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MOTIVATED SOCIAL COGNITIONS ABOUT POLITICS: THE EFFECTS OF INTEGRATIVE COMPLEXITY AND INVOLVEMENT ON PERCEPTIONS OF POLITICAL MESSAGES

By

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ABSTRACT

MOTIVATED SOCIAL COGNITIONS ABOUT POLITICS: THE EFFECTS OF INTEGRATIVE COMPLEXITY AND INVOLVEMENT ON PERCEPTIONS OF POLITICAL MESSAGES

By

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Studies of political involvement fail to yield consistent results with regard to involvement's effects on message perception. Possible reasons are the lack of an explanatory cognitive mechanism that underlies involvement, and the failure to account for what type of involvement is being elicited. The purpose of this study is to examine how level of integrative complexity relates to different types of political involvement. This research will then be applied to examine how this relationship effects perceptions of contradiction present within political messages. It is thought that type of involvement will explain the extent to which people bias the political messages they receive. Further, integrative complexity may contribute to theories about who gets involved with politics and the function this involvement serves. It was found that levels of integrative complexity related to outcome-relevant and value-relevant involvement in a positive way. It was also found that people with higher degrees of integrative complexity and outcome or value relevant involvement perceived messages as less contradictory. This relationship was augmented when the messages were from a favored politician. These findings demonstrate that type, and degree, of involvement influence how people pay attention to political messages.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Are college students rational, irrational, or just apathetic when it comes to politics? Researchers disagree about whether or not students are a demographic that merit campaign attention (Eliasoph, 1998; Greenberg, 2003; Putnam, 1996). While it is easy to dismiss young adults as being uncaring about political issues, historical events have repeatedly proven inconsistent with this conclusion. Many student movements have had a significant impact on the political climate of this country, and this shows that students have potential impact. But how can this potential be harnessed? This question is an interdisciplinary concern, and many of the social sciences have attempted to address the roots of civic and political engagement.

One difficulty with this question, however, is that different approaches involve different levels of analysis rendering integration difficult. For example, according to Social Identity Theory (Taijfel, 1981; Turner, 1996; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), political involvement can best be understood as a group phenomenon that is driven by self-categorization stemming from group membership (Cohen, 2003; Duncan, 2005; Huddy, 2001). Cognitive theorists argue that certain people are pre-disposed to political thought (Burdein, Lodge, & Taber, 2006; Caprara, Barbaranelli, & Zimbardo, 1999; Dolan & Holbrook, 2001; Greenberg & Jonas, 1993; Golec, 2002; Lodge & Taber, 2005; Sidanius, 1978, 1988; Skitka & Tetlock, 1993; Tetlock, 1983, 1986; Tetlock, Peterson, & Lerner, 1996). Political scientists often focus on perceptions of legitimacy (Conover, 1988; Jennings, 1991; Jost & Major, 2001), deprivation (see Relative Deprivation Theory, Davis 1959; Crosby, 1976; Foster & Matheson, 1995), or oppression (Corning & Myers, 2002; Lee, 2002)

that incites political activism. An important limitation in each, however, is their failure to amalgamate all levels of information processing from the individual level to the group level.

It is proposed here that both ability and motivation determine how and why college students get involved in politics. Both individual-level and group level factors impact ability and motivation. The specific focus here concerns how students make sense of contradicting political messages and what factors account for these perceptual differences. The answer to this question has important implications for the more general understanding of how people process political messages and why people become politically involved.

One way to examine both motivation and ability is through the cognitive structures that produce patterned information processing. Work on motivated social cognition has demonstrated that certain people are motivated to think about issues in specific ways (Battistich & Aronoff, 1985; Caprara et al., 1999; Greenberg & Jonas, 2003; Schaller, Boyd, Yohannes, & O'Brien, 1995; Webster, 1993). One cognitive construct particularly relevant to political thought is integrative complexity (Caprara et al., 1999; Tetlock, 1983, 1986; Tetlock et al., 1996). Integrative complexity can be defined as the ability to, or degree to which, a person is able to integrate different perspectives into a coherent and comprehensive understanding (Golec, 2002; Tetlock, 1983, 1986; Tetlock et al., 1996; Rosenberg, 1988). This is an ability in that certain people are more capable than others of achieving a more integrated understanding of an event. Integrative complexity is also a motivation because this type of thought is cognitively effortful, and as such, people who tend to put in more effort may naturally be more motivated to process political messages. This motivated social cognition has been shown to be relevant in a political context because it motivates people to scrutinize information contained in messages in distinct and potentially important ways.

Another factor affecting political motivation is involvement. Involvement has generally been defined as the degree to which someone feels something is important (Thomsen, Borgida, & Lavine, 1995). While strength of involvement is considered to be an important factor in message perception, research has suggested that people are involved in different ways (Johnson & Eagly, 1989, 1990), and that different types of involvement translate into different motivations in message processing and information seeking behaviors (Cho & Boster, 2005). Therefore, a second set of variables that will be explored is type and strength of political involvement.

There are ample theories to draw upon when hypothesizing about how integrative complexity and involvement relate to one another and to political message perceptions. Because type of involvement has not been thoroughly explicated in a political context, however, much of the research thus far is inconsistent. Nevertheless, three theoretical perspectives are likely to be especially useful. These perspectives include the Value Pluralism Model (Tetlock, 1986; Tetlock et al., 1996), the Functional Approach to Attitudes (Katz, 1960), and Duel Processing Models (Heuristic Systematic Processing, Chaiken, Liberman, & Eagly, 1989; Elaboration Likelihood Model, Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b).

First, the idea of integrative complexity will be reviewed with a focus on showing how all of these interdisciplinary ideas interrelate. Second, involvement type and strength will be explored. Third, the Value Pluralism model will be discussed followed by the Functional Approach to Attitudes. Tenets from the Duel Processing models will be interspersed to provide for predictions regarding information processing. It is hoped that by understanding the interplay between integrative complexity and involvement, light can be shed about how college students perceive, and make sense of, political messages.

College Students and Politics

Intentionally, and conveniently, the participant pool of interest in this study is college students. While most research in the social sciences use this demographic in order to generalize, albeit with hesitance, to the general public, the current study is concerned exclusively with this audience. This is because college students should be at an age when sophisticated political thought can begin to be developed. Further, college campuses are an environment conducive to the rapid spread of political views. Understanding how college students can be motivated to think about politics, and understanding the causal mechanisms that underlie their opinions can be of great value to future campaigns. The reason for this logic follows.

Generally public opinion research does not give much credence to the political opinions of college students. While no adequate explanation exists as to why this is the case, both political parties appear to be relatively uninterested in this demographic's political opinion (Greenberg, 2003).

Thus, the current research will attempt to identify contextual idiosyncrasies that may drive normative perceptions of politics or even motivate civic engagement for college students. Empirical studies have found that contextual idiosyncrasies such as biographical availability (Corning & Myers, 2002; Lee, 2002), group membership through social networks (Conover, 1988; Corning & Myers, 2002; Huddy, 2001) and attitude specificity (Corning & Myers, 2002; Golec, 2003) significantly predict whether a person will engage in political behavior. Therefore, questions tapping the above contextual factors are important in determining whether an instigator of political involvement, specifically in college students, is attributable to contextual and/or cognitive motivations. More specifically, it will be examined how

differences in involvement account for differences in political message perceptions. It is important to understand how college students make sense of political messages, and how patterns of interpretation can be explained through internal and external factors.

The importance of answering the above questions, and further explicating the relationship between college students and politics lies in the tremendous influence this demographic can potentially have on the political climate of the United States. According to the US Census Bureau college students currently make up 9% of the country's eligible voter population (http://factfinder.census.gov/). Further, college students aged 18 to 24 years old are anywhere from 20% to 30% more likely to vote than people of the same age not having attended any college (http://www.census.gov/prod/2006pubs/p20-556.pdf). With this demographic information comes two very important implications. First, college students are more capable of being mobilized to political action than the average person their age (Greenberg, 2003). Second, 9% is a large enough percentage to be significantly influential considering the margin of victory in the 2004 election was 2.46% (http://elections.gmu.edu/). Thus, the importance of this demographic must be realized. Due to the existence of such potential, it is surprising how little work has been done to truly understand the political ideologies, normative perceptions, and information processing capacities in college students.

Integrative Complexity

The idea of studying integrative complexity in the political realm grew out of the idea that to best understand how voters process political messages, their personalities, beliefs, and values must be considered (Caprara et al., 1999; Tetlock, 1983, 1986; Tetlock et al., 1996). One way to do this is by studying motivated social cognitions. The idea is that these cognitions are influential because they guide information processing in patterned ways

(Battistich & Aronoff, 1985; Caprara et al., 1999; Greenberg & Jonas, 2003; Schaller, Boyd, Yohannes, & O'Brien, 1995; Webster, 1993; Westen, Kilts, Blagov, Harenski, & Hamann, (in press)). Some motivated cognitions that have received a large amount of empirical attention have been personal need for structure (Schaller et al., 1995), need for cognition (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b; Schaller et al., 1995), and need for closure (Webster, 1993) just to name a few. While many of these have been examined in several different contexts, integrative complexity as a motivated cognition fits in nicely as an influential, and distinct, style that organizes one's political identity. This is because one potentially crucial component of political reasoning is the desire for a coherent, consistent, and well-integrated political identity (Rosenberg, 1988; Tetlock, 1986; Tetlock et al., 1996). A review of the relationship between integrative complexity and political ideology follows.

Researchers generally define integrative complexity as the degree to which an individual can weigh all perspectives and then integrate ideas into a coherent position (Golec, 2002; Tetlock, 1986; Tetlock et al., 1996; Rosenberg, 1988; Van Hiel & Mervielde, 2003). Integrative complexity varies as a function of three factors including individual predispositions, situational factors, and internal states that temporarily affect information processing (Golec, 2002; Jost & Major, 2001; Schroeder, Driver, & Streufert, 1967; Streufert & Streufurt, 1978; Tetlock, 1986; Tetlock et al., 1996). This being the case, it is important to recognize that integrative complexity is both an individual difference and an issue specific variable that can be enhanced under motivation.

Rosenberg (1988) theorized that integrative complexity consists of the capacity to decentrate and coordinate information. Decentration refers to the ability to focus on multiple aspects of an object or the relationship between objects (Golec, 2002; Rosenberg, 1988);

whereas coordination is considered, "the ability to integrate different perspectives into a coherent and comprehensive understanding of a given political situation" (Golec, 2002, p. 734). Thus, the complexity with which a person decentrates and coordinates information determines the level of integrative political reasoning.

According to this conceptualization of political reasoning those possessing a high level of integrative complexity are successful in their development of conceptual connections among differentiated characteristics, and as a result are able to create a political understanding that is both abstract and complex (i.e., systematic reasoning; Golec, 2002; Rosenberg, 1988). On the other hand, people who rate lower in integrative complexity (i.e., linear reasoning; Rosenberg, 1988) tend to rely on simple evaluative rules to categorize information and tend to be more susceptible to situational characteristics, which facilitate more temporary and inconsistent viewpoints across issues (Tetlock, 1983, 1986; Tetlock et al., 1996; Van Hiel & Mervielde, 2003). Further, they lack a defined perspective and are only able to rely on simple generalizations and abstractions when forming opinions (Golec, 2002; Rosenberg, 1988). Based on the aforementioned definitions, it is best to distinguish levels of integrative complexity in terms of fundamental differences along three criteria as defined in Golec (2002): (1) the degree of abstraction one can reach with regard to their understandings of the world; (2) the ability to transcend a single perspective of political reality and the ability to integrate a multitude of perspectives; (3) and the extremity and generality in their understandings of norms, rules, and values.

While past research on integrative complexity has often operationally defined the construct as high or low based on a median split, Rosenberg's (1988) conceptualization divides reasoning among five levels. These levels include, from lowest to highest:

sequential, advanced sequential, linear, advanced linear, and systematic political reasoning (Rosenberg, 1988). In order to identify people as operating at one of these levels of reasoning, a coding scheme was implemented that assessed how people answered questions based on 16-dimensions. The purpose of these dimensions was to address how many causes people attributed to a certain political event and the degree of interrelationship among causes. It was reasoned that more causes and more integration was indicative of more advanced reasoning. To test his hypotheses regarding the existence of five levels of political thought, Rosenberg (1988) brought people into the lab and conducted a series of interviews about political and social issues of the participant's choice. While the questions were initially simple, their complexity increased throughout the course of the interview. The degree to which participants could respond to complex questioning determined their level of integrative complexity. Further, results from three empirical studies found that a participant's structure of thought remained constant through all interviews irrespective of the issue being addressed. This demonstrates that Rosenberg's (1988) operationalization of integrative complexity seems to reliably measure this construct as an individual difference.

