



The Ideological Toolbox: Ideologies as Tools of Motivated Social Cognition

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INTRODUCTION

The popular image of the ideologue is someone who is rigid and impractical. When we say that a person's thinking is influenced by ideology we often mean that they are blind to the dynamics of the immediate situation. This is in sharp contrast to the highly pragmatic portrayal of human thought that has come to characterize the field of social cognition. One of the most influential messages of social cognition has been that mental constructs such as goals (Bargh, Gollwitzer, Lee-Chai, Barndollar, & Trötschel, 2001), attitudes (Ferguson & Bargh, 2004), self-perceptions (Markus & Wurf, 1987), and stereotypes (Kunda & Spencer, 2003) fluctuate adaptively in relation to cues of situational relevance and immediate needs. So, at first, the topic of ideologies may seem to be a poor fit for a handbook of social cognition.

However, we will review research that shows that, much like these other social-cognitive constructs, ideological knowledge can be activated and applied flexibly in response to changing situational dynamics and personal goals. We will apply the classic social-cognitive distinction between chronic and temporary accessibility of cognitive content to ideological knowledge in order to show that individual differences interact with situational demands to influence the expression of ideology in people's thoughts and behavior. We will present a model suggesting that,

through their exposure to competing ideologies in the social environment, people acquire diverse ideological resources that they can use to interpret events in their personal lives and the broader world.

Differences in individuals' psychological needs and their relative exposure to and frequency of activation of specific ideologies produce variability in the chronic accessibility of specific ideological resources. However, while certain ideologies may be more chronically accessible for a given individual, we suggest that most individuals also have diverse ideological resources to draw on, some that are chronically accessible and others that become accessible only when prompted by relevant situational cues. We will suggest that people draw on their ideological resources to construct situated ideologies that help them make sense of events, provide meaning and coherence to their actions, and rationalize their circumstances and personal choices. In short, to borrow a metaphor from the sociology of knowledge (Swidler, 1986), ideologies are like tools that people use to solve specific functional problems and accomplish particular tasks. Individuals may differ in the content and organization of their ideological toolboxes, but most people have diverse ideological tools to draw on. Some of these ideological tools may be more readily at hand than others but people will usually attempt to find the tool that best fits the particular task they are working on at any given moment.

This ideological toolbox metaphor provides an original perspective on a long-standing controversy regarding whether American voters actually have ideologies. Ever since Converse's (1964) devastating depiction of the inconsistencies in American voters' political opinions, political scientists have argued that the average American is too politically unsophisticated to have anything resembling a coherent ideology guiding their judgments. From this point of view, highly educated elites may have ideologies, but average people do not. Others such as Jost (2006) have argued that Converse overstated the case and there actually is sufficient underlying stability and coherence in average voters' political opinions to characterize their judgments as based on ideology. Our model of chronic and temporary accessibility of ideological knowledge provides a resolution to this controversy and explains both the inconsistencies and the underlying stability in average voters' political judgments. Contrary to Converse (1964), we would argue that voters' political judgments are inconsistent not because they have *too little* ideology but because they have *too much* ideology. That is, if exposure to diverse ideological positions in their social environment causes people to acquire diverse forms of ideological knowledge, then people will draw on different ideological resources to construct judgments in different contexts, depending on what ideological resources seem to provide the best fit to a particular problem. Thus, what Converse and others see as ideological incoherence may actually reflect the flexible application of ideological resources to diverse problems.

To illustrate, the case for ideological incoherence has often cited examples where average voters appear to take ideologically inconsistent positions on the same issue, depending on superficial variations in how the issue is framed. For example, Schuman and Presser (1981) showed that while a majority of Americans said that the United States should not "forbid public speeches in favor of communism," a majority of Americans said that the United States should not "allow public speeches in favor of communism." Thus, when the question is worded in terms of forbidding speech most Americans look like civil libertarians, but when the question is worded in terms of allowing speech most Americans look like authoritarians. Converse might say that this means that Americans' ideologies are neither libertarian nor authoritarian but rather that they are so hopelessly inconsistent that they have no underlying ideological structure to speak of. By contrast, we would argue that most Americans have diverse ideological knowledge to draw on and that the particular ideological resources that they apply in any given situation will depend on what the situation

has prompted. So, the oppressive overtones of a word like "forbid" may activate Americans' libertarian proclivities, while the extreme permissiveness of a word like "allow" in the context of a threatening belief system like communism may activate their authoritarian proclivities.

While analyses of average citizens' responses to closed-ended questions in political surveys have often led researchers to conclude that their attitudes lack ideological structuring, analyses of responses to open-ended questions have suggested a more complex picture of the role of ideology in political judgment. For instance, in response to open-ended questions about public welfare and resource distribution, Americans readily draw on ideological concepts to describe and justify their positions (Feldman & Zaller, 1992; Hochschild, 1981). However, their responses also suggest that Americans have a great deal of ideological ambivalence regarding public welfare, because this issue brings up their conflicting values of individualism, humanitarianism, and opposition to big government (Feldman & Zaller, 1992). Moreover, this kind of value pluralism tends to be associated with more sophisticated, integratively complex forms of ideological reasoning as people seek to balance their conflicting values to arrive at a position on a given issue (Tetlock, 1986). This is consistent with our suggestion that far from being empty-headed when it comes to ideology, people may actually have a variety of ideological resources that they draw on flexibly as the situation demands.

Our model can also explain why, amidst the inconsistencies in their political judgments across contexts, people also show a good degree of underlying stability. We would argue that the stability that Jost (2006) and others document reflects people's chronically accessible ideological views. These are the ideological tools that are most readily at hand and that people will use by default unless the context prompts them to draw on a less readily accessible ideological tool.

Defining ideology

In this chapter we define an ideology as a set of general beliefs or abstract values by which people define the social and political arrangements that they believe ought to be preferred. Ideologies thus function like generative grammars for constructing and justifying positions on specific social and political issues (Rohan & Zanna, 2001). The ideologies that we will be discussing in this chapter are primarily concerned with two issues: (1) specifying the legitimate grounds for distributing material, symbolic, and social resources, and (2) defining the nature and scope

of moral authority. Debates over how to distribute resources and how to define moral authority animate many of today's major ideological conflicts. For instance, while free-market individualists believe that resources should be distributed based on individual choice in a free market (Nozick, 1974), liberal egalitarians believe that resources should be distributed in ways that ensure that the least well-off members of society are better off than they would be under any alternative arrangement (Rawls, 1971), and moral traditionalists often believe that resource distributions should reward those who display virtuous character traits.

In addition to ideological variation in beliefs about the legitimate bases for distributing resources, ideologies also differ in their definitions of the nature and scope of moral authority. According to Hunter (1991), the modern culture wars are rooted in fundamental disagreements about moral authority that pit morally orthodox ideologies against morally progressive ideologies. The morally orthodox define moral authority as "external, definable, and transcendent" (Hunter, 1991, p. 120). Different orthodox communities base moral authority on different sources, such as sacred scripture, moral tradition, "natural law," or the teaching authority of religious leaders, but in all cases moral authority is seen as being rooted in fundamental moral truths that are not subject to human interpretation or revision. By contrast, moral progressives define moral authority "as a process, as a reality that is ever unfolding" (Hunter, p. 44) and, which, "can only be understood and expressed in human (which is to say, historical and institutional terms)" (Hunter, 1991, p. 123). Attending to these moral dimensions of ideological conflict is particularly important because attitudes that are rooted in moral convictions tend to promote greater political involvement, lead to greater intolerance of (and social distancing from) those who disagree, are more likely to override concerns about procedural justice, promote greater resistance to counter-attitudinal decisions by authorities, are more resistant to counter-attitudinal norms and conformity pressures, and are more opposed to value tradeoffs compared to equally strong but non-moral attitudes (Skitka, 2010).

