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Ideology and Prejudice: The Role of Value Conflicts

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Abstract

In three studies, we tested whether prejudice derives from perceived similarities and dissimilarities in political ideologies (the value-conflict hypothesis). Across three diverse samples in Study 1, conservatives had less favorable impressions than liberals of groups that were identified as liberal (e.g., African Americans, homosexuals), but more favorable impressions than liberals of groups identified as conservative (e.g., Christian fundamentalists, businesspeople). In Studies 2 and 3, we independently manipulated a target's race (European American or African American) and political attitudes (liberal or conservative). Both studies found symmetrical preferences, with liberals and conservatives each liking attitudinally similar targets more than dissimilar targets. The amount of prejudice was comparable for liberals and conservatives, and the race of the target had no effect. In all three studies, the same patterns were obtained even after controlling for individual differences on prejudice-related dimensions (e.g., system justification, social-dominance orientation, modern racism). The patterns strongly support the value-conflict hypothesis and indicate that prejudice exists on both sides of the political spectrum.

Keywords

prejudice, individual differences, morality, stereotyped attitudes, values

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Past research closely associates political conservatism with prejudice. Studies have found, for example, that conservatives report less favorable attitudes than liberals toward minorities, including African Americans (Sears & Henry, 2003), Arabs (Echebarria-Echabe & Guede, 2007), homosexuals (Terrizzi, Shook, & Ventis, 2010), and immigrants (Meertens & Pettigrew, 1997). Thus, there is ample evidence for a *prejudice gap* between liberals and conservatives, with conservatives appearing less egalitarian and tolerant.

Current theories of this prejudice gap suggest that conservatives engage in motivated thought processes that legitimize prejudice. System-justification theory (Kay & Jost, 2003), for example, posits that conservatives in particular are motivated to defend the status quo, and that groups (e.g., African Americans) seeking social change and reform are therefore regarded as threatening. According to symbolic-racism theory (Sears & Henry, 2003), anti-Black prejudice stems from a commitment to traditional American values of individualism and self-reliance, and because conservatives endorse those values more strongly than liberals, they are more willing to deny that racial prejudice exists and oppose programs aimed at achieving equality. Similarly, social-dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001) contends that there is a basic predisposition to form group-based hierarchies, and that groups in power (e.g.,

wealthier individuals, who tend to be more ideologically conservative) are motivated to justify their advantaged position over less powerful social groups. Implicit in each of these theories is the notion that political conservatives are more motivated than liberals to rationalize and defend the position of higher-status groups over lower-status groups (often racial minorities), and hold system-justifying beliefs that sustain and legitimize prejudice.

There is also ample research indicating that people focus on evidence consistent with their preexisting attitudes and ideologies, and interpret evidence to be consistent with their attitudes (Hart et al., 2009; Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979). Whereas liberals believe in equality; endorse tolerance and pluralism in matters of morals, religion, and politics; and see government as a vital instrument for solving social injustice, conservatives value individualism and self-reliance, believe that better outcomes go to people who work harder and that rewards should match one's contributions (i.e., equity), and rely on individuals and private institutions for the care and protection of

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people in need (Schlenker, Chambers, & Le, 2012). If people believe in individualism and self-reliance, they will find evidence that choices and actions determine outcomes, just as if people believe in the power of the situation, they will find evidence that systemic pressures and luck determine outcomes.

These conflicting values of liberals and conservatives may give rise to different prejudices. In general, people like individuals (and groups) who share their values and opinions more than those who do not. This is the well-known similarity-liking principle (Byrne, 1971). It is exhibited by people of various ages (e.g., both children and adults) and holds across diverse issues and qualities (Crano, 1997; Fawcett & Markson, 2010) and may be so fundamental as to supersede other considerations, such as differences in race, gender, or social status. For example, in classic research by Rokeach (1960), participants rated their impressions of target persons whose race and opinions on issues were either the same as or different from the participants' own. Rokeach found that differences in opinions were more important than racial differences in determining liking for the targets; participants preferred targets with similar opinions over targets with dissimilar opinions, regardless of the targets' race. More recent work has extended these ideas to show that perceived value conflicts play a key role in the development of negative stereotypes and prejudice (Chambers & Melnyk, 2006).

Extending this reasoning, we suggest that liberals and conservatives favor whichever social groups share their own values and are biased against groups that do not share their values (i.e., the *value-conflict hypothesis*). Moreover, the preference for like-minded groups may be above and beyond the effects of other possible contributors to prejudice, such as characteristics of the perceiver (e.g., individual differences in system justification or social-dominance orientation) or characteristics of the target group (e.g., its race or social status). In short, conservatives and liberals may each have their own prejudices, and prejudice may not be restricted to either political ideology.

