SHARED REALITY AND THE RELATIONAL UNDERPINNINGS OF SYSTEM-JUSTIFYING BELIEFS

John T. Jost, A. Ledgerwood, Curtis D. Hardin
New York University, University of California, Davis, Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center, CUNY

RESUMEN	ABSTRACT
Se piensa que las ideas políticas de las personas reflejan un pensamiento independiente e imparcial, pero la investigación psicosocial sugiere que las ideologías reflejan procesos motivacionales. En este artículo se integra el sistema de justificación y teorías de la realidad compartida para sugerir que las ideologías funcionan como unidades pre-empaquetadas de interpretación que incluyen motivos humanos básicos para entender el mundo, evitan la amenaza existencial y mantienen las relaciones interpersonales relevantes. Repasamos datos que revelan que los motivos de afiliación influyen en las creencias ideológicas para integrarlas con las visiones progresistas o conservadoras compartidas dentro de una relación determinada o de un grupo. Proponemos que dichos motivos pueden llevar a la adopción de sistemas de justificación de visiones del mundo. Describimos las implicaciones para las creencias ideológicas dependientes de contexto, el papel que la realidad compartida puede jugar en los conflictos del grupo, así como las bases del cambio revolucionario.	It is tempting to believe that one's political convictions reflect independent and unbiased thinking, but social psychological research increasingly suggests that ideologies reflect motivational processes. The present paper integrates system justification and shared reality theories to suggest that ideologies function as pre-packaged units of interpretation that spread because of basic human motives to understand the world, avoid existential threat, and maintain valued interpersonal relationships. We review evidence revealing that affiliative motives influence ideological beliefs to align with the progressive or conservative views shared within a given relationship or group, and propose that such motives may lead disproportionately to the adoption of system-justifying worldviews. Implications for the context-dependence of ideological convictions, the role that shared reality may play in group conflicts, and the relational bases of revolutionary change are discussed.

Key words: ideology, beliefs, human motives, system-justifying worldviews.

Contrary to the common view that human beliefs result from a more or less rational use of evidence, it is well documented that beliefs and opinions frequently result from biased, selective, and motivated processing of information (e.g., Ditto & Lopez, 1992; Greenwald, 1980; Kruglanski, 1996; Kunda, 1990; Nisbet & Ross, 1980). Humans excel at believing what they

wish to believe, sometimes even in the face of disconfirming evidence (e.g., Dunning, 1999; Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979; Pomerantz, Chaiken, & Tordesillas, 1995), and the individual's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are influenced by others much more than is typically recognized (e.g., Asch, 1952; Festinger, 1954; Fitzsimons & Bargh, 2003; Hardin & Higgins, 1996; Kawakami, Dovidio, & Dijksterhuis, 2003; Sherif, 1936; Sinclair, Huntsinger, Skorinko, & Hardin, 2005; Turner, 1991). Although it is tempting to assume that at least the most self-defining, weighty, and principled convictions—such as ideological opinions—escape the clutch of motivation and social influence, it seems increasingly unlikely that they do (see Jost, 2006; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003a, 2003b).

A Tale of Two Theories (and Three Motives)

In this article, we start by summarizing theory and research on the role of system justification in giving shape to the ideological opinions and values of individuals. This work suggests that two classes of motivation, namely epistemic motives to reduce uncertainty and existential motives to minimize threat, are capable of influencing ideological outcomes (Jost, Fitzsimons, & Kay, 2004). Next, we propose that there is also a third, relational motivation that underpins ideological opinions (see also Jost, Federico, & Napier, 2009). From this perspective, ideology is linked to processes of social influence and the motivation to achieve and maintain "shared reality" with others (Hardin & Conley, 2001; Hardin & Higgins, 1996). An integration of these two theories (and three motives) suggests that it is possible to provide a more complete account of the psychological origins of political beliefs than currently exists in the research literature (see also Jost, Kay, & Thorisdottir, 2009).

System Justification Theory

In laying out the basic tenets of system justification theory, Jost and Banaji (1994) proposed that *there is a general psychological tendency to justify and rationalize the status quo, that is, a motive to see the system as good, fair, legitimate, and desirable*. Although system justification results in negative consequences for some individuals—most especially for members of disadvantaged groups who are harmed by the current state of affairs—there are a number of psychological reasons why it would be functional for people to actively seek to justify the status quo (Jost & Hunyady, 2002). These include epistemic motives to establish order, structure, closure, certainty, and perceived control as well as existential motives to per-

ceive a safe, reassuring environment (Jost, Fitzsimons, & Kay, 2004; Jost & Hunyady, 2005; Kay, Gaucher, Napier, Callan, & Laurin, 2008). Experimental studies reveal that people defend and bolster the legitimacy of the societal status quo following exposure to various manipulations of system threat, including exposure to passages highlighting crises of legitimacy or stability in society (e.g., Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Kay, Gaucher, Peach, Laurin, Friesen, Zanna, & Spencer, 2009; Kay, Jost, & Young, 2005; Ullrich & Cohrs, 2007). These results, which demonstrate defensive ideological responses on behalf of the system, are consistent with the notion that a general system justification motive exists.

Ideologies differ in the extent to which they serve to justify reigning social systems (e.g., Jost & Hunyady, 2005). For example, conservative ideology typically favors preserving the societal status quo, whereas liberal, radical, and progressive ideologies often seek to reform or revise it (e.g., Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003a, 2003b). Consistent with this formulation, Jost, Nosek, and Gosling (2008) found in three samples of student respondents (Total $N = 1,316$) that that system-justifying attitudes are endorsed more enthusiastically by conservatives than liberals. Self-reported conservatism scores strongly predicted scores on Kay and Jost's (2003) general system justification scale, with rs ranging from .42 to .46, as well as scores on Jost and Thompson's (2000) economic system justification scale, with rs ranging from .32 to .47.