The importance of recognizing different levels of reasoning is that political thought and attitudes are the foundation of one's political identity (Conover, 1988; Greenberg & Jonas, 2003). An important goal in the development of this identity is the ability to establish opinions that remain consistent across issues. Once these positions are established and supported, a value system is developed (Katz, 1960) that carries implications for how one will perceive and interpret future information that agrees or disagrees with a particular attitude. Balance theories have demonstrated that when values and/or attitudes are threatened by incongruent information an aversive state is created that people will actively seek to

alleviate (e.g., Cognitive Dissonance Theory; Festinger, 1957; e.g., Balance theory, Heider, 1958). As a result, purposive thinking and complex cognitions are evoked to negotiate discrepancies to reinstate cognitive equilibrium (Katz, 1960; Festinger, 1957; Rokeach, 1960; Skitka & Tetlock 1993). Further, research has demonstrated that in order to return to a state of attitudinal homeostasis, a person will be motivated to engage in information processing that is systematic or biased (Chaiken et al., 1989; Festinger, 1957; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b). Whichever route is chosen, it is important to recognize that with contradiction comes reasoning that will attempt to reduce cognitive dissonance when confronted with a disparaging message.

The idea that people are constantly dealing with, and negotiating, contradictions rooted in political value conflict is the basis of the Value Pluralism Model (Tetlock, 1986; Tetlock et al., 1996). This model asserts that when dealing with conflicting values, the first step people engage in is the creation of a value hierarchy that implicitly gives preferential treatment to some values at the expense of others. This is the notion of a 'value trade-off' (Tetlock, 1986; Tetlock et al., 1996; Skitka & Tetlock, 1993). Depending on motivated cognitions, however, the ease of creating this hierarchy may vary depending on an individual's integrative complexity. Some individuals may be able to expend more cognitive effort to create a more integrated value system, which could have significant implications concerning fundamental differences in the ways people with varying degrees of complexity interpret political messages.

Based on the conceptual definition of integrative complexity, it is reasoned that those who rate higher in integrative complexity will have the tendency to develop a more integrated and coherent political ideology that is founded in logic that connects a multiplicity of political

issues and events. Those low in integrative complexity however, should not be motivated to create such an organized and comprehensive political schema. Thus, political ideologies should be structurally different as a function of integrative complexity. This difference is under investigation in the current study because it is reasoned that understanding this cognitive motivation can explain type of political involvement that is most salient and, equally important, the patterns of message processing as a result of this individual difference.

Types of Political Involvement

Being politically involved is not solely contingent on how complex a person is able to think. Involvement also needs to be considered. Involvement is generally defined as the degree to which someone feels something is important (Thomsen et al., 1995). Involvement can be considered a collaborative function of both environmental and cognitive factors that manifest themselves in the intensity of one's attitudes, beliefs, and/or behaviors. Reasons for involvement can be authentic interest (or cognitive needs), close ties to one's self-concept, or normative influence. Motivations for political involvement is an interesting realm with which to study information processing because knowledge is so varied due to political messages that are often ambiguous and contradictory across positions, politicians, and campaigns.

Referring to previous assertions about levels of integrative complexity and structural differences of political thought, the argument made here is that it becomes necessary to first identify, and second to individually address, involvement motivated by complex cognition versus involvement attributable to other factors. The supposition here is that a predominately internal motivator for political identity is fundamentally different than ideologies motivated by external factors, and information processing patterns will differ distinctly as a result. To

follow will be an examination of how involvement type could be better explained and applied to politics from a more cognitive perspective. By understanding the relationship between the two, more accurate predictions can be made concerning information processing in favorable and unfavorable messages.

A paradoxical relationship exists in the literature perhaps because of the failure to account for cognitive motivations behind involvement type differences. Past research in political science (Dolan & Holbrook, 2001; Rudolph, 2006), psychology (Chaiken et al., 1989; Festinger, 1957; Johnson & Eagly, 1989, 1990; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b), and communication (Cho, 2005; Cho & Boster, 2005) have looked at how high or low levels of involvement affect information processing. An argument advanced by Johnson and Eagley (1989, 1990), however, suggests that looking at involvement as a unidimensional construct does not accurately portray how this construct operates. More recently, Cho and Boster (2005) tested the reliability and validity of scales measuring involvement along the three dimensions originally conceptualized by Johnson and Eagly (1989, 1990). Results indicate that there are three different types of involvement, specified as: (1) value-relevant; (2) outcome-relevant; and (3) impression-relevant involvement, and that these types all produce different patterns of perceptions when combined with other variables (Cho & Boster, 2005). Implications suggest that research in involvement should begin to distinguish between these types of involvement in order to yield more explainable empirical findings. Another implication is that if research could better understand the cognitions potentially underlying different types of involvement, persuasive attempts could be more precise when targeting a particular demographic.

The first type of involvement specified is termed value-relevant, and encompasses the construct often known as ego involvement (Johnson & Eagly, 1989). Value-relevant involvement can be conceptually defined as a psychological state developed by the activation of attitudes that are the result of important personal values (Cho & Boster, 2005; Johnson & Eagly, 1989, 1990). This involvement type is inextricably tied to one's self-concept and as a result has the potential to be threatened by contradictory information. Because the motivation behind this type of involvement is to maintain and reinforce a positive self-image, persuasion is often difficult when value-relevant involvement is high. Research has found (Cho & Boster, 2005) that there is a positive association between value-relevant involvement and attitude extremity. This is because in an effort to maintain a stable, and favorable, self-concept it is likely that individuals will bias information in ways that consistently reinforce their pre-existing schema. Further, this assertion about value-relevant involvement and attitude extremity has some important ties to integrative complexity based on contradictory findings currently existing in research. By examining the role of cognitions on attitudes, the need for a more detailed specification of involvement types may become clearer.

Van Hiel and Mervielde (2003) conducted a study investigating the relationship between cognitive complexity and political extremism. The purpose of this study was to reinvestigate the claim by Rokeach (1960) and Tetlock (1983), that high integrative complexity was most indicative of moderate, and left-wing, political ideologies. Van Hiel and Mervielde (2003) and Sidanius (1978, 1988) disagreed with these prior findings on two accounts. They believe that left versus right wing ideologies should not be structurally different from one another. Instead, they claimed that extremists should be higher in integrative complexity for four main reasons: (1) more independence and less conformity

pressures; (2) relatively high intelligence; (3) a larger information arsenal as a result of increased involvement; and finally (4) a higher stress tolerance (Sidanius, 1978, 1988; Van Hiel & Mervielde, 2003). Findings from Van Hiel and Mervielde (2003) as well as two studies conducted by Sidanius (1978, 1988), supported the conclusion that political extremism and integrative complexity were positively related.

How can research reconcile these discordant findings? First, it is important to acknowledge that today, researchers tend to agree that strength of ideology is more structurally similar than content in ideology. In other words, staunch Republicans and devote Democrats are more structurally similar to one another than their moderate counterparts despite an overt difference of opinion. As Tetlock (1986) states in his Value Pluralism Model, *what* we think is not necessarily indicative of *how* we think. Thus, the remainder of this paper will be making political distinctions in terms of high versus low political involvement rather than democrat versus republican or liberal versus conservative.

The second area of debate is whether integratively complex reasoning leads to extreme or moderate viewpoints. Given that previous research lacks specification about involvement types, both viewpoints might be right. This is because neither perspective is picking up on how cognitive structure leads to different types of high involvement. More specifically, being high in value relevant involvement can lead to extremist viewpoints resulting from a heightened concern with self-concept, whereas rating high in outcome relevant involvement (see below) may lead to more moderate ideologies marked by a concern with what is actually correct. The latter relationship is consistent with what Rokeach (1960) and Tetlock (1983) were finding, in relation to integrative complexity. The former is consistent with findings from Van Hiel and Mervielde (2003) and Sidanius (1978, 1988).

Unlike value-relevant involvement, Johnson and Eagly's (1989, 1990) conceptualization of outcome-relevant involvement is distinguished by a concern with the accuracy (and consequently outcome) of one's opinion (Cho & Boster, 2005). Outcome-relevant involvement can be defined as the extent to which an attitudinal issue is believed to have personal consequences for them (Cho & Boster, 2005; Johnson & Eagly, 1989, 1990). It follows that if this involvement is dictated by the consequences of an attitude, it is more likely that an individual will scrutinize a message in an effort to make the best decision (Chaiken et al., 1989; Cho & Boster, 2005; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b). This relationship is supported by both Dual Processing Models (Chaiken et al., 1989; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b) which assert that if an issue is of high relevance to an individual, they will be more likely to pay attention, seek out additional information, and to carefully evaluate the message content. As a result, this type of information processing tends to be more objective and less susceptible to situationally induced biases (Cho & Boster, 2005; Webster, 1993). Thus, because finding an accurate outcome is more cognitively taxing than biasing information to maintain a previous, and preferential, opinion, it is believed that integrative complexity as a cognitive style complements outcome-relevant involvement.

One recent study that lends support to the above assertion is Duncan's (2005) investigation on personal political salience. A personal political schema scale (PPS) was created that measured an individual's propensity to internalize historical political events, and view these issues as being influential to one's daily life (Duncan, 2005). This construct relates to Johnson and Eagly's (1989, 1990) conceptualization of outcome-relevant involvement because it is reasoned that if someone believes political events impact their daily lives, they should be more motivated to create an ideology that is beneficial but also accurate

in its predictive ability. Duncan's (2005) PPS scale comprised of 25 historical political events (e.g., Vietnam War, the Feminist Movement, 9/11, etc) in which the respondent was asked to rate on a scale of one (not at all relevant) to three (extremely relevant) how important certain events were to their daily lives. Results from this study indicate that that high PPS scores were positively related to more developed positions across issues. Further, this integration of perspectives across issues manifested itself in a stronger attitude and behavior link for high PPS scorers such that,

> ...high scorers on PPS may have reacted to the war attitudinally, emotionally, or behaviorally. For example, when thinking about what kind of car to drive, high scorers on PPS may consider fuel efficiency as very important- not just for economic reasons, but because of its connections to U.S. dependence on foreign-bought fuel (Duncan, 2005, p. 974)

Aside from the integrative link between war attitudes and type of car to buy, the PPS scale also found a positive behavioral link between scores and tendency to "obsessively watch CNN, engage in emotionally charged conversations about the war, or participate actively in war protest or support activities" (Duncan, 2005, p. 974). Thus, the results of this study imply that people who feel the need to integrate their political perspectives tend to understand the need for logical consistency between issues. A second implication that can be derived from this study is that for people engaging in behaviors that correspond with an integrative ideology, outcome-relevant involvement may be an important goal of information processing.

The distinction between value-relevant involvement and outcome-relevant involvement can be identified by the adherence to different cognitive goals, which manifests in distinct differences in information processing. Rudolph (2006), states that motivated reasoning is driven by either accuracy goals (i.e., outcome-relevant) or directional goals (i.e.,

value-relevant). He defines accuracy goals by the desire to reach an accurate conclusion, and directional goals as the desire to reach a preferred conclusion (Rudolph, 2006). It should be clear, based on these definitions, how analogous these concepts are to the first two types of involvement explicated. The contribution of Rudolph's (2006) research is that he applied these ideas specifically to political attitudes by examining how the mentioning of political parties affected attributions of responsibility. What this research found was that when partisan cues were offered, biased processing occurred (i.e., directional goals) in the form of responsibility attributions. Rudolph (2006) asserted that, "responsibility judgments lie at the heart of representative democracy" (p. 99). This is a dangerous assertion because the subjective interpretability of these judgments are susceptible to extreme bias. This is why more empirical attention must be given to the source of these biases. Duncan (2005) maintains that with involvement comes information seeking. Another purpose of the current investigation will be to decipher what cognitive factors lead to highly selective information seeking that appeases value-relevant and directional goals, and what factors contribute to outcome-relevant, accuracy driven information processing.