Jost, Federico, and Napier (2009) suggest that political ideologies can be situated on a left-to-right continuum depending on their implications for equality and their openness to changes in the social order. Ideologies on the left-wing end of the continuum highly value social equality and are relatively open to change in the system, whereas ideologies on the right-wing end of the continuum tend to place less emphasis on social equality and are more supportive of the status quo.

Others suggest that political ideology is multi-dimensional, involving a more complex mix of potentially conflicting values (Haidt, Graham, & Joseph, 2009; Tetlock, 1986). These authors suggest that liberals and conservatives often disagree on policy issues not because conservatives do not value social equality but because they adhere to other values such as in-group loyalty and moral purity that sometimes come into conflict with equality (Haidt & Graham, 2009).

If ideologies are the generative grammars for constructing and justifying social and political attitudes, then our model would suggest that, when it comes to ideology, people might be considered multilingual. Thus, what appears to be ideological incoherence may be better described as the ideological equivalent of linguistic code-switching. That is, the same person may, depending on what situation they are in, alternate between the codes of libertarian individualism and communitarianism, meritocracy and egalitarianism, or moral relativism and universalism. If people tend to assimilate elements from these and other opposing ideologies without fully committing themselves to any given ideology, then they may draw on different ideologies depending on what best fits their immediate situation. Their outwardly inconsistent attitudes, judgments, and behaviors may appear to suggest that people do not have ideologies at all but the reality may be that they have diverse ideological resources that they draw on selectively, depending on the issue and the broader situation they are facing.

Using this model of chronic and temporary accessibility as our guiding framework, we will discuss and integrate a range of social psychological factors that contribute to the formation of chronic (first half of the chapter) and temporary (second half of the chapter) ideological beliefs and perspectives.

CHRONIC DIFFERENCES IN THE APPLICATION OF IDEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

There is considerable evidence that people, chronically, differ in their ideological predispositions. Although it may be tempting to assume such chronic, "personality" (Adorno et al., 1950) differences are outside the scope of social-cognitive inquiry, this is not necessarily the case (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003a). According to Higgins (1996), consistent differences in preferences, perceptions, judgments, and even behavior may reflect chronic differences in cognitive features: namely, construct accessibility. Put simply, constructs that are more chronically

accessible are more likely to be applied in a given situation.

For those for whom a given ideological principle or construct is chronically accessible, therefore, specific types of ideological judgments will be more likely across situations. What might predict these chronic differences in ideological resources? Below, we review several documented sources of chronic variance in ideological predispositions, including genetics, chronic motivational differences, and differing formative experiences.

Influence of biological factors on ideological predispositions

Monozygotic twins are more concordant in liberal-conservative political ideology than dizygotic twins, and estimates derived from these data indicate that approximately 43% of the variance in political ideology is heritable (Alford, Funk, & Hibbing, 2005). To explain how heritable variation produces ideological differences, Jost (2009) suggested that genetically based differences in personality or cognitive style could create affinities for different political ideologies. The idea is that people are channeled towards political ideologies that form a suitable match to their personality or cognitive style. In the following sections we review research on the neurophysiological, personality, and cognitive correlates of political ideologies that provide insights into the individual differences that may be the sources of people's affinities for specific ideologies.

Neurocognitive and physiological correlates

Neurocognitive research finds that liberals show stronger evoked-reaction potential activity in the anterior cingulate region than conservatives during a go/no-go task, in which participants had to switch their behavioral responses between trials (Amodio, Jost, Master, & Yee, 2007). This pattern of neuroactivity suggests that liberals are more sensitive to response conflict and thus better able to inhibit habitual responses. Consistent with this account, the researchers also found that liberals were more accurate than conservatives on the go/no-go task. Other studies show that conservatives are more physiologically reactive to threatening stimuli than liberals are, as measured through startle eye-blink responses and changes in skin-conductance arousal in response to non-political threatening stimuli (Oxley et al., 2008). It is possible that these differences in liberals' and conservatives' physiological reactions to response conflict and threatening stimuli are some of the heritable factors that contribute to variance in political ideology. Of course, it is also possible

that the direction of causation runs in the other direction, with ideology causing people to experience psychophysiological changes, or these ideological differences in psychophysiology could be due to differences in individuals' social experiences rather than heritable differences.

Intelligence and cognitive style

Another heritable factor that may be the source of ideological differences is general intelligence. In research with nationally representative samples, individuals with higher IQs tend to be more liberal than individuals with lower IQs (Deary, Batty, & Gale, 2008; Kanazawa, 2010). This association of socio-political ideology with IQ remains significant even when age, sex, race, education, income, and religiosity are controlled. One explanation for this association is that liberalism's greater attraction to novelty and difference may involve types of abstract thought associated with higher IQ (Deary et al., 2008). Another explanation stresses that liberal attitudes often require people to override a default conservative response when they make attributions about the causes of events (Skitka, Mullen, Griffin, Hutchinson, & Chamberlin, 2002), evaluate whether a harmless but offensive action is immoral (Haidt, Koller, & Dias, 1993), or decide between the status quo and change (Eidelman & Crandall, 2009). Because people with higher IQs have greater cognitive resources, they may have more ability to override these default conservative responses.

Personality

Researchers have also examined the relationship of political ideology to the Big 5 dimensions of personality, which have a heritable basis and thus could account for some of the genetic variation related to political ideology. Numerous studies with a variety of samples have found that liberals score higher than conservatives on self-report measures of openness and conservatives score higher than liberals on self-report measures of conscientiousness (Carney, Jost, & Gosling, 2008; Hirsh, DeYoung, Xu, & Peterson, 2010; Jost et al., 2003a). Moving beyond self-report measures of personality, researchers have also coded the contents of people's bedrooms and offices for behavioral traces of openness and conscientiousness (Carney et al., 2008). The contents of their bedrooms and offices indicate that liberals tend to seek out more novel and diverse experiences than do conservatives. Research using other behavioral measures also supports the conclusion that liberals are more open to experience than conservatives. For instance, a recent study using a non-political measure of exploratory behavior

found that liberals explore novel stimuli more actively than conservatives when forming attitudes (Shook & Fazio, 2009).

In addition to studies establishing associations of political ideology with the openness and conscientiousness dimensions of personality, recent research has documented that different components of the agreeableness dimension are associated with liberal and conservative ideologies (Hirsh et al., 2010). Specifically, this research finds that conservatives are higher than liberals in the politeness component of agreeableness, whereas liberals are higher than conservatives in the compassion component. Conservatives' greater politeness may explain why they tend to be more traditional than liberals, whereas liberals' greater compassion may explain why they tend to be more egalitarian than conservatives.

