

An Individual–Group Belief Framework: Predicting Life Satisfaction, Group Identification, and Support for the “War on Terror”

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A sample of U.S. citizens ($N=281$) completed the Individual–Group Belief Inventory approximately 6 months after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The survey measured beliefs about vulnerability, injustice, distrust, superiority, and helplessness in three interrelated spheres: personal beliefs about their American ingroup, personal perceptions of the ingroup’s collective worldviews, and personal beliefs about their personal worlds. As predicted, individual differences in the strength of these beliefs were related to satisfaction with current circumstances, strength of group identification, and support for the post-9/11 “war on terror.” Personal beliefs about the ingroup tended to be most strongly correlated with the criterion measures, but the three belief spheres together offered greater explanatory power than any single sphere alone.

The power of beliefs to influence perception and behavior has long been recognized, not only in the realm of individual psychology but also in relation to groups large and small. Indeed, beyond the realistic conflict elements of competition over resources and territory, large-scale intergroup hostilities are often driven, in part, by deeply held partisan convictions. For instance, Kelman (1997, 1999) has long emphasized the influence of collective needs and fears regarding identity, security, and justice in driving conflicts between national or ethnic groups; Staub (1989) has argued that conflict-engendering miscalculations become more likely when reliance on

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worldviews replaces “objective reality” as the basis for judging the intentions and behaviors of others; and Brewer and Miller (1996) have noted that political psychologists view biases as promoting warfare because they limit trust and cooperation between nations. Moreover, the degree to which key beliefs of the contending parties stubbornly resist change can make conflicts more intractable and conflict resolution efforts more difficult (e.g., Coleman, 2003; Deutsch, 1973; Deutsch & Coleman, 2000).

Eidelson and Eidelson (2003) have proposed that certain beliefs are particularly influential in group conflict settings because they operate simultaneously as core beliefs fundamental to the daily and existential experiences of individuals (e.g., Beck, 1976; Burns, 1999; Young, 1999) and as collective worldviews pivotal to the central concerns and shared narratives of groups (e.g., Bar-Tal, 2000; Ross, 1995, 1997). Within this framework, the authors identify and describe five domains that meet this dual standard: beliefs about vulnerability, injustice, distrust, superiority, and helplessness. Eidelson and Plummer (2005) have elaborated on this five-domain framework by describing three interrelated spheres in which individual group members may differ from each other in the strength of their beliefs—namely, in their personal beliefs about the ingroup, in their personal perceptions of the ingroup’s collective worldviews, and in their personal beliefs about their personal worlds.

This article offers an empirical test of the utility of this five-belief, three-sphere model. The survey responses of a sample of American citizens were used to examine whether beliefs about vulnerability, injustice, distrust, superiority, and helplessness in these three spheres were indeed linked to individual differences in satisfaction with current circumstances, strength of group identification, and support for the post-9/11 “war on terror.” Let me begin by briefly describing the basic components of the model.

FIVE BELIEF DOMAINS

Vulnerability

The vulnerability domain is characterized by the view that the world is a dangerous and risky place, where safety and security are elusive, and individual or collective threats seem omnipresent (e.g., Stephan & Renfro, 2002). When adopted in regard to one’s personal world, this belief often produces chronic worry and an exaggerated expectation that circumstances will deteriorate (e.g., Beck, Emery, & Greenberg, 1985). At times, groups also see themselves as potential victims of pervasive and imminent threats (e.g., Bar-Tal, 2000). Worst-case scenarios may be imagined and nurtured

by a real or perceived history of misery and devastation, including traumatic experiences as the targets of outgroup aggression. Indeed, fears about the future are among the major contributing factors to intergroup conflicts, often producing spiraling violence (e.g., Deutsch, 1973; Lake & Rothchild, 1998). Perceived collective vulnerability can also provide the impetus for a group to act aggressively in an effort to preemptively ensure its own safety (e.g., Jervis, 1978).

Injustice

At both the individual and group levels, the injustice domain involves the perception of being the victim of mistreatment by others. When this belief is activated in reference to an individual's personal world, the grievances are often focused on those people perceived to have been the source of betrayal or the cause of disappointment. When the injustice frame represents a sufficient consensus within the group, this collective worldview can play an important role in the mobilization of violent insurgencies (e.g., Staub, 1989), especially because shared views of injustice can serve to heighten the identification and allegiance that individuals feel toward the ingroup (Brewer & Brown, 1998). Further contributing to the likelihood of intergroup conflict, perceptions of history often contain subjective distortions that include self-whitewashing and other maligning myths (van Evera, 1997).

Distrust

The distrust domain focuses on the presumed hostility and malicious intent of others. In reference to the individual's personal world, at the extreme this belief is transformed from a predisposition toward suspicion into outright paranoia. In reference to groups, the collective worldview that other groups harbor malevolent intentions toward the ingroup is sufficiently widespread that "dishonest" and "untrustworthy" are considered to be central elements in the universal stereotype of outgroups (Campbell, 1967; LeVine & Campbell, 1972). Insko and Schopler (1998; Schopler & Insko, 1992) found empirical evidence for a group schema that leads groups to be significantly more distrustful of and competitive toward each other than are individuals.

Superiority

Superiority beliefs rest on the conviction of being better than others. When adopted in reference to one's personal world, this belief often takes the form

of standing above the norms and rules that govern the actions of other people, often leading to expressions of arrogance and harsh judgments of others that create difficulties in interpersonal relationships (e.g., Young, 1999). When the belief represents a group's collective worldview, it often manifests itself in the perception that the group is morally superior, chosen, entitled, or destined for greatness. Ethnocentrism—the presumed superiority of the ingroup's culture combined with condemnation of the outgroup as immoral and inferior—appears to be commonplace (e.g., LeVine & Campbell, 1972). “Chosenness” is a particularly prominent expression of this belief, often encouraging diametrically opposed viewpoints as to which group is truly entitled to disputed territory or status. Evidence for each side's claim is often found in the selective recounting of group histories that promote further polarization (e.g., van Evera, 1997).

