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Intergroup Attitudes and Values in Response to the U.S. Invasion of Iraq

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This study analyzed a dataset in which approximately one-half of the sample (all U.S. college students) participated just prior to the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, and the remainder participated in the weeks following the initial invasion. Results indicated that wartime participants increasingly valued power and superiority, scoring significantly higher on social dominance orientation and self-enhancement values relative to pre-war participants. Wartime participants also highly valued social control and security, scoring significantly higher on right-wing authoritarianism and conservatism values compared to pre-war participants. These results demonstrate that psychological orientations (attitudes and values) vary as a function of unfolding historical events.

A number of studies find that social dominance orientation (SDO; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) and right-wing authoritarianism (RWA; Altemeyer, 1998) correlate with support for various forms of intergroup inequality and domination. For instance, both constructs are associated with support for the ongoing war effort in Iraq (McFarland, 2005), as well as prejudice against multiple groups including women, gays and lesbians, and African Americans (e.g., Altemeyer, 1998; Whitley, 2002). Such findings are often taken as evidence of SDO and RWA's causal roles in determining a host of group-based attitudes. However, focusing exclusively on the causal role of these

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orientations in predicting support for political and ideological stances obscures the fact that these constructs are themselves products of the context of intergroup relations. In addition to documented variations in levels of SDO and RWA according to existing social status (e.g., Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), a number of experiments have found that changes in the context of intergroup relations have a causal effect on levels of these variables (e.g., Guimond, Dambrun, Michinov, & Duarte, 2003; Reicher & Haslam, 2006; Schmitt, Branscombe, & Kappen, 2003). What researchers have not yet demonstrated, however, is whether SDO and RWA vary as a function of contemporary historical events unfolding outside of the laboratory.

In this investigation we examined SDO and RWA in the context of the recent U.S. invasion of Iraq. In addition, we explored two sets of values closely associated with these constructs to more fully assess the nature of this war's effects on individual psychology. Specifically, we examined self-enhancement values (which tend to be related to SDO among high status groups) and conservatism values (which tend to be related to RWA; Cohrs, Moschner, Maes, & Kielmann, 2005; Duriez & Van Hiel, 2002).

SDO AND RWA

SDO is "the degree to which individuals desire and support group-based hierarchy and the domination of 'inferior' groups by 'superior' groups," (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; p. 48) regardless of their own position in the social hierarchy. SDO is conceptualized as an individual difference variable, and is assumed to be a relatively stable orientation that people bring with them from context to context, influencing how they respond to intergroup situations. Thus, most research on SDO has focused on the degree to which this construct predicts ideological positions and social policies that maintain or enhance intergroup inequality. SDO predicts prejudice against ethnic minorities, gays and lesbians, and women (e.g., Altemeyer, 1998; Whitley, 2002), as well as favorable attitudes toward capital punishment (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994), support for U.S. action in the 1991 Gulf War (Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius & Liu, 1992), and support for the 2003 war against Iraq (Crowson, DeBacker, & Thoma, 2005; McFarland, 2005).

The related construct of RWA is conceptualized as an individual difference variable consisting of three components: (a) submission to authority; (b) aggression toward socially sanctioned target groups; and (c) adherence to established social conventions and beliefs, including conservative ideologies (Altemeyer, 1996, 1998). Like SDO, RWA is assumed to be a relatively stable orientation influencing how people react to intergroup situations. Thus, most research on RWA concerns the extent to which this construct

predicts equality-attenuating ideological positions and policies. For example, RWA predicts prejudice against numerous minority groups (e.g., Altemeyer, 1998; Whitley, 2002), harsher punishments for those who violate the law (Altemeyer, 1998), support for U.S. action in the 1991 Gulf War (Doty, Winter, Peterson, & Kemmelmeier, 1997; Duncan & Stewart, 1995), and support for the 2003 Iraq war (Crowson et al., 2005; McFarland, 2005).

