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Effects of Dangerous and Competitive Worldviews on Right-Wing Authoritarianism and Social Dominance Orientation over a Five-Month Period

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The cross-lagged effects of dangerous and competitive social worldviews on Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) and Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) were examined over a five-month period (N = 165). Analyses indicated that the motivational goal for group-based dominance and superiority indexed by SDO changed as a function of the degree to which the social world was perceived as a competitive place characterized by inequality and resource scarcity. The motivational goal for ingroup conformity and collective security indexed by RWA, in contrast, changed as a function of the degree to which the social world was perceived as a dangerous and threatening place prone to high levels of crime and immoral behavior. These findings are consistent with the causal pathways between social worldviews and ideological attitudes predicted by Duckitt’s (2001) model of the dual motivational and cognitive processes underlying prejudice. An unexpected reciprocal effect in which RWA predicted longitudinal change in dangerous worldview was also identified, suggesting that the relationship between these two constructs may be more complex than previously hypothesized.

KEY WORDS: Social dominance orientation, Right-wing authoritarianism, longitudinal change, social worldviews
A plethora of constructs have been considered over the years in the search for individual differences underlying prejudice and discrimination. Two of the most robust predictors to emerge from this literature are Social Dominance Orientation (SDO; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994) and Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA; Altemeyer, 1981). Together, SDO and RWA cast a wide ranging net that encompasses a substantial proportion of the variation in most domains of prejudice, discrimination, and related intergroup attitudes (e.g., Altemeyer, 1998; McFarland & Adelson, 1996; Sibley, Robertson, & Wilson, 2006). There is, however, considerable debate regarding the mechanisms and causal directions underlying the associations between SDO, RWA, and prejudice. Some authors have defined SDO and RWA as stable personality traits, with the related implication that their effect on prejudice should remain invariant across situations (e.g., Altemeyer, 1998). Taken to the other extreme, some authors have suggested that SDO and RWA are a product, rather than a cause, of group dynamics (e.g., Kreindler, 2005; Reynolds, Turner, Haslam, & Ryan, 2001).

Duckitt (2001, 2005; Duckitt, Wagner, du Plessis, & Birum, 2002) has suggested that SDO and RWA reflect dual aspects of a cognitive-motivational system underlying individual differences in prejudice. According to Duckitt’s dual process model, SDO and RWA are not immutable personality-type traits but rather ideological attitudes that express relatively independent motivational goals for group-based dominance and superiority, and social control and collective security, respectively. The model further posits that these two motivational goals should depend upon schematic beliefs about the nature of the social world, which are in turn the result of linear combinations of sociostructural characteristics of the situation and stable individual difference in personality. The current study presents longitudinal data evaluating two specific causal predictions offered by Duckitt’s (2001, 2005) dual process model, namely that dangerous and competitive social worldviews should affect RWA and SDO, respectively.

According to Duckitt (2001, 2005), the motivational goal indexed by SDO is thought to stem from relatively stable perceptions of the social world as a competitive jungle characterized by a “ruthless, amoral struggle for resources and power in which might is right and winning is everything” (Duckitt et al., 2002, p. 92). A competitive worldview is, in turn, thought to result from the combination of a personality disposition high in tough-mindedness and exposure to social situations characterized by high levels of inequality and competition. The motivational goal indexed by RWA, on the other hand, is thought to stem from relatively stable perceptions of the social world as a dangerous place in which “good, decent people’s values and way of life are threatened by bad people” (p. 92). This dangerous worldview is in turn thought to result from the combination of a personality disposition high in social conformity and exposure to social situations characterized by high levels of threat to ingroup norms and values. SDO should therefore increase as a function of the degree to which the social world is perceived to be a competitive place. RWA should, in contrast,
Evaluating Social Worldviews on RWA and SDO

increase as a function of the degree to which the social world is perceived to be a dangerous place.