Although most people endorse system-justifying beliefs to at least some extent, dispositional and situational factors that stimulate the motivation to reduce uncertainty and threat also tend to increase the appeal of conservative, system-justifying beliefs and decrease the appeal of progressive, system-challenging beliefs (Jost & Hunyady, 2005). Research reveals, for instance, that heightened epistemic motives to achieve certainty and closure and/or heightened existential motives to minimize fear and threat are associated with increased conservatism with respect to political opinions, candidate preferences, and even ideological self-placement (Bonanno & Jost, 2006; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003a, 2003b; Jost, Napier, Thorisdottir, et al., 2007). The evidence, therefore, is quite strong that *epistemic and existential motives contribute to specific ideological outcomes*.

Shared Reality Theory

Shared reality theory was first proposed by Hardin and Higgins (1996) to explain how and why relational and epistemic motives are intertwined. The theory holds that *people are motivated to achieve mutual understanding or "shared reality" with specific others* in order to (a) establish, main-

tain, and regulate interpersonal relationships, thereby satisfying relational needs for affiliation (see also Asch, 1952; Freud, 1933; Sherif, 1936), and (b) perceive themselves and their environments as stable, predictable, and potentially controllable, thereby satisfying epistemic motives to achieve certainty (see also Festinger, 1954; Mead, 1934; Turner, 1991). Hence, according to the theory, two fundamental adaptive requirements of human survival (social inclusion and knowledge of the external world) are served by the same social psychological mechanism, namely the maintenance and regulation of shared reality in interpersonal relationships (see also Hardin & Conley, 2001).

If specific interpersonal relationships and the subjective experience of reality are indeed connected through the regulation of shared reality, then people should a) "tune" relationship-relevant attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors *towards* others in desired or obligatory relationships so as to create and protect those common understandings that the relationships depend upon, and b) "anti-tune" relationship-relevant attitudes beliefs, and behaviors *away from* others in undesired or disengaged relationships so as to protect common understandings shared with other extant relationships. Consistent with this prediction, research shows that individuals mimic the characteristics and behaviors of salient individuals and groups (Cesario, Plaks, Higgins, 2006; Chartrand & Bargh, 1999), shift their attitudes toward those of close relationship partners (Davis & Rusbult, 2001), and bring their self-concepts and self-evaluations into alignment with the perspectives of significant others and even the perspectives of strangers (Baldwin & Holmes, 1987; Hinkley & Anderson, 1996; Sinclair, Dunn, & Lowery, 2005; Sinclair, Lowery, Hardin, & Colangelo, 2005). In fact, it may be that some behavioral assimilation effects that have received purely "cognitive" explanations (e.g., Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996) result, at least partially, from motivated social tuning processes (Cesario et al., 2006; Magee & Hardin, in press). By the same token, according to shared reality theory, research also shows that individuals shift their attitudes away from disliked or socially peripheral others (e.g., Sinclair, Dunn, et al., 2005; Sinclair, Lowery, et al., 2005).

Although shared reality theory has not yet been applied expressly to the political domain, there is every reason to expect that it will be useful for understanding the interplay of relational and epistemic motives that underlies ideological belief formation and change, just as it has been useful for understanding the role of these motives in other attitudinal domains, including intergroup attitudes, self-stereotyping, and religiosity (e.g., Echterhoff, Higgins, & Levine, 2009; Hardin & Conley, 2001; Hardin, Cheung, Magee,

Noel, & Yoshimura, in press; Lowery et al., 2001; Sinclair et al., 2005a, 2005b, 2005c).

An Integration of System Justification and Shared Reality Perspectives

Although system justification and shared reality theories were developed independently, there are several ways in which they complement each other, particularly in the context of understanding social and political opinions. Both theories seek to explain the social psychological appeal of specific beliefs and belief systems (including ideologies) in terms of basic motives held by individuals and groups. Although system justification theory emphasizes epistemic and existential motives (Jost, Fitzsimons, & Kay, 2004) and shared reality theory emphasizes epistemic and relational motives (Hardin & Conley, 2001), it seems clear that all three motives could contribute to ideological outcomes. For instance, there may be interpersonal reasons, in addition to epistemic and existential reasons, to profess one's support for the status quo and to refrain from "upsetting the apple cart." Studies show that many people -especially those who engage in system justification- derogate others who are perceived as complaining about discrimination and injustice in the system (Kaiser, Dyrenforth, & Hagiwara, 2006). This is consistent with the possibility that shared social norms may reward system-justifying responses and punish system-challenging responses in part to regulate interpersonal relationships. To the degree that friends and family members have system justification motives of their own, the desire to achieve shared reality may disproportionately lead to system-justifying outcomes.

Furthermore, evidence suggests that social tuning is affected by the system-justifying tendency to maintain and bolster existing forms of social inequality (see also Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). For example, Henry and Hardin (2006) found that members of disadvantaged groups (Blacks in Chicago and Muslims in Lebanon) were more likely to align their attitudes with advantaged outgroup friends (Whites and Christians, respectively) than members of the advantaged groups were to align their attitudes with disadvantaged outgroup friends. In this way, the overarching status quo may be slow to change because people are not equally motivated to achieve shared reality with everyone. According to shared reality theory, social tuning of attitudes occurs to the extent that the relationship is desired or obligatory. Social privilege, it seems, extends to epistemic privilege. In the remainder of this article, we will focus first on the notion that relational motives can contribute to ideological beliefs that are *either* conservative or progressive, depending on the beliefs held by significant others. Afterward,

we will return to the more speculative possibility that the motivation to achieve shared reality will lead disproportionately to conservative, system-justifying outcomes.