In addition to these differences in liberals' and conservatives' scores on broad personality dimensions, other research has investigated the relation between ideology and more specific, theoretically relevant traits. For instance, some have speculated that political ideology might be associated with disgust-sensitivity because liberals, in the tradition of John Stuart Mill (1859), tend to oppose legal restrictions on behaviors that are harmless but offensive to many members of the community, while conservatives, like Lord Patrick Devlin (1965), tend to defend legal restrictions on harmless but offensive behaviors (Haidt & Hershey, 2001; Nussbaum, 2010). People with a strong disgust response might be motivated to restrict behaviors that offend them, which would make the conservative position on using the law as a mechanism for enforcing morality more attractive to them. Consistent with this hypothesis, recent studies have found that liberals report weaker disgust reactions than conservatives, even in response to non-political disgusting actions (e.g., accidentally drinking from a stranger's soda can) (Inbar, Pizarro, & Bloom, 2009).

Since personality traits have a heritable basis and show consistent relations to ideology, it makes sense that personality differences might be an important mediating link between genetic differences and ideologies. Suggestive evidence for such a connection comes from a recent study that identified an interesting gene-environment interaction that predicts political liberalism. Specifically, this study found that if a person has the 7R variant of the dopamine receptor gene (*DRD4*), a gene variant that tends to be associated with novelty seeking, they are more likely to report having a liberal ideology, but only if the person also has a relatively large friendship network (Settle, Dawes, Hatemi, Christakis, & Fowler, 2010). Novelty seeking, which is a

component of openness to experience, may be the personality dimension that provides the motivation and a large friendship network may be the structural factor that provides the opportunity to explore diverse perspectives on social issues and events, and it may be this experience of diverse perspectives that then leads people to be more liberal. This work is too preliminary to support any definitive conclusions, but future research on gene-environment interactions may help to illuminate the links between, genes, personality, and the development of political ideologies.

Influence of chronic needs on ideological predispositions

Information processing and judgment can be powerfully impacted by motivational- and need-based states (Kunda, 1990). This includes the recruitment and use of knowledge structures that help the individual interpret their environment in ways most useful for a given need (Kunda & Sanitioso, 1989; Kunda & Spencer, 2003). When a given need is most salient, specific schemas, stereotypes, and perceptual filters become more likely to be applied in that situation. This form of motivated cognition – in which a chronic need renders a certain mode or style of information processing chronically more active – has been shown to powerfully predict ideological judgments across a wide range of contexts.

Lerner (1980) famously argued that people hold a need to believe in a just and fair world. Since Lerner's seminal treatise on this topic, hundreds of studies have demonstrated that individual variation in this need predicts the causal inferences people make when confronted with victims of misfortune (Hafer & Bègue, 2005). Although the specific nature of this finding differs slightly from one study to the next, the general message is that those higher in the need to believe in a just world are more apt to perceive an individual's actions or character as causally related to that individual's fate (Hafer & Bègue, 2005) – i.e., they are more likely to construe people as personally responsible for their outcomes, a noted difference between left- and right-wing social perception. This proclivity can even be predicted via reaction time measures that gauge the cognitive accessibility of fairness-related constructs (Hafer, 2000). This type of effect – in which chronic needs influence the interpretation of social information – has now been demonstrated across a wide range of psychological needs and ideological judgments.

In their review of the literature, Jost et al. (2003a) demonstrate that a host of chronic needs – including uncertainty tolerance, death anxiety,

and needs for order, structure, and closure – predict resistance to change and justification of inequality, two variables that, they and others suggest, represent the core of conservative ideology. In their article, Jost and colleagues argue that, “... conservatism as a belief system is a function of many different kinds of variables, but that a matching relationship holds between certain kinds of psychological motives and specific ideological outcomes” (p. 342). In their review, they note, for example, that those higher in intolerance of ambiguity, uncertainty avoidance, and need for cognitive closure tend to be more conservative socially and politically. In other words, Jost and colleagues suggest that specific needs give rise to specific ways of interpreting and processing the social world, which, in turn, gives rise to specific ideological positions – in this case, conservatism. Lerner’s view, that the need to believe in a just world will manifest as increased perceptions of personal responsibility also offers a content-specific perspective on how chronic needs can translate into information-processing biases that represent a particular type of ideology. More recently, Kay, Gaucher, Napier, Callan, and Laurin (2008) have offered a similarly content-specific prediction regarding the effects of chronic needs, but in the context of views toward government intervention and religious belief. Specifically, they suggest that those who are higher in needs for order and structure are more apt to construe the government as a necessary means of providing the world with order, rather than as an impediment to personal freedom (Kay, Whitson, Gaucher, & Galinsky, 2009b; see also Adorno et al., 1950).

There is also a class of psychological theories that, while sharing this same emphasis on the effects of chronic needs on ideological beliefs, suggest a more content-free set of consequences (Greenberg & Jonas, 2003). Terror management theory, the meaning maintenance model (Heine, Proulx, & Vohs, 2006), theories of world-view verification (e.g., Major, Kaiser, O’Brien, & McCoy, 2007), and theories of uncertainty management and conviction (e.g., McGregor, 2003) argue that specific existential and epistemic needs will shape ideological beliefs, but not necessarily in one, uniform direction. According to these perspectives, psychological needs can and do manifest in ideological judgments, but whether that need will lead to more left- or right-leaning cognitions in a given individual may depend on several factors, including (but not limited to) dominant cultural views, previously held beliefs, and characteristics of the status quo (also see Kay et al., 2009a). According to terror management theory, for example, needs to avoid acknowledging one’s mortality influence ideological judgments, but the manner in which they do so will be a function of

what a given individual believes is the commonly accepted world view in his or her environment – concerns about mortality will cause individuals to gravitate toward whatever is the predominant world view (Greenberg & Jonas, 2003; but see Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003b).

Importantly, though, it need not be the case that these two classes of theories are mutually exclusive; some needs may be best satisfied by a specific class of beliefs, whereas others may simply require strong beliefs, regardless of their content. For the purposes of the present chapter, all that is relevant is the common feature between all of these approaches: that ideological beliefs can be shaped by chronic needs that lead to an increased use of the cognitive tools (e.g., schemas, frameworks) to understand and interpret the social world. That is, chronic needs render certain tools for interpreting and understanding the world more and less likely to be applied, and these chronic differences can result in consistently different ideological tendencies. In this way, chronic needs can shape the cognitive processes that mediate ideologically relevant judgments. Those high in the need to believe in a just world, for example, may have notions of personal responsibility especially accessible, which should affect the causal inferences they make when they encounter a situation in which a tragedy needs to be explained.

Experiential influences on ideological predispositions

Individual differences in the recruitment and application of specific ideological concepts are not, however, just a function of differences in psychological needs. They also can be determined by powerful social experiences. We now turn our attention to a discussion of experiential influences on ideological predispositions, and how they can shape the ways in which people interpret and understand ideologically relevant issues. Specifically, we discuss how learning, exposure to moral cultures, social status, peer-group influences, and chance experiences can shape the chronic tendency of people to draw on specific ideological concepts when forming political beliefs.

Learning

Sears’ theory of symbolic politics (2001) proposes that in early life people form affective associations to political symbols through classical conditioning processes, and that these affective associations remain an important source of people’s political predispositions over the course of their lives. For example, a person who grows up in

an environment in which poor people are often depicted in negative ways in media imagery and everyday discourse will tend to form an enduring antipathy towards the poor that may reduce their support for redistributive economic policies, such as welfare for people who fall below the poverty line. Support for this theory has been found in studies showing that measures of people's affective evaluations of relevant political symbols are often stronger predictors of their policy positions than measures of their self-interest with respect to those policies (Kinder & Sears, 1981; Sears, Lau, Tyler, & Allen, 1980). Also supporting the theory is research showing that people's political predispositions remain largely stable over the course of their lives (Sears & Funk, 1999).

