

Predicting Economic, Social, and Foreign Policy Conservatism: the Role of Right-Wing Authoritarianism, Social Dominance Orientation, Moral Foundations Orientation, and Religious Fundamentalism

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Abstract The current research examined the capability of Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA), Social Dominance Orientations (SDO-D and SDO-E), the five Moral Foundations Orientation (MFO), and Religious Fundamentalism (RF) to predict economic conservatism, social conservatism, and foreign policy conservatism. Based on data gathered from a sample of students attending a public university located in the northeast U.S., multiple regression analyses indicated: 1) RWA and SDO-D were predictors of economic conservatism; 2) only RWA predicted social conservatism; and 3) RWA and RF predicted foreign policy conservatism. In all cases, RWA was the strongest predictor of economic, social, and foreign policy conservatism. We discuss the reasons RWAs endorse conservative economic, social and foreign policies.

Keywords Right-wing authoritarianism · Social dominance theory · Moral foundations orientation · Religious fundamentalism · Conservatism

Given the current polarized political climate in the U.S., disentangling the effects that attitudinal ideologies have on economic conservatism, social conservatism, and foreign policy conservatism may help researchers better understand the motivational underpinnings Americans have toward such

matters. Indeed, some (e.g., Crowson 2009; Duckitt et al. 2002) have suggested that attitudes about social issues are distinct from attitudes concerning economic issues and that economic and social conservatism have different psychological correlates. Thus, the purpose of the current research was to determine if prominent ideological attitudes (i.e., Right-Wing Authoritarianism, Social Dominance Orientation, Moral Foundations Orientation, and Religious Fundamentalism) not only predicted American college students' economic and social conservatism but foreign policy conservatism as well.

Dual Process Model of Ideology and Prejudice

Duckitt and his colleagues (Duckitt 2001; Duckitt et al. 2002; Duckitt and Sibley 2010) have proposed the Dual Process Model (DPM) of Ideology and Prejudice which posits that two different sets of ideological attitudes—Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA; Altemeyer 1996, 1998) and Social Dominance Orientation (SDO; Pratto 1996; Sidanius and Pratto 1993)—precipitate prejudicial behaviors and political ideology (Duckitt and Sibley 2010). More specifically, according to the DPM, a conforming personality creates a worldview that is dangerous and threatening, which produces authoritarian ideological attitudes. Such attitudes lead to negative intergroup attitudes which are directed toward threatening or unconventional groups. In contrast, the DPM posits that a tough-minded personality creates a worldview that is competitive, which produces social dominance ideological attitudes. Such ideological attitudes lead to negative intergroup attitudes which are directed toward socially subordinate groups or those who challenge the status quo.

Right-Wing Authoritarianism Altemeyer (1981) characterized RWA by a high degree of submissiveness (i.e.,

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compliance with legitimate authority), aggression (i.e., aggressiveness toward social deviants), and conventionalism (i.e., adherence to social ideals that are thought to be normative for a society). RWA has been conceptualized as a social attitude rather than a stable personality disposition (Duckitt 2001, 2006; Sibley and Duckitt 2008) because it has been demonstrated to change in response to situational manipulations (Duckitt and Fisher 2003), societal threats (Doty et al. 1991), group socialization (Poteat et al. 2007), cultural norms (Rydgren 2005), and parental attitudes and education (Altemeyer 1988).¹ Additionally, those who score high in RWA are more critical and punitive of minorities in order to maintain individual and group security, stability and order (Saeri et al. 2015). As such, measures of authoritarianism have “never failed to be a major predictor of prejudice at the individual level of analysis” (Pettigrew 2016, p. 4). RWA has been demonstrated to positively correlate with homophobia, sexism, racism, and intolerance toward different religions (Duckitt and Farre 1994; Goodman and Moradi 2008; Whitley 1999; Whitley and Kite 2006). Finally, researchers (Altemeyer 1998; Lambert and Chasteen 1997; Wilson and Sibley 2013) have found support for the notion that RWA is associated with conservative political ideology.

Social Dominance Theory Sidanius and Pratto (1999) proposed Social Dominance Theory (SDT) that postulates group conflict is minimized in societies by creating ideologies that promote the superiority of one group over others and that such ideologies legitimize discrimination. According to SDT, for a society to work smoothly, these ideologies are widely accepted as truth and help minimize conflict among groups when allocating resources. Such ideologies suggest that some groups are not as “good” as others and deserve to be monitored and prevented from obtaining resources enjoyed by the in-group. Recent research (Hindriks et al. 2014; Ho et al. 2012, 2015; Jost and Thompson 2000) has suggested that there are two complimentary dimensions to an individual’s SDO. One dimension reflects support for group-based dominance hierarchies (SDO-D) while the other dimension reflects opposition to group-based equality (SDO-E). Individuals who score high in SDO-D emphasize group-based dominance hierarchies and support the active and forceful suppression of out-groups (Ho et al. 2012, 2015). Research exploring SDO-D has found that it is associated with “old-fashioned” prejudice, zero-sum group competition, and overt hostility and aggression toward out-groups (Ho et al. 2012, 2015). In contrast, research has suggested that SDO-E is associated with exclusivity of resources to prevent out-groups from increasing their social status (Ho et al. 2012, 2015). SDO-E has been found to be positively correlated with just-world beliefs, political

conservatism, antagonism to international diplomacy, opposition to affirmative action and hostility toward the redistribution of resources (Ho et al. 2012, 2015).