An alternative conceptualization of SDO and RWA is offered by Duckitt (2001; Duckitt, Wagner, du Plessis, & Birum, 2002), who described each of these constructs as social attitudes reflecting different motivational goals. Among dominant groups, SDO is assumed to reflect the motivational goals of power, dominance, and superiority; and RWA is assumed to reflect the motivational goals of social control and security. Consistent with this, research on Schwartz's (1992) typology of values indicates that SDO does correlate positively with the three self-enhancement subscales—power, achievement, and hedonism—whereas RWA correlates positively with the three conservatism subscales—security, conformity, and tradition (Cohrs et al., 2005; Duriez & Van Hiel, 2002; Lehmler, 2003; McFarland & Adelson, 1996).

To date, most work on SDO and RWA assumes that these constructs have a causal influence on support for specific manifestations of intergroup inequality and domination (e.g., high levels of SDO and RWA caused support for the Iraq wars). However, more recent research has examined these variables as responses to and functions of the context of intergroup relations (e.g., the wars with Iraq may have caused higher levels of SDO and RWA). For instance, studies have found that both constructs are responsive to social norms. With regard to SDO, Guimond et al. (2003) found that law students (i.e., students in a hierarchy-enhancing academic major) expressed higher SDO than psychology students (i.e., students in a hierarchy-attenuating academic major). Furthermore, they found the greatest difference between majors among upper-level students, suggesting an effect of socialization across time. Likewise, Sinclair, Sidanius, and Levin (1998) found that as people spent more time in hierarchy-attenuating environments, they exhibited lower SDO scores. With regard to RWA, Siegel and Siegel (1957) found that women who lived in dormitories with liberal norms showed a significant decline in authoritarianism over a 1-year period, making them increasingly different from women who lived in more conservative sororities.

In addition to the influence of social norms, SDO and RWA are also affected by the social structural position of contextually relevant in-groups. Social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) assumes a motivation to protect in-group identities and would predict that compared to subordinate groups, dominant groups will more readily (but not inevitably; see Reicher

& Haslam, 2006) accept ideological positions that support the legitimacy of their dominant social position. For example, high status groups typically express higher levels of SDO than members of low status groups (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In experimental research, Guimond et al. (2003) found that people randomly assigned to dominant social positions scored higher on SDO than people who were not placed in such positions. Schmitt et al. (2003) found that participants led to believe that their in-group was privileged scored higher on SDO than participants led to believe that they possessed a disadvantaged in-group status. As reported by Sidanius and Pratto (1999), Levin (1996) found that participants scored higher on SDO when thinking about intergroup contexts in which the in-group was in a dominant position, compared to when they were thinking about contexts in which their in-group was lower in social position.

In short, evidence from a growing number of sources suggests that SDO and RWA scores are responsive to changes in the intergroup context, including changes in norms and the social structural position of the in-group. However, most of this work has not addressed whether such scores are responsive to changes that occur outside of controlled laboratory environments. What little work has been done outside of the lab has focused exclusively on socialization influences that unfold over significant periods of time. Far less is known about whether SDO and RWA scores experience shorter-term fluctuations in response to unfolding historical events. We would expect that scores on SDO's and RWA's ideologically related value dimensions (self-enhancement and conservatism) would also vary as a function of the intergroup context, but little research has addressed this idea. As with research on SDO and RWA, most of the work conducted on Schwartz's (1992) values treats them as relatively stable individual difference variables that affect attitudes and behaviors. For instance, values predict sexual (Goodwin et al., 2002), organizational (Smith, 2002), and voting behaviors (Barnea & Schwartz, 1998). Thus, the degree to which these values might vary as a function of the intergroup context is a more open question.

SDO, RWA, AND WAR

Given the contextual variability in SDO and RWA, how might they be affected when an in-group nation wages war against and attempts to dominate an out-group? Assuming that people feel a meaningful connection to their national in-group, they may shift their attitudes to reflect the nation's identity—itsself dependent on the in-group's relation with relevant out-groups. From a self-categorization theory perspective, “referent” social

influence occurs through a process of depersonalization, as the individual self becomes defined as more prototypical of in-group identity (Turner, 1991). Returning to this case, when an in-group nation, led by a conservative and hierarchical government, attempts to militarily dominate an out-group, citizens may respond by endorsing values and ideologies that reflect conservatism, hierarchy, and domination. These predictions are consistent with work suggesting that social groups serve as normative references (Newcomb, 1943) and can affect the endorsement of SDO and RWA through processes of socialization (e.g., Guimond et al., 2003; Levin, 1996). They are also consistent with research demonstrating that high status groups tend to express greater support for group-based dominance than low status groups (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