One last area of consideration thought to motivate political involvement is environmental influences and normative perceptions of public opinion. It was previously discussed that the motivation to become involved with politics is not only a function of internal factors, but can also be instigated by a highly politicized environment. Historically, there have been incidences of political "hotbeds" that have arisen based on leadership that effectively mobilized a specific population. Examples include the Free Speech Movement in Berkeley, California and anti-war protests in Madison, Wisconsin, Washington, D.C., and Chicago, Illinois. These examples indicate seem to indicate that an important component of

political involvement is overt expression and behavior. As such, the last type of involvement specified by Johnson and Eagly (1989, 1990) and empirically supported by Cho and Boster (2005) is impression relevant involvement. This type of involvement is defined as being concerned with one's self-presentation (Cho & Boster, 2005; Johnson & Eagly, 1989, 1990; Zimbardo, 1960). This concern is rooted in one's basic need for approval, especially with regard to the consequences of one's actions. The primary motivator for this type of involvement is cues present within one's environment, and one's perception of normative behavior in a given context. According to Zimbardo (1960), concern with the consequences of communication about an issue can be just as significant in forming opinions as the other two forms of involvement. An important implication of impression-relevant involvement is that because the expression of opinions is rooted in the need for approval, position on issues is susceptible to change based on environment. Thus, if college students perceive a normative opinion regarding an issue, it is important to understand whether the opinion individuals are arriving at is attributable to the facts of the issue or conformity to the social standard.

The idea of communication appropriateness is further augmented in politics. Because politics is fundamentally controversial, people are likely to be strategic about the contexts in which they choose to disclose their political opinions. Due to this, it merits investigation whether strength of political involvement, confidence in political knowledge, and perceptions of deviance from the social norm leads to voluntary disclosure of personal political opinions. Understanding this relationship may account for student's perceptions of theirs, and other student's political participation as well as accuracy motivations in political information processing.

Thus far, motivated social cognitions and involvement type have been explicated. It has been demonstrated how cognitive structures potentially provide a foundation for understanding political information, and developing integrative reasoning about a multitude of issues, events, and politicians. What needs to be further explained however, is how cognitive structure and intensity, and type, of involvement foster the creation of value systems. Through this explanation, the pervasiveness of idiosyncratic information processing patterns will be discussed.

The Value Pluralism Model

The Value Pluralism Model (VPM) was advanced through the acknowledgement that everyone holds beliefs and values that inherently conflict at some level of reasoning. Tetlock (1986) and later Tetlock et al. (1996) posit that this truism is especially applicable to politics such that policies that satisfy one value, often require sacrificing another. An example of this might make this idea more clear. Take two values held sacred in American society, freedom and equality. These political buzzwords are deeply entrenched in the rhetoric that mobilizes citizens to proclaim their patriotism and ostracize dissenters who become accused of not holding these values in the highest esteem. Regardless of the fact many people openly accept and embrace these values, realistically adherence to both is idealistic and almost impossible. Education provides an apropos metaphor for this contradiction. Parents may assert that they want equality for their children, however are quick to exercise that part of their freedom entails the choice of sending their kids to private schools, or paying absorbent taxes to enroll them in the best public schools. How do people deal with contradictory values and principles? The rest of this section will explicate what cognitive processes help justify these types of policy decisions through tenets of the VPM.

The VPM assumes that underlying all ideologies are core or terminal values that specify what the ultimate goal or consequence should be of message perception, policy support, or ideological preference (Tetlock, 1986). This model is pluralistic in nature because ideologies consist of multiple values that an individual must prioritize based on frequency, intensity, and/or relevance (Tetlock, 1986; Tetlock et al., 1996). A value hierarchy is imposed so that an individual can rely on a cognitive prescription that resolves the discrepancy by prioritizing some values at the expense of others (Skitka & Tetlock, 1993; Tetlock, 1986; Tetlock et al., 1996). Research has shown that people who are highly involved with an issue have the tendency to implement greater integrative complexity when faced with value conflict because they are more motivated to resolve complicated contradictions (Tetlock, 1983, 1986; Tetlock et al., 1996; Van Hiel & Mervielde, 2003). While this assertion appears parsimonious, it neglects that message perception is a subjective process that could be undertaken with different goals in mind. Recall Rudolph's (2006) assertions about motivated reasoning; there can be two outcomes of political information processing, either the facilitation of accuracy or directional goals.

It is proposed that those who are high in outcome-relevant involvement should scrutinize information in an attempt to arrive at the best possible conclusion. They will likely be motivated to expend a great deal of cognitive effort, and to seek additional information that will help them resolve an existing conflict. In accordance with the original VPM, individuals who are high in integrative complexity (i.e., ability), and are highly motivated by outcome-relevant goals, should have more deliberate and developed value hierarchies than people low in ability and/or motivation.

The revised VPM (Tetlock et al., 1996), however, is careful not to presume that cognitive ability is solely responsible for the establishment of a value hierarchy. Rather, Tetlock et al. (1996) assert that elements within a given context significantly contribute to the level of attention paid to a specific discrepancy or issue. Specifically, the revised VPM predicts that the only way a person will engage in integratively complex trade-off reasoning, is if the following five conditions exist (Tetlock et al., 1996): (1) the two contradicting values are of equal strength; (2) it is socially acceptable to consider the trade-off; (3) the person is accountable in some way; (4) a decision is necessary; (5) and lastly, there are motives for an accurate and a high quality decision. If these conditions are not met, Tetlock et al. (1996) posit that an individual will disengage from the issue or use heuristic or peripheral processing to make a quick, and likely biased, decision expending little cognitive effort.

The guidance that the VPM offers is predicated on postulates from the Duel Processing Models. It is important to recognize that information processing is a function of motivation and ability. While intensity of political involvement comprises the motivation component, ability is conceptualized by integrative complexity that manifests in a value hierarchy that can be articulated and developed. Due to the existence of this hierarchy, and the motivation to achieve an outcome-relevant ideology, information processing should be guided by accuracy goals (Rudolph, 2006). In this vein, it is likely that participants take a more pragmatic approach when interpreting discrepant messages, and should seek information that reconciles the differences at hand, while being reasonably free from selectivity and preferential bias. This way of organizing information is consistent with the central or systematic route to information processing, marked by effortful and objective message processing (Chaiken et al., 1989; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b). One way to

measure the occurrence of this type of processing is to look at participant's evaluations of contradictory messages from a favored, neutral, and opposing source. If rational processing is occurring, the perceived discrepancy between messages should remain constant because preferential biases are not effectively priming message evaluation.

While the VPM is an appropriate model for understanding how integratively complex thinkers might create a political schema, it does not adequately address people with less developed hierarchies. As a consequence, the VPM also fails to specify predictions about what happens when emotional biases color one's information processing in ways that are preferential rather than accurate. Because political reasoning is not always objective and not always motivated by accuracy goals, a different theoretic approach must be considered to explicate the areas outside the scope of the VPM. Katz's (1960) Functional Approach to Attitudes provides a nice segue for understanding how affect leads to fundamentally different patterns of information processing.

The Functional Approach to Attitudes

The VPM is predicated on the assumption that the sociopolitical environment, consequences of a given issue, and the ability of the individual will together determine the likelihood of whether a person will engage in systematic reasoning. In politics, however, all of these conditions are rarely met due to the emotional valence of the topics discussed. A persistent problem of public opinion and public policy is that it is difficult to convince the average person to care about issues that are so far removed from their day-to-day life (Eliasoph, 1998; Putnam, 1996). This being the case, however, there are still people who are intensely involved in politics even though they are not political elites, nor dealing with the consequences of public policy decisions. Katz's (1960) Functional Approach to Attitudes

(FAA) asserts that attitudes serve different functions, and if one can accurately identify the function, the mechanisms behind the attitude become much more clear. In this section, the functional approach will be applied to the DPM in order to support predictions about message perceptions in the current experiment.

According to Katz (1960), there are four main functions served by attitudes. The four functions are: instrumental, ego-defensive, value-expressive, and knowledge. The dimensions of these functions that produce attitude diversity and theoretically determine behavior include: intensity, degree of specificity, degree of differentiation, and the strength (or number) of linkages to a value system (Katz, 1960). While the FAA is a different model, it is important to recognize how analogous much of the FAA's components are to previous conceptualizations of integrative complexity, involvement, and the VPM. The purpose of explicating tenets of the FAA in the current study, however, is not to reaffirm and further support the aforementioned relationships. Rather, this discussion of the FAA will be focused on the ego-defensive function of attitudes, because this perspective is outside the scope of previous models, but still highly relevant to the current experiment.

An influential function of political ideology is self-identity (Cohen, 2003; Huddy, 2001; Rokeach 1960). It follows that when one's identity is threatened, often in terms of value clashes, it is likely that a person will respond in an ego-defensive way. Katz (1960) defines ego-defense as a means through which an individual avoids facing issues that are dangerous to their self-concept. Because this function is inextricably tied to one's identity, it has been shown that an individual will go to great lengths to remove threats and to protect their ego. In the political realm, one's ego is often threatened especially because common campaign tactics include political slander and attack ads. Thus it follows that if a person is

highly involved or strongly affiliated with a political party or issue, they will undergo different information processing techniques when the message supports, versus opposes, their position of choice. Further, in order to make sense of negative information, a person may bias their information processing in order to maintain cognitive consistency (Festinger, 1957; Heider, 1958; Katz, 1960). Katz (1960) suggests that one way to deal with cognitive dissonance, or to protect against its occurrence, is to submit to "irrational factors of distorted perceptions and wishful thinking" (p. 166). This phenomenon is consistent to predictions in the DPM asserting that if someone is highly involved in an issue, they are harder to persuade (Chaiken et al., 1989; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b). This is because they are not as willing to listen to and apply logical arguments that go against one's preconceived ideology.

Ego-defensive information processing is markedly different from processing driven by outcome-involvement or integrative complexity. While people driven by accuracy goals and integrative complexity can be as hard to persuade as those ego-involved, the persuasive difficulties arise from different reasons that political research has failed to quantify. Those high in outcome-relevant involvement tend to know more information and, as a result, are not as reliant on single sources of information present within a given message. Thus, inconsistencies are often resolved through outside information rationally applied to the value hierarchy, as opposed to blindly accepting the terms of the discrepant message. To reiterate, this approach is indicative of systematic or central processing (Chaiken et al., 1989; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b), according to the DPM. It is important to recognize that not all forms of high involvement, or types of people, are privy or capable of such an analytic route.

Individuals who get involved in a way tied to their self-concept may not always have the ability to rationally process information that challenges their belief system. The DPM

asserts that individuals must be involved and have the capacity, or ability, to correctly process a given message (Chaiken et al., 1989; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b). If a person is involved, but does not possess these prerequisite cognitive capacities, it is likely that a heuristic or peripheral route to processing will occur (Chaiken et al., 1989; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b). Katz (1960) goes on to predict that when an ego-defensive function is elicited, an individual will bias new information to fit into a pre-existing schema. The implication of this is that people whose political identity and self-identity are synonymous are more difficult to persuade because discordant information is threatening. If threatening information is compounded by the inability to rationally process information, DPM and FAA predict that biased information processing will occur. Thus, people high in value-relevant involvement will interpret a political message differently than people high in outcome-relevant involvement.

Throughout the course of this review the argument has been advanced that it is important to examine the role cognitions play in the formation of coherent issue positions. This knowledge facilitates the understanding of why a value system is formed, and how open and resilient it may be to alternative information. Understanding how these constructs relate to one another, and operate, may shed some light on how people, specifically college students, reconcile discrepant political messages. In an attempt to synthesize the above information, the following section will specify the hypotheses guiding the current research.

Hypotheses

The current study will expose participants to a series of messages from a politician that contradict one another. The purpose of this will be to understand how college students make sense of contradictory political information messages. It will further be investigated

how cognitive factors predict who will get involved with politics, and how these two factors motivate specific patterns in information processing.

The first set of hypotheses concerns the relationship between integrative complexity and involvement type. Prior research is inconsistent in the relationship between these two constructs; however it was argued here that this discrepancy is attributable to involvement being measured as a unidimensional construct. If this is the case, the following two hypotheses are theoretically supported by both Rokeach (1960) and Tetlock (1983) and by Van Hiel and Mervielde (2003) and Sidanius (1978, 1988).

H1: Scores on integrative complexity are positively associated with ratings of outcome-relevant involvement.

H2: Scores on integrative complexity are negatively associated with ratings of value-relevant involvement.

Another theoretical shortcoming is the failure to understand impression-relevant involvements role in message perception from a cognitive standpoint. Because political involvement is influenced by environmental factors, does impression-relevant involvement change as a function of environment or can it be seen as stable? Are highly involved people apt to be more or less self-conscious about their behaviors? What in the environment potentially moderates this consciousness? Because answers to these questions remain to be empirically determined, a second set of research questions will be advanced regarding impression-relevant involvements relationship to motivated social cognitions and other involvement types.

RQ1: Is there a relationship between level of integrative complexity and impression-relevant involvement?