Moral Foundations Theory

Graham and his colleagues (Graham et al. 2011, 2013; Haidt 2007) have proposed Moral Foundations Theory (MFT) which asserts that moral judgments are based upon five intuitive systems: Caring for others/avoiding harm (Harm/Care), fairness and justice (Fairness/Reciprocity), loyalty to one’s group (In-group/Loyalty), obedience to authority (Authority/Respect), and maintaining bodily and spiritual purity (Purity/Sanctity). Prior research (e.g., Graham et al. 2013) has shown a relationship between moral foundations and a variety of attitudes and beliefs. For example, the Harm/Care dimension is positively correlated with other measures of empathy, but negatively correlated with SDO, while the Fairness/Reciprocity dimension is positively correlated with other measures of social justice, and the Authority/Respect dimension is positively correlated with RWA. Additionally, the five moral foundations have been extended to political contexts. For instance, individual moral foundations endorsements predicted favorability ratings for candidates in the 2008 Democratic Presidential primaries (Iyer et al. 2010), the 2012 U.S. Presidential election (Franks and Scherr 2015), and intentions to abstain from voting (Johnson et al. 2014). Undeniably, the five moral foundations are associated with an individual’s political orientations; those who place emphasis on the Harm/Care and Fairness/Reciprocity dimensions tended to be politically liberal whereas those who place an equal weight to all of the dimensions tended to be politically conservative (Graham et al. 2009). These findings seem to be consistent and robust across cultures (Graham et al. 2011).

Religious Fundamentalism

Altemeyer and Hunsberger (1992) defined religious fundamentalism (RF) as “the belief that there is one set of religious teachings that clearly contain the fundamental, basic, intrinsic, essential, inerrant truth about humanity and deity...” (p. 118). Those who score high in RF also score high in dogmatism, zealotry, self-righteousness, and a belief in a dangerous world (Altemeyer and Hunsberger 2004). Like SDO and RWA, RF can be conceived as a functional and adaptive strategy for reducing ambiguity and increasing coherency and control (e.g., McCullough and Willoughby 2009). Relatedly, those who score high in RF also score higher on measures of closure (Brandt and Reyna 2010; Saroglou 2002) and logical positivism (Bridges and Harnish 2015). And, like RWA and SDO,

¹ Past research has been inconclusive regarding the extent to which RWA can be changed (Duckitt and Sibley 2010).

RF is also an influential predictor of prejudice (Brandt and Reyna 2014; Doty et al. 1997; Hall et al. 2010).

The Present Research

In an effort to further expand our understanding of factors that explain various facets of conservatism, we examined how RWA, SDO-D, SDO-E, MFO, and RF predicted economic conservatism, social conservatism, and foreign policy conservatism. This is important because different forms of conservatism may be associated with different intergroup and political behavior. For example, social conservatives hold traditional moral beliefs (Kirk 2016) and may be more accepting of aggression directed toward those who hold beliefs that differ from their own (Crowson 2009). In contrast, economic conservatives adhere to free market capitalist ideology (Van Heil and Mervielde 2004) and may be unconcerned with violations of traditional moral beliefs (e.g., same-sex marriage). Clearly, understanding differences in conservatism has “real-world” outcomes (e.g., discrimination) for those who are not an in-group member. Using data we gathered from a sample of students attending a public university located in the northeast U.S., we assessed their RWA, SDO, MFO, and RF along with their economic, social, and foreign policy conservatism to test the following hypotheses.

RWA Hypotheses RWA is said to be characterized by a high degree of submissiveness to authority figures, aggressiveness toward social deviants, and adherence to social ideals that are thought to be normative for a society (Altemeyer 1981). Little research has examined RWA and economic conservatism; however, the research that has been conducted is mixed. For example, research conducted by Bobbio et al. (2010) found RWA did not predict economic conservatism and causal attributions for poverty and wealth. However, other researchers (i.e., Jost et al. 2003a) found that RWA is correlated with fair market ideology. Thus, we made no prediction about RWA and economic conservatism.

Prior research has demonstrated that RWA is strongly related to prejudice toward social groups that are perceived to undermine and threaten conventional values and norms (Duckitt 2006; Duriez et al. 2005; Sibley et al. 2007). For example, RWA has been found to be related to prejudice toward specific groups that RWAs perceived as a threat—African Americans (Altemeyer 1988) and homosexuals (Laythe et al. 2001)—as well as non-specific groups who were described as dangerous (e.g., people who disrupt safety and security) (Duckitt and Sibley 2007) and groups who were culturally stereotyped as threatening (e.g., drug dealers) (Duckitt 2006). Consequently, we hypothesized that RWA would predict social conservatism replicating prior research findings.