Helplessness

Helplessness beliefs involve the perceived inability to influence or control events and outcomes (e.g., Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978; Buchanan & Seligman, 1995). Even when it does not accurately represent objective reality, this belief tends to be self-perpetuating because it diminishes motivation. For instance, Bandura's (1977, 1997) analyses of self-efficacy have revealed that individuals less confident of their capabilities tend not to try as hard or as long when pursuing goals and tend not to bounce back as resiliently when their efforts prove unproductive. Similarly, when a group sees itself as helpless to alter its circumstances, this belief severely constrains organized political mobilization. An effective insurgency or social movement depends on the promise of some reasonable likelihood of success given the risks undertaken (Brewer & Brown, 1998; Gamson, 1995; Homer-Dixon, 1999).

THREE SPHERES OF BELIEF AND PERCEPTION

Personal Beliefs About the Ingroup

Personal beliefs about the ingroup are likely to bear most directly on the individual's relationship with the group and his or her perspective on the challenges and priorities facing the group. For example, do I personally believe that my group is endangered? Do I believe that other groups have treated my group unfairly? Indeed, more so than self-interest alone, such beliefs about ingroup circumstances have been shown to be key determinants of a person's political attitudes and willingness to take action on

behalf of the group (e.g., Kinder, 1998; Runciman, 1966), ranging from voting behavior to militant resistance.

Both the centrality of social identity in individuals' lives and the diverse demands groups place on their members have been persuasively theorized and empirically demonstrated, including within the frameworks of social identity theory (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and self-categorization theory (e.g., Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). In addition, pressures toward conformity can become especially strong during periods of conflict with other groups (e.g., LeVine & Campbell, 1972; Ross, 2002). Nevertheless, individual differences among group members in the extent to which they believe their group is vulnerable, mistreated, in need of a distrustful posture, superior, and helpless should act as sources of variation in how members interpret and respond to group experiences, including threats from outgroups and calls for collective mobilization.

Personal Perceptions of the Ingroup's Collective Worldviews

This second belief sphere focuses on individual differences in group members' perceptions of their ingroup's collective worldviews. Eidelson and Eidelson (2003) have described how collective worldviews are often powerful influences in a group's understanding of itself, its circumstances, and its relationships with other groups. Because the collective worldviews of a group typically exist independent of any specific individual—indeed these shared beliefs usually precede the entry of each member into the group—they also represent important benchmarks against which individual members can gauge their own personal beliefs about the ingroup, evaluate their prototypicality, and make judgments regarding alternative courses of action.

However, just as individual judgments of public opinion are often faulty (e.g., Shamir & Shamir, 2000; Todorov & Mandisodza, 2004), an individual group member's perceptions are unlikely to perfectly capture the collective worldviews themselves. These perceptions result from the personal and idiosyncratic lenses through which shared beliefs are viewed. As a result, some divergence among group members is to be expected in their assessments of the ingroup's worldviews regarding collective vulnerability, injustice, distrust, superiority, and helplessness. For example, I may perceive our group as believing that it needs to be distrustful of other groups, but you may think our group holds a more trusting attitude toward outgroups; or, I may perceive our group as believing it is superior to other groups, but you may see our group as less chauvinistic in its shared mindset. Although variability in members' perceptions may hamper the precise determination of the group's

actual shared beliefs, the lack of unanimity also provides a valuable opportunity to examine correlates of these individual differences.

Personal Beliefs About the Personal World

Finally, the third sphere focuses on the personal core beliefs an individual group member holds about his or her personal world. For example, to what extent do I feel personally helpless to find a job?; or, to what degree do I feel personally vulnerable in my neighborhood? These beliefs focus on one's personal identity and do not directly implicate social identity or group membership. Nevertheless, an individual's personal world beliefs may still bear on his or her experience of group-related events, and individual differences in these beliefs may, in part, explain variation in members' views of group concerns.

Inter-Relationships Among the Three Spheres

As noted earlier, personal beliefs about the ingroup are likely to be the belief sphere that most directly taps into an individual group member's attitudes regarding his or her group. However, the three-sphere framework described here recognizes that there are situations where it may also be important to consider the role of personal perceptions of the ingroup's collective worldviews or personal beliefs about the personal world when trying to understand or predict how a group member will view and respond to group-relevant events. As one example, a group member's personal beliefs about the magnitude of injustices perpetrated against the group may be intensified or tempered by perceptions of whether the group holds a collective victimization mindset and by personal first-hand experiences with unjust treatment. As another instance, two individuals with similar assessments of their group's vulnerability may nevertheless diverge in their preferred responses due to differences in their perceptions of the group consensus concerning its collective insecurity or their own sense of personal danger. Moreover, tension among the parallel beliefs in the three interrelated spheres may be influential and informative in its own right. Thus, discrepancies between personal beliefs about the group and perceptions of the group's collective worldviews may indicate alienation from or discomfort with group norms and narratives, whereas concordance may indicate commitment and conformity to the group prototype.

THE PRESENT STUDY

The present study applied this five-domain, three-sphere framework to individual differences among a sample of American citizens in three

important areas: satisfaction with current circumstances, strength of group identification, and support for the post-9/11 “war on terror.” The hypothesized relations are described later.

Satisfaction with Current Circumstances

Dissatisfaction can be an important factor in determining an individual’s or a group’s inclination to take action to change the *status quo*. Vulnerability, injustice, distrust, and helplessness are all belief domains theoretically tied to a perceived aversive or undesirable state. Therefore, for all three spheres, it was hypothesized that beliefs in these four domains would be associated with diminished satisfaction.