In addition to the possibility of referent influence, SIT suggests additional reasons why SDO and RWA might increase when the in-group attempts to dominate an out-group. SIT assumes that people are motivated to perceive valued in-groups as distinct from relevant out-groups on subjectively valued dimensions of comparison. When changes in the context of intergroup relations pose a threat to the identity of the in-group (such as during a time of war), people tend to take advantage of opportunities to protect the in-group identity (Branscombe & Wann, 1994; Jetten, Spears, & Postmes, 2004). With regard to an in-group initiated war, one can identify at least two threats to identity. First, and most obvious, when the outcome of a military operation is uncertain, the possibility of a failed operation and reprisals from the out-group represent threats to group identity. Second, when the legitimacy of a military invasion has been contested, a positive in-group identity requires perceiving the in-group's attempts at dominating another nation as justified. Both of these interrelated threats might result in attitudinal changes to protect the in-group identity. For instance, in-group members might experience increased acceptance of intergroup domination (e.g., support for military action) and increased faith in the authorities who initiated attempts at the domination of the out-group (e.g., higher approval ratings for and increased confidence in the Commander-in-Chief's political party) as an attempt to show solidarity for the group under threat and legitimize its actions. Thus, the motivation to see the in-group positively offers additional reasons to expect wartime increases in levels of SDO, RWA, and their ideologically associated value types (i.e., self-enhancement and conservatism). Furthermore, the existence of an intergroup military conflict is likely to heighten the salience of national identity, increasing the likelihood that people will define themselves and endorse attitudes in ways consistent with the in-group's identity.

In summary, when one's in-group nation wages war against a less powerful out-group, one might expect referent influence and threats to in-group

identity to affect in-group members' attitudes and values. In particular, there would seem to be a strong theoretical basis to expect increases in support for group-based dominance and hierarchy when an in-group launches a military strike against a weaker out-group.

STUDY OVERVIEW

We examined U.S. college students' intergroup attitudes and values using a dataset in which approximately one-half of the data were collected in the months prior to the U.S. invasion of Iraq. The remaining data were collected in the weeks following the start of the war. Because participants were not randomly assigned to participate before or during the war, our study is quasi-experimental. Also, given that no students participated in both phases of data collection, this study involves a between-subject design.

We predicted that wartime participants would more strongly endorse SDO and self-enhancement values (achievement, power, and hedonism) relative to pre-war participants (Hypotheses 1a and 1b). Similarly, we predicted that wartime participants would more strongly endorse RWA and conservatism values (conformity, security, and tradition) relative to pre-war participants (Hypotheses 2a and 2b). After testing these hypotheses, we address potential threats to validity due to the quasi-experimental design.

METHOD

Participants

College undergraduates (98 women, 80 men) participated for credit in a general psychology course. On average, participants were 19.5 years old ($SD = 2.36$). We organized the students into two groups depending on date of participation. Students who participated prior to the first day of the Iraq war (33 men, 44 women) were considered the "pre-war" group (data collected from December 1, 2002–March 18, 2003), whereas students who participated on or after the start of the war (47 men, 54 women) were considered the "wartime" group (data collected from March 19, 2003–April 9, 2003).

Materials and Procedures

Participants were recruited for a study of "social perceptions." After providing informed consent, participants were given a packet consisting of

the measures described later. After completing the questionnaire, participants were fully debriefed.

SDO. We measured SDO with the 16-item version of the scale (Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; $\alpha = .91$). Sample items include "inferior groups should stay in their place" and "no one group should dominate in society" (reverse scored). These items were rated on a 9-point scale ranging from -4 (*very strong disagreement*) to $+4$ (*very strong agreement*). Average SDO scores were computed with higher scores indicating higher SDO.

RWA. We measured RWA with the 32-item version of the scale (Altemeyer, 1998; $\alpha = .94$). Sample items include "what our country needs *most* is discipline, with everyone following our leaders in unity" and "there is absolutely nothing wrong with nudist camps" (reverse scored). These items were rated on the same 9-point scale as the SDO measure. Average RWA scores were computed with higher scores indicating higher RWA.