We expected that RWA would predict foreign policy conservatism because foreign policy conservatism is characterized by ethnocentrism, morality of war, and isolationist sentiments (Hurwitz and Peffley 1987). Prior research has demonstrated that RWA is positively correlated with ethnocentrism (Altemeyer 1996; Radkiewicz 2015), and support for war (Cohrs and Moschner 2002; McFarland 2005).

SDO Hypotheses We hypothesized that SDO-D would predict economic conservatism (e.g., concerns about the regulation of business, instituting policies that reduce taxes, or increasing work requirements for welfare recipients). This is because those who score high in SDO-D emphasize group-based dominance hierarchies and support the active and forceful suppression of out-groups (Ho et al. 2012, 2015). One way to maintain power and status over out-groups and to ensure the exclusivity of resources is through restricting out-groups from access to resources (Schwartz 1994). Indeed, research has demonstrated that perceived economic competition between in-group and out-group members can cause attitudes toward out-group members to become less favorable (Esses et al. 1998, 1999; Jackson and Esses 2000), and attenuates helping that involves spending on social programs that assist out-group members (Altemeyer 1998; Edwards and Hughes 1998; Huber and Espenshade 1997). Moreover, economic conservatives reject efforts by the government to redistribute wealth to increase economic egalitarianism (Champlin and Knodler 2005).

We thought that SDO-D, which is associated with “old-fashioned” prejudice, zero-sum group competition, and overt hostility and aggression toward out-groups (Ho et al. 2012, 2015), would predict social conservatism. Social conservatism is defined as attitudes representing traditional morals (Kirk 2016) such as concerns about same-sex marriage, abortion access, or the ease and availability of divorce. By upholding attitudes representing traditionalism and suppressing deviant norms (e.g., marriage is only between a man and woman), those high in SDO-D can maintain their in-group-favored dominance hierarchy. Research has supported the notion that SDO-D measures the motivation to maintain a privileged position. For example, Sears et al. (2008) reported Caucasian Americans who scored high in SDO-D held overtly negative feeling toward African Americans, believed that they are inferior, and wanted to take resources away from other groups. Research has also supported the notion that SDO-D predicts both old-fashioned and symbolic racism (Ho et al. 2012; Kugler et al. 2010; respectively). Exploring other types of prejudice, Eagly et al. (2004) found that SDO-D was a predictor of discrimination toward women and homosexuals.

Prior research has suggested a link between SDO and foreign policy conservatism. For example, SDO was found to predict support for the use of military aggression (Henry et al. 2005), military programs, war, (Jackson and Gaertner

2010; McFarland 2005) and military aggression against Iraq (Lyll and Thorsteinsson 2007). Given that individuals who score high on SDO-E hold antagonistic attitudes toward international diplomacy (Ho et al. 2012, 2015), and possess negative attitudes towards migrants (Martinovic and Verkuyten 2013), we hypothesized that SDO-E would predict foreign policy conservatism because foreign policy conservatism seems to center on national security issues (e.g., immigration, diplomacy, war).

MFO Hypotheses Issues related to group loyalty, respect for authority, and purity are more important to political conservatives, while issues related to harm, rights and justice seem to be more important to political liberals (Graham et al. 2013). Indeed, Schlenker et al. (2012) argued that political conservatives' conceptualization of fairness revolves around the concept of equity, while political liberals' conceptualization of fairness revolves around the concept of equality. Supporting their contention, they found that political conservatives believe better economic outcomes are due to how hard one works, and that rewards should match one's contributions. Other research supports Schlenker et al.'s (2012) contention. For example, Federico et al. (2013) found that those who endorse the Harm/Care and Fairness/Reciprocity dimensions are more concerned with the distribution of power and resources than those who do not endorse the Harm/Care and Fairness/Reciprocity dimensions. Thus, we anticipated that the Harm/Care dimension of MFO would predict economic conservatism while the Fairness/Reciprocity dimension would inversely predict economic conservatism. Additionally, Federico et al. (2013) reported that those who endorse In-group, Authority and Purity foundations are more concerned with protecting social order and group membership. Thus, we hypothesized that the In-group/Loyalty, Authority/Respect and Purity/Sanctity dimensions of MFO would predict social conservatism. Because little, if any, research has been conducted exploring the dimensions of MFO and foreign policy conservatism, we made no prediction concerning these constructs.

RF Hypotheses RF has been characterized as a belief style defined by a militant belief system that supports a sense of one absolute truth and one's special relationship with God (Altemeyer and Hunsberger 1992). In a study exploring fundamentalism and economic conservatism, Johnson et al. (1986) found no association between the constructs. Thus, we did not expect that RF would predict economic conservatism. Rather, we posited RF would be a predictor of social conservatism because religious fundamentalists and political conservatives eschew attempts to change social conventions, and hold traditional practices and beliefs in order to create a stable society (Hood et al. 2005; Jost et al. 2003b). Moreover,

RF has been found to be a positive correlate of prejudice (Brandt and Reyna 2014; Doty et al. 1997; Hall et al. 2010).

