

Ideology and Societal Values: A Reversal Theory Perspective

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The central theme of this theoretical paper is that although the motivations identified in reversal theory, and the values that relate to them, have been defined, and researched, largely in individual or small group terms, they can also be discerned at other, more general social levels of analysis. This is demonstrated in terms of five levels: philosophies of life, societal values, institutions, ideologies, and political parties. The idea is developed that the values that seem peculiar to each of these levels are in fact anchored in, and gain their moral and political force from, the set of eight individual motivations/values identified in reversal theory. The paper also explores the way in which these fundamental values play themselves out in the political process, using the Republican and Democratic parties in the USA as an example. The surprising conclusion is that these two opposing parties have more in common, psychologically, than might have been suspected.

Keywords: ideology, motivation, politics, reversal theory, values

The idea of value is a key concept in reversal theory, because each of the eight metamotivational states identified in the theory represents a fundamental psychological value and can be defined in terms of this value, such as enjoyment, or power (Apter, 2001, 2007). These metamotivational states are listed in the first column of Table 1 and the corresponding values are represented in the second column. In the course of everyday life, these values move in and out of awareness in different combinations, representing different desires and giving rise to the dynamic complications and inconsistencies of personality over time.

Some may argue that this set of reversal theory values is specific to individual motivation and can say little about values that are identifiable at more social, cultural and political levels, such as the values of justice or liberty. The aim of the present paper is to argue that, on the contrary, social values can indeed be reduced to the reversal theory set of eight values and even explained in terms of them. More specifically, the aim here is to see how the reversal theory set of values might be embodied in each of the following levels:

- *Philosophies of life*, in which one or more values are taken as especially important and used to form the basis of a whole way of living for a community.
- *Societal values* that may be regarded as values that are seen as desirable for a society as a whole.
- *Institutions* that serve personal and societal values in particular concrete ways.

- *Ideologies* that combine and articulate values, and attach the chosen values to various ideas, in order to form systems of thought and action.

- *Political parties* that may more or less represent ideologies but transform them into practical concrete programs that address particular historical circumstances.

In the approach to be adopted here, it will be claimed that cultural phenomena, whether relating to social, sociological, political, or anthropological processes, including ideologies, can be traced back to individual personal values – those that correspond to situations that the individual finds desirable. In other words, it will be argued that it is possible to trace the eight psychological values through all five of the registers that have just been indicated.

By seeing these personal human values as universal, and therefore innate, reversal theory flies in the face of postmodernist relativistic accounts of both individual and social phenomena. Further, by taking a “bottom-up” approach in this way, reversal theory opposes classical structuralism which, consistent with Marxism, tends to work in the opposite, “top-down,” direction, seeing psychological phenomena as being determined by social, cultural and economic forces. Reversal theory can therefore be seen as part of a tradition, initially Freudian, that attempts to understand aspects of culture from a psychological, and especially motivational, point of view. Beyond Freud, a classic example would be the work of McClelland and his colleagues (e.g., McClelland, 1953, 1961). However, reversal theory could be said to represent a more comprehensive and dynamic approach to human motivation than earlier motivation theories and provides its own distinctive interpretation of cultural processes (see for example, the

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Table 1
The correspondences between metamotivational states and three levels of value.

Metamotivation	Personal Values	Life Philosophy Values	Societal Values
Telic	Achievement	Commitment	Progress
Paratelic	Enjoyment	Pleasure	Affluence, Consumerism
Conforming	Fitting in	Obedience, Virtue	Purity, Equality
Rebellious	Freedom	Tolerance	Liberty, Diversity
Mastery	Power	Honor, Courage	Hegemony, Justice
Sympathy	Love	Charity, Compassion	Fraternity, Mercy
Autic	Individuality	Self-actualisation	Human rights
Alloic	Community	Self-transcendence	Social duties

reversal theory interpretation of the development of religions in Apter, 1982, chapter 12).

A key feature of the reversal theory account is of course that the deep human values that it identifies come in opposites. That is, every value has a contradictory value, so that it is difficult for an individual or a group to pursue all values at the same time. This is consistent with the well-known 'value pluralist' views of Isaiah Berlin in political science, concerning the incompatibility of ultimate human goods (e.g., Berlin, 1969). But what reversal theory does is to take Berlin's insight further by identifying and providing an account of the underlying structure of such oppositions and incompatibilities.