For instance, in regard to vulnerability, the group member who sees the ingroup’s situation as precarious should be less satisfied with the group’s circumstances than the member who sees the group’s status as more secure. In much the same way, individuals who feel in jeopardy in their personal lives should presumably be less happy than those who feel personally safer. Similarly, in regard to injustice, group members who believe the ingroup is treated unfairly are likely to be less content with the group’s circumstances, and individuals who feel mistreated in their personal lives are likely to be less satisfied with their own personal situations. Comparable relations should hold for the distrust and helplessness domains as well. For each of these four domains, the same logic should also apply in reference to perceptions of the group’s collective worldviews and judgments about whether the group as a whole is satisfied with its situation.

In contrast, convictions of superiority do not immediately appear to be linked as clearly to one end of the satisfaction–dissatisfaction continuum. Although superiority beliefs could be linked to a favorable view of one’s personal situation or the ingroup’s circumstances, such convictions could also support the perception that circumstances are inadequate (e.g., in light of a narcissistic presumption of entitlement). Therefore, no predictions were made regarding the relation between superiority beliefs and satisfaction.

Strength of Group Identification

The strength of group members’ identification with their ingroup was the second key criterion measure of interest. Group identification has been a longstanding focus and concern of social psychologists, with an impressive body of accumulated research confirming and elaborating on its importance in intergroup relationships. Among the most prominent theoretical accounts are social identity theory (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and self-categorization theory (e.g., Turner et al., 1987). More recent approaches

have extended the reach of these formulations by highlighting the significance of individual differences in the strength with which people identify with groups. For example, Huddy (2003) has stressed the greater importance of subjective group loyalty over mere objective group membership, noting that members who identify more strongly with a group are more likely to view the group positively, view outgroups negatively, and engage in political action on behalf of the group. Considerable evidence also supports the conclusion that high-identifiers and low-identifiers respond differently to perceived threats to the ingroup, with the former showing greater commitment and willingness to sacrifice for the group than the latter (e.g., Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002).

Bringing these insights to bear on the three-sphere analysis of group members' beliefs leads to specific predictions. First, within the sphere of group members' personal beliefs about the ingroup, beliefs about ingroup vulnerability, injustice, and distrust should be associated with stronger group identification because high-identifiers tend to be more committed to the group's welfare and, therefore, should be more alert to issues of potential concern. In addition, given the self-enhancement that can derive from identification with a group (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1986), it is likely that personal convictions regarding ingroup superiority will be positively related to strength of group identification as well. On the other hand, identification should tend to be negatively associated with the belief that the group is helpless. Such a mindset should not only adversely impact commitment and willingness to participate in presumably fruitless group mobilization efforts, it should also represent a threat to the positive self-image otherwise derived from group membership.

In comparison to these hypothesized relations, it was expected that strength of identification with a group would not be linked as strongly to perceptions of the group's collective worldviews because such perceptions do not represent the individual's own personal convictions about the group. Because personal beliefs about the personal world do not directly engage the individual's social identity or group membership, any relations between group identification and beliefs about personal vulnerability, injustice, distrust, superiority, or helplessness should also be relatively weak.

Support for the Post-9/11 "War on Terror"

To the extent that the five belief domains are linked to intergroup conflict and collective mobilization, individual differences in the strength of these convictions should be related to variations in how group members react to instances of perceived group threat and overt hostile engagement with an outgroup. The immediate U.S. response in the aftermath of the 9/11

attacks—broadly construed as a “war on terror”—was multifaceted and encompassed military action in Afghanistan against al-Qaeda and the Taliban; new laws, regulations, and related initiatives to improve homeland security; and a salient “us versus them” narrative recurrently highlighted by the country’s leaders and media.

Therefore, it was hypothesized that U.S. citizens’ personal beliefs about their American national group in regard to issues of group vulnerability, injustice, distrust, and superiority—but not helplessness—would be correlated with greater support for this “war on terror.” In addition, it was expected that perceptions of the nation’s collective worldviews and beliefs about the personal world in these same domains would serve to either intensify or temper the degree to which individual group members embraced the national response to 9/11.

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

Data were collected in April 2002 from volunteers recruited from a large waiting room for prospective jurors awaiting possible empanelling at a Philadelphia, PA municipal courthouse. Respondents were given the survey materials at their seats in the waiting room and received a candy bar as a token of appreciation. It was made clear to all present that the survey was entirely unrelated to their jury duty. Whenever a respondent’s name was called for jury duty it was necessary for him or her to leave the waiting room and return the survey uncompleted. As a result, only about two-thirds of the surveys that were distributed were completed. Only completed surveys in which the respondent identified his or her national group as “American” were used in the data analyses presented here ($N = 281$). The average age of this sample (65% women, 35% men) was 41.20 years ($SD = 13.44$); their racial backgrounds were 63% White and 37% African American; highest educational level attained was 19% graduate work, 20% college degree, 31% some college, 29% high school, and 1% did not hold a high school diploma; the family income breakdown was 21% less than \$30,000, 55% between \$30,000 and \$75,000, and 24% greater than \$75,000.

In addition to measures of their five beliefs in the three interrelated spheres, the respondents also completed three brief measures of subjective well-being adapted from Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985; one set for each of the three spheres); a measure of group identification adapted from Brown, Condor, Mathews, Wade, and Williams (1986); and a set of items assessing the respondents’ views related to the implications

of the 9/11 attacks and appropriate responses to it; demographic data were also collected.

