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CULTURAL INFLUENCES IN POLITICAL IDEOLOGY:
CONSERVATISM AND VERTICAL INDIVIDUALISM

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Psychology

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Cyrus Sarrafpour

May 2016

The Designated Thesis Committee Approves the Thesis Titled

CULTURAL INFLUENCES IN POLITICAL IDEOLOGY:
CONSERVATISM AND VERTICAL INDIVIDUALISM

by

Cyrus Sarrafpour

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2016

Dr. Clifton Oyamot   Department of Psychology

Dr. Gregory J. Feist   Department of Psychology

Dr. Sean Laraway   Department of Psychology

ABSTRACT

CULTURAL INFLUENCES IN POLITICAL IDEOLOGY:
CONSERVATISM AND VERTICAL INDIVIDUALISM

by Cyrus Sarrafpour

After an extensive literature review on authoritarianism and right-wing ideology,

Jost, Kruglanski, Glaser, and Sulloway (2003) developed a model of conservatism as

motivated social cognition. The model asserts that feelings of uncertainty, fear, and

threat stimulate existential, epistemic, and ideological social-cognitive motives, which in

turn lead to political conservatism in the forms of resistance to change and endorsement

of inequality. The model, however, generally bypassed the notion that situational factors,

such as cultural values, might also be influential in the manifestation and shaping of

conservative ideologies. This study included situational factors such as the role of a

hierarchical cultural dimension (Vertical Individualism) on conservative beliefs in the

forms of resistance to change and endorsement of inequality. A battery of surveys was

administered to assess the relationship between culture and conservatism. The surveys

were administered to an American university sample (N=157, 56 males and 101

females) as well as to general population samples from the USA (N=299, 140 males and

159 females) and Sweden (N=164, 73 males and 91 females) for cross-cultural

comparisons. Results indicated that Vertical Individualism (VI) is indeed associated with

conservatism and that this association holds cross-culturally. A multiple regression

analysis demonstrated that VI is an appropriate addition to Jost et al.'s (2003) model of

conservatism with respect to endorsement of inequality, but not for resistance to change.

Theoretical and applied results and implications are discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to my graduate advisor, Dr. Oyamot for his help throughout this project, as well as my research mentors Dr. Feist and Dr. Laraway who has provided me with support and encouragement throughout my time at San José State University. Your time, effort, guidance and assistance throughout my time at the University have been invaluable and is greatly appreciated.

I would also like to extend my gratitude and appreciation to the College of Social Sciences, which provided funding through its research grant resulting in the completion of this project. Lastly I would like to thank the thesis reviewers and to the faculty of the department of psychology and graduate office for their work which has resulted in the accomplishments and achievements of the students.

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Introduction

Psychologists have been investigating the different psychological tendencies and motives that underlie the political right and left for over half a century. Singling out and studying conservatism as one type of sociopolitical ideology first began with a landmark study of fascist-like personality and authoritarianism by Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford (1950). Since then, the study of right-wing ideology has predominantly involved examining individual differences with respect to specific ideological beliefs (e.g., resistance to change, dogmatism, and Right-Wing Authoritarianism).

More recently, a relatively comprehensive model of conservatism, proposed by Jost, Glaser, Krusglanski, and Sulloway (2003), went further than just focusing on individual differences. The authors suggested that focusing solely on personality differences is a mistake because people adopt "conservative ideologies in an effort to satisfy various social-cognitive motives" (p. 339). Consequently, after reviewing the voluminous literature and comparing differences between cognitive styles and motivational needs across political ideologies, Jost et al. developed an integrative model of political conservatism as motivated social cognition. In their model (Figure 1), environmental stimuli such as feelings of fear, threat, and uncertainty contribute to social cognitive motives, resulting in political conservatism in the forms of resistance to change and endorsement of inequality. The social-cognitive motives in the model involve three domains. The first includes epistemic motives, including dogmatism, intolerance of ambiguity, uncertainty avoidance, need for order, structure, and closure, whereby beliefs

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and information are reached through a process of motivated search for knowledge to make sense of the world. The second domain comprises of existential motives, such as self-esteem, loss prevention, and terror management, in which people develop to cope with existing crises that are inherent in the human experience. Third are ideological motives, including rationalization of self-interest, group-based dominance, and system justification, where sociopolitical theories are used to focus on the societal system as a whole as well as the psychological and ideological functions that a conservative orientation might fulfill.
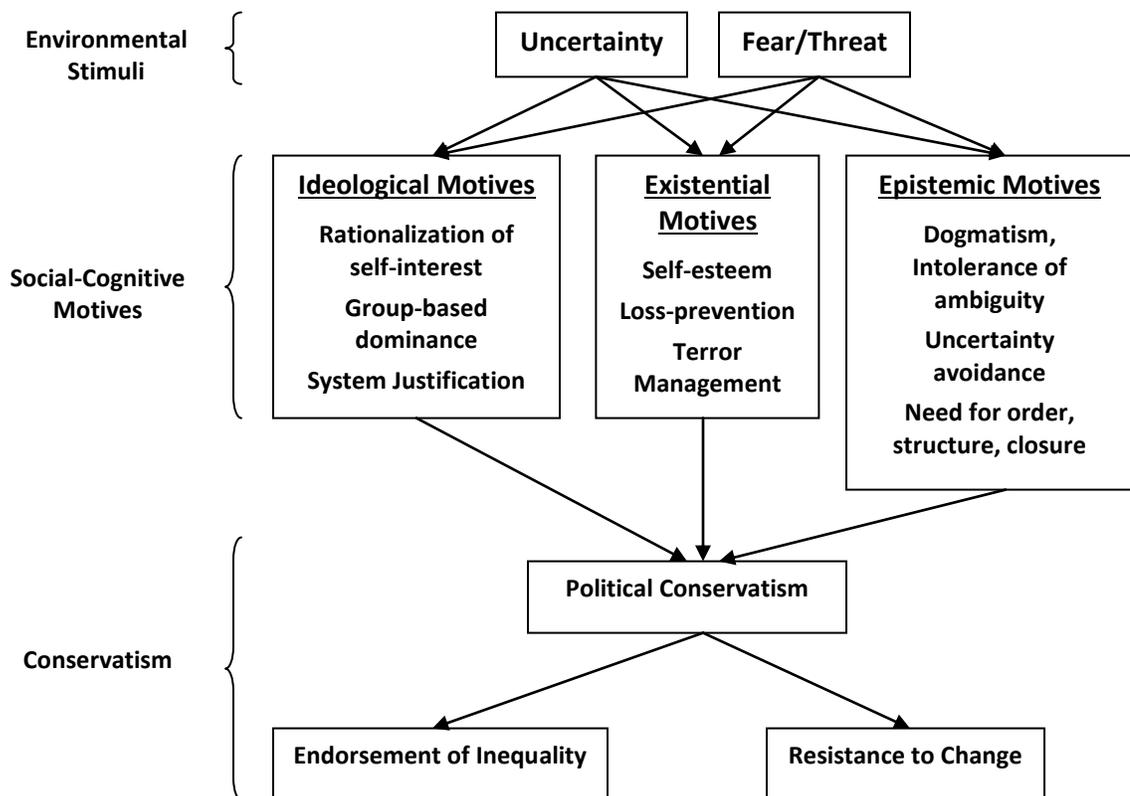
Figure 1. Social-Cognitive Motives of Conservatism.

Although the model proposed by Jost et al. (2003) is sophisticated and relatively comprehensive, their model neglected cultural aspects of political ideology, and the influence of cultural values and societal norms was not given as much weight as potential ideological social-cognitive motives (e.g., cultural acceptance of group-based dominance.) Cultural values with respect to political ideology can be investigated by examining aspects of social structures favored by a collective, such as the endorsement or opposition of a social hierarchy in terms of wealth, social class, status or power. These types of attributes of societal hierarchy, and consequent power differentiations, can be perceived as being more or less acceptable based on corresponding cultural values. The realization of the general approval or disapproval of such hierarchical power-differentiations can lead to the development of a deeper and better understanding of right-wing political movements, such as approval for fascist-like legislature, public support for the restriction of individual freedom by authorities, or public support of withholding government assistance to those in need (e.g., universal healthcare, welfare programs, economic safety-nets), as will be discussed in upcoming chapters.

The present study investigated the relationship between cultural values of how a society should be structured (e.g., social hierarchy or social equality), and political ideology. I assessed the relationship between ideological conservative components and acceptance of social hierarchies, and propose the inclusion of Vertical Individualism, a type of cultural value, into Jost et al.'s (2003) model of conservatism as part of ideological social-cognitive motives.