Let us now see what light this throws on the five levels of analysis indicated earlier in this paper. These levels are, of course, not entirely separate from each other, and overlap in many respects. Reversal theory research and practice has also shown interest in small groups of people interacting, such as in sport, or in management teams, and therefore has not been confined to the individual level. But on the whole the levels that are the focus of interest in this paper are more sociological and cultural than psychological and have generally been overlooked in reversal theory.

Philosophies of Life

First we turn to what might be called 'philosophies of life.' Here we can see that each of the values identified in reversal theory corresponds with a whole philosophy of life. That is, not only do such philosophies represent one among other possible forms of satisfaction for the individual, but they can also, in a 'strengthened' form, be related to certain virtuous ways of life in which the value concerned comes to be, if not a moral value, at least a key value in establishing wellness of being for all those who adopt it. Indeed, each of these reversal theory values has been taken as central in one or another philosophy which has presented the chosen value as not just desirable but essential to 'the good life' for the individual and his or her community. Sometimes these values have been presented explicitly as part of some philosophical or religious system. At other times and in other places, these values have

been understood more implicitly and have contributed to, or reflected, the psychological climate of the times. Often, as we shall see, each value is expressed in a number of different particular ways. Let us see how the reversal theory values anchor different ideals and provide them with moral force. The following comments should of course be taken as no more than illustrative, and are not intended to be comprehensive. A summary will be found in Table 1, column 3.

Telic. The telic state is all about achievement, of sacrificing the present to the future, and of delaying gratification. As a model way of life this telic approach has been extolled in a number of systems. For example, if Weber's classic analysis is correct (Weber, 1958) it was central to Protestantism and expressed through *investment* and *thrift*. In another of its forms, the telic philosophy takes the Consequentialist view that "the end justifies the means." In Existentialist philosophy it takes the form of making 'engagement' a central virtue so that *commitment* to a project, devotion to a purpose, striving towards future goals, become definitive of the well lived life, whatever the particular purposes are.

Paratelic. The basic value here is that of *hedonism*, of pleasure in all its forms and for its own sake. Its classical Greek representation is in Epicureanism in which the ultimate good is that of pleasure, although Epicurus did also extoll the virtue of moderation. A less moderate form of hedonism in Ancient Greece was promulgated by the Cyrenaic school of Aristippus. In the American Declaration of Independence, in the spirit of the Enlightenment, the pursuit of happiness becomes a human right. In the philosophy of Utilitarianism, pleasure becomes the key variable in a calculus of desirability. In the 'roaring twenties' and the 'swinging sixties' the paratelic value comes to define an era of individual pleasure-seeking, including the immediate pleasures of drugs and sex.

Conformity. The way of life extolled by the conformist state is one that values *obedience, duty and virtue*. This may also take the form of faith (obedience to ideas) and ritual. Obviously, fundamentalist religions display this in extreme form. This would also appear to be particularly true in Islam where obedient submission is of the essence. There is a sense in which every virtue involving an explicit morality involves

a conformist way of being, and in this respect conformity has a special importance in the "good life."

Negativism. The desirable value here is that of *tolerance*. This is negativistic because it involves being opposed to every kind of restriction or limitation, and in this way the person who is being negativistic feels free. It also means opposing dogmatic authority, irrational belief and unfairness of every kind, whether this primarily affects oneself or others. Its classical Greek representation is the movement known as Cynicism, associated particularly with Diogenes, that emphasized the importance of freedom of speech and freedom of action, and that was highly critical of various received ideas of the period.

Mastery. The mastery state is associated with lifestyles that encourage such values as *honor* and *courage* – values that are particularly important in militaristic societies. It can also take the form of Stoicism, due to Epictetus in Ancient Greece, which emphasized the importance of control over one's own body and emotions. The virtue of asceticism (self-oriented mastery) is related to this. The idea that "might is right" is also essentially a mastery sentiment - involving a kind of anti-moral morality. Nietzsche's 'Superman' epitomizes the mastery value.

Sympathy. The value of *charity and compassion*, is associated with the sympathy state. It hardly needs to be said that it is a central value in Christianity, where love is of the essence. The medieval culture of chivalry also expresses this value. It became a cornerstone of the Hippie culture of the sixties: as the Beatles put it: "All you need is love." A related value is perhaps that of pacifism.

Autic. The moral value here is that of *self-actualisation*: one has a duty to develop all one's talent and abilities. This idea has a long history that goes back at least to Aristotle and his emphasis on self-realization. More recently, following the work of Maslow (1968) it has been a central concept in Humanistic Psychology. A variant on the autic value is that it is perfectly proper to put oneself first: a primary exponent of this view in recent times has been Ayn Rand (1964) with her so-called "Objectivism."