RQ2: Is intensity of impression-relevant involvement related to intensity in value-relevant and/or outcome-relevant involvement?

After an examination of the anticipated structural differences between involvement types, the next step will be to understand how these differences influence message perceptions. Specifically, this research is interested in understanding how people make sense of discrepant political messages. Because so much political rhetoric is contradictory, understanding how people view inconsistency has real-world utility. Generally, participants will be asked to view a set of political messages from three sources. One source will be democrat, one republican, and one politically neutral. The logic behind these three sources is the presumption that the participant will view one as 'favored', one as 'opposing', and the neutral as indifferent. Each message will contain two statements made by a politician, on different dates that contradict one another. The participant will be asked to rate the extent of the contradiction, and will then be provided with information that adequately reconciles the discrepancy. Because the act of reconciliation is fundamentally an integrative task, it is thought that one's level of integrative complexity should be influential such that:

H3: Participant's scores on integrative complexity will be negatively associated with the extent to which messages are perceived as contradictory.

H4: As scores on integrative complexity increase, participants will shift opinions less in response to exposure to contradictory information.

The next set of hypotheses will specify how involvement type should theoretically relate to discrepant message perceptions. Based on past research, it is believed that people high in outcome-relevant involvement should attempt to reconcile messages in an accurate way. People who are high in value-relevant involvement, however, should be motivated to maintain cognitive consistency by viewing their preferred candidate more positively than the other two. By being motivated by these directional goals, it is likely biased information processing will occur and be distinguishable by differences in perceived discrepancy as a function of political party. Further, preferential goals will hinder information processing such that new positive information about an opposing source will be ignored, while new and positive information about a favored source will be highly attended to. For students low in involvement it is thought that discrepancy would be viewed as generally high, but will be easily alleviated when reconciling information is presented. This is because of the lack of scrutiny of message content, due to low motivation, and an over-reliance on message cues due to the lack of outside information. It is unclear however, if environmental changes in impression-relevant involvement can provide an adequate catalyst for motivation and message scrutiny. Thus, the following hypotheses and research questions are advanced.

H5a: Degree of outcome-relevant involvement should be negatively related to perceived message discrepancy.

H5b: The degree of outcome-relevant involvement should also be negatively related to degree of opinion change after being presented with reconciling information.

H6a: Degree of value-relevant involvement should be negatively related to perceived message discrepancy for the preferred source, and positively related to message discrepancy for an opposing source.

H6b: The degree of value-relevant involvement will be negatively correlated with degree of opinion change for preferred source.

H6c: The degree of value-relevant involvement will be positively related to degree of opinion change for an opposing source.

H7: Participants low in all types of involvement should initially rate all messages as highly discrepant, but should shift their position upon being presented with reconciling information such that they will view the messages as being less discrepant and the reconciling information as more accurate.

RQ3: Will high levels of impression-relevant involvement motivate accurate or directional processing?

With the above hypotheses guiding the current research, it is important to reiterate the purpose and importance of the current investigation. First, it is necessary to examine how cognitive structures predict patterns in information processing. The second purpose is to better understand how, and in what capacity, college students are involved in the political process. The third is to examine whether traditional theories of political science, motivated social cognitions, and attitudes are replicated when applied to an area as emotionally latent as political message perception. Thus, insight into these facets of political psychology and information processing can help research become better informed about the elusive, inconsistent, and largely ignored yet highly sought after, college demographic.

METHOD

Participants

The sample of this study consisted of 122 undergraduate men (n = 69) and women (n = 53). The mean age of the sample was between 19 and 20 years old (*SD* = .63). Approximately 96% of the sample was from America, while 4% were international students. Further 66% of the sample was White, 2% Hispanic, 6 % African-American, 2% Asian, 1% Native American, 1% Middle Eastern, and the rest of the sample considered themselves to be other or their report was missing. Participants were enrolled in various classes at a large Midwestern State University. All students received course credit for their participation in the study.

In an effort to remain consistent with other procedures for measuring political identity, self-report measures were included in this study. These included both categorical and continuous measures of: political affiliation, strength of political affiliation, liberal versus conservative attitudes and strength of attitudes, past voting behavior and intentions, and lastly parent's political opinions (See Appendix C). In terms of political participation, 53% of the sample had voted in the past while 28% stated that they have not voted in the past. For measures of political affiliation, 26% of the sample considered themselves Democrats, 16.7% republican, 4% Independent, 3% Libertarian, 1% Green Party, and finally 30% stated they had no political affiliations.

Instructions

Upon arrival to the laboratory, subjects were greeted by an experimenter, given a brief overview to the study, and asked to fill out and sign a form for their voluntary consent.

Participants were told that the purpose of the study was to help determine how college students think about politics and political messages.

Procedure

The current study was a between subject 2 (Affirmative Action v. Capital Punishment) by 2 (Republican v. Democrat) design, and consisted of three phases including: writing about a political issue (either capital punishment or affirmative action), a structured interview about that same issue, a survey gauging political involvement, affiliation, and behavior, and lastly a series of messages from a political source.

During the first stage, participants were asked to write their thoughts about the political issue assigned to them. Specifically, they wrote a paragraph about why the given issue is debated, a list of both side's arguments, and which political party is associated with these arguments. After the paragraph was completed, the participant was interviewed. Participants were brought into a room with an experimenter and told that their conversation will be tape-recorded and that their identity will remain confidential. Before the tape-recorder was turned on, the participant was told that they will be discussing the same topic they just wrote about in the essay. The interviews lasted approximately five minutes, and the interviewer read five questions from a script and was not allowed to deliver any feedback about participant's responses to reduce social desirability issues.

The second phase of the experiment was a series of survey questionnaires gauging political affiliations and behaviors, demographic characteristics, and involvement type scales about the issue discussed and politics in general. The involvement type scale was a revised form of Cho and Boster's (2005) involvement scale that was altered to match the issues specific to this study. This involvement scale was given to discriminate between outcome-

relevant involvement, value-relevant, and impression-relevant involvement. There were two indicators used to determine each involvement type. One indicator contained items measuring involvement in politics in general, while the other included items measuring issue specific involvement.

The third phase was exposure to a series of political messages. The participant was told that the following three messages all came from either the head of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) or the Republican National Committee (RNC). Assuming that student's identify with one of the major political parties (i.e. democrat or republican), it follows that they perceived this message as being from a favored source, or from an opposing source.

The participant was exposed to an initial statement made by the head of the DNC or RNC. A contradictory statement then followed containing a message by the same target, that contradicted the initial statement. The participant was asked following message exposure a series of questions examining the extent to which they perceived the manipulated contradiction. The third page presented the participant with an exculpatory statement, which used contextual information to explain the contradiction. As a second measure, participants were asked to evaluate the contextual information. These procedures were the same across conditions, issues, and message sources. After the participant was exposed to all four phases of the study, they were debriefed.

Measures

Integrative Complexity. There were two methods used to obtain an individual's integrative complexity score. The first method asked the participant to write a paragraph concerning their understanding about one of the political issues previously mentioned. After

completion, the paragraph was scored in accordance with the integrative complexity coding manual (Baker-Brown et al., 1992). The second method used to obtain complexity scores only differed from the first in that the data analyzed was from the interview rather than the written paragraph. Like the written part however, these data were scored using the integrative complexity coding manual (Baker-Brown et al., 1992). The correlation between scores for the written portion and interview portion was, $r\,(119) = +.24, p < .01$. Generally, scores for integrative complexity range from one being the lowest to seven indicating the highest degree of complexity. For the current sample however, the range of scores was from one to six for the composite measure of integrative complexity ($M = 2.53$, $SD = .77$), and there was a slightly positive skew on the distribution.

In an effort to ensure that coding for integrative complexity was both valid and reliable, two coders blind to hypotheses were trained in two stages. First, coders were given a condensed version of the integrative complexity coding manual (Baker-Brown et al., 1992) that also contained dimensions taken from Rosenberg's (1988) measurement of political reasoning. Based on this information, coders were asked to read the materials and complete a series of practice problems that were already coded by the authors of the manual. Once the coders Independently proved that they were able to code reliably with the authors of the manual (determined by the coding of problem sets as the same, or within one point of the scores given by the authors; the procedure recommended by the manual), they were considered to be validly measuring integrative complexity.

Once the coders were consistent with the manual, training sessions were conducted to ensure that they were coding reliably with one another. Both coders scored all of the written responses, and it was determined that the two coders were highly internally consistent, *r*

(120) = +.85 and reliable, α = .92. After this, both coders each scored half of the interviews Independently after scoring ten together to confirm reliability would be maintained when the format shifted from written to oral response. A more detailed description of the numerical values assigned to different levels of reasoning can be found in Appendix A.

Involvement Scale. In order to assess political involvement, Cho and Boster's (2005) three dimension involvement scale was used. Cho and Boster's (2005) original measurement assessed outcome-relevant, value-relevant, and impression-relevant involvement by asking subjects to rate levels of importance assigned to specific issues (e.g., marijuana legalization, abortion, death penalty, toothpaste, and jeans). In the current experiment, these questions were replicated using one of the two issues previously mentioned (Appendix E), and were followed by a general political involvement scale (See Appendix B). Both scales were analyzed Independently for reliability, and then later averaged to obtain an involvement type composite score.

There were approximately nine items gauging outcome-relevant involvement in the original scale (Cho & Boster, 2005). This scale included questions such as, "It is easy for me to think of ways that political issues affect my life," and "My life changes are a direct result of capital punishment legislation." Questions such as this attempted to adequately measure whether the participant felt that political involvement and issue involvement were both personally relevant. In the issue related outcome-relevant involvement scale, all nine items were kept with strong reliability, α = .86. The general political outcome-involvement scale yielded a reliability of α= .87 when one item was omitted from measurement. Results obtained for the composite measure of outcome- relevant involvement revealed a normal distribution for this measure (M = 3.91, SD = 0.98).

This measurement also included nine items measuring value-relevant involvement. Sample items included, "My political position is based on the values with which I try to conduct my life," and, "My position on Affirmative-Action reflect who I am." Again, two versions of this scale were used, one measuring issue specific value-relevant involvement (α = .89) and the other measuring general political involvement (α = .87). All items were kept in both of the scales. Results obtained for the composite measure of value-relevant involvement showed a slightly normally skewed distribution (M = 4.36, SD = 1.15).

Finally, in Cho and Boster's (2005) study five items were used to assess impression relevant involvement. Examples from this dimension include, "People may judge me on the basis of the opinion that I express in public about political issues," and, "If I express the right kind of opinion about Affirmative-Action, people will find me more attractive". For issue-specific impression relevant involvement, two items were omitted leaving three to be scaled (α = .81). Only one item was omitted that gauged general political impression relevant involvement (α = .80). The composite measure of impression relevant involvement revealed a normal distribution (M = 4.28, SD = 1.19).

Perceived contradiction between messages. One of the dependent variables was the amount of discrepancy the participant attributes to the message source (See Appendix D). The participant was asked a series of questions regarding their perceptions of the contradiction such as, "To what degree do you feel that the previous two messages contradicted each other?" and was given a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly contradict) to 7 (not at all contradictory). It was thought that the favorability of the message source would weigh into the participant's willingness or motivation to reconcile the discordant viewpoints.

Opinion Change after reconciling information presented. A second measure of perceived discrepancy was used to better understand how the participant processes new information. After the participant rated the perceived level of inconsistency between messages, they were provided with information that reconciled the discrepancy and explained why the source changed their mind. After exposure to this information, the participant was asked a series of questions gauging their perceptions of the reconciling information such as, "I think the new information accurately explains how the first two messages relate". Again a Likert scale, with the same anchors, was used to quantify responses.

RESULTS

Hypothesis One

It was hypothesized that scores on integrative complexity would be positively associated with ratings of outcome-relevant involvement. The correlation between integrative complexity and outcome-relevant involvement was significant, $r\ (120) = +.20, p < .05$. Thus the findings were consistent with predictions for hypothesis one.

An unpredicted finding, however, was that results differed for participants who reported themselves as being republican versus participants who did not affiliate with any political party. Although the correlation between integrative complexity and self-reported Republicans was not statistically significant, $r\ (23) = -.16, p = .442$, the reported correlation between integrative complexity and those not affiliated with any political party was significant, $r\ (44) = + .43, p < .05$. Further, these two correlations were significantly different from one another, $z = 2.38, p < .05$. A more detailed description of this data can be found in Table 1 located in Appendix G.