The Individual–Group Belief Inventory (IGBI)

The IGBI (Eidelson, 2002) was developed as a brief inventory to assess the strength of respondents' beliefs about vulnerability, injustice, distrust, superiority, and helplessness in the three spheres described earlier. For each sphere, three items are used to measure each of the five belief domains, producing three parallel item sets of 15 items each. All items are endorsed on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

In its standard form, and as used in this study, the first set of IGBI items assesses the respondent's beliefs about his or her personal world distinct from any explicit aspects of the individual's social identity or group identification. This set is introduced in this way: "Please describe how you think about yourself and the world by rating how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements." The second set of items then measures the respondent's personal beliefs about his or her ingroup. Before answering these items, the respondent is first asked to identify the group about which he or she will be responding. In this study, participants were specifically instructed to identify their national group as either "American" or "Other (please specify)." The prompt for the item set read: "Please describe how you think about your national group by rating how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements." The third parallel set of items follows immediately and measures the respondent's personal perceptions of the ingroup's collective worldviews. In this study, it was introduced in this way: "Please describe how your national group thinks about itself by rating how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements."

An example of a vulnerability domain IGBI item in all three spheres should help to make this format clear. In the first set, the item reads: "My safety and security are uncertain." In the second set, it appears in parallel form: "I believe my group's safety and security are uncertain." All items for this sphere begin with the following key phrase: "I believe that my group." In the third set, the same item again appears in parallel form: "My group believes its safety and security are uncertain." All items for this sphere begin with the following key phrase: "My group believes." A respondent's score is the average of three items for each of the five scales in each of the three spheres. The complete set of 15 items measuring personal beliefs about the ingroup is presented in Table 1. In the table, the items are grouped by domain, but the actual IGBI ordering alternates items across the domains (other research has investigated and shown the absence of signifi-

TABLE 1
Individual-Group Belief Inventory Items for Each Domain in the Personal Beliefs
About the Group Sphere

<i>Scale items</i>	<i>Description items</i>
Vulnerability	I believe my group's safety and security are uncertain. I believe that my group must be constantly alert for possible danger.
Injustice	I believe that the things most important to my group are at risk. I believe other groups are often unfair to my group.
Distrust	I believe my group is criticized by other groups more than it should be. I believe that my group's efforts often go unrewarded. I believe my group should be suspicious of other groups' intentions.
Superiority	I believe that other groups will try to deceive my group if given the chance. I believe my group generally should not trust other groups. I believe my group is superior to other groups in many ways.
Helplessness	I believe that it is important for my group to do better than other groups. I believe my group's contributions to society are more valuable than those of other groups. I believe that my group has very little control over its future. I believe that it is hard to be optimistic about my group's future. I believe that my group's fate is in the hands of other groups.

Note. Parallel items measuring perceptions of the ingroup's collective worldviews and personal world beliefs are not shown here.

cant order effects with the IGBI; Eidelson, 2005). A copy of the entire IGBI is available from the author on request.

Satisfaction With Current Circumstances

Each of the three sets of 15 IGBI items was immediately followed by three items adapted from the five-item Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985). Following the personal world set, these three items were as follows: "In most ways my life is close to ideal," "So far I have gotten the important things I wanted in my life," and "The conditions of my life are excellent." Following the beliefs about the ingroup set, these three items were as follows: "I believe that in most ways my group's current circumstances are close to ideal," "I believe that so far my group has gotten the important things it wants," and "I believe that my group's current situation is excellent." Following the perceptions of collective worldviews set, the parallel items were as follows: "My group believes that in most ways its current circumstances are close to ideal," "My group believes that so far it has gotten the important things it wants," and "My group believes that its current situation is excellent." All items were answered on a 5-point Likert-type

scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). For each sphere, the items were averaged to create a Satisfaction With Current Circumstances scale. The Cronbach's alphas were .77, .76, and .78, respectively.

Strength of Group Identification

Six items adapted from Brown et al. (1986) were used to measure strength of identification with the American national group. These items were completed immediately after the respondent identified his or her national group and immediately before the IGBI items measuring personal beliefs about the ingroup were presented. The identification items read: "I identify with other members of my national group," "My group is important to my identity," "I think of myself as a member of my group," "I feel close to other members of my group," "When someone criticizes my group, it feels like a personal insult," and "When I talk about members of my group, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they'." All items were answered on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .85.

Support for the Post-9/11 "War on Terror"

This scale was designed to measure the extent to which respondents supported or adopted key aspects of the U.S. response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Scores on the following nine items were averaged: "I support military action against the groups or nations responsible for the September 11th terrorist attacks," "The U.S. has been doing all it reasonably can do to try to avoid civilian casualties in Afghanistan," "The U.S. should have done more to find a diplomatic solution before attacking Afghanistan" (reverse-scored), "I am concerned about the possibility that there will be more major terrorist attacks in this country," "I support new laws that make it easier for the FBI and other authorities to investigate people they suspect of involvement with terrorism," "The news media have exaggerated the danger of terrorism" (reverse-scored), "The September 11th terrorist attacks have made me more suspicious of people I think are of Arab descent," "The conflict between the United States and countries that support Islamic fundamentalism is a battle between good and evil," and "It would be a mistake for us to think that countries like Iraq, Iran, and North Korea have peaceful intentions toward the United States." All items were answered on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .77.

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

Preliminary confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) were conducted to determine whether the data satisfactorily fit the theoretical five-factor, three-sphere model. This proved to be the case. First, for each of the three spheres, a CFA and subsequent chi-square difference test confirmed that a five-factor model produced a better fit to the data than a one-factor model, and that each factor was distinct from each of the other four factors (i.e., all of the correlations among factors were significantly different from 1.0). Second, a separate set of five CFAs—one for each belief domain—confirmed that the three different spheres represented separate (but intercorrelated) factors. In combination, this series of analyses provided support for the premise that the respondents as a whole distinguished among the five belief factors and the three spheres (for further details on these analyses, see Eidelson, 2002).