Learning about the effects of different social arrangements can also play a role in shaping people's ideological leanings. Breer and Locke (1965) found that people adopted more authoritarian attitudes if they received false feedback indicating that they had performed better when they worked in a leader-directed groups than when they worked in a more democratically structured group, but they adopted more egalitarian attitudes if they received false feedback indicating that they had performed better when working in a democratically structured group than when working in a leader-directed group.

Social status

Research generally finds that self-interest has, at best, a weak influence on people's political attitudes (Sears & Funk, 1991). For example, winning the lottery is associated with attitudes that are narrowly relevant to a lottery winner's self-interest, such as opposition to the estate tax, but not with more general conservative views on economic stratification, which would also be consistent with a lottery winner's self-interest (Doherty, Gerber, & Green, 2006). While self-interest does not appear to be a reliable determinant of political ideology, evidence suggests that group interests may play a more important role in shaping people's political ideologies. In particular, research suggests that people who are members of low-status social groups are more likely to adopt egalitarian ideologies, perceive greater need for egalitarian reform, and support hierarchy-attenuating social policies than people who are members of high-status social groups (Adams, O'Brien, & Nelson, 2006; Bobo, 1983; Bobo & Hutchings, 1996; Eagly, Diekmann, Johannesen-Smith, & Koenig, 2004; Eibach & Ehrlinger, 2006, 2010; Hunt, 1996; Kahn, Ho, Sidanius, & Pratto, 2009; Kluegel & Smith, 1986; O'Brien, Blodorn, Alsbrooks, Dube, Adams, & Nelson, 2009; Pratto, Stallworth, Sidanius, & Sears, 1997; Robinson,

2008; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Siegelman & Welch, 1991). For members of high-status groups, both the motive to advance the in-group's interests and the motive to defend the system should undermine support for egalitarianism. However, for members of low-status groups, these two motives pull in opposite directions. The motive to advance the in-group's interests should make egalitarian ideology more attractive to members of low-status groups than it is to members of high-status groups. However, this should be an ambivalent and fragile attraction, even for members of low-status groups, because the motive to defend the system (Jost & Banaji, 1994), which they tend to share with high-status groups, works against egalitarianism.

There is considerable evidence that members of low-status groups tend to endorse egalitarian ideologies more strongly than members of high-status groups. One particularly compelling line of evidence for this is research on group differences in social dominance orientation (SDO), a measure of individual differences in preferences for group dominance hierarchies over more egalitarian social arrangements (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; but also see Jost & Thompson, 2000). This research shows that members of high-status social groups tend to have higher SDO scores than members of low-status social groups. For example, within the United States the lowest-status ethnic groups, Black Americans and Latino Americans, have the lowest mean SDO scores, while the highest-status ethnic group, White Americans, has the highest mean SDO score, with the intermediate-status ethnic group, Asian Americans, having a mean SDO score that falls between these higher- and lower-status groups (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). The domination of women by men also seems to lead to men being lower in egalitarianism and higher in SDO than women in most societies in which these gender differences have been examined, including the United States, Canada, Sweden, Australia, the Soviet Union, China, and Israel (Pratto et al., 2000; Sidanius, Levin, Liu, & Pratto, 2000; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Sidanius, Pratto, & Brief, 1995).

Furthermore, evidence indicates that group differences in ideology are due to the groups' perceptions of their differential status in their society's dominance hierarchy. For instance, in Northern Ireland, Irish Catholics have higher SDO scores than Irish Protestants among participants who believe that Irish Catholics are the dominant group, but Irish Protestants have higher SDO scores than Irish Catholics among participants who believe that Irish Protestants are the dominant group (Levin, 2004).

Other research suggests a more complicated relationship between social status and ideology. For instance, a 19-nation study of working-class

authoritarianism found evidence that economically advantaged and economically disadvantaged groups are drawn to conservative ideology for different reasons (Napier & Jost, 2008a). Whereas economically advantaged groups endorse conservative ideology to defend their status privileges, economically disadvantaged groups endorse conservative ideology to express ethnic and moral intolerance that helps them cope with their experiences of economic threat.

Role socialization

Social roles often have associated ideologies, and the process of psychologically adapting to social roles may involve adopting role-congruent ideologies. For instance, the criminal justice system often functions to maintain social hierarchies because members of low-status social groups (e.g., African Americans) tend to be disproportionately punished by the criminal justice system, which perpetuates their low status. People who work in hierarchy-enhancing roles within the criminal justice system, such as police, tend to be higher in SDO than people who work in hierarchy-attenuating roles such as public defenders (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). These data could indicate that people's pre-existing SDO beliefs influence which roles within the criminal justice system they seek out or they could indicate that people adapt their SDO beliefs to their roles. The latter possibility is better supported by longitudinal studies which show that, over time, as people become socialized into their role within a hierarchy-maintaining social institution, such as the police or their country's military, they adopt attitudes that justify group dominance (Guimond, 2000; Teahan, 1975). Evidence also suggests that experience in system-challenging roles can affect a person's ideology. For instance, McAdam (1988) collected longitudinal data to test the long-term effects of civil rights activism on the attitudes of a sample of activists who participated in a high-profile civil rights event and a control sample who, although they applied to participate in the same event, did not ultimately participate in it. The activists reported becoming more critical of dominant social institutions, shifted their attitudes further toward the left, and were more active in subsequent system-challenging protest movements than the control sample, despite the fact that there was little evidence that the activists and the control sample differed in their political attitudes, values, and motivations prior to this civil rights event.

Gender role socialization is another potential source of ideological variation. Specifically, women's socialization into caretaking roles has been used to explain why women tend to be

higher in socially compassionate attitudes, such as government intervention to reduce income inequalities, and moral traditionalism, such as disapproval of divorce and legalization of marijuana, compared to men (Eagly et al., 2004). Women's overrepresentation in child-rearing roles may explain their greater social compassion because raising children involves caretaking activities and it may explain women's greater moral traditionalism because child-rearing involves nurturing children's character development.

Peer-group influences

The groups that people belong to and the social networks that they participate in can play a powerful role in shaping their political attitudes and behavior (Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1995; McAdam, 1986; Snow, Zurcher, & Ekland-Olson, 1980). People have fundamental affiliative needs (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) and individuals may adopt a peer-group's ideology in order to better integrate themselves into that group. Describing the process by which social contacts can shape ideologies, Bandura (1982) writes, "[O]nce individuals become attached to a primary group, they are socialized into its ideology and life-style through a vast network of proximal rewards and sanctions that members provide each other in daily transactions" (p. 752).

The classic demonstration of the impact of reference groups on ideology is Newcomb's (1943) Bennington College study. Newcomb studied the development of political ideologies in a sample of undergraduates who, during the 1930s, enrolled at Bennington College, a small liberal arts college for women located in Bennington, Vermont. The students who enrolled at Bennington mostly came from wealthy, conservative Republican families who were largely hostile to the New Deal policies of the Roosevelt administration. Due to its small size and recent establishment, Bennington College was a highly cohesive community where the students had close interactions with the faculty who were mostly young, liberal-minded supporters of the New Deal. Newcomb documented how the Bennington students shifted away from their families' conservative ideology in their freshman year to an increasingly liberal ideology as they advanced towards graduation. This liberal shift appears to initially have served a social adjustment function as the Bennington students adopted liberal beliefs in order to be viewed favorably by the faculty and upper-class students. Indeed, liberal students were more popular and were judged to be better representatives of the College compared to their conservative peers.

