Cunningham, Nezlek, & Banaji, 2004; see also Sidanius & Pratto, 1999 for similar results at the explicit level).

The meta-analysis and subsequent investigations of implicit social cognition provide an initial basis for the notion that conservatives are more likely to show favoritism for higher- than lower-status groups than liberals, on both implicit and explicit measures. We examined this possibility across a variety of target groups using nationally representative samples of voters collected through the American National Election Studies (ANES) and with large data sets collected over the Internet.

MEASURING IDEOLOGY AND IMPLICIT ATTITUDES

Validity of a Single-Item Political Ideology Assessment

Remarkably, even the simplest of questions—self-placement on a single-item liberal to conservative dimension—appears to be an effective means of parsing individual differences in ideological orientations. Jost (2006) analyzed ANES data from 1972 to 2004 and found that a self-placement on a 7-point single item of *strongly liberal* to *strongly conservative* explained 85% of the variance in voting behavior for Democratic and Republican candidates for president.

Similar evidence is available from large data sets showing that self-placement on a liberal–conservative dimension discriminates both explicit and implicit attitudes toward politicians. Nosek and colleagues (Nosek, Smyth, Hansen, et al., 2007) summarized approximately 6 years' worth of data collected at Project Implicit web sites (see <https://implicit.harvard.edu/>). The aggregated data sets included more than 2.5 million IATs and self-reported attitude assessments across more than a dozen topics, including social attitudes, stereotypes, and political attitudes. Three of the studies examined attitudes toward George Bush compared to (a) Al Gore (collected before and after the 2000 U.S. presidential election), (b) John Kerry (collected before and after the 2004 election), and (c) previous U.S. presidents (individual and aggregate comparisons).

For each of these data collections, participants reported their explicit candidate preferences, completed an IAT contrasting Bush with another politician, and reported their political orientation on a 5-, 6-, or 7-point scale of liberalism–conservatism. Results for Project Implicit 2004 Election data using a 6-point liberal–conservative self-rating are presented in Figure 20.1 ($N = 22,904$), and all other data sets replicated this pattern (Nosek, Smyth, Hansen, et al., 2007). Conservative participants favored Bush over Kerry both implicitly and explicitly, and liberal participants favored Kerry over Bush. Also, the political preferences were strongest for more extreme conservatives

and liberals. These effects replicate the political preferences expressed in the ANES, and show that self-reported political ideology is predictive of implicit as well as explicit political attitudes. These results provide additional evidence that ideology is not incoherent and meaningless, as some have concluded (e.g., Bishop, 2005; Converse, 1964), even when measured with a “bare bones” single item (see also Jost, 2006).

Measuring Implicit Attitudes

In the 10 years since its initial publication (Greenwald et al., 1998), a sizable literature of over 500 papers has developed using and evaluating the IAT (see Nosek, Greenwald, & Banaji, 2006, for a review; and, Greenwald, Poehlman, Uhlmann, & Banaji, in press, for a meta-analysis of predictive validity evidence). The IAT provides an estimate of the strength of association between concepts such as *gay* and *good/bad* compared with *straight* and *good/bad*.

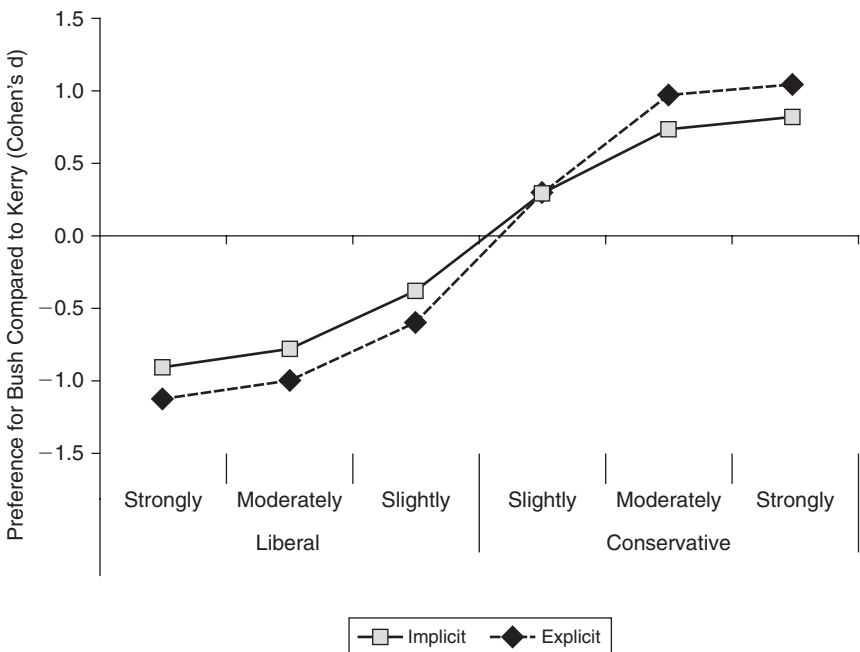


Figure 20.1 Implicit and explicit preferences for George Bush versus John Kerry as a function of ideological self-placement.

Note: Positive values indicate a preference for George Bush relative to John Kerry. Data were collected between November 2003 and May 2005 (total $N = 30,165$; adapted from Nosek et al., 2007).

Participants sort exemplars representing those four categories in two key sorting conditions. In one condition, items representing *gay people* and *bad* things are categorized with one response (a key press), and items representing *straight people* and *good* things are categorized with an alternate response. In a second condition, the response configuration is switched, so that *gay people* and *good* things are categorized with one response and *straight people* and *bad* things are categorized with the alternate response. Categorizing the items faster in the first compared to the second condition is interpreted as indicating an implicit preference for straight people relative to gay people.

The accumulated evidence suggests that the constructs measured by the IAT and self-report measures are related but distinct (Nosek & Smyth, 2007), and the strength of their relation varies from weakly to strongly positive depending on the topic of assessment (Nosek, 2005). Notably, in contrast to the well-known result of dissociation between explicit and implicit attitudes, attitudes toward political candidates and some political issues (e.g., pro-choice versus pro-life) elicit some of the strongest implicit–explicit relations, with r 's sometimes above .70 (Nosek, 2007).

The IAT also shows predictive validity of judgment and behavior in a variety of domains, with explicit measures showing better predictive validity in some cases (e.g., consumer preferences), and the IAT showing better predictive validity in others (e.g., intergroup discrimination-related behaviors; Greenwald, et al., in press). Such congruence may stem from political attitudes being subserved by a general liberal–conservative ideology that binds preferences and provides psychological consistency.