Cultural Dimensions

The most studied cultural dimensions in psychology are collectivism and individualism (Brewer & Chen, 2007). These cultural dimensions pertain to a person's subjective perception of his or her relationship with the entire collective, as well as with the other individuals in that respective collective (Brewer & Chen). In cultures that tend to be more collectivistic, individuals have a self-perception of being co-dependent with others in their environment, and socio-cultural beliefs and collective interests are of high personal value as they are considered to be more important than the individual's interest. In contrast, people in cultures that are more individualistic tend to view themselves as being autonomous from others, hence they have a higher regard for individual achievement and personal freedom with rights separate from, and at times above, the one of the collective.

However, due to the constructs of individualism and collectivism being widely criticized for their ambiguous definitions and lack of conceptual clarity (Tsui et al., 2007), researchers have dissected these constructs further into vertical and horizontal dimensions (Triandis, 1995). The vertical dimension of a culture reflects beliefs that view the self differently from other selves in a collective, and thus involve an accepting attitude of a social hierarchy or order based on social status and class. In contrast, a horizontal dimension corresponds to a belief and value system of equality between individuals in a collective, where individuals in a society are and *should* be of equal value. The horizontal dimension has less of an acceptance and support for a society comprised of social class and hierarchy. Taken together, four distinct dimensions of culture can be

identified: Horizontal Individualism (HI), Vertical Individualism (VI), Horizontal Collectivism (HC), and Vertical Collectivism (VC).

Triandis and Gelfand (1998) summarized and discussed the theoretical and empirical support for the components of each of these dimensions. They stated that people high on the HI dimension want to be distinct and unique from other groups and fellow group members. HI people are very self-reliant, trend towards doing things their own way, and are likely to say "I want to do my own thing," but do not have a particular interest in attaining high-status or becoming distinguished by the group. In contrast, people high on the VI dimension tend to strive for social status and to be able to distinguish themselves from the rest of the collective by competing with other individuals in the same group. People high on the HC dimension emphasize mutual objectives with others, sociability, and interdependence, but they are reluctant to submit to authority. They also see themselves as being similar to others in their respective collective. For people high on VC, the central theme of self-concept revolves around the importance of the collective; individuals in this dimension highly value the integrity of their respective society. For instance, they are willing to sacrifice individual personal goals for the objective of their society while supporting competition of their respective collective with external ones. Individuals in this dimension tend to comply and submit to demands from authority even if what is asked of them is considered "extremely distasteful" (Triandis & Gelfand, p. 119).

In theory, cultural dimensions are a suitable addition to the social-cognitive motives that are composed of a cluster of situational and social values. Epistemic and

existential motivational theories focus on the individual, and perceive the manifestation of conservative behavior and attitudes as a result of these cognitive-motivations. In contrast, ideological motives focus on sociopolitical systems and how these result in ideological functions that conservatism might satisfy. Hence, cultural values are suitable in the ideological sphere of conservatism because they are comprised of socially learned values that influence sociopolitical ideologies.

Conservatism – Definition, Socioeconomic Inequality and Resistance to Change

In defining conservatism, Neilson proposed that conservatism is "the disposition and tendency to preserve what is established; opposition to change" (Neilson, 1958, p. 568, cited in Jost et al. 2003). In a similar vein, Morris claimed that conservatism is the "disposition in politics to maintain the existing order" (Morris, 1976, p. 312). Others have defined conservatism as "an attitude of opposition to disruptive change in the social, economic, legal, religious, political, or cultural order" (Rossiter, 1968, p. 291, cited in Jost et al. 2003). Consistent with these definitions, research on conservative ideology has found that the key component for self-definition of conservatives and liberals concern the resistance to, rather than acceptance of, change (Conover & Feldman, 1981).

Jost et al. (2003) reviewed a set of changing *peripheral*, or secondary, associations of conservatism. They summarized that conservatism, as a historical ideological belief system, has expressed many things, including "the desire for order and stability, preference for gradual rather than revolutionary change (if any), adherence to preexisting social norms, idealization of authority figures, punishment of deviants, and endorsement of social and economic inequality" (Jost et al., pg. 343). For instance, after

studying the left and right wings of traditional political spectrums, Giddens (1998) stated that a major condition that consistently reappears when trying to distinguish the right from the left concerns attitudes and beliefs towards equality. Left-wing societies tend towards equality, whereas right-wing societies tend toward hierarchy (p. 40).

Research linking resistance to change and endorsement of inequality aligns with the tenets of a vertical individualistic cultural dimension. In the next chapter I discuss how a vertical cultural orientation favors a hierarchical societal structure, consequently endorsing the status-quo socioeconomic inequality while also expressing reluctance towards changing it into a more egalitarian one. Therefore, a high vertical cultural orientation expresses reluctance to changing an already unequal socioeconomic societal structure.

Conservatism and Vertical Individualism

In order to understand how culture and ideology affect each other, we can examine their related and co-varying components. For instance, a study conducted by Sidanius, Pratto, and Bobo (1996) showed that individuals who score high on conservatism, compared to those who score low, tend to be against affirmative action in America. In response to such findings, Zdaniuk and Bobocel (2011) examined beliefs concerning the distaste and negative attitudes towards government-run social interventions, such as affirmative action, with respect to one's self-concept and world-view. They found that those who expressed negative attitudes and disapproval of government programs aimed at assisting the public (e.g., Affirmative action) tend to score higher on measures of individualism. Moreover, those scoring high on

individualism were shown to endorse principles of micro-justice, which affirmative action is violating by assisting a minority (out-group), and oppose principles of macro-justice, which affirmative action is promoting. Findings such as these theoretically align with the vertical-individualistic cultural dimensions in that individuals have to compete with each other; giving a certain group any type of advantage that is not given to the rest of the collective as a way for them to rise in the social hierarchy is "cheating" and unfavorable.

The effects of this pro-hierarchical world-view can further be detected amongst studies in political psychology. For instance, Castelli and Carraro (2010) examined the role of cognitive processes with respect to attitude formation amongst a variety of political ideologies. They showed that compared to liberals, conservatives tend to characterize physiological attributes to negative stimuli amongst people, such as skin color or ethnicity, and also consider themselves to be higher up on a "moral hierarchy." Along the same lines, a study by Shook and Fazio (2009) demonstrated that conservatives tend to display significantly more avoidant strategies than liberals while exploring the environment, which lead them to stronger learning asymmetries and favoring the learning of negative over positive stimuli. What these types of research have in common is that they both not only indicate that negative information automatically grabs the attention of more conservative individuals, but also that they form more negative attitudes toward social minorities while stereotyping based on negative arbitrary information. This further indicates a tendency of highly conservative individuals to categorize or "classify" people

into lower stages of social hierarchy, especially marginalized groups such as immigrants, homosexuals, minorities, or other non-traditional social groups.

Further indications suggesting that conservatism is associated with a vertical-individualistic cultural dimension can be seen with respect to beliefs about ideal government spending. For instance Skitka and Tetlock (1993) conducted a study on conservative political ideology with respect to public assistance in forms of government funding, and showed that highly conservative individuals tend to blame poverty on self-indulgence, lack of moral standards, and intelligence. Those scoring low on conservatism perceive the poor as being victims of unjust social practices and structures. Skitka & Tetlock's study also showed that low scoring conservatives tend to have attitudes that favor applicants of public assistance programs. However, those scoring high on conservatism are more motivated to withhold assistance from those who are believed to have created their own need for assistance, and more concerned about preventing "free-riders" from taking advantage of the system.

In general, individuals with less conservative ideologies (e.g., left-wing liberals) favor increased spending on social programs that assist the poor or those in need, whereas conservatives tend to favor the opposite (Skitka & Tetlock, 1993). This aligns with the vertical cultural orientation in that high-scoring conservatives are in favor of an unequal socioeconomic status-quo and more reluctant to changing it, hence being more or less supportive of a societal hierarchy. Low-scoring conservatives, however, have more egalitarian attitudes towards wealth distribution.

Cross-cultural research in political psychology has also shown that horizontal and vertical dimensions of culture co-vary with respect to milieu, culture, and culture-induced beliefs about "ideal societies." For instance, Fiske (1992) and Rokeach (1973) examined characteristics pertaining to VI, CI, HC, and HC across nations and cultures, and found patterns of cultural and political attributes pertaining to the concept of the self and world-view associated with the corresponding dominant cultural dimension. A sample of their findings can be seen in Table 1 (adapted from Triandis, 1996).

Table 1.