Although the initial motivation to adopt liberal beliefs seems to have been social adjustment, many of the Bennington students eventually internalized the liberal beliefs that they outwardly professed. Indeed, the Bennington students' liberalism persisted up to 50 years after they graduated (Alwin, Cohen, & Newcomb, 1991; Newcomb, Koenig, Flacks, & Warwick, 1967). However, reference groups may have played a role even in the long-term persistence of the Bennington graduates' liberal ideology because this liberal ideology was more likely to persist over time if they had married liberal spouses and formed lasting friendships with other liberals (Alwin et al., 1991). Another interpretation of these data is that the Bennington graduates who were more strongly committed to liberalism, and thus more likely to remain liberal over the ensuing decades, were also those who were more likely to have formed social ties to others liberals.

Moral cultures

Liberal and conservative ideologies may also be rooted in people's socialization into different moral cultures. Research by Haidt, Graham, and colleagues suggests that conservatives tend to moralize a broader range of behaviors and interpersonal relationships than do liberals (Graham, Haidt, Nosek, 2009; Haidt & Graham, 2009). Liberals' moral concerns tend to be narrowly confined to issues of fairness, equality, and alleviating suffering. Conservatives, for the most part, share liberals' moral concerns about these issues, but conservatives also have moral concerns about respecting authority, remaining loyal to one's group, and maintaining sexual and bodily purity that liberals typically lack. Thus, issues that liberals would see as matters of taste or preference, conservatives see as matters of moral concern. For instance, research shows that while both liberals and conservatives tend to express moral disapproval of acts that violate values of fairness, equality, and compassion towards others, conservatives tend to morally disapprove of acts that violate values of respect for authority, in-group loyalty, and bodily purity more strongly than do liberals (Graham et al., 2009).

What is the source of these differences in liberals' and conservatives' moral values? Haidt and Graham (2009) suggest that these differences may be rooted in the different cultures that liberals and conservatives experience from living in differently structured communities. Specifically, they suggest that the three distinctively conservative values of respect for authority, in-group loyalty, and concern for moral purity may be more likely to be cultivated in small, close-knit,

culturally homogeneous communities. It is in such communities that people will experience the kind of tight interpersonal connections that are conducive to developing strong values for authority, group loyalty, and sacredness.

In addition to differing in their moral cultures, liberals and conservatives may also differ in the mental models that they use to conceptualize the political system. Lakoff (1996) suggests that because the State is an abstract and vastly complex concept that may be very difficult for individuals to comprehend, people may use more concrete relationships from their everyday lives as metaphors for understanding the relationship between the State and its citizens. In particular, Lakoff suggests that many people use the relationship between parents and children as a metaphor for understanding the proper relationship between citizens and the State. If the family is used as a metaphor for understanding the State, then differences in people's conceptions of parent-child relations may be an important source of ideological differences in their conceptions of good government.

In particular, Lakoff suggests that the dominant model of parent-child relations for conservatives is a "strict father" model that emphasizes parental authority and strict rules, with rewards for children's compliance with parental rules, and punishments for children's deviations from parental rules. This is consistent with classic work linking authoritarianism to harsh parental discipline (Adorno et al., 1950). By contrast, the dominant model of parent-child relations for liberals, according to Lakoff, is a "nurturant parent" model that emphasizes parental responsibility for tending to their children's emotional needs and fostering their development into happy and fulfilled adults. Lakoff argues that when conservatives apply their "strict father" model to politics, this leads them to support State actions that reward those who comply with societal norms and punish those who deviate. By contrast, when liberals apply their "nurturant parent" model to politics, this leads them to support State actions that intervene to reduce the suffering that can arise in a market-based economy and to cultivate citizens' skills and opportunities for success. If Lakoff's analysis is correct, then the ideological differences between liberals and conservatives may be rooted in the different family cultures that liberals and conservatives experience in their everyday lives.

There is some evidence to support Lakoff's hypothesis that liberals and conservatives may have different models of the family. For example, Barker and Tinnick (2006) found that conservative political attitudes are associated with harsh disciplinary attitudes towards child-rearing,

while liberal political attitudes are associated with nurturant attitudes towards child-rearing. Also, a recent study found that when they describe significant autobiographical events conservatives tend to emphasize themes such as self-discipline and rule-following, which are associated with the “strict father” model, whereas liberals tend to emphasize themes of empathy, openness, and growth, which are associated with the “nurturant parent” model (McAdams, Albaugh, Farber, Daniels, Logan, & Olson, 2008).

Chance encounters

Although it may be possible to make predictions about a person’s ideological leanings based on information about such factors as their personality and cognitive style, cultural background, early socialization experiences, social status, and social network ties, there is likely to be a significant component of variance in ideology that is unpredictable because it is due to chance encounters that people have during the course of their lives (Bandura, 1982). This idea that random experiences might shape a person’s ideology is captured in the common saying that “a liberal is someone who has never been mugged.” And while this particular effect does not appear to hold – crime victimization is not a reliable predictor of conservative attitudes towards crime (King & Maruna, 2009; Unnever, Cullen, & Fisher, 2007) – the more general idea that chance experiences may influence a person’s ideology remains a viable hypothesis.

For instance, in a study of women in racist movements, Blee (2002) found evidence that chance social encounters can influence people to adopt extremist ideologies. Blee reports that many of the women she interviewed developed racist ideologies through chance contacts with individuals who were already involved in the hate movement. It appears that it was often these social contacts rather than unusual background characteristics or preexisting racist beliefs that led many of these women to develop extreme racist ideologies. Blee reports that while some of these women were raised in families with extreme racist beliefs, many others were not, and some were even from liberal or progressive families who they became estranged from after they joined hate groups. Also, while many of these women had racist beliefs before they joined hate groups, their beliefs were not that different from racist views that are quite widespread in American culture. Indeed, it was only after they joined hate groups that many of the women developed more extreme racist beliefs, through their exposure to the movement’s ideology.

SITUATIONAL AND CONTEXTUAL DETERMINANTS OF THE APPLICATION OF IDEOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

Without disputing the obvious fact that certain beliefs and modes of information processing are more chronic than others for specific individuals, it is clear that the processing of social information is also influenced by one’s immediate context, needs, and situational constraints (Kunda, 1990). At a cognitive level of analysis, it has been observed, for instance, that temporary increases in the accessibility of a given construct (achieved via subliminal priming) influence social information processing and perception, regardless of whether people are a priori chronically high (or low) in accessibility for that construct (Bargh, Bond, Lombardi, & Tota, 1986). Consistent with this perspective, it has been shown that although people differ in their chronic tendencies to apply stereotypes when evaluating other groups, this tendency also fluctuates as a function of transient, situational factors, including self and social threat (e.g., Fein & Spencer, 1997; Kay, Jost, & Young, 2005) and environmental triggers of stereotype accessibility (for a review, see Wheeler & Petty, 2001).