Current research efforts are investigating the underlying processes that contribute to IAT effects (Conrey, Sherman, Gawronski, Hugenberg, & Groom, 2005; Rothermund & Wentura, 2004), and refining the understanding of the IAT's relation to self-report, behavior, and to other implicit measures, such as the Affect Misattribution Procedure (AMP; Payne, Cheng, Govorun, & Stewart, 2005), the Go/No-go Association Task (GNAT; Nosek & Banaji, 2001), evaluative priming (Fazio et al., 1986), and the Sorting Paired Features (SPF) task (Bar-Anan, Nosek, & Vianello, in press).

INTERNET DATA: CORRELATIONS BETWEEN POLITICAL ORIENTATION AND IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT ATTITUDES

A key topic investigated in this chapter is whether political ideology—measured by self-placement on a liberal–conservative dimension—is related to implicit and explicit attitudes toward social groups. In particular, following theories of ethnocentrism, authoritarianism, system justification, motivated social cognition, and moral foundations, are conservatives more

likely than liberals to prefer higher-status groups than lower-status groups? And, is this pattern observed with both implicit and explicit measurement methods?

In a review of the large data sets collected at Project Implicit (Nosek, Smyth, Hansen, et al., 2007), eight of the investigated topics concerned preferences between social groups that differ in terms of social status. To examine the relationship between political orientation and social group preferences, Nosek and colleagues regressed the attitude measure (IAT or a single-item self-reported preference) on to self-reported political orientation and three demographic covariates (gender, age, and ethnicity).

Across topics and measurement methods, conservatives consistently favored higher-status groups to a greater degree than did liberals. Conservatives showed relatively stronger implicit preferences than liberals for White Americans compared to African Americans ($\eta_p^2 = .009$), light-skinned people compared to dark-skinned people ($\eta_p^2 = .006$), White children compared to Black children ($\eta_p^2 = .013$), others compared to Arab-Muslims ($\eta_p^2 = .012$), others compared to Jews ($\eta_p^2 = .008$), abled people compared to disabled people ($\eta_p^2 = .005$), straight people compared to gay people ($\eta_p^2 = .057$), and thin people compared to overweight people ($\eta_p^2 = .004$).

Likewise, conservatives self-reported relatively stronger explicit preferences than liberals for White Americans compared to African Americans ($\eta_p^2 = .029$), light-skinned people compared to dark-skinned people ($\eta_p^2 = .013$), White children compared to Black children ($\eta_p^2 = .023$), other people compared to Arab-Muslims ($\eta_p^2 = .039$), other people compared to Jews ($\eta_p^2 = .035$), and straight people compared to gay people ($\eta_p^2 = .126$). There was minimal variation across political orientation in explicit preferences for the abled compared to the disabled ($\eta_p^2 = .001$) and thin people compared to fat people ($\eta_p^2 = .001$), and there was a slight tendency for liberals to show a stronger pro-young/anti-old preference ($\eta_p^2 = -.002$).

An aggregated comparison of implicit and explicit preferences for all eight topics is presented in Figure 20.2. The x-axis presents self-rated political orientation from strongly liberal to strongly conservative. Positive values on the y-axis indicate a preference for higher-status groups. The displacement of effect sizes from zero indicates that, across the political spectrum, the sample as a whole (both liberals and conservatives) favored higher-status groups. The positive slope shows that greater conservatism was associated with stronger preferences for higher- compared to lower-status groups.

At the extremes, even strong liberals showed a preference for higher-status groups both implicitly ($d = 0.48$) and explicitly ($d = 0.28$), but strong conservatives showed a 65% stronger implicit preference than liberals

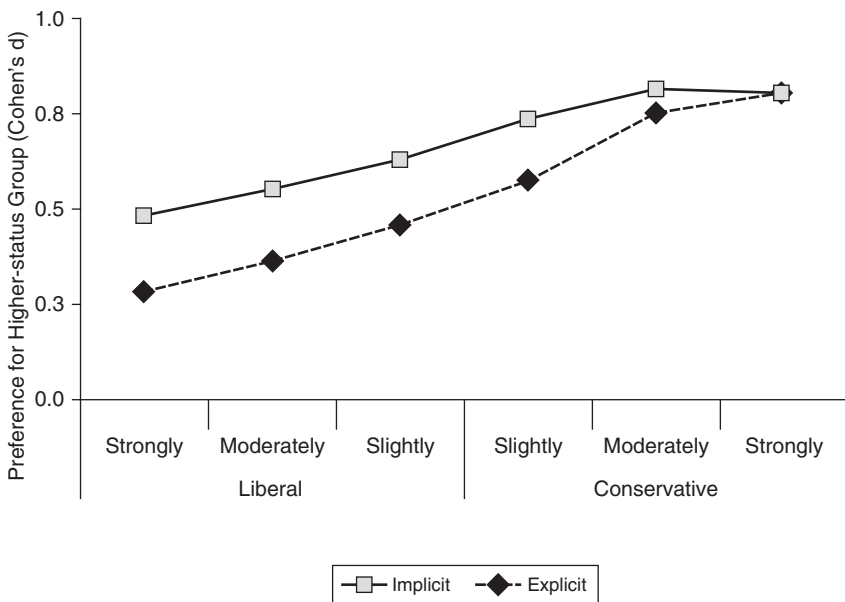


Figure 20.2 Average implicit and explicit preferences for higher status versus lower status groups as a function of ideological self-placement.

Note: Positive values indicate a preference for the higher status group. Aggregate comprised of attitudes toward (higher status listed second): African Americans/White Americans, Dark-skin/Light-skin, old people/young people, Arab-Muslims/Other people, Jews/Other people, Disabled people/Abled people, gay people/straight people, and fat people/thin people (adapted from Nosek et al., 2007).

($d = 0.79$), and a 186% stronger explicit preference ($d = 0.80$). That is, all groups favored higher-status groups on average, and conservatives did so to a greater degree than did liberals.

In summary, liberals and conservatives differ somewhat in their implicit intergroup preferences, and differ more substantially in their explicit intergroup preferences. Liberals showed a larger discrepancy between their implicit higher-status preferences and their comparatively weaker explicit higher-status preferences, whereas conservatives showed very little discrepancy between their strong implicit higher-status preferences and their strong explicit higher-status preferences (assuming the comparability of effect sizes). These findings suggest that liberals are more likely to have a complex or perhaps “conflicted” stance in their social evaluations insofar as they harbor some degree of automatic bias along with an explicit commitment to egalitarianism.