Theory and evidence suggesting that relational motives contribute to ideological opinions in general

We propose that *ideological convictions are influenced by a motive to establish and maintain a shared view of the world with other people*—what Hardin and Higgins (1996) referred to as a motive for "shared reality." To the extent that political and religious ideologies are sets of interrelated beliefs and attitudes that can provide many different individuals with the same "lenses" through which to view the world and thereby communicate with each other, they should be especially useful for building and maintaining a sense of shared reality. Ideologies, in other words, may function as "pre-packaged" units of interpretation that are useful for regulating interpersonal relationships and navigating social and political life. If a person knows, for instance, that her friend, family member, or conversation partner voted for President George W. Bush, then she also knows that he probably favors lower taxes, the death penalty, and the Iraq War and opposes welfare spending, gay marriage, and abortion rights. These inferences are more likely to be made by those who are relatively educated and knowledgeable about politics (e.g., Converse, 1964; Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Judd & Krosnick, 1989; Zaller, 1992). We consider four sources of evidence for the claim that for these people at least ideological endorsement is affected by, among other things, the desire to maintain shared reality with others.

The Political Socialization Literature

The first reason to think that people's ideological opinions are influenced by significant others comes from a vast research literature in political science on the parental socialization of party identification, social and political attitudes, and political behavior (e.g., Hyman, 1959; Jost, Federico, & Napier, 2009; Sapiro, 2004; Sears, 1975; Sears & Levy, 2003). Although the effect of parental attitudes on their offspring may decline somewhat as the offspring age and accumulate other experiences and relationships (Niemi & Jennings, 1991), there is a great deal of evidence suggesting that young adults and late adolescents are strongly influenced by their parents' (and friends') political preferences and behavior (e.g., Kitt & Gleicher, 1950; Stillman, Guthrie, & Becher, 1960). Correlations between parent and adolescent attitudes, for example, frequently range from .3 to .6, with espe-

cially high parent-offspring correlations (around .6) for party identification and other parental commitments that are particularly well known to their children (Jennings & Niemi, 1968; Tedin, 1974). The transmission of political partisanship from parents to children is more effective when both parents belong to the same party and when politics is salient in the family and attitudes are well-known (Jennings & Niemi, 1981). Both of these findings are consistent with a shared reality perspective—the first because it is a situation in which there are no competing shared realities within the same family, leading to a clearer "relational signal" and the second because salience makes politics more central to the discursive environment in which shared reality is established. Although there have been skeptics of the notion that parents transmit their political attitudes to their children (see Tedin, 1974 for a discussion), the evidence inspired at least one team of researchers to conclude that, "the single most important determinant of long run voting behavior is the behavior of one's friends and family" (Stillman et al., 1960, p. 171).

However, there are some limitations to what can be learned from correlational studies of parent-offspring attitudes. First, it is unclear what specific processes or mechanisms are responsible for the apparent connection between parental political preferences and those of their children. Cook (1985) has even suggested that the decline in research interest in political socialization research after 1978 is attributable to the "absence of an explicit psychological model of learning" (p. 1079). Second, there is the strong possibility that at least some of the ideological correspondence between parents and their offspring is due to genetic factors such as inherited personality traits that are linked to political predispositions (Alford, Funk, & Hibbing, 2005). Of course, this limitation does not apply to studies that document intercorrelations in political attitudes among friends. In any case, relational motives have received relatively little attention in political science in recent decades, perhaps because some researchers find relational or identity-based theories difficult to apply to real-world political preferences (e.g., Huddy, 2001). Nonetheless, the studies that do exist are consistent with the notion derived from shared reality theory that stable ideological opinions are tied to stable interpersonal relationships such as those involving friends and family members.

Effects of Social Identification on Political Opinions

Several studies link social and political attitudes to group memberships that are especially valued by individuals (e.g., Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954; Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960; Green, Palm-

quist, & Schickler, 2002; Greene, 1999; Newcomb, 1943). For instance, Conover and Feldman (1981) found, using data from the American National Election Studies, that ideological self-placement was related to evaluations of liberals and conservatives as social groups, and that these evaluations stem, in turn, from both cognitive sources (beliefs about political issues) and symbolic sources (affective evaluations of social groups). Their model, which is also highly compatible with both reference group theory (Merton, 1957) and social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), implies that political opinions are influenced by the desire to align oneself with positively evaluated social groups.

Other researchers have examined additional implications of social identity and self-categorization perspectives for social and political attitudes (e.g., Abrams, 1994). For example, Haslam et al. (1996) demonstrated that Australians' beliefs about both Americans and Australians were strongly influenced by opinions expressed by fellow Australian (but not other) sources. Similarly, Stangor, Sechrist, and Jost (2001) demonstrated that racial beliefs are influenced by consensus information, such that college students' stereotypes are bolstered when they learn that fellow students hold similar versus dissimilar beliefs. These findings and others suggest that motives to bring one's attitudes into alignment with those held by others (especially ingroup members) can play a key role in the formation and maintenance of stereotypes and other social and political attitudes.

Recent research has shed some light on the cognitive-motivational mechanisms by which identification-based motives come to influence political opinions. Specifically, Cohen (2003) found that liberal and conservative participants who were presented with either a generous or stringent welfare policy supported the new policy when their own political party allegedly endorsed it, regardless of the policy's content. Furthermore, knowledge of their own party's position led people to engage in selective and biased processing of policy information in order to arrive at agreement with ingroup members. Participants also selectively invoked moral consequences of the policy in order to justify the ingroup position. Thus, evidence suggests that people's opinions about political parties as well as specific policy issues are influenced (and perhaps even distorted) by their attachment to valued social groups as well as interpersonal relationships.