Hypothesis Two

The second hypothesis posited that integrative complexity scores would be negatively related to ratings of value-relevant involvement. Results found that the correlation between integrative complexity and value-relevant involvement was significant ($r\ [120] = +.19, p < .05$), in the direction opposite of the hypothesis. Thus, findings were inconsistent with initial predictions, suggesting that participants higher in integrative complexity were also likely to score higher in value-relevant involvement.

It should be noted that correlations between integrative complexity and value-relevant involvement significantly differed based on issue, $z = 2.28, p < .05$. The correlation found

between integrative complexity and value-relevant involvement in the affirmative action condition was r (59) = +.35, p < .05, whereas in the capital punishment condition the correlation between the same two constructs was, r (59) = -.06, p > .05. The difference between these two correlations by issue is largely attributable to significant differences between participants reporting no political affiliation. For the affirmative action condition, those reporting no political affiliation yielded a significant and large integrative complexity and value-relevant involvement correlation, r (15) = +.60, p < .05. This finding significantly differed from the capital punishment condition, z = 2.65, p < .05. However, for those with no affiliation, the correlation between integrative complexity and value-relevant involvement in the capital punishment condition was not significant, r (27) = -.19, p = .337. These findings are more specifically depicted in Table 2 in Appendix G.

Research Question One

The first research question asked whether there would be a relationship between integrative complexity and impression-relevant involvement. A correlation between the two revealed that there was no significant relationship between the two variables, r (120) =+.09, p = .312. This finding suggests that level of integrative complexity is not clearly associated with reported differences in impression-relevant involvement.

Research Question Two

The second research question asked whether impression-relevant involvement related to outcome-relevant involvement and/or value-relevant involvement. Correlations revealed that the relationship between impression-relevant involvement and outcome relevant involvement was significantly positively correlated, r (120) = +.45, p < .001. Furthermore, there was a significantly positive relationship yielded between impression-relevant

involvement and value-relevant involvement, r (120) = +.50, p < .001. Thus, findings from this study suggest that as impression-relevant involvement increases, so should scores in outcome-relevant and value-relevant involvement.

Hypothesis Three

The third hypothesis asserted that there would be a negative correlation between integrative complexity scores and the extent to which participants perceived the initial two messages as being contradictory. Using each scale item as a dependent variable due to scaling difficulty, one significant result was found and was consistent with the initial hypothesis. There was a significant negative correlation, r (122) = -.22, p < .05, between integrative complexity scores and the fourth item that asked participants to what extent do the two messages, "have nothing to do with one another". Thus, the more highly participants scored on integrative complexity, the less likely they were to think that the two messages were unrelated. This finding was consistent with this hypothesis.

Upon looking at the results more closely, there are a few other significant relationships to consider with regard to this hypothesis. It was found that for the issue of affirmative action, there was a significant correlation between integrative complexity and item number three, which asked participants to what extent were the two statements, "not at all contradictory", r (59) = -.25, p < .05. Thus, consistent with the aforementioned finding, the greater one's integrative complexity, the less likely one is to view the two messages as contradictory.

Hypothesis Four

It was hypothesized that as scores on integrative complexity increased, participants would shift their opinions less in response to reconciling information. A correlation revealed

that this hypothesis was not consistent with findings, r (120) = +.16, p = .089. Thus, hypothesis four was not supported because it appears that level of integrative complexity does not clearly relate to opinion change.

Hypothesis Five

Hypothesis 5a posited that outcome-relevant involvement was negatively related to perceived message discrepancy. When analyzing this data, it was found that the correlation between outcome-relevant involvement and perceived message discrepancy was not significant when interpreted using both issues in aggregate, r (120) = -.06, p = .497. However, when splitting the data up by issue, it was found that a significant negative correlation existed between outcome-relevant involvement and message contradiction in the case of capital punishment, r (59) = -.29, p < .05. Therefore, findings for capital punishment were consistent with the initial hypothesis such that as outcome-relevant involvement increased, perceptions of message discrepancy decreased. These findings are depicted in Table 3 in Appendix G.

Furthermore, data suggests that political affiliations may have also affected the relationship between outcome-relevant involvement and perceptions of message discrepancy in the case of capital punishment. The strongest association existed between the above-mentioned constructs in the case of reported Democrats, r (15) = -.74, p < .01. Although this correlation did not significantly differ from Republicans and 'other' political parties, it was found to be statistically different from participants reporting no political affiliations, z = 2.64, p < .01. For participants reporting no political affiliations, almost no association was found between outcome-relevant involvement and perceptions of discrepancy, r (27) =+ .08, p = .668. These findings suggest that people who affiliate with political parties perceived the

messages as more discrepant based on their outcome-relevant involvement than participants reporting no such affiliations.

Hypothesis 5b suggested that degree of outcome-relevant involvement should also be negatively related to degree of opinion change after the presentation of reconciling information. Findings however failed to be consistent with this hypothesis, r (120) = -.04, p = .673, which suggests that degree of outcome-relevant involvement does not affect participants perceptions, or acceptance, of the reconciling information.

Hypothesis Six

In the first part of hypothesis 6a it was predicted that value-relevant involvement should be negatively related to perceived message discrepancy for a preferred source (i.e., same political affiliation as participant). A correlation revealed that the relationship between value-relevant involvement and perceptions of message discrepancy was significant in the direction predicted, r (29) = -.36, $p < .05$. Thus, as value-relevant involvement increases, perception of message discrepancy decreases when the source of the message is a politician from one's preferred affiliation.

The second part of hypothesis 6a speculated that value-relevant involvement should be positively associated to message discrepancy for an opposing source (i.e., a politician from an opposing political party). Results found that when both issues were analyzed together, findings for this hypothesis were not consistent with initial predictions. When issues were separately analyzed however, it was found that in the case of capital punishment, there was a significant negative correlation between value-relevant involvement and perceptions of message discrepancy, r (12) = -.65, $p < .05$. Thus, results for this issue revealed a significant relationship in the direction opposite of the one predicted. Results for affirmative action,

however, approached significance in the direction originally hypothesized and opposite from capital punishment, r (17) = +.41, p = .084. Therefore, data suggests that both the issue and the degree of value-relevant involvement affect how people interpret messages from an opposing candidate. A more detailed description of how perceptions of contradiction varied by political affiliation can be found in Table 4.

Hypothesis 6b asserted that value-relevant involvement should be negatively correlated with degree of opinion change when the message was from a preferred source. The results indicate that although the relationship between value-relevant involvement and degree of opinion change were in the predicted direction, the correlation only approached statistical significance, r (29) = -.33, p = .073. Thus, according to this study, no conclusion can be made as to whether a relationship exists between value-relevant involvement and opinion change when the source of the message is a preferred politician.

The predicted correlation in hypothesis 6c specified that value-relevant involvement should be positively related to degree of opinion change when the message was from an opposing source. Results revealed that the relationship between value-relevant involvement and opinion change was not significant, r (31) = +.02, p = .928. Further, when examining whether the correlations differed between value-relevant involvement and opinion change for a favored versus an opposing source, results came out insignificant. Thus, these findings suggest that the relationship between value-relevant involvement and opinion change do not appear to be affected by whether the source of the information is from a favored or opposing politician.

Hypothesis Seven

The first part of hypothesis 7 predicted that participants low in all types of involvement would initially rate all messages as being highly discrepant. In order to test this hypothesis, two statistical analyses were conducted. In order to conduct the first, participants were split into two groups indicating whether they were generally high in political involvement or low. The question tested was whether those who were low in all types of involvement rated the messages as being more discrepant than participants rating high in involvement. Participants were labeled as low in involvement if the product of all three of their involvement averages came out to less than 64. The score of 64 was chosen because this is the product of the midpoints (i.e., four) of all involvement scales (i.e., 4 x 4 x 4). A participant was labeled high in involvement if the product of their involvement scores were 64 or higher. After labeling participants as high or low, an Independent t-test was used to test the hypothesis. When all cases were considered, it was found that participants low in involvement indicated that the messages were significantly more discrepant ($M = 5.68$, $SD = 1.32$) than participants high in involvement ($M = 5.22$, $SD = 1.64$, $t\,[120] = 1.67$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .02$), using one-tail to set significance.

When splitting the data by issue however, it was found that when looking at the issue of capital punishment there were significant differences between reported discrepancy based on level of involvement, $t\,(59) = 2.62$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .10$. Specifically it was found that participants low in involvement found the messages to be more discrepant ($M = 6.01$, $SD = 1.20$) than participants considered high in involvement ($M = 5.00$, $SD = 1.82$). This relationship was especially true for self-labeled Democrats in this sample regardless of

political issue. Results from the study show that Democrats low in involvement perceived both messages as being significantly more discrepant ($M = 6.02$, $SD = .85$) than Democrats high in involvement ($M = 5.17$, $SD = 1.66$, $t\,[32.6] = 2.08$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .12$. These two findings are consistent with first part of hypothesis 7.

Part two of hypothesis 7 asserted that people low in involvement would show greater opinion change upon being presented with reconciling information. This opinion shift would be evident in participants low in involvement reporting less message discrepancy in time two than participants high in involvement. First, in order to test this prediction, an Independent-sample t-test was used to determine whether degree of opinion change was different based on level of involvement. Based on this test, it was found that there was no significant mean difference between level of involvement and degree of opinion change, $t\,(120) = 0.15$, $p = .885$. Thus, the second part of hypothesis 7 was inconsistent with results from this study.

The final part of hypothesis 7 asserted that people low in involvement would view the reconciling information as more accurate than people high in involvement. Again an Independent-samples t-test was used. The result did not yield a significant difference between high and low level involvement, $t\,(120) = 0.16$, $p = .870$. Participants low in involvement did not find the new information to be more accurate ($M = 4.82$, $SD = 1.23$) than participants high in involvement ($M = 4.78$, $SD = 1.22$). Based on findings, it can be concluded that although level involvement did appear to affect participants initial perceptions of the messages in the direction predicted, it cannot be concluded that level of involvement affects opinion change and perceptions of accuracy after the presentation of new information.

Research Question Three

The third research question inquired whether high levels of impression-relevant involvement would motivate accurate or directional information processing. In order to examine this question, cases were selected for analysis if participants scored higher than four in impression-relevant involvement. All other cases were excluded from analysis. To explore whether processing was accurate or directional, an Independent-samples t-test was used to compare mean scores between favored and opposing party in terms of perceived initial contradiction, opinion change, and perceptions of information accuracy. The analysis revealed that participants high in impression-relevant involvement did not significantly report different scores for initial message discrepancy (t [38] = 0.65, p = .518) based on whether they were reading a message from a favored (M = 5.02, SD = 1.72) versus an opposing source (M = 5.38, SD = 1.66). Furthermore, it was found that participants did not shift their opinion any differently (t [38] = 0.55, p = .584) based on whether the source was a favored (M = .11, SD = 1.01) or an opposing politician (M = .31, SD = 1.18). The only difference that approached significance was information accuracy, t (38) = 1.87, p = .069. It was found that participants high in impression-relevant involvement perceived opposing party information as being slightly more accurate (M = 4.92, SD = 1.01) than information from a favored party (M = 4.25, SD = 1.24). These findings insinuate that participants high in impression-relevant involvement perceive political information in more accurate, rather than directional, ways. This assertion is evidenced by this data because participants high in this type of involvement do not appear to process information any differently based on their political affiliations.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this investigation was to understand how selected factors affect an individual's political attitudes as well as their perception of political messages. It was thought that the motivated social cognition related to integrative complexity would affect a person's tendency to become involved in politics. Because the construct of integrative complexity is thought to be related to one's degree of political sophistication, it was thought that people who scored higher in this reasoning ability would perceive political messages differently than those scoring lower. Additionally, if integrative complexity shapes how a person thinks about an issue, it also merited attention to investigate the relationship between complexity and involvement type when looking at a person's political attitudes.

The data from this study suggest that integrative complexity and type and strength of involvement do affect how participants interpret political information. It was reasoned that both involvement and integrative complexity would motivate a person to scrutinize political information in an attempt to refine their political opinion. The reason why understanding this assertion is important is because people who are motivated to achieve a comprehensive political opinion will reason through political messages differently than people who consider themselves more apolitical.

Further, these findings demonstrate that an important factor in the political process is, not surprisingly, the source of the political messages and the political affiliations of the participant. It was found that people's motivation to scrutinize the information they received varied as a function of message source. When participants' own opinions were threatened, based on their favored candidate appearing contradictory, the response to the message was quantifiably different than when the message source was the opposition. Specifically,

participants were able to reason through contradictions presented by their favored candidate and reported these messages as "less contradictory" than the same set of messages presented by an opposing candidate.