Initial tests of Duckitt’s (2001) dual process model have used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) of concurrent data. These analyses indicate that the causal paths specified by the dual process model provided an acceptable fit to data collected in the United States, South Africa, and New Zealand (Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt et al., 2002). In addition, the causal paths predicted by the dual process model appear to provide a better fit than alternative configurations in which the relations between the personality, social worldview, and ideological attitude dimensions of the model were changed in various ways (Duckitt et al., 2002; Sibley, Wilson, & Robertson, 2007). Nevertheless, although it is widely accepted that SEM analyses of concurrent data can be used to infer causal processes, such analyses cannot test predictions about the direction of potential causality with the same degree of validity that longitudinal or experimental designs can achieve. Thus, as Duckitt et al. (2002) noted, further research using a range of different designs remains necessary to validate and elaborate upon the complex set of causal pathways predicted by the dual process model.

Previous historiometric and experimental research lends support to specific causal paths predicted by Duckitt’s (2001, 2005) model. Historiometric analyses indicate that various societal-level indicators of authoritarian behavior have changed systematically according to levels of societal threat (e.g., Doty, Peterson, & Winter, 1991; Sales, 1973; McCann, 1997; McCann & Stewin, 1990). In terms of voting behavior, for example, conservative political incumbents received greater support during periods of high social threat, whereas liberal political incumbents received greater support during periods of low threat (Doty et al., 1991). Societal-level indicators thought to reflect authoritarian submission, such as level of censorship and laws requiring oaths of fealty for school teachers, have also been shown to vary systematically over the years depending upon levels of societal threat in the United States (Doty et al., 1991; Sales, 1973). Similarly, Perrin (2005) reported that indicators of authoritarian sentiment in letters to the editor published in U.S. newspapers increased following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Experimental manipulations of perceived social threat also lend support to the notion that dangerous worldview affects RWA (e.g., Altemeyer, 1988; Duckitt & Fisher, 2003; Sales & Friend, 1973). Duckitt and Fisher (2003), for example, reported that participants who read a hypothetical scenario in which the future of their county was described as having become threatening and dangerous exhibited higher scores on a subsequent measure of RWA than those in a control condition. The effect of this social threat manipulation on RWA was fully mediated by dangerous worldview. In addition, the social threat manipulation exerted a far weaker effect on subsequent levels of SDO, suggesting that SDO and RWA may indeed have different antecedents.

Research has also shown that SDO varies systematically according to the social context, primarily according to the individuals’ social position and societal
levels of competition and resource scarcity (e.g., Danso & Esses, 2001; Guimond, Dambrun, Michinov, & Duarte, 2003; Levin, 2004). Guimond et al. (2003), for example, reported that participants who were higher in SDO were more likely to major in university subjects that presumably afforded high-status positions (such as law) relative to subjects that afford lower-status positions (such as psychology). Importantly, law students in their third or fourth year were higher in SDO than first-year law students, whereas psychology students displayed the reverse trend and evidenced lower levels of SDO the further that they progressed through their academic training. In addition, SDO mediated the effects of differences in social position on prejudice. These findings are consistent with Duckitt’s (2001, 2005) premise that sociostructural characteristics of the situation (both the individual’s situation and more pervasive sociocultural realities) foster perceptions of the social world as a competitive place which in turn heightens the motivational goal for group-based dominance and superiority indexed by SDO.

Overview and Guiding Hypotheses

In sum, available research indicates that social situations characterized by high levels of threat to ingroup norms and values, and inequality and competition, exert causal effects on RWA and SDO, respectively. The effects of such social situations on RWA and SDO are theorized to be indirect, however, and should be mediated by corresponding changes in dangerous and competitive social worldview (Duckitt, 2005). The current research presents longitudinal data evaluating one specific aspect of Duckitt’s (2001, 2005) dual process model, namely that the motivational goal for group-based dominance and superiority indexed by SDO should increase as a function of the degree to which the social world is perceived as a competitive place, whereas the motivational goal for ingroup conformity and collective security indexed by RWA should increase as a function of the degree to which the social world is perceived as a dangerous and threatening place. These predictions are tested by examining the cross-lagged effects of social worldviews on RWA and SDO, and vice-versa, over a five-month period.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were undergraduate students enrolled in consecutive first- and second-trimester introductory psychology papers during 2005. Data were collected from 331 participants (116 male, 215 female; $M_{age} = 20.10$, $SD = 4.28$) during the first testing phase administered at the start of the first trimester paper (223 NZ European, 46 Maori/Pacific Nations, 36 Asian, 7 Indian, 19 non-NZ European). One hundred and sixty five (50%) of the people surveyed at Time 1 were also enrolled in the second trimester paper and participated during the second
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phase five months (20 weeks ± 9 days) later (44 male, 121 female; $M_{age} = 19.72$, $SD = 4.43$; 119 NZ European, 23 Maori/Pacific Nations, 11 Asian, 3 Indian, 9 non-NZ European).

