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# Authoritarianism, social dominance and social values: Group-based dominance and opposition to equality as independent factors

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Several authors have studied the relationship between Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) and Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) (Altemeyer, 1998; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth & Malle, 1994; Roccato & Ricolfi, 2005; Weber & Federico, 2007), as well as their relation with values (Cohrs, Moschner, Maes & Kielman, 2005; Duriez, Van Hiel & Kossowska, 2005; Heaven & Connors, 2001). As far as SDO is concerned, recent research has shown the existence of a bidimensional structure: opposition to equality (OEQ) and group-based dominance (GBD) (Jost & Thompson, 2000; Sidanius & Peña, 2002; Silván-Ferrero & Bustillos, 2007). The aim of this study is to deepen into the relationship between RWA and the dimensions of SDO, as well as their relation to values. A total of 463 subjects participated in the study and measures of values (Schwartz, 1992), RWA (Zakrisson, 2005), and SDO (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) were used. Significant correlations between RWA and SDO as well as the relationship among the SDO dimensions were found. The SEM showed that the bidimensional model had a better fit than the unidimensional one. Entering values as covariates, and RWA, SDO and its dimensions as dependent variables, several GLM analyses were performed, showing that the model was significant for RWA, SDO, BDG, and OEQ. Results also showed that RWA was better predicted by the value dimension of conservation while SDO by the dimensions of self-enhance and self-transcendence. Moreover, while the BDG and OEQ were similar in self-transcendence, BDG had a higher level of self-enhance and conservation. Finally, results relevance for theoretical and applied dimensions is discussed.

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**Mots-clés :**

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# Introduction

Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) concept was developed by Altemeyer (1981) based theoretically and methodologically on Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson and Sandford *F* Scale (1950) which measure authoritarian personality. Adorno and colleagues, from a psychoanalytic framework, explained the development of the authoritarian personality highlighting family background as the figures of a dominant father and a very restrictive mother, who strongly suppress every tendency to disobedience. Authors found that people who are stronger in authoritarianism hold believes in: authority’s obedience, clearness of rules, no tolerance to weakness and

punishment to deviants (Passini, 2008).

Altemeyer (1981) found that only three original aspects of authoritarianism covariate: conventionalism, authoritarian aggression and authoritarian submission, which make up a unique and strong social attitude dimension. Thus, authoritarianism would be a combination of: (a) conventionalism, a strong adhesion to norms defended by hegemonic power; (b) authoritarian aggression, the use of violence against different and minorities groups, and (c) authoritarian submission, dominant authority obedience, socially recognized.

Individuals high in RWA also show a greater agreement with strong social politics of social control (capital punishment), valuate more positively normative members of the in-group and show greater rejection for out-group persons or those who question their believes - e.g. authoritarian individuals valuate strongly positively persons who share their opinions and strongly devaluate to whom hold contrary believes- (Altemeyer, 1998). Other studies findings also indicate that authoritarian subjects reject out- groups perceived as threatening.

Passini (2008) indicates that RWA scale developed by Altemeyer (1981) is widely used and commonly accepted as the best measure of authoritarianism, even when it have received recently critics due to items formulations and complexity cause most of them are composed of two and sometimes three different parts (p. 52). In this debate, Funke (2005) discussed that Altemeyer's (1981, 1998) three-dimensional conceptualization of authoritarianism (the three dimensions being authoritarian submission, conventionalism, authoritarian aggression) is inconsistent with its one-dimensional methodological operationalization. According to Altemeyer (2004), the three attitudinal clusters are thoroughly intertwined among the items of the scale, and each item taps at least two clusters. Therefore, even if the three attitudinal clusters are theoretically distinct, the RWA scale was constructed to measure only one dimension of authoritarianism.

RWA appears, with the related concept of Social Dominance Orientation (SDO), as a potent predictor of several forms of prejudice, ethnocentrism and homophobia. Both constructs also seems to be related with forms of political and behaviour orientation. RWA emphasizes submission to authority figures inner groups while SDO refers more to the domination of some groups upon others. RWA appears as an in-group phenomena while SDO is consider as an inter-groups phenomena.