The application of ideological knowledge functions no differently. Situational constraints and contextual cues can strongly influence the likelihood that people will bring to mind (i.e., render more cognitively accessible) and apply specific ideological resources in making ideological judgments. In the next sections, we describe four such influences on beliefs and attitudes in ideologically relevant domains: threat, framing, priming, and role salience.

Threat

A long tradition of research has demonstrated that, following specific psychological threats, cognitive resources are mobilized to help the individual most efficiently deal with that threat. Across various domains of research – ranging from self and interpersonal perception to social stereotyping to basic cognitive processing (e.g., Baldwin & Main, 2001; Fein & Spencer, 1997; Mathews & MacLeod, 1985) – it has been observed that immediate threats can activate specific modes of information processing. Similar findings have also been observed in the context of ideological perceptions, judgments, and inferences. That is, ideological judgments and beliefs have also been shown to be influenced by the salience of immediate threats.

Sales, for example, reasoned that contexts of economic threat and turmoil should cause people to temporarily construe authoritarian institutions as more attractive (Sales, 1972, 1973). In support of this, Sales noted that during times of threat (such as the Great Depression and other economic downturns), people exhibited increases in many of the behaviors and beliefs associated with authoritarianism, according to Adorno et al.'s (1950) definition. For example, he observed that, in times of economic threat, conversion rates into religious sects offering high levels of imposed order increased, conversion rates into religious sects offering low levels of imposed order decreased, people became more loyal to authority, people perceived others more cynically, and superstitious belief increased.

Sales' research was influential but the measures were limited to what was available in archival sources, the methodology was strictly correlational, and it lacked a clear mechanistic account. More recently, researchers have developed other models of the influence of threat on ideological processes that more precisely specify and measure underlying mechanisms and provide the experimental data needed to more definitively test patterns of causal influence. All of these more recent models pivot on the notion that when a specific motivational state is starved, people will relatively immediately act in ways that promote the satiation of that specific motivation (or, conversely, when a specific motive is satiated, people will relatively immediately disengage from those processes specific to that motive). This is consistent with social cognitive goal theory, which suggests that, just as meeting a desired end state greatly reduces motivated cognitive processes generally used to achieve that end state (e.g., Förster, Liberman, & Higgins, 2005), blocking a desired end state results in increased efforts to reach it (Atkinson & Birch, 1970; Bargh et al., 2001). In a social psychological context, this process is perhaps most vividly illustrated via the myriad demonstrations that self-threat (affirmation) manipulations increase (decrease) the proclivity to engage in self-defensive processes (e.g., Fein & Spencer, 1997; Sherman & Cohen, 2002; Steele, 1988). Following self-threat (or self-affirmation), this research demonstrates that people engage in (or disengage from) a number of social-cognitive processes, including stereotyping, shifts in self-construal, and shifts in self-identification, that help them protect their views of their self-worth.

Similar types of processes manifest in ideological contexts, too, shaping people's perceptions and judgments regarding a range of political, religious, and institutional issues. Following mortality threats, terror management theorists suggest

people engage in the defense of worldviews (including political and religious ones) that can serve to establish their symbolic immortality and attachment to something larger than their physical selves (Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, 1997). In the context of ideology, terror management researchers have observed that following specific mortality threats, for example:

- people preferred leaders that emphasized the superiority of the in-group (Cohen, Solomon, Maxfield, Pyszczynski, & Greenberg, 2004)
- people became more supportive of George W. Bush's policies in Iraq (Cohen, Ogilvie, Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 2005; Landau et al., 2004)
- Middle Eastern participants became more positive towards a student who supported martyrdom and American conservative participants became more supportive towards aggressive, likely fatal military policies (Pyszczynski, Abdollahi, Solomon, Greenberg, Cohen, & Weise, 2006)
- liberal students' attitudes towards capital punishment, abortion, and gay people became more conservative (Nail, McGregor, Drinkwater, Steele, & Thompson, 2009).

In each of these cases, terror management researchers suggest, mortality salience led people to filter their social perceptions, apply social schemas, and generally arrive at conclusions that provided evidence for the worth and permanence of the social ideas and groups they identify with.

Compensatory control theory, like terror management theory, also posits a model of threat and compensation. But, unlike terror management, compensatory control theory emphasizes (i) people's motivation to maintain a view of the world as a structured, non-random place and (ii) the substitutability of people's means for doing so (Kay et al., 2008, 2009b, 2010c). To maintain a view of the world as structured and non-random, the theory suggests, people rely on a combination of their own personal control, and the structure and control exerted on them via secular and religious structural forces (e.g., governments, institutions, religions, organizations, etc.). As such, when the integrity of one of these control-maintaining outlets is threatened or challenged, people can augment their faith in the others.

Such a model holds implications for political and religious ideology. It suggests, for example, that when personal control is threatened, people should become more likely to believe in and endorse government control and religious control. Indeed, both of these effects have been observed. Following experimental inductions of personal control threat, people become more likely to

believe in a controlling God (Kay et al., 2008; Kay, Moscovitch & Laurin, 2010b; Laurin, Kay, & Moscovitch, 2008), more likely to support government intervention (Kay et al., 2008), and more likely to believe their political leaders are capable of controlling their lives (Banfield & Kay, 2010). This model also suggests that threats to one source of external control should cause increased support for another. This, too, has been observed. Following experimentally generated or naturally occurring threats to one's political system, people become more likely to report believing that a controlling God exists (Kay, Shepherd, Blatz, Chua, & Galinsky, 2010c). Likewise, following information that threatens belief in the existence of a controlling God, people become more likely to support those aspects of the government that provide order and stability (Kay et al., 2010c). Finally, following control threat, people have even been shown to become more likely to believe that catastrophes were caused by conspirators (rather than random forces; Whitson & Galinsky, 2008) and that personal enemies (rather than random chance) are to blame for negative outcomes (Sullivan, Landau, & Rothschild, 2010). Thus, following contextual threats that deprive individuals of one specific means for maintaining their belief in the order and structure of the world, people begin to perceive order in other domains (Kay, Whitson, Gaucher, & Galinsky, 2009b). This perceptual interpretation is buttressed by data demonstrating that, following control threat, people are more likely to see patterns even in random visual stimuli (Whitson & Galinsky, 2008).

Finally, system justification theory suggests that, for various epistemic, existential, and relational reasons, people hold a fundamental need to believe in the integrity, legitimacy, and desirability of the systems (including political ones) within which they function (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). To the extent this is so, events that threaten people's beliefs in the integrity and legitimacy of their system should cause people to engage in social-cognitive processes that reassert that system's legitimacy. This process can manifest itself in ways that have profound effects on ideological judgments. For example, following exposure to fake newspaper articles that suggest their national system is decaying (i.e., system threat manipulations), people become more likely to endorse stereotypes that justify inequality in both liberal (complementary stereotypes that offer an illusion of equality) and conservative (victim derogating stereotypes that reaffirm meritocracy) ways (Jost, Kivetz, Rubini, Guermant, & Mosso, 2005; Kay & Jost, 2003; Kay, Jost, & Young, 2005; Kay et al., 2007). Following similar system threat manipulations,

people also have been shown to resist changes to the gender imbalance in business contexts (Kay et al., 2009a) and prefer romantic partners who hold benevolent sexist ideologies (Lau, Kay, & Spencer, 2008). A similar system threat analysis has also been used to explain a range of real-world phenomena, from victim blame following Hurricane Katrina (Napier, Mandisodza, Andersen, & Jost, 2006) to increased nationalism following terrorist attacks or the threat thereof (Ullrich & Cohrs, 2007; Willer & Adams, 2008), to the resistance to environmental policy that suggests the system is failing (Feygina, Jost, & Goldsmith, 2010).