The problem with past studies examining the prejudice gap is that they have confounded the target group's race or minority status with its stance on core conservative and liberal values. The targets in these studies have tended to be racial, ethnic, or religious minority groups—often groups who are known or assumed to oppose core conservative values (e.g., African Americans generally support affirmative action and social welfare programs, which conservatives oppose). Thus, it is difficult to tell whether these studies' findings of greater prejudice among conservatives are due to the race or minority status of those groups or due to the groups' opposition to core conservative values. At the same time, many studies have failed to include as targets relevant comparison or control groups, such as religious fundamentalists, entrepreneurs, or financially well-off individuals—groups that embrace core conservative values and toward whom political liberals might express greater prejudice. Conflating the target group's race or

minority status with its perceived position on core values limits conclusions that can be drawn about general ideological differences in prejudice. Building on research in political science showing that people tend to be more intolerant of groups with ideologies dissimilar to their own (Sullivan, Piereson, & Marcus, 1979), we examined the ideology-prejudice confound by manipulating targets' race and political attitudes orthogonally and testing whether these factors have separate (and possibly interactive) effects on liking.

We conducted three studies to examine prejudice differences between conservatives and liberals and to assess the role played by value conflicts, as compared with the target's race. In Study 1, we examined conservatives' and liberals' impressions of social groups from across the entire ideological spectrum, using data from three diverse samples. In Studies 2 and 3, we examined conservatives' and liberals' impressions of target individuals whose race (African American or European American) and attitude position (conservative or liberal) on a variety of divisive political issues were manipulated.

Study 1

We had three goals in Study 1. First, we wanted to test our hypothesis that conservatives will display more prejudice against liberal social groups, whereas liberals will display more prejudice against conservative social groups. We therefore compared conservatives' and liberals' impressions of both liberal groups (e.g., atheists, welfare recipients) and conservative groups (e.g., Christian fundamentalists, businesspeople). Second, we wanted to assess the generalizability of our findings, so we included three different samples of participants (e.g., college students, American adults participating in an online survey). Third, we sought to determine whether personality variables associated with prejudice (e.g., social-dominance orientation, symbolic racism) may explain the hypothesized prejudice differences between conservatives and liberals, so we assessed participants' standing on several such variables.

Method

Participants in Sample 1 were 170 adults in the United States. In exchange for a small payment, they responded to an online survey via Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk. First, they rated the ideological position (1 = *strongly liberal*, 5 = *strongly conservative*) and their overall impression (1 = *strongly dislike*, 5 = *strongly like*) of 34 target groups (see Table 1); the groups were presented in randomized order. Next, participants completed individual difference measures of system justification (Kay & Jost, 2003), symbolic racism (Henry & Sears, 2002), right-wing authoritarianism (Altemeyer, 1981), and social-dominance orientation (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994). Finally, they answered demographic items, including an item assessing their own ideological position (1 = *strongly liberal*, 5 = *strongly conservative*).

