

Exceptions That Prove the Rule—Using a Theory of Motivated Social Cognition to Account for Ideological Incongruities and Political Anomalies: Reply to Greenberg and Jonas (2003)

John T. Jost
Stanford University

Jack Glaser
University of California, Berkeley

Arie W. Kruglanski
University of Maryland at College Park

Frank J. Sulloway
University of California, Berkeley

A meta-analysis by J. T. Jost, J. Glaser, A. W. Kruglanski, and F. J. Sulloway (2003) concluded that political conservatism is partially motivated by the management of uncertainty and threat. In this reply to J. Greenberg and E. Jonas (2003), conceptual issues are clarified, numerous political anomalies are explained, and alleged counterexamples are incorporated with a dynamic model that takes into account differences between “young” and “old” movements. Studies directly pitting the rigidity-of-the-right hypothesis against the ideological extremity hypothesis demonstrate strong support for the former. Medium to large effect sizes describe relations between political conservatism and dogmatism and intolerance of ambiguity; lack of openness to experience; uncertainty avoidance; personal needs for order, structure, and closure; fear of death; and system threat.

We are grateful to Greenberg and Jonas (2003) for their keen, far-reaching commentary on our meta-analytic review of the social, cognitive, and motivational bases of political conservatism (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003). Their skeptical response, we expect, will be fairly typical of readers who are unlikely to accept that there are any psychological differences between adherents of right-wing versus left-wing ideologies. Nevertheless, the current state of evidence warrants the conclusion that (at least in the general population) right-wing conservatism is positively related to dogmatism and intolerance of ambiguity; uncertainty avoidance; fear of threat, loss, and death; system instability; and epistemic needs to achieve order, structure, and closure, as well as negatively related to openness to experience, integrative complexity, and (to a lesser extent) self-esteem. This does not mean that liberals crave uncertainty and risk, but they do seem to be less troubled by them and less preoccupied with their management in comparison with conservatives.

Our predecessors have been down this road before. The most famous were Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford

(1950), who argued for the existence of a right-wing authoritarian syndrome, and Eysenck (1954), Shils (1954), Rokeach (1960), and countless others, who criticized them sharply for failing to acknowledge that left-wingers are also capable of dogmatism, mental rigidity, intolerance of ambiguity, and so on. This was also Greenberg and Jonas's (2003) main concern, inspired mainly by their perceptions of the former Soviet Union. At the risk of being anticlimactic, we concede this point (again): Rigidity of the left can and does occur, but it is less common than rigidity of the right. We stated this as many times as we could in our original article without detracting from our theoretical focus.

Does this mean that our conclusions were wrong or that no empirical regularities exist between specific cognitive and motivational styles on the one hand and the contents of political ideologies on the other? No. We presented consistent evidence (coming from 12 countries, 88 samples, and 22,818 individual cases) that such regularities do exist (see Jost et al., 2003, Tables 2–10). Most of the average correlations for the hypotheses we reviewed ranged in magnitude from .20 to .50. Such imperfect correlations leave plenty of room for the kinds of anecdotes and exceptions gathered by Greenberg and Jonas. Because anecdotes and exceptions can be potentially misleading, we decided to let the data speak for themselves. Our substantive conclusions, it turns out, differ from those of previous researchers (e.g., Altemeyer, 1998; Billig, 1984; Brown, 1965; Christie, 1991; Sidanius, 1985; Stone, 1980; Tetlock, 1984; Wilson, 1973), mainly in that we now have more and better evidence at our disposal.

In responding to the criticisms of Greenberg and Jonas, we divide their points into conceptual objections—their difficulties with how *conservatism* is and has been defined since the inception of the term—and empirical objections—mainly, a string of puta-

John T. Jost, Graduate School of Business, Stanford University; Jack Glaser, Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California, Berkeley; Arie W. Kruglanski, Department of Psychology, University of Maryland at College Park; Frank J. Sulloway, Institute of Personality and Social Research, University of California, Berkeley.

We thank Jeff Greenberg and Eva Jonas for their constructive, valuable reactions to our work. We are also grateful to Orsolya, György, and Zsuzsanna Hunyady for devoting a dinner on the Danube to a discussion of these ideas.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to John T. Jost, Graduate School of Business, Stanford University, Stanford, California 94305. E-mail: jost_john@gsb.stanford.edu

tive counterexamples to the regularities we have sought to identify. After clarifying definitional issues and showing that some of their “exceptions” may actually prove the rule, we review the strength of the existing empirical evidence for our position that there are significant cognitive and motivational differences between the political left and right. Indeed, the results are much more conclusive than Greenberg and Jonas implied. Finally, we show that a motivated social–cognitive perspective can shed new light on a number of contemporary political anomalies, including some that were touched on by our commentators.

Conceptual Issues

In defining political conservatism, we distinguished between core aspects of the ideology and peripheral, historically changing elements. The core features of conservative ideology, we argued, are resistance to change and tolerance of inequality. We found it surprising that Greenberg and Jonas (2003) resisted the resistance to change component, because this is one of the least controversial issues in existing scholarship on conservatism. From Burke to Buckley and from Lincoln to Huntington, it has been widely assumed that, *ceteris paribus*, conservatives favor the status quo. Consider these examples:

We owe an implicit reverence to all the institutions of our ancestors. (Burke, 1756/1982b, pp. 15–16)

What is conservatism? Is it not adherence to the old and tried, against the new and untried? (Lincoln, 1860/2002, p. 73)

[Conservatism is associated with] a general psychological attitude which manifests itself in the individual as a clinging to old ways and expresses itself in a fear of innovation. (Mannheim, 1927/1986, p. 83)

Conservatism is that system of ideas employed to justify an established order, no matter where or when it exists, against any fundamental challenge to its nature or being. . . . The essence of conservatism is the passionate affirmation of the value of existing institutions. (Huntington, 1957, p. 455)

[*The National Review*] stands athwart history, yelling Stop. (Buckley, 1955)

Conservatism is a set of political, economic, religious, educational, and other social beliefs characterized by emphasis on the status quo and social stability, religion and morality, liberty and freedom, the natural inequality of men, the uncertainty of progress, and the weakness of human reason. (Kerlinger, 1984, p. 16)

Conservatives emphasize tradition and stability in preference to change. They advocate freedom, religion, and patriotism, and believe that there are differences among individual people that make them inherently unequal. (Stone, 1994, p. 702)

The conservative defends existing institutions because their very existence creates a presumption that they have served some useful function, because eliminating them may lead to harmful, unintended consequences, or because the veneration which attaches to institutions that have existed over time makes them potentially usable for new purposes. (Muller, 2001, p. 2625)

To explain their rejection of standard definitions of conservatism, Greenberg and Jonas offered several historical counterexamples of change seeking among right-wingers and several cases of resistance to change among left-wingers. Our definition was not abso-

lutist; thus, there is no reason to think that a few counterexamples would undermine it. Nevertheless, we discuss both kinds of exceptions and propose a new dynamic model to incorporate temporal factors in political movements.