Alloic. The good life as represented by the alloic state is that of *self-transcendence*, of going beyond and above oneself in some way. This may take the form of loyalty to something greater than oneself, as expressed in the philosophy of Royce (1908). It may take the form of an emphasis on self-denial, sacrifice and martyrdom, as encouraged in many religious systems. It may make the life of *service*, claimed by politicians and civil servants among others. It may be represented in *philanthropy*. In all these cases, and others, the individual puts others before self.

It will be recognised that these philosophies, like the psychological values that underlie them, come in pairs of opposites, so that people are forced to make choices in their lives, and may often change their minds. Thus it is difficult to focus on the future (telic) and the pleasures of the moment

(paratelic) at the same moment. One cannot easily be loving and sensitive (sympathy) at exactly the same time as being courageous and tough-minded (mastery).

Societal Values

By 'societal values' we mean values that are expressed at a social level. For example, equality is necessarily social since it is about relations *between* individuals not about individuals in themselves. These societal values obviously overlap the "good life" values just discussed, but it takes them up to a level at which the primary concern is for what constitutes a good society rather than what makes an admirable person in a good society. Each of the following values represents something that a society can encourage and embody in its various structures, or not (See list in Table 1, column 4). As we shall now see, although social, these values can be mapped onto reversal theory values and desires.

Telic. An all-consuming value, especially in Western societies in the modern era, is that of *progress*. It provides a benchmark for everything else. "Are we becoming more X?" where X is one of the societal values cited below. In this sense progress is an amplifier of the other societal values.

Paratelic. *Affluence* is a societal version (or index) of happiness and pleasure in the individual. It may also be associated with materialism and *consumerism*.

Conformist. This takes different forms in different societies. One form is the value of *purity*, which is a key value in Fascism: people in the society must all meet some kind of standard of belief, race, or physique. *Equality* is also a conformist principle – everyone must be the same, or at least treated as the same, by society.

Negativistic. *Freedom and diversity* are what matter here. At the societal level we have the Enlightenment values of liberty and tolerance. These values are expressed in a way that includes the right to be different, to speak and write freely, to 'do one's own thing.' On the other hand, negativism can be regarded negatively in some of its manifestations as a form of permissiveness. It can also be seen as anarchic.

Mastery. Mastery expresses itself through various values in society. In its relation to other societies it calls for *pride* through independence and even *hegemony* over other societies. In its internal relations, the value is that of *justice* for all.

Sympathy. Sympathy is represented in such values as *fraternity* and *community*. Mercy can be seen as a sympathy value, in contrast to the justice of the mastery state.

Autic. Recognition of human *rights*, i.e. the rights of the individual rather than the state. Here the values are those of what Ferdinand Tonnies called "Gesellschaft" (Tonnies, 1988). This means impersonal and self-serving relationships.

Alloic. Recognition of obligations and *duties*, i.e. the rights of others, including the state, vis-à-vis the individual.

This may be associated with tribalism, patriotism, nationalism, etc. This is what Tonnies referred to as "Gemeinschaft" or community (Tonnies, 1988). *Unity* is also an expression of this value of loyalty to, and care for, others.

These societal values are clearly related to each other in many ways and can in some combinations support each other. For example, the value of affluence (paratelic) can also be used for the purposes of mastery through conspicuous consumption. Alloic sympathy may often be related to negativism when dissidents act against the system because they care for those who have been badly treated within it. Dumont (1986) has argued that egalitarianism, treated above as a conformist value, is also essentially individualistic (autic). The fact that values can be combined in such ways, however, does not mean that these values are not themselves distinct and qualitatively unique.

Institutions

It should be evident that different institutions embody different values in the sense that they attempt to provide ways of satisfying these values. Although in most cases institutions offer the satisfaction of many different values to their various stakeholders – owners, employees, customers, suppliers and managers – typically they are set up in a way that privileges one or more values over others. Here are some examples, all of them obvious with a moment's thought.

Telic. Some institutions only exist because they are concerned with preparing the future, and in this way represent telic values. All teaching establishments, including schools and universities, fall into this category. So, in a different way, should banks and insurance companies, although they sometimes fall short, as we have seen in recent years.

Paratelic. The paratelic value of immediate enjoyment is represented in entertainment of all kinds: television, movies, theatre, novels, casinos, amusement parks, concerts, video games. Sport is also in its essence about fun (although for those involved professionally sport may become telic). Carnivals and festivals, such as Mardi Gras, and town festivals (Fiestas) in Spain, also express paratelic values.

