REVISITING THE END OF IDEOLOGY CLAIMS
An Emerging Psychological Paradigm for the Study of Ideology

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RESUMEN	ABSTRACT
Los sociólogos y los científicos políticos afirmaron *el fin de las ideologías* al final de la de la II Guerra Mundial. Sin embargo, las realidades políticas actuales y los resultados de un nuevo paradigma psicológico presentan bases sólidas para retomar el estudio de ideología. La distinción liberalismo-conservadurismo sigue siendo un medio válido y sencillo de organizar pensamientos, sentimientos, y conductas (para los legos y los científicos sociales). Los estudios revelan que hay diferencias políticas y psicológicas significativas relacionadas con el autoposición ideológica. Variables de tipo situacional –como la amenaza y la percepción de la muerte- y variables disposicionales- como abierto a la experiencia y responsabilidad- afectan al grado en que una persona se siente atraída por líderes, partidos y opiniones liberales vs. conservadores. Un análisis psicológico también es útil para entender la división política entre "estados rojos" y "los estados azules" en los Estados Unidos.	The *end of ideology* was declared by sociologists and political scientists in the aftermath of World War II. However, current political realities and results from an emerging psychological paradigm provide strong grounds for returning to the study of ideology. The liberalism-conservatism distinction remains a pervasive and parsimonious means of organizing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (for both laypersons and social scientists). Studies reveal that there are indeed meaningful political and psychological differences that covary with ideological self-placement. Situational variables -including system threat and mortality salience- and dispositional variables -including openness and conscientiousness- affect the degree to which an individual is drawn to liberal (leftist) vs. conservative (rightist) leaders, parties, and opinions. A psychological analysis is also useful for understanding the political divide between "red states" and "blue states" in the U.S.A.

Key words: ideology, liberalism, conservatism, political orientation, political polarization

One of the chief architects of the influential "end of ideology" movement in sociology and political science, Edward Shils (1968b), eventually admitted that "the potentiality for ideology seems to be a permanent part of the human constitution" (p. 75). It is a good thing, then, that psychologists

have finally returned to the topic after so many years of neglect. There are many important questions for which we lack solid empirical answers, in large part because of "end of ideology" pronouncements made by Shils (1955/1968s), Aron (1957/1968), Bell (1960), Lipset (1960), Converse (1964), and many others. Because ideologies and other belief systems grow out of an attempt to satisfy the epistemic, existential, and relational needs of our species, it may be ascertained that ideology is a "natural" part of our psychological functioning and will always be present in one form or another (Jost, Fitzsimons, & Kay, 2004). Core ideological beliefs concerning attitudes toward equality and traditionalism possess relatively enduring dispositional and situational antecedents, and they exert at least some degree of influence or constraint over the individual's other thoughts, feelings, and behaviours (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003a, 2003b).

End-of-ideology theorists have advanced four major claims that are in need of re-evaluation (see Jost, 2006). They have argued that ideologies such as liberalism and conservatism lack (a) cognitive structure, (b) motivational potency, (c) substantive philosophical differences, and (d) characteristic psychological profiles. I will consider each of these claims separately and suggest that, whether or not they were defensible in the 1950s—the context in which they were developed—they are not defensible in the current political climate. I also propose that there is now the very real possibility of explaining ideological differences between right and left in terms of underlying psychological and social dimensions. These dimensions are the basic building blocks of an emerging psychological paradigm that has already begun to shed light on why ideology (and, unfortunately, ideological conflict) are always likely to be with us.

Do People Possess Coherent Ideological Belief Systems?

Building upon his earlier collaborative work in *The American Voter* (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960), Converse (1964) argued to great effect that the vast majority of the American population would be hard-pressed to articulate coherent ideological principles. Although his point was quite different (and more specific) than the broader historical theses concerning the decline of ideology in the West advanced by Aron (1957/1968), Bell (1960), Lipset (1960), and Shils (1955/1968a), it was readily assimilated into the end-of-ideology framework.

Drawing on public opinion data from the 1950s, Converse (1964) argued that only a small and highly sophisticated layer of the populace is able or willing to resolve obvious inconsistencies among political beliefs or to organize beliefs consistently according to philosophical definitions of left and right.

This statement has had an extraordinary degree of impact, not only in political psychology (e.g., Billig, 1984; Bishop, 2005; Conover & Feldman, 1981; Kinder & Sears, 1985; McGuire, 1986/1999) but in popular culture as well.

There is indeed widespread acceptance of what Converse (2000) felt was the "pithiest truth" about the information level of the electorate, namely that "the mean level is very low but the variance is very high" (p. 331). Furthermore, Converse (1964) was correct in observing that a significant minority of citizens (sometimes as much as one-third) either cannot or will not locate themselves on a single bipolar liberalism-conservatism dimension. According to ANES results from presidential election years between 1972 and 2004, between 22% and 36% of survey respondents indicated that they either "Haven't thought much about it" or "Don't know" how to place themselves on a liberalism-conservatism scale. Although Converse's (1964, 2000) work deserves serious attention, I do not think it justifies the common conclusion that most citizens fail to use ideological terms coherently most of the time.

Current political realities. To begin with, Converse's (1964) thesis may apply better to the 1950s than to subsequent historical periods, although I have suggested that his conceptual and operational definitions probably led to an underestimation of the prevalence of ideology even in the 1950s. In any case, Converse believed that no more than 15% of the population (in 1956) satisfied the criteria for being ideological, but others have obtained higher estimates (e.g., Knight, 1990). In his analysis of the highly polarizing 1972 Nixon-McGovern presidential race, Stimson (1975) argued that "at least half of the eligible electorate (and more of the actual electorate) display[ed] evidence of belief structuring that is consistent with the standards originally laid down by Converse" (p. 414). Judd and Milburn (1980) similarly concluded that data from the 1970s "pose a substantial threat to Converse's original hypothesis that the attitude responses of the public at large are unstable, nearly random responses" (p. 82).