We made no prediction regarding RF and foreign policy conservatism. This is because some researchers have found that RF is associated with ethnocentrism (Wilson and Bagley 1973) as well as RWA (Altemeyer 1996), and that immigrants are seen to threaten a society's cultural homogeneity and social cohesion (Scheepers et al. 2002). However, Meulemann and Billiet (2011) reported that church attendance is negatively associated with ethnic threat perceptions, while Billiet and de Witte (2008) found a negative association between religiosity and prejudicial attitudes, and Coenders and Scheepers (2003) reported a negative correlation between religiosity and exclusionary attitudes toward ethnic minorities.

Method

Participants Data were obtained from 132 undergraduate students enrolled in introductory psychology at a large, northeastern public university in the U.S. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents were women (64%), while one-third were men (34%). One percent indicated male to female transgender, and one percent did not report their gender identity. Almost all respondents were single, never married (96%), with one percent of the respondents married with children, one percent married without children, and one percent widowed. Two percent were living with a partner. The majority of respondents were of European descent (73%), with those of African (8%), Asian (8%), Hispanic (7%), and "other" (4%) descent represented. The average age of respondents was 19.52 years old ($SD = 1.40$). The majority of the respondents were U.S. citizens (89%) with six percent or less of the respondents citizens of China (6%), Congo (1%), Dominican Republic (1%), Ecuador (1%), Ethiopia (1%), Japan (1%), and the United Kingdom (1%). The majority of respondents indicated that they were Catholic (32%), while Protestant (21%), Jewish (2%), Buddhist (2%), Hindu (1%), and "other" (18%) religions were represented. A quarter (25%) of the respondents indicated "none" to the question. The study was approved by the university's Institutional Review Board, and all participants consented to the study.

Procedure Respondents were recruited by a male undergraduate research assistant who visited introductory psychology classes to provide a brief description of the study and asked for student participation. After the request, he distributed a handout containing more information about the study and the URL of the survey. The information sheet also contained contact information for the first author should potential respondents have questions about the research; there were none. All respondents completed the measures via the Internet at

their convenience outside of class and received extra credit for their participation.

Measures The Right-Wing Authoritarian Scale (RWAS; Altemeyer 2006) consists of 22-items which are rated on a 9-point scale where $-4 = \text{very strongly disagree}$, $0 = \text{neutral}$, and $+4 = \text{very strongly agree}$. The RWAS measures an individual's tendency to endorse attitudinal statements that reflect moralistic (e.g., "God's laws about abortion, pornography and marriage must be strictly followed before it is too late, and those who break them must be strongly punished"), nationalistic (e.g., "What our country really needs is a strong, determined leader who will crush evil, and take us back to our true path"), homophobic (e.g., "Gays and lesbians are just as healthy and moral as anybody else"; reverse scored), paternalistic (e.g., "It is always better to trust the judgment of the proper authorities in government and religion than to listen to the noisy rabble-rousers in our society who are trying to create doubt in people's minds"), and sexist (e.g., "Women should have to promise to obey their husbands when they get married") ideas. Higher scores on the RWAS indicate a greater willingness to submit to authority. Participants' scores on the RWAS ranged from 23 to 154 ($M = 81.05$; $SD = 27.56$). The observed Cronbach's Alpha for the RWAS in this study was .92.

Social dominance orientation was measured by administering the 14-item Social Dominance Orientation Scale (SDOS₆; Pratto et al. 1994). The SDOS₆ instructed respondents to indicate their feeling toward each of the 14 statements using a 1 to 7 scale where 7 = *very positive* and 1 = *very negative*. The statements reflect a desire to have group hierarchy (e.g., "Having some groups on top really benefits everybody") and maintain group dominance and superiority (e.g., "We should not push for group equality"). Higher scores on the SDOS₆ indicate higher levels of support for intergroup status hierarchies. Participants' means on the SDOS₆ ranged from 2.00 to 11.13 ($M = 5.61$; $SD = 2.33$). The observed Cronbach's Alpha for the SDOS₆ in this study was .93. Means on the SDO-D dimension (items 1–7 of the SDOS₆ which reflected group hierarchy) ranged from 1.00 to 6.75 ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 1.37$); Cronbach's alpha was .91. For SDO-E dimension (items 8–14 of the SDOS₆ which reflected group dominance and superiority), means ranged from 1.00 to 6.38 ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 1.29$); Cronbach's alpha was .92.

Participants completed the Moral Foundations Questionnaire (MFQ; Graham et al. 2011), which includes 32 statements that measure agreement with harm (e.g., "Compassion for those who are suffering is the most crucial virtue"), fairness (e.g., "When the government makes laws, the number one principle should be ensuring that everyone is treated fairly"), loyalty (e.g., "I am proud of my country's history"), authority (e.g., "Respect for authority is something all children need to learn"), and purity (e.g., "People should not do things that are disgusting, even if no one is harmed")