Schwartz Value Survey. We measured self-enhancement and conservatism values with the 56-item Schwartz Value Survey (Schwartz, 1992). Sample items include "independent," "honest," "freedom," "pleasure," and "respect for tradition." These items were rated "as a guiding principle in my life" on a 9-point scale ranging from $+7$ (*of supreme importance*), $+6$ (*very important*), $+5$ and $+4$ (these were unlabeled), $+3$ (*important*), $+2$ and $+1$ (these were also unlabeled), 0 (*not important*), to -1 (*opposed to my values*). The mean importance ratings for all of the items tapping self-enhancement and conservatism were calculated. For self-enhancement values, we collapsed across the power, achievement, and hedonism subscales ($\alpha = .85$). For conservatism, we averaged across the security, conformity, and tradition subscales ($\alpha = .79$). Schwartz's self-transcendence and openness to change values were also assessed. Thus, for self-transcendence, we averaged across all of the items tapping benevolence and universalism ($\alpha = .71$); for openness to change, we averaged across all of the items tapping self-direction and stimulation ($\alpha = .77$). Although we only expected shifts in the endorsement of values relevant to group-based dominance and hierarchy (i.e., self-enhancement and conservatism), these other values were analyzed to determine whether the wartime sample was systematically different from the pre-war sample in their overall value structure.

Schwartz (1992) specified criteria for excluding data from participants who did not put forth the effort necessary to distinguish among their value priorities. Schwartz excluded participants who made a response of 7 (*of supreme importance*) more than 21 times and respondents who made any other single response more than 35 times. We adopted these criteria in this

study as well. A total of 23 (12 pre-war, 11 wartime) participants met the criteria and were excluded from all analyses. This number is consistent with the proportion of participants excluded in Schwartz's own research.¹

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

We first conducted a series of analyses of variance (ANOVAs) to examine whether there were any gender effects on our major dependent variables of interest. Results indicated that men ($M = -1.29$, $SD = 1.28$) scored marginally higher on SDO than women ($M = -1.65$, $SD = 1.27$), $F(1, 153) = 3.12$, $p = .079$. In addition, men ($M = -0.94$, $SD = 1.23$) scored higher on RWA than women ($M = -1.43$, $SD = 1.09$), $F(1, 153) = 6.94$, $p = .009$. No significant gender differences in self-enhancement, $F(1, 153) = 0.08$, $p = .776$, or conservatism, $F(1, 153) = 0.26$, $p = .609$, emerged. Finally, no reliable Gender $\times$ Context (wartime vs. pre-war) interactions emerged for SDO, $F(1, 151) = 0.30$, $p = .583$; RWA, $F(1, 151) = 0.58$, $p = .447$; self-enhancement values, $F(1, 151) = 1.99$, $p = .160$; or conservatism values, $F(1, 151) = 0.88$, $p = .349$.

Effects of War on Support for Group-Based Dominance and Hierarchy

Next, a series of ANOVAs was used to test our primary hypotheses. Results indicated that wartime participants ($M = -1.30$, $SD = 1.34$) scored significantly higher on SDO than pre-war participants ($M = -1.73$, $SD = -1.17$), $F(1, 153) = 4.39$, $p = .038$. A similar pattern emerged on the ideologically related value dimension of self-enhancement (wartime: $M = 4.57$, $SD = 0.93$; pre-war: $M = 4.26$, $SD = 0.94$), $F(1, 153) = 4.12$, $p = .044$. Thus, Hypotheses 1a and 1b were supported.

In addition, wartime participants ($M = -0.99$, $SD = 1.05$) rated themselves significantly higher on RWA than pre-war participants ($M = -1.49$, $SD = 1.28$), $F(1, 153) = 7.18$, $p = .008$; with scores on the ideologically related conservatism value dimension exhibiting a similar pattern (wartime: $M = 4.29$, $SD = 0.86$; pre-war: $M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.84$), $F(1, 153) = 3.95$, $p = .049$. Thus, Hypotheses 2a and 2b were supported.

¹We also conducted all analyses with the full sample. Findings from the full sample are consistent with those presented in the Results section and are available on request from the authors.