Experimental Demonstrations of Automatic Social Tuning
In addition to suggesting that lasting interpersonal relationships and group identities should exert strong and stable influences on ideological beliefs, shared reality theory implies that ideological beliefs may fluctuate

insofar as unconscious (as well as conscious) needs to regulate temporary relationships motivate ideological alignment with different individuals (Hardin & Conley, 2001). Thus, rather than representing stable and unchanging views of the world, ideological outcomes may be more malleable and context-dependent than is often assumed (see also Jost, 2006, 2007). Several studies demonstrate that people automatically (or implicitly) "tune" their attitudes to others, subtly bringing their own opinions into alignment with the actual or presumed opinions of other people, including strangers with whom they wish (or are obligated) to maintain smooth interactions.

In one particularly dramatic demonstration, Lowery et al. (2001) found that participant scores on various implicit measures of anti-Black bias were affected by the presence of a Black (vs. White) experimenter. To the extent that White participants were motivated to interact with the Black experimenter, they exhibited less anti-Black bias on these measures, although they were unaware of the effects of the experimenter's race on their behavior. Subsequent research demonstrated that automatic social tuning effects are both moderated and mediated by the degree to which participants like the experimenter (Sinclair et al., 2005c), thereby demonstrating that social tuning is a consequence of temporary relationship regulation and complementing evidence that stable relationships are associated with stable political attitudes. For example, children's racial attitudes are positively correlated with the racial attitudes of their parents to the extent that they are highly identified with their parents (Sinclair et al., 2005a). Ledgerwood and Chaiken (2007) found that subliminally priming participants with their own political party led them to express stronger agreement with the positions of their party, raising the possibility that ideological attitudes may automatically tune toward groups as well, or perhaps that the group primes are animated by thoughts of particular group members. Together, these findings are consistent with the notion that social and political attitudes are affected by both conscious and unconscious relational motives to establish and maintain shared reality with friends, family members, and even strangers. The theoretical and practical implications of this insight for the study of ideology, as we shall see, are numerous.

Effects of Parents on System-Justifying vs. System-Challenging Attitudes

If attitudes are held and expressed in part to maintain and regulate interpersonal relationships, as shared reality theory implies, then ideological endorsement should covary with the cognitive accessibility of particular individuals with whom that ideology is (or is not) shared. Your politics are your people, or, more precisely, an expression of the values and opinions

perceived to be shared with them when you are with them or thinking of them. In order to explore this plausible, but until now untested hypothesis, we conducted two studies that directly implicate relational motives in ideological endorsement. Specifically, we sought to alter the extent to which people would express conservative, system-justifying attitudes versus liberal, system-challenging attitudes by subtly reminding participants of significant others who hold different ideological positions.

Although political conservatives do in fact score more highly than liberals on system justification measures (Jost, Nosek, & Gosling, 2008), we wanted to be sure that participants were (at least to some extent) aware of this empirical association. In an initial study we asked a small group of 16 NYU undergraduates to answer the 8 questions taken from Kay and Jost's (2003) general system justification scale either as a "moderate conservative" or as a "moderate liberal" would. Sample items include: "Everyone has a fair shot at wealth and happiness"; "Most policies serve the greater good"; and "American society needs to be radically restructured" (reverse-scored). Results indicated that when participants emulated a conservative, they scored significantly higher on every item and more than three points higher on the 9-point system justification scale ($M = 6.69$, SD $= 0.69$) than when they emulated a liberal, ($M = 3.59$, SD $= 0.83$), $t(14) = 8.32$, $p < .001$. Thus, the students accurately discerned a connection between liberalism-conservatism and the endorsement of system-justifying attitudes.

If it is true that people either legitimize or subvert the status quo in part to fulfill relational motives, then individuals should endorse system-justifying beliefs more enthusiastically when a relationship with a conservative (rather than liberal) family member is made salient. To investigate this possibility, we asked a large number of undergraduates about their parents' political partisanship and recruited only those with one liberal (i.e., Democratic) and one conservative (i.e., Republican) parent to participate in a second study. Several weeks after the initial pretesting session, participants were asked to imagine either a positive or negative interaction with either their mother or their father (with no mention of political partisanship or opinions whatsoever) and to write a few sentences describing the hypothetical interaction. Next, as part of an ostensibly unrelated task, participants completed two measures of system justification, including the same Kay and Jost (2003) general system justification scale used in the pilot study and Jost and Thompson's (2000) economic system justification scale. (Scores on these two scales were significantly intercorrelated, $r = .59$, $p < .001$).

We conducted two analyses of covariance (ANCOVAs) to examine the effect of the salient parent's political orientation on general and economic system justification scores, adjusting for the parent's gender (mother vs. father) and participants' baseline general and economic system justification scores, respectively (obtained during the pre-testing session). As illustrated in Figure 1, participants who thought about interacting with their conservative parent scored higher on both the general and economic system justification scales than did participants who thought about their liberal parent, $F(1, 54) = 6.36$, $p = .01$, and $F(1, 52) = 3.85$, $p = .06$, respectively. Remarkably, these effects were equally strong regardless of whether participants had been asked to write about positive or negative interactions with their parents, suggesting that long-term, obligatory social relationships may exert a much stronger hold on attitudes than more transitory or optional relationships in which similar valence manipulations moderate shared reality effects (e.g., Sinclair et al., 2005).