Exceptions That Prove the Rule

Right-wingers seeking change. Although we acknowledged in our original article that some right-wing conservatives do advocate change, the important question is of what kind of change they advocate. There is no reason to assume that liberals and conservatives would react much differently to minor, everyday changes in policy or procedure. As Huntington (1957) pointed out, “to preserve the fundamental elements of society, it may be necessary to acquiesce in change on secondary issues” (p. 455). More to the point, many changes desired by right-wingers are actually in the service of returning to some previous idealized state. Given that leaders are chosen to take action, the issue is not whether a conservative leader will advocate change (rather than stagnation); any minimally successful leader will implement some changes, even if those changes are retrograde. In critiquing the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, Edmund Burke (1789/1982a), the patron saint of conservative intellectuals, illustrated this point, saying, “A state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation. Without such means it might even risk the loss of that part of the constitution which it wished most religiously to preserve” (p. 9).

Greenberg and Jonas accepted the common characterization of Ronald Reagan as a conservative revolutionary (rather than a reactionary), forgetting that his political career on the national stage largely began with his suppression of student dissent as governor of California. Most of Reagan’s “changes” as president of the United States were in the name of restoring traditional American values, including individualism, religion, capitalism, family values, and law and order. His policies increased social and economic inequality and limited the redistribution of wealth (e.g., Blinder, 1987). His chief accomplishment, in effect, was to roll back both the New Deal era and the 1960s, which was also the goal of former speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Newt Gingrich and many other neo-conservatives often regarded as advocates of change. As Krugman (2002a) observed in the context of current debates concerning the privatization of social security, “hard-line conservatives are determined to build a bridge back to the 1920’s.”

Another example of right-wing activism discussed by Greenberg and Jonas (2003) involved the Religious Right, which they described (accurately) as “a potent conservative movement [that] seems to want change to the point of making Christianity the explicit basis of all government policy” (p. 377). We trust the post-Enlightenment reader to determine for him- or herself whether this goal is forward- or backward-thinking. Finally, Greenberg and Jonas (2003) commented that “although Hitler sometimes referred to a mythic German past portrayed in Wagner’s operas, his Nazi movement and regime bore little if any resemblance to that or any other past German society” (p. 377). However, surely the important point is that fascist movements, including extreme right-wing movements in Europe today, are inspired by an idealized past filled with racial purity, religious

righteousness, and ideological and demographic homogeneity. That the mythic ideal is illusory (and unattainable) matters little, psychologically or politically. The interesting question for a theory of motivated social cognition is why such “an imaginatively transfigured conception of the past” (Muller, 2001, p. 2625) is so consistently appealing to would-be followers of right-wing demagogues.

Left-wingers resisting change. Although Greenberg and Jonas (2003) rejected the resistance to change definition of conservatism, they resurrected it in the form of “conventionalism” (p. 379) to explain why authoritarianism in Russia would predict pro-communist beliefs and opposition to capitalism (e.g., McFarland, Ageyev, & Abalakina-Paap, 1992; McFarland, Ageyev, & Djintcharadze, 1996). Their remarks, which relied mainly on evidence from communist regimes in the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba,¹ draw attention to historical cases of leftists who have resisted change. We do not dispute that defenders of established left-wing governments are capable of mental rigidity or resistance to change or even that such defenders would be relatively low in cognitive complexity (e.g., Tetlock & Boettger, 1989) or high in authoritarianism (e.g., McFarland et al., 1992, 1996). Such cases tend to arise in mature, well-established left-wing regimes—in which those in power have a personal stake in preserving their privileged positions and therefore resisting change. In other words, defenders of established left-wing governments have a need for specific closure that leads them to support the status quo qua status quo. Far from challenging our core definition of conservatism as resistance to change (plus acceptance of inequality), these points underscore the relevance of our contextual definition.

We pointed out repeatedly that epistemic and existential motives such as the need for closure, uncertainty reduction, and mortality salience would most likely induce both content-laden preferences associated with the right wing and general support for the status quo, whatever its contents. Thus, the same psychological motives may be associated with different ideologies in the context of a brand new movement as compared with the context of a well-entrenched system. As a result, people who are highly motivated to reduce uncertainty and threat may end up defending a system that is different from what they would have preferred initially, and people who are open to ambiguity and innovation may end up replacing a system that they might have otherwise favored, especially if there is a more desirable alternative.

It is common sense, for example, that a supporter of Soviet communism in 1917 was a different sort of person with different motives than a supporter of Soviet communism in 1987, 70 years later. It is hard to imagine that the Bolsheviks were primarily motivated by simplicity, certainty, or security. Once communism succeeded in becoming a well-established status quo, however, a tolerance for novelty and change (more likely among “liberals”) could only be manifested in two ways: (a) by moving toward a more extreme form of communism, which might have been practical if communism had been succeeding but had not yet reached all of its goals or (b) by moving to a different system that might work better, thereby ridding society of a failed revolution. Under this second political scenario, liberals might opt to support change toward what is considered in the West to be a conservative, inegalitarian position (free-market capitalism) and to sympathetically consider the possibility that such a position is preferable to

the failed status quo (e.g., McFarland et al., 1992, 1996).² What one has, then, in the case of Soviet communism by the 1980s, is the occurrence of a misalignment between political ideology and psychological motivation brought about by the aging of the movement and by the movement’s failure to deliver the political and economic goods as originally promised. None of this vitiates the basic truth that core conservative (and liberal) ideological contents vary in their appeal to individuals as a function of their psychological makeup.