Conforming. Most institutions require rules and therefore call on the conformist value of rule-following. But in some cases this is exaggerated and becomes the heart of the process. One thinks here particularly of churches with their ceremonies and services, but also state occasions and state ceremonies: march pasts, parades, visitations, etc. In a different sense, the police institutionalize conformity in their role in enforcing the law.

Negativistic. In democracies, negativism is institutionalized through the acceptance of opposition parties in politics and in the existence of a free press. Paradoxically, negativism is often institutionalized through entities that are recognized, but recognized as being outside the bounds of conforming society. In this respect they are, at the same time, both accepted

and rejected. Examples are: Cock fighting in England in the eighteenth century, speakeasies in the twenties, pop music festivals like Woodstock in the sixties, online pornography in the present day.

Mastery. The mastery value of control and power is exemplified in such institutions as the police and judiciary systems, and the army. Big business is all about power and control. So are internal and external intelligence services. Mastery is also represented in Trade Unions. Historically, it was especially represented by the practice of slavery. In a different way it is expressed in science and technology, which are about gaining power and control over the material world.

Sympathy. Hospitals and clinics are clearly societies' expression of sympathy for the ill. Workhouses, when they existed, were an expression of sympathy for the downtrodden. Social clubs of various kinds are ways of helping people to establish and maintain personal and friendly relationships with each other. Christmas as an institutional festival is about giving and being given. In these and other ways, the value of sympathy is emphasized in society.

Autic. People are encouraged to excel through such devices as honors lists and awards. Award ceremonies typically emphasize the achievements of individual people. Wages, salaries and bonuses are paid to individuals rather than groups. Through the mass media, people can become celebrities and held up for admiration and even veneration. In such ways as these, the individualistic autic value is foregrounded and celebrated.

Alloic. Voluntary bodies and charities behave in alloic ways, since they are designed to help others. Fans, in both sport and entertainment, celebrate supporting, and feeling part of, something larger than themselves: They are 'taken out of themselves.' Advertising and promotions typically aim to get people to identify emotionally with the products that they represent.

In all these cases, the institutions involved make promises that they may or may not be able to keep. If the satisfaction of desires is essential to their survival, then organizations need to be able to understand what drives the people to whom they make their promises, and to take into account all the different options that are available at a given time.

Ideologies

The term 'ideology' will be taken here in its broadest sense to mean a coherent system of ideas and values that relate to society as a whole and indicate ways of changing society. Each ideology emphasizes a certain cluster of values, and brings them together in terms of integrative ideas involving economics, sociology, philosophy and history. In other words, ideologies attach values to certain social entities, and then attempt to optimize the values they extol (e.g., freedom, equality) through actions that have an impact on the entity. By a 'social entity' here I mean country, race, social

class, religion, property ownership, and the like. It should be clear that I am not attempting to reduce ideologies to nothing but values. Rather, I am claiming that values represent an essential, and foundational, aspect of ideologies.

It would seem that for ideologies to have any impact, they must be based on values and the individual motivational states that relate to values. Without this they will remain on the outside of peoples' lives, being nothing but intellectual edifices without emotional force. For an ideology to take hold in a culture it must engage with peoples' basic aspirations: people must care about and want to experience and express these basic motives, and they find the way to do so through what is offered by the ideology that attracts them. The values are what make ideologies attractive and "bring them alive." Rhetoric is essentially about making this kind of connection between ideas, motives and actions. If political rhetoric has human motivation as its raw material, it is clearly important to politicians to be able to identify the basic motivations as they relate to values, and to understand how these motivations can become part of political discourse.

An ideology emphasizes values in two ways: firstly, it shows that certain states of affairs are desirable e.g., a state in which everyone is equal; secondly it shows that this desideratum is to be obtained through procedures laid down in the ideology, e.g., revolution. It is possible therefore to see ideologies as making use of two kinds of values: instrumental values and ultimate values (see Apter, 2015). Thus in the example just given, revolution would be an instrumental value and equality the ultimate value. In reversal theory terms, both the telic and negativistic states are called upon in this example, with the negativistic state serving the telic state. It should also be said, though, that often it is unclear which values are ultimate and which are instrumental, and it is possible that, as ideologies develop, values switch back and forth in this respect. In our example, sometimes revolution serves equality but sometimes the cry for equality is aimed at provoking revolutionary action for its own sake.