Figure 1: Effects of Parental Priming on Participants' General and Economic System Justification Scores
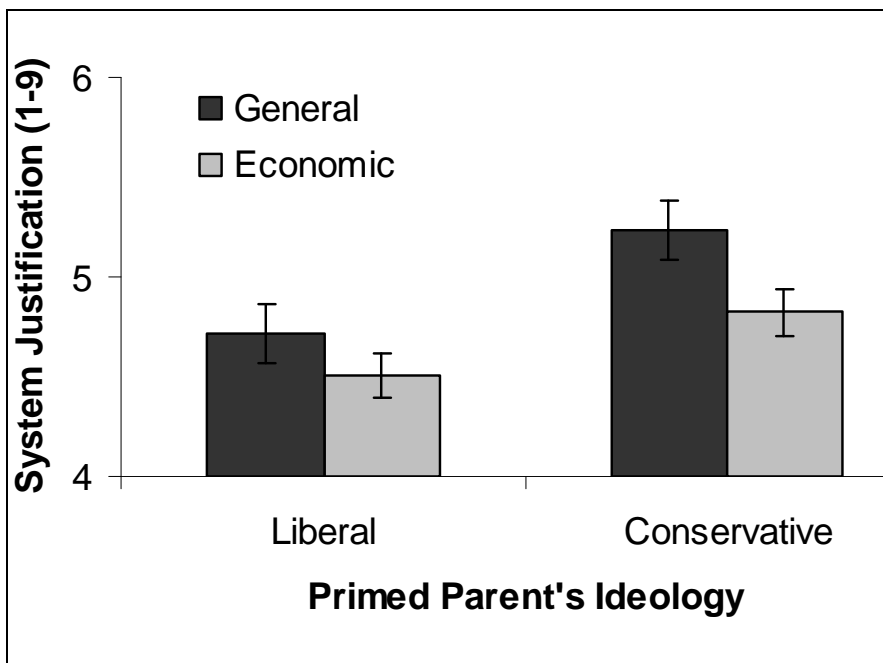
Thus, above and beyond participants' own ideological preferences for supporting vs. criticizing the societal status quo, their opinions shifted as a function of whether they imagined interacting with a parent who was presumably more (versus less) favorable toward the social system. These results provide preliminary but striking support for the notions that (a) shared reality needs motivate short-term fluctuations in ideological convictions, and (b) political conservatism is indeed associated in many people's minds with the endorsement of more system-justifying attitudes, consistent with system justification theory (e.g., Jost et al., 2004; Jost, Nosek, & Gosling, 2008; Jost & Hunyady, 2005). In addition, results are broadly consistent with our suggestion that ideologies may provide "pre-packaged" units of shared reality. Knowing someone's political party says a great deal about a whole complex of beliefs they are likely to hold, including system justification beliefs—beliefs that may then ready to be used to create and regulate shared realities necessary to maintain the relationship.

Theory and Evidence Suggesting that Relational Motives Contribute to System-Justifying Opinions in Particular

Thus far, we have suggested that motives to attain shared reality may underlie commitment to any ideology, whether system-justifying or system-subverting. When a friend, family member, or member of a valued group endorses a given set of social or political beliefs, shared reality is facilitated by partial (if not complete) adoption of that belief system, regardless of its specific content. The results of our experimental study involving college students with one liberal and one conservative parent are consistent with the notion that relational motives can contribute to ideological shifts to the left or to the right. However, we do not know from this experiment alone whether it is easier to shift attitudes in one direction or the other. There are reasons to expect that the motivation to establish and maintain shared reality may disproportionately lead to conservative, system-justifying outcomes, much as epistemic and existential motives do (e.g., Jost et al., 2003a, 2003b, 2009a, 2009b; Jost, Fitzsimons, & Kay, 2004; Jost, Napier, et al., 2007).

Specifically, we think that shared reality motives might lead disproportionately to conservative, system-justifying outcomes because of communicative advantages associated with conservative cognitive and rhetorical styles. When a shared worldview does not already exist, certain types of ideologies may be more easily shared than others. For example, shared reality may be more easily established when a perspective is simple (vs. complex), unambiguous (vs. nuanced), and consistent (vs. dynamic). Be-

cause conservative rhetoric and ideology tends to be simpler, more consistent, and less ambiguous on average than liberal rhetoric and ideology (e.g., Jost et al. 2003a, 2003b, 2007; Tetlock, 2007), relational motives for shared reality may generally elicit relatively conservative attitudes, much as epistemic and existential motives to reduce uncertainty and threat do. There is also evidence that conservatives are more prone to conformity than are liberals or progressives (e.g., Cavazza & Mucchi-Faina, 2008; Feldman, 2003; Tarr & Lorr, 1991; Weber & Federico, 2007). For all of these reasons, future research would do well to address ideological asymmetries arising from relational (as well as epistemic and existential) motives.

Concluding Remarks

In contrast to the view of ideologies as belief structures that are stable, consistent, logically (as opposed to psychologically) coherent, and predicated on individualized perceptions of the world, ideologies may change considerably in response to the demands of both ongoing and temporary social relationships (see also Glassman & Karno, 2007; Jost, 2006, 2007). Ideological values and opinions are influenced by the individuals and groups that surround us, at least to some extent. As Thomas Merton (1979) wrote, "Often our need for others is not love at all but only the need to be sustained in our illusions, even as we sustain others in theirs" (p. 23).

We hasten to add, however, that just because ideological beliefs are motivated and subject to social influence processes, it does *not* mean that they are *necessarily* incorrect or invalid (see also Jost, 2006 for a discussion of this point). One may indeed be motivated to agree with others that the grass is green at least in part to preserve social harmony, but who would argue that the presence of relational motivation entails that the grass is not green? Nevertheless, shared reality theory implies that (a) multiple interpretations of reality may exist in different social settings or among different groups, and (b) shared versions of reality will solidify interpersonal relationships.

Encountering a truly alternative (or countercultural) worldview may be threatening to relational motives, especially at first, because it calls into question the shared, meaningful set of assumptions upon which a web of interpersonal relationships depend. The presence of an opposing worldview may, therefore, lead people to become extremely defensive about their ideologies; at that moment, they are protecting not only their own beliefs but also the integrity of the shared reality on which their valued relationships are based. This fact may help to explain the fierceness with which individuals and groups strive to avoid, repel, and even eradicate those who endorse

competing ideological convictions (e.g., Bar-Tal, 1998; Green, Abelson, & Garnett, 1999; Tindale, Munier, Wasserman, & Smith, 2002). Social conflicts such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the current tensions between the United States and much of the Muslim world may arise in part because of the threat that is inherent in the existence of competing worldviews and the motivation to defend and protect existing social networks relationships, and the ideologies on which those relationships are predicated. In other words, the mere existence of an alternative worldview may challenge the shared set of beliefs that constitute the very foundation of people's connections to their family, friends, and social groups.