A dynamic model of “young” and “old” movements. Let us consider both young and old political movements of the left and right according to a 2×2 conceptual framework (see Figure 1). In one quadrant, we have relatively young or new right-wing movements, such as the Nazi movement in the 1930s or contemporary religious right-wing activism. As mentioned above, these generally involve either (a) a return to a previous way of governing or a society that is more conservative than the present or (b) an attempt to establish political goals that express right-wing yearnings by means of some new mechanism. Under these particular circumstances, we would say that such conservatives tend to tolerate moderate changes and accept some uncertainty in obtaining such changes.

In the second quadrant, we would place conservatives who are generally against any significant changes in the context of an older, mature political system. This was the basic, most common scenario from about 10,000 B.C., when cities first arose, through eras of feudalism and religious monarchies, until the American, French, and Russian revolutions (and especially the advent of Marxism). Such systems were notable not only for their resistance to change but also for their tolerance of inequality or, as Huntington (1957) described it, their “acceptance of social differentiation” (p. 457). On a theoretical pro-change scale, people in this quadrant would receive a very low score for

¹ Greenberg and Jonas’s (2003) observations about ideological rigidity in Cuba may have some truth when applied to Fidel Castro and his government supporters (although judging from his speeches and his longevity, it is doubtful that Castro would score high on the need for closure!), but they probably have little validity with respect to most Cubans (even socialists) living in Cuba. Greenberg and Jonas did not suggest a comparison group for Cuban leftists, but there seems to be no shortage of ideological rigidity among right-wing émigrés from Cuba living in the United States, as demonstrated during the Elian Gonzalez case. Indeed, throughout Latin America, neo-Marxist revolutionary groups are aptly characterized as rigidly dogmatic—except perhaps in comparison with their neo-fascist adversaries.

² In calling attention to the work of McFarland et al. (1992, 1996), Greenberg and Jonas (2003) stated that we “overlooked” their “pertinent research” (p. 379). These studies, although interesting, did not meet the criteria for inclusion in our meta-analysis because they do not report on any empirical relations between psychological variables (e.g., need for closure, uncertainty avoidance) and separate political variables (e.g., authoritarianism, attitudes toward capitalism). Furthermore, Greenberg and Jonas’s own review of omitted studies led to the relatively banal conclusion that in two studies respondents from former socialist countries scored higher on authoritarianism than did Western respondents (in Oregon, which is one of the most politically liberal states in the United States, and in socialist Norway), and in three other studies this pattern was reversed. It is unclear how these findings would have changed the conclusions we reached.

	Left-Wing Movements	Right-Wing Movements
“Young” Movements	<p><i>Progressive Revolutions</i> (e.g., liberal, democratic, radical, socialist, neo-Marxist)</p> <p><i>highly open to change and uncertainty</i></p>	<p><i>Reactionary Revolutions</i> (e.g., Religious Right, military rule, fascist, neo-Nazi)</p> <p><i>moderately open to change and uncertainty</i></p>
“Old” Regimes	<p><i>Socialist and Communist Regimes</i> (e.g., Soviet Union, People’s Republic of China, Cuba)</p> <p><i>moderately open to change and uncertainty</i></p>	<p><i>Traditional Hierarchical Regimes</i> (e.g., feudalism, monarchy, religious authority, patriarchy)</p> <p><i>not at all open to change and uncertainty</i></p>

Figure 1. Dynamic model of “young” and “old” political movements of the left and right.

their generally fierce opposition to all political changes, unless they could find some way to bring about an even more right-wing political state, in which case this would be another case of conservatives supporting reactionary changes.

In the third quadrant, we have mature left-wing movements or regimes, including the former Soviet Union, China, and Cuba. People in these situations would tend to support change to the extent that it renews the “revolutionary” aims of the older movement (such as the renewal of Mao’s Cultural Revolution in the 1970s) or, if faced with a previously failed liberal revolution (such as communism in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s), would decide that they must turn to what Greenberg and Jonas and others would characterize as a more conservative ideological position. We would assign this quadrant a moderate pro-change score for either renewing a revolution or for moving toward a more conservative position to make government finally work.

In the fourth quadrant, we would place liberals and radicals who support new (and sometimes revolutionary) movements. This is the paradigmatic case of revolutionary change from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries, including socialist and communist movements in Europe, Asia, and Latin America. We would assign people in this quadrant a very high score for their readiness to support radical change (in the direction of increased social and economic equality) and to accept relatively high levels of uncertainty in attaining such changes.

This overall pattern would provide the basis for the correlational data that consistently support our claims on this subject. On average, left-wingers are more pro-change than are right-wingers. A comparison of new versus aging movements also reveals that political leaders in new movements tend to be more open to change than people in older, mature movements, which is consistent with the fact that some people in power tend to protect what they already have, even if it is a “liberal” system. In this kind of dynamic model, there are really no major exceptions to what is

normally observed in the political world. This is especially true because the most well-known political movements tend to involve Quadrant 2 (conservatives defending long-established traditional, inegalitarian systems) and Quadrant 4 (left-wingers leading liberal or radical revolutions). Most of Greenberg and Jonas’s exceptions, which would fall in the other two quadrants (right-wingers leading new movements or left-wingers defending old movements) now become understandable variations in a dynamic model that adds to the basic scenario a temporal element.

The Social Construction of Ideology

Other exceptions to our two-part core definition of conservatism (see Jost et al., 2003) can be explained by noting that ideologies are socially constructed around both core and peripheral issues and that political movements have multiple goals that are sometimes in conflict. On our view of social constructionism (see Jost & Kruglanski, 2002), there is no contradiction in stating that the contents of belief systems are dynamic, historical, and culturally specific and that their adoption reflects (and reinforces) general psychological needs and motives. As Mannheim (1927/1986) put it, “Once a deliberately functionalised political will becomes possible, accordingly, this inclination toward conservatism entails not only an orientation to certain political contents but also a particular way of experiencing and thinking” (p. 85).

We have argued that the core themes of conservatism are resistance to change and acceptance of inequality and that these are relatively stable. Peripheral issues, such as specific attitudes toward capitalism or governmental policies, are especially likely to vary as a function of dynamic social, cultural, and historical contexts. The core is what disparate conservative ideologies tend to have in common, and the periphery is where they differ. One is justified in referring to Hitler, Mussolini, Reagan, and Limbaugh

as right-wing conservatives (as Greenberg and Jonas did) not because they share an opposition to “big government” or a mythical, romanticized view of Aryan purity—they did not share these specific attitudes—but because they all preached a return to an idealized past and favored or condoned inequality in some form.