With so much media attention on campaigns and the character of the politicians involved, an important question raised is how do people make sense of discrepant, or inconsistent, messages from both favored and opposing political parties. For example, past campaigns, such as the 2004 Bush strategy, have used a 'flip-flop' platform in an attempt to undermine the credibility of the opposing candidate. The secondary purpose of this study was to understand how political messages were viewed when contradiction did occur.

In order to test these empirical questions, first integrative complexity was measured. Participants were asked to begin reasoning about a political issue by writing down the arguments for and against that issue. Participants were also asked to identify which political party affiliates with specific arguments. Secondly, participants were interviewed so that they could elaborate on their understanding of the issue. Multiple indicators for the construct of integrative complexity were important here because this ensured that all participants, whether stronger writers or stronger speakers, would have the opportunity to present their opinions free from method-specific constraints.

It is recommended that future examinations into the construct of integrative complexity explore how slight methodological differences such as interviews or writing effect how this construct is inevitably measured. The current study found that, although similar, the two different mediums corresponded with differences in coding. Specifically, it was found that participants scored higher in integrative complexity in the interview portion of the study than in the written portion. However, in the written portion one person was able to

achieve a score of six, while in the interview portion five was the highest score given. Interpretations of these findings potentially hold implications about the construct validity of integrative complexity measurement. One explanation of the data is that participants who took more time on the written portion may have been more involved with the topic, which increased their complexity score. In the interview portion, participants may have felt pressure to hurry their response due to the presence of an interviewer and this pressure could have hindered the quality of their response. On the other hand it could be argued that impromptu responses best illustrate integrative complexity, indicated by the slightly higher average score. Regardless, this study illustrates the controversy of using different methods to obtain integrative complexity and in doing so poses the question of which method is the more valid indicator of this construct.

The third aspect of the study was a questionnaire that gauged involvement type for both politics in general and the issue in particular. Again, the two indicators used to measure involvement yielded slightly different scores. It is urged that future consideration be given into what the wording on questionnaires implies for politics and public opinion. Results from this study found differences based on reports about the issue versus politics in general, and this was important to consider before making assumptions about the type of political participation an individual is reporting.

The final aspect of the study showed two messages that were identical from both the republican and democrat party. The two messages contradicted one another about the politician's perspective on the issue, and the reader of these messages was asked to what degree do they perceive these statements as contradictory. Shortly thereafter contextual information was given to the participant that would allow them to make sense of the initial

contradiction if they so chose. The participant was then asked whether this potentially reconciling information: explained the contradiction, was accurate, was related to the issue, or was biased in any way.

The first two hypotheses predicted how integrative complexity would be related to outcome-relevant involvement and value-relevant involvement. For hypothesis one it was found that participants scoring higher in integrative complexity also scored higher in outcome-relevant involvement. Outcome-relevant involvement is thought to be involvement motivated by accurate processing and the need to make 'right' choices. Thus, it is normally associated with less biases and more openness to opinion change. These characteristics make sense when understanding what motivates integrative complexity is the need for a well-organized and patterned way with which to view political events. Further, because integrative complexity measures how well participants are able to integrate different aspects of a political event into a coherent meta-understanding of the issue in general, it seems logical that outcome-relevant involvement would facilitate this cognitive goal.

Another aspect considered when looking at integrative complexity was an attempt to resolve debates in the literature regarding the affiliations of those higher in this construct. Results from this study found that Republicans actually showed a non-significant negative correlation between integrative complexity and outcome-relevant involvement, while people with no reported political affiliation showed a significant and substantial positive correlation. This suggests that party affiliations may present a barrier between reasonable and accurate information processing. This finding is explainable because if people want their preferred party to be 'correct' (a processing technique indicative of value-relevant involvement), they

may dismiss evidence to the contrary and this pattern of information processing is not indicative of sophisticated reasoning.

The second hypothesis examined the relationship between integrative complexity and value-relevant involvement. It was predicted that there would be a negative relationship between these two constructs because value-relevant involvement is more closely tied to the ego-defense functions served by holding particular attitudes. Thus, inherent in this involvement should be dedication to party affiliations and the need to view preferred parties as better than opposing parties. The need to maintain preferential consistency seemed to be contradictory to information processing patterns motivated by integrative complexity. Results from the study, however, yielded a positive correlation between integrative complexity and value-relevant involvement, which contradicted the argument presented in the second hypothesis. Although not as strongly correlated as outcome-relevant involvement, this finding suggest that people who are reasonably patterned and sophisticated in their political thought still show a degree of ego invested involvement with their political attitudes. Following are two post-hoc reasons why this finding showed up as significant in the opposite direction.

A first potential explanation is that Cho and Boster (2005) found that outcome-relevant involvement and value-relevant involvement are significantly positively correlated, although the strength of association tended to vary by issue. This finding was replicated in this current study. Thus, statistically if such a high positive correlation exists between these two types of involvement, it is almost inevitable that a positive correlation would exist between both constructs, or neither construct, in the case of involvement type and integrative complexity. Thus, the relationship found in the present study might be spurious.

Second, this relationship appears logical when thinking about how and why people hold their political viewpoints. Because politics is value-laden, it seems that teasing apart objective versus subjective reasoning could be almost impossible. In other words, a negative relationship between these two types of involvement would be idealistic because people who believe they hold the most correct political opinion also likely believe, or uphold, the values underlying those opinions. Because political attitudes often reflect the person holding the attitude, teasing apart accurate or directional processing may be a falsely dichotomous way of understanding how involvement type effects political processing.

The first two research questions inquired about the relationship of impression-relevant involvement and integrative complexity, as well as impression-relevant involvements relationship to the other two forms of involvement. Unlike outcome-relevant or value-relevant involvement, impression-relevant involvement is rooted in an individual's concern with how their political attitudes are perceived by other people. Important to this type is whether a person is intentionally conforming or intentionally disassociating from another group with known political attitudes. Because impression-relevant involvement is concerned with appearance more so than political conviction, the relationship between this involvement and patterns of reasoning could not be persuasively predicted, and was thus left as a research question. This study found that the reason why this relationship could not be easily predicted was, perhaps because no clear relationship exists between impression-relevant involvement and integrative complexity. This suggests that how someone wants their political opinions to be perceived does not hold implications for the sophistication of their political attitudes.

The second research question exploring the correlation between impression relevant involvement and the other two types found a significant positive relationship between all types of involvement. Again this finding replicates Cho and Boster's (2005) results. This means that the stronger one is involved with their political attitudes (value or outcome), the more they care about how their opinions are being perceived. Although this relationship was significant, this study failed to find any patterns of information processing clearly associated with impression-relevant involvement. One explanation for this non-finding is that a factor may be confounding this relationship (which is demonstrated by the lack of correlation with integrative complexity). This factor is potentially whether impression-relevant involvement is interacting with involvement strength or attitude extremity. This study did not measure whether, or how, integrative complexity and involvement type relates to attitude extremity. Therefore, people who hold strong, or extreme, political attitudes may be dealing with more public scrutiny or conformity issues than people not holding as outwardly strong or extreme attitudes. Thus, the true nature between the relationship of information processing and impression-relevant involvement remains to be determined. This relationship merits investigation because on a college campus political norms are quickly transmitted and potentially influential. Understanding with more clarity how norms effect message perception could be an important tool for future campaign managers seeking the college demographic.

The third and fourth hypotheses dealt with how integrative complexity motivates patterns of information processing. Specifically, the predictions involved whether people higher in integrative complexity would view the initial two messages as being less contradictory, and whether these participants would shift their opinions less after viewing the

contextual information. The reason why integrative complexity should have negatively related to message contradiction was that people who are high in this construct have a fundamental need to integrate, rather than differentiate, information. This need should have been especially salient in this study because it was mentioned that the same politician made the statements. There were two different ways contradiction was measured. One scale asked the participant three items all gauging the degree to which the two messages were in contradiction with one another. The second was a single item measure that asked the participants whether they thought the two items were related. It was found that there was no relationship between integrative complexity and perceptions of contradiction; however, a relationship did exist between integrative complexity and the second measure. Participants higher in integrative complexity stated that the messages were more closely related to one another than participants low in integrative complexity. This was a logical relationship because people higher in integrative complexity are more able to integrate different information than people low in integrative complexity. One implication of this finding is that people higher in integrative complexity have more information to draw upon when creating their political attitudes because they are more able to find relationships among differentiated pieces of information, whereas people low in integrative complexity may tend to rely on singular pieces of information when forming their attitudes.

It is important to mention that degree of initial contradiction and integrative complexity were heavily influenced by whether the source of the message was a preferred source or an opposing source. This initially seemed a bit paradoxical with the thinking that people higher in integrative complexity should be less susceptible to these biases than people low in integrative complexity. The fact that this was not the case however, perhaps re-

emphasizes the strong relationship between outcome-relevant and value-relevant involvement. In this hypothesis it was found that when a democrat viewed a Democratic message, those higher in integrative complexity perceived the messages as being far less contradictory than Republicans high in integrative complexity who found the messages to be somewhat contradictory. This pattern was similar in the case of Republicans receiving republican messages. Here too directional bias was evident in that the more integratively complex participants viewed the messages as less contradictory than members high in complexity but from an opposing party. Furthermore, there were differences in these interpretive patterns based on the issue. This pattern of information processing was more prevalent for the affirmative action issue than the capital punishment issue. This could be because either the messages were not equivalently contradictory from issue to issue, or that the issues triggered different information processing techniques in the individuals. One reason for this is that affirmative-action was a recently hot issue heavily debated at the university because it was recently voted on, and overturned, by the state government. This current event could have made the context and findings more idiosyncratic to this public university than the issue of capital punishment.

The two predictions made in hypothesis five concerned how outcome-relevant involvement would relate to perceptions of initial contradiction, and opinion change following the contextual information. It was thought that people high in outcome-relevant involvement would demonstrate patterns similar to people who scored high in integrative complexity. This is because people motivated by accurate information processing goals would likely bring in outside information to reconcile any immediate contradictions. Thus, people high in involvement would scrutinize the message pair more thoroughly, and

consequently would perceive less contradiction than those not motivated by similar outcome related goals. Findings from this study revealed that when both issues were analyzed in aggregate, this relationship was not found to be the case. When splitting up the data by issue, however, a negative association occurred in the case of capital punishment between outcome-relevant involvement and perception of initial contradiction. This suggests that participants who were more outcome-involved with capital punishment perceived less contradiction. For the issue of affirmative action, this association was not observed. Although not statistically significant, there was a slight positive correlation between outcome-relevant involvement and initial message contradiction. This could mean that for this issue, more involvement led to a higher perception of contradiction. Again, the reason why this discrepancy by issue occurred is an empirical question that merits further investigation.

Another factor in the relationship between outcome-relevant involvement and initial message contradiction was political party. The capital punishment issue showed that Democrats who were high in outcome-relevant involvement found the two messages as being far less contradictory than participants reporting no political affiliations. This again suggests that although outcome-relevant involvement is conceptualized as being more accuracy driven, patterns of directional thinking are still evident in the case of message perception and the need to reconcile discrepant information.

The second part of this hypothesis posited that outcome-relevant involvement should also be negatively related to opinion change after the presentation of contextual information. The reason behind this assertion was that people high in this involvement would have already scrutinized the information, and any new information brought forth would therefore not be as closely depended upon when processing the messages. It should be mentioned that this

hypothesis did not state that change would not be possible, but rather acknowledges that small pieces of information would not be as heavily relied upon for participants stronger in this involvement type. Participants not knowing as much about politics, or the issue, would likely be more susceptible to information change and information source than participants who are more involved. Despite this reasoning however, findings failed to support this hypothesis. It was found that opinion change, and perceptions of contradiction following the contextual information were relatively unaffected by outcome-relevant involvement. One post-hoc explanation for this is that much of the reasoning through the contradiction was done before the presentation of new information. Because this reasoning was reflected in the variance of scrutiny potentially given to the initial contradiction, new information did not really affect what anyone later thought about the messages. An alternative explanation is that perhaps this pattern demonstrates participants need to report political opinion consistency. Regardless of these speculations, an area that definitely merits further research is how contextual information is perceived. The dependent measures present in the current study were not exhaustive enough to yield any patterns that could lead to a comfortable understanding regarding the effectiveness of the reconciling information.