Table 1. Study 1: Average Ideology and Impression Ratings of the Target Groups

Target group	Average rating of the target group's ideology (Sample 1)	Sample 1 (MTurk)		Sample 2 (UF students)		Sample 3 (ANES)	
		Liberals' mean impression rating	Conservatives' mean impression rating	Liberals' mean impression rating	Conservatives' mean impression rating	Liberals' mean impression rating	Conservatives' mean impression rating
Liberal groups							
Liberals	1.29	4.12	2.23	76.00	44.74	66.86	39.95
Gays and lesbians	1.63	3.93	2.52	76.02	65.83	54.29	31.50
Civil-rights leaders	1.68	3.97	3.03	77.98	72.43	59.11	42.16
Radical students	1.72	3.36	1.84	49.68	33.87	36.86	20.17
Democrats	1.78	3.97	2.39	74.27	47.17	66.03	56.95
Feminists	1.82	3.49	2.65	71.95	49.83	61.70	45.57
Environmentalists	1.90	3.90	2.87	72.39	70.57	75.61	62.45
Labor unions	1.96	3.44	2.19	58.29	43.52	54.86	45.56
Young people	1.99	3.81	3.68	79.34	72.74	77.14	75.02
Poor people	2.04	3.65	3.35	59.00	49.74	70.33	68.22
Atheists	2.05	3.72	2.26	53.68	47.70	—	—
People on welfare	2.09	3.24	2.35	53.51	43.57	53.46	46.02
Black militants	2.10	2.46	1.71	47.27	48.74	28.34	16.89
Drug users	2.20	2.28	1.48	22.98	28.43	—	—
Blacks	2.21	3.63	3.13	68.17	70.17	65.83	61.69
People with AIDS	2.24	3.64	2.97	60.78	54.39	—	—
Illegal aliens	2.27	2.89	1.74	49.61	35.78	40.54	30.39
Communists	2.45	2.59	1.65	33.39	26.39	—	—
Chicanos, Hispanics	2.51	3.57	3.26	69.39	66.00	62.69	59.09
Women	2.76	4.10	4.19	79.49	85.70	80.85	78.74
Average	2.03						
Conservative groups							
Asian Americans	3.20	3.60	3.58	70.90	69.61	64.00	63.67
Middle-class people	3.23	3.72	4.00	81.20	78.17	72.85	76.15
Men	3.31	3.71	3.94	72.80	83.00	—	—
Whites	3.35	3.82	4.19	75.93	83.17	70.61	73.40
Protestants	3.68	3.22	3.77	55.76	63.39	65.98	69.77
Catholics	3.68	3.07	3.70	54.98	71.13	63.15	65.54
Elderly people	3.73	3.79	4.16	70.34	74.91	79.15	79.89
Military	4.02	3.12	4.35	61.68	73.22	59.10	72.66
Businesspeople	4.23	2.24	3.42	50.02	53.65	45.43	56.10
Wealthy people	4.23	2.82	3.32	60.93	67.17	—	—
Anti-abortionists	4.24	1.97	3.61	33.98	68.65	39.44	56.78
Republicans	4.49	2.38	4.35	45.56	71.39	51.86	65.47
Christian fundamentalists	4.50	2.12	3.39	37.44	52.04	39.34	57.36
Conservatives	4.65	2.34	4.23	38.46	68.91	46.86	69.85
Average	3.90						

Note: Ideology ratings of the target groups were on a scale from 1 (*strongly liberal*) to 5 (*strongly conservative*). Impression ratings of the groups were on a scale from 1 (*strongly dislike*) to 5 (*strongly like*) in Sample 1, a scale from 1 (*cold/unfavorable*) to 100 (*warm/favorable*) in Sample 2, and a scale from 0 (*cold/unfavorable*) to 100 (*warm/favorable*) in Sample 3. MTurk = Mechanical Turk; UF = University of Florida; ANES = American National Election Surveys.

Sample 2 consisted of 91 University of Florida students who received research credit for participating. In a questionnaire, they rated their overall impression (1 = *cold/unfavorable*, 100 = *warm/favorable*) of each target group in Table 1

and their own ideology (1 = *strongly liberal*, 5 = *strongly conservative*).

Sample 3 consisted of respondents to the American National Election Surveys (ANES), surveys of Americans'

political attitudes and voting behavior conducted semiannually since 1948. Respondents for the years 1972 through 2004 were included in this sample. Of the target groups in Table 1, a subset of 28 appeared in the survey across these years. Because different target groups appeared in different waves of the surveys, the sample sizes varied across target groups (from 4,028 to 18,567 per group; 19,179 total). In each survey, respondents rated their overall impression of each group (0 = *cold/unfavorable*, 100 = *warm/favorable*). They also rated their own ideology (1 = *extremely liberal*, 7 = *extremely conservative*).

Results and discussion

Table 1 presents the mean impression ratings of all target groups as reported by conservatives and liberals in all three samples. Because our main interest was in comparing liberals and conservatives, we excluded politically neutral participants from our analyses of each sample (23%, 30%, and 34% of Samples 1, 2, and 3, respectively). We also excluded non-European Americans to avoid confounding racial ethnicity, ideology, and target group.¹

To determine each target group's ideological position, we used the ideology ratings made by Sample 1 participants. Conservative and liberal participants in this sample agreed about which target groups were more liberal or more conservative (the correlation between their average ideology ratings was .97, $p_{\text{rep}} = .99$). Therefore, we averaged their ratings (see Table 1) and classified target groups rated below the midpoint (3) of the scale as the *liberal groups* (20 total; e.g., people on welfare, atheists, Blacks) and those above the midpoint as the *conservative groups* (14 total; e.g., middle-class people,

Protestants, Whites). In each sample, impression ratings were averaged across all of the groups within each category (liberal or conservative). These composite impression ratings were analyzed in separate 2 (participant's ideology) \times 2 (target group's ideology), mixed analyses of variance (ANOVAs), with target groups as a within-subjects variable.