Conservatives (and liberals) may resolve conflicts among potentially contradictory motives by prioritizing expedient political goals, even if it means adopting strategies or positions that would otherwise be relatively incongruent with a conservative (or liberal) ideology. For example, American conservatives may support a market-based economy (which introduces uncertainty and risk) because it preserves the status quo and results in inequality of outcomes even though it may conflict with personal needs for stability and security. Similarly, American liberals may sometimes favor increased governmental regulation (which reduces uncertainty and ambiguity) to the extent that it meets other goals of minimizing social or economic inequality. In short, one should not apply our model in a mindless way that overlooks potential conflicts among motives and the dynamic, socially constructed nature of ideologies. Over time, belief systems inevitably accumulate complexities and incongruities. When dynamic factors are incorporated into our framework, there are relatively few exceptions to the rule that right-wing conservatism is generally associated with resistance to change and acceptance of inequality. Moreover, the principal exceptions generally become exceptions that prove the rule. A left-wing system (like communism) must be entrenched to the point of being an established status quo (and, perhaps, to be embattled by most of the rest of the world) in order for “conservative” characteristics such as dogmatism and intolerance of ambiguity to manifest clearly among its leaders and among others who benefit materially or symbolically from the status quo.

Greenberg and Jonas (2003) proposed an alternative to our conceptualization, which they referred to as a “quick-fix solution,” (p. 380) involving two orthogonal dimensions, one of which is content laden (i.e., socially constructed) and the other of which is content free. Although they said that this idea was inspired by Duckitt, Tetlock, and Altemeyer, it is really a return to Eysenck’s (1954) idea of crossing a (content-laden) left versus right dimension with a (content-free) tough-mindedness versus tender-mindedness dimension. Eysenck would no doubt approve of Greenberg and Jonas’s ideological relativism and their search for tough-minded liberals and tender-minded conservatives. Although Eysenck’s model received some empirical support from factor analytic studies, it turned out to be a dead end in political psychology. It does not advance our motivated social-cognitive perspective because it applies only to individual differences and does not contain a dynamic element that would account for temporal factors and situational constraints. Greenberg and Jonas (2003, Footnote 4) elaborated with approval on Duckitt’s (2001) perspective, which identifies the following two dimensions: (a) authoritarianism/social and cultural conservatism/traditionalism and (b) economic conservatism/power distance/hierarchy/inequality. Indeed, these two dimensions bear more than a passing resemblance to our two core conceptions of political conservatism: resistance to change and tolerance of inequality.

Empirical Issues

Although he initially criticized the one-sidedness of Adorno et al.’s (1950) Frankfurt school approach to the authoritarian personality, Rokeach (1960) eventually came to share their belief that there is a match between psychological needs and ideological contents:

If a person’s underlying motivations are served by forming a closed belief system, then it is more than likely that his motivations can also be served by embracing an ideology that is blatantly anti-equalitarian. If this is so, it would account for the somewhat greater affinity we have observed between authoritarian belief structure and conservatism than between the same belief structure and liberalism. (p. 127)

Indeed, the voluminous literature we reviewed (Jost et al., 2003) suggests that Rokeach was right. There is a consistent empirical connection between mental rigidity (among other things) and the adoption of conservative and right-wing ideological beliefs. Insofar as a general tolerance for inequality is a core component of political conservatism, Rokeach’s conclusions can be extended to the connection between the epistemic needs for order, structure, and closure and prejudicial attitudes (e.g., Schaller, Boyd, Johannes, & O’Brien, 1995). That the need for cognitive closure also promotes the craving for homogeneity was recently demonstrated in a series of studies conducted in the United States and Italy (Kruglanski, Shah, Pierro, & Mannetti, 2002).

Unmoved by the evidence, Greenberg and Jonas (2003) dismissed the viability of the matching hypothesis. They asserted for example, that “need for closure, terror management, uncertainty reduction, prevention focus, and system justification are all best served by embracing and rigidly adhering to and defending whatever the prevailing ideology is in one’s sociocultural environment” (Greenberg & Jonas, 2003, p. 378). We do not deny that the epistemic and existential motives we have reviewed may lead to increased acceptance of culturally available ideologies; indeed, this acceptance of the status quo is part of what we mean by conservatism. However, as we again show, the current evidence does not warrant acceptance of this availability hypothesis to the exclusion of the matching hypothesis that there is a “somewhat greater affinity” (Rokeach, 1960, p. 127) between right-wing ideological contents and these same epistemic and existential needs.

Greenberg and Jonas (2003) claimed that Altemeyer’s definition of right-wing authoritarianism “applies well to people supporting left-wing communist ideology” (p. 379). However, Altemeyer’s (1998) own meticulous research program led him to conclude that in the general population “‘authoritarianism on the left’ has been as scarce as hens’ teeth” (p. 71). They also insisted that “left-wing ideologies serve these motives [i.e., to reduce fear, anxiety, and uncertainty] just as well as right-wing ones” (Greenberg & Jonas, 2003, p. 378), but both reason and evidence are very much against them. Breaking down existing hierarchies is inherently more unsettling and necessarily raises uncertainty and ambiguity. And the available evidence, which we highlight again here, strongly supports the directional rigidity-of-the-right hypothesis as against nondirectional alternatives such as the ideological extremity hypothesis.

Pitting the Rigidity-of-the-Right Hypothesis Against the Ideological Extremity Hypothesis

Although our review dealt with more than just mental rigidity, Greenberg and Jonas focused primarily on this issue, which is the oldest, most traditional, and perhaps most controversial of the hypotheses we assessed. Because Greenberg and Jonas (and maybe other readers) were not sufficiently persuaded by our aggregate statistics, it is worth taking a closer look at the specific studies that directly pit some version of the rigidity-of-the-right hypothesis against the ideological extremity hypothesis favored by our commentators. We found 13 individual studies that allowed for a direct test between competing hypotheses (see Table 1). The linear, asymmetrical pattern of results that is suggested by the rigidity-of-the-right hypothesis is illustrated in Figure 2(a). The quadratic, symmetrical pattern derived from the extremity hypothesis is illustrated in Figure 2(b). A third pattern of results in which both effects are present in combination is illustrated in Figure 2(c).