In retrospect, it appears that Converse's conclusions concerning the lack of ideology among ordinary citizens were drawn on the basis of survey data collected during one of the least politically charged periods in recent American history (Tedin, 1987). But there was always something paradoxical about touting the end of ideology in a decade that witnessed McCarthyism and the "Red Scare," a war in Korea to stop the threat of communism, ideological conflict over racial desegregation in American schools, the Hungarian uprising against the Soviet Union, and many other politically charged events (see also Aron, 1957/1968, p. 27). The 1960s would soon find Americans and others grappling with political assassinations, and a number of polarizing social, economic, and foreign policy issues, as well as

student protests and race riots. The 1970s would bring an escalation of the Vietnam War (as well as its opposition), the Watergate scandal and the subsequent impeachment of Richard Nixon, the rise of feminism and gay rights movements, and many other events of genuine ideological significance. These developments, which threatened the societal status quo, spurred a conservative reaction—what Frank (2004) refers to as a "backlash"—that would take two decades to peak (if indeed it has peaked).

Almost half of the counties in the U.S. have become so ideologically stable in recent years that they are politically uncompetitive in virtually every election, and not only because of partisan gerrymandering (e.g., see Bishop, 2004). Party loyalty has increased, and so has the proportion of strict party-line votes in Congress. Ticket-splitting, in which voters cast ballots for both Democratic and Republican candidates, has fallen off dramatically. Political segregation is occurring more rapidly than racial segregation, and it appears to many that the nation is currently "in the midst of the most partisan era since Reconstruction" (Davidson, quoted in Bishop, 2004).

Empirical evidence. A large majority of the American public knows whether they usually prefer liberal or conservative ideas, and although Converse (1964) was right that they are far from completely consistent (or loyal), their political attitudes are meaningful and interpretable. According to my analyses of ANES data, over two-thirds of respondents since 1972 and over three-fourths since 1996 can and do place themselves on a bipolar liberalism-conservatism scale (Jost, 2006). In other studies that my colleagues and I have conducted, over 90% of college students choose to locate themselves on a liberalism-conservatism dimension, even when they are provided explicitly with options such as "Don't know" and "Haven't thought much about it." Most of the available evidence suggests that people who place themselves on such a scale do so with a reasonable (but not perfect) degree of accuracy, stability, and coherence (Conover & Feldman, 1981; Evans et al., 1996; Feldman, 2003; Kerlinger, 1984; Knight, 1999; Noelle-Neuman, 1998). Factors such as education, involvement, expertise, and political sophistication are all known to increase the degree of ideological coherence (Jacoby, 1991; Judd et al., 1981). As educational levels in the American population have increased, so, too, has ideological sophistication (Tedin, 1987, p. 83). These data require us to revise the conclusion of Fuchs and Klingemann (1990), who wrote that "the left-right schema is not currently institutionalized in the United States to the same extent and in the same way as it is in . . . European countries" (p. 209).

Evidence also indicates that individuals' belief systems are more tightly constrained around abstract rather than concrete (Peffley & Hurwitz, 1985)

and core rather than peripheral issues that separate liberals and conservatives, such as resistance to social change and attitudes concerning social and economic equality (Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003a, 2003b). Conover and Feldman (1981), for instance, showed that Americans who evaluated conservatives favorably also possessed consistently favorable attitudes toward groups that uphold the status quo, serve social control functions, and are pro-capitalist (e.g., Protestants, White Men, police, military, and Big Business). Conversely, respondents who evaluated liberals favorably held more favorable attitudes toward groups that question the status quo and seek egalitarian reforms (e.g., radical students, feminists, civil rights leaders, and minority activists). Feldman (1988) found that attitudes concerning equality were highly stable over time and consistently predicted ideological self-placement, political partisanship, candidate preferences, and opinions on many specific issues. Evans et al. (1996), too, recorded impressive levels of ideological stability and consistency in the British public in two areas: (a) egalitarianism with respect to income distribution, and (b) support for traditional authorities versus agents of social change.

Disentangling ideology from political sophistication. Perhaps the biggest problem with using Converse's (1964) work to support end-of-ideology conclusions, however, was underscored by Kerlinger (1984), who wrote that the "denial of the attitude structure of mass publics was backed by research that could not bear the full weight of the conclusions drawn" (p. 218). The fact is that people can be both highly ideological and generally uninformed, but this possibility still has not been sufficiently addressed in the political science literature (see Achen, 1975, pp. 1229-1231). The end-of-ideologists made an unwarranted assumption that a lack of political sophistication among the general public should be counted as evidence for the meaninglessness of left and right. It does not follow that when citizens struggle to articulate a sophisticated, coherent ideology, they must be incapable of using ideology with either sophistication or coherence. Very few speakers can state precisely the grammatical and syntactical rules they obey when speaking their native languages, and yet they use language adeptly (albeit imperfectly).

In fact, one of the most notable features of ideology, from a psychological perspective, is that it breeds distortion, oversimplification, and selective processing of information at least as much as it breeds political sophistication (Dember, 1974; Glaser, 2005; Lavine, Lodge, & Freitas, 2005). A wealth of experimental evidence illustrates the biasing role of ideology with respect to cognitive processes such as attention, information processing, encoding, and memory recall (e.g., Ditto & Lopez, 1992; Lodge &

Hamill, 1986; Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979; Pomerantz, Chaiken, Tordesillas, 1995). The most significant criticism of Converse's (1964) work is probably conceptual rather than empirical in nature: by equating ideology with internal consistency and internal consistency with political sophistication, he and his adherents may have mischaracterized the function of ideology in people's lives altogether.