ideas. The first 16 statements are rated using a 6-point scale where $0 = \text{not at all relevant (to judgments of right and wrong)}$, $1 = \text{not very relevant}$, $2 = \text{slightly relevant}$, $3 = \text{somewhat relevant}$, $4 = \text{very relevant}$, and $5 = \text{extremely relevant}$. The second 16 statements are rated using a 6-point scale where $0 = \text{strongly disagree}$, $1 = \text{moderately disagree}$, $2 = \text{slightly disagree}$, $3 = \text{slightly agree}$, $4 = \text{moderately agree}$, and $5 = \text{strongly agree}$. Higher scores on the MFQ indicate higher moral concern. Participants' total score on the MFQ was summed; total scores ranged from 40 to 129 ($M = 88.71$; $SD = 15.47$). The observed Cronbach's Alpha for the MFQ was .81. To create the MFQ subscale scores, MFQ items that comprised each subscale were summed. The following scores were observed on each of the five dimensions of the MFQ: Harm/Care subscale scores ranged from 8 to 29 ($M = 19.57$, $SD = 4.52$), Cronbach's alpha was .52; scores on the Fairness/Reciprocity subscale ranged from 7 to 30 ($M = 19.82$, $SD = 4.37$), Cronbach's alpha was .59; In-group/Loyalty subscale scores ranged from 2 to 28 ($M = 17.24$, $SD = 4.77$), Cronbach's alpha was .28; scores on the Authority/Respect subscale ranged from 7 to 28 ($M = 17.72$, $SD = 4.52$), Cronbach's alpha was .62; and Purity/Sanctity subscale scores ranged from 4 to 29 ($M = 14.36$, $SD = 4.65$), Cronbach's alpha was .60.²

The Revised Religious Fundamentalism Scale (RRFS; Altemeyer and Hunsberger 2004) consists of 12 items, each rated on an 8-point scale where $-4 = \text{very strongly disagree}$ and $+4 = \text{very strongly agree}$. The RRFS measures the belief that there is one inerrant set of religious teachings that contain the fundamental truth about humanity and deity. An example item from the RRFS is "God has given humanity a complete, unfailing guide to happiness and salvation, which must be totally followed." Higher scores on the RRFS indicate higher religious fundamentalism. Participants' scores on the RRFS ranged from 13 to 108 ($M = 50.70$; $SD = 20.96$). The observed Cronbach's alpha for the RRFS in this study was .94.

Conservatism was measured using three questions that assessed political views with regard to economic, social, and foreign policy issues. These questions were adopted from Pratto et al. (1994) because, we, like Pratto et al. (1994), "wished to measure political-economic conservatism separately from policy attitudes" (p. 745). Each item asked respondents to indicate their political views on economic (i.e., "Using the following scale, how liberal or conservative are you on economic issues?"), social (i.e., "Using the following scale, how liberal or conservative are you on social issues?") and foreign policy (i.e., "Using the following scale, how

² The Cronbach alphas for the subscales of the MFQ were rather low (i.e., all were less than the accepted cut-off of .70) with the In-group/Loyalty subscale especially problematic (i.e., Cronbach alpha was .28). To ensure that the scale was coded correctly and the subscales created accurately, the authors rechecked their coding and creation of the subscales to ensure accuracy. We found no errors and have no answer why the subscales are unreliable.

liberal or conservative are you on foreign policy issues?") matters. The response scale that respondents used to indicate their views was based on a 1 to 7 scale where 1 = *very liberal*, 2 = *liberal*, 3 = *slightly liberal*, 4 = *middle of the road*, 5 = *slightly conservative*, 6 = *conservative*, and 7 = *very conservative*. Higher scores on these measures indicate greater conservatism. Participants' scores on economic issues ranged from 1 to 7 ($M = 4.07$; $SD = 1.61$), while scores on social issues ranged from 1 to 7 ($M = 3.82$; $SD = 1.72$). Finally, participants' scores on foreign policy issues ranged from 1 to 7 ($M = 3.95$; $SD = 1.51$).

Results

To assess the association between economic, social and foreign policy conservatism and RWA, SDO-D, SDO-E, MFQ dimensions, and RF scores on each measure were correlated. Table 1 presents the correlations among the variables. Economic conservatism was positively correlated with all other variables except MFQ-Harm/Care, and MFQ-Fairness/Reciprocity. Social conservatism was positively correlated with all variables except MFQ-Harm/Care, and MFQ-Fairness/Reciprocity which were negatively correlated. Foreign policy conservatism was positive correlated with all other variable except MFQ-Fairness/Reciprocity which was negatively correlated. Foreign policy conservatism was not associated with MFQ-Harm/Care and RF.

Our hypothesis proposed that SDO-D, and MFQ-Harm/Care would predict economic conservatism. To test this hypothesis, we conducted a standard regression analysis where participant's economic conservatism rating was the dependent variable and RWA, SDO-D, SDO-E, MFQ dimensions and RF were predictors. Preliminary assumption testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and

multivariate outliers (via visual inspection of Normal P-P plots and scatterplots), homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity (i.e., tolerance for all variables were $> .10$ and all VIFs were less than 4), with no serious violations noted. Using the enter method, a significant model emerged, $F(9, 120) = 4.61$, $p < .001$. The model accounted for 20% of variance (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.20$). RWA and SDO-D were strongly linked to economic conservatism with RWA making the strongest contribution. (See Table 2.)