In relation with SDO, the underlined postulated is that even when inter groups conflict and inequality based on them have been a constant in human existence, at the middle of past century, a strong expectancies in west countries were observed, due to some relatives reforms in civil and human rights, in a democratic solution to problems such as prejudice, discrimination and oppression. Nevertheless, levels of inter ethnic genocides showed up at the end of past century which made notice that the celebration of tolerance triumph was premature, at the same, a great scientific interest was detected on topics such as prejudice, stereotypes, racism and inter groups relationships

(Sidanius, Pratto, van Laar & Levin, 2004; p. 845)

Social Dominance theory see familiar forms of groups based oppression, group discrimination, racism, ethnocentrism, classism and sexism between others, as special cases of a general tendency in human beings to form and maintain hierarchies between groups. As Sidanius and Pratto (1999) pointed out, more than questioning why people stereotypes, why people hold prejudices, why individuals have discriminative behaviours or why people believe in world justice or injustice, the accurate question is why societies tend to be organized in group's hierarchy. Following the authors, group's discrimination tends to be systematic because social ideologies help to coordinate institutions and individuals actions. People share knowledge and believes that legitimate discrimination, and very frequently, they behave as holding such ideologies.

First studies on SDO which used 14 and 16 items scale concerned SDO as a unique construct, but more recent researches has pointed to the existence of a bifactorial structure proposing the dimensions of: opposition to the equality and group-based dominance (Jost & Thompson, 2000; Sidanius & Peña, 2002), although in the original version the unifactorial structure was supported. Silván-Ferrero and Bustillos (2007), through factorial analysis found a better support for the structure of two factors proposed by Jost and Thompson (2000) based on a Spanish sample and so did Cárdenas, Meza, Laguez and Yañez (2010) with a Chilean one.

Regarding SDO and its relationship with socio-demographic variables, Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth & Malle (1994) indicate that in terms of gender, men show a greater social dominance orientation compare with women. Including other psycho-sociological variables, it is observed that in professions, people high in SDO look for professional roles hierarchy reinforcing while those with low SDO prefer roles hierarchy attenuating. SDO is also associated with believes in an extent number of political and social ideologies which support group based hierarchy -such as meritocracy and racism- and politics with implications for intergroup relations -such as wars, civil rights and social programmes. SDO is distinguished from interpersonal dominance, conservatism and authoritarianism, and is negatively correlated with empathy, tolerance, community sense and altruism (Pratto et al., 1994). It was also found a strong correlation between SDO, racist ideologies and conservative political values (Espinosa & Calderon, 2006).

As Duckitt (2006) suggested, authoritarianism and SDO can be seen as functions of values or general beliefs concerning relationships between people and relationships between the individual and authority figures. Authoritarianism and SDO might be related to different value orientations: authoritarianism might be related to conservative and traditional, SDO to individualistic and materialistic value orientations. Authoritarian aggression is presumably related to SDO because intolerant attitudes towards deviants could also reflect a preference for hierarchical intergroup relationships and a personal drive to attain wealth and success (a materialistic value orientation) and not only submission to authority.

Different relations between RWA and values and between SDO and values confirm the

existence of two different types of prejudice: authoritarianism-based prejudice which is driven by fear and the feeling of being threatened; and dominance-based prejudice which is driven by the need for power and success. Persons high in RWA should dislike groups that seem to threaten societal or group security, while persons high in SDO should dislike socially subordinate groups (Passini, 2008).

But relationships between RWA and SDO vary across cultures and studies. In countries characterized by strong ideological contrast (e. g. Belgium, Great Britain, Germany, Sweden, Australia, and New Zealand), ideology tends to be organized along a left-right dimension. As a consequence, people with a leftist orientation are characterized by low scores for both RWA and SDO, whereas those with a rightist orientation are characterized by high scores for both RWA and SDO. On the contrary, in countries characterized by lesser ideological contrast (e. g., the United States, Canada, South Africa, and Poland), RWA and SDO scores are often independent of each other (Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt, Wagner, du Plessis & Birum, 2002).