Further Exploration of Values and Attitudes Across Time

We plotted the standardized mean scores for SDO and RWA during each week of data collection, with the week during which the war began divided into two periods (pre-war vs. wartime). However, because very few data collection sessions happened to be scheduled in the 2 days preceding the war ($n = 7$), the data from these 2 days were averaged with data collected during the last week of February (the next closest week of data collection that occurred prior to the war). Also, data from the first 2 weeks were merged, as were data from the last 2 weeks, given that fewer data collection sessions were scheduled during these times. This ensured that none of the time periods we examined had fewer than 10 participants. We then conducted an ANOVA and examined contrasts between adjacent time periods. As seen in Figure 1, relative to the preceding pre-war period, a significant upward spike occurred at the beginning of the war (March 19, 2003–March 21, 2003) for both SDO (contrast $t[150] = 2.73$, $p = .007$) and RWA (contrast

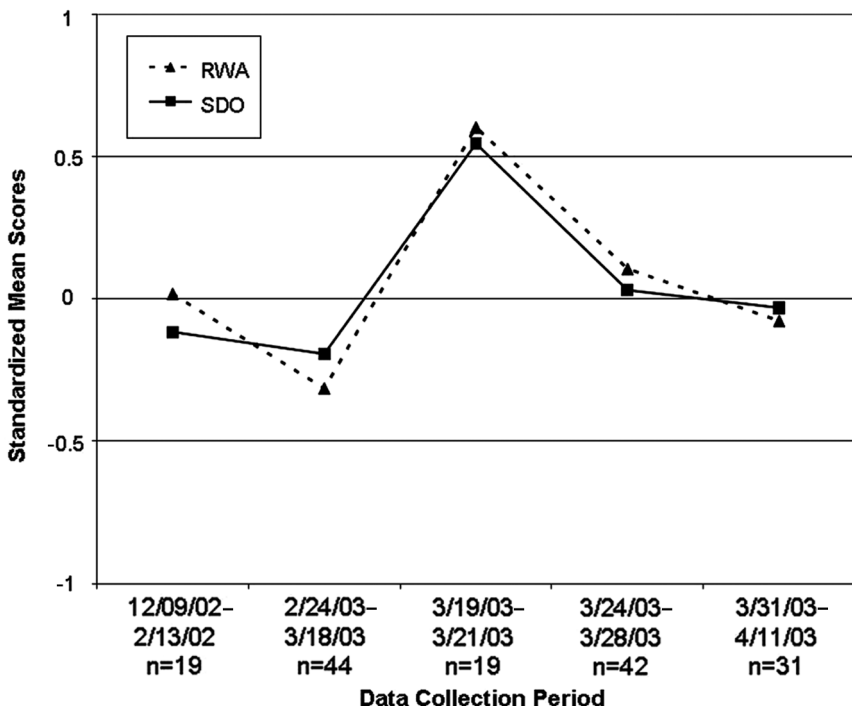


FIGURE 1 Standardized scores of social dominance orientation (SDO) and right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) by data collection period.

$t[150] = 3.44, p = .001$). This peak was followed by a decline in scores in the weeks after the initial days of combat, strongly suggesting that the war was responsible for the observed changes, not some other temporal factor. Aside from the significant increase that occurred at the beginning of the war, comparisons between all other adjacent time periods were nonsignificant.

Addressing Potential Threats to Validity

Our study is quasi-experimental, given that participants were neither randomly assigned to complete the measures in the pre-war versus wartime periods, nor were they asked to provide repeated measures over time. Thus, although we clearly have evidence of a relation between time of participation and ideologies and values, we cannot assume that the initiation of the U.S. war with Iraq had a causal effect on those variables. For example, it could be the case that some other factor associated with time affected the dependent measures—such as stress associated with the time of semester. However, the more detailed analysis of changes across time located the biggest change precisely at the point at which the war began, suggesting that the observed variability across time was particularly influenced by the initiation of military conflict. Another possibility is that the initiation of the war changed who signed up for and participated in the study. It is hard to imagine how the initiation of the war would have influenced participation rates, especially given that none of the recruitment materials mentioned anything about war or international relations. However, it is plausible that participation rates might have dropped after the war began, and that certain types of participants were disproportionately represented among those who dropped out. One possibility is that after the war began, those who were opposed to the war (and were also lower on SDO and RWA) were less likely to sign up and participate, thus increasing the proportion of war supporters in the wartime sample. Although this differential self-selection would fit our pattern of findings, our records indicate that we had approximately the same number of people participating each day both before the war began (11 participants per day) and during the war (10.1 participants per day). Furthermore, during the particular week that the war began, participation rates remained relatively constant and, if anything, slightly increased after the war began.