By looking at the clusters of values that are assimilated into, or inform, different ideologies we can see an important way in which ideologies differ from each other. Let us sketch in the very broadest terms how the classic ideologies privilege different motivational states.

Totalitarian. These ideologies see the world in terms of conflict (whether between classes, nations, or other groupings), and they understand the need for strength in order to win in any kind of conflict. In this sense they privilege the mastery state. At the same time they have a Utopian vision for the future that can be obtained through struggle and in this respect they see history as having direction. They also engage in long-term planning wherever possible. In these ways they therefore also privilege the telic state. Along with this goes the notion that only mass action will prevail, and this alloic state is expressed through ideas such as those of

community and sacrifice or through such actions as collectivization. The conformist state is also invoked through insistence on correct thinking, correct speech and correct action. In summary, totalitarian ideologies privilege telic, conformist, mastery and alloic states. In these terms, fascist and communist ideologies can be seen to be motivationally very similar. The basic difference is that in fascism, people are supposed to conform to hierarchies (of class, race, religion, ethnicity) while in communism they are supposed to conform to conditions that ensure equality.

Socialism. The values encouraged by *Socialism* are the same as those of totalitarian ideologies, but they are expressed in different ways and take different concrete forms. Thus the alloic and conformist states takes the form of voluntary solidarity rather than imposed regimentation.

Liberalism. In contrast to socialism, communism and fascism, liberalism emphasizes the negativistic and autic states. That is, personal freedom is valued in both *laissez-faire* economic and lifestyle terms (negativistic state). Diversity is tolerated and the individual comes first (autic state). There is also a place for the sympathy state expressed in such ways as the provision of welfare. Some overlap with totalitarian and socialist ideologies comes through the telic state tendency to value progress, to see things as generally improving, and to see itself as modernising - but not seeing such progress as necessitating conflict. In summary, liberal ideologies privilege the telic, negativistic, sympathy and autic states.

Conservatism. This is about the conformist and autic states. Conformity is valued to tradition, to accepted ways of doing things, to the religious ideas that already prevail in society and to the social and other hierarchies that are already existent in the society. As in liberalism, the autic state comes into play through putting the individual first. There may be some mastery state element too.

Anarchy. This clearly involves the negativistic state, this taking the extreme form of seeing rules of all kinds as undesirable and to be opposed. It also privileges the autic state in the form of "every man for himself."

There are also ideologies that have a narrower focus. Examples would be Feminism (involving autic mastery for women), and Green parties (alloic sympathy towards the environment).

Political Parties

Political parties represent ideologies, but do so in concrete historical situations that may require reordering the emphasis on different values, and the way that one value is used in the service of another. Also since, at least in democracies, they have to get and gain power through popularity, they will find that they have to appeal - if they can, and in their own ways - to *all* the metamotivational states. They therefore need to display what has been called "motivational richness"

(Apter, 2001). A motivationally rich organization is one that promises the individual satisfaction of many – ideally all – rather than just a few metamotivational states. This means that it must find a way of offering contradictory satisfactions, so that whatever combination of states are active in an individual at a given time, the organization will offer the possibility of satisfaction. This idea has important practical implications for political parties. Politicians have to be experts in the manipulation of desire.

With this in mind, let us look in rather broad terms at the Republican and Democratic parties in the U.S. as they are at the present time. In doing so, we shall see that both parties do indeed appeal to all the values. It should be emphasized that this characterization is that of the parties at present, and that over their history the two parties have from time to time swapped positions on particular issues (It would be interesting to carry out a similar analysis to the one below at different cross-sections of U.S. history). Here then is a sketch of the parties in terms of the eight values.

Telic.

- **Democrats.** Long-term goals tend to be idealistic and even Utopian. Thus the concept of 'The Great Society' still colors Democratic thinking.
- **Republicans.** Pride themselves on the fact that their long-term goals tend to be pragmatic and realistic.

Paratelic.

- **Democrats.** Tends to support the idea of people doing things that give them pleasure, provided they do not harm anyone else (e.g., smoking marijuana, having homosexual relationships).
- **Republicans.** Tend to support the idea that people should be allowed to possess whatever they want, and as much as they can get, and to enjoy it, without feeling guilty and without being penalized or taxed too heavily.

Conformity.

- **Democrats.** Emphasis on conformity to *egalitarian values*, characterised by opponents as political correctness (as in feminism, anti-racism).
- **Republicans.** Emphasis on conformity to *religious values* (as in the pro-life stance, faith-based initiatives).

Negativism.