Although significance tests were not reported in all cases, means from 7 of the 13 studies conform to the linear pattern illustrated in Figure 2(a). Barker (1963) surveyed student activists in Ohio and found that organized rightists scored significantly higher in dogmatism ($M = 150.9$) than did nonorganized students ($M = 139.2$), who in turn scored (nonsignificantly) higher than did organized leftists ($M = 135.8$). Kohn (1974) followed student political groups in Great Britain and found that conservatives scored significantly higher than socialists and liberals, and they scored marginally higher than Labour Party supporters on intolerance of ambiguity (no means were reported, but see pairwise comparisons, p. 253).

Studies by Sidanius (1978, pp. 223–224) in Sweden and by Fibert and Ressler (1998, pp. 37–38) in Israel also investigated relations between political ideology and intolerance of ambiguity. In both studies, significant linear effects were observed, and so

were quadratic effects in the direction that was opposite to the extremity hypothesis: Intolerance of ambiguity decreased slightly between the center right and the far right. Sidanius (1985) obtained comparable effects for the relation between ideology and cognitive complexity.

Studies by Kimmelmeier (1997, p. 788) in Germany and by Chirumbolo (2002, p. 607) in Italy examined ideological differences related to the need for cognitive closure, and both yielded evidence of significant linear effects and no evidence of quadratic trends. Thus, the bulk of the relevant evidence supports the rigidity-of-the-right hypothesis. Confidence is strengthened by the fact that such similar results have been obtained in six different countries and on such convergent measures as dogmatism, intolerance of ambiguity, need for cognitive closure, and integrative complexity.

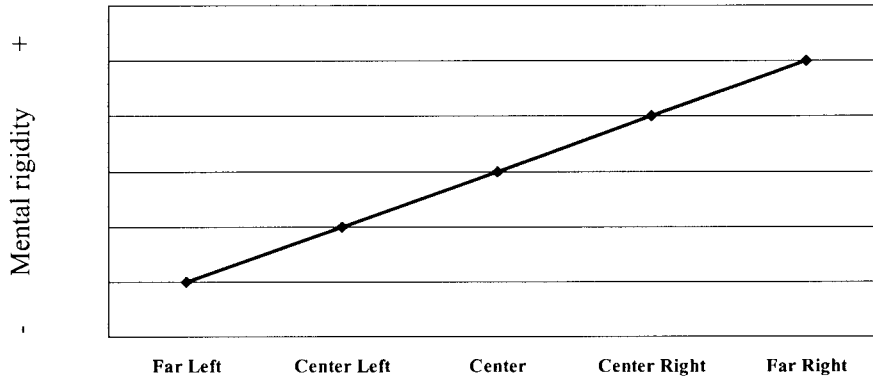
By contrast, no studies provided exclusive support for the ideological extremity hypothesis preferred by Greenberg and Jonas (see Table 1). Probably the strongest evidence for this position comes from an article by McClosky and Chong (1985) in which descriptive (but not inferential) results from U.S. surveys conducted in 1958 and 1976–1977 were reported. For several items tapping intolerance of ambiguity and “psychological rigidity,” a preponderance of respondents classified as “high” came from the far left and far right groups, as compared with moderates. In all cases graphically summarized by McClosky and Chong (1985, p. 350), however, the percentage of high scorers from the far right group (63% and 81% for intolerance of ambiguity in 1958 and 1976–1977, respectively, and 39% for rigidity) exceeds the percentage of high scorers from the far left (49%, 75%, and 33%, respectively). Although they did not report full data for center left and center right groups, a footnote indicated that “liberals are considerably more tolerant of ambiguity than conservatives” (McClosky & Chong, 1985, p. 350). Putting these two pieces of

Table 1
Summary of Research Reviewed in Jost et al. (2003) Pitting Directional and Nondirectional Hypotheses

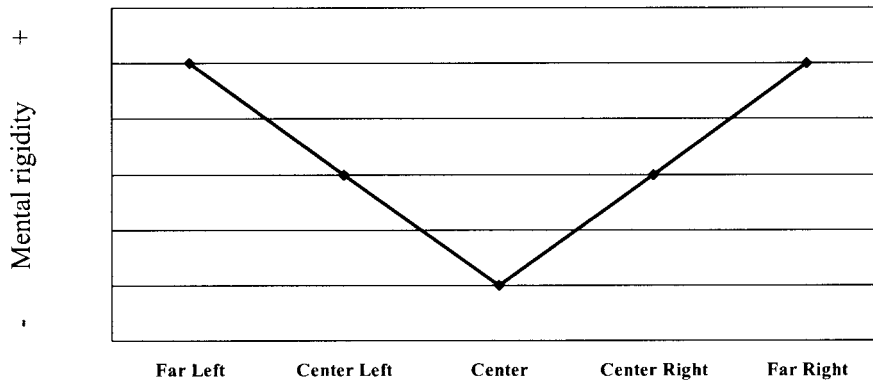
Study	Country of sample	Psychological variable
Studies supporting the rigidity-of-the-right hypothesis only		
Barker (1963)	United States	Dogmatism
Kohn (1974)	England	Intolerance of ambiguity
Sidanius (1978)	Sweden	Intolerance of ambiguity
Sidanius (1985)	Sweden	Cognitive complexity
Kimmelmeier (1997)	Germany	Need for cognitive closure
Fibert & Ressler (1998)	Israel	Intolerance of ambiguity
Chirumbolo (2002)	Italy	Need for cognitive closure
Studies supporting both the rigidity-of-the-right hypothesis and the ideological extremity hypothesis ^a		
Smithers & Lobley (1978)	England	Dogmatism
Tetlock (1983)	United States	Integrative complexity
Tetlock (1984)	England	Integrative complexity
Tetlock et al. (1984)	United States	Integrative complexity
Tetlock et al. (1985)	United States	Integrative complexity
McClosky & Chong (1985)	United States	Intolerance of ambiguity

^aNo studies supported only the ideological extremity hypothesis.