We also hypothesized that RWA, SDO-D, MFQ-Authority/Respect, and RF would predict social conservatism. To test this, we conducted a standard regression analysis in which participant's social conservatism rating was the dependent variable and RWA, SDO-D, SDO-E, MFQ dimensions, and RF were predictors. Using the enter method, a significant model emerged, $F(9, 122) = 8.05$, $p < .001$. The model accounted for 33% of variance (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.33$). Only RWA was strongly linked to social conservatism. (See Table 3.)

Our last hypothesis was that RWA, SDO-E, MFQ-In-group/Loyalty, and MFQ-Purity/Sanctity would predict foreign policy conservatism. To test this hypothesis, we conducted a standard regression analysis where participant's foreign policy conservatism rating was the dependent variable and RWA, SDO-D, SDO-E, MFQ dimensions, and RF were predictors. Using the enter method, a significant model emerged, $F(9, 122) = 3.99$, $p < .001$. The model accounted for 17% of variance (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.17$). RWA and RF (inversely) were strongly linked to foreign policy conservatism with RWA making the strongest contribution. (See Table 4.)

Discussion

The goal of the present research was to determine if RWA, SDO-D, SDO-E, MFO and RF predicted economic, social,

Table 1 Correlations among economic conservatism, social conservatism, foreign policy conservatism, SDO subscales, RWA, RF, and MFO dimensions

Variable	Economic Conservatism	Social Conservatism	Foreign Policy Conservatism	SDO-D	SDO-E	RWA	RF	MFO-Harm/Care	MFO-Fair/Reciprocity	MFO-In-group/Loyalty	MFO-Authority/Respect
Social Conservatism	.66**										
Foreign Policy Conservatism	.67**	.55**									
SDO-D	.38**	.41**	.30**								
SDO-E	.20*	.30**	.29**	.54**							
RWA	.39**	.55**	.38**	.49**	.50**						
RF	.18*	.32**	.14	.24**	.24**	.74**					
MFO-Harm/Care	-.12	-.19*	-.09	-.22*	-.39**	-.27**	-.13				
MFO-Fairness/Reciprocity	-.11	-.23**	-.19*	-.28**	-.53**	-.35**	-.17	.64**			
MFO-In-group/Loyalty	.29**	.35**	.22*	.24**	.05	.36**	.19*	.21*	.18*		
MFO-Authority/Respect	.37**	.39**	.32**	.33**	.20*	.44**	.29**	.09	.10	.64**	
MFO-Purity/Sanctity	.22*	.31**	.20*	.28**	.11	.55**	.62**	.23**	.19*	.44**	.50**

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

Table 2 Prediction of economic conservatism on SDO subscales, RWA, RF, and MFO dimensions

Scale	B	SE B	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
SDO-Dominance	.26	.12	.22	2.21	.029
SDO-Egalitarianism	-.14	.14	-.11	-1.01	.313
RWA	.02	.01	.35	-1.16	.027
RF	-.01	.01	-.16	2.25	.248
MFO-Harm/Care	-.02	.04	-.06	-.59	.553
MFO-Fairness/Reciprocity	.01	.04	.02	.13	.984
MFO-In-group/Loyalty	.01	.04	.04	.32	.749
MFO-Authority/Respect	.08	.04	.22	1.95	.054
MFO-Purity/Sanctity	-.02	.04	-.05	-.36	.722

df = 120

and foreign policy conservatism. More specifically, we hypothesized that only SDO-D and MFO-Harm/Care would predict economic conservatism. Our hypothesis was partially supported. SDO-D did predict economic conservatism but RWA was a stronger predictor. MFO-Harm/Care did not predict economic conservatism. We also hypothesized that RWA, SDO-D, MFO-In-group/Loyalty, MFO-Authority/Respect, MFO-Purity/Sanctity, and RF would predict social conservatism. Again, results partially support the hypothesis. Only RWA predicted social conservatism. Finally, we expected that RWA, and SDO-E would predict foreign policy conservatism. We found only partial support for the hypothesis; RWA and to a lesser degree RF (inversely) predicted foreign policy conservatism. Although prior research suggested that SDO-D rather than RWA predicts economic conservatism (e.g., Duckitt 2006; Duriez et al. 2005; Sibley et al. 2007), our findings demonstrate that RWA is a better predictor. Indeed, RWA was the best predictor of economic conservatism, social conservatism, and foreign policy conservatism. Why then were we unable to replicate prior research? One possible explanation was provided by Altemeyer (1998) who argued that RWA

Table 3 Prediction of social conservatism on SDO subscales, RWA, RF, and MFO dimensions

Scale	B	SE B	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
SDO-Dominance	.17	.12	.14	1.49	.139
SDO-Egalitarianism	-.11	.13	-.08	-.80	.424
RWA	.03	.01	.45	-1.15	.002
RF	-.01	.01	-.14	3.16	.251
MFO-Harm/Care	-.03	.04	-.07	-.67	.507
MFO-Fairness/Reciprocity	-.04	.04	-.10	-.95	.343
MFO-In-group/Loyalty	.05	.04	.13	1.27	.206
MFO-Authority/Respect	.05	.04	.12	1.16	.250
MFO-Purity/Sanctity	.01	.04	.04	.34	.734

df = 122

Table 4 Prediction of foreign policy conservatism on SDO subscales, RWA, RF, and MFO dimensions