Do Ideological Belief Systems Motivate People to Act?
    A second major claim advanced by the end-of-ideologists was that ideology had lost its capacity to inspire collective action (e.g., Bell, 1960; Shils, 1958) or, as Lane (1962) summarized the point, "the transformation of broadly conceived political ideas into social action is no longer the center of an exciting struggle" (p. 15). This was widely regarded as a positive societal development by end-of-ideology proponents, who celebrated the decline of Marxist ideas in the West (Aron, 1957/1968; Bell, 1960, 1988; Fukuyama, 1992).
    The end-of-ideologists heralded the "passing of fanaticism" and welcomed a new era of politics that would be determined not by ideological enthusiasts but by pragmatic moderates. In this respect and others, one could argue (with the benefit of hindsight, of course) that they succumbed to wishful-thinking.
    Current political realities. The stunning organizational success of the conservative movement is one of the most significant events in American political history over the last 25 years or so, but it would stretch credulity beyond bounds to claim that it has been a "revolt of the moderates" (e.g., see, Brock, 2004; Dean, 2006; Frank, 2004). There are many factors that help to explain how conservatives once inspired by fringe activists such as William F. Buckley (the founder of the *National Review*), Milton Friedman, and Barry Goldwater managed to reach what Brooks (2003) referred to as the "The Promised Land" of mainstream governance. These include: (a) the mass defection of White southerners from the Democratic to the Republican party following liberal civil rights legislation in the 1960s and 1970s; (b) the development of a strong coalition involving economic conservatives and religious fundamentalists beginning in the 1970s; and (c) the powerful emergence of right-wing think tanks and media conglomerates, including FOX news and Christian/conservative talk radio networks (e.g., Barker, 2002; Brock, 2004; Graetz & Shapiro, 2005; Lakoff, 2004; Lind, 1996).
    There are now scores of extraordinarily popular conservative radio and television personalities—including Rush Limbaugh, Bill O'Reilly, Ann

Coulter, Sean Hannity, Joe Scarborough, and Michael Savage, to name just a few—and their popularity is hardly attributable to the quietude, moderation, reasonableness, or prudence that Shils (1958) saw in their predecessors.

A study by the Pew Center, for instance, found that politically provocative shows by Rush Limbaugh and Bill O'Reilly draw well over 15 million listeners per week (see also Barker, 2002; Brock, 2004)[1]. According to the 2004 ANES, 44% of respondents reported listening to political talk radio[2]. Although liberals are still behind in the resumption of ideological wars, the battle has now been joined by Michael Moore, Al Franken, Arianna Huffington, Bill Maher, Jon Stewart, Stephen Colbert, and Keith Olbermann; they appear to draw their inspiration from Saul Alinsky's motto that "ridicule is man's most potent weapon." Converse (1964) and many others have long assumed that most citizens care little about political affairs, but this assumption does not fit the current climate. There are now more than 17,000 political websites maintained by thousands of individual bloggers and visited by at least 25 million Americans. The top 100 political blogs attract 100,000 American adults each day[3].

Public opinion polls show the nation to be sharply divided along ideological lines, and these lines predict political outcomes to a remarkable degree (e.g., Bishop, 2004). The argument that most of the population is impervious to the liberal-conservative distinction was probably never on solid empirical ground, but it seems increasingly untenable in the current (red state vs. blue state) political climate, in which formerly latent ideological conflicts are now more self-consciously enacted. The fact that most people (and regions) are probably shades of "purple" rather than purely red or blue does not mean that the citizenry is non-ideological. What it means is that people are capable of warming to ideas of the left, right, or center (Baker, 2005; Lakoff, 1996), depending upon both psychological needs and social circumstances (Bonanno & Jost, 2006; Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003a, 2003b). I will return to a consideration of both dispositional and situational influences on political orientation later in the article.

Empirical evidence. The question of whether ideological commitments motivate important behavioral outcomes such as voting is one that has haunted researchers since the end of ideology was declared. Luttbeg and Gant (1985), for example, found reason to "call into question the very notion that an ideology structured in liberal/conservative terms is necessary to linking public preferences to government action" (p. 91). Similarly, Tedin (1987, pp. 63-4) examined the data from the 1972 election and was generally unimpressed by the motivational potency of ideology. At issue is whet-

her people know enough and care enough about ideological labels such as liberalism and conservatism to use them reliably in making political decisions.

I have compiled the percentages of ANES respondents placing themselves at each point on an ideological scale who voted for each of the major Democratic and Republican presidential candidates between 1972 and 2004. The weighted averages, collapsing across the 9 elections and over 7,500 respondents, are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Effects of Ideological Self-Placement on Voting Behavior, 1972-2004
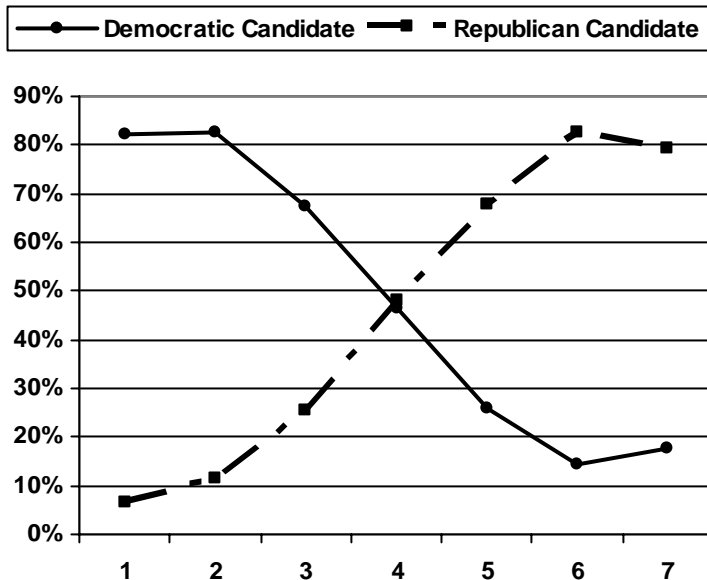
Note: Data are weighted average percentages of National Election Survey respondents placing themselves at each point on an ideological scale voting for Democratic and Republican presidential candidates, aggregated across presidential election years between 1972 and 2004 (Total $N = 7,504$). Labels for the liberal-conservative self-placement scale were as follows: 1 = "Extremely liberal"; 2 = "Liberal"; 3 = "Slightly Liberal"; 4 = "Moderate/middle of the road"; 5 = "Slightly conservative"; 6 = "Conservative"; and 7 = "Extremely conservative." *Source*: http://www.umich.edu/~nes/studyres/download/nesdatacenter.htm

The effects of liberalism and conservatism on voting decisions are powerful indeed; in each case the correlation exceeds .9! Responses to this single ideological self-placement item explain 85% of the statistical variance in self-reported voting behavior over the last 32 years[4]. Approximately 80% of respondents who described themselves as "liberal" or "ex-

tremely liberal" reported voting for Democratic candidates, and 80% of respondents who described themselves as "conservative" or "extremely conservative" voted for Republican candidates. I find it difficult to think of another survey question in the entire social and behavioral sciences that is as useful and parsimonious as the liberalism-conservatism self-placement item for predicting any outcome that is as important as voting behavior.