In this sense, in everyday judgment and action, liberals may make greater efforts to override their automatic reaction in favor of a more egalitarian explicit response (e.g., Skitka et al., 2002). Conservatives, on the other hand, show greater consistency on average in their implicit and explicit social evaluations, suggesting that conservatives may be more likely than liberals to justify and use their automatic reactions as a basis for explicit report and judgment (see also Jost et al., 2003, 2004; Sniderman, Crosby, & Howell, 2000).¹

Explicit Attitudes Toward African and White Americans by Respondent Ethnicity. The prior section examined *relative* preferences between higher- and lower-status groups because of the procedural constraint of relative comparison in the IAT and the use of relative explicit preference measures. For this chapter, we conducted additional analyses of Nosek and colleagues' (2007) data and analyzed self-reported thermometer ratings for each group separately. Also, we compared racial attitudes of White American, African American, and other respondents.

Social identity theory anticipates that group members will tend to like their own group more than others (Hewstone, Rubin, & Willis, 2002; Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). But, the hypothesis that conservatives will be more favorable to higher-status groups and more unfavorable to lower-status groups than will liberals does not depend on the individual's own group membership. That is, to the extent that conservatism is linked to a desire to preserve the status quo and acceptance of inequalities among groups (Jost et al., 2003), conservatives should possess more negative attitudes than liberals toward lower-status groups *whatever their own group membership*. For example, conservative Blacks would be expected to report more negative attitudes toward African Americans than would liberal Blacks (see also Jost et al., 2004).

Figure 20.3 presents regression estimates of thermometer attitude ratings (0 cold to 10 warm) toward White Americans on the left and African Americans on the right, separated by respondent ethnicity (White [$n = 255,590$], Black [$n = 34,216$], Other [$n = 72,834$]). The x-axis arrays respondents according to self-reported political orientation. Considering attitudes toward White Americans first, there is a main effect of ethnicity in which White respondents, across the political spectrum, reported liking White Americans more than respondents

¹ Notably, the implicit–explicit consistency is greater at the mean level for conservatives than liberals, but this difference does not emerge at the level of individual differences. The correlation between implicit and explicit social attitudes seems to be equally strong for liberals and conservatives (Nosek, Smyth, Hansen, et al., 2007).

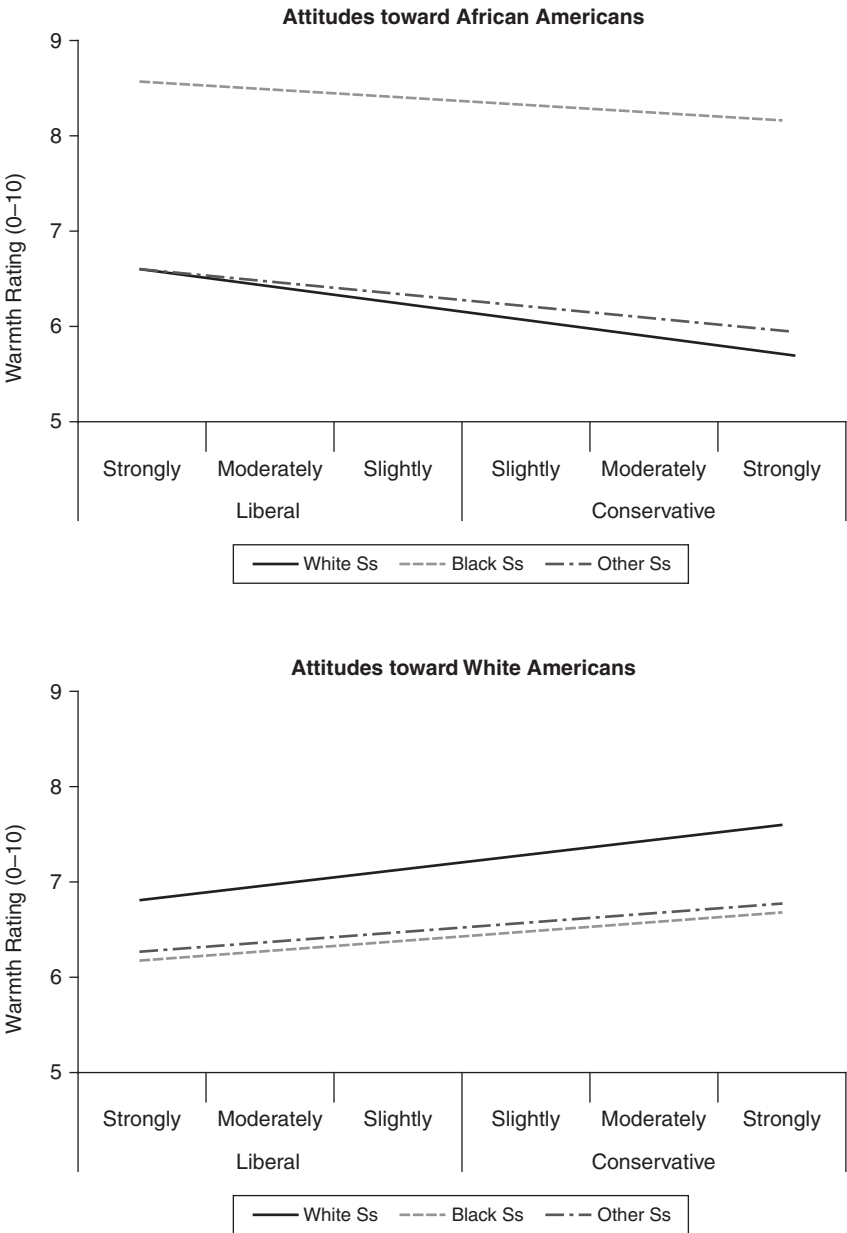


Figure 20.3 Regression estimates of relationship between ideological self-placement and self-reported warmth toward African Americans (*top*) and White Americans (*bottom*) from ANES data separated by respondent race (White, Black, Other).

of other racial groups did.² At the same time, there was a main effect of conservatism such that, for all three racial groups, conservatives expressed more positive attitudes toward White Americans than did liberals in the same racial group. The strength of the conservatism–attitude relationship was strongest for White respondents compared to the other two groups (Whites $\beta = .11$; Blacks $\beta = .06$; Others $\beta = .06$). For Whites, this corresponded to an estimated attitude difference of .8 of a scale point (on a 0 to 10 scale) between attitude ratings of the strong liberals and the strong conservatives.