(a) The rigidity-of-the-right hypothesis



(b) The ideological extremity hypothesis



(c) Integration of both (a) and (b) hypotheses (independent, additive effects)

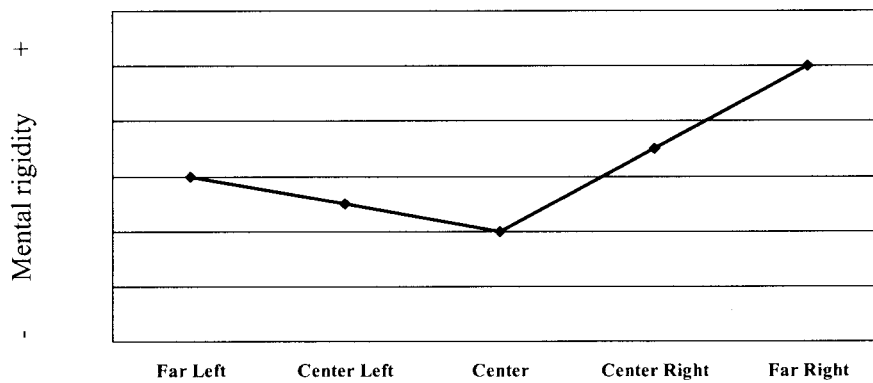


Figure 2. Patterns of results predicted by competing hypotheses.

information together, it seems that the McClosky and Chong data would more closely resemble the combined pattern depicted in Figure 2(c) than that depicted in Figure 2(b).

Five more studies provide evidence that both rigidity-of-the-right and ideological extremity exert effects, as illustrated in Figure 2(c). Smithers and Loble's (1978) study of dogmatism and political orientation in Great Britain produced a pattern of results in which "the V-shaped curve did include more of the conservative end of the scale" (p. 135). Tetlock (1983) found that political moderates in the U.S. Senate scored nonsignificantly higher on integrative complexity ($M = 2.51$) than did liberals ($M = 2.38$) and that both groups scored significantly higher than conservatives ($M = 1.79$). Very similar results were obtained by Tetlock, Bernzweig, and Gallant (1985) in their study of U.S. Supreme Court justices' opinions on both economic issues and civil liberties. Tetlock's (1984) study of members of the British House of Commons revealed that the most integratively complex politicians were moderate socialists, who scored significantly higher than extreme socialists, moderate conservatives, and extreme conservatives (who scored lowest in complexity). Finally, Tetlock, Hannum, and Micheletti (1984) found considerable variation from one congressional session to the next; however, if one averages across the five sessions they studied, one finds that political conservatives scored considerably lower on integrative complexity ($M = 1.67$) than did liberals ($M = 2.33$), who scored slightly lower than moderates ($M = 2.41$). Thus, six of the studies provided partial evidence for the ideological extremity hypothesis, and all 13 studies provided at least some evidence for the rigidity-of-the-right hypothesis.

Classification of Effect Sizes

In our original article we opted not to impose reified, categorical labels onto the effect sizes we quantified. That may have been a mistake, insofar as it could have enabled some readers to underestimate the significance of the results. In this vein, Greenberg and Jonas (2003) contended that our evidence accounts for "a small amount of variance in conservatism" (p. 376). We have listed in Table 2 the effect sizes we obtained, along with the classifications recommended by Cohen (1988). Although we side with those who

stress that Cohen's definitions must be modified by the context of the effects discussed, only three of our nine effect sizes (self-esteem, fear of loss, and integrative complexity) fit the usual criteria for a classification of "small." Four of the effect sizes we calculated should be classified as "moderate," and at least two more (mortality salience and system instability and threat) justifiably deserve to be classified as "large" according to Cohen's criteria. Thus, the research literature we have reviewed demonstrates a preponderance of moderate to large effects rather than small effects, as Greenberg and Jonas claimed.

Furthermore, one must assume that there is some independence among these measures, so that a multiple regression model would probably yield a multiple correlation (R) for various different predictors of political conservatism that would be much higher than the typical correlation of .30 (i.e., at least .40 to .50). If the overall multiple correlation were only .40, this would mean that an above-average score on the basket of interrelated variables we analyzed would make a person roughly four times more likely to take a conservative rather than a liberal position—hardly a negligible effect. This estimate is arrived at by converting the product-moment correlation (r) to the odds ratio expected when data involve equal n s in all marginal conditions, and adjusting slightly by a factor of .80 for the fact that our data involve continuous variables rather than dichotomous variables. If the multiple correlation were .50 (which seems more likely), an above-average score on our basket of interrelated variables would make a person roughly seven times more likely to take a conservative rather than a liberal position—really quite a large effect in the behavioral sciences.

Accounting for Political Anomalies

In our original article (Jost et al., 2003), we argued that political conservatism is associated with a specific constellation of epistemic and existential motives pertaining to the management of uncertainty and threat. In disputing this conclusion, Greenberg and Jonas underestimated the strength of the available evidence and generated a list of counterexamples that are readily accountable for by our framework. They also offered a number of flattering self-

Table 2
Classification of Effect Sizes Reported by Jost et al. (2003)

Hypothesis/variable	Weighted mean effect sizes		Effect size classification
	r	Cohen's d	
Dogmatism and intolerance of ambiguity	.34	0.73	Medium
Integrative complexity	-.20	-0.41	Small
Openness to experience	-.32	-0.68	Medium
Tolerance of uncertainty	-.27	-0.57	Medium
Needs for order, structure, and closure	.26	0.54	Medium
Self-esteem	-.09	-0.17	Small
Fear of threat and loss	.18	0.38	Small
Mortality salience	.50	1.20	Large
System instability and threat	.47	1.08	Large

Note. According to Cohen (1988), $d = 0.20$ for small effect sizes, $d = 0.50$ for medium effect sizes, and $d = 0.80$ for large effect sizes.

characterizations offered by contemporary conservatives to explain the motivations for their opinions. For example, in elaborating on their thesis that liberals are just as rigid as conservatives, they noted that “conservative talk show hosts such as Rush Limbaugh and Michael Savage paint liberals as antifreedom advocates of ‘political correctness’ and ‘big government’” (Greenberg & Jonas, 2003, p. 377). There are several ironies here. First, Greenberg and Jonas failed to consider why there are dozens of extreme right-wing commentators occupying the American radio waves and virtually no left-wing equivalents. This is at least one naturalistic measure that suggests that right-wing dogmatism is generally more prevalent. Second, their reference to the specter of political correctness (PC) is telling. Has anyone ever defended PC norms with as much vitriol as they have been attacked? And third, it is true that conservatives often push for a smaller government (especially shorter tax codes and less complicated market regulations), but insofar as smaller is simpler, this is consistent with our account.