Are There Differences in Content Between Liberalism and Conservatism?

One of the assumptions of the end-of-ideologists and their followers is that the substantive ideological differences between the left and the right are few and far between (Aron, 1957/1968; Giddens, 1998; Lasch, 1991; Lipset, 1960; Shils, 1955/1968a). Shils (1954), for example, mocked the left-right distinction as "rickety," "spurious," and "obsolete" (pp. 27-28).

An essential part of the end-of-ideology thesis was that everything of value in Marxism had already been incorporated into Western democratic societies, and that there was no continuing need for leftist economic or cultural critique (Bell, 1960, 1988). Aron (1957/1968, p. 31), for example, argued that "Western 'capitalist' society today comprises a multitude of socialist institutions," and Shils (1958, p. 456) claimed that the "more valid aspirations of the older humanitarian elements which were absorbed into Marxism have been more or less fulfilled in capitalist countries." Lipset (1960/1981, p. 406) went even further, celebrating the fact that "the fundamental political problems of the industrial revolution have been solved: the workers have achieved industrial and political citizenship; the conservatives have accepted the welfare state."

Current political realities. In the four or five decades since these statements were made, one need only point to a few well-known facts about political economy to cast doubt on the notion that the left and right have resolved their fiscal disputes. In 1980, when Ronald Reagan was elected president, corporate CEO's earned approximately 40 times the salary of the average worker; recent estimates place the figure at nearly 500 to 1 (Crystal, 2002). As of the late 1990s, the richest 1% of Americans controlled almost half of the country's total financial wealth, and the top 20% possessed 94% of the nation's net wealth (Wolff, 1996). More than 30 million Americans today live below the poverty line, while the combined net worth of the 400 wealthiest Americans exceeds 1 trillion dollars. By nearly every metric—including the *gini* index of income concentration—the distribution of wealth in American society has grown increasingly skewed in favor of the wealthy (e.g., Weinberg, 2002). Income inequality increased most sharply during the 1980s and 1990s in those societies that most aggressively pursued "neo-liberal" (i.e., free market) economic policies, especially the

U.S., U.K., Australia, and New Zealand (Weeks, 2005). These statistics (and many more) cast doubt on the claim that Western capitalist institutions in general have internalized fundamental socialist principles, as the end-of-ideologists suggested.

The notion that "conservatives have accepted the welfare state" is particularly hard to accept, given how strenuously the governments of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan worked to reduce or eliminate welfare and social services, albeit with mixed success.

Welfare reform was a major objective of Newt Gingrich's "Republican Revolution" of 1994 and the "Contract with America" that followed. In 2005, President Bush conducted a speaking tour (called "60 Stops in 60 Days") aimed at persuading the public to privatize the liberal social security system established by Franklin D. Roosevelt seventy years earlier.

Empirical evidence. Studies show that there are substantial differences in the beliefs and values of liberals and conservatives. The largest and most consistent differences concern core issues of resistance to change and attitudes toward equality. For example, people who call themselves conservatives hold significantly more favorable attitudes than liberals toward traditional cultural and "family values," including religious forms of morality (e.g., Altemeyer, 1998; Haidt & Graham, in press; Kerlinger, 1984; Lakoff, 1996). They are also more likely to support conventional authority figures and to oppose activists who are seeking to change the status quo, especially if change is toward greater egalitarianism (e.g., Altemeyer, 1988; Conover & Feldman, 1981; Erikson et al., 1988; Evans, Heath, & Lalljee, 1996).

People who identify themselves as liberals place a higher priority on achieving social and economic equality through policies such as welfare, social security, and affirmative action (Evans et al., 1996; Feldman, 1988; Glaser, 2005; Graetz & Shapiro, 2005; Jacoby, 1991; Noelle-Neumann, 1998; Pierson, 1994). They are also significantly less likely to hold prejudicial attitudes—at a conscious or unconscious level—toward racial minorities, homosexuals, women, and members of other disadvantaged groups (Cunningham, Nezlek, & Banaji, 2004; Duckitt, 2001; Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1996; Whitley, 1999). Although a full consideration of the numerous peripheral (as well as core) differences between the left and right is well beyond the scope of this article, even a cursory glance at recent public opinion research provides reason enough to reject the end-of-ideology thesis that meaningful ideological differences have disappeared in the aftermath of World War II (e.g., Erikson et al., 1988; Feldman, 1988, 2003; Jacoby, 1991; Kerlinger, 1984; Knight, 1990; McClosky & Zaller, 1984).

Are There Differences in Psychological Processes Underlying Liberalism and Conservatism?

Adorno et al's (1950) *The Authoritarian Personality* is one of the most influential—and also one of the most badly caricatured—books in the history of social science. One website claims that Adorno and colleagues "attacked the 'authoritarian character' of the American nuclear family, the 'problem' of the American people's belief in a transcendent monotheistic God, the underlying 'fascist' character of all forms of American patriotism, and American culture's excessive reliance on science, reason, and 'abstract ideas.'" Another lists it as one of the "most harmful" books of the last two centuries[5]. Roiser and Willig (2002) noted that even in academic circles "*The Authoritarian Personality* has been the victim of several determined attempts at psychological and political assassinations" (p. 89). Soon after the book's publication, Shils (1954) accused the authors of a "narrowness of political imagination" and for "holding fast to a deforming intellectual tradition" (p. 31). More recently, Martin (2001) has pronounced it "the most deeply flawed work of prominence in political psychology" (p. 1) and argues for a "categorical dismissal" of it (p. 24).