A distinctly different pattern was observed for attitudes toward African Americans. As before, a main effect of respondent ethnicity was observed. This time, Black respondents across the political spectrum reported more positive attitudes toward African Americans than did White and other respondents. This ingroup effect for both racial groups is consistent with social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Conservatism was not only positively associated with liking for White Americans, it was also negatively associated with liking for African Americans. For all three racial groups, liberals reported more positive attitudes toward African Americans than did conservatives. Again, the strength of the conservatism–attitude relationship was strongest for White respondents (Whites $\beta = -.12$; Blacks $\beta = -.05$; Others $\beta = -.08$). For Whites, this corresponded to a difference of .9 of a scale point between attitudes of strong liberals and strong conservatives.

Strong liberals who are White are estimated to have slightly more positive attitudes toward White Americans (est. $M = 6.81$) than African Americans (est. $M = 6.61$), whereas strong conservatives who are White show a difference of almost 2 full scale points favoring White Americans (est. $M = 7.61$) over African Americans (est. $M = 5.71$).³ Black respondents showed a similar ingroup preference in their White and Black warmth ratings, except that Black conservatives showed less ingroup preference than Black liberals, whereas the opposite was observed with respect to White conservatives and liberals (see also Jost et al., 2004). This latter finding shows that ideology

² Because the samples were very large, all reported effects were estimated reliably with $p < .0001$. Figures and text report data analyses using a 6-point liberal to conservative response item. Data collected with a 7-point response item showed similar results for all reported effects.

³ Actual means were very similar to the regression estimates. Strong liberals ($n = 32,880$, Whites only) reported slightly more positive attitudes toward White Americans ($M = 6.91$) than African Americans ($M = 6.66$), and strong conservatives ($n = 13,836$, Whites only) reported substantially more positive attitudes toward White Americans ($M = 7.78$) than African Americans ($M = 5.61$).

predicts variation in group attitudes beyond that accounted for by social identity—one's group membership.

Other High- and Low-status Groups. We reanalyzed the data for the other attitude domains from the Nosek and colleagues (2007) report that contained a 6-point single-item liberal-conservative self-rating and *separate* thermometer ratings of the higher- and lower-status groups. These included the following, with the higher-status group listed second: dark skin/light skin ($n = 67,561$), old people/young people ($n = 174,289$), Arab-Muslims/other people ($n = 34,520$), Jews/other people ($n = 39,021$), disabled people/abled people ($n = 20,729$), gay people/straight people ($n = 38,511$), and fat people/thin people ($n = 99,142$).⁴ Regression estimates predicting warmth ratings by self-rated liberalism-conservatism appear in Figure 20.4, with the higher-status groups in the bottom panel and lower-status groups in the top panel.

For higher-status groups, all of the regression lines show a positive slope, suggesting that conservatives hold more favorable explicit attitudes toward these groups than do liberals. This effect was observed consistently and with varying magnitude for attitudes toward light-skinned people ($\beta = .11$), non-Arabs ($\beta = .08$), non-Jews ($\beta = .27$), abled people ($\beta = .10$), young people ($\beta = .04$), straight men ($\beta = .34$), and thin people ($\beta = .11$). Across all groups examined, attitudes toward higher-status groups were again more positive among conservatives than among liberals (see also Jost et al., 2004).

For lower-status groups, greater conservatism was expected to be associated with more negativity toward one's own group. As can be observed in Figure 20.4, variability occurred across intergroup comparisons. Three comparisons revealed that conservatives had more unfavorable explicit attitudes than liberals did toward dark-skinned people ($\beta = -.09$), Arab-Muslims ($\beta = -.34$), and gay men ($\beta = -.62$).⁵ Four others had near zero or weakly positive attitude-ideology relations: Jews ($\beta = .01$), thin people ($\beta = .02$), disabled people ($\beta = .03$), and old people ($\beta = .05$). This suggests that some comparisons do not elicit as highly ideologically differentiated attitudes toward the lower-status group as do other comparisons.

⁴ Similar effects were observed with the portions of the data using a 7-point liberal-conservative item. Also, one task—attitudes toward Black and White children—only contained data using a 7-point ideology item. Data for that task were similar to the other race tasks described.

⁵ Thermometer ratings were given separately for gay men, lesbians, straight men, and straight women. Because they show the same pattern, only the male data are presented in Figure 20.4. Attitudes toward lesbians ($\beta = -.52$) showed a similar relation with ideology as attitudes toward gay men, and attitudes toward straight women ($\beta = .29$) were similar to attitudes toward straight men.

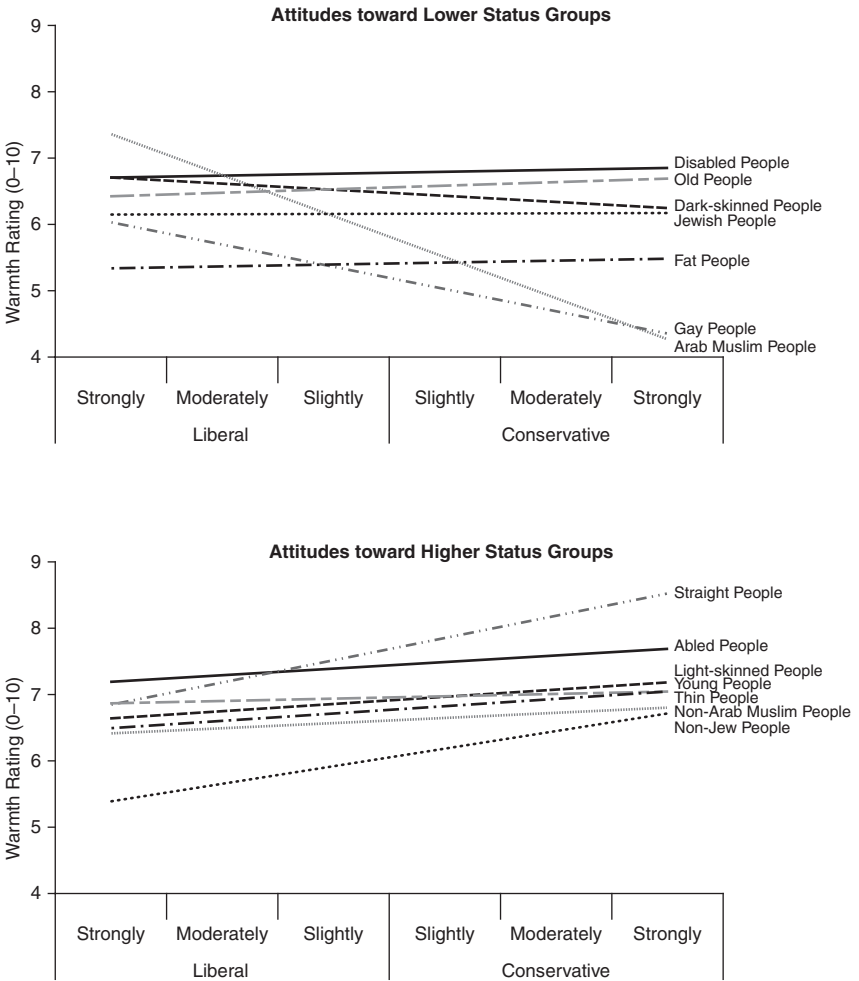


Figure 20.4 Regression estimates of relationship between ideological self-placement and self-reported warmth ratings from combined ANES data for lower status (*top panel*) and higher status (*bottom panel*) groups.