The results, displayed in Table 2, strongly support our value-conflict hypothesis: Politically liberal groups were rated more favorably by liberals than by conservatives, whereas politically conservative groups were rated more favorably by conservatives than by liberals. These patterns were confirmed by a significant Participant's Ideology \times Target Group's Ideology interaction in each sample. Thus, results were consistent with our argument that value conflicts play a key role in prejudice: Conservatives expressed more prejudice than liberals against social groups endorsing liberal values, but less prejudice than liberals against groups endorsing conservative values. It is worth noting that within each sample, the liberal-conservative difference in liking, as measured by Cohen's d , was comparable for the two ideological target-group categories, but in each case, the two effects were in opposite directions (see Table 2), with each participant group seeming to be prejudiced against its ideological opposite.

Can these findings be explained by conservative-liberal differences in system justification, social-dominance orientation, symbolic racism, or right-wing authoritarianism? Table 3 shows that conservatives in Sample 1 scored higher than liberals on all four of these measures, as in past research (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003). In turn, higher scores on these measures were associated with less favorable impressions of (i.e., higher prejudice toward) liberal groups and more favorable impressions of (i.e., lower prejudice toward)

Table 2. Study 1: Effect of Participant's Ideology and Target Group's Ideology on Impression Ratings

Sample and target group's ideological category	Liberals' mean impression rating	Conservatives' mean impression rating	t test for difference	Effect size (Cohen's d)	Participant's Ideology \times Target Group's Ideology interaction
Sample 1 (MTurk respondents)					$F(1, 97) = 108.60^{***}$
Liberal target groups	3.48 (0.58)	2.57 (0.65)	$t(97) = 6.95^{***}$	1.23	
Conservative target groups	2.99 (0.66)	3.86 (0.48)	$t(97) = -6.54^{***}$	1.22	
Sample 2 (UF students)					$F(1, 62) = 38.20^{***}$
Liberal target groups	61.66 (13.51)	52.87 (17.15)	$t(62) = 2.27^*$	0.57	
Conservative target groups	57.86 (13.05)	69.89 (16.66)	$t(62) = -3.20^{**}$	0.78	
Sample 3 (ANES respondents)					$F(1, 10559) = 4,700.93^{***}$
Liberal target groups	61.16 (12.77)	49.87 (12.66)	$t(10584) = 43.72^{***}$	0.82	
Conservative target groups	56.13 (15.37)	68.11 (13.38)	$t(10562) = -41.69^{***}$	0.79	

Note: Standard deviations are in parentheses. Impression ratings of the groups were on a scale from 1 (*strongly dislike*) to 5 (*strongly like*) in Sample 1, a scale from 1 (*cold/unfavorable*) to 100 (*warm/favorable*) in Sample 2, and a scale from 0 (*cold/unfavorable*) to 100 (*warm/favorable*) in Sample 3. MTurk = Mechanical Turk; UF = University of Florida; ANES = American National Election Surveys.

* $p_{\text{rep}} > .88$. ** $p_{\text{rep}} > .95$. *** $p_{\text{rep}} > .99$.

Table 3. Study 1: Correlations Among Ideology, Individual Difference Measures, and Impressions of Liberal and Conservative Groups in Sample 1

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Participant's ideology (conservative)	—					
2. System justification	.25*	—				
3. Right-wing authoritarianism	.72***	.30**	—			
4. Symbolic racism	.58***	.08	.54***	—		
5. Social-dominance orientation	.52***	.06	.55***	.63***	—	
6. Impression: liberal groups	-.64***	-.21*	-.66***	-.69***	-.62***	—
7. Impression: conservative groups	.58***	.41***	.59***	.32**	.21*	-.21*

Note: Higher impression ratings indicate more favorable impressions.

* $p_{rep} > .88$. ** $p_{rep} > .95$. *** $p_{rep} > .99$.

conservative groups. Nonetheless, the Participant's Ideology \times Target Group's Ideology interaction remained significant when these measures were statistically controlled for, either individually, all $F_s(1, 95-96) > 22.01$, $p_{rep} > .99$, or in combination, $F(1, 92) = 12.88$, $p_{rep} > .99$. In short, the observed prejudice differences between liberals and conservatives cannot be explained purely in terms of these individual differences.

In all three samples, impression differences between liberals and conservatives were strongly related to the target group's perceived ideological extremity (i.e., ratings of how liberal or conservative the target group is), $r_s > .84$, $p_{rep} > .99$. Perceived ideological extremity is itself a function of several factors, including controllability of group membership (voluntarily choosing membership or being assigned it by birth; Crandall et al., 2001) and news coverage of group positions (e.g., poll results, publicized advocacy of hot-button political issues). For example, Table 1 shows that conservatives are more negative toward feminists, radical students, and militant Blacks—strongly left-leaning groups that are voluntarily joined and widely publicized for their positions—than toward women, young people, and Blacks—more center-left, involuntary groups.