In addition, the remaining variables we have do not offer any evidence of systemic differences between the pre-war and wartime groups. No significant differences emerged with regard to participant gender or age. Furthermore, pre-war and wartime participants did not significantly differ with respect to the other value orientations we measured (i.e., self-transcendence and openness to change values). Thus, with regard to these additional

measures we administered, it does not appear that the pre-war and wartime samples were systematically different.

Again, however, we should be clear that our explanation for the results is not definitive. Our study would have been much stronger if we had been able to conduct a planned quasi-experiment in which the pre-war and wartime samples were matched both demographically and on a number of variables typically unrelated to SDO and RWA. Such a design would have allowed us to rule out a number of alternative explanations. Also, the fact that we relied on a college student sample is somewhat limiting because college students may be different from the general population when it comes to SDO and RWA (e.g., there may be a restricted range of scores on these constructs among students). Examining the effects of the Iraq war in a diverse probability sample would have granted greater external validity to our findings. Thus, although our design does not inspire the same level of confidence as a true experiment, our results (particularly the exploration of means across data collection periods) suggest that the most plausible explanation for our findings is that the initiation of the war caused an increase in our participants' acceptance of hierarchy and inequality.

DISCUSSION

A number of studies find that SDO and RWA correlate with support for the ongoing war effort in Iraq (Crowson et al., 2005; McFarland, 2005). In addition, both constructs are associated with related factors, such as blind patriotism (i.e., unquestioning allegiance and support for the United States; McFarland, 2005) and bias toward Muslims (Rowatt, Franklin, & Cotton, 2005). These findings are often taken as evidence of SDO and RWA's causal roles in determining a host of group-based attitudes. However, we argue that a focus on how these orientations shape responses to contexts can miss an important part of the story. Specifically, focusing on the causal role of these orientations in predicting support for political and ideological stances overlooks the fact that these constructs are themselves products of the context of intergroup relations. This research speaks to this point in a novel way by demonstrating that both SDO and RWA scores, along with endorsement of their ideologically related values, may vary as a function of contemporary events unfolding outside of the laboratory. Although some researchers stress the relative stability of individual differences in these constructs, these variables can just as easily be described as social products or normative beliefs rooted in group identity and the context of intergroup relations.

Our results are consistent with referent influence—the taking on of prototypical aspects of the in-group identity (Turner, 1991)—and the in-group

protection motives posited by SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Specifically, we found that changes in intergroup relations (in terms of the in-group dominating an out-group) resulted in more favorable attitudes toward group-based dominance and hierarchy. However, because our analyses were conducted using an existing dataset not designed to test our hypotheses, we cannot provide conclusive evidence that group-identity protection served as the motivation for our observed effects. Other explanations are possible. For example, people might express higher SDO and RWA in response to generally threatening social events and situations, regardless of the threat's implications for group identity and status. Consistent with this idea, Duckitt and Fisher (2003) found that RWA scores increased after participants read hypothetical scenarios depicting social threat. Likewise, archival data suggest that authoritarianism tends to increase in times of political or economic threat and disorder, such as the 1991 Persian Gulf crisis (Doty, Peterson, & Winter, 1991) and the Great Depression (Sales, 1973). However, the focus of this archival data was not on RWA scores, but rather on social indicators of authoritarianism such as the rise in authoritarian churches (Sales, 1973) and increased frequency of anti-Semitic vandalism (Doty et al., 1991). Although less research has investigated the effect of threat on SDO, Duckitt's (2001; Duckitt et al., 2002) work would suggest a similar relation with threat, as SDO is predicted by a perception of the world as being a competitive jungle (i.e., a ruthless struggle for power and resources).