Examining the higher and lower status groups separately with explicit, self-report data provided some interesting insights into the differences in group attitudes by ideology. Explicitly, at least, the pattern is consistent, although with variable magnitude: conservatives report stronger favoritism for higher-status groups than do liberals. The pattern is less consistent for attitudes toward lower-status groups. When substantial differences are observed, the pattern was as expected—conservatives held less favorable attitudes toward lower-status groups than did liberals.

In sum, these data suggest that the liberal–conservative differences are driven primarily by conservatives’ greater liking than liberals for higher-status groups, rather than consistently greater disliking than liberals for lower-status groups. This intriguing result deserves further investigation, as the existing theoretical perspectives are mute with regard to whether the effect is primarily a low-status disliking or a high-status liking effect.

The effects reported in this section have the advantage of being drawn from large and heterogeneous data sets, thus allowing highly reliable estimation and confidence in the robustness of the effects in a very diverse sample. As an unselected data set, the data are not, however, representative of the U.S. population. Next, we sought to replicate the explicit preference effects in a nationally representative data collection—the ANES (an implicit measurement of nationally representative samples was not yet available at the time of writing this chapter).

DATA FROM THE AMERICAN NATIONAL ELECTION STUDIES

Started in 1948, the ANES has conducted studies of the American electorate every 2 or 4 years, using a representative sample of 1,000 to 3,000 Americans on each occasion. The surveys were conducted in face-to-face or telephone interviews in a structured format. Besides surveying a representative sample of Americans, an important feature of the ANES is that similar or identical items were used on multiple occasions, allowing aggregation and cross-sectional comparisons by year.

Two sets of items were of particular interest for the present purposes. For one, since 1972, ANES has included a 7-point “strongly liberal” to “strongly conservative” single-item measure. Also, ANES respondents provided warmth ratings on a thermometer scale toward a variety of different social groups. Attitudes toward some groups, such as Blacks and Whites, were measured on most occasions, and attitudes toward other groups were measured less frequently.

From the available set, we selected feeling thermometer ratings toward a range of social groups and analyzed the available data from 1972 through 2004.⁶ This resulted in a sample of 14 social groups—each with four to 15 measurement occasions. Table 20.1 lists the social groups, the years that they were included in the feeling thermometer rating section of the ANES, the total sample size, the mean warmth rating (range 0 to 97), and the empirical relationships between ideology and intergroup attitudes, described next.

⁶ The data set was the 1948–2004 ANES Cumulative Data File retrieved from <http://electionstudies.org/>.

Table 20.1 Mean warmth rating (0 cold—97 warm) and ideology–attitude relation from ANES data for 14 social groups. Positive *d*'s indicate that conservatism was positively associated with liking for the group; negative *d*'s indicate that conservatism was negatively associated with liking for the group.

Target Group	Years Measured	Total N	Mean thermometer rating	Relation with political orientation from multilevel models (<i>d</i>)
Gays-Lesbians	84 88 92 94 96 98 00 02 04	13860	38.8	-.30
People on Welfare	76 80 84 86 88 90 92 94 96 00 02 04	19766	50.9	-.15
Illegal Aliens	88 92 94 04	6608	35.9	-.15
Blacks	72 74 76 80 82 84 86 88 90 92 94 96 98 00 02 04	25975	65.0	-.08
Young People	72 74 76 80 04	7896	76.2	-.07
Chicanos/Hispanics	76 80 84 88 92 94 96 00 02 04	15193	60.6	-.07
Poor People	72 74 76 80 84 86 88 90 92 94 96 98 00 02 04	24704	71.7	-.06
Jews	72 76 88 92 00 02 04	11185	63.7	-.01
Asian Americans	92 00 02 04	5841	63.0	.02
Protestants	72 76 00 04	6510	68.2	.02
Catholics	72 76 84 88 92 00 02 04	13095	64.9	.04
Middle Class People	72 74 76 80 84 04	9705	74.7	.06
Whites	72 74 76 80 82 84 88 92 94 96 98 00 02 04	22106	73.1	.06
Southerners	72 76 80 92 04	8235	65.4	.10

1. Negative scores indicate that liking for the group was higher with increasing liberalism; positive scores indicate that liking for the group was higher with increasing conservatism.

2. Boldface means that political orientation was not a significant predictor of thermometer ratings for that group.

3. Thermometer ratings for some groups go back to 1964, but the political orientation self-rating does not. There are thermometer ratings for liberals and conservatives going back to 1964 that could be used to replicate these analyses.

Table 20.1 Mean warmth rating (0 cold—97 warm) and ideology–attitude relation from ANES data for 14 social groups. Positive d 's indicate that conservatism was positively associated with liking for the group; negative d 's indicate that conservatism was negatively associated with liking for the group. (*Continued*)

4. ANES thermometer ratings that were not included here concerned political groups (e.g., Democrats, Republicans), politicized groups (e.g., feminists, fundamentalists), or occupational groups (e.g., police).
5. Family income item (vcf0114) was not available in 2002, so that year was not included in multilevel regressions.
6. Multilevel regressions used year (vcf0004) as a grouping variable and regressed thermometer ratings on political orientation (vcf0803), race (vcf0106a), family income (vcf0114), gender (vcf0104), religion (vcf0128), and age (vcf0101). Only political orientation data are summarized here. Full analyses are available as a supplement at <http://briannosek.com/>.