In summary, our findings strongly support the value-conflict hypothesis, illustrate the confound between a group's race or majority/minority status and its members' perceived political attitudes, and suggest that the prejudice gap appears, disappears, or reverses when this confound is taken into account.

Studies 2 and 3

As discussed earlier, prior studies on the conservative-liberal prejudice gap have typically confounded the target group's race (or majority/minority status) and political attitudes. To address this confound and provide more direct tests of our hypothesis (given that naturally occurring groups differ on numerous dimensions simultaneously), we examined conservatives' and liberals' impressions of targets whose race (European or African American) and attitude position (conservative or liberal) were manipulated independently.

Method

In Study 2, participants were 67 European American adults in the United States. They completed an online survey on Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk in exchange for a small payment. They first answered demographic questions, including a rating of their political ideology (1 = *strongly liberal*, 5 = *strongly conservative*). Next, they rated their impression of target persons (1 = *strongly negative*, 5 = *strongly positive*) who systematically varied in their race (African American or European American) and attitude position (conservative or liberal) on each of six divisive political issues (welfare, affirmative action, wealth redistribution, legalized abortion, gun control, and the Iraq War). For example, they were asked to rate an African American who favored welfare, a European American who favored welfare, an African American who opposed welfare, and a European American who opposed welfare. The order of the six political issues and the race and attitude position of the target person within issues were randomized. Finally, participants completed individual difference measures of system justification (Kay & Jost, 2003), modern racism (McConahay, 1986), and attitudes toward Blacks (Brigham, 1993).

Because repeated measures designs highlight similarities and differences across stimulus conditions, we conducted Study 3, a replication using a between-subjects design. The procedure, materials, and scales were the same as those in Study 2, except that each participant (152 European American Mechanical Turk respondents in the United States) rated only one of the four target persons (an African American or European American who held liberal or conservative positions on all six issues).²

Results and discussion

In Study 2, impression ratings were averaged and submitted to a 2 (participant's ideology) \times 2 (target's race) \times 2 (target's attitudes) mixed ANOVA, with participants' ideology as the only between-subjects variable. The results, displayed in Table 4, indicate that the target's (conservative or liberal) attitude

Table 4. Study 2: Effect of Participant's Ideology, Target's Race, and Target's Attitude Position on Impression Ratings

Target's race and attitude position	Liberals' mean impression rating	Conservatives' mean impression rating	t test for difference	Effect size (Cohen's d)
African American, liberal	3.56 (0.73)	2.60 (0.60)	$t(65) = 5.55^{***}$	1.17
European American, liberal	3.59 (0.75)	2.63 (0.65)	$t(65) = 5.35^{***}$	1.13
Average: liberal targets	3.57 (0.73)	2.61 (0.61)	$t(65) = 5.53^{***}$	1.16
African American, conservative	2.52 (0.77)	3.48 (0.63)	$t(65) = -5.26^{***}$	1.13
European American, conservative	2.52 (0.80)	3.48 (0.58)	$t(65) = -5.25^{***}$	1.12
Average: conservative targets	2.52 (0.78)	3.48 (0.59)	$t(65) = -5.32^{***}$	1.13

Note: Standard deviations are in parentheses. Impression ratings were on a scale from 1 (*strongly negative*) to 5 (*strongly positive*).
 $^{***}p_{rep} > .99$.

position mattered, but the target's race did not. Neither the main effect of target's race nor its interaction with participant's ideology was significant ($F_s < 1$); conservatives and liberals both rated African American targets just as favorably as European American targets. However, targets with liberal attitude positions were rated more favorably by liberals than by conservatives, and this was true for both African American and European American targets. Conversely, targets with conservative attitude positions were rated more favorably by conservatives than by liberals, and this was true for both African American and European American targets. This pattern was confirmed by a significant Participant's Ideology \times Target's Attitude interaction, $F(1, 65) = 33.94$, $p_{rep} > .99$. Even more conclusive evidence that the prejudice gap is accounted for by value differences rather than by racial differences is provided by the fact that conservatives rated African American targets with conservative attitude positions more favorably than European American targets with liberal attitude positions, paired $t(24) = 3.53$, $p_{rep} > .98$, whereas liberals rated them less favorably, paired $t(41) = -5.00$, $p_{rep} > .99$.