Shared reality theory, however, may be able to explain important deviations from system justification—that is, how and why people are at least occasionally motivated to band together to fight to change the societal status quo (cf. Martorana, Galinsky, & Rao, 2005). Although questions of how and when social change occurs are enormously complicated, we would predict that people are capable of devoting themselves to rebellious causes only when they have arrived at a shared definition of reality with important others as fundamentally unjust and oppressive. Thus, the relational benefits arising from the opportunity to experience and communicate intimacy, support, and loyalty to one's fellow agitators may—at least in exceptional circumstances—outweigh the tremendous epistemic and existential costs associated with any sustained revolutionary impulse or effort.

References

Abrams, D. (1994). Social self-regulation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 20,* 473-483.

Alford, J.R., Funk, C.L., & Hibbing, J.R. (2005). Are political orientations genetically transmitted? *American Political Science Review, 99*, 153-167.

Asch, S. (1952). *Social psychology*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

Baldwin, M. W., & Holmes, J. G. (1987). Salient private audiences and awareness of the self. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 52*, 1087-1098.

Bargh, J. A., Chen, M., & Burrows, L. (1996). Automaticity of social behavior: Direct effects of trait construct and stereotype priming on action. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 71*, 230-244.

Bar-Tal, D. (1998). Societal beliefs in times of intractable conflict: The Israeli case. *International Journal of Conflict Management, 9*, 22-50.

Berelson, B. R., Lazarsfeld, P. F.& McPhee, W. N. (1954). *Voting*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Bonanno, G.A., & Jost, J.T. (2006). Conservative shift among high-exposure survivors of the September 11th terrorist attacks. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology, 28,* 311-323.

Campbell, A., Converse, P. E., Miller, W., & Stokes, D. (1960). *The American voter*. Chicago, IL: Wiley.Cesario, J., Plaks. J.E., & Higgins, E.T. (2006). Automatic social behavior as motivated preparation to interact. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 90*, 893-910.

Cavazza, N., & Mucchi-Faina, A. (2008). Me, us, or them: Who is more conformist? Perception of conformity and political orientation. *Journal of Social Psychology, 148*, 335-346.

Chartrand, T. L., & Bargh, J. A. (1999). The chameleon effect: The perception-behavior link and social interaction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 76*, 893-910.

Cohen, G. L. (2003). Party over policy: The dominating impact of group influence on political beliefs. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 85,* 808-822.

Conover, P.J., & Feldman, S. (1981). The origins and meaning of liberal/conservative self identification. *American Journal of Political Science, 25*, 617-645.

Converse P.E. (1964). The nature of belief systems in mass publics. In D.E. Apter (Ed.), *Ideology and discontent.* New York: Free Press.

Cook, T. E. (1975). The bear market in political socialization and the costs of misunderstood psychological theories. *American Political Science Review, 79,* 1079-1093.

Davis, J. L., & Rusbult, C. E. (2001). Attitude alignment in close relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 81,* 65-84.

Delli Carpini, M. X., & Keeter, S. (1996). *What Americans know about politics and why it matters*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Ditto, P. H., & Lopez, D. F. (1992). Motivated skepticism: Use of differential decision criteria for preferred and nonpreferred conclusions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 63,* 568-584.

Dunning, D. (1999). A newer look: Motivated social cognition and the schematic representation of social concepts. *Psychological Inquiry, 10*, 1-11.

Echterhoff, G., Higgins, E.T., & Levine, J.M. (2009). Shared reality: Experiencing commonality with others' inner states about the world. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 4*, 496-521.

Feldman, S. (2003). Enforcing social conformity: A theory of authoritarianism. *Political Psychology, 24*, 41-74.

Festinger, L. (1954). A theory of social comparison processes. *Human Relations, 7*, 117-140.

Fitzsimons, G. M. & Bargh, J. A. (2003). Thinking of you: Nonconscious pursuit of interpersonal goals associated with relationship partners. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84,* 148-164.

Freud, S. (1933). *New introductory lectures on psycho-analysis* (W. J. H. Sprott, Trans.). London: Hogarth Press.

Glassman, M., & Karno, D. (2007). Ideology as instrument. *American Psychologist*, forthcoming.

Green, D., Abelson, R. P., & Garnett, M. (1999). The distinctive political views of hate-crime perpetrators and white supremacists. In D. A. Prentice, & D. T. Miller (Eds.), *Cultural divides: Understanding and overcoming group conflict* (pp. 429-464). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Green, D., Palmquist, B., & Schickler, E. (2002). *Partisan hearts and minds: Political parties and the social identities of voters*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Greene, S. (1999). Understanding party identification: A social identity approach. *Political Psychology, 20*, 393-403.

Greenwald, A. G. (1980). The totalitarian ego: fabrication and revision of personal history. *American Psychologist, 35*, 603-618.

Hardin, C. D., Cheung, R. M., Magee, M. W., Noel, S., & Yoshimura, K. (in press). Interpersonal foundations of ideological thinking. In J. Hanson (Ed.), *Ideology, psychology, and law*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hardin, C. D., & Conley, T. D. (2001). A relational approach to cognition: Shared experience and relationship affirmation in social cognition. In G. B. Moskowitz (Ed.), *Cognitive social psychology: The Princeton symposium on the legacy and future of social cognition* (pp. 3-17). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Hardin, C. D., & Higgins, E. T. (1996). Shared reality: How social verification makes the subjective objective. In E. T. Higgins & R. M. Sorrentino (Eds.), *Handbook of motivation and cognition: The interpersonal context (Vol. 3)*. New York: Guilford.