We conducted a multilevel regression for each social group with year of data collection as the grouping variable; thermometer ratings as the dependent variable, which was regressed onto political orientation; and five covariates, namely gender, ethnicity, age, religion, and family income. The effects of political orientation on attitudes toward each of the social groups after adjusting for the other individual difference variables is presented in the last column of Table 20.1 as an effect size (Cohen's d). Negative values indicate that more negative attitudes toward the group were associated with greater conservatism (versus liberalism); positive values indicate that more positive attitudes toward the group were associated with greater conservatism (versus liberalism).

As can be observed in Table 20.1, for seven social groups—gays/lesbians, people on welfare, illegal aliens, blacks, young people, Hispanics, and poor people—conservatism was associated with relatively more negative attitudes toward the group (average $d = -.13$). For four social groups—Catholics, middle class people, Whites, and southerners—liberalism was associated with relatively more negative attitudes toward the group compared to conservatism (average $d = .07$). There were no reliable relationships between political orientation and attitudes for three groups—Jews, Asian Americans, and Protestants (average $d = .01$).

The social groups included in the ANES vary in terms of their size and social status. For domains in which the higher- and lower-status groups were included, conservatives tended to show greater liking for the higher-status

group and greater disliking of the lower-status group, in comparison with liberals. For example, liking of Blacks and Hispanics was negatively associated with conservatism, whereas liking of Whites was positively associated with conservatism. Likewise, liking of poor people was negatively associated with conservatism, whereas liking of middle class people was positively associated (see also Jost et al., 2004).

Across groups, there was a strong association between the overall liking of the group (averaging across liberals and conservatives) and the ideology–attitude relationship. The correlation between mean warmth ratings and the ideology–attitude relationship was $r = .76$. In other words, those groups that were most disliked overall were those that differentiated liberals and conservatives the most, with conservatives being more negative. This association was driven by the three most disliked groups in the data set—gays/lesbians (M warmth rating = 38.8), people on welfare ($M = 50.9$), and illegal aliens ($M = 35.9$). In short, ideological differences were most apparent for attitudes toward the most disliked groups.

The results suggest that lower-status groups are viewed more unfavorably by conservatives than liberals. At the same time, liberals do not like *everyone* more than conservatives do. Conservatives reported more liking of some groups, especially Whites and the middle class, who possess higher social status than their racial and economic counterparts. In addition, conservatives reported greater favorability toward southerners than did liberals. Southerners are not easily recognized as high-status or dominant, but they are generally seen as more conservative than other regional groups.

These data from nationally representative ANES data collections replicate the findings from the very large data sets reviewed earlier, at least with regard to explicit evaluations. In the next section, we narrow our focus to racial attitudes to take advantage of the fact that the ANES offers opportunities for cross-sectional comparisons over time. Following the review by Jost and colleagues (2003), conservatives' comparatively greater resistance to change and tolerance of inequality should make liberals more likely to be at the forefront of social change movements aimed to increase egalitarianism between groups. Changes in explicit racial attitudes in the United States from the mid-20th to early 21st centuries provide an ideal circumstance to test this prediction.

LIBERALS AS SOCIAL CHANGE AGENTS

Following the theoretical analysis comparing liberals' and conservatives' attitudes about social change and inequality (Jost et al., 2003, 2008), liberals should be more likely than conservatives to instigate social change aimed at reducing social inequalities. Successful social movements, however, are those

that ultimately convince liberals, moderates, and conservatives alike that the inequalities are both real and unjustified. Jost and colleagues (2003) did not suggest that conservatives are altogether *unconcerned* with inequality; rather, their review suggested that conservatives are *less* concerned with inequality than are liberals (see also Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2007; Napier & Jost, 2008). They also observed that conservatives are more likely than liberals to believe that society is inevitably hierarchical. Further, because conservatives are relatively more resistant to change in general, they are likely more wary of corrective measures to redress inequality when they require substantive changes to the existing social order.

The combination of differential concerns about inequality and resistance to change suggests that social movements for changing inequalities are more likely to be introduced and led by liberals and to be resisted, especially at first, by conservatives. Liberals, in prioritizing social equality over social order, may provide the culture with an early-warning signal for the presence of an excessive inequality among groups.

Conversely, conservatives, in prioritizing social order over social equality, may caution against unnecessary changes to a societal status quo and warn against the uncertainties of change. Conservatives' degree of sensitivity to order and their tolerance for inequality frequently puts them in the role of skeptic concerning social movements that seek to ameliorate social inequalities. We hypothesize that those social movements that produce change are those in which liberals are ultimately able to convince conservatives that the inequalities are important to fix, and that social change can occur without cultural collapse. Eventually, the liberal-initiated changes become part of the status quo, and conservative resistance relents and embraces the new world order.

In the context of social group prejudices, this account of liberal and conservative reactions to social movements leads to the following predictions: (a) early in a social movement, liberals' and conservatives' attitudes toward a given stigmatized group will be most differentiated, with liberals being relatively more favorable toward the target group than conservatives; and (b) over time, for successful social movements, the attitude gap between liberals and conservatives will progressively narrow, as conservatives become more accepting of the social change and more supportive of equal rights and treatment for the stigmatized group.

A TEST OF THE SOCIAL CHANGE HYPOTHESES: ATTITUDES TOWARD BLACKS IN THE UNITED STATES

From 1972 to 2004, the ANES included feeling thermometer ratings toward Blacks in every data collection except for 1978. These cross-sectional data

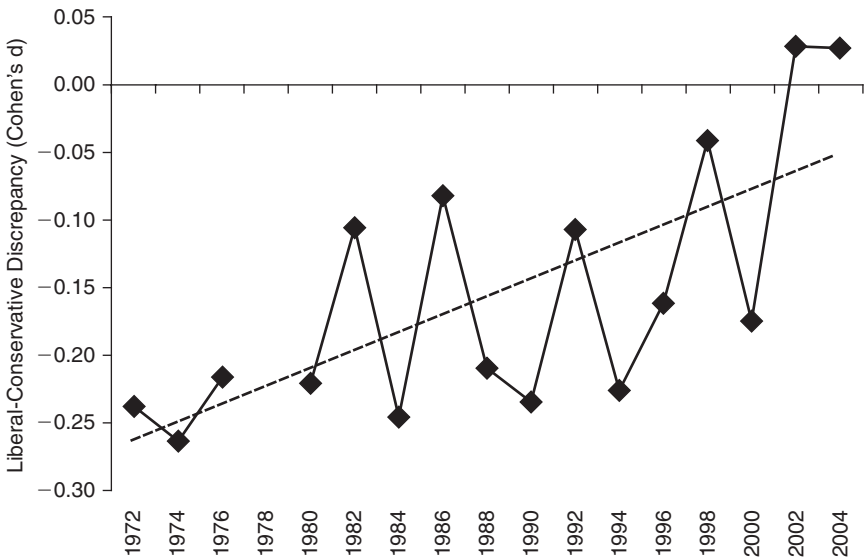


Figure 20.5 The relationship between ideological self-placement and attitudes toward Blacks for ANES data by year of data collection.