The efforts of Greenberg and Jonas to suggest that there are no motivational differences between contemporary liberals and conservatives³ detract from the fact that, once acknowledged, a motivated social-cognitive perspective on conservatism can shed light on a number of political anomalies. Sticking with contemporary American politics, it has been observed that Republicans are far more single-mindedly and unambiguously aggressive in pursuing Democratic scandals (e.g., Whitewater, the Clinton-Lewinsky affair) than Democrats have been in pursuing Republican scandals (e.g., Iran Contra, Bush-Harken Energy, Halliburton). In commenting on the Republican “scandal machine,” Krugman (2002b) argued that

there is a level of anger and hatred on the right that has at best a faint echo in the anti-globalization left, and none at all in mainstream liberalism. Indeed, the liberals I know generally seem unwilling to face up to the nastiness of contemporary politics.

Greenberg and Jonas (2003) embraced conservatives’ idealization of the free-market system, noting that

favoring the market system goes along with giving people freedom to choose what they want to consume, how much money they are willing to spend on certain products, and what kinds of jobs they want to perform. It also goes along with encouraging innovations. (p. 377).

Furthermore, conservatives’ faith in market-based economies was said to “reveal a remarkable amount of trust that good things can come out of uncertainties” (Greenberg & Jonas, 2003, p. 378). As mentioned above, conservatives (like other ideological groups) are faced with the task of reconciling potentially conflicting motivations. We think that American conservatives support free-market capitalism (as a peripheral rather than core conviction) out of the desire to preserve traditional values of entrepreneurial individualism, despite—rather than because of—increased uncertainty and risk. In addition, although conservatives may advocate meritocracy (possibly to maintain the belief that socioeconomic outcomes are controllable and predictable), they have not historically favored redistribution of wealth to allow true equal opportunity for those born to less privileged families. In this sense, the free market does favor the status quo in terms of existing class hierarchies.

Our theory of conservatism as the motivation to preserve the status quo against various forms of threat and to rationalize inequality helps to understand not only why conservatives generally embrace capitalism but also why strong support for capitalism would entail other, ostensibly unrelated right-wing attitudes. For example, Sidanius and Pratto (1993) found that in both the United States and Sweden, pro-capitalist attitudes were associated with racism and social dominance orientation. Although Greenberg and Jonas noted that political liberals in Eastern Europe have advocated capitalist reforms, their account (in terms of the open-mindedness of free market ideology) would be hard-pressed to explain how seamlessly some pro-capitalist political parties, such as the *FIDESZ* party in Hungary, have embraced anti-Semitism, nationalism, official Christianity, and a host of other traditional right-wing causes.

We now take it for granted in the United States that political conservatives tend to be for law and order but not gun control, against welfare but generous to corporations, protective of cultural traditions but antagonistic toward contemporary art and music, and wary of government but eager to weaken the separation of church and state. They are committed to freedom and individualism but perennially opposed to extending rights and liberties to disadvantaged minorities, especially gay men and lesbians and others who blur traditional boundaries. There is no obvious political thread that runs through these diverse positions (or through their liberal counterparts) and no logical principle that renders them all consistent. Their cooccurrence may be explained just as well with psychological theory as with political theory. Conservative opinions acquire coherence by virtue of the fact that they minimize uncertainty and threat while pursuing continuity with the past (i.e., the status quo) and rationalizing inequality in society. Basic social, cognitive, and motivational differences may also explain why extreme right-wing movements are typically obsessed with purity, cleanliness, hygiene, structure, and order—things that would otherwise have little to do with political positions per se—and why religious fundamentalism is so attractive to right-wing parties and their followers in just about every nation stretching from North America to the Middle East.

Permeating the commentary of Greenberg and Jonas (2003) was the worry that we (Jost et al., 2003) were attaching value and preference to one end of the psychological—ideological spectrum. To be clear, we never argued that it is intrinsically good to be

³ Greenberg and Jonas (2003) wrote,

The phenomena falling under the label *conservatism* still warrant further psychological understanding. . . . [But] we believe that prevailing cultural norms, socialization influences, and perhaps, certain genetic predispositions . . . rather than the need to reduce fear and uncertainty, play the primary roles in determining whether people develop right- or left-wing political attitudes. (p. 381)

We find it curious that psychologists would choose to separate emotions and motives from such things as cultural norms, socialization influences, and genetics. Moreover, even if it were possible (and useful) to make this distinction, there is no empirical precedent for believing that genetics would be more important than motivation in determining social and political attitudes.

tolerant of uncertainty or ambiguity, low on the need for cognitive closure, or even high in cognitive complexity. In many cases, including mass politics, "liberal" traits may be liabilities, and being intolerant of ambiguity, high on the need for closure, or low in cognitive complexity might be associated with such generally valued characteristics as personal commitment and unwavering loyalty. Furthermore, ruling large societies may be easier and more successful to the extent that a leader uses simple and unambiguous rhetoric, eschews equivocation, and generally acts in a clear and decisive way. For a variety of psychological reasons, then, right-wing populism may have more consistent appeal than left-wing populism, especially in times of potential crisis and instability. The psychological appeal of conservatism may add a practical as well as theoretical justification for our asymmetrical focus on the motives of right-wing conservatives: At a time when communism and leftist extremism are disappearing from the planet, right-wing extremism seems to be on the rise again.