- **Democrats.** Negativistic to rules that interfere with *personal life-style*. Emphasis on religious freedom, freedom of choice on abortion, freedom to be gay.
- **Republicans.** Negativistic to government rules and regulations that limit activity, especially *business activity*. Emphasis on freedom to make money, freedom from heavy taxation, freedom to own a gun, freedom to disregard environmental consequences.

Mastery.

- **Democrats.** Emphasis on mastering problems through *central control*, strong government and social planning.
- **Republicans.** Emphasis on *law and order*, severity on criminals, need for military strength.

Sympathy.

- **Democrats.** *Welfare* as an expression of compassion towards those less well-off. Concern for peoples' education and health, concern for the environment.
- **Republicans.** *Family values* as an expression of love and responsibility. Importance of voluntary work.

Autic.

- **Democrats.** Individual freedom of belief and lifestyle is emphasized.
- **Republicans.** Individual freedom of action, especially entrepreneurial action, and self-reliance is emphasized. The pioneer spirit is valued.

Alloic.

- **Democrats.** Concern with *world issues* – global warming, human rights, poverty. In these respects, Democratic tendencies are often internationalist.
- **Republicans.** Put "America first." *Patriotism* is emphasized. The tendencies here are Nationalist.

It goes without saying that this characterization is a huge oversimplification and implies a monolithicity that is not in fact the case. But the point is firstly to demonstrate in very broad terms the fact that, in one way or another, both parties appeal to the exact same set of psychological values. But they do so through different policies that are equivalent only in their appeal to these values. Secondly it is to suggest that historically successful parties maintain themselves in existence through being able to appeal to *all* the basic values that are embedded in the human psyche. To stay in existence, whether or not in power, parties must promise the satisfaction of all the basic psychological needs that can be represented as values.

Although both parties 'touch all the bases,' and harness motivation from all eight motivational states, this obviously does not mean that they are the same. Indeed, the basic motivations, as I have shown, relate to many different concrete goals and attitudes. So what holds each party together? What gives it a certain coherence and character?

To answer this question I think we need to look to two different strains in the American character that go back to the origins of the country. Although immigrants came for many different particular reasons, there would seem to be two highly contrasting types that played a particularly important role in the development of what became the distinctive American character. The first was that of those believers who were

escaping from religious persecution, and who set up their own communities on arrival in the New World. Within such communities they were far from free, having to follow strict rules of various kinds. But the community as a whole was, at least initially, relatively free from outside interference. Such communities tended to be idealistic and moral. The second type was that of the pioneer. These were individualistic adventurers who became explorers, traders, voyageurs, gold miners, bounty hunters, and the like. Here the freedom that was valued was individual freedom to make one's own life, and perhaps one's own fortune, with no interference from outside. Although a vast oversimplification, and recognizing that the parties themselves have changed and evolved over time, and contain many contradictions within themselves, it is nevertheless possible to see traces of these two strains in the two parties in the modern period. The Democratic party can be seen as heir to the idealistic communities, with central control, that valued freedom of belief and provided care for everyone in the community. The Republican party can be seen as heir to the self-reliance, self-discipline and entrepreneurship of the pioneers who recognized no external control of a political kind.

In terms of the eight basic values, it can be seen that the Democratic party, while picking up on all the values, tends to emphasize the values of community (alioic) and care (sympathy), while Republicans have tended to foreground the values of independence (autic) and self-reliance (mastery). This is perhaps a more systematic way of putting the distinction that George Lakoff proposed in his influential and best-selling book "Don't Think of an Elephant," (2004) in which he contrasts the nurturing parent model underlying the Democratic party with the disciplined upbringing model underlying the spirit of the Republican party.

Conclusion

The generality of reversal theory, large as it is, can therefore be extended beyond the bounds of individual psychology, or small group psychology (e.g., sports teams and management teams) and help to provide insights in relation to more general social systems and ideologies. This is possible because the reversal theory structure of four value domains can be discerned also at these more general levels. If this insight can be sustained in future scholarship and research, then it would be possible to begin to think of reversal theory as a general theory of values as well as a general theory of motivation and personality.

Of course the observation that these social, cultural and political values can be mapped onto the eight values of reversal theory does not in itself prove that they are derived in some way from the reversal theory values. But the fact that different sets of values at different levels all seem to map onto this common core is highly suggestive and would certainly be consistent with the idea that the social values derive in some way from a fundamental set of biologically-based psychological values. It seems to make sense of the seemingly universal patterns of values that arise wherever we look.

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