As Table 5 shows, conservatives in Study 2 scored higher than liberals on system justification, modern racism, and attitudes toward Blacks (the latter coded so that higher scores

reflected more anti-Black attitudes). In turn, higher scores on these scales were associated with less favorable impressions of (i.e., higher prejudice toward) both European American and African American liberal targets, and more favorable impressions of (i.e., lower prejudice toward) both European American and African American conservative targets. Could these differences account for the liberal-conservative differences in liking of liberal and conservative targets? The Participant's Ideology \times Target's Attitude interaction remained significant even when scores on these scales were controlled, either individually, all $F_s(1, 63-64) > 21.93$, $p_{rep} > .99$, or in combination, $F(1, 61) = 15.81$, $p_{rep} > .99$. Once again, conservatives and liberals expressed greater prejudice against targets whose attitudes opposed their own regardless of the targets' race, and these differences cannot be explained purely in terms of differences in system justification or associated variables.

Study 3 had a 2 (participant's ideology) \times 2 (target's race) \times 2 (target's attitudes) between-subjects factorial design. As shown in Table 6, the patterns were identical to those obtained in Study 2, even though each participant rated only one target (so that we could avoid the repeated measures issue). The Participant's Ideology \times Target's Attitude interaction was significant, $F(1, 144) = 78.67$, $p_{rep} > .99$; none of the main effects or

Table 5. Study 2: Correlations Among Ideology, Individual Difference Measures, and Target Impression Ratings

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Participant's ideology (conservative)	—						
2. System justification	.38**	—					
3. Modern racism	.38**	.27*	—				
4. Attitudes toward Blacks	.28*	.25*	.91***	—			
5. Impression: AA liberal targets	-.63***	-.35**	-.56***	-.51***	—		
6. Impression: EA liberal targets	-.63***	-.43***	-.53***	-.46***	.96***	—	
7. Impression: AA conservative targets	.59***	.49***	.40**	.33**	-.81***	-.79***	—
8. Impression: EA conservative targets	.57***	.50***	.43***	.36**	-.81***	-.80***	.96***

Note: Higher scores on the measure of attitudes toward Blacks (Brigham, 1993) indicate more anti-Black attitudes. Higher impression ratings indicate more favorable impressions of the target. AA = African American; EA = European American. Ratings of EA and AA targets did not differ significantly within either level of target's ideology (liberal, conservative), whereas ratings of liberal and conservative targets differed significantly within each level of target's race (EA, AA).

* $p_{rep} > .88$. ** $p_{rep} > .95$. *** $p_{rep} > .99$.

Table 6. Study 3: Effect of Participant's Ideology, Target's Race, and Target's Attitude Position on Impression Ratings

Target's race and attitude position	Liberals' mean impression rating	Conservatives' mean impression rating	t test for difference	Effect size (Cohen's d)
African American, liberal	3.94 (0.97)	1.57 (0.79)	$t(38) = 6.05^{***}$	1.82
European American, liberal	3.76 (1.15)	2.00 (1.16)	$t(22) = 3.42^{**}$	1.27
Average: liberal targets	3.88 (1.02)	1.79 (0.98)	$t(62) = 6.84^{***}$	1.57
African American, conservative	1.86 (1.41)	3.57 (1.22)	$t(47) = -4.66^{***}$	1.23
European American, conservative	1.74 (0.98)	3.33 (1.30)	$t(37) = -4.22^{***}$	1.22
Average: conservative targets	1.81 (1.07)	3.46 (1.24)	$t(86) = -6.32^{***}$	1.22

Note: Standard deviations are in parentheses. Impression ratings were on a scale from 1 (strongly negative) to 5 (strongly positive).

** $p_{rep} > .95$. *** $p_{rep} > .99$.

other interactions were, $F_s(1, 144) < 1$. Once again, targets with liberal attitude positions were rated more favorably by liberals than by conservatives, and targets with conservative attitude positions were rated less favorably by liberals than by conservatives. Moreover, this was true for both African American and European American targets.

As Table 7 shows, conservatives again scored higher than liberals on system justification, modern racism, and attitudes toward Blacks. In turn, higher scores on these scales were associated with less favorable impressions of liberal targets, and more favorable impressions of conservative targets, regardless of the targets' race. These individual differences once again cannot account for the between-groups differences in liking of liberal and conservative targets. The Participant's Ideology \times Target's Attitude interaction remained significant even when scores on these scales were controlled, either individually, all $F_s(1, 137-143) > 76.52$, $p_{rep}s > .99$, or in combination, $F(1, 135) = 78.92$, $p_{rep} > .99$. Thus, the between-groups prejudice differences cannot be explained purely in terms of

differences in system justification, modern racism, or attitudes toward Blacks.