Relation of Horizontal and Vertical Individualism and Collectivism to Other Typologies

Dimension	Collectivism	Individualism
Vertical Self		
Fiske (1992)	Self different from others	Self different from others
	Communal sharing	Market pricing
	Authority ranking	Authority ranking
Rokeach (1973)	Low freedom	High freedom
	Low equality	Low equality
	Communism (e.g., China)	Market democracy (e.g., France)
Horizontal Self		
Fiske (1992)	Self same as other	Self same as others
	Communal sharing	Market pricing
	Equality matching	Equality matching
Rokeach (1973)	Low freedom	High freedom
	High equality	High equality
	Communal living (e.g., kibbutz)	Democratic socialism (e.g., Sweden)

Objective

Taking ecological and individual difference factors influencing political ideologies into consideration, I hypothesized that an influential feature missing from the Jost et al.'s (2003) model of conservatism is the acceptance or dismissal of a hierarchical (vertical) based social structure. Specifically, I expected that a vertical individualistic cultural dimension would be a suitable addition to the ideological motives portion of Jost et al.'s model. Discussing the model, Matthews et al. (2009) summarized the ideological motives as emphasizing "the extent to which maintenance of a certain social system is important for the individual's sense of security, and [that] they are primarily indexed by the constructs of social dominance orientation and system justification" (p. 922). Along the same lines, I am attempting to demonstrate that cultural dimensions in conjunction with Social Dominance Orientation and system justification can substantially account for the variance in conservatism, as assessed by resistance to change and endorsement of inequality.

Furthermore, in order to enforce the construct validity of Vertical Individualism and investigate if it indeed is culturally-dependent, samples from Sweden and the United States were compared. An economically class-based society should in theory score higher on Vertical Individualism (U.S) than a more egalitarian one where income inequality is substantially less (Sweden). Higher scores on endorsement of inequality and reluctance for changing the unequal status-quo societal system were also predicted. I tested these hypotheses by comparing how a more egalitarian oriented, social-democratic, society (Sweden) scored on Vertical Individualism and components of conservatism

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compared to a more socioeconomically hierarchical one (USA) and how they differ on Social Dominance Orientation, System Justification, and reluctance to social change.

Social Dominance Orientation

Social dominance theory takes societal and evolutionary factors into consideration as elements of hierarchy promoting social orientations. This theory suggests that societies attempt to reduce group conflict by developing ideological belief systems that validate the domination of some social groups over others (Pratto et al., 1994). This is done through the proclamation of several "legitimizing myths." The first is "paternalistic myths," which proclaim that certain groups need to be above others in order to take care and lead other subordinate groups who might be unable to take care of themselves. The second is "reciprocal myths," which claim that a relationship between the dominant and subordinate groups exists and works in symbiosis with each other, and that these two groups complement each other in a society. Third are the "sacred myths," which assert that the dominant position of certain groups that are high up in the hierarchy, as well as subordinate groups that are low in it, is due to the will of God or some other divine power (Sidanius, 1993, pp. 207 – 209). These ideological devices are intrinsically conservative, as they assert an ideology that restricts qualitative social change while striving to preserve pre-existing hierarchies of wealth, status, and power (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Social dominance theory emphasizes that beliefs and attitudes concerning social dominance are mutually determined by socialization and biology, and that significant individual differences among people exist with respect to Social Dominance Orientation (Pratto et al.). Furthermore, SDO is not only associated with seeking to sustain

hierarchical order, but it has also been shown that individuals high in the construct wish to increase the degree of group dominance and social hierarchy, as it is an appealing ideological goal when one belongs to a high-status group (Altemeyer, 1998; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

The instrument used to assess SDO is composed of two subscales encompassing the opposition and reluctance to egalitarianism, social equality and desire for group-based dominance (Jost & Thompson, 2000). In reviewing the literature on SDO and conventional measures of economic and political conservatism, Jost et al. (2003) found that the average correlation between them is about .30. SDO has also been shown to correlate reliably with nationalism, anti-Black racism, sexism, Right-Wing Authoritarianism, the belief in a just and fair world, and identification with the Republican Party in the United States (Altemeyer, 1998; Pratto et al., 1994). The aforementioned findings suggest that SDO is a valuable and practical measure to assess hierarchical based socio-cultural beliefs, and should in theory be associated with vertical-individualism.

System Justification

Many personality theories pertaining to right-wing ideology assert ego-justifying or ego-defensive aspects of conservatism, especially theories of dogmatism, anxiety reduction, and authoritarianism. That is, the need and satisfaction individuals derive from forecasting situations, security, and obedience can explain their attraction to right-wing ideological attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Altemeyer, 1981). Even though motives of ego-justification constitute an important part of the fostering of right-wing ideology,

group-justifying and system-justifying motives are also satisfied in a proficient manner by conservative ideologies (Jost & Banaji, 1994). For instance, social dominance theory, discussed above, asserts that the manifestations of conservative legitimizing myths are attempts of group-justification in order to vindicate the interest and objectives of individuals in high-status and dominant groups (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

System justification theory concerns the tendency of individual's motivation to perpetuate inequality and preserve the status quo, while focusing on his or her cognitive thought patterns leading to the subscription of such ideological beliefs (Jost & Banaji, 1994). A key objective of system justification theory is to understand why and in what manner individuals rationalize the present social system, particularly when their endorsement of it appears to be in their own disadvantage, and in conflict with motives to enhance self-esteem or enhance group standing (Jost & Banaji, 1994).

The theory is derived from numerous existing theories, such as Marxist, feminist, and sociological theories of legitimizing the status quo to justify the acceptance of right wing ideologies and practices (Jost, 1995). Perhaps the most influential theories responsible for the drafting of system justification are cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957, cited in Jost et al. 2003) and just world theory (Lerner, 1980, cited in Jost et al. 2003), which assert that individuals are motivated to understand existing social systems as rational, legitimate, justifiable, inevitable, and a part of the "natural order."

Jost et al. (2003) argue that political conservatism is present across social classes because nearly everyone is motivated to justify and explain the status quo to the extent that it is perceived as just and fair. Furthermore, system justification is a good mediator

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of political conservatism and should be the strongest amongst individuals on the lower stages of the hierarchy (e.g., women and members of the working class) as they are particularly vulnerable to the system, and hence have the most to rationalize, explain, and justify. Additionally, to minimize dissonance, one would enforce allegiance to the system itself, which is a motivational key enforcement of system justification. Aside from being part of Jost et al.'s (2003) ideological model of social-cognitive motives, system justification is based on the ideology of social structures and therefore well suited to act as mediator between hierarchical and non-hierarchical societies and conservative psychological components.

Hypotheses

The prediction of the current study is that the cultural dimension of Vertical Individualism is positively correlated with the conservative ideological components, such as group-based dominance and system justification, and political conservatism, in forms of endorsement of inequality and resistance to change. Therefore my first hypothesis is that Vertical Individualism positively correlates with Social Dominance Orientation (group-based dominance), General System Justification, Economic System Justification (endorsement of inequality), and Right-Wing Authoritarianism (resistance to change).

I then progress to demonstrate that Vertical Individualism is not only capable of forecasting conservative values, but is also a suitable addition to Jost et al.'s (2003) model of ideological motives of conservatism. This leads to the second hypothesis that Vertical Individualism will predict conservatism, in the forms of endorsement of inequality and resistance to change, together with the contributions of Social Dominance

Orientation and General System Justification. Study 1 tests these first two hypotheses using American college-aged students.

Finally, the relationship between culture and ideology was tested cross-culturally in order to reinforce its construct validity as well as to illustrate that this association is indeed culture-dependent. Sweden is considered a more egalitarian oriented society (e.g., emphasis on the welfare of the community and social democracy) than the U.S., which is in theory more hierarchical (e.g., emphasis on individual freedom and free market capitalism). Consequently, my third hypothesis is that scores of conservatism and Vertical Individualism should be significantly lower for Swedish participants due to Sweden's egalitarian oriented societal structure, as compared to participant from the United States. Further, the fourth hypothesis was that Vertical Individualism, together with conservatism, should be a less important predictor of conservatism for the Swedish sample than for the American one. Study 2 tests these hypotheses by comparing representative samples of Swedish and American adults on the key variables in this study, including Vertical Individualism (VI), Social Dominance Orientation (SDO), General- (GSJ) and Economic System Justification (ESJ), and measure of resistance to change in forms of Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA).

<div align="center">

Scale Characteristics

</div>

All scales displayed high levels of reliability across samples aside from the RWA scale for the Swedish sample (Table 2). The Swedish RWA scale was also the only instrument not translated, as it already was available in Swedish. I was unable to find satisfactory reliability even after multiple forms of factor and psychometrical analysis.

<div align="center">

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Table 2.