In hypothesis five it was found that the relationship between outcome-relevant involvement and message perception was affected by party affiliations. Although this was not foreseen because it was thought that this type of involvement would be relatively unaffected by preferential bias, in the case of value-relevant involvement party affiliation was considered. All parts of hypothesis six asserted that patterns of message perception, specifically initial contradiction and opinion change, would relate to value-relevant involvement in different ways depending on whether the source was from a favored or

opposing political party. It was thought that when a politician was from a favored political party, participants higher in value-relevant involvement would view the messages as less contradictory than participants lower in this type. The explanation for this is basically that in an attempt to preserve one's ego, it becomes important to view messages from favored politicians in a positive way. Because contradiction has gotten bad publicity in recent political times, it makes sense here that participants would view their political party of choice as being less contradictory than their opposition. In the case of the favored politician, it was found that consistent with the above logic, participants did rate their own candidates as being less contradictory than an opposing source. The pattern predicted for opposing candidates, however, was not statistically significant. This finding merits further investigation because it suggests that while ego-defense does function to promote and support one's favored opinion, it does not simultaneously outwardly disparage or discredit the opposition's opinion in this scenario. It would have made sense for participants to see opposing messages as more contradictory, however this was not the case in a significant way. In fact, the data show that at times people are more accurate or objective when viewing an opposing party message than a favored party message. This was not a predicted finding, but an empirical question that naturally follows is why this would be the case.

Hypothesis six also argued that degree of opinion change based on degree of value-relevant involvement would also be influenced by political affiliation. For the same ego-defensive reasons, it was thought that when the source was favored the participant would be more likely to buy into the contextual information, and would shift their opinion even more in support of their affiliation. Although this finding was not quite significant, it was found to be the case that people higher in value-relevant involvement did not significantly change their

opinion upon receiving new information. This suggests that when information is revealed about one's already preferred political party the participant will likely not change their opinion very much because they essentially have already been convinced. While the predicted relationship was consistent for the favored source, findings from participants who viewed an opposing candidate told a different story. It was initially suggested that value-relevant involvement would be positively related to degree of opinion change for an opposing source. It was found however that no relationship existed between these two variables. This suggests that for an opposing source, contextual information may not change any opinions and participants may not pay much attention to new information when it concerns a party in which they are not affiliated.

Many of the previous hypotheses have analyzed involvement type separately, and then correlated the dependent variables with the strength of a particular type of involvement. One of the arguments advanced at the beginning of this paper, however, was that people who were involved would perceive messages differently than people low in involvement. Therefore, it was important to look at general involvement and to label participants as high or low to see if there are differences in message perception. When doing this, it was found that participants low in involvement perceived messages as being more contradictory than participants high in involvement. This is explainable because, as previously mentioned, affiliation breeds bias so when people are unaffiliated through non-involvement, their judgments appear to be either more objective or more heuristic. This relationship was especially strong in the case of reported Democrats for capital punishment. It was found that Democrats low in involvement perceived the messages as more contradictory than Democrats high in involvement.

Hypothesis 7 also asserted that people who are highly involved would shift their opinion less than people who are not very involved. It was speculated that this would be the case because people low in involvement would be more likely to accept information as is, without much scrutiny or outside information brought in to evaluate the veracity of the message. This would be indicative of more heuristic processing. Further, it was thought that people low in involvement would see the contextual information as more accurate than people high in involvement. Findings from this study revealed, however, that neither of these relationships were consistent with results. There were no significant differences based on involvement for opinion change after the contextual information or accuracy judgments regarding this information. This suggests that level of general involvement does not necessarily explain how people make sense of different pieces of political information. One idea is that the reason no change occurred and no accuracy judgments were made is because people low in involvement are generally apathetic about politics. Thus, the credibility of the information made no difference. This claim however, is only speculative and again more attention should begin to be paid concerning how people interpret potentially reconciling information.

Finally, while different relationships were predicted and reported for type of involvement and perceptions of the political messages, nothing was predicted for how impression-relevant involvement would affect perception. Impression-relevant involvement was not predicted to be too salient or influential in this study because no one was present to assess the participant's political opinions. Regardless, the final research question examined whether people who scored high in impression-relevant involvement would show significant differences in their perception of messages from a favored versus an opposing source. It was

found that high levels of impression-relevant involvement did not effect the participants' reporting of initial contradiction or opinion change based on the source of the message. The only difference that approached significant was that participants high in impression-relevant involvement viewed opposing party's contextual information as more accurate than that from their favored party. Because this finding is a bit unusual, the reason why this would be the case remains to be determined.

Aside from some methodological implications already discussed in this section, results from this study also allow for inferences to be made regarding the political attitudes of college students and the sophistication of current political messages. Based on findings regarding integrative complexity, involvement, and message perception, it was demonstrated that political sophistication effects who is paying attention to messages, and how closely an individual may scrutinize or make sense of the content within the message. This suggests that current campaign tactics that attack the opposing candidate by exposing past political contradictions may be a relatively ineffective strategy. The reason implied by current findings is that people who are already affiliated with a political party will likely bias information about their own candidate rendering the message ineffective, and will pay less attention to messages concerning opposing candidates because exposing this politician's weakness needs no affirmation. The participants in this study who were most integratively complex were the participants claiming no political affiliations. These participants also viewed the messages as being generally less contradictory regardless of the affiliation ascribed to the message. The lack of partisan bias suggests that participants reporting no affiliation reason that political messages are not outright contradictory because they occur within a context. They are able to not let their partisanship clout their judgment, and also use

their integrative reasoning to use outside information to make sense of this contradiction. In the current study, more than one third of the participants reported no affiliation. If this finding generalizes to other campuses, this implies that there are many votes to be gained if these Independents can be convinced by a persuasive rhetorical appeal. It must be kept in mind however that if Independents are, on average, demonstrating higher levels of political reasoning, campaign messages must become more complex to appeal to this group of individuals. This implies that current strategy, which targets the masses through relatively simple campaigns, are only polarizing the already decided, while failing to engage the Independent voter seeker noteworthy and credible information.

An implication that follows from this suggestion is that college students, despite their reputation, appear politically capable of making informed decisions. Although many students in this study provided a disclaimer stating, "I don't know much about politics," almost every participant was capable of forming coherent and accurate political opinions that reflect knowledge of the political system and affiliations in this country. The reason students, despite evidence to the contrary, may believe that they are politically unaware is because campaigns neglect their opinion, which sends the message that students do not understand politics in an important way. Because politics appears intentionally confusing, many students with valid viewpoints may innocently dismiss themselves from the political process. If more of an effort was made at harnessing the opinion students already possess, perhaps political participation for this demographic would not be so disappointing.

Another global implication from this study is the complexity of using contradicting messages as a campaign strategy. Although initial predictions concerning how integrative complexity, involvement, and political affiliations, affected perceptions of initial

contradiction were relatively straightforward, what happened after participants' exposure to contextual information became a lot more ambiguous. Political research in campaigning often uses opinion or attitude change as the main dependent variable; this study suggests however that there is a lot going on in the perception of the initial messages that must be better understood before making claims about how to create a persuasive message. If audiences are better targeted and more thoroughly researched campaigns may ultimately be more effective in understanding how the functions served by initial attitudes and values allow for message salience, retention, and scrutiny. The argument advanced in this paper is that using college students as a directly targeted, and economically plausible demographic may be the margin of error needed to win an election.

Although this study began to look at how political attitudes effect message perceptions, there are limitations that may have affected results and merit replication. The first limitation is the small sample size analyzed for many of the hypotheses. When initially setting the number of participants, it was difficult to predict how many would report each political affiliation. Further, it was difficult to match issue, affiliation, and message condition in ways that increased each cell size without more resources and participants to draw upon. It was also unexpected how many students would report no affiliation. Although this finding was not surprising post-hoc, it was not anticipated in the operationalization stage. Another unexpected finding hindering the study's sample size was the large differences present by issue. Initially it was thought that affirmative-action and capital punishment would have yielded analogous results. Thinking this would be the case would have allowed for bigger cell sizes in each message condition. The fact that this was not the case however, has

interesting implications for the greater study of political communication, because in this study issue type did moderate many results.

Another inherent limitation in the study was the measurement of integrative complexity. Although precautions were made to get the coders reliable to the developers of the integrative complexity scoring manual, and then to one another, the difficulty of the construct may have led to measurement issues that would not be detectable.

One measurement that could have been added to this study would have been participant's opinion on the issue itself. Although this measurement was intentionally left out in an effort to stay true to integrative complexities assertion that structure of thought should not be confused with content of opinion, knowing this information may have been explanatory in the interpretation of some unexpected findings. It was previously mentioned how opinion extremity may have been confounded with measurements of some forms of involvement, and while this should not have affected measures of integrative complexity, it might have affected message perception in ways that the current design could not measure.

Finally, there were not many findings that were significant when using reports of the contextual information. It was thought that the items should scale into three dimensions being: accuracy, consistency, and bias; however, items gauging this were not scaling together as well as they should have. This suggests that there was more going on with perceptions of the contextual information that the questionnaire could not measure. It is suggested that future research include more items so that the presence of this contextual information could be better understood and could perhaps help explain how people use new information to make sense of their already existing political judgments.

Future research in the area of political communication, individual attitudes, and perception of political messages should answer some of the empirical questions interspersed throughout this section. More could be understood with regard to who is paying attention to what types of political messages, who is capable of opinion change and at what level of message complexity can this change occur, how methodological choices effect end results, and lastly how norms function to induce political attitudes in a place like a college campus.

This study began to explore the development of college students' attitudes regarding political issues and how they perceive political messages. It is important that research continue in this vein to understand how individuals make sense of the political world around them. Especially in such a highly populated area with so many similar people such as a college campus, political research can serve to understand how public opinion can flourish in such environments. Currently, most registered voters are adults who have voted in several elections. The voters who consistently participate are the people who are more difficult to persuade. College students however are embarking upon the political process for the first time. Although some relegate to their parent's affiliation when making these political choices, some look for answers from their peers and from the media on tough political issues. If researchers can begin to explore the depth and breadth of these opinions, more could be understood about what messages can help win elections.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTEGRATIVE COMPLEXITY CODING SCHEME

(Baker-Brown et al., 1992; Golec, 2002; Rosenberg, 1988)

Sequential Level (scores 1 & 2)

Interviewers were classified as possessing thought reflective of this level if they revealed an ability to:

- Observe, notice, remember, and recall concrete objects, events, people, etc.;
- Organize observed and/or remembered events in a sequence based on loose and subjective associations;
- Opinion usually expressed as absolute or concrete and usually highly evaluative;
- End result is often the imposition of a dichotomous category structure;
- Usually qualification without elaboration, understands other viewpoints exist but does not consider much more about the explanation behind other viewpoints;
- Demonstrates conditional acceptance of other perspectives.

Advanced Sequential Level (Score of 3)

Interviewers were classified as possessing thought reflective of this level if they revealed all the above-mentioned operations, and others allowing for more abstract reasoning such as:

- Form simple relationships between concrete objects, events within a reported sequence;
- Fractionate, analyze concrete objects, events, etc.;
- Recognizes alternative perspectives and accepts these as being relevant or legitimate;
- Can articulate multiple alternatives and perspectives and begins to understand their relationship;
- Probability statements are evident and ambiguity is more tolerated.

Linear Level (Scores 4 & 5)

Interviewers were classified as possessing thought reflective of this level if they revealed all the above-mentioned operations, and others allowing for more abstract reasoning such as:

- Generalize relations between concrete objects, events, etc.;
- Relate objects and events to each other, abstract rules, laws, and properties from relations between concrete objects, events, etc.;
- Evaluate objects, events, etc., based on authority and social norms, conventions, and standards understood as stable, absolute, and externally given;
- Judgment is often withheld and tension between alternatives is acknowledged;
- Integration begins to be expressed through superordinate statements that reveal interactivity and interdependence between alternate perspectives;
- Causal attributions are made that explains differences between perspectives.

Advanced Linear Level (Score of 6)

Interviewers were classified as possessing thought reflective of this level if they revealed all the above-mentioned operations, and others allowing for more abstract and complex reasoning such as:

- Construct relationships between abstracted rules, laws, and properties;
- Decentrate – see more than one-at-a-time aspect of objects, events, etc., consider simultaneously more than one possible point of view on a problem;
- Evaluate objects, events, etc., based on recognition of relativity of social norms, based on individual choice according to preferences, without way of determining what is better or worse; recognition of difference between moral (should be) and practical (is);
- Comparison of outcomes is considered between alternative courses of action;
- Systematic analysis and hypothesis testing becomes possible as means for information searches.