Table 2 presents the intercorrelations among the IGBI scale scores and the criterion measures. The alphas for all scales are presented in the table's main diagonal. Several points regarding the brief IGBI scales merit highlighting. First, all alphas were at least .60 in magnitude, and most were above .70. Second, within each sphere of analysis, as expected, the five belief scales tended to be significantly intercorrelated. Third, for each domain, scale scores across the three spheres of analysis were also significantly intercorrelated. These cross-sphere correlations were strongest between personal beliefs about the ingroup and perceptions of the ingroup's collective worldviews, and weakest between beliefs about the personal world and perceptions of the ingroup's collective worldviews. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for the IGBI scales and criterion measures. Consistent with previous research (Eidelson & Plummer, 2005), in each of the five domains mean scores on the perceived collective worldviews scales were significantly higher than scores measuring personal beliefs about the ingroup, and scores on the beliefs about the ingroup scales were significantly higher than those on the IGBI scales measuring beliefs about the personal world (all $ps < .001$ based on paired-sample t tests).

Hypothesis 1: Satisfaction With Current Circumstances

Satisfaction with personal life circumstances was hypothesized to be linked to personal world beliefs, personal satisfaction with the circumstances of the American national group was predicted to be correlated with personal beliefs about the ingroup, and judgments regarding the

TABLE 2
Correlations and Cronbach's Alphas for Individual-Group Belief Inventory Scales and Criterion Measures

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
1. V-IG	0.72	0.60	0.64	0.39	0.37	0.52	0.39	0.39	0.18	0.29	0.44	0.19	0.19	-0.02	0.15	-0.40	0.30	0.31	
2. I-IG		0.78	0.62	0.51	0.38	0.30	0.53	0.42	0.08	0.30	0.29	0.25	0.26	0.04	0.16	-0.36	0.40	0.34	
3. D-IG			0.81	0.52	0.37	0.38	0.44	0.56	0.24	0.22	0.35	0.26	0.37	0.06	0.24	-0.35	0.27	0.33	
4. S-IG				0.68	0.21	0.19	0.23	0.31	0.35	0.04	0.22	0.11	0.25	0.35	0.16	-0.10	0.40	0.34	
5. H-IG					0.70	0.18	0.26	0.24	-0.01	0.60	0.35	0.29	0.27	0.11	0.37	-0.44	0.00	0.07	
6. V-GG						0.71	0.55	0.55	0.40	0.20	0.24	0.18	0.06	0.06	0.10	-0.23	0.07	0.08	
7. I-GG							0.73	0.62	0.39	0.32	0.23	0.25	0.17	0.10	0.18	-0.35	0.09	-0.03	
8. D-GG								0.76	0.53	0.22	0.19	0.27	0.26	0.07	0.16	-0.23	0.10	0.03	
9. S-GG									0.70	-0.00	-0.05	0.07	0.09	0.26	0.07	0.07	0.03	-0.20	
10. H-GG										0.76	0.28	0.29	0.21	0.03	0.31	-0.37	-0.02	-0.01	
11. V-II											0.60	0.47	0.51	0.23	0.41	-0.31	0.12	0.30	
12. I-II												0.65	0.51	0.24	0.48	-0.39	-0.04	0.09	
13. D-II													0.71	0.29	0.50	-0.29	0.05	0.14	
14. S-II														0.61	0.17	-0.05	-0.01	0.01	
15. H-II															0.66	-0.38	-0.03	0.06	
16. Satisfaction																0.77	-0.03	-0.11	
17. Identification strength																	0.85	0.44	
18. Post-9/11 "war on terror"																			0.77

Note. $N = 281$. For correlations $> .12$, $p < .05$; for correlations $> .15$, $p < .01$; for correlations $> .19$, $p < .001$. Main diagonals represent Cronbach's alphas for Individual-Group Belief Inventory and criterion measure scales. Satisfaction measure entries correspond to the satisfaction scale used for the parallel spheres of analysis for each belief scale. Cell entries for Satisfaction with other criterion measures reflect averages across all three spheres on the satisfaction measure. V = Vulnerability; I = Injustice; D = Distrust; S = Superiority; H = Helplessness; IG = personal beliefs about the ingroup ("Individual" about "Group"); GG = perceptions of the ingroup's collective worldviews ("Group" about "Group"); II = personal beliefs about the personal world ("Individual" about "Individual").

TABLE 3
Means and Standard Deviations for the Individual–Group Belief Inventory Belief Domain Scales for Each Sphere and Criterion Measures

<i>Scale</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>D</i>
Personal beliefs about ingroup		
Vulnerability	3.43	0.84
Injustice	3.24	0.90
Distrust	3.25	0.87
Superiority	3.13	0.88
Helplessness	2.28	0.77
Personal perceptions of collective worldviews		
Vulnerability	3.72	0.73
Injustice	3.49	0.78
Distrust	3.49	0.76
Superiority	3.63	0.79
Helplessness	2.43	0.79
Personal beliefs about personal world		
Vulnerability	2.82	0.83
Injustice	2.35	0.75
Distrust	2.55	0.80
Superiority	2.57	0.74
Helplessness	1.99	0.69
Personal satisfaction with group circumstances	2.98	0.83
Judgment of group's satisfaction with its circumstances	3.01	0.80
Satisfaction with personal circumstances	3.25	0.86
Group identification strength	3.69	0.79
Support for post-9/11 "war on terror"	3.58	0.63

Note. $N = 281$. Each Individual–Group Belief Inventory scale score is based on the average of three items; each belief scale ranges from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 5. Satisfaction, group identification strength, and support for the post-9/11 "war on terror" scales range from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 5.

ingroup's view of its circumstances were expected to be associated with perceptions of the ingroup's collective worldviews. Overall, for each sphere, the hypothesized negative relations between the IGBI belief scales and the corresponding satisfaction measure were confirmed. As Table 2 indicates, for each sphere all belief domains, except for Superiority, were significantly negatively correlated with reported satisfaction with current circumstances. Higher scorers on Vulnerability, Injustice, Distrust, and Helplessness consistently reported less satisfaction than their lower scoring counterparts.