Scale Characteristics – University (N=157), USA (N=299), Sweden (N=164)

Sample	Scale	*N* items	*M*	*SD*	Cronbach's α
University (N =157)					
General System Justification		8	3.66	.87	.71
Economic System Justification		17	4.65	.87	.76
Social Dominance Orientation		16	2.77	.90	.90
Vertical Individualism		4	4.31	1.23	.82
Authoritarianism		12	5.08	.96	.76
Conservatism		12	4.44	1.15	.86
Traditionalism		12	4.02	1.26	.84
USA (N = 299)					
General System Justification		8	4.08	1.01	.76
Economic System Justification		17	4.67	1.05	.79
Social Dominance Orientation		16	2.84	1.04	.88
Vertical Individualism		4	4.02	1.09	.67
Right-Wing Authoritarianism		15	3.85	1.00	.82
Sweden (N = 164)					
General System Justification		8	3.69	1.00	.80
Economic System Justification		17	4.11	1.55	.83
Social Dominance Orientation		16	2.44	1.07	.92
Vertical Individualism		4	3.44	1.13	.70
Right-Wing Authoritarianism		15	4.10	1.07	.27

Study 1

Participants

For the first study, 157 participants (56 male and 101 female, $M_{Age} = 23.4$) were

recruited through an introductory university psychology course and received course credit

for their participation. Ethnicity and education levels for the sample can be seen in Appendix A.

Materials and Procedure

Participants were asked to complete four different scales in the form of surveys and a brief demographic questionnaire. The four scales encompass attitudes and beliefs pertaining to the acceptance of societal inequality, resistance to societal change, system justification, and a measure assessing cultural dimensions (horizontal and vertical-individualism and collectivism). All surveys were administered online.

Group based dominance. The Social Dominance Orientation Scale (SDO), a widely used scale developed by Pratto et al. (1994), aims at measuring the preference for inequality among social groups. It has been shown that individuals who score high on SDO are more likely to pursue and support hierarchy-enhancing professional roles, whereas those that score low on the SDO scale seek hierarchy reducing professional roles. Moreover, the measure has been linked to political and social ideologies that are in favor of societal hierarchy. The SDO scale consists of 16 items, measured on a 1 to 7-point Likert scale (1 = *extremely negative* and 7 = *extremely positive*), asking respondents how they feel about certain questions, such as "we should strive to make incomes as equal as possible" or "group equality should be our ideal."

System Justification. A System Justification scale, developed by Zimmerman et al. (2013), was used to assess attitudes and beliefs about the righteousness of one's current societal structure. The scale consists of 8 items measured on a 7-point Likert type

scale, and includes items such as "In general, you find society is fair" and "Everyone does have a fair shot at wealth and happiness."

Resistance to Change. Much research, particularly in political psychology, has used Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) to measure right wing and conservative ideologies. RWA encompasses the covariation of traits, including authoritarian aggression, authoritarian submission, and conventionalism (Altemeyer, 1981). However, the RWA scale measures these traits as a combination of social values and attitudes in a unidimensional fashion. In order to create a scale that measures these traits separately of each other while maintaining strong statistical reliability, Duckitt et al. (2010) developed the Authoritarianism-Conservatism-Traditionalism Scale (ACT), which re-conceptualizes Altemeyer's RWA Scale into factorial distinct dimensions. The ACT Scale consists of 36 items across three scales based on Altemeyer's RWA Scale, but rephrased as Authoritarianism (instead of authoritarian aggression), Conservatism (for authoritarian submission), and Traditionalism (conventionalism). The items are scored on a Likert type scale ranging from –4 to +4, and reflects one's agreement or disagreement with statements such as: "Strong, tough government will <u>harm</u> not help our country" (authoritarianism), "It's great that many young people today are prepared to defy authority" (conservatism), and "The "old-fashioned ways" and "old-fashioned values" still show the best way to live" (traditionalism).

Both the RWA and the ACT scale were used, but in different studies; the ACT scale was used for the university sample, whereas the participants from the Qualtrics

panel (the US and the Swedish samples) were administered a shorter, 15-item version, of the RWA scale (Zakrisson, 2005).

Cultural Dimensions. Cultural assessment was made using Triandis and Gelfand's (1998) Horizontal and Vertical Individualism and Collectivism Scale. The scale consists of four items for each dimension, resulting in a total of 16 items, measured on a 7-point Likert type scale. Items include "I'd rather depend on myself than others" (horizontal individualism), "it is important that I do my job better than others" (vertical-individualism), "if a coworker gets a prize, I would feel proud" (horizontal collectivism), and "parents and children must stay together as much as possible (vertical collectivism).

Acceptance of Inequality. To measure ideological based tendencies of the endorsement and legitimization of economic inequality, the Economic System Justification scale was used (Jost & Thompson, 2000). The scale consists of 17 items measured on a scale ranging from 1 to 9, comprised of items such as "poor people are not essentially different than rich people" (reversely scored) or "economic positions are legitimate reflections of people's achievements."

Results

I hypothesized that ideological conservative factors, stressing acceptance of inequality and resistance to societal change, are systematically related to a cultural dimension embracing hierarchical tenets. I used a University sample ($N = 157$) to test this prediction by exploring how components of conservatism, measured by General ($M = 3.66$, $SD = .87$) and Economic ($M = 4.65$, $SD = .87$) System Justification and Social Dominance Orientation ($M = 2.77$, $SD = .90$) relate to a hierarchy oriented individualistic

cultural dimension, measured by a Vertical Individualism scale ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 1.23$).

Among the University sample, Vertical Individualism was significantly

correlated with General System Justification ($r = .286$, $p < .001$), Economic System

Justification ($r = .333$, $p < .001$), and Social Dominance Orientation ($r = .344$, $p < .001$),

but not with the Authoritarianism-Traditionalism-Conservatism scales (all p values are

two-tailed.) Hence the cultural dimension was positively correlated with the ideological

components of conservatism as well as political conservatism in forms of endorsement of

inequality, but not with resistance to change. Table 3 depicts correlations between

variables.

Table 3.

Correlations Between Vertical Individualism and Conservative Components
University Sample (N = 157)

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 VI	-						
2 GSJ	.286**	-					
3 SDO	.344**	.191*	-				
4 ESJ	.333**	.410*	.527**	-			
5 Auth	.125	.343**	.194*	.412**	-		
6 Trad	.040	.240**	.297**	.250**	.165*	-	
7 Cons	.082	.323**	.259**	.415**	.397**	.554**	-

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$ (all p values are two-tailed)
Note. VI = Vertical Individualism, GSJ = General System Justification, ESJ =
Economic System Justification, SDO: Social Dominance Orientation, Auth =
Authoritarianism, Trad =Traditionalism, Cons = Conservatism

Multiple Regression Analyses. I also predicted that Vertical Individualism

would predict endorsement of inequality (Economic System Justification) and resistance

to change (Authoritarianism-Conservatism-Traditionalism) alongside the ideological

variables of General System Justification and Social Dominance Orientation. Results

indicated that Vertical Individualism was not able to predict Economic System

Justification (Table 4), Authoritarianism (Table 5), Conservatism (Table 6), or

Traditionalism (Table 7) alongside the ideological conservative variables of General

System Justification and Social Dominance Orientation.

Table 4.

Summary of Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Endorsement of Inequality - University Sample (N = 157)

Variable	Economic System Justification		
	b	SE b	β
Constant	2.10	.29	
Vertical Individualism	.07	.05	.10
General System Justification	.30	.07	.30***
Social Dominance Orientation	.42	.07	.44***
R^2	.39		
F	31.95***		

***$p < .001$ (all p values are two-tailed)

Table 5.

Summary of Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Resistance to Change Authoritarianism (N = 157)

Variable	Authoritarianism		
	b	SE b	β
Constant	3.41	.38	
Vertical Individualism	- .01	.06	- .12
General System Justification	.36	.09	.32***
Social Dominance Orientation	.15	.09	.14
R^2	.16		
F	7.908***		

***$p < .001$ (all p values are two-tailed)

Table 6.

Summary of Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Resistance to Change Conservatism (N = 157)

Variable	Conservatism		
	b	SE b	β
Constant	2.48	.45	
Vertical Individualism	- .08	.08	- .08
General System Justification	.40	.10	.30***
Social Dominance Orientation	.29	.10	.23**
R^2	.15		
F	8.973***		

** $p < .01$,   *** $p < .001$ (all p values are two-tailed)

Table 7.

Summary of Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Resistance to Change Traditionalism (N = 157)

Variable	Traditionalism		
	b	SE b	β
Constant	2.25	.50	
Vertical Individualism	- .13	.08	- .13
General System Justification	.32	.16	.22**
Social Dominance Orientation	.42	.11	.30***
R^2	.14		
F	8.037***		

** $p < .01$,   *** $p < .001$ (all p values are two-tailed)

Discussion of Results

The premise of this study revolves around whether or not a cultural dimension embracing hierarchical tenets is present, can be measured, and is associated with conservative values. I tested this by assessing how Vertical Individualism (VI), a cultural dimension emphasizing status and hierarchical social values, relate to constructs that has been shown to predict conservatism, such as Social Dominance Orientation, General and

Economic System Justification. Within the University sample, there was a significant positive correlation between VI and endorsement of inequality; however, no significant correlation was found between VI and resistance to change.