Systematic Level (Score of 7)

Interviewers were classified as possessing thought reflective of this level if they revealed all the above-mentioned operations, and others allowing for more abstract and complex reasoning such as:

- Generate hypotheses about novel objects, evens, and relations by juxtaposition of the abstract rules, laws, and properties;
- Reflect on process of generating judgments about objects, events, and relations;
- Construct general model of system of abstract rules, laws, properties, and relations; use it as a frame of reference in analyzing and interpreting objects, events, relations, etc.;
- Coordinate points of view, define relations between different aspects of objects, events, etc., and between different perspectives on a problem, seeing some aspects in context of others;
- Evaluate objects, events, etc., based on recognition of relativity of social norms, according to given frame of reference that provides ways of choosing between better and worse; awareness of relativity and context of this choice; recognition of difference between moral (should be) and practical (is); attempts to integrate.
- An overarching principle or perspective pertaining to the nature of the relationship between alternatives;
- Hierarchical integration is evident and complex trade-offs are made and understood between conflicting goals.

APPENDIX B

INVOLVEMENT SCALES

Impression-relevant involvement

1. Talking about my political beliefs has little effect on what others think of me. (Reverse coded)
2. The impressions that others have of me are very much affected when I talk with them about my position on political issues.
3. The kind of opinion that I express in public about politics has little effect on what others think of me. (Reverse coded)
4. People may judge me on the basis of the opinion that I express in public about political issues.
5. If I express the right kind of opinion about political issues, people will find me more attractive.

Outcome-relevant involvement

1. My thoughts regarding political issues has little impact on my life. (Reverse coded)
2. All in all, the effect of politics on my life is small. (Reverse coded)
3. My life changes are a direct result of politics.
4. Laws created because of political issues have little effect on me. (Reverse coded)
5. It is easy for me to think of ways that political issues affect my life.
6. It is difficult for me to think of ways that political issues impact my life. (Reverse coded)
7. All in all, the effect of political changes in my life would be little. (Reverse Coded)
8. My opinions on political issues are relevant to my daily life.
9. Political issues have direct consequences to my life.

Value-relevant involvement

1. The values that are most important to me are what determine my stance on political issues.
2. Knowing my positions on political issues is central to understanding the kind of person I am.
3. My political position has little to do with my beliefs about how life should be lived. (Reverse coded)
4. My political position is based on the values with which I try to conduct my life.
5. The arguments for or against political issues are relevant to the core principles that guide my life.
6. My beliefs about how I should live my life determine my political position.
7. My political positions reflect who I am.
8. My political opinions do not reflect who I am. (Reverse coded)
9. My political positions are of much personal importance to me.

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONAIRRE ITEMS

Demographics Questionnaire

1. How old are you?
2. Are you male or female?
3. Which state are you from?
4. What is your ethnicity/race?

Political Attitudes

Voting Behavior

1. Have you ever voted before?
2. If so, how many times and for which election:
   - Local elections ____
   - National elections _____
3. Do you intend to vote in the next local election?
4. Do you intend to vote in the next national election?

Political Ideology

3. What is your political affiliation?
   a. Democrat
   b. Republican
   c. Independent
   d. Green Party
   e. Other _____
   f. I don't consider myself to have any political affiliations
4. What would you say is your strength of political party identification?
   Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strong
5. What would you say is your strength of political opinions?
   Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strong
6. I would consider myself to be conservative
   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
7. I would consider myself to be liberal
   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
8. What is your mother's political affiliation?
   a. Democrat
   b. Republican
   c. Independent
   d. Green Party
   e. Other _____
   f. None
   g. Don't know
9. What is your father's political affiliation?
   a. Democrat
   b. Republican
   c. Independent
   d. Green Party
   f. None
   g. Don't know
   e. Other

APPENDIX D

MESSAGE EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Dependent Measures and Manipulation Checks

Perceived Contradiction (Time 1 and Time 2)

1. Too what degree do you feel that the two previous messages contradicted each other?
Not at All Contradicting 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Contradicting
2. The two statements presented disagree with one another.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
3. The two statements are not at all contradictory.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
4. The two statements have nothing to do with one another.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

Perceptions of new information

1. The new information presented is accurate.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
2. The two initial messages are in contradiction with one another.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
3. I think the new information accurately explains how the first two messages relate.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
4. The new information has nothing to do with the initial two messages.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
5. The new information is inaccurate.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
6. The new information is biased.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

Manipulation Checks

1. The source of this message is a
    a. Democrat
    b. Republican
    c. Independent
    d. Not sure

APPENDIX E

QUESTIONNAIRES BY ISSUE

Impression-relevant involvement (Issue A: Affirmative-Action)
1. Talking about my beliefs concerning affirmative-action has little effect on what others think of me. (Reverse coded)
2. The impressions that others have of me are very much affected when I talk with them about my position on affirmative action.
3. The kind of opinion that I express in public about affirmative-action has little effect on what others think of me. (Reverse coded)
4. People may judge me on the basis of the opinion that I express in public about affirmative action.
5. If I express the right kind of opinion about affirmative-action, people will find me more attractive.

Outcome-relevant involvement (Issue A: Affirmative-Action)
1. My thoughts regarding affirmative-action has little impact on my life. (Reverse coded)
2. All in all, the effect of affirmative-action on my life is small. (Reverse coded)
3. My life changes are a direct result of affirmative-action legislation.
4. Laws created because of affirmative-action have little effect on me. (Reverse coded)
5. It is easy for me to think of ways that affirmative-action legislation affect my life.
6. It is difficult for me to think of ways that affirmative-action impact my life. (Reverse coded)
7. All in all, the effect of legal affirmative-action changes in my life would be little. (Reverse Coded)
8. My opinions on affirmative-action are relevant to my daily life.
9. Affirmative-action rulings have direct consequences to my life.

Value-relevant involvement (Issue A: Affirmative-Action)
1. The values that are most important to me are what determine my stance on affirmative-action.
2. Knowing my positions on affirmative-action is central to understanding the kind of person I am.
3. My position on affirmative-action has little to do with my beliefs about how life should be lived. (Reverse coded)
4. My position on affirmative-action is based on the values with which I try to conduct my life.
5. The arguments for or against affirmative-action are relevant to the core principles that guide my life.
6. My beliefs about how I should live my life determine my position on affirmative-action.
7. My position on affirmative-action reflects who I am.
8. My position on affirmative-action does not reflect who I am. (Reverse coded)
9. My stance on affirmative-action is of much personal importance to me.

Impression-relevant involvement (Issue B: Capital Punishment)
1. Talking about my beliefs concerning the death penalty has little effect on what others think of me. (Reverse coded)
2. The impressions that others have of me are very much affected when I talk with them about my position on the existence of the death penalty.
3. The kind of opinion that I express in public about death-penalty has little effect on what others think of me. (Reverse coded)
4. People may judge me on the basis of the opinion that I express in public about capital punishment.
5. If I express the right kind of opinion about capital punishment, people will find me more attractive.

Outcome-relevant involvement (Issue B: Capital Punishment)
1. My thoughts regarding the death penalty has little impact on my life. (Reverse coded)
2. All in all, the effect of the death penalty on my life is small. (Reverse coded)
3. My life changes are a direct result of capital punishment legislation.
4. Laws created because of capital punishment have little effect on me. (Reverse coded)
5. It is easy for me to think of ways that capital punishment legislation affects my life.
6. It is difficult for me to think of ways that capital punishment impacts my life. (Reverse coded)
7. All in all, the effect of changes to the death penalty laws in my life would be little. (Reverse Coded)
8. My opinions on capital punishment are relevant to my daily life.
9. Capital punishment rulings have direct consequences to my life.

Value-relevant involvement (Issue B: Capital-Punishment)
1. The values that are most important to me are what determine my stance on capital punishment.
2. Knowing my positions on the death penalty is central to understanding the kind of person I am.
3. My position on capital punishment has little to do with my beliefs about how life should be lived. (Reverse coded)
4. My position on capital punishment is based on the values with which I try to conduct my life.
5. The arguments for or against capital punishment are relevant to the core principles that guide my life.
6. My beliefs about how I should live my life determine my position on the death penalty.
7. My position on capital punishment reflects who I am.
8. My position on capital punishment does not reflect who I am. (Reverse coded)
9. My stance on capital punishment is of much personal importance to me.

APPENDIX F

MESSAGES USED IN THE STUDY

The message posted first in all cases was the message typically associated with the source of the messages party affiliation

Issue A: Affirmative-Action

Pro: " We need to move away from a world of lingering biases and towards one in which opportunity is equal. Affirmative action has been good for America, when done right, it is flexible, it is fair, and it works. The point isn't to give out jobs, but instead to provide opportunities to prove one self. Whether you are a female or a minority candidate, doors close. Affirmative action can open these doors of opportunity."

Anti: "I feel that people of all races must be treated equally under the law, and we know that society has not fully achieved that ideal. Yet, as we work to address the wrong of racial prejudice, we must not use means that create another wrong, and thus perpetuate our economic divisions. Quota systems that use race to include or exclude people from higher education and the opportunities it offers are divisive, unfair and increasingly impossible to justify."

Exculpatory Statement: This politician made this second statement 4 years after the initial statement, in a lower-middle class White community that historically struggles with getting students to higher education. The second statement addressed a growing concern that state Universities were considering ethnicity before socioeconomic status, which perpetuates class inequality. This speech was made to motivate non-minority, low-income families, to pursue higher education.

Issue B: Capital Punishment

Pro: "Along with almost three-fourths of the American public, I believe in capital punishment. I believe that there are some defendants who have earned the ultimate punishment our society has to offer by committing murder with aggravating circumstances present. In my view, society has not only the right, but the duty to act in self defense to protect the innocent."

Anti: "The way some states administer the death penalty constitutes "cruel and unusual punishment." The death penalty is used disproportionately against the poor, who cannot afford expensive legal counsel, as well as racial, ethnic and religious minorities. Further, as in this case, the death penalty was applied arbitrarily and inconsistently, which is evidenced because wrongly convicted, innocent people have received death penalty sentence, and tragically, were killed by the state."

Exculpatory Statement: This politician made this second statement in a low-income neighborhood near a state penitentiary, 4 years after the initial statement. The second

statement addressed recurring accusations that states were not abiding by capital punishment in the way the law intended, because research had recently indicated that 50 innocent people were wrongly executed at this penitentiary in particular.

APPENDIX G

Table 1

Correlations Between Integrative Complexity and Outcome-Relevant Involvement by Political Party and Issue Type

Issue	All Participants	Democrats	Republicans	Other	No Affiliation
Both Issues	.198* (N = 122)	.211 (n = 39)	-.161 (n = 25)	.191 (n = 12)	.432** (n = 46)
Affirmative-Action	.260* (n = 61)	.290 (n = 22)	-.114 (n = 15)	.192 (n = 7)	.636** (n = 17)
Capital-Punishment	.130 (n = 61)	.398 (n = 17)	-.267 (n = 10)	-.350 (n = 5)	.111 (n = 29)

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Table 2

Correlations Between Integrative Complexity and Value-Relevant Involvement by Political Party and Issue Type

Issue	All Participants	Democrats	Republicans	Other	No Affiliation
Both Issues	.193* (N = 122)	.266 (n = 39)	.069 (n = 25)	.199 (n = 12)	.229 (n = 46)
Affirmative-Action	.349** (n = 61)	.426* (n = 22)	.152 (n = 15)	.391 (n = 7)	.599* (n = 17)
Capital-Punishment	-.060 (n = 61)	.169 (n = 17)	-.187 (n = 10)	-.075 (n = 5)	-.185 (n = 29)

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Table 3

Correlations Between Outcome-Relevant Involvement and Perceived Message Discrepancy by Political Party and Issue Type

Issue	All Participants	Democrats	Republicans	Other	No Affiliation
Both Issues	-.062 (N = 122)	-.262 (n = 39)	.062 (n = 25)	-.140 (n = 12)	.000 (n = 46)
Affirmative-Action	.146 (n = 61)	-.023 (n = 22)	.338 (n = 15)	.226 (n = 7)	.117 (n = 17)
Capital-Punishment	-.287* (n = 61)	-.744** (n = 17)	-.027 (n = 10)	-.627 (n = 5)	-.084 (n = 29)

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Table 4

Correlations Between Value-Relevant Involvement and Perceived Message Discrepancy by Political Party, Message Condition, and Issue Type

Issue	Democrats	Republicans
	Democrat Message Condition (n = 31)	
Affirmative-Action	-.157 (n = 10)	.527 (n = 7)
Capital-Punishment	-.766* (n = 8)	-.802 (n =6)
	Republican Message Condition (n = 32)	
Affirmative-Action	.146 (n = 12)	-.735* (n = 8)
Capital-Punishment	-.287* (n = 8)	.451 (n = 4)

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

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