Many researchers have studied the relationship between RWA and SDO showing that RWA and SDO are relatively independent predictors of prejudice and also that RWA and SDO are differently related to values.

In relation to values or motivational types developed by Schwartz (1992), it was observed that subjects sharing believes in domination show more agreement with power values and in a lesser extend those of universalism and benevolence. Marques, Páez, Techio, Mendoza Pinto and Espinosa Pezzia (2005) indicate that social dominance believes are originated in the existence of social groups which have different places in a stratified society, with high hierarchy distance. In these societies, groups will accept the principles of a hierarchical order to justify for themselves and others the position they have in social scale. It is reasonable to think that subjects that strongly value status differences, who share power values and believe in their nation, and dominant class superiority, that is, with a social domination tendency, show more in group favouritism. In other hand, people with strong believes in domination will also show greater agreement with collective violence (aggression in war), manifest less empathy and more agreement with strong punishment to families members. This agreement with severity and social control values suggest that individuals high in SDO can strongly disvalue a group’s member who fails.

Altemeyer (2004) show that SDO is positively associated with power value and negatively to benevolence, relations that Espinosa and Calderon (2006) ratify in their study with a sample from Spain. In a study carried out with a sample of college students from Buenos Aires city, Argentina, Zubieta, Delfino and Fernández (2007), found that SDO is positively associated with power and achievement values and negatively with self-direction, universalism and benevolence. These results supported data obtained for Espinosa and Calderon (2006): universalism and benevolence integrate self-transcendence dimension which refers to the interest in others well-being, in group and in general, indicating that persons with high SDO tend to show non concern for other groups, and also exhibit a tendency to emphasize individual oriented values such as

achievement and power, which conform self-promotion dimension opposite to self-transcendence dimension in Schwartz´s (2001) theory.

Positive association between SDO and self-promotion values -power and achievement- is also probably related with the fact that these goals or motives are indicators of political conservatism. Pratto et al. (1994) consider political and economical conservatism -and it emphasize in competitiveness- as a legitimizing myth which reinforce hierarchy so it will show a positive correlation with SDO. In a previous study in Buenos Aires, Argentina, (Zubieta, 2007) it was ratify the positive association of competitiveness and Protestant Work Ethic (PWE) with power and achievement values -self-promotion dimension-. PWE is suggested, with the Believes in a Just World (JWB), as a "meritocracy" ideology, which reinforce intergroup hierarchies so it is postulated as being positive related to SDO (Pratto et al., 1994). In ideological positioning, it was found that SDO is more usual in right oriented individuals (Espinosa & Calderón 2006; Zubieta et al., 2007).

SDO positive association with power value also links to Altemeyer (2004) and it's distinction between SDO and RWA as different authoritarian personality aspects. While RWA refers to submission, SDO refers to domination thus evidence shows that SDO is positively associated with power and negatively with benevolence. As Espinosa and Calderon (2006) stressed, prejudice base on RWA is motivated by fear and menace sensation while prejudice activated by SDO is the result of perceiving world as a fight for power and resources.

Due to the fact that in previous local studies only SDO were explored (Zubieta et al., 2007), the aim of the present study was to analyze the relationship between RWA, as a one dimension of authoritarianism, with SDO (Funke, 2005), as a bi-factorial construct: opposition to equality and group-based dominance (Jost & Thompson, 2000) and their associations with Schwartz's human values.

# Method

## Participants

Convenience sample was used, composed by 464 adults from Buenos Aires city and surroundings, 43.8% males and 52.2% females. Average age of 25 years ($M$ = 25.08; $SD$ = 6.0; Min = 18; Max = 42).