Haslam, S. A., Oakes, P. J., McGarty, C., Turner, J. C., Reynolds, K. J. & Eggins, R. A. (1996). Stereotyping and social influence: The mediation of stereotype applicability and sharedness by the views of ingroup and outgroup members. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 35*, 369-397.

Henry, P. J., & Hardin, C. D. (2006). The contact hypothesis revisited: Status bias in the reduction of implicit prejudice in the United States and Lebanon. *Psychological Science, 17,* 862-868.

Hinkley, K., & Andersen, S.M. (1996). The working self-concept in transference: Significant-other activation and self-change. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *71*, 1279-1295.

Huddy, L. (2001). From social to political identity: A critical examination of social identity theory. *Political Psychology, 22*, 127-156.

Hyman, H. (1959). *Political socialization.* Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Jennings, M. K., & Niemi, R. G. (1968). The transmission of political values from parent to child. *The American Political Science Review, 62,* 169-184.

Jennings, M. K., & Niemi, R. G. (1981). *Generations and politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Jost, J.T. (2006). The end of the end of ideology. *American Psychologist*, *61*, 651-670.

Jost, J. T. (2007). Coda: After "The end of the end of ideology"—Reply to Glassman and Karno (2007) and Unger (2007). *American Psychologist*, forthcoming.

Jost, J. T. & Banaji, M. R. (1994). The role of stereotyping in system-justification and the production of false consciousness. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 33*, 1-27.

Jost, J.T., Banaji, M.R., & Nosek, B.A. (2004). A decade of system justification theory: Accumulated evidence of conscious and unconscious bolstering of the status quo. *Political Psychology, 25*, 881-919.

Jost, J.T., Federico, C.M., & Napier, J. L. (2009a). Political ideology: Its structure, functions, and elective affinities. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *60*, 307-337.

Jost, J.T., Fitzsimons, G., & Kay, A.C. (2004). The ideological animal: A system justification view. In J. Greenberg, S.L. Koole, & T. Pyszczynski (Eds.), *Handbook of experimental existential psychology* (pp. 263-282). New York: Guilford Press.

Jost, J.T., Glaser, J., Kruglanski, A.W., & Sulloway, F. (2003a). Political conservatism as motivated social cognition. *Psychological Bulletin, 129*, 339-375.

Jost, J.T., Glaser, J., Kruglanski, A.W., & Sulloway, F. (2003b). Exceptions that prove the rule: Using a theory of motivated social cognition to account for ideological incongruities and political anomalies. *Psychological Bulletin, 129*, 383-393.

Jost, J.T., & Hunyady, O. (2002). The psychology of system justification and the palliative function of ideology. *European Review of Social Psychology, 13,* 111-153.

Jost, J.T., & Hunyady, O. (2005). Antecedents and consequences of system-justifying ideologies. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 14,* 260-265.

Jost, J.T., Kay, A.C., & Thorisdottir, H. (Eds.) (2009b). *Social and psychological bases of ideology and system justification.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Jost, J.T., Napier, J.L., Thorisdottir, H., Gosling, S.D., Palfai, T.P., & Ostafin, B. (2007). Are needs to manage uncertainty and threat associated with political conservatism or ideological extremity? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 33, 989-1007.

Jost, J. T., Nosek, B., & Gosling, S. (2008). Ideology: Its resurgence in social, personality, and political psychology. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *3*, 126-136.

Jost, J.T., & Thompson, E.P. (2000). Group-based dominance and opposition to equality as independent predictors of self-esteem, ethnocentrism, and social policy attitudes among African Americans and European Americans. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 36,* 209-232.

Judd, C. M., & Krosnick, J. A. (1989). The structural bases of consistency among political attitudes: Effects of political expertise and attitude importance. In A. R. Pratkanis, S. J. Breckler, & A. G. Greenwald (Eds.), *Attitude structure and function* (pp. 99-128). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Kaiser, C. R., Dyrenforth, P. S., & Hagiwara, N. (2006). Why are attributions to discrimination interpersonally costly? A test of system- and group-justifying

motivations. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 32,* 1423-1536.

Kawakami, K., Dovidio, J.F., & Dijksterhuis, A. (2003). Effect of social category priming on personal attitudes. *Psychological Science, 14*, 315-319.

Kay, A. C., Gaucher, D., Napier, J. L., Callan, M. J., & Laurin, K. (2008). God and the

government: Testing a compensatory control mechanism for the support of

external systems. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *95*, 18-35.

Kay, A. C., Gaucher, D., Peach, J. M., Laurin, K., Friesen, J., Zanna, M.P., & Spencer, S.J. (2009). Inequality, discrimination, and the power of the status quo: Direct evidence for a motivation to see the way things are as the way they should be. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *97*, 421-434.

Kay, A.C., & Jost, J.T. (2003). Complementary justice: Effects of "poor but happy" and "poor but honest" stereotype exemplars on system justification and implicit activation of the justice motive. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 85,* 823-837.

Kay, A.C., Jost, J.T., & Young, S. (2005). Victim derogation and victim enhancement as alternate routes to system justification. *Psychological Science, 16,* 240-246.

Kitt, A.S., & Gleicher, D.B. (1950). Determinants of voting behavior. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 14*, 393-412.

Kruglanski, A. W. (1996). Motivated social cognition: Principles of the interface. In E. T. Higgins, & A. W. Kruglanski (Eds.), *Social psychology: Handbook of basic principles*. New York: Guilford.

Kunda, Z. (1990). The case for motivated reasoning. *Psychological Bulletin, 108*, 480-498.