Note: Negative values indicate that conservatism (compared to liberalism) was associated with more negative attitudes toward Blacks, and positive values indicate the reverse, namely that liberalism (compared to conservatism) was associated with more negative attitudes toward Blacks.

provide an opportunity to test whether liberals and conservatives differ most in their attitudes toward Blacks early in the Civil Rights movement (as early as is available in this data set), and the extent to which the liberal-conservative gap closed in the intervening years. The ANES data provide clear support for both hypotheses (Fig. 20.5).

We conducted a multilevel regression with attitudes toward Blacks as the dependent variable; year of data collection as the grouping variable; race, gender, family income, age, and religion as covariates; and political orientation entered as a predictor and random effects factor. The latter variable tests the hypothesis that the relationship between political orientation and attitudes toward Blacks changes over time.⁷ A main effect of year reveals that attitudes toward Blacks became more favorable over time ($z = 2.54, p = .006$).

⁷ An additional model that excluded Black participants from the data set shows the same pattern of results as reported here.

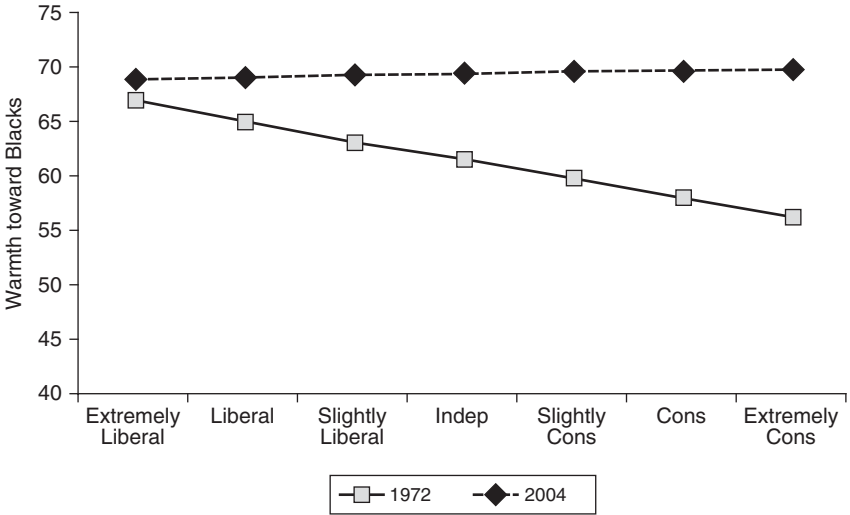


Figure 20.6 Regression estimates for warmth ratings for attitudes toward Blacks by political ideology for ANES data from 1972 and 2004. Estimates calculated after partialing out gender, race, family income, age, and religion. Indep, independent; cons, conservative.

Likewise, a main effect of political orientation indicates that liberals tended to be more favorable toward Blacks than did conservatives over the 32-year period ($B = -1.08, SE B = .18, t = -6.19, p < .0001$). Critically, the random effect of political orientation by year was significant, despite there being only 15 measurement occasions ($z = 1.66, p = .048$). The attitude gap between liberals and conservatives was strongest in the earliest years available, and the gap narrowed significantly in later years.

The pattern shows that liberals' and conservatives' attitudes toward Blacks were most differentiated in the 1970s, and that this differentiation narrowed over time and was completely absent (even nonsignificantly reversed) in the latest two data collections (2002 and 2004).⁸ Figure 20.6 provides further illustration by showing the regression estimates for attitudes toward Blacks for the first (1972) and last (2004) data collection by ideology. The most extreme liberals were nearly as positive toward Blacks in 1972 as they were 32 years later, suggesting very little change among liberals over the time span.

⁸ Note that the large web data sets reviewed earlier found that a small political difference in racial attitudes persisted into the 21st century (data collected 2000–2006).

The most extreme conservatives, on the other hand, showed a substantial change (cross-sectionally) in attitudes over the same period. The regression estimates for extreme conservatives have them giving a 56 warmth rating for Blacks in 1972 and a 70 rating in 2004. In effect, these data suggest that conservatives' explicit attitudes toward Blacks eventually "caught up" to liberals' over this 32-year period in American history.⁹

Cross-sectional analyses of attitudes toward Blacks in ANES data were consistent with our hypothesis that liberals are more likely to be the instigators of social change aimed at redressing social group inequalities, and conservatives to initially resist. Whereas strong liberals were already quite positive toward Blacks in 1972, conservatism was then associated with markedly less favorable attitudes toward Blacks. Over time, attitudes toward Blacks became more favorable in general, with the rest of the political spectrum ultimately joining liberals in the expression of more positive attitudes.

INTERGROUP ATTITUDES AND THE CHANGING OF POLITICAL MINDS

Across two large data sets, and using both implicit and explicit methods of measurement, we consistently observed that conservatives more than liberals tilt in their preferences toward higher-status groups over lower-status groups (Jost et al., 2004). Looking at explicit attitudes toward higher- and lower-status groups separately, we see that this effect in conservatives occurs at both ends: they prefer higher-status groups more than liberals and dislike lower-status groups more than liberals, with the former being the more consistent effect. Variation occurs in the extent to which liberals and conservatives differ. Some intergroup comparisons elicit strong polarization (e.g., gay men), whereas others elicit minimal variation by ideology (e.g., young people). An obvious next step for this area of research is to identify those factors that exaggerate or minimize ideological polarization with respect to specific target groups.

An observation of interest from data from the Project Implicit website is that the ideological polarization for group preferences was substantially stronger for explicit reports than for implicit measurement. Nosek and colleagues (2007) reported that, after adjusting for variations in age, gender, and ethnicity, the average effect size across topics for political ideology predicting implicit preferences was $\eta_p^2 = .013$, and the average effect size for explicit

⁹ The main caution for this interpretation is the fact that the data is cross-sectional, not longitudinal. Different people participated in each year's data collection.

preferences was $\eta_p^2 = .030$, more than twice the magnitude. Conservatives show robust preferences for high-status groups, with implicit and explicit preferences having approximately the same effect sizes, on average, for moderate and strong conservatives (Fig. 20.2). For liberals, however, a “conflicted stance” more accurately describes the data, with explicitly reported preferences being discrepant from implicit ones and consistently more egalitarian on average.