During both phases, the measures were included in a larger series of randomly ordered survey packets. These other packets differed in content across the two phases and were unrelated to the current research. The entire set of survey packets took approximately 25 minutes to complete during each phase. Data were matched using confidential student identification numbers. Students received partial course credit for participation during both phases.

**Materials**

Belief that the social world is a dangerous place was assessed using a balanced set of eight items randomly selected from Duckitt et al. (2002; items: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10). The scale included items such as “My knowledge and experience tells me that the social world we live in is basically a dangerous and unpredictable place, in which good, decent and moral people’s values and way of life are threatened and disrupted by bad people” (pro-trait), and “My knowledge and experience tells me that the social world we live in is basically a safe, stable and secure place in which most people are fundamentally good” (con-trait). Belief that the world is a competitive place was also assessed using a balanced set of eight items from Duckitt et al. (2002; items: 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11). The scale included items such as “It’s a dog-eat-dog world where you have to be ruthless at times” (pro-trait), and “The best way to lead a group under one’s supervision is to show them kindness, consideration, and treat them as fellow workers, not as inferiors” (con-trait). Items were rated on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) was measured using a balanced set of 10 items randomly selected from Sidanius and Pratto (1999; items: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16). The scale contained Likert-type items such as “Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups” (protrait), and “No one group should dominate in society” (contrait). Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) was measured using a balanced set of 10 items randomly selected from Altemeyer (1996; items: 13, 15, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 32, 34). The scale included items such as “The only way our country can get through the crisis ahead is to get back to our traditional values, put some tough leaders in power, and silence the troublemakers spreading bad ideas” (pro-trait), and “Our country needs free thinkers who will have the courage to defy traditional ways, even if this upsets many people” (con-trait). Items assessing SDO were rated on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly negative) to 7 (strongly positive). Items assessing RWA were rated on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Higher scores indicated higher mean levels of SDO and RWA, respectively.

Descriptive statistics and internal reliabilities for all scales used in this research are presented in Table 1.
Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations between Measures of Social Worldview and RWA and SDO at Time 1 and 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1. Dangerous worldview</th>
<th>2. Competitive worldview</th>
<th>3. RWA</th>
<th>4. SDO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time 1 M</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>2.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>α</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 2 M</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>α</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Correlations between measures at Time 1 appear on the bottom diagonal, n = 331. Correlations between measures at Time 2 appear on the top diagonal, n = 165. *p < .05.

Sample Attrition

Those who participated during only the first testing phase (n = 166) did not differ from those who participated during both testing phases (n = 165) in ethnic distribution, χ²(4, n = 331) = 6.54, p = .16, or mean age, F (1,329) = 2.59, p = .11, partial η² < .01. However, women were significantly more likely to enroll in the consecutive introductory psychology courses during which the survey was administered and were therefore significantly more likely to be sampled during both testing phases than men, χ²(1, n = 331) = 10.15, p < .01.

People sampled during only the first phase did not differ from those who were sampled during both testing phases on Time 1 measures of dangerous worldview or RWA, F (1,329) = 1.36, p = .24, partial η² < .01; F (1,329) = .51, p = .48, partial η² < .01, respectively. However, those sampled during both phases scored significantly lower on Time 1 measures of competitive worldview (M = 2.55, SD = .74) than those sampled during only the first testing phase, M = 2.86, SD = .80; F (1,329) = 12.99, p < .01, partial η² = .04. A similar difference was observed in SDO, with those sampled during both phases scoring significantly lower in Time 1 SDO (M = 2.65, SD = .80) than those sampled during only the first phase, M = 2.93, SD = .87; F (1,329) = 9.00, p < .01, partial η² = .03.