Ledgerwood, A., & Chaiken, S. (2007). Priming us and them: Automatic assimilation and contrast in group attitudes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 93,* 940-956.

Lord, C. G., Ross, L., & Lepper, M. R. (1979). Biased assimilation and attitude polarization: The effects of prior theories on subsequently considered evidence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *37*, 2098-2109.

Lowery, B.S., Hardin, C. D., & Sinclair, S. (2001). Social influence on automatic racial prejudice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 81*, 842-855.

Magee, M. W., & Hardin, C. D. (in press). In defense of religion: Shared reality moderates the unconscious threat of evolution. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*.

Martorana, P.V., Galinsky, A.D., & Rao, H. (2005). From system justification to system condemnation: Antecedents of attempts to change power hierarchies. *Research on Managing Groups and Teams, 7*, 285-315.

Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self, and society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Merton, R. K. (1957). Continuities in the theory of reference groups and social structure. In R. K. Merton (Ed.), *Social theory and social structure* (2nd ed., pp. 281-386). New York: Free Press.

Merton, T. (1979). *Love and living*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Newcomb, T. M. (1943). *Personality and social change.* New York: Dryden.

Niemi, R. G., & Jennings, M. K. (1991). Issues and inheritance in the formation of party identification. *American Journal of Political Science, 35,* 970-988.

Nisbett, R., & Ross, L. (1980). *Human inference: Strategies and shortcomings of social judgment.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Pomerantz, E. M., Chaiken, S. & Tordesillas, R. S. (1995). Attitude strength and resistance processes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 69,* 408-419.

Sapiro, V. (2004). Not your parents' political socialization: Introduction for a new generation. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *7*, 1-23.

Sears, D. O. (1975). Political socialization. In F. Greenstein & N. Polsby (Eds.), *Handbook of political science* (Vol. II, pp. 93-153). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Sears, D. O., & Levy, S. (2003). Childhood and adult political development. In D.O. Sears, L. Huddy, & R. Jervis (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of political psychology* (pp. 60-109). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.Sherif, M. (1936). *The psychology of social norms*. New York: Harper & Row.

Sinclair, S., Dunn, E.W., & Lowery, B. (2005a). The influence of parental racial attitudes on children's automatic racial prejudice. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 41*, 283-289.

Sinclair, S., Huntsinger, J., Skorinko, J., & Hardin, C. D. (2005b). Social tuning of the self: Consequences for the self-evaluations of stereotype targets. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 89,* 160-175.

Sinclair, S., Lowery, B.S., Hardin, C.D., & Colangelo, A. (2005c). Social tuning of automatic racial attitudes: The role of affiliative orientation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 89*, 583-592

Stangor, C., Sechrist, G.B., & Jost, J.T. (2001). Changing racial beliefs by providing consensus information. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *27*, 486-496.

Stillman, J.G. Guthrie, G.M., & Becker, S.W. (1960). Determinants of political party preference. *Journal of Social Psychology, 51*, 165-171.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33-47). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Tarr, H., & Lorr, M. (1991). A comparison of right-wing authoritarianism, conformity, and conservatism. *Personality and Individual Differences, 12*, 307-311.

Tedin, K. L. (1974). The influence of parents on the political attitudes of adolescents. *American Political Science Review, 68,* 1579-1592.

Tetlock, P. E. (2007). Psychology and politics: The challenges of integrating levels of analysis in social science. In A.W. Kruglanski & E.T. Higgins (Eds.), *Social psychology: Handbook of basic principles* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford.

Thorisdottir, H., Jost, J.T., Liviatan, I., & Shrout, P. (2007). Psychological needs and values underlying left-right political orientation: Cross-national evidence from Eastern and Western Europe. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, forthcoming.

Tindale, R.S., Munier, C., Wasserman, M., & Smith, C. M. (2002). Group processes and the holocaust. In L. S. Newman & R. Erber (Eds.), *Understanding genocide: The social psychology of the holocaust* (pp. 143-161). New York: Oxford University Press.

Turner, J.C. (1991). *Social influence.* Buckingham, England: Open University Press.

Ullrich, J. & Cohrs, J. C. (2007). Terrorism salience increases system justification: Experimental evidence. *Social Justice Research, 20*, 117-139.

Weber, C., & Federico, C. M. (2007). Interpersonal attachment and patterns of ideological belief. *Political Psychology, 28,* 389-416.

Zaller, J. (1992). *The nature and origins of mass opinion.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

John T. Jost es profesor asociado de Psicología Social en la Universidad de Nueva York desde 2003. Anteriormente perteneció a la Universidad de Stanford y fue profesor visitante en la Universidad de Bolonia (Italia). La teoría de Justificación del Sistema es un tema central de su investigación que la analiza en sus aplicaciones a distintos campos de la Psicología: las ideologías y las creencias políticas, la justicia, el prejuicio y otros muchos más. John T. El Jost se incorpora a partir de ahora al Consejo editorial de la revista española *Psicología Política.* john.jost@nyu.edu

Alison Ledgerwood es profesor asociado en el Departamento de Psicología en la Universidad de California, Davis**.** Las investigaciones se orientan al estudio del cambio de actitudes en la función del contexto social, así como en el campo de los conflictos entre los grupos. Su preocupación central es la estabilidad-flexibilidad de actitudes y las creencias políticas. aledgerwood@ucdavis.edu

Curtis D. Hardin es profesor asociado de Psicología en Brooklyn. Investiga la teoría de la realidad compartida y las bases interpersonales del pensamiento ideológico. Se interesa sobre todo por la dinámica interpersonal y su influencia en el conocimiento social, el yo, la identidad social, el prejuicio y los estereotipos. cdhardin@brooklyn. cuny.edu.

Address: John T. Jost. Department of Psychology.New York University.6 Washington Place, Room 578. New York, NY 10003-6634.