## Measures

Self-administered questionnaire composed by personal data section and the following scales:

*Social dominance orientation*: measured with 16-item version (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). All items were measured on a 7 point scale, anchored at 1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 =

*strongly agree* ( =.87) (GBD =.79; OEQ =.85).

*Authoritarianism*: measured using 15- items scale (Zakrisson, 2005). All items were measured in a 7 point scale, 1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree* ( = .72).

*Values*: measured with 40-item Schwartz's Portrait Values Questionnaire (Schwartz, 2001; adaptation of Castro Solano & Nader, 2006). Participants rated in a 6 point scale the degree in which each statement described themselves (0 = *Nothing to do with me at all* and 5 = *Too much to do with me*). Values were structured in 10 types: Conformism ( =.63), Tradition ( =.55), Security ( =.64), Benevolence ( =.62), Universalism ( =.75), Self-direction ( =.56), Stimulation ( =.69), Hedonism ( =.70), Achievement ( =.78) and Power ( =.57), which are grouped into four dimensions: Conservatism ( =.77), Self-trascendence ( =.79), Openness to Change ( =.79) and Self-promotion ( =.82)

# Results

## Social Dominance as a bi-factor construct

Correlations between SDO dimension's: Group Domination and Opposition to Equality is positive (r= 53; p > 0.00). Through confirmatory factorial analysis two models were contrasted: Model 1 postulated a unique dimension for SDO items saturating a latent variable and Model 2 establish two latent dimensions (GBD and OEQ). Statistical package used was LISREL 8.5 (Josreskog & Sorbom, 1996).

Model 2 (bi-factorial) obtained indexes greater to the ones in Model 1 (one factor). What is more, bi-factor model have a better significant fix with data comparing with the one factor model ($\chi^2$=291.41: df=6; p> .001). Absolutes t values fluctuate between 6.38 and 20.52 (2.0 or greater are considered statistically significant). Standardized contributions fluctuate between 0.34 and 0.84, and multiple squared correlations between .11 y .72. Results of factorial and squared multiple correlations coefficients saturations are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Models adjusted index (N = 640)

| | $\chi^2$ | CFI | NFI | RFI | RMSEA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unifactorial | 524.34 | 0.90 | 0.89 | 0.89 | 13.1 |
| Bifactorial | 232.93 | 0.96 | 0,95 | 0.96 | 0.70 |

Note. CFI (Comparative Fit Index); NFI (Normal Fit Index) and RFI (Relative Fit Index) with values upper 0.90 are considered very satisfactory. RMSEA (Root Mean Square

Error of Approximation) is significant with values lower than 0.08

# RWA, SDO and Values

Bi-variate correlations were calculated to examine the relations between variables. As expected, Authoritarianism was positively correlated with SDO dimensions: DG (r=.32, p<0.01) and OI (r=.21, p<0.01). It also show a high correlation with Conservatism values (r=.50) and a too lesser extent with Self-promotion (r=19). No significant difference appear with Self-trascendence and Openness to Change but the tendency is negative.

SDO dimension of Group Dominance was positively correlated with Conservatism (r=.16) and Self-promotion (r=.31), negatively associated with Self-trascendence (r=.-23).

Opposition to equality was positively correlated with Self-promotion (r=.19) and negatively with Self-trascendence (r=.-22).

With the aim of analysing the effect of values as independent factors in SDO, GBD and OEQ, as well as in RWA, General Linear Model was used taking centered values dimensions punctuations as co-variables and RWA, SDO GBD and OEQ as dependent variables. Values effects on dependent variables are reported in Table 2.

Multivariate tests show that general model was significant for RWA (F(10,452)= 55,44; p< 0.00), SDO (F(10,452)= 22,76; p< 0.00), GBD (F(10,452)= 24.19; p< 0.00), and OEQ (F(10,452)= 11.69, P < 0.00).

Results show that value dimension of Conservatism, positively, and Self-trascendence –negatively- were which better predicted RWA, while value dimension of Self-trascendence –negatively-, and Self-promotion and Conservatism –positively- were the ones who better predict SDO, confirming relationships previously mentioned.