Building on the assertion that a VI cultural dimension is associated to conservatism, I hypothesized that it also has the potential of predicting the construct in terms of endorsement of inequality and resistance to social change together with the ideological variables. Using a multiple regression analyses, I was not able to support this prediction as VI did not contribute significantly to the variance of conservatism in terms of endorsement of inequality or resistance to change.

The notion that VI does not correlate with or predict resistance to change and endorsement of inequality may be possibly attributed to the relatively young age of the sample ($M_{Age} = 23.4$). People tend to become more strongly rooted in their political and cultural values with higher age, as well as more fiscally and socially conservative Altemeyer, 1996; Hetherington & Weiler, 2009). For instance, the mean age for those identifying with right-wing political groups (e.g., the Republican- and Tea party) tend to be higher than for the relatively more left-leaning ones (e.g., the Democratic and Green party.) Younger people tend to be less religious and oppose military interventions while favoring pro-LGBT legislation and novel social government programs (Hetherington & Weiler). Further, when reviewing the literature on the demographics of high-scoring RWA's, Altemeyer (1996) found that they tend to be older than those scoring low, and proposed that this could be due to longitudinal change or cross-sectional differences. Along the same lines, the beliefs and values of this young cohort might still be evolving

and may have not yet reached a definite level that will be longitudinally internalized. Furthermore, the ACT-Scale might also have been problematic as it has not been a frequently used instrument when assessing resistance to change, whereas the Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) scale has (Jost et al., 2003; Altemeyer, 1996). Study 2 addressed these issues by using two general population samples from two distinct cultures while also replacing the ACT-Scale with a shortened RWA scale.

Study 2

In the second study, I investigated whether a difference could be found between industrialized cultures that have, at face value, historical and political systems emphasizing egalitarianism (e.g., social democracy) and those that traditionally value hierarchical free-market tendencies. In short, I predicted that a hierarchical cultural difference could be found in VI between a generally political liberal country (Sweden, less hierarchy) and a more conservative one (USA, more hierarchy).

Participants

Participant recruitment for the second study went through Qualtrics Services, a research oriented organization that recruits participants for survey based studies and grants them with points that can be redeemed for an undisclosed monetary compensation or other types of internal rewards. Participants were recruited from Sweden ($N = 164$, 73 men and 91 women, $M_{age} = 52.39$) and from the United States ($N = 299$, 140 men and 159 women, $M_{age} = 59$). The only recruitment criteria was that participants had to be older than 21 years of age. Ethnicity and educational characteristics can be seen in Appendix A.

Materials and Procedure

The same methodology and instruments from Study 1 were implemented in Study 2, with the exception of the ACT scale which was replaced with the short-RWA scale. The short-RWA scale is a 15-item instrument measuring the authoritarian spectrum and is used to assess resistance to social and societal change (Zakrisson, 2005).

Translation

All of the instruments (GSJ, SDO, and ESJ) were translated for the Swedish sample, except for the short-RWA scale, which was already available in Swedish (Zakrisson, 2005). The translation was first made by Qualtrics Translation Services, and then back translated by two native Swedish-speaking individuals. Few adjustments were made in the wording of the items after the instruments were translated back into English. A pilot study with three native Swedish-speaking participants with fluency in English, being asked to compare the Swedish to English instruments, was conducted in order to evaluate whether the items corresponded to the English versions. Aside from few minor wording adjustments, the instruments reached a satisfactory level of translation.

Results

Similar to what was found in Study 1, the samples in Study 2 showed significant positive correlations between VI and ideological and outcome variables of conservatism for both Sweden ($N = 164$, GSJ $r = .197$, $p < .01$; ESJ $r = .360$, $p < .001$; SDO $r = .238$, $p < .001$) and the United States ($N = 299$, GSJ $r = .231$, $p < .001$; ESJ $r = .367$, $p < .001$; SDO $r = .234$, $p < .001$; RWA $r = .188$, $p < .001$). However, the correlation to resistance

to change was not significant for the Swedish sample.

Table 8.

Correlations Between Cultural and Conservative Components – Sweden (N=164)

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 VI	-					
2 GSJ	.197*	-				
3 SDO	.238**	.026	-			
4 ESJ	.360**	.106	.320	-		
5 RWA-Resistance	.027	.731**	.029	.041	-	
6 RWA	.266**	.643**	.156*	.322**	.722**	-

* *p* < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001 (all *p* values are two-tailed)

Note. VI = Vertical Individualism, GSJ = General System Justification, ESJ = Economic System Justification, SDO: Social Dominance Orientation, RWA-Resistance = Right-Wing Authoritarianism-Resistance, RWA = Right-Wing Authoritarianism

The Swedish RWA measure displayed problematic issues as it lacked a satisfactory level of internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .27). Due to the RWA scale being flawed and unsatisfactory, I conducted a factor analysis that only used two items that would give adequate internal reliability (alpha = .70), resulting in a more accurate construct reflecting resistance to social change. The items included were "our country needs free thinkers who will have the courage to stand up against traditional ways, even if this upsets many people" and "our society would be better off if we showed tolerance and understanding for untraditional values and opinions." Correlations between VI and conservative components for the Swedish and American sample can be seen in Table 8 and Table 9 respectively.

Table 9.

Correlations Between Cultural and Conservative Components – USA (N = 299)

Measure	1	2	3	4	5
1 Vertical Individualism	-				
2 General System Justification	.231**	-			
3 Social Dominance Orientation	.234**	.152**	-		
4 Economic System Justification	.367**	.379**	.679**	-	
5 RWA	.188**	.273**	.315**	.411**	-

* $p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$ (all p values are two-tailed)

The third hypothesis proposed that the Swedish sample would score lower on VI and conservative components due to its more egalitarian-oriented milieu. The prediction was supported by an independent sample t-test as noteworthy significant differences were found between the two countries (Table 10), with the United States scoring higher on both conservative components (GSJ, SDO, and ESJ) and for the hierarchical cultural dimension (VI, t's $(456 – 460) > 3.90$, p's $< .001$).

Table 10.

Independent Sample t-test for USA and Sweden

	USA (N = 299)		Sweden (N = 164)					
Scale	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*	*D*
VI	4.02	1.09	3.44	1.00	5.40	460	< .0001	.53
GSJ	4.08	1.01	3.69	1.17	4.04	460	< .0001	.39
SDO	2.84	1.04	2.44	1.07	3.91	456	< .0001	.38
ESJ	4.67	1.05	4.11	1.55	4.59	456	< .0001	.38

Note. VI = Vertical Individualism, GSJ = General System Justification, ESJ = Economic System Justification, SDO: Social Dominance Orientation, RWA-Resistance = Right-Wing Authoritarianism-Resistance. All p values are two-tailed.

Multiple Regression Analyses. Multiple regression analysis was used to test if VI could be of potential inclusion in the ideological components of Jost et al.'s (2003) model of political conservatism. I tested whether General System Justification, Social Dominance Orientation, and VI could predict political conservatism through Resistance to Change and Endorsement of inequality, measured by a short modified version of RWA scale and Economic System Justification respectively. I tested this model in both the American and Swedish samples to assess whether similar or different patterns emerged.

Results from multiple regression analyses for an American general population sample ($N = 299$) indicated that the three ideological predictors explained 56% of the variance for ESJ ($R^2 = .56$, $F(3, 290)=125.22$, $p < .0001$). It was found that GSJ ($\beta = .25$, $p < .001$), SDO ($\beta = .60$, $p < .001$), and VI ($\beta = .17$, $p < .0001$) all significantly contributed to the variance and predicted endorsement of inequality (Table 11).

Table 11.

Summary of Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Endorsement of Inequality and Resistance to Change (N = 299) – American Sample

Variable	Endorsement of Inequality				Resistance to Change		
	b	*SE b*	*β*		*b*	*SE b*	*β*
Constant	1.25	.21			1.24	.36	
Vertical Individualism	.16	.04	.17***		.01	.07	.01
General System Justification	.26	.04	.25***		.11	.07	.08
Social Dominance Orientation	.61	.04	.60***		.55	.07	.44***
R^2	.56				.22		
F	125.22***				26.16***		

***$p < .0001$ (all *p* values are two-tailed)

Additionally, I conducted multiple regressions for predicting resistance to change (RWA). The analysis implied that although 22% of the variance was accounted for (R^2 = .22, F(3, 285)=26.16, p < .001), only SDO was significantly predicting resistance to change (β = .44, p < .001).