General Discussion

People perceive groups as comprising members who generally share common characteristics, including goals, attitudes, and values (Wilder, 1978). In Study 1, liberals and conservatives showed high agreement in how they categorized each group's political ideology (Sample 1). These judgments were generally consistent with data from national surveys describing the ideological predilections of different groups, at least in cases for which such data are available. For example, African Americans and unions are seen as and actually exhibit liberal attitudes and voting records, whereas members of religious groups and the military are seen as and actually exhibit conservative attitudes and voting records (Brooks, 2010; Newport, Jones, & Saad, 2011a, 2011b). Thus, there was considerable agreement and accuracy in the categorization of the groups'

Table 7. Study 3: Correlations Among Ideology, Individual Difference Measures, and Target Impression Ratings

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Participant's ideology (conservative)	—			
2. System justification	.43***	—		
3. Modern racism	.45***	.27**	—	
4. Attitudes toward Blacks	.33***	.10	.82***	—
5. Impression: AA liberal targets	-.74***	-.44**	-.68***	-.50**
6. Impression: EA liberal targets	-.71***	-.48*	-.78***	-.60**
7. Impression: AA conservative targets	.57***	.47**	.35*	.30*
8. Impression: EA conservative targets	.53**	.61***	.20	.11

Note: Sample sizes in the target conditions were as follows—African American (AA) liberal: 40; European American (EA) liberal: 24; AA conservative: 49; EA conservative: 39. Higher scores on the measure of attitudes toward Blacks (Brigham, 1993) indicate more anti-Black attitudes. Higher impression ratings indicate more favorable impressions of the target. Ratings of the EA and AA targets did not differ significantly within either level of target's ideology (liberal, conservative), whereas ratings of the liberal and conservative targets differed significantly within each level of target's race (EA, AA).

* $p_{rep} > .88$. ** $p_{rep} > .95$. *** $p_{rep} > .99$.

political leanings (see Jussim, Cain, Crawford, Harber, & Cohen, 2009).

People liked groups who were ideologically similar to themselves far more than groups who were ideologically dissimilar to themselves. The effect sizes for differences between liberals' and conservatives' ratings were similar for liberal and conservative target groups within all three samples in Study 1, but in each case, the direction of the difference was opposite for liberal and conservative targets. Liberal groups were liked more by liberals than by conservatives, whereas conservative groups were liked more by conservatives than by liberals. This pattern highlights the typical confounding of minority (or outsider) groups and perceived liberal attitudes. If we had selected as targets only groups that are usually identified as minorities (e.g., homosexuals, African Americans) and that are seen as favoring liberal positions, our results would have led to the conclusion that conservatives are prejudiced whereas liberals are not. However, liberals exhibit similar prejudice (less liking) toward groups that are identified as conservative (e.g., Protestants, businesspeople).

The groups in Study 1 were classified on the basis of their perceived standing on a liberal-conservative continuum, but these naturally occurring groups may have varied on other dimensions. To determine if similarities and dissimilarities in political ideologies are a sufficient basis for prejudice, in Studies 2 and 3 we orthogonally manipulated two crucial qualities of each target: race and political attitudes (modifying a procedure used by Rokeach, 1960). The results were striking and supported our interpretation of the results of Study 1. Neither liberals' nor conservatives' ratings were affected by the race of the target, but both groups' ratings were strongly influenced by the target's political attitudes. Liberals liked liberal targets more, and conservative targets less, than conservatives liked them. The results seem straightforward: Conservatives' lower ratings of African Americans derive from perceived ideological dissimilarities, not from race per se. Conversely, liberals' higher ratings of African Americans derive from perceived ideological similarities, not open-mindedness per se.

Historically, conservatism has been linked to prejudice, either directly or indirectly through personality traits and attitudes associated with conservatism (e.g., system justification, right-wing authoritarianism; Hodson & Busseri, 2012; Sibley & Duckitt, 2008). These personality and attitudinal qualities are often regarded as flaws or problems because of this link. The implicit assumption is that liberals do not exhibit prejudice because they do not have the attitudes or personality characteristics that lead conservatives to bigotry. Indeed, the qualities usually associated with liberals, such as open-mindedness and tolerance, are ones that connote the absence of prejudice, not simply different prejudices.

Our results, however, indicate that prejudice is not the province of only one side of the political spectrum. Both liberals and conservatives dislike individuals and groups who oppose their political attitudes and (presumably) their visions of a preferred society. In the United States, conservatives

emphasize personal responsibility, transcendent religious beliefs, and fairness defined by equity, whereas liberals emphasize the power of the situation, secular beliefs that oppose the Judeo-Christian tradition, and fairness defined by equality (Newport, 2011; Schlenker et al., 2012). When surveys ask about target groups that emphasize personal responsibility and traditional moral values, such as religious groups in the Judeo-Christian tradition (Protestants, Catholics, and Christian fundamentalists; Study 1), liberals exhibit greater prejudice than conservatives do. Liberals dislike individuals and groups that want to perpetuate the status quo as much as conservatives dislike individuals and groups that want to change it.