Although sample attrition was substantial, it did not occur because people refused to participate during the second testing phase (as far as we are aware, no one who attended the class during which this research was conducted refused to participate). Rather, sample attrition was due to the relatively low (50%) overlap between students who enrolled in the consecutive psychology papers during which the Time 1 and 2 surveys were administered. The higher levels of SDO and competitive worldview observed in those sampled during only the first testing
phase probably occurred because these persons were enrolled in only a single introductory psychology paper and were majoring in subjects other than psychology, most likely those that afforded higher levels of status and prestige (see also Guimond et al., 2003).

Results

Correlations and Descriptive Statistics

Correlations between measures of social worldview and RWA and SDO at both Time 1 and 2 are presented in Table 1. During both phases, dangerous worldview was moderately to strongly positively correlated with RWA, $r_s = .43$ and .56, but only weakly related to SDO, $r_s = .13$ and .23. Competitive worldview displayed the opposite pattern of associations, being moderately to strongly positively correlated with SDO, $r_s = .56$ and .61, but only weakly related to RWA, $r_s = .14$ and .04.

Correlations between Time 1 and 2 measures of social worldview and RWA and SDO are presented in Table 2 (test-retest correlations are shown on the diagonal). Consistent with the concurrent associations, Time 1 dangerous worldview was strongly positively associated with Time 2 RWA, $r = .52$, but only weakly associated with Time 2 SDO, $r = .17$. Time 1 competitive worldview, in contrast, was strongly associated with Time 2 SDO, $r = .56$, but only weakly associated with Time 2 RWA, $r = .10$.

Stability and Change in Social Worldviews, RWA, and SDO

We assessed stability and change in dangerous and competitive worldviews, RWA, and SDO by estimating longitudinal associations between latent indicators of these constructs using SEM. This approach has considerable advantages over the use of the observed means (such as the test-retest correlations reported in Table 2), as the estimation of latent variables reduces the effects of measurement error thus

Table 2. Correlations between Time 1 and Time 2 Measures of Social Worldview and RWA and SDO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time 2</th>
<th>1.</th>
<th>2.</th>
<th>3.</th>
<th>4.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Dangerous worldview</td>
<td>.76*</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.52*</td>
<td>.17*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Competitive worldview</td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td>.75*</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.56*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. RWA</td>
<td>.50*</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.81*</td>
<td>.19*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. SDO</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>.50*</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>.61*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Test-retest correlations appear on the diagonal. $n = 165$ for all correlations, *p < .05.
providing a more accurate appraisal of the underlying construct(s). Latent indicators of dangerous and competitive worldviews, RWA, and SDO at Times 1 and 2 were each assessed using three-item parcels. Item parcels were randomly selected, but where possible contained a balanced number of pro- and contrait items. Identical parceling procedures were used at both time points. In all analyses, the three manifest indicators created for a given construct were allowed to relate solely to the latent indicator of that particular construct at that point in time.

Hu and Bentler (1999) argued that it is important to consider both the standardized Root Mean square Residual (sRMR; a residual-based fit index) and one or more index of comparative fit, such as the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI), or Goodness of Fit Index (GFI, estimated here using the population corrected GFI), when considering the overall adequacy of a model. CFI, NNFI, and GFI indices above .95, and RMSEA and sRMR values below .06 and .08, respectively, are indicative of good-fitting models (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

We first tested a baseline SEM model examining the stability of social worldviews, RWA, and SDO. This model was similar to the model presented in Figure 1, except that it did not include any cross-lagged paths between latent constructs (that is, the diagonal paths shown in Figure 1 testing cross-lagged effects were not modeled). Instead, Time 1 latent indicators of each construct solely on their corresponding Time 2 latent indicator. Analyses indicated that