The methodological problems associated with research on authoritarianism as a personality syndrome (including the problem of acquiescence and other response biases) were serious, but they have been addressed by Altemeyer (1981, 1988, 1998) and many others (see Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003a for a review). There have also been recurrent theoretical and ideological criticisms of the book's central thesis, which is that character rigidity and feelings of threat are related to the holding of intolerant, right-wing opinions that were dubbed "pseudo-conservative." Critics have claimed that left-wingers can be every bit as dogmatic and rigid as right-wingers. Shils (1954) and Eysenck (1954/1999), for example, emphasized that left-wing extremists (i.e., Communists), especially in the Soviet Union, resembled right-wing extremists (i.e., Fascists) in certain respects (e.g., intolerance of ambiguity and tough-mindedness, respectively). Others point out (quite correctly) that left-wing movements have sometimes embraced authoritarian themes and methods. But these historical observations do not establish that leftists and rightists are *equally* dogmatic, rigid, and closed-minded in the general population. Nevertheless, they have sometimes been used to claim that there are no important or enduring psychological differences between liberals and conservatives (e.g., Greenberg & Jonas, 2003; but see Jost, Glaser, et al. 2003b).

Current political realities. There are signs that Adorno et al.'s (1950) work is gaining new appreciation, at least in part because of the current political climate (e.g., Lavine et al., 2005; Roiser & Willig, 2002; Stenner, 2005). Many of the fundamental ideas of the theory of right-wing authoritarianism have resurfaced in contemporary accounts of the "culture wars." Lakoff (1996), for instance, has analyzed differences in political metaphors and observed that whereas conservatives adhere to a "strict father" model of moral discipline, liberals prefer a "nurturing parent" frame. Baker (2005), too, has noted that increasing "absolutism" has accompanied the rise in popularity of American conservatism (pp. 66-71).

John Dean (2006), the former Nixon attorney, has similarly argued that, "Conservatism has been co-opted by authoritarians, a most dangerous type of political animal" (p. xxxix). Wolfe, Dean, and others have noted that rather than responding in kind, liberals have generally eschewed dogmatic reactions to 9/11 and its political aftermath. All of this is consistent with the notion that there are indeed significant differences of cognitive and motivational style that characterize people who are drawn to liberal vs. conservative belief systems, much as Adorno and his colleagues initially supposed.

Empirical evidence. There is now sufficient evidence to conclude that Adorno et al. (1950) were correct that conservatives are, on average, more rigid and closed-minded than liberals. My colleagues and I published a meta-analysis that identified several psychological variables that predicted, to varying degrees, adherence to politically conservative (versus liberal) opinions (Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003a, 2003b). Several studies demonstrate that in a variety of perceptual and aesthetic domains, conservatism is associated with preferences for relatively simple, unambiguous, and familiar stimuli, whether they are paintings, poems, or songs (see also Wilson, 1973).

There are other psychological differences between liberals and conservatives as well. Conservatives are, on average, more likely than liberals to perceive the world as a dangerous place (Altemeyer, 1998; Duckitt, 2001) and to fear crime, terrorism, and death (e.g., Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003a; Wilson, 1973). They are also more likely to make purely internal attributions for the causes of others' behaviors (e.g., Skitka et al., 2002) and to engage in moral condemnation of others, especially in sexual domains (Haidt & Hersh, 2001). As Adorno et al. (1950) noted long ago, conservatives tend to hold more prejudicial attitudes than liberals toward members of deviant or stigmatized groups, at least in part because of elevated levels of threat and rigidity (e.g., Altemeyer, 1988, 1998; Cunningham et al., 2004; Duckitt, 2001; Sidanius et al., 1996; Whitley, 1999).

What about authoritarianism of the left? Are extremists of the left and right equally likely to be closed-minded? Some studies, especially those comparing multiple political parties in Europe, allow researchers to pit the (linear) rigidity-of-the-right hypothesis against the (quadratic) extremity hypothesis that increasing dogmatism/rigidity should be associated with increased ideological extremity in both directions (left and right). The existing data provide very consistent support for the rigidity-of-the-right hypothesis, no support for the extremity hypothesis in isolation, and some support for the notion that both linear and quadratic effects are present in combination (see Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003b, pp. 388-390). In summary, then, much evidence upholds the Adorno et al. (1950) rigidity-of-the-right hypothesis and contradicts persistent claims that liberals and conservatives are *equally* rigid and dogmatic (e.g., Greenberg & Jonas, 2003). The important point is not that Adorno and colleagues bested their critics; it is that psychologists are finally returning to the kinds of questions raised by *The Authoritarian Personality* after many years of neglect during the end-of-ideology era.

An Emerging Psychological Paradigm for the Study of Ideology

The reticence of sociologists and political scientists to take ideology seriously in recent decades has created opportunities for psychologists not only to describe ideological differences in theory but to explain them in practice. Social and personality psychologists have made relatively rapid progress in identifying a set of situational and dispositional factors that are linked to the motivational underpinnings of political orientation. There is now the possibility of explaining ideological differences between right and left in terms of underlying psychological needs for stability vs. change, order vs. complexity, familiarity vs. novelty, conformity vs. creativity, and loyalty vs. rebellion. These and other dimensions of personal and social significance are the basic building blocks of an emerging psychological paradigm that has already begun to shed light on the antecedents and consequences of ideological preferences.

Situational Factors

As former President Bill Clinton observed in a 2003 interview, "the psychological setting after 9-11 helped [conservatives]" because "we all wanted to see things in black and white for a while." Much as the Great Depression precipitated rightward shifts in Germany, Italy, Spain, Austria, Hungary, Romania, Japan, and other nations, heightened perceptions of uncertainty and threat in the aftermath of September 11, 2001 generally

increased the appeal of conservative leaders and opinions (see Jones, 2003). My colleagues and I found that the two largest effect sizes obtained in our meta-analysis of psychological predictors of conservatism were system threat and fear of death, both of which were elicited by the events of 9/11 (Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003a, 2003b).