Regression analyses were also conducted using the five IGBI scales to predict satisfaction ratings for each belief sphere. The results for these three

TABLE 4
Standardized Regression Weights Predicting Satisfaction With Current Circumstances
for Three Belief Spheres

Scale	<i>Satisfaction with current circumstances</i>		
	<i>Personal view of group</i>	<i>Perception of group's view</i>	<i>Personal world</i>
Vulnerability β	-0.20**	-0.09	-0.12
Injustice β	-0.15*	-0.26***	-0.23***
Distrust β	-0.10	-0.10	-0.02
Superiority β	0.17**	0.26***	0.08
Helplessness β	-0.31***	-0.25***	-0.22***
$F(5, 275)$	22.65***	17.28***	14.82***
R^2	0.29	0.24	0.21

Note. $N = 281$. Individual-Group Belief Inventory belief scales in each domain are matched to the parallel satisfaction measures by sphere of interest.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

models are presented in Table 4. The models accounted for comparable amounts of variance in the criterion measure, with R^2 values ranging from .21 to .29. Injustice and helplessness beliefs were significant unique contributors in all three spheres, and a personal belief in the group's vulnerability was also significant in the model predicting personal satisfaction with group circumstances (but vulnerability was not significant in the other two models).

It is important to note the presence of suppressor variable effects (e.g., Conger, 1974; Paulhus, Robins, Trzesniewski, & Tracy, 2004) in regard to the superiority domain. Although superiority beliefs had non-significant, zero-order correlations with satisfaction in all three spheres (see Table 2), in both of the group-related regression models (i.e., personal beliefs about the ingroup and perceptions of the ingroup's collective worldviews) the superiority variable was a significant positive predictor of satisfaction. This change in strength of association indicates that, after controlling for the influence of the other four beliefs, respondents with strong personal convictions of American national group superiority reported greater personal satisfaction with group circumstances, and those with strong perceptions that the national group considers itself superior perceived the group as more satisfied with its situation.

Hypothesis 2: Strength of Group Identification

It was hypothesized that the respondents' personal beliefs about their American national group would be significantly related to their strength

of identification with this group. At the same time, it was expected that perceptions of collective worldviews and beliefs about the personal world would not show these same links. The results largely supported these predictions. As Table 2 indicates, the zero-order correlations between personal beliefs about the ingroup in the vulnerability, injustice, distrust, and superiority domains were all significantly and positively related to strength of identification. However, the predicted negative association between helplessness beliefs and group identification was not supported by the zero-order correlation between these two variables. As expected, the IGBI scales measuring personal-world beliefs and perceptions of collective worldviews tended to be uncorrelated with strength of group identification.

A follow-up regression analysis was conducted in which all five IGBI scales measuring personal beliefs about the ingroup were used to predict strength of group identification. This model produced an R^2 of .25, $F(5, 275) = 18.25, p < .001$. Three scales—Injustice ($\beta = .31, p < .001$), Superiority ($\beta = .27, p < .001$), and Helplessness ($\beta = -.20, p = .001$)—were significant contributors to the prediction of the criterion measure; Vulnerability ($\beta = .12, p = .088$) and Distrust ($\beta = -.07, p = .371$) were not.

A noteworthy suppressor variable effect arose in regard to the helplessness beliefs. Although this IGBI scale was uncorrelated with group identification strength at the zero-order level, after controlling for scores on the other four belief scales, personal convictions about the American national group's helplessness had a significant negative relation to the respondents' level of identification with the group. Those who saw the group as more helpless identified less strongly as members of the American national group. This linkage is consistent with the predicted relation between these two variables. To clarify these associations further, additional exploratory regression analyses were performed in which the Helplessness scale was paired with each of the other four IGBI domain scales to predict strength of group identification. Helplessness tended to act as a suppressor variable in all four of these two-predictor models, and in so doing it strengthened the positive association between the other paired belief scale and group identification. Thus, vulnerability, injustice, distrust, and superiority beliefs were even more strongly correlated with identification strength when the influence of concomitant helplessness beliefs was controlled for.

Hypothesis 3: Support for the Post-9/11 "War on Terror"

It was hypothesized that personal beliefs about the American national group would be significantly correlated with support for the "war on terror," and that beliefs in the other two spheres would also contribute to individual differences in the extent of this support. The zero-order correlations in Table 2

reveal that personal beliefs about the ingroup were indeed positively linked to the criterion measure (except for Helplessness, which was uncorrelated). However, with the exception of Vulnerability in the personal world sphere (positive correlation) and Superiority in the sphere of perceived collective worldviews (negative correlation), none of the other IGBI scales for these two spheres was significantly correlated with strength of support.

Two approaches were used to determine whether beliefs in multiple spheres combined to explain individual differences in support for the “war on terror.” First, a hierarchical regression analysis was performed in which the sets of five belief scales for each sphere were entered in succession. At the first step, all five personal world beliefs were entered into the model, producing an R^2 of .10, $F(5, 275)=5.95$, $p < .001$. At the second step, the five beliefs about the ingroup were entered; this predictor set significantly increased the total R^2 to .23, $F(5, 270)=9.11$, $p < .001$. At the final step, the five IGBI scales measuring perceptions of the ingroup’s collective worldviews were added; this predictor set again significantly increased the full model R^2 to .35, $F(5, 265)=9.48$, $p < .001$. In this combined 15-predictor model, one personal world belief was statistically significant (a positive beta for Vulnerability); four beliefs about the ingroup were significant (positive betas for Injustice, Distrust, and Superiority; and a negative beta for Helplessness); and two IGBI scales measuring the perceived collective worldviews sphere contributed significantly (negative betas for both Injustice and Superiority). Thus, although the personal beliefs about the ingroup had the strongest relations to the criterion measure, support for the post-9/11 “war on terror” was better explained by considering the respondents’ beliefs in all three belief spheres.