Other theories also have implications for the effects of immediate contextual threats on ideological beliefs and judgments, but we do not have the space to review them all here. These include, but are not limited to, McGregor and colleagues' model of reactive approach motivation (McGregor, Nash, & Prentice, 2010), Hogg's uncertainty-identity theory (Hogg, 2005, 2007), and van den Bos and Lind's model of uncertainty management and fairness judgments (van den Bos & Lind, 2002). It is also worth noting that just as psychological threat can increase the recruitment and application of specific ideological judgments and social perceptions, psychological affirmations can decrease them. For example, whereas mortality threats have been shown to make people more likely to gravitate towards a strong, charismatic leader and support the Iraq war (Landau et al., 2004; Pyszczynski et al., 2006), reminders of secure attachment figures cause people to less strongly endorse these worldview buffering beliefs (Gillath & Hart, 2010).

Different types of threat activate distinct versions of conservative ideology

Some motivational models of ideology propose that there is a more specific mapping from particular threats to corresponding ideologies. For instance, Duckitt's (2001) dual-process model of ideology posits that distinct forms of conservatism are responsive to different types of threat. Duckitt proposes that conservative ideology is composed of two distinct underlying ideologies, which he identifies as right-wing authoritarian ideology and social dominance ideology. According to Duckitt's model, these two ideologies are rooted in two different worldviews. Specifically, right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) is rooted in the perception that the world is a dangerous place, whereas SDO is rooted in the perception that the world is a competitive jungle. Supporting the idea that these different conservative ideologies are rooted in different worldviews, research shows that RWA, but not SDO, tends to correlate with beliefs

that the world is a dangerous place, whereas SDO, but not RWA, tends to correlate with belief in a competitive, zero-sum world (Duckitt, 2001).

If RWA and SDO are rooted in distinct worldviews, as these correlational results suggest, then manipulations that raise the salience of threats related to one or the other of these worldviews should selectively activate that worldview's associated ideology. Specifically, if right-wing authoritarian ideology is rooted in perception that the world is a dangerous place then events that highlight dangers and disorder in the world should tend to selectively activate authoritarian attitudes and behavior. Consistent with this hypothesis, research shows that when researchers experimentally induce participants to perceive dangers, disorder, and decline in the world people tend to report higher RWA scores, but not higher SDO scores (Altemeyer, 1988; Duckitt & Fisher, 2003).

While events that highlight threats and dangers in the world should selectively activate right-wing authoritarian ideology, events that highlight intergroup competition for access to resources and social status should selectively activate social dominance ideology. Researchers have used a variety of methods to test how manipulations that highlight intergroup competition moderate the effects of social dominance ideology on people's political perceptions and attitudes. When threats to the in-group's status are highlighted, people who are high in SDO have a stronger implicit preference for their in-group over out-groups compared to people who are low in SDO (Pratto & Shih, 2000). SDO also has a stronger influence on people's perceptions of social conditions when participants are induced to perceive resources and opportunities as zero-sum than when they are induced to perceive resources as non-zero-sum (Eibach & Keegan, 2006; Eibach & Purdie-Vaughns, 2009). Other research has found that the relationship between SDO and negative attitudes (Esses, Dovidio, Jackson, & Armstrong, 2001) and aggression (Thomsen, Green, & Sidanius, 2008) toward immigrants is amplified when immigrants are perceived to be a competitive threat. Importantly for Duckitt's dual-process model, this research also shows that information that highlights immigrant's competitive threat does not increase the influence of RWA on aggression towards immigrants (Thomsen et al., 2008).

Priming

Just like threat, other contextual factors can also influence which of their diverse ideological resources people draw on when forming an

opinion on a given ideological issue. Priming, or recency of prior activation of an ideological resource, may be one factor that influences which ideological resources influence people's political attitudes, perceptions, and behavior (Zaller, 1992). To support this hypothesis, Zaller (1992) cites research showing carryover effects of prior questions on answers to subsequent questions in opinion surveying. For example, Zaller (1992) cites research by Tourangeau, Rasinski, Bradburn, and D'Andrade (1989) showing that American participants were significantly less likely to criticize defense spending as being too high if they were responding to a version of the survey in which a previous question asked about the Soviet military threat than they were if they were responding to a version of the survey in which the previous question asked not about the Soviet military threat but about the issue of arms control. Although such an effect could be driven by the types of threat reactions described above, it also could be because the relevant ideas that were activated in response to a preceding question remained accessible when a subsequent question was encountered, making this information more accessible and readily applied to the subsequent question.

In a recent study that provided clearer evidence for ideological priming, Bryan, Dweck, Ross, Kay, and Mislavsky (2009) tested the hypothesis that most Americans carry around conflicting ideas about the role of personal merit versus good fortune in determining people's outcomes in life. Bryan et al. hypothesized that which of these ideas people have in mind when they consider a given social policy may determine whether they adopt a conservative or a liberal position toward that policy because conservative policies tend to assume that people are responsible for their circumstances whereas liberal policies assume that a person's social position may be determined by forces beyond his or her control. Consistent with this reasoning, the researchers found that when personal merit was primed people adopted more conservative policy positions than they did when good fortune was primed. (For other examples of priming effects in an ideological context, see Berger, Meredith, & Wheeler, 2008; Wakslak, Jost, Tyler, & Chen, 2007.)

Role salience

Ideologies are sometimes associated with particular social roles, which may mean that people will be more likely to express a given ideology when a relevant role is situationally salient. Just like primes and threats, therefore, the salience of social roles or identities may make specific ideological resources more likely to be recruited

and applied when judging specific social issues. A number of studies have investigated the effects of manipulating social role salience on various measures of ideology. For example, Catholic participants expressed attitudes that were more consistent with the ideology of their Church if their role as Catholics was made salient by mentioning it in a prior question (Charters & Newcomb, 1958). Also, Black American voters expressed less approval of conservative Republican President Ronald Reagan when they were interviewed by a Black interviewer who specifically mentioned that he was surveying the attitudes of Black Americans than when they were interviewed by a White interviewer who did not mention race (Zaller, 1992).