In SDO dimensions, GBD and OEQ, it was found that basically, are the values of Self-trascendence –negatively- and Self-promotion –positively- who better predict both dimensions, even when the effect is greater in GBD, while values of Conservatism is who basically positively affect to GBD, and is residual or a trend in OEQ. These data, nevertheless, support the ones of correlations analysis.

Table 2: Univariate F for SDO, GBD OEQ and RWA

| Values Dimensions | SDO TOTAL F(t) | SDO-DG F(t) | SDO-OI F (t) | RWA F (t) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Self-Trascendence | 33.42*** (-5.78) | 32.06*** (-5.66) | 18.32*** (-4.28) | 33.83*** (-5.82) |
| Self-promotion | 19.87*** (4.45) | 20.03*** (4.47) | 10.17** (3.19) | 1,56 (-5.81) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Conservatism | 15.19*** | 21.37*** | 4.28* | 185,54*** |
| | (3.89) | (4.62) | (2.07) | (13,62) |
| Openness to Change | 0.00 | 0.98 | 0.97 | 0.00 |
| | (0.01) | (0.99) | (-0.96) | 0.05 |

*Note.* ***p< .00; **p<.01; *p< ,05

# Discussion

In order to support, explanatory, the proposal of Joskerskog and Sorbom (1996), a positive relationship was confirmed between the postulated dimensions of SDO indicating two mayor tendencies, one directed to group domination and other which emphasize opposition to equality. Thus, SDO construct can be treated as a bi-factor construct as also show results obtained by Silván Ferrero and Bustillos (2007) based on a Spanish sample and the ones reported by Cárdenas et al. (2010) with Chilean participants.

What is more, when relating with RWA, as several studies has shown (Roccato & Ricolfi, 2005) both dimensions show positives relations, being a little stronger the one oriented to group domination. One idea of correlations force difference can be explained due to group dominance dimension is more oriented to in-group favouritism either in hegemonic and disfavorable groups while opposition to equality is negative related (Silván Ferrero & Bustillos, 2007). Also, GBD dimension can be conceived as a group justification while OE can constitute a form of system justification (Jost, Banaji & Nosek, 2004).

When taking values into account, both SDO dimension have negatively associations with Self-trascendence values –concerning for other´s well being and Self-promotion –emphasize in power and achievement- but is Conservatism who also positively affect GBD, similar to RWA. Values of conservatism reinforce the importance of maintaining group cultural costume and conformity to group goals and harmony over member's personal ones.

It can be say that RWA and SDO are relatively different related to values as many studies had proved (Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt et al., 2002). According to Schwartz's theory of values (1992) RWA, when statistically corrected for SDO, is negatively associated with Openness to change and positively with opposite values of Conservadurism. SDO, when corrected for RWA, is associated negatively with Self-trascendence and positively with Self-promotion values (Passini, 2008). Results found in current study follow this line of evidence, when analysing values as independent factors on RWA and SDO, it was observed that RWA was better predicted negatively by Self-trascendence and positively by Conservatism while SDO was better predicted also negatively by Self-trascendence but negatively by Self-promotion values. Highlighting the fact that even when both are clearly opposite to "social oriented" values which emphasize concerning for other people and groups well being, RWA is mostly oriented to conservation while SDO to self-

promotion.

The relationship above mentioned support the statement about two different types of prejudice underlining RWA and SDO. Following Duckitt (2001), the relations of RWA with Conservatism values such as conformity, tradition and security reflect an authoritarianism-based prejudice driven by the fear and the feeling of being threatened; the relations of SDO with Self-promotion values of power and achievement reflect a dominance-based prejudice driven by the need of power and success.

As further steps, a confirmatory analysis of SDO bi-factorial structure should be done to get stronger support for it proposal. Also, differences in RWA and SDO authoritarianism attitudes in terms of socio-demographical aspects such us gender and age and others like ideological self-positioning will be explored.

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