![Figure 1. Structural Equation Model examining stability and longitudinal change in Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA), Social Dominance Orientation (SDO), dangerous worldview, and competitive worldview over a five-month period. (Note: For simplicity, manifest indicators and paths from latent to manifest indicators are not shown; dashed lines indicate nonpredicted paths. * p < .05.)](image-url)
dangerous and competitive social worldviews were both highly stable over the five-month assessment period, $\beta = .93$, $z = 10.58$, $R^2 = .86$, $p < .01$; $\beta = .93$, $z = 10.90$, $R^2 = .86$, $p < .01$, respectively. RWA was also highly stable over this same time period, $\beta = .90$, $z = 11.25$, $R^2 = .82$, $p < .01$. SDO also evidenced a relatively high level of stability, $\beta = .79$, $z = 10.04$, $R^2 = .62$, $p < .01$, although somewhat less than RWA. The paths from each latent variable to its three manifest indicators were also all highly significant, $\beta s > .70$, $z s > 9.64$. This model provided an acceptable fit to the data, $\chi^2 (242, n = 165) = 431.81$; NNFI = .95; CFI = .96; population GFI = .91; sRMR = .07; RMSEA = .07; 90% confidence interval = .06 < RMSEA < .08.

We next examined the hypothesized causal effects of dangerous worldview on levels of RWA and competitive worldview on levels of SDO. We tested the predicted causal paths by including additional (cross-lagged) paths testing whether (a) dangerous worldview assessed at Time 1 predicted RWA measured at Time 2, and (b) competitive worldview assessed at Time 1 predicted SDO measured at Time 2, while controlling for the concurrent associations between these latent variables and the stability of dangerous worldview, competitive worldview, RWA, and SDO over time. These effects are presented in Figure 1, where cross-lagged paths testing longitudinal changes are represented by the diagonal paths. Significant longitudinal associations found using this analytic strategy would provide good evidence for the hypothesized causal effects of dangerous and competitive worldview on RWA and SDO, respectively.

As shown in Figure 1, and consistent with our hypotheses, Time 1 competitive worldview exerted a cross-lagged effect on Time 2 SDO, $\beta = .39$, $z = 3.69$, $p < .01$. As also expected, Time 1 dangerous worldview predicted increases in RWA at Time 2, $\beta = .20$, $z = 3.24$, $p < .01$. Post-hoc model modification indices using the Lagrange multiplier revealed an additional unexpected longitudinal association (represented by the dashed line in Figure 1), in which Time 1 RWA exerted a reciprocal cross-lagged effect on Time 2 dangerous worldview, $\beta = .16$, $z = 2.36$, $p < .05$. This model (which included the nonpredicted path from Time 1 RWA to Time 2 dangerous worldview) provided an acceptable fit to the data, $\chi^2 (239, n = 165) = 410.71$; NNFI = .96; CFI = .96; population GFI = .92; sRMR = .07; RMSEA = .07; 90% confidence interval = .06 < RMSEA < .08. Moreover, the model provided a significantly better fit than the aforementioned baseline model which did not include cross-lagged paths, $\chi^2_{df} (3) = 21.10$, $p < .01$.

Additional post-hoc model modification tests using the Lagrange multiplier failed to identify any further cross-lagged paths between any Time 1 and Time 2 latent variables, $\chi^2_{LMS} < 2.82$. Thus, Time 1 SDO did not predict change in Time 2 competitive worldview. In addition, it is also important to note that competitive worldview did not predict change in RWA, and dangerous worldview did not predict change in SDO. These alternative paths were all nonsignificant when included in the model, $zs < 1.79$, whereas the paths shown in Figure 1 remained significant and were of a comparable magnitude.
Discussion

The longitudinal effects of dangerous and competitive social worldviews on RWA and SDO were examined over a five-month period. Latent indicators of dangerous and competitive social worldviews (modeled using SEM) were highly stable, with both of these social worldviews displaying 86% shared variance over time (equivalent to test-retest correlations of .93). RWA and SDO were slightly less stable over time, with RWA displaying 82% shared variance over time (equivalent to a test-retest correlation of .91), and SDO displaying 62% shared variance (equivalent to a test-retest correlation of .79). Consistent with previous research, these results indicate that SDO and RWA exhibit relatively high levels of stability (e.g., Sidanius, Sinclair, & Pratto, 2006). Furthermore, the stability of SDO and RWA is particularly pronounced when (a) attenuation due to measurement error is controlled using SEM, and (b) SDO and RWA are measured under the same or extremely similar conditions at both times (and in the case of SDO, when the same social categorizations are salient during completion of survey items; cf. Schmitt, Branscombe, & Kappen, 2003).