Other explanations for our findings include the possibility that war might increase the salience of one's own mortality, particularly as casualties suffered by the in-group mount. From a terror management theory perspective, one might predict that this increased mortality salience would lead to the defense of cultural worldviews (Cohen, Ogilvie, Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 2005). In other words, in-group members might adopt attitudes that would assist in defending their in-group status, as well as their cultural beliefs and practices. Finally, one might predict wartime increases in SDO and RWA as a consequence of justifying a social system (Lerner, 1980). However, all of these perspectives share the common theme of predicting contextual variation in SDO and RWA as a function of in-group behavior and perceptions of the intergroup context.

Will War Always Spark Increases in Support for Group-Based Dominance and Hierarchy?

There are several conditions under which a war would likely *not* lead to increases in support for group-based dominance and hierarchy. For instance, if an in-group government initiates or participates in a war that does not advance the national identity, because either the costs of the war

to the in-group are too high relative to the perceived benefits or because the war lacks legitimacy, one might not expect the same pattern of results to emerge. Indeed, if one were to consider data from another country that signed on for the 2003 invasion of Iraq, but whose citizens did not perceive the invasion as legitimate, the pattern of results runs contrary to the findings reported in this research. Specifically, using data collected in Australia, Heaven, Organ, Supavadeeprasit, and Leeson (2006) found no differences in SDO and RWA scores as a function of whether participants provided responses before or after the commencement of the Iraq war. It is important to note that from the very beginning, support for the Iraq war was always considerably lower among Australians relative to Americans, resulting in a greater number of large antiwar demonstrations taking place in that country (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2003). Thus, because Australians appeared less likely to believe the Iraq war was legitimate and in their country's best interest, it could provide a plausible explanation for why there was no observed effect on support for group-based dominance among citizens of that country. Similarly, although a coalition of troops were initially sent to Iraq (including troops from Australia), the vast majority came from the United States—the chief promoter of the invasion. Thus, with respect to the initial invasion, it was only the United States (and perhaps Britain to a lesser extent) that could be viewed as being in a clear position of dominance. This could also help explain the lack of an apparent increase in support for group dominance among Australians.

Similarly, this reasoning would explain why the U.S. government worked hard to justify the Iraq war prior to its beginning, and also why such a dramatic reversal in public opinion regarding the war has occurred. As the costs of the war mount and justifications for it have been undermined, the military operation now appears in the eyes of many Americans as a stain on U.S. identity, thus eroding support for intragroup hierarchy (as political elites are seen as harming the country's interests) and intergroup domination (as the attack is seen as unjust). Such changes are evident in public opinion polls, which indicate that support for the Iraq war dropped significantly (nearly 20 percentage points) after just the first year (Pew Research Center, 2005). More important, too, a motivated minority protested against the war even before it began, claiming it violated standards of moral behavior and did not advance the interests of U.S. citizens.

Second, if an in-group initiated military effort were designed to create conditions of greater equality between a subordinate in-group and the targeted dominant out-group, the initiation of such a war might lead to ideological shifts *opposite* those found in this research. The same could be said for instances in which an in-group military effort is initiated primarily as a means to free a weak out-group from repression by another, more

powerful out-group—that is, if military action is aimed at overthrowing an oppressive out-group, then ideologies of revolution and equality are more likely to affirm the in-group identity than are ideologies of domination.

If this is true, it would appear ironic that we observed the pattern of effects that we did in this research, given that one of the primary justifications for the U.S. invasion of Iraq—“Operation Iraqi Freedom”—was to bring an end to a dominating, hierarchical regime. However, this was but one of many justifications for the war, and it came second to months of rhetoric regarding “weapons of mass destruction.” Had humanitarian grounds been the only basis for the U.S. invasion, a very different ideology might have been affirmed.

CONCLUSION

These results provide further evidence that attitudes and values are not something that people simply bring with them to intergroup situations (Lehmiller & Schmitt, 2007). Specifically, we found that with regard to the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, the threats posed to members of the dominant country (the United States) by virtue of this war appeared to have implications for people’s evaluations of status relations both within and between groups. Thus, how people respond to measures of support for group-based dominance and hierarchy may vary substantially as a function of contemporary events that occur outside of the laboratory setting.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

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