Results indicated that the three predictors accounted for 57% of the variance for the RWA-Resistance scale (R^2 = .57, F(3, 143)=61.49, p < .0001) with only GSJ (β = .-.78, p < .0001) and VI (β = .14, p < .05) being significant contributors. Results for the Endorsement of Inequality for the Swedish sample accounted for 49% of the variance (R^2 = .49, F(3, 143)=44.84, p < .0001). However, the only variables that significantly contributed to the variance were VI (β = .22, p < .001) and SDO (β = .59, p < .0001). Results for the Swedish sample are depicted in Table 12.

Table 12.

Summary of Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Endorsement of Inequality and Resistance to Change – Sweden (N = 164)

Variable	Endorsement of Inequality				Resistance to Change		
	B	*SE B*	*Beta*		*B*	*SE B*	*Beta*
Constant	.99	.46			7.26	.41	
Vertical Individualism	.31	.09	.22**		.19	.08	.14*
General System Justification	.01	.10	.01		-1.15	.09	-.78***
Social Dominance Orientation	.84	.09	.59***		.02	.08	.12
R^2	.49			.57			
F	44.84***			61.49***			

***p < .0001, **p < .001, *p < .05 (all p values are two-tailed)

Discussion of Results

The second study was built on the presumption that Vertical Individualism is systematically associated to the ideological components and outcome variables of conservatism. This was tested in the first study and reaffirmed in the second study as significant positive correlations were found between Vertical Individualism (VI) and General (GSJ) and Economic System Justification (ESJ), Social Dominance Orientation (SDO), and Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) for both the Swedish and American sample. The only exception was that after revising the RWA scale for the Swedish sample due to inadequate internal reliability, a new two-item scale was derived (RWA-Resistance) which did not correlate significantly with Vertical Individualism.

Presuming that Vertical Individualism was associated to conservatism, I tested whether this relationship held true cross-culturally and if the magnitude of conservative components were less for an egalitarian oriented individualistic culture. Using independent t-tests, I found that the Swedish sample scored significantly lower on all variables when compared to the American one (Table 10). These findings support my third hypothesis that an egalitarian society, with social-democratic principles dominating the political arena, tends to be culturally and ideologically less conservative than one where hierarchical standards are more embraced.

In order to determine the construct validity of Vertical Individualism as it relates to conservatism, the relationship had to meet two assumptions when cross-culturally examined. The first one is that if culture is indeed influencing conservatism, or vice versa, then the magnitude of the cultural dimension as well as conservative components

should differ accordingly to respective society. This was the case for this study as the Swedish sample scored less on Vertical Individualism as well as all other conservative components. Second, if the cultural dimension indeed is suitable for Jost et al.'s (2003) model of social-cognitive motives of conservatism, then Vertical Individualism should be significantly associated to conservatism regardless of culture. This was true for all samples, aside from resistance to change for the University sample in Study 1. These comparisons provide support for the notion that Vertical Individualism has the potential of being a suitable addition to the social-cognitive ideological motives for conservatism as it holds its validity cross-culturally. Nevertheless, this alone is not enough to make a conclusive claim that Vertical Individualism should be included in the model. More research, preferably comparing more than only two cultures and how they relate to other conservative components, is needed until one can make such a final assertion. Moreover, in order for Vertical Individualism to be included in the ideological components, it also needs to be able to predict the outcome variables of conservatism, which was tested in the fourth hypothesis.

Aside from being associated to conservatism, I predicted that Vertical Individualism also has the potential of predicting the outcome variables of conservatism in terms of endorsement of inequality (ESJ scale), and resistance to social change (RWA scale). Multiple regression analysis on a general population sample from both Sweden and the United States were used to test this. Results indicated that Vertical Individualism had indeed predictive power with respect to significantly forecasting endorsement of inequality for both these samples. Although the cultural dimension could predict weakly

resistance to change for the Swedish sample, it failed to do so for the American sample. What is also noteworthy is that Vertical Individualism (VI), General System Justification (GSJ), and Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) were able to predict endorsement of inequality, Economic System Justification (ESJ), significantly with the exception of GSJ for the Swedish sample; yet these failed to do so consistently predict resistance to change. Only SDO significantly accounted for the variance in the American sample but not for the Swedish as GSJ and VI were the only significant ones. These results suggest that Vertical Individualism, alongside GSJ and SDO, can predict endorsement of inequality but not resistance to change. The results also indicate that Vertical Individualism is a suitable addition to Jost et al.'s (2003) model of ideological motives of conservatism with respect to endorsement of inequality, but not for resistance to change.

General Discussion

Current and Future Research

The findings of this study do not definitively support a direct causal relationship between culture and conservatism. They do, however, support the notion that political ideology and culture are related and bound to reflect one another. The findings also heighten the construct validity of Vertical Individualism and how it is influenced by the general priorities set through policy by a respective society. Therefore, the question remains whether culture shapes policies with respect to the acceptance of inequality, or whether policies influence cultural values. It is important to answer this question in order to determine the possibility of making a culture less hierarchical by means of legislation. Although the topic is much too broad to be covered in the current study, it is worth

discussing within the frameworks of Jost et al.'s (2003) model and the potential role

cultural variables can play in predicting conservative ideology.

Jost et al.'s (2003) model of conservatism proposes that feelings of fear and threat

lead people to develop social-cognitive motives that, through their acceptance of

inequality and resistance to change, result in conservatism. These motives lead people to

believe what they believe in order to satisfy certain psychological functions, such as

minimizing the ambiguity in their world view or helping to ward off concerns and

anxieties about disorder. Most scholars generally agree that the *level* of conservatism in a

population remains, more or less, the same across time. What does change, however,

depending on circumstances, is its *effect* (Hetherington & Weiler, 2009). This effect is a

function of the perceived threat, which in turn results in measurable consequences for

preferences, behaviors, and opinions (e.g., Feldman & Stenner 1997; Stenner 2005).

Within the framework of authoritarianism, which is closely linked to

conservatism, studies have overwhelmingly shown that legislation and policy-making

tend to change in a conservative direction during times of turmoil and instability, and that

more people embrace these types of changes as the perception of threat increases (Page,

Shapiro, & Dempsey 1987; Erikson, MacKuen, & Stimson, 2002, Hetherington & Weiler,

2009). Group membership in far right-wing political groups also tends to increase during

threatening times. For instance, far-right political parties, such as the National Front in

France and the Tea Party in the U.S., tend to attract more members and votes during

tumultuous times than during peaceful and quiet ones (Mudde 2007; Hetherington &

Weiler). Of particular interest in these types of circumstances is the way the expressed

effect of fear increases collective right-wing affiliation. Future research should examine how support for these types of social movements during threatening times and circumstances affects culture by increasing right-wing affiliation and widening the embrace of hierarchical values, as shown by endorsements of inequality and segregation of social groups.

Psychological threat can manifest in many ways, including the violation of social norms by group movements or challenging the status quo by military conflicts and interventions, but perhaps the more prominent and current threat for industrialized societies is economic destabilization. In fact, studies have shown that during times of economic hardship, people embrace conservative values and figures more than during times of economic prosperity (Hetherington & Weiler, 2009). Economic hardship naturally also includes a cluster of other types of threats, such as poverty, crime, and the fear of imminent societal collapse. Scholars have shown that, on an aggregated level, economic threat leads to support for harsher prison sentences and increased police budgets (Sales, 1973), enhanced public support for media censorship, and a broader expression of ethnocentrism and racial prejudice (Doty, Peterson, & Winter, 1991). The effect of these types of threats seems to be more severe for those scoring high on authoritarianism and conservatism, who, because they tend to be more reactive and to perceive threats in their environment to be more imminent, are more likely to adhere to radical "solutions" (Hetherington & Weiler).

These effects of the perception of social and economic threat provide a theoretically fitting explanation for why the samples in this study differed. Societies

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where overall wealth is distributed in a more egalitarian manner, such as social-democratic ones represented by Sweden in this study, show lower public support for conservative values because economic threat is perceived to be less imminent. For instance, the socioeconomic safety-nets, reduction of wealth gaps, and low poverty in the Scandinavian societies might have dramatically reduced the fear of economic collapse or hardship. Sweden and its neighboring countries, which are amongst the most secular societies that are more inclined to assist the poor and encourage social government programs (e.g., free healthcare and education,) tend to be in many aspects less socially and politically conservative. These societies tend to show, at face value, a culture denouncing class-based society and social hierarchy. In this study, for instance, the Swedish sample scored significantly lower on group based dominance (SDO) and Vertical Individualism, indicating that tolerance there for a class-based, hierarchical, society is less than in the US sample. According to the Jost et al.'s (2003) model, this is due to a reduced perception of threat and a lower fear of potential turmoil.