Since the publication of our meta-analysis, several additional studies have demonstrated that reminders of death and terrorism increase the attractiveness of conservative leaders and opinions. Willer (2004), for instance, conducted time-series analyses and showed that President Bush's approval ratings increased each time his administration raised the terror alert levels between 2001 and 2004. Landau et al. (2004) demonstrated that subliminal and supraliminal 9/11 and death primes led college students (a relatively liberal population) to show increased support for President Bush and his counterterrorism policies and decreased support for the liberal challenger John Kerry. These effects were replicated by Cohen et al. (2005) immediately prior to the Bush-Kerry election in 2004. A Spanish study found that in the aftermath of the Madrid terrorist attacks of March 11, 2004, survey respondents scored higher on measures of authoritarianism and prejudice and were more likely to endorse conservative values and less likely to endorse liberal values, compared to baseline levels calculated prior to the attacks (Echebarria & Fernandez, 2006; see also Ullrich & Cohrs, in press, for additional evidence).

An experimental study by Jost, Fitzsimons, and Kay (2004) demonstrated that priming people with images evoking death (e.g., images of funeral hearse, a "Dead End" street sign, and a chalk outline of a human body) led liberals and moderates as well as conservatives to more strongly endorse politically conservative opinions on issues such as taxation, same-sex marriage, and stem cell research, compared to a standard control condition in which they were primed with images evoking pain (e.g., a dentist's chair, a bandaged arm, and a bee sting removal). This finding is particularly important because it demonstrates that death reminders increase support for conservative *opinions* as well as leaders and therefore rules out "charismatic leadership" as an alternative explanation for the results (see Cohen et al., 2005). The results of these post-9/11 studies, especially when taken in conjunction, appear to overturn an earlier conclusion—based primarily on a non-significant result obtained by Greenberg et al. (1992, p. 214)—that mortality salience would lead liberals to cling more strongly to liberal beliefs and values (see also Greenberg & Jonas, 2003).

A recent study of the political attitudes of World Trade Center survivors provides further support for the notion that threat precipitates "conser-

vative shift" even among people who are not initially conservative (Bonanno & Jost, 2006). Survivors were asked 18 months after 9/11 whether they had grown "more liberal, more conservative, or stayed the same" since the terrorist attacks. Results revealed that 38% of the sample overall reported that they had become more conservative in the 18 months following 9/11, which was almost *three times* as many people (13%) who reported that they had grown more liberal ($\chi^2 = 5.26$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$). Conservative shifts were more common than liberal shifts not only among Republicans (50% vs. 0%) but also among Independents (50% vs. 0%) and Democrats (35% vs. 23%) and even among people who reported voting for Clinton in 1992 (32% vs. 16%) and 1996 (34% vs. 16%) and Gore in 2000 (40% vs. 12%). There was no evidence in this sample that embracing conservatism was associated with improved well-being as measured either in terms of survivors' mental health symptoms or peer ratings of their psychological adjustment. On the contrary, chronic symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and depression (measured at 7 months and again at 18 months after 9/11) were positively correlated with political conservatism, conservative shift, and especially right-wing authoritarianism (see Bonanno & Jost, 2006), suggesting that, as Adorno et al. (1950) proposed, there may be long-term (as well as short-term) differences in distress and coping style that covary with political orientation.

Dispositional Factors

In addition to situational factors, there is good evidence that chronic dispositional factors contribute to liberal vs. conservative political orientations. With respect to the "Big Five" taxonomy of personality traits, we find that two of the five traits are consistently linked to political orientation in the United States, and the other three are not (Carney et al., 2006; see also Stenner, 2005, pp. 171-2). Results, aggregated across 6 studies involving a total of 19,331 research participants, are summarized in Figure 2. Consistent with Tomkins' (1963) observation that leftists are more motivated by excitement-seeking, novelty, and creativity for its own sake, liberals tend to score significantly higher than do conservatives on self-report questionnaire items tapping openness to new experiences (Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003; McCrae, 1996). In one of our 6 samples, it was possible to inspect correlations between individuals' scores on specific facets of the NEO-PI-R and ideological self-placement on a liberalism-conservatism scale ($n = 85$). Results revealed that all 6 of the openness facets were associated with liberalism rather than conservatism: openness values ($r = -.48$), aesthetics ($r = -.32$), actions ($r = -.27$), ideas ($r = -.24$),

feelings (r = -.24), and fantasy (r = -.19)[6]. These findings add to a growing body of evidence suggesting that open-mindedness/closed-mindedness is a fundamental psychological variable that helps us to understand ideological asymmetries between the left and the right (Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003a, 2003b; Kruglanski, 2004).

Figure 2
Correlations Between "Big Five" Personality Scores
and Ideological Self-Placement of Individuals
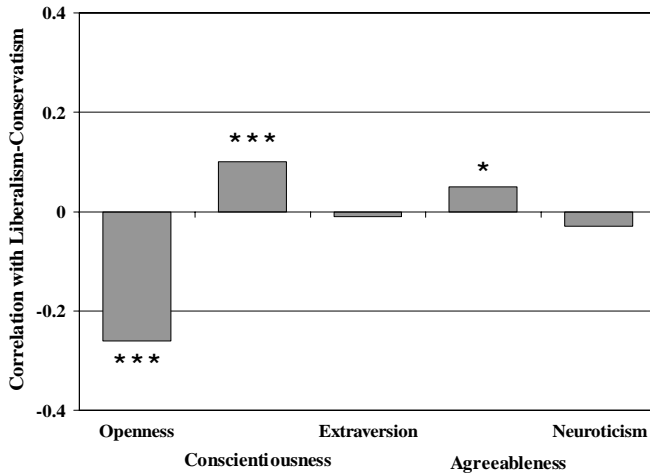
Note: Data are adapted from Carney, Jost, Gosling, Niederhoffer, & Potter (2006, Study 1). Effect size estimates are weighted mean correlations (r's), aggregating results across 6 studies (Total N = 19,331). Each "Big Five" dimension was correlated with ideological self-placement as measured using a single-item 5-point ideological self-placement scale, with higher numbers indicating more conservatism and lower numbers indicating more liberalism. Asterisks are used to denote those personality dimensions that were significant correlates in the meta-analytic calculation as follows: * p<.05, ** p< .01,*** p < .001(two-tailed)