Levin (cited in Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) hypothesized that which of a person's social identities is salient in a given situation can influence that person's expression of social dominance ideology. Specifically, she hypothesized that when a person's membership in a low-status group is situationally salient, that person should tend to score lower in SDO than they do when their membership in a high-status group is situationally salient. To test this hypothesis, Levin studied social dominance ideology among three ethnic groups of Israeli Jews: Ashkenazi Jews, who have a higher status than other Jews; Sephardic Jews, who have a lower status than other Jews; and mixed-ethnicity Jews, who have intermediate status. This was a promising context to study the effects of social identity salience on social dominance ideology because all three groups of Jews have higher status relative to Palestinians. Thus, when national identity (Israeli vs Palestinian) is salient, all three groups of Jews should tend to endorse social dominance ideology at comparably high levels. However, when Jews' ethnic identities (Ashkenazi vs Sephardic vs mixed ethnicity) are situationally salient, endorsement of social dominance ideology should be highest for the highest-status ethnic group (Ashkenazi Jews), intermediate for the intermediate status group (mixed-ethnicity Jews), and lowest for the lowest-status group (Sephardic Jews). Levin experimentally varied whether Israeli nationality or Jewish ethnicity was situationally salient before participants' endorsement of social dominance ideology was measured. In the ethnic prime condition, the ethnic hierarchy within the Jewish in-group was made salient by having participants answer a number of questions about Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews. In the nationality prime condition, the hierarchical relationship between Israelis and Palestinians was made salient by having participants answer a number of questions about Israelis and Palestinians. As Levin predicted, all three ethnic groups of Jews endorsed social dominance ideology at comparably high

levels in the nationality prime condition. However, as Levin hypothesized, in the ethnicity prime condition participants' endorsement of social dominance ideology corresponded to the status of their ethnic group: social dominance scores were highest for Ashkenazi Jews, intermediate for mixed-ethnicity Jews, and lowest for Sephardic Jews.

Other research has examined the effects of situational variance in social role salience on people's political and moral attitudes and ideologies. For example, when their parental role is made salient, parents perceive the world to be a more dangerous place (Eibach & Libby, 2009; Eibach & Mock, 2011) and adopt more paternalistic moral attitudes (Eibach, Libby, & Ehrlinger, 2009). Also, research has examined how variation in people's subjective identification with a social role interacts with their beliefs about the ideological entailments of that role to predict political and moral attitudes. For example, when middle-aged and older adults were induced to feel subjectively older and primed with the stereotype that older people are more rigid, this caused them to adopt more morally traditionalist beliefs and to more strongly oppose extension of marriage rights to same-sex couples, compared to participants who had not been induced to feel older or were not primed with the rigidity stereotype (Eibach, Mock, & Courtney, 2010).

Framing

Threat, priming, and role salience, however, are not the only factors that dictate which of a person's diverse ideological resources he or she will apply to any given political judgment or decision. This is because even once a given ideological concept becomes activated (via, for example, threat), it must then be applied to the specific, concrete issue at hand, and this application process is often far from straightforward. There is rarely a direct one-to-one mapping from an ideology to a position on a particular issue, because ideologies tend to be abstract whereas political issues are often more concrete. Indeed, the same ideology could often be used to support opposite positions on the same issue. Consider, for example, egalitarian ideology. This specific ideology has been used to both support a more open immigration policy – based on the reasoning that immigration restrictions are invariably applied in an unequal manner to people from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds (Ngai, 2010) – and to oppose it – based on the grounds that open immigration creates downward pressure on wages for low-skilled workers, who are often members of low-status ethnic or cultural groups within the host society (Swain, 2010).

How an ideological concept gets translated into specific political beliefs and judgments for a given issue, therefore, can be an ambiguous process. People may thus look for external cues to guide their selection and application of ideological concepts to specific policy questions. In particular, people may rely on *frames*, offered by opinion elites and social movement activists, to determine how to map their own ideological views onto specific policy issues. One of the most powerful ways in which media discourse (Iyengar, 1991) and social movement activists (Snow, 2004) influence public opinion is through the work they do to frame public issues. Most public issues are complex and can often be seen from a variety of ideological perspectives. From the range of potentially relevant ideological perspectives, frames select a particular perspective and interpret the issue from that perspective, highlighting those features of the issue that are relevant to that ideological perspective and relatively downplaying or ignoring features of the issue that are not relevant to the selected perspective. Thus, framing simplifies the construal of an issue by narrowing the range of relevant ideological considerations that people apply to the issue. For example, the issue of global climate change would look very different depending on whether one viewed it from the perspective of a consequentialist's concerns about maximizing human flourishing over the long run, an evangelical Christian's concerns about responsible stewardship over Creation, an egalitarian's concerns about global injustices in the distribution of the benefits and costs of resource consumption, or a libertarian's concerns about protecting human freedom. By selecting which of these perspectives to emphasize, politicians, media figures, and activists can influence what ideological considerations the public draws on to form an opinion on a given issue.

Kinder and Sanders (1996) conducted a series of experiments to test whether the perspective from which a public issue is framed determines which of a person's relevant ideological concepts most influences the opinions they form about that issue. In these studies, Kinder and Sanders measured a number of relevant ideological predispositions by having participants complete a battery of ideological scales. They then manipulated the ideological framing of a particular policy issue to which participants were exposed. After participants considered the issue from the assigned frame, the researchers then assessed the strength of the associations between measures of participants' ideological predispositions and the positions they took on the relevant issue. When an ideological concept was referenced in the framing of a policy issue, measures of participants' endorsement of that ideological concept were stronger

predictors of their stance toward the policy than when that ideological concept was not referenced in the frame.

CONCLUSION

Social psychologists (Augoustinos, 1998; Billig, 1995; Essed, 1991), feminist scholars (Bem, 1994), and media critics (van Dijk, 1998) have observed that ideology is a pervasive feature of everyday life. Ideology is not only conveyed overtly – as in the discourse of political leaders, social movement activists, and media pundits – but also more subtly in a variety of everyday practices that convey meta-messages about how society ought to be structured (Bem, 1994; Shweder, Jensen, & Goldstein, 1995). Given people's extensive exposure to ideology in everyday life, it should not be surprising that ideology comes to influence their own thought processes and behavior. Even if people do not fully understand or accept the various ideologies they encounter in everyday life, these ideologies may nevertheless affect how they think about the world and the choices they make (Feagin, 2000).

Whereas in past eras there may have been a single dominant ideology that most people adhered to, the contemporary era seems to be characterized by a fractured mix of diverse ideologies (Augoustinos, 1998). Given this extensive ideological pluralism within the culture, it should not be surprising that people show a great deal of ideological heterogeneity in their own thought processes and behavior. Thus, the inconsistencies in expressions of ideology that some observers have taken to suggest a lack of ideology on the part of ordinary people may actually suggest that people flexibly sample from the heterogeneous ideological environment in which they are immersed.

To explain how immersion in this heterogeneous ideological environment may affect people's thinking and behavior, we borrowed a conceptual framework from the field of social cognition that emphasizes the classic distinction between chronic and temporary accessibility of cognitive constructs (Bargh et al., 1986; Higgins, 1996). We reviewed research showing that people vary in their chronically accessible ideologies, owing to their affinities for particular ideologies that fit their own temperament or cognitive style, and their degree of prior exposure to different ideologies. We also reviewed research showing that people vary in the temporary accessibility of ideological concepts, depending on their immediate need states and the recency of prior activation of those ideological concepts. Thus, the dynamic

patterns of activation of ideological concepts seem to follow that of other cognitive constructs.

This variation in chronic and temporary accessibility of ideological concepts suggests that, in their use of ideology, people do not fit the stereotype of the rigid ideologue. Instead, people seem to flexibly draw on ideological concepts as tools to solve particular problems, such as understanding events and broader conditions (Skitka, 1999; Skitka et al., 2002), deciding what position to take on a particular social issue (Feldman & Zaller, 1992), rationalizing social arrangements (Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), and managing their own emotions about social conditions (Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Napier & Jost, 2008b; Wakslak et al., 2007). While this image of people as flexible ideological tool users may not fit some definitions of ideologies as coherent and consistent systems of thought, it does fit with the pragmatic image of human thought processes that has been more generally advanced within the social cognition literature.

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