These preferences are consistent with ideological differences in the moral foundations of liberalism and conservatism. Liberals emphasize individualizing moral foundations, which respect the rights and welfare of other people (caring, fairness), whereas conservatives emphasize these plus binding foundations, which draw people together into groups (in-group loyalty, respect for authorities, sanctity; Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009). Groups that are exemplars of binding foundations—groups that represent cultural traditions, legitimate authorities, and transcendent moral beliefs—are ones that are usually against social change. These groups, preferred by conservatives but not liberals, are usually not selected as targets in prejudice research.

Individual difference measures

System justification, social-dominance orientation, right-wing authoritarianism, and racism-related constructs (symbolic racism, modern racism, and attitudes toward Blacks) are individual differences that are usually associated with prejudice. In all three studies, our finding that people like individuals and groups who have political ideologies similar to their own and dislike those who have ideologies dissimilar to their own remained after we controlled for these individual differences. Thus, the prejudice differences between conservatives and liberals cannot be attributed to these constructs.

The individual difference measures also had consistent effects of their own. When participants evaluated group (Study 1) or individual (Studies 2 and 3) targets, these measures were negatively related to liking of liberal targets but positively related to liking of conservative targets. In other words, people who scored lower on these scales, and hence were more likely to be liberals and to be described as non-prejudiced, showed greater disliking of conservative individuals and groups, just as they showed greater liking of liberal targets. Conversely, people who scored higher on these scales, and hence were more likely to be conservatives and to be described as prejudiced, showed greater disliking of liberal targets, just as they showed greater liking of conservative targets. The symmetry of these correlations is striking and again supports the value-conflict hypothesis, not the view that conservatives are prejudiced and liberals are not.

If the three racism-related scales we used primarily measured racial prejudice, one would expect them to have been strongly related to the manipulation of the target's race in Studies 2 and 3. However, if they tapped into ideological differences, one would expect them to have been strongly related to the manipulation of the target's political attitudes. Only the second pattern was found. Higher scores were related to lower ratings of liberal targets but higher ratings of conservative targets. In contrast, with the target's ideology held constant, the correlations between scale scores and prejudice were comparable regardless of the target's race. To approach racism subtly, these scales include items dealing with legitimate ideological disagreements (e.g., issues of equity vs. equality, role of government in imposing its definition of fairness), and this accounts for these patterns. Similar infusions of ideological attitudes and values can be identified in the other individual difference scales we used (e.g., the system-justification and social-dominance orientation scales contain a preponderance of items dealing with preferences for equity vs. equality, and acceptance vs. rejection of the current social system). Thus, we expected scores on all of these scales to be positively related to evaluations of conservative targets and negatively related to evaluations of liberal targets, and this is precisely what was found.

Concluding comments

Conservatives' opposition to social welfare programs or to policies that give preferential treatment to racial minority groups should not be taken as prima facie evidence of antiminority prejudice. It instead may reflect principled opposition to policies that conflict with core conservative values of individualism, self-reliance, and small government. Further, equality of outcomes should not be regarded as the only reasonable or defensible objective of social policy and the only way to define social fairness. There are legitimate disagreements about whether fairness should be defined on the basis of equity, equality, need (from each according to ability, to each according to need), or even some combination of these. To assume that only one definition of fairness is legitimate, and then to evaluate liberals and conservatives according to whether or not they agree with one's definition, is to inject personal values and political ideology into the analysis. Tetlock and his colleagues (e.g., Arkes & Tetlock, 2004; Tetlock, 1994) discussed some of the implicit assumptions and values, usually reflecting a liberal ideology, that have been introduced into political psychology and warned against the dangers of politicizing scientific theories and their implications for public policies. To the extent that social scientists operate under one set of assumptions and values, and fail to recognize important alternatives, their scientific conclusions (including those regarding differences in prejudice between people with different ideologies) and social-policy recommendations are likely to be tainted.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared that they had no conflicts of interest with respect to their authorship or the publication of this article.

Notes

1. The same patterns were obtained when we included non-European Americans in the analysis. In Samples 1 and 3, the only two samples for which we had information on participants' racial ethnicity, we found the same Participant's Ideology \times Target Group's Ideology interactions as reported here ($p_{\text{rep}s} > .99$). Liberal groups were rated more favorably by liberals than by conservatives, and conservative groups were rated more favorably by conservatives than by liberals ($p_{\text{rep}s} > .99$).
2. We excluded data from 23 politically neutral and 14 non-European American participants in Study 2 and from 47 politically neutral and 31 non-European American participants in Study 3. Including the data of the non-European Americans did not change any of the patterns of the results or our conclusions.

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