TABLE 5
Standardized Regression Weights for Three Spheres of Each Individual–Group Belief Inventory Belief Scale Predicting Support for the Post-9/11 “War on Terror”

Variable	Belief domain				
	Vulnerability	Injustice	Distrust	Superiority	Helplessness
Beliefs about ingroup β	0.28***	0.48***	0.44***	0.49***	0.09
Perceived group worldviews β	-0.11	-0.29***	-.22***	-0.35***	-0.08
Beliefs about personal world β	0.20**	0.04	0.03	-0.07	0.05
$F(3, 277)$	14.68***	19.68***	15.26***	27.94***	0.91
R^2	0.14	0.18	0.14	0.23	0.01

Note. $N=281$.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

As a second approach to examining these inter-relationships with the criterion measure, separate regression analyses were conducted for each of the five belief domains. For each domain, three-predictor models were created in which IGBI scores for all three spheres were entered simultaneously as predictors of support for the “war on terror.” Table 5 summarizes the results for each model. Four of the five models—all except for Helplessness—explained a significant percentage of the variance in the criterion measure (with R^2 values ranging from .14 to .23). Personal world beliefs contributed significantly to the model in the Vulnerability domain only (as a positive predictor of support). By contrast, in all four of the significant models, stronger personal beliefs about the ingroup were associated with greater support for the “war on terror”. At the same time, stronger perceptions of the ingroup’s collective worldviews were generally linked to weaker support in each of these models.

In addition, in these four models, the standardized regression weights for the IGBI scales measuring personal beliefs about the ingroup and for the scales measuring perceived collective worldviews tended to exceed the magnitude of their zero-order correlations with the criterion measure. These suppressor variable effects indicate that (a) after controlling for the respondents’ personal beliefs about their ingroup, perceptions of more elevated collective worldviews about vulnerability, injustice, distrust, and superiority were linked to significantly reduced support for the “war on terror”; and (b) when statistically controlling for these perceived collective worldviews, heightened personal beliefs about the ingroup were even more strongly linked to support than was otherwise apparent from the zero-order correlations. This pattern of findings again demonstrated the multi-sphere linkages to the criterion measure.

DISCUSSION

As a whole, the results presented offer encouraging support for the value of the IGBI’s multisphere approach to measuring beliefs about vulnerability, injustice, distrust, superiority, and helplessness. For all three spheres—personal beliefs about the ingroup, personal perceptions of the ingroup’s collective worldviews, and personal beliefs about the personal world—stronger beliefs were associated with diminished satisfaction in all domains except for superiority. American national group members were more dissatisfied with their group’s circumstances when they believed the group was vulnerable, mistreated, compelled by necessity to be distrustful, and helpless. Respondents similarly imagined that their group as a whole was more dissatisfied to the extent they perceived the group as holding strong collective

worldviews in these four domains. They also reported less subjective well-being in their own lives when they held these same beliefs in the personal world sphere. Although this study was correlational in design, it is certainly plausible that these key beliefs contribute causally to feelings of dissatisfaction with current circumstances, which may in turn stimulate efforts to improve the situation through personal action or collective mobilization.

As predicted, personal beliefs about the American national group in regard to issues of vulnerability, injustice, distrust, and superiority were also positively correlated with strength of group identification. Personal beliefs about ingroup helplessness, although uncorrelated with identification strength at the zero-order level, proved to have the anticipated negative relationship with this criterion measure in a regression model that controlled for the other four beliefs. Regardless of whether identification affects beliefs or beliefs influence identification (or both), it seems likely that these beliefs are potentially important components of the broader array of factors that shape or sustain long-term identification with a group. These convictions may, therefore, again serve as foundations for collective mobilization in the face of perceived threats from outside the group. In this regard, using a preliminary version of the IGBI, Eidelson and Plummer (2005) found that, compared to a pre-9/11 sample of Americans, a post-9/11 sample scored significantly higher on personal beliefs about national group vulnerability, injustice, distrust, and superiority; and significantly lower on beliefs about group helplessness.

As hypothesized, the respondents' beliefs in these five domains were also significantly linked to support for the post-9/11 "war on terror." In this context, the findings demonstrated the primacy of personal beliefs about the ingroup compared to perceptions of collective worldviews and beliefs about the personal world. However, regression analyses revealed that all three spheres of analysis contributed to the prediction of the criterion measure. Of particular note, for several belief domains these analyses uncovered significant suppression effects whereby personal beliefs about the American national group were even stronger *positive* predictors of support for the "war on terror" after controlling for perceptions of the ingroup's collective worldviews, whereas perceptions of the ingroup's collective worldviews were significant *negative* predictors of support after controlling for personal beliefs about the group.

Considering the injustice domain as one example, the respondents who reported the weakest support for the post-9/11 "war on terror" were those individuals who simultaneously (a) did not personally believe that the United States is treated unfairly by other groups, and (b) perceived the American national group as holding a strong collective worldview of itself as an aggrieved nation. Similar relationships were observed for

the distrust and superiority domains as well. These patterns are indicative of the potentially important tensions faced by some group members, and they merit further investigation. Of the three belief spheres measured by the IGBI, perceptions of collective worldviews is the sphere where misjudgments and pluralistic ignorance effects (e.g., Prentice & Miller, 1996) are most likely because individuals are more directly in touch with their own personal beliefs about their ingroup and their personal worlds. However, it is clear from the results reported here that these judgments of how the ingroup as a whole sees itself, however imperfect in their precision, can still have consequences in shaping an individual's support for the group's actions.