Additionally, in comparison to the Swedish sample, the American sample scored significantly higher on General and Economic System Justification, meaning they perceived the current system and status quo to be more righteous despite its wealth and social inequalities. It might be noteworthy that currently in the United States, income inequality has reached its highest point since the 1940s, when national data collection for economic growth and income began (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006). It is also noteworthy that much research has linked SDO, GSJ, and ESJ directly to conservative ideologies and right-wing affiliations (Jost et al., 2003; Pratto et al., 1994). Scholars have

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explained this link as being partly due to "justifying" the current system so as to reduce cognitive ambiguity and anxiety and to give a simpler explanation for the status quo (see sections on SDO and System Justification.) This is an important point for future research to explore because it provides insight into how individuals can rationalize inequality, and what might lead them to accept group segregation during times of economic hardship.

Part of the reason egalitarian societies, such as the Scandinavian ones, are less vertical and conservative might be their longtime avoidance of armed national military conflicts and other violent quarrels. These types of conflicts tend to instill an effective and prolonged fear in a population (Hetherington & Weiler, 2009), for it is not only the armed conflict per se that contributes to existential threats but its byproducts as well, thus leading to conservative social-cognitive motivations for conservatism. For instance, the constant reminders that one has a mortal enemy and one's inclination to rationalize the situation (epistemic motives,) images of casualties of fellow group-members (existential motives,) and the threat to one's traditional societal status quo (ideological motives) contribute holistically to the inclination to embrace conservative and authoritarian values. Within the framework of Jost et al.'s (2003) model, because economic and mortal threats are lower in Sweden than in the US, the Swedes have developed reduced social-cognitive epistemic and existential cognitive motivations when developing conservative values. The reduction of these threats might also have led to the subscription to more tolerant political ideologies and world views, and hence explain why they scored lower on a hierarchical cultural dimension. Even though these potential theories might neatly align with theories of conservatism, future research should examine them empirically and be

attentive to how the avoidance of armed conflict affects culture with respect to receptivity to authoritarian values.

It is then perhaps fair to make the assertion that policy-making, by controlling for socioeconomic threat, has some effect on conservatism within a culture. Nevertheless, social legislation cannot control existential intimidation and fear, stemming, for instance, from terrorist attacks or military aggression, which has an imminent effect on levels of authoritarianism (Hetherington & Weiler, 2009). Hence, in the spirit of a traditional nature vs. nurture debate, future research should focus on the interaction between domestic legislation and external threat as it pertains to cultural conservatism. Perhaps this could result in a better understanding of why military conflicts increase religious practices, support for autocratic figures, and increases in ethnocentrism (Hetherington & Weiler). In order to investigate how these factors influence cultural values, future research should also focus on developing improved instruments for cultural assessments while being more attentive to cultural tolerance for untraditional values, group-based dominance, and hierarchical tenets. This would help improve the methodological aspects of studying and understanding the dynamic between collective and subjective ideology and situationism.

Implications

Conservatism is not a unidimensional psychological construct, but a cognitive thought pattern greatly shaped by fear and threat to one's individual and collective wellbeing. The level of manifested effect is a function of the perceived imminent threat in one's current milieu, resulting in psychological fear and leading to the development of

social-cognitive motivations that are expressed in a number of ways. Many times the outcome is dramatic support for legislative action, active participations in civic right-wing movements (a la the Tea-Party,) and increased support for hostile domestic and foreign policy, such as war or the death penalty (Hetherington & Weiler, 2009). No matter the outcome, the perception of collective fear and threat changes societal values and hence culture. This is precisely why conservatism, authoritarianism, and right-wing ideologies are so crucial to understand; when perception of threat reaches high existential levels, it runs the risk of being manifested in extreme forms, such as religious fundamentalism, support for autocratic figures (e.g., idolism,) or systematic racism. For instance, after the September 11 terrorist attacks, support for right-wing legislation surged resulting in increased public support for military action and defense spending, President Bush's approval rating reached its highest point, and anti-Muslim racism became more prevalent (Hetherington & Weiler).

On an aggregated level, these types of changes in beliefs and attitude reflect how fear and threat lead to alterations in societal values. Hence, assessing cultural dimensions after drastic changes in public opinions like these can help us interpret the dynamic between circumstances and right-wing ideology. This approach also has the potential for providing a better understanding of why radical ideologies take root and drastically influence cultures to become less tolerant (e.g., theocratic societies, extremist organizations, and far-right fascist movements.) Not only is conservatism associated with low socioeconomic status, but developing societies that have indulged in intense armed conflict seem to become more autocratic as well (Altemeyer, 1996: Hetherington

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& Weiler, 2009). Even though previous studies have made the assumptions that war and poverty lead to increased conservative values on an individual level, most have bypassed the notion that these types of threats result in *social values* that amplify the group support for right-wing, radical, ideologies (e.g., Jost et al. 2003). That is, the threats result in creating a cultural milieu for fostering the acceptance for social and economic inequality and resistance to change. Culture serves as a reflection of these attitudes, can potentially act as a mediator for group thinking, and quantifying and assessing it can give insight into how occurrences influence conservatism on a collective scale, such as the shift in cultural values after the September 11th terrorist acts.

These are a few of the reasons why culture and conservatism influence one another and why considering including circumstantial variables is of value to optimize Jost et al.'s (2003) model of conservatism. Taking cultural values into account can also lead to two valuable types of directions in research that leads to a better understanding of how environment and ideology affect each other. First, assessing cultural dimensions and conservatism allows us to see how societies shift to be more or less tolerant after fear inducing incidents, including terrorism, fascistic legislation, or military conflict. Second, it allows us to compare and contrast different cultures. This is particularly valuable as it not only allows us to see how different societies react to similar threats, but also how their respective social values might change (one potential approach might be to cross-examine Jost et al.'s (2003) model between diverse societies and using cultural values acting as mediators.) Although it might not be reasonable to draw conclusions by

comparing cultures at face value due to their complexity, this methodology has potential

to provide insight into how certain political systems affect cultural values.

Limitations

There are a few caveats to this study that should be taken into account when

considering the results. The first are the small sample sizes used for the University

sample ($N = 157$), general population samples from the US ($N = 299$) and Sweden ($N =$

164), which may be underpowered and not reveal true representative results of the

population. These small sample sizes, together with the fact that Qualtrics services

recruited the participants from their panel with undisclosed locations, might also have

led to a skewed distribution of cultural values. For instance, there is a chance that more

people may have been recruited from a traditionally conservative area (e.g. the American

south,) than a generally more liberal one (e.g., American northwest,) or vice versa

(Hetherington & Weiler, 2009). Future research should focus on larger sample sizes and

be aware of the sub-cultures of right-wing ideologies pertaining to various geographical

regions that can potentially create inaccurate representations of populations.

Another important limitation, and perhaps the most noteworthy one, was the

Swedish short-RWA scale, which reflects reluctance to social change. Although the scale

claimed to have a Cronbach's alpha of around .72 to .80 across the three samples

(Zakrisson, 2005), reaching satisfactory levels of reliability was problematic. The scale

for the Swedish sample only provided an alpha of .27, which was far below the

acceptance level. Even after conducting multiple factor analyses, the short-RWA still

failed to reach acceptable levels of reliability. In order to use the data obtained from the

scale to predict resistance to change using multiple regressions, only two items were used which provided a reliability of .70 for Cronbach's alpha. This may have confounded the data and the outcomes for resistance to change in the Swedish sample. Future researchers should focus on using a scale assessing resistance to change with a good track record for internal reliability across diverse cultures and languages.

The risk of cultural differences in the interpretation of semantics, constructs, and concepts is also a potential limitation. Although all instruments, aside from the short-RWA, were translated back and forth multiple times, their conceptual interpretation of certain terminologies remains a concern. For example, the perception and interpretation of poverty might be different in an American society than in a Swedish one. Even though all scales, aside from the short-RWA, had high reliabilities, this issue is still an important factor to consider when interpreting the results and something to keep in mind for future directions.

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APPENDIX A

Ethnicity and Education Characteristics for all Samples

	Sample		
	University	U.S	Sweden
Ethnicity			
Caucasian	31	252	
African American	8	14	
Hispanic	38	5	
Asian	52	5	
Native American	1	2	
Pacific Islander	9		
Other/Mixed	17	10	
Total	157	299	
Education			
Less than High School		5	15
High School/GED	51	63	79
Some College	79	71	n/a
2-year College	21	43	n/a
4-year College	4	68	24
MA/MS	2	28	14
PhD or MD		6	1
Other Professional Degree		4	31
Total	157	299	164

APPENDIX B

Short Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) Scale

Rated on a 7 point Likert Scale. Items in italics are reversely scored.