Scale	B	SE B	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
SDO-Dominance	.05	.11	.05	.45	.651
SDO-Egalitarianism	.05	.13	.05	.40	.687
RWA	.02	.01	.41	-2.00	.012
RF	-.02	.01	-.28	2.56	.048
MFO-Harm/Care	.02	.04	.07	.64	.522
MFO-Fairness/Reciprocity	-.05	.04	-.13	-1.08	.284
MFO-In-group/Loyalty	-.10	.04	-.03	-.28	.780
MFO-Authority/Respect	.07	.04	.20	1.79	.077
MFO-Purity/Sanctity	.02	.04	.05	.36	.720

df = 122

is closely associated with conservative (economic) ideology whereas SDO is usually defined along gender and/or racial categories (Pratto et al. 1994). Given our sample was among traditional-age college students, it could be that these respondents do not perceive economic issues along gender or racial lines but between “haves and have nots.” Such a worldview may be reinforced by continuous media discussion of economic inequality in the U.S., which was a major theme in the most recent U.S. presidential election and was a major theme in the 2012 U.S. presidential election as well. Moreover, traditional-age college students have experienced the “Great Recession” first-hand. They may have found it difficult to find part-time employment, or may have had to incur more debt to pay for the ever-increasing cost of college tuition. If not directly impacted, they may have witnessed their parents struggle through reduced salaries or job losses that caused economic disruptions in their families.

Although we found that both RWA and SDO-D predicted economic conservatism, and are moderately correlated with each other, they may operate relatively independently of each other. It might be that socially dominant individuals in our sample endorsed economic conservatism to maintain status hierarchies in order to perpetuate their economic dominance over others (i.e., lower social economic classes). In contrast, RWAs may endorse economic conservatism because of their belief in traditional values such as the Protestant work ethic identified by Weber (Weber 1905). The Protestant work ethic has been found to positively correlate with RWA (Christopher and Mull 2006; Christopher et al. 2008; Mudrack 2005).

We found that only RWA predicted social conservatism in our sample, consistent with prior research (e.g., Duckitt 2006; Duriez et al. 2005; Sibley et al. 2007). Interestingly, this research has shown that those who score high in RF also are prejudiced toward a variety of out-groups – specifically, homosexuals, and other religions (Hunsberger and Jackson 2005; Hunsberger et al. 1999). However, social conservatism seems to encompass a broader sociocultural value system than the

narrower focus of RF. As such, social conservatives are intolerant of individuals who deviate from social conventions; they are more discriminating among those who they consider an in-group or out-group member (Gudykunst et al. 1992), promote adherence to traditions and norms (Triandis 1994), avoid out-group members (Terrizzi et al. 2013), and hold negative attitudes toward out-group members (Terrizzi et al. 2013).

Finally, RWA and, to a lesser degree, RF (inversely) predicted foreign policy conservatism in our sample of college students. RWAs seem to be unable to cope cognitively or psychologically with diversity and because of this, RWAs shun members of the out-group (Duckitt and Sibley 2010), express intolerant and punitive attitudes toward the out-group, and engage in prejudicial actions against the out-group (Stenner 2005). Thus, when RWAs are threatened by thoughts of foreign policy issues (e.g., immigration), they may likely withdraw until an authority figure exhorts a foreign policy that prevents out-groups from immigrating, deports illegal migrants, and increases border security. As Dunn (2015) stated, “when authoritarians are threatened with the perception of a fragmenting society, their inherent response is to rally behind a strong in-group leader that [*sic*] similarly rejects anything perceived to be foreign” (p. 368). Others have found that RWA predicts conservative values (Duckitt and Fisher 2003; Jost et al. 2003b), and resistance to social change (Bonanno and Jost 2006). More importantly, research has demonstrated that RWA is a positive correlate of negative attitudes toward groups who deviate from normative in-group behavior (Duckitt 1989). Because of this, it is thought such groups present RWAs with a threat to their social security and in-group norms (Asbrock et al. 2010; Cohrs and Asbrock 2009) and as a consequence, they engage in prejudicial and discriminatory behavior toward the out-group (Duckitt and Sibley 2010).

We also found that RF inversely predicted foreign policy conservatism among our sample of college students. This suggests that those who scored high in RF had *less* conservative attitudes toward foreign policy. Of course, it is important to remember that foreign policy conservatism (as well as our other measures of conservatism) was measured by a single item, and because of this, it is difficult to understand how sophisticated our college students’ foreign (or economic) policy knowledge and reasoning is. Nevertheless, at first glance this finding seems counterintuitive. However, Foner and Alba (2008) argued that religion acts a bridge for immigrants to the U.S. It “promotes the incorporation of newcomers into their new society and helps them, in a variety of ways, to cope and adapt. Participation in almost any sort of religion is depicted as a pathway into the mainstream” (p. 361–362). For many immigrants, members of churches, temples, or mosques provide fellowship and friendship opportunities couched in a familiar cultural environment (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Additionally, churches, temples, and mosques can provide a

multitude of services to immigrants from English language classes, and job and housing information speeding the culturalization process. Under such circumstances, RFs and immigrants can share the same social identity (Tajfel and Turner 1979).