Although SDO and RWA were relatively stable over time, dangerous worldview predicted hypothesized changes in RWA over time, whereas competitive worldview predicted hypothesized changes in SDO over time. These results indicate that changes in SDO and RWA that did occur over the five-month study period depended, in part, upon changes in the individual’s schematic representations of the competitiveness and dangerousness of the social world in which they exist. These findings provide support for the hypothesized causal pathways between social worldviews and ideological attitudes specified in previous SEM analyses of concurrent data (Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt et al., 2002). Consistent with Duckitt’s (2001, 2005) dual process model, our findings show that the motivational goal for group-based dominance and superiority indexed by SDO increased as a function of the degree to which the social world was perceived to be a competitive place characterized by high levels of resource scarcity. The motivational goal for ingroup conformity and collective security indexed by RWA, in contrast, increased as a function of the degree to which the social world was perceived to be a dangerous and threatening place characterized by high levels of danger and moral deviance. It is also worth noting that competitive worldview did not predict RWA, and dangerous worldview did not predict SDO. These results provide additional evidence indicating that SDO and RWA have different genuses, insofar as the effects of social worldview are concerned.

An unexpected reciprocal effect in which RWA predicted longitudinal changes in dangerous worldview was also identified. Thus, although dangerous worldview predicted hypothesized changes in RWA, it appears that RWA in turn predisposed one to perceive the social world as more dangerous and threatening. Interestingly, similar reciprocal effects were not identified in analyses assessing the relationship between competitive worldview and SDO.
Why might RWA predict reciprocal causal changes in dangerous world beliefs, whereas SDO does not exert a similar effect on competitive world beliefs? It is possible that the motivational goal for ingroup conformity and collective security indexed by RWA may stem more directly from personality and childhood socialization than the motivational goal indexed by SDO. Duckitt et al. (2002; Duckitt, 2001), for example, have consistently reported that social conformity is directly related to RWA independently of dangerous worldview, whereas the association between tough-mindedness and SDO is fully mediated by competitive worldview. Although changes in personality over the five-month study period were probably relatively limited, such changes might have caused direct changes in RWA, which may then have impacted dangerous worldview. Such reciprocal effects might have been caused by a need to justify increasingly authoritarian attitudes by viewing the social world as more dangerous and threatening and so requiring tough coercive social control and conformity. In contrast, prior research has shown that SDO is predicted only by competitive world beliefs, with the effects of personality mediated fully through competitive worldview. This suggests that independent effects of personality on SDO over time that then affect competitive social worldview are less likely.

Moreover, although increasing one’s belief in a competitive world seems to inevitably suggest a resulting increase in the belief that inequality and the domination of the strong over the weak are justified, the opposite may not necessarily hold. Increasing one’s belief in justified social inequality need not necessarily result in an increased belief in a competitively social Darwinist world, because increased competition might threaten the dominance of the powerful. Instead, increased beliefs in inequality may also produce justifying beliefs in terms of the powerful being paternalistically benevolent towards those less powerful. Thus, causal effects from competitive worldview to SDO might be unidirectional whereas those between dangerous worldview and RWA might be bidirectional. Future research could elaborate upon these interesting possibilities.

These and other related findings (e.g., Guimond et al., 2003; Huang & Liu, 2005) demonstrate that SDO and RWA are not invariant across situations in the manner that traditional personality theories have tended to conceptualize personality traits. Rather, as Duckitt (2001) has argued, SDO and RWA appear to function as expressions of the respective global motivational goals for intergroup dominance and superiority, and social control and collective security, that are heightened (and we suspect made more chronically accessible to the individual) by changes in the schematic perceptions of the social world (which result in turn from sociostructural characteristics of the environment) and relatively stable tendencies toward social conformity (in the case of RWA) and tough-mindedness (in the case of SDO).