1. Our country needs a powerful leader, in order to destroy the radical and immoral currents prevailing in society today.
2. *Our country needs free thinkers, who will have the courage to stand up against traditional ways, even if this upsets many people.*
3. The ''old-fashioned ways'' and ''old-fashioned values'' still show the best way to live.
4. *Our society would be better off if we showed tolerance and understanding for untraditional values and opinions.*
5. God's laws about abortion, pornography and marriage must be strictly followed before it is too late, violations must be punished.
6. *The society needs to show openness towards people thinking differently, rather than a strong leader, the world is not particularly evil or dangerous.*
7. It would be best if newspapers were censored so that people would not be able to get hold of destructive and disgusting material.
8. *Many good people challenge the state, criticize the church and ignore ''the normal way of living''.*
9. Our forefathers ought to be honored more for the way they have built our society, at the same time we ought to put an end to those forces destroying it.
10. *People ought to put less attention to the Bible and religion, instead they ought to develop their own moral standards.*
11. There are many radical, immoral people trying to ruin things; the society ought to stop them.
12. *It is better to accept bad literature than to censor it.*
13. Facts show that we have to be harder against crime and sexual immorality, in order to uphold law and order.
14. *The situation in the society of today would be improved if troublemakers were treated with reason and humanity.*
15. If the society so wants, it is the duty of every true citizen to help eliminate the evil that poisons our country from within.

APPENDIX C

Authoritarian-Conservatism-Traditionalism (ACT) Scale

Rated on a 9 point Likert rating scale (see below)

-4: Very strongly disagree
-3: Strongly disagree
-2: Somewhat disagree
-1: Slightly disagree
0: Unsure/Neutral
+1: Slightly agree
+2: Somewhat agree
+3: Strongly agree
+4: Very strongly agree

Authoritarianism ("Authoritarian aggression")

1. *Strong, tough government will harm not help our country. (R)
2. *Being kind to loafers or criminals will only encourage them to take advantage of your weakness, so it's best to use a firm, tough hand when dealing with them.
3. *Our society does NOT need tougher government and stricter laws. (R)
4. *The facts on crime and the recent public disorders show we have to crack down harder on troublemakers, if we are going preserve law and order.
5. *Our prisons are a shocking disgrace. Criminals are unfortunate people who deserve much better care, instead of so much punishment. (R)
6. *The way things are going in this country, it's going to take a lot of "strong medicine" to straighten out the troublemakers, criminals, and perverts.
7. We should smash all the negative elements that are causing trouble in our society.
8. The situation in our country is getting so serious, the strongest methods would be justified if they eliminated the troublemakers and got us back to our true path.
9. People who say our laws should be enforced more strictly and harshly are wrong. We need greater tolerance and more lenient treatment for lawbreakers. (R)
10. The courts are right in being easy on drug offenders. Punishment would not do any good in cases like these. (R)
11. What our country really needs is a tough, harsh dose of law and order.
12. Capital punishment is barbaric and never justified. (R)

Conservatism ("Authoritarian submission")

1. *It's great that many young people today are prepared to defy authority. (R)
2. *What our country needs most is discipline, with everyone following our leaders in unity.

3. *Students at high schools and at university must be encouraged to challenge, criticize, and confront established authorities. (R)
4. *Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn.
5. *Our country will be great if we show respect for authority and obey our leaders.
6. *People should be ready to protest against and challenge laws they don't agree with. (R)
7. People should be allowed to make speeches and write books urging the overthrow of the government. (R)
8. The more people there are that are prepared to criticize the authorities, challenge and protest against the government, the better it is for society. (R)
9. People should stop teaching children to obey authority. (R)
10. The real keys to the "good life" are respect for authority and obedience to those who are in charge.
11. The authorities should be obeyed because they are in the best position to know what is good for our country.
12. Our leaders should be obeyed without questions.

Traditionalism

1. *Nobody should stick to the "straight and narrow". Instead people should break loose and try out lots of different ideas and experiences. (R)
2. *The "old-fashioned ways" and "old-fashioned values" still show the best way to live.
3. *God's laws about abortion, pornography, and marriage must be strictly followed before it is too late.
4. *There is absolutely nothing wrong with nudist camps. (R)
5. *This country will flourish if young people stop experimenting with drugs, alcohol, and sex, and pay more attention to family values.
6. *There is nothing wrong with premarital sexual intercourse. (R)
7. Traditional values, customs, and morality have a lot wrong with them. (R)
8. Everyone should have their own lifestyle, religious beliefs, and sexual preferences, even if it makes them different from everyone else. (R)
9. The radical and sinful new ways of living and behaving of many young people may one day destroy our society.
10. Trashy magazines and radical literature in our communities are poisoning the minds of our young people. 11. It is important that we preserve our traditional values and moral standards.
12. People should pay less attention to the bible and the other old-fashioned forms of religious guidance, and instead develop their own personal standards of what is moral and immoral. (R)

Economic System Justification Scale

Indicate level of agreement or disagreement on a scale ranging from 1 to 9.
(R): reversely scored

-4: Very strongly disagree
-3: Strongly disagree
-2: Somewhat disagree
-1: Slightly disagree
0: Unsure/Neutral
+1: Slightly agree
+2: Somewhat agree
+3: Strongly agree
+4: Very strongly agree

1. If people work hard, they almost always get what they want.
2. The existence of widespread economic differences does not mean that they are inevitable (R).
3. Laws of nature are responsible for differences in wealth in society.
4. There are many reasons to think that the economic system is unfair (R).
5. It is virtually impossible to eliminate poverty.
6. Poor people are not essentially different from rich people (R).
7. Most people who don't get ahead in our society should not blame the system; they have only themselves to blame.
8. Equal distribution of resources is a possibility for our society (R).
9. Social class differences reflect differences in natural order of things.
10. Economic differences in the society reflect an illegitimate distribution of resources (R).
11. There will always be poor people, because there will never be enough jobs for everybody.
12. Economic positions are legitimate reflections of people's achievements.
13. If people wanted to change the economic system to make things equal, they could (R).
14. Equal distribution of resources is unnatural.
15. It is unfair to have an economic system which produces extreme wealth and extreme poverty at the same time (R).
16. There is no point in trying to make income more equal.
17. There are no inherent differences between rich and poor; it is purely a matter of circumstance into which you are born (R).

Horizontal and Vertical Dimensions of Individualism and Collectivism

Scored on a 7 point Likert scale:

1: Strongly disagree
2: Moderately disagree
3: Slightly disagree
4: Neither disagree nor agree
5: Slightly agree
6: Moderately agree
7: Strongly agree

Horizontal Individualism
1. I'd rather depend on myself than others.
2. I rely on myself most of the time; I rarely rely on others.
3. I often do "my own thing."
4. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.

Vertical Individualism
1. It is important that I do my job better than others.
2. Winning is everything.
3. Competition is the law of nature.
4. When another person does better than I do, I get tense and aroused.

Horizontal Collectivism
1. If a coworker gets a prize, I would feel proud.
2. The well-being of my coworkers is important to me.
3. To me, pleasure is spending time with others.
4. I feel good when I cooperate with others.

Vertical Collectivism
1. Parents and children must stay together as much as possible.
2. It is my duty to take care of my family, even when I have to sacrifice what I want.
3. Family members should stick together, no matter what sacrifices are required.
4. It is important to me that I respect the decisions made by my groups.

APPENDIX F

General System Justification Scale

7 point Likert type response scale:

1: Strongly disagree
2: Moderately disagree
3: Slightly disagree
4: Neither disagree nor agree
5: Slightly agree
6: Moderately agree
7: Strongly agree

Items:

1. In general, you find society *is* fair.
2. In general, the American political system *does* operate as intended.
3. American society *is* structured adequately.
4. The United States *is* the best country in the world to live in.
5. Most policies *do* serve the greater good.
6. Everyone *does* have a fair shot at wealth and happiness.
7. Our society *does* get worse every year.
8. Society *is* set up so that people usually get what they deserve.

APPENDIX G

Social Dominance Orientation Scale

Scored on a Likert scale from 1 to 7

7: Extremely positive
6: Somewhat positive
5: Slightly positive
4: Neutral
3: Slightly negative
2: Somewhat negative
1: Extremely negative

Which of the following objects or statements do you have a positive or negative feeling towards?

1. We should strive to make incomes as equal as possible.*
2. Group equality should be our ideal.*
3. It's OK if some groups have more of a chance in life than others.
4. To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other groups.
5. We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups.*
6. It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and others are at the bottom.
7. Inferior groups should stay in their place.
8. We would have fewer problems if groups were treated more equally.*
9. It would be good if groups could be equal.*
10. In getting what you want, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other groups.
11. All groups should be given an equal chance in life.*
12. If certain groups stayed in their place, we would have fewer problems.
13. We should strive for increased social equality.*
14. Sometimes other groups must be kept in their place.
15. Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups.
16. No one group should dominate in society.*

* reversely scored