Tomkins (1963) was also correct in observing that conservatives are more motivated than liberals by norm attainment, rule-following, and orderliness. Specifically, my colleagues and I find that conservatives score somewhat higher than liberals on the Big Five dimension of conscientiousness (see Figure 2), but reliable differences emerge for only two of the facets, namely achievement-striving (r = .24) and order (r = .21). These results, too, are consistent with our meta-analytic finding that conservatism is positively associated with personal needs for order, structure, and closure. There is even some behavioral evidence suggesting that conservatives' living and working spaces may be better organized and tidier on average, in

comparison with those of liberals! We have discovered, for example, that the bedrooms of conservatives were significantly more likely to contain organizational supplies such as calendars, postage stamps, and laundry baskets, whereas the bedrooms of liberals were more likely to contain art supplies, books, compact disks, maps, and travel documents. Results such as these imply that left-right ideological differences permeate nearly every aspect of our public and private lives. As a general rule, liberals are more open-minded in their pursuit of creativity, novelty, and diversity, whereas conservatives tend to pursue lives that are more orderly, conventional, and better organized (see Carney et al., 2006).

A longitudinal study conducted by Block and Block (2006) suggests that personality differences between liberals and conservatives may begin early in childhood, long before people define themselves in terms of political orientation. They found that preschool children who were described by their teachers as energetic, emotionally expressive, gregarious, self-reliant, resilient, and impulsive were more likely to identify themselves as politically liberal as adults. Children who were seen by teachers as relatively inhibited, indecisive, fearful, rigid, vulnerable, and over-controlled were more likely to identify themselves as conservative adults. Although it would be impossible to control for all of the factors that could influence both personality and political orientation over a 20-year period, the Block and Block findings largely mirror adult personality differences (e.g., Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003a; Wilson, 1973) and suggest that basic predispositions and interpersonal relationships may affect one's ideological preferences later in life.

Studies comparing the social and political attitudes of monozygotic and dizygotic twins who are reared apart reveal that identical twins have more similar attitudes than fraternal twins (e.g., Alford, Funk, & Hibbing, 2005; Bouchard et al., 2003). This research suggests that there is a substantial heritable component of political attitudes, although it does not mean that there is a gene for political orientation *per se*. A more likely explanation is that there are basic cognitive and motivational predispositions, including orientations toward uncertainty and threat (e.g., Block & Block, 2006; Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003a, 2003b; Wilson, 1973), and that these predispositions have a heritable component and lead to preferences for liberal vs. conservative ideas. It is therefore plausible that differences in underlying psychological characteristics (or processes) will eventually explain differences between the left and the right at the level of ideological content (i.e., resistance to change and acceptance of inequality).

*Implications for Understanding the Red State/Blue State Divide*

Research on psychological variables underlying political ideology has led to a fruitful analysis of the current political divide between "red states" and "blue states" in terms of differences in "regional personality." Specifically, my colleagues and I theorized that differences in modal personality styles at the state level could influence ideological commitments and therefore voting patterns in at least two ways (Rentfrow, Jost, Gosling, & Potter, 2006). First, there is the possibility of self-selection in migration patterns. People may be more likely to move to places where others tend to share their personality characteristics and political values; for instance, those who are especially high on openness may disproportionately relocate to major coastal or urban centers that are high on stimulation and cultural diversity and that also tend to be very liberal. Second, there is the prospect of social influence through interaction, so that people are affected by their neighbors' traits and political orientations over time, thereby increasing the local concentration of certain personality types and political ideologies.

To investigate patterns of regional ideology, my colleagues and I conducted an Internet survey in which we obtained Big Five personality scores from hundreds of thousands of American respondents and analyzed their data on a state-by-state basis (Rentfrow et al., 2006). We used these state-level personality estimates to predict the percentage of votes for Democratic vs. Republican candidates in the 1996-2004 presidential elections on the assumption that voting behavior is related to ideology (see Jost, 2006). Consistent with results at the individual level of analysis (e.g., Carney et al., 2006; McCrae, 1998), openness to new experiences was the strongest regional personality predictor of the percentage of the statewide vote cast for Democratic versus Republican candidates in the three most recent presidential elections (see Figure 3). That is, states with higher mean-level openness scores were significantly more likely to have cast votes for Clinton, Gore, and Kerry in these elections and significantly less likely to have cast votes for Dole or Bush. Remarkably, state-level openness remained a significant predictor even after adjusting for demographic and other political variables, including population density, percentage of minority population, average income, voter turnout, and percentage of the vote cast for the same-party candidate in the previous election (see Rentfrow et al., 2006).

Although the effect sizes were not quite as large, conscientiousness also proved to be a reasonably strong and unique predictor of voting patterns. States that were higher in mean-level conscientiousness were significantly more likely to have cast votes for Dole and Bush in the last three elections and less likely to have cast votes for Clinton, Gore, or Kerry (see Figure 3).

There was also some evidence that states that were higher in mean-level extraversion were more likely to favor liberal over conservative candidates, but these results should be interpreted with caution because they are opposite to those obtained by Caprara et al. (2003) in Italy. Altogether, we found that the Big Five dimensions accounted for 40% of the overall statistical variance in voting percentages across the three elections (Rentfrow et al., 2006). These results suggest that a psychological analysis, in addition to the kinds of demographic and institutional analyses offered by sociologists and political scientists (Erikson, Wright, & McIver, 1993), may be extremely useful for understanding the American political divide.