Thus, consistent with Mischel and Shoda’s (1995, 1999) recent work outlining a cognitive-affective system theory of personality, the dual process motivational model predicts that there should be systematic variability in SDO and RWA.
across situations. Such systematic variability should in turn predict negative inter-group attitudes and prejudice, rather than the other way around. This appears to be the case, as we have recently demonstrated in research predicting longitudinal change in men’s sexist attitudes: RWA predicted longitudinal changes in benevolent sexism to women, whereas SDO predicted longitudinal changes in hostile sexism toward women (Sibley, Wilson, & Duckitt, 2007). In sum, accumulated research findings therefore suggest that SDO and RWA are contextually activated by schematic perceptions of the social world and that SDO and RWA in turn exert a causal influence on prejudice. Thus, SDO and RWA may be most appropriately operationalized as mediators that explain two fundamental individual difference-based mechanisms through which sociostructural characteristics of the environment (and resulting schematic representations of the environment) and tendencies toward social conformity and tough-mindedness affect prejudice (Duckitt, 2001; Guimond et al., 2003).

Caveats and Conclusions

Terrorist attacks such as the September 11, 2001, attacks in the United States and the recent bombings of London’s public transport system (July 7, 2005) constitute horrific events that resulted in heightened levels of both personal and national threat (Huddy, Feldman, Capelos, & Provost, 2002). In both cases, these attacks were fortunately one-off events. Nevertheless it is likely that they may have resulted in chronic changes to schematic representations of the social world as a dangerous and threatening place for many people. Interestingly, although the bombing of London’s public transport system occurred in the interim five-month testing period, overall mean levels of dangerous and competitive worldview did not increase over time in the current sample of New Zealand students.

Why might this be the case, and how might such events affect social worldviews and hence RWA and SDO in general? In the current context, social comparison processes may have led New Zealanders to perceive their immediate social world (assuming that sociostructural characteristics of New Zealand society were the most cognitively accessible referent for participants’ social world beliefs) as more safe relative to foreign nations such as the United States and United Kingdom. More generally, the degree to which schematic perceptions of the social world alter as a result of single, although intensely emotional and horrific, events such as terrorist attacks is also likely to be moderated by attributional processes. People who make stable and external attributions about the cause of events such as terrorist attacks and other disasters (and hence tend to attribute subsequent similar events as more likely to be beyond the control of the person or their nation) should be more likely to experience chronic changes in social worldview. In addition, it is likely that the tendency to make such attributions will be heavily influenced by the ways in which such events tend to be framed within national news media (see Glassner, 1999). Finally, it seems likely that a personality disposition high in social conformity will
likely heighten (i.e., moderate) the effect that sociostructural changes resulting from such attacks have on schematic representations of the world as a dangerous place. Future research is needed to explore these possibilities.

It is also worth noting that the current research examined stability and change in an undergraduate sample, the majority of whom were roughly 20 years old. This is likely to be a period of change as people form political identities (indeed, the majority of participants would have been eligible to vote in their first national election during the year these data were collected). As such, it seems likely that SDO and RWA may be more amenable to change (and hence evidence somewhat lower levels of stability) in younger populations because political beliefs may be less firmly anchored by political socialization.

To conclude, the results reported here complement findings from previous correlational, historiometric, and the limited amount of experimental research examining the social worldview antecedents of RWA and SDO. Consistent with the theoretical framework described by Duckitt (2001, 2005), experimental research indicates that social situations characterized by high levels of danger and threat may increase one's dangerous worldview and subsequent levels of RWA (Duckitt & Fisher, 2003). Our research elaborates upon such findings and indicates (a) that individual differences in social worldview exert a causal influence on SDO and RWA over time, and (b) that these two ideological attitudes originate from different social worldviews: RWA from dangerous worldview, and SDO from competitive worldview. We look forward to future research employing a variety of different designs in order to test and elaborate upon the various causal pathways and mechanisms between sociostructural characteristics of the situation, personality traits, social worldviews, ideological attitudes, and prejudice theorized by Duckitt (2001), and hope that the current study may contribute to this growing body of literature.

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REFERENCES


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