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Understanding the factors that explain different facets of conservatism has both theoretical and practical importance. At a theoretical level, the current research advances our understanding of the ways in which prejudicial motives operate. Consistent with Duckitt’s (2001) dual-process cognitive motivation theory, RWA predicted social conservatism while SDO-D predicted economic conservatism supporting the differential prediction hypothesis (Duckitt and Sibley 2010). However, inconsistent with Duckitt’s (2001) model, RWA also predicted economic conservatism. Additionally, inconsistent with Duckitt’s (2001) model, only RWA predicted foreign policy conservatism. However, these findings could be explained via the differential moderation hypothesis (Duckitt and Sibley 2010), which posits that “the degree to which particular out-group or situational factors activate the specific motivational goals or values expressed in RWA and SDO will be directly related to the degree to which RWA and SDO predict prejudice or other outcomes” (p. 1877). That is, at the time of the data collection, immigration reform (i.e., how to treat out-groups) was a major discussion topic in the popular media and many conservative politicians espoused anti-immigration views. Hearing such messages may have activated the motives underlying RWA in our sample of college students.

At a practical level, understanding different forms of conservatism may explain different types of intergroup and political behavior. For example, on March 23, 2016, North Carolina passed a law which prevents people from using government-owned restrooms or locker rooms that do not match the gender indicated on their birth certificates. The consequences of the law for transgender individuals have altered their daily activities. According to a Los Angeles Times story, transgendered individuals are trying not to use public restrooms for fear of being attacked (Pearce 2016). Such concern is not without reason; in a 2013 survey of transgender respondents who work in Washington DC, seven out of ten respondents reported being “denied access, verbally harassed, or physically assaulted in public restrooms” (Herman 2013, p.65).

Beyond those who are directly impacted by the law, an interesting division among conservatives appears to be occurring. Social conservatives seem to be supporters of the law; whereas economic conservatives seem to oppose the law. For social conservatives, the law attempts to restore traditional

morals. For example, Bishop Patrick Wooden of the Upper Room Church of God in Christ in Raleigh, NC, is quoted in a Raleigh newspaper, “I’m not concerned about political correctness. Everybody knows that a transgendered woman is a man. And everybody knows that a transgendered man is a woman. And we have allowed common sense to go out of the window in the name of political correctness” (Bonner 2016). Another supporter of the law, Ron Baity, a Baptist preacher and head of Return America, said “people who don’t know who they are should go to the library and get a book on anatomy. God made no mistake when he created us” (Bonner 2016). But economic conservatives may oppose the law because of the negative impact it has on the state’s economy. To illustrate, PayPal (Berman 2016) and Deutsche Bank (Eavis 2016) canceled expansions that were planned for the state.

Limitations

The current research has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, our results are based upon self-report measures among college students at a large northeastern public university. Because of this, our findings cannot be generalized to the greater population of American college students. Moreover, our respondents were from a Western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic society (see Henrich et al. 2010 for a review) and as such, the findings may not generalize to other cultures.³ Because we used a cross-sectional design, it is important to note that it is difficult to make causal inferences among the variables. Additionally, a cross-sectional design provides only a snapshot of how RWA, SDO-D, SDO-E, MFO, and RF may predict economic, social and foreign policy conservatism. Results can differ if another timeframe is selected (i.e., under different economic and social circumstances). We should also emphasize that our analysis is based on a rather small sample size with intercorrelated predictors which may limit the stability of the results. Indeed while the VIFs associated with the regression analyses are under 4 and do not indicate large multicollinearity problems, they do suggest some instability in our results. Our findings may also be limited because we used an older SDO measure and that there is newer one that better assesses the SDO-D and SDO-E dimensions of social dominance orientation (Ho et al. 2015). We did not use the newer measure (i.e., SDO₇) because it was not available when data was collected in the current study. Finally, social, economic and foreign policy conservatism are broad concepts that were measured with single items. Moreover, we did not assess how sophisticated our undergraduate students’ social, economic, and foreign policy knowledge was. Additional research is needed to more fully explore these concepts.

³ We wish to acknowledge an anonymous reviewer for this idea.

Conclusion

The results of the present study make a useful contribution to our understanding of economic conservatism, social conservatism, and foreign policy conservatism. Although prior research has demonstrated that both RWAs and SDO-Ds may be economic conservatives, our results indicate that RWA is a better predictor of economic conservatism. We also found that RWA predicted social conservatism and conservative foreign policy attitudes. The current finding support the notion that RWAs and SDO-Ds express their dislike of out-groups differently (Altemeyer 1998). Among RWAs, their underlying motive of seeking security in a dangerous world impels them to endorse conservative economic, social and foreign policies, while among SDO-Ds, their underlying motive of seeking security in a competitive world compels them to dominate out-groups economically.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

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Conflict of Interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Informed Consent Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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