Figure 3
Statewide *Big Five* Personality Scores Predict Voting Patterns in U.S. Presidential Elections, 1996-2004
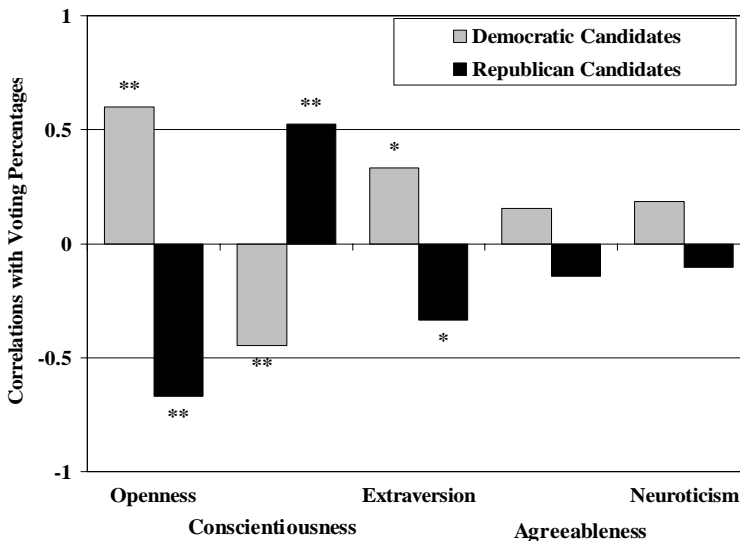
Note: Data are adapted from Rentfrow, Jost, Gosling, and Potter (2006). Entries are standardized regression coefficients for a model in which state-level means for all "Big Five" dimensions were used simultaneously to predict the percentage of the statewide vote cast for Democratic (Clinton, Gore, and Kerry) and Republican (Dole and Bush) candidates, aggregating across the 1996, 2000, and 2004 presidential elections. Asterisks are used to denote those regional personality dimensions that emerged as significant predictors in all three elections as follows: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed)

Conclusion

The late Italian political theorist Norberto Bobbio (1996) pointed out that it was at one time or another in the political interest of nearly everyone to deny the enduring relevance of ideology, insofar as "undermining the left/right distinction becomes an obvious expedient for hiding one's own weakness" (p. 14). In other words, blurring ideological boundaries is a rhetorical strategy that helps a sidelined minority party to refashion its image.

The end-of-ideology thesis originated with neo-conservatives such as Bell, Shils, and Fukuyama; their work helped to marginalize the radical left and to give neo-conservatives a fresh start. D'Souza (1995) wielded the end-of-ideology excuse to distance conservative policies from unpopular legacies such as racism. Soon thereafter, it was liberals who, following the collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe, abandoned their commitment to robust social welfare programs and professed the need for a "third way" (Giddens, 1998) to defeat the heirs of Thatcher and Reagan. The strategy worked for Bill Clinton and Tony Blair, but arguably at the cost of taking historically leftist concerns such as exploitation, egalitarianism, and social and economic justice off the political table.

It is probably no coincidence that the ideological struggle was renewed by the right-wing rather than the left-wing. Tedin (1987) reports data from 1980 indicating that more than three times as many conservatives as liberals satisfied Converse's (1964) criteria for being true "ideologues." And, as we have seen, a large body of evidence supports the (asymmetrical) rigidity-of-the-right hypothesis over the (symmetrical) ideologue-as-extremist hypothesis (Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003a, 2003b). Research suggests that conservatives are often prone to expedient, closed-minded, and authoritarian solutions (e.g., Altemeyer, 1988, 1998; Kruglanski, 2004). Liberals, on the other hand, may be too quick to defy authority, flout conventions, and slay the "sacred cows" of others (e.g., see Haidt & Graham, in press). There are almost surely necessary, self-correcting historical swings in both left-wing and right-wing directions, as Tomkins (1965) noted in the epigraph I selected for this article. It may well be that the future of humanity depends upon each side's ability to learn from and avoid repeating past mistakes.

My own conclusion is similar to that of Lane (1962) and Kerlinger (1984), which is that while ordinary people by no means pass the strictest tests imaginable for ideological sophistication, most of them do think, feel, and behave in ideologically meaningful and interpretable terms. As I have shown, millions of Americans now actively seek out ideologically charged talk radio, televised news programs, and political blogsites. Between two-thirds and three-quarters of the American population currently locates their

political attitudes on a liberalism-conservatism dimension, and we have seen that these attitudes do reliably predict voting intentions and many other important outcomes, including beliefs, opinions, values, traits, behaviors, and perhaps even mental health characteristics. Many other discoveries concerning the causes and consequences of left-right ideological differences await us, but only if we accept that the differences exist and can be studied scientifically.

There is reason to assume that human beings have required and will continue to require the characteristics that are associated with the political left as well as the political right. We need tradition, order, structure, closure, discipline, and conscientiousness, to be sure, but if the human race is to continue to survive new challenges, we will also just as surely need creativity, curiosity, tolerance, diversity, and open-mindedness.

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Notes

[1] See http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?PageID=834.

[2] See http://www.umich.edu/~nes/studyres/download/nesdatacenter.htm.

[3] For statistics concerning political websites, see: http://www.comscore.com/press/ release.asp?press=517, http://ww2.websense.com/global/en/PressRoom/PressReleases/ Press-ReleaseDetail/ ?Release=041018730, and http://michellemalkin.com/archives/001623.htm.

[4] In separate general linear models, ideological self-placement was a powerful predictor of self-reported voting for both Democratic, $F(1, 61) = 352.89$, $p < .001$, Adjusted $R^2 = .85$, and Republican, $F(1, 61) = 424.19$, $p < .001$, Adjusted $R^2 = .87$, candidates. Additional analyses yielded no significant interactions between ideological self-placement and election year, indicating that ideology played a consistently strong role between 1962 and 2004.

[5] See http://www.schillerinstitute.org/strategic/2004/AFF.html and http://www.humaneventsonline.com/article.php?id=7591, respectively.

[6] Although Carney et al. (2006) found that conservatives scored slightly higher than liberals on agreeableness in the two largest samples contributing to the data summarized in Figure 2 (but not in the other four samples), there was also some evidence that liberals scored higher than conservatives on the tender-mindedness facet of the agreeableness subscale ($r = -.27$). This latter result (and others summarized in Table 2) cast doubt on Eysenck's (1954/1999) suggestion that tough-mindedness/tender-mindedness is a dimension of personality that is truly orthogonal to political orientation.

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