References

- Adorno, T. W., Frenkel-Brunswik, E., Levinson, D. J., & Sanford, R. N. (1950). *The authoritarian personality*. New York: Harper.
- Altemeyer, R. A. (1998). The other "authoritarian personality." In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 30, pp. 47–91). New York: Academic Press.
- Barker, E. N. (1963). Authoritarianism of the political right, center, and left. *Journal of Social Issues, 19*, 63–74.
- Billig, M. (1984). Political ideology: Social psychological aspects. In H. Tajfel (Ed.), *The social dimension* (Vol. 2, pp. 446–470). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Blinder, A. (1987). *Hard heads, soft hearts: Tough-minded economics for a just society*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Brown, R. (1965). The authoritarian personality and the organization of attitudes. In R. Brown (Ed.), *Social psychology* (pp. 477–546). New York: Free Press.
- Buckley, W. F., Jr. (1955). Mission statement of *The National Review*. Retrieved August 14, 2002 from <http://gort.ucsd.edu/newjour/n/msg01402.html> (Original work published 1955)
- Burke, E. (1982a). Reflections on the revolution in France. In R. Kirk (Ed.), *The portable conservative reader* (pp. 7–40). New York: Penguin Books. (Original work published 1789)
- Burke, E. (1982b). *A vindication of natural society: Or, a view of the miseries and evils arising to mankind from every species of artificial society*. Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Classics. (Original work published 1756)
- Chirumbolo, A. (2002). The relationship between need for cognitive closure and political orientation: The mediating role of authoritarianism. *Personality and Individual Differences, 32*, 603–610.
- Christie, R. (1991). Authoritarianism and related constructs. In J. P. Robinson, P. R. Shaver, & L. S. Wrightsman (Eds.), *Measures of personality and social psychological attitudes* (pp. 501–571). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Duckitt, J. (2001). A dual-process cognitive-motivational theory of ideology and prejudice. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 33, pp. 41–113). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Eysenck, H. J. (1954). *The psychology of politics*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Fibert, Z., & Ressler, W. H. (1998). Intolerance of ambiguity and political orientation among Israeli university students. *Journal of Social Psychology, 138*, 33–40.
- Greenberg, J., & Jonas, E. (2003). Psychological motives and political orientation—The left, the right, and the rigid: Comment on Jost et al. (2003). *Psychological Bulletin, 129*, 376–382.
- Huntington, S. (1957). Conservatism as an ideology. *American Political Science Review, 51*, 454–473.
- Jost, J. T., Glaser, J., Kruglanski, A. W., & Sulloway, F. J. (2003). Political conservatism as motivated social cognition. *Psychological Bulletin, 129*, 339–375.
- Jost, J. T., & Kruglanski, A. W. (2002). The estrangement of social constructionism and experimental social psychology: History of the rift and prospects for reconciliation. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 6*, 168–187.
- Kemmelmeier, M. (1997). Need for closure and political orientation among German university students. *Journal of Social Psychology, 137*, 787–789.
- Kerlinger, F. M. (1984). *Liberalism and conservatism: The nature and structure of social attitudes*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Kohn, P. M. (1974). Authoritarianism, rebelliousness, and their correlates among British undergraduates. *British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 13*, 245–255.
- Kruglanski, A. W., Shah, J. Y., Pierro, A., & Mannetti, L. (2002). When similarity breeds content: Need for closure and the allure of homogeneous and self-resembling groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 83*, 648–662.
- Krugman, P. (2002a, July 26). The private interest. *The New York Times*, p. A21.
- Krugman, P. (2002b, March 29). The smoke machine. *The New York Times*, p. A29.
- Lincoln, A. (2002). "Right makes might." Speech at the Cooper Union, February 27, 1860. In W.E. Gienapp (Ed.), *This fiery trial: The speeches and writings of Abraham Lincoln* (pp. 71–81). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Mannheim, K. (1986). *Conservatism: A contribution to the sociology of knowledge*. (D. Kettler, V. Meja, & N. Stehr, Trans.). New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul. (Original work published 1927)
- McClosky, H., & Chong, D. (1985). Similarities and differences between left-wing and right-wing radicals. *British Journal of Political Science, 15*, 329–363.
- McFarland, S., Ageyev, V. S., & Abalakina-Paap, M. A. (1992). Authoritarianism in the former Soviet Union. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 63*, 1004–1010.
- McFarland, S., Ageyev, V. S., & Djintcharadze, N. (1996). Russian authoritarianism two years after communism. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 22*, 210–217.
- Muller, J. Z. (2001). Conservatism: Historical aspects. In N. J. Smelser & P. Baltes (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of the social and behavioral sciences* (pp. 2624–2628). Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Rokeach, M. (1960). *The open and closed mind*. New York: Basic Books.
- Schaller, M., Boyd, C., Yohannes, J., & O'Brien, N. (1995). The prejudiced personality revisited: Personal need for structure and formation of erroneous group stereotypes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 68*, 544–555.
- Shils, E. A. (1954). Authoritarianism: "Right" and "left." In R. Christie & M. Jahoda (Eds.), *Studies in the scope and method of "The Authoritarian Personality"* (pp. 24–49). Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- Sidanius, J. (1978). Intolerance of ambiguity and socio-political ideology: A multidimensional analysis. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 8*, 215–235.
- Sidanius, J. (1985). Cognitive functioning and sociopolitical ideology revisited. *Political Psychology, 6*, 637–661.

- Sidanius, J., & Pratto, F. (1993). Racism and support of free-market capitalism: A cross-cultural analysis. *Political Psychology, 14*, 381–401.
- Smithers, A. G., & Loble, D. M. (1978). Dogmatism, social attitudes and personality. *British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 17*, 135–142.
- Stone, W. F. (1980). The myth of left-wing authoritarianism. *Political Psychology, 2*, 3–19.
- Stone, W. F. (1994). Conservatism/liberalism. *Encyclopedia of Human Behavior, 1*, 701–707.
- Tetlock, P. E. (1983). Cognitive style and political ideology. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 45*, 118–126.
- Tetlock, P. E. (1984). Cognitive style and political belief systems in the British House of Commons. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 46*, 365–375.
- Tetlock, P. E., Bernzweig, J., & Gallant, J. L. (1985). Supreme Court decision making: Cognitive style as a predictor of ideological consistency of voting. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 48*, 1227–1239.
- Tetlock, P. E., & Boettger, R. (1989). Cognitive and rhetorical styles of traditionalist and reformist Soviet politicians: A content analysis study. *Political Psychology, 10*, 209–232.
- Tetlock, P. E., Hannum, K. A., & Micheletti, P. M. (1984). Stability and change in the complexity of senatorial debate: Testing the cognitive versus rhetorical style hypotheses. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 46*, 979–990.
- Wilson, G. D. (Ed.). (1973). *The psychology of conservatism*. London: Academic Press.

Received August 10, 2002

Revision received August 19, 2002

Accepted August 20, 2002 ■

New Editor Appointed to *Psychological Review*, 2004–2010

The Publications and Communications Board of the American Psychological Association announces the appointment of Keith Rayner, PhD, to a 6½-year term on *Psychological Review* beginning on July 1, 2004.

Effective July 1, 2003, manuscript submissions to *Psychological Review* should be submitted electronically through the Manuscript Submission Portal at

<http://www.apa.org/journals/rev.html>

Authors who are unable to do so may contact the editor's office about alternatives by writing to Keith Rayner, PhD, Department of Psychology, Tobin Hall, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003.

The current editor, Walter Mischel, PhD, will receive and consider manuscripts through June 30, 2003. Should the April 2004 issue be filled before that date, manuscripts will be redirected to the new editor for consideration.