Taken as a whole, the results reported here suggest considerable utility for the vulnerability, injustice, distrust, superiority, and helplessness belief domains and for the three-sphere IGBI in understanding and studying intergroup conflict. However, it is important to highlight areas of caution based on limitations in this study. First, the survey was targeted at only one group at one particular time. The sample was comprised of American citizens living in Philadelphia, PA, who accepted a summons to appear for jury duty approximately 6 months after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Although there was considerable demographic diversity among the participants, the respondents were not a representative sample of Americans as a whole, and generalizations to the larger population may not be warranted. The timing of the survey during a period of heightened national focus on external threats has both its advantages and disadvantages, the latter including the possibility that the salience of the beliefs measured was abnormally inflated beyond levels likely to be found during more tranquil periods in the United States. Future research using the IGBI in other settings (e.g., with members of other national groups and with member of other types of groups) will, therefore, be important for assessing the broader relevance of these findings and for assessing the inventory's value.

Another limitation of this study is its use of only a limited set of criterion measures, all of which—like the IGBI itself—were constructed from pencil-and-paper, self-report items. In addition, the criterion measures used, although important as general factors related to group mobilization, did not provide a particularly strong basis for determining the extent to which different belief domains bear on specific aspects of the respondents' experiences and attitudes. On a theoretical basis, the five domains overlap with each other in meaningful ways (e.g., beliefs about mistreatment by others should not be unrelated to the adoption of a distrustful posture toward them), but demonstrating that specific belief domains are particularly important in certain arenas would be a valuable step forward. For example, in regard to personal beliefs about the ingroup, are beliefs about

vulnerability especially important in shaping respondents' views about the importance of directing resources and policies toward enhancing protection against outside threats? Do beliefs about injustice bear on the likelihood of experiencing collective guilt over the actions of the ingroup, and do distrust beliefs act as an obstacle to forgiveness? Similarly, are convictions about superiority expressed in the eager assertion of power and in a preference for unilateral action? Are helplessness beliefs linked to despair over group setbacks or skepticism about future possibilities?

Of the three belief spheres examined in this study, the results most strongly confirm the importance of individual differences in personal beliefs about the ingroup in explaining variation among group members in their relationship to the group. In particular, personal world beliefs proved relatively unimportant in the group context (the exception being beliefs about personal vulnerability and support for the "war on terror"). Whether this reflects the specific criterion measures used or a more general phenomenon cannot be established here. Certainly, it makes sense that beliefs about the personal world will often be secondary in situations where social identity and group membership are salient. Further clarification of how respondents construe the "My group believes" IGBI items—designed to measure perceptions of collective worldviews—would also be useful. Indeed, there may be considerable variability in how these judgments are made. In this study, the declarations of national leaders or other key political actors may have carried considerable weight for some respondents; others may have relied more on media reports of public opinion and sentiment, whereas still others may have drawn on their familiarity with U.S. history or national narratives learned at home or in school.

Future research might also examine how the IGBI and the five belief domains it measures are related to other theoretical models and survey instruments that illuminate the dynamics of intergroup conflict. Two important examples are Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA; Altemeyer, 1981, 1998) and Social Dominance Orientation (SDO; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). The RWA scale measures individual differences in authoritarianism, a personality variable characterized by a willingness to submit to authority and a strong tendency to hold prejudiced and ethnocentric views. The SDO scale measures individual differences in beliefs about the appropriate relationship (hierarchical or non-hierarchical) between groups; it too has been linked with prejudice, as well as with a preference for the ingroup to dominate outgroups. In a framework that utilizes both of these constructs, Duckitt and his associates (e.g., Duckitt, Wagner, du Plessis, & Birum, 2002) have developed a dual process model that identifies social conformity and belief in a dangerous world as influencing authoritarian attitudes (RWA), whereas tough-mindedness

and belief in a competitive jungle world are seen as influencing social dominance attitudes (SDO), with both processes ultimately bearing on prejudice toward outgroups.

In contrast to the RWA and SDO scales, each of which measures a key global orientation, the IGBI measures more specific beliefs that have been identified as central to both personal and group life (Eidelson & Eidelson, 2003). The IGBI is also distinctive in its assessment of these beliefs in three interrelated spheres (personal beliefs about the ingroup, personal perceptions of the ingroup's collective worldviews, and personal beliefs about the personal world), thereby allowing for analyses that both link and distinguish the realms of personal identity and social identity. In this regard, it is noteworthy that the IGBI items measuring personal beliefs about the ingroup and personal perceptions of the ingroup's collective worldviews are administered in reference to a specific group identity of the respondent; this strategy recognizes the possibility or likelihood that individuals will hold differing views about the multiple groups to which they belong. A determination of the extent to which the IGBI may serve to complement scales like RWA and SDO and frameworks such as the dual process model of Duckitt et al. (2002) merits further investigation.

In sum, this study offers strong preliminary evidence that research focusing on group member beliefs about vulnerability, injustice, distrust, superiority, and helplessness can prove valuable for elucidating the psychological underpinnings of intragroup and intergroup conflict dynamics. Moreover, the distinctive three-sphere framework highlighting personal beliefs about the ingroup, perceptions of the ingroup's collective worldviews, and personal beliefs about the personal world—all measured by the IGBI—incorporates multiple parallel belief streams that bear on critical facets of an individual's experience of group membership and support for the ingroup's agenda.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Roy J. Eidelson, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist and president of Eidelson Consulting. His consulting, research, and writing focus primarily on the ways that core issues of vulnerability, injustice, distrust, superiority, and helplessness contribute to conflict and change for individuals and groups. President-Elect Psychologists for social Responsibility, Roy is also an associate director of the new Solomon Asch Center at Bryn Mawr College and the former executive director of the University of Pennsylvania's Solomon Asch Center for Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict.

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