Why might this be? Our prevailing hypotheses focus on change—both in the immediate situation and over time. At any given moment, liberals and conservatives may have fairly similar automatic reactions to social groups but deal with their reactions differently. Liberals may be more suspicious of their own automatic responses and seek to suppress, change, or modify their influence on explicit report and judgment (Skitka et al., 2002). Conservatives, on the other hand, might be more likely to accept their automatic responses as valid and use them to guide explicit judgment.

This hypothesis does not address the fact that there are indeed some implicit attitude differences across the ideological spectrum, suggesting that automatic reactions are not all the same for liberals and conservatives. This provides the basis for our hypothesis about change over time. Evidence for the automatization of cognitive processes points to practice and elaboration as key influences (Logan, 1988; Nosek, 2005).

If liberals actively reject or modify their automatic responses and practice replacing those reactions with judgments that conform to their explicit values, then, over time, those alternative evaluations may become automatized themselves. This is consistent with evidence that people who are chronic egalitarians or high in the motivation to respond without prejudice show less implicit bias against African Americans than others do (e.g., Devine, Plant, Amodio, Harmon-Jones, & Vance, 2002; Moskowitz, Gollwitzer, Wasel, & Schaal, 1999). Liberals typically have stronger motivations to avoid prejudice than conservatives. As a consequence, they may practice egalitarian responses more frequently, thus accounting for their lower degree of implicit preference for higher-status groups.

From this perspective, a liberal’s effort to practice egalitarianism is first an explicit shift that, over time, fosters an implicit shift as well. It also highlights the possibility that, based on the present data, the change of mind is incomplete. If practicing egalitarian responses is the key to reducing implicit biases, then most liberals have more practicing to do before attaining a high degree of implicit–explicit consistency.

Another possibility is that the type of change that leads to explicit egalitarianism is not sufficient for changing implicit evaluations. Deciding that one has changed one’s mind will likely alter what is said and endorsed, but

it need not change much beyond that, and it certainly doesn't have one-to-one impact on the local and global environment. If implicit evaluations are sensitive to the stamp of culture, then a change of mind must be followed by a change of behavior and a change in the situation, or else implicit–explicit discrepancies will persist.

Conservatives, on the other hand, may be less likely to reject their automatic responses in the first place, less likely to practice egalitarian responses, and thus less likely to modify their automatic preferences for the higher-status groups. The substantial change in conservatives' racial attitudes in the ANES data set suggests that ideological differences in explicit racial attitudes have dissipated substantially. If those indeed reflect genuine shifts, then they may be accompanied by increased motivations among conservatives to be racially egalitarian. This increase in motivation could lead to a more consistent practice of egalitarian responses and ultimately to a reduction or elimination of differences in implicit racial biases between liberals and conservatives. Future research will speak to the extent and quality of this social change.

These hypotheses offer bidirectional perspectives on implicit–explicit influence: that changes in explicit preferences can, over time, lead to implicit changes as a cause of implicit–explicit consistency, and that, in the moment, an automatic reaction can either be used or rejected as a basis for generating an explicit report or judgment. At the same time, this chapter may reflect another directional assumption: that ideology shapes explicit orientations about social groups, and not the other way around. However, this need not be the case. Disliked or disadvantaged groups, notably Blacks, gays, and lesbians, are more likely to identify as liberal than conservative. This may be a sign that attitudes about some social groups shape ideological commitments as well. For members of disliked groups, maintaining a positive view of one's group may favor an ideological belief that the status quo should be replaced with one in which "my group" is better valued (Jost & Thompson, 2000). If this is true, then as social acceptance of a group increases, then so should the conservatism of members within that group, insofar as the group-serving motivation to take on a liberal position for change declines. This is another hypothesis for future study.

CONCLUSION

The fundamental ideological distinction of liberalism–conservatism shapes how individuals orient themselves toward the social world. Preferences for others as members of social groups are markers of such orientations, and both explicit and implicit measures provided the evidence from which we draw several conclusions.

First, liberals both self-report and reveal on implicit measures greater favorability toward groups that are socially disadvantaged than do conservatives. Political ideology also affects the strength of the connection between implicit and explicit social attitudes, but the cause of this relationship is inconclusive. The data might have revealed a difference between liberals and conservatives on self-report measures, but not on measures of automatic preference. That was not what we observed; liberals both deliberately report and automatically reveal less of a preference for the socially privileged than do conservatives. Those who maintain that political conservatism is not linked to differential preferences for advantaged versus disadvantaged groups are obliged to rethink their position based on such data. And, those who believe that liberals are without social preferences or biases are also out of step with what the data show.

The automatic preferences of liberals are discrepant from their self-reported attitudes. In this sense, liberals may possess a more "conflicted stance." It appears that their explicit egalitarian ideals have not been fully internalized or automatized.

Finally, the most provocative comment we can offer from the evidence concerns the role that liberals play in shaping public opinion about social groups. Using race attitudes as the case in point, we found that the position arrived at by liberals in the 1970s is the position of conservatives today. From this, we put forward the hypothesis, to be assessed in future investigations of other social groups, that liberals lead the way in changing social beliefs and attitudes. In the 19th century, it was the liberals and progressives who first opposed slavery. Decades after the emancipation proclamation, conservatives agreed. The 21st century may be witness to a similar social change in attitudes toward gays and lesbians. In our own data, liberals reveal much greater positivity than conservatives do toward gays and lesbians, both implicitly and explicitly. These ideological differences may not persist forever. Future generations of conservatives, we predict, will come to mirror today's liberals in attitudes concerning sexual orientation.

The larger point may be a simple one of the empirical evidence backing up a dictionary definition. In the area of attitudes toward social groups, conservatives embody the definition of the term *conservative*: "favoring traditional views and values; tending to oppose change." And liberals, explicitly at least, embody *liberal*: "not limited to or by established, traditional, orthodox, or authoritarian attitudes, views, or dogmas; free from bigotry; favoring proposals for reform, open to new ideas for progress, and tolerant of the ideas and behavior of others; broad-minded" (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 2000). With respect to the preferences that we feel and reveal concerning members of advantaged and disadvantaged groups,

liberals do what by definition they are assumed to do. What we suggest is that conservatives either do not or cannot remain where they are forever, but are bound to follow liberals, however grudgingly, perhaps even without awareness of following at all, because liberals are agents of social change.

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