

Punishment attitudes: their social and psychological bases

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Introduction

Peoples' use of punishment, primarily in child rearing, has been an important issue of psychological investigation, and the damaging effects of harsh physical punishment on children has been powerfully documented in the research literature (Gershoff, 2002). In contrast to the huge research literature on the effects of parental physical punishment, there has been very little systematic research on peoples' attitudes and beliefs about the use of punishment, either in child rearing or in general in society. Most of the research done consists of scattered surveys that have looked at attitudes and belief about different kinds of punishment (e.g. most commonly capital punishment, longer versus shorter prison sentences, corporal punishment and particular kinds of parental punishments) (e.g. Wiener & Haney, 2004), in relation to various possible correlates of these attitudes (e.g. mostly socio-demographic, but sometimes other attitudes, and behaviour). One issue of interest has been that of whether people with attitudes favouring stricter, more frequent and more severe punishments do express this in behaviour, most notably their child-rearing behaviour. In the few studies on this, the correlation has tended to be positive and significant. For example, Vittrup, Holden and Buck (2006) found correlations ranging from 0.21 to 0.50 between mothers' attitudes to spanking and actual spanking of their children.

Peoples' punishment attitudes, however, have broader implications for society. More favourable attitudes to punishment will be expressed in support for social policies and practices – most prominently for greater punitiveness in the criminal justice system in the form of longer prison sentences, support for capital

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punishment, and a greater readiness to criminalize socially and morally disapproved and counter-normative behaviours. In addition, socially shared attitudes favouring harsher punishments create a culture of punitiveness and so support and legitimize those who do use punishment more severely, and strengthen and legitimize opposition to attempts to legislate against the use of physical punishments by parents on children. This makes it important to understand the social and psychological factors underlying and maintaining these attitudes, and to clarify their implications for changing these attitudes.

The most important theoretical perspective in psychology for understanding punishment attitudes derives from the theory of the authoritarian personality, as it was originally conceptualized, or authoritarian attitudes and values, as they are more commonly conceptualized today. This theory provides a framework for understanding the psychological and social factors that lead individuals to adopt social attitudes favourable to punishment and, by extension, how these social attitudes can become ideologically dominant in particular societies to create cultures of punitiveness.

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► The theory of the authoritarian personality

This theory emerged from a major program of empirical research by Adorno *et al.* (1950) in the 1940s. Their research originally set out to investigate the psychological bases of anti-Semitism, but they soon discovered that individuals did not hold anti-Semitic attitudes in isolation. Instead anti-Semitic attitudes were associated with a tendency for individuals to be generally prejudiced against most out-groups and minorities. This led on to the discovery that most, perhaps even all, social attitudes held by individuals seemed to be organized and structured along a single broadly ideological or socio-political dimension. At one extreme of this dimension were people who tended to be generally prejudiced, whose social attitudes were nationalistic, conservative, traditional and anti-egalitarian and who favoured strict, punitive, social control, authority, leadership and child-rearing practices. At the other extreme were people who held generally tolerant, non-prejudiced attitudes towards out-groups and minorities, who were also socially liberal, egalitarian, non-traditional, open to change, tolerant of diversity and deviance with less strict, less punitive and more liberal, relaxed views on punishment and child-rearing practices. Adorno *et al.* (1950) viewed the attitudes at the former pro-authority extreme as implicitly fascist and therefore authoritarian, and those at the latter, non-authoritarian extreme, as implicitly democratic. Their theory then suggested that these authoritarian attitudes arose out of basic needs within the personality.

These basic needs were viewed as rooted in underlying psychodynamic conflicts originating from harsh, punitive parental socialization in early childhood. This was presumed to create underlying feelings of resentment and anger towards parental authority, later generalized to all authority, which were repressed and replaced by deference to and idealization of authority, and so expressed in

authoritarian attitudes. At the same time, the underlying repressed anger and aggression was displaced in the form of hostility towards deviant persons, out-groups and minorities, hence the generalized prejudice of such personalities.

In order to measure this dimension of authoritarian attitudes, Adorno *et al.* (1950) developed their F scale. The items of the F scale covered a broad range of relatively indirect expressions of authoritarian attitudes and beliefs classified into nine content categories, which are shown in Table 5.1 with their definition of each category and an illustrative item for each. Several of these categories relate to punishment attitudes and beliefs by, for example, favouring strictness, obedience, adherence to established norms and rules (authoritarian submission, conventionalism), and aggressive harshness (destructiveness and cynicism, anti-intracception, power and toughness), while one category (authoritarian submission) directly subsumes favourable attitudes to strict, harsh, tough punishment

Table 5.1 Definitions (Italics) and Illustrative Items (Quotation Marks) for Adorno *et al.*'s Nine "Traits" of the Authoritarian Personality Syndrome

1. CONVENTIONALISM: *rigid adherence to conventional middle-class values.*
"A person who has bad manners, habits, and breeding can hardly expect to get along with decent people."
2. AUTHORITARIAN SUBMISSION: *a submissive, uncritical attitude towards idealized moral authorities of the in-group.*
"Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn."
3. AUTHORITARIAN AGGRESSION: *a tendency to be on the lookout for, and to condemn, reject and punish people who violate conventional values.*
"Homosexuals are hardly better than criminals, and ought to be severely punished."
4. ANTI-INTRACCEPTION: *opposition to the subjective, imaginative, tender-minded.*
"Nowadays more and more people are prying into matters that should remain personal and private."
5. SUPERSTITION AND STEREOTYPY: *the belief in mystical determinants of the individual's fate; the disposition to think in rigid categories.*
"Some day it will probably be shown that astrology can explain a lot of things."
6. POWER AND TOUGHNESS: *a preoccupation with the dominance-submission, strong-weak, leader-follower dimension; identification with power figures; exaggerated assertion of strength and toughness.*
"People can be divided into two distinct classes, the weak and the strong."
7. DESTRUCTIVENESS AND CYNICISM: *generalized hostility, vilification of the human.*
"Human nature being what it is, there will always be war and conflict."
8. PROJECTIVITY: *the disposition to believe that wild and dangerous things go on in the world, the projection outwards of unconscious emotional impulses.*
"Most people don't realize how much our lives are controlled by plots hatched in secret places."
9. SEX: *exaggerated concern with sexual "goings-on."*
"The wild sex life of the old Greeks and Romans was tame compared to some of the 'goings-on' in this country, even in places where people might least expect it."

and social control. For example, items directly expressing these attitudes included:

- “Sex crimes, such as rape and attacks on children, deserve more than mere punishment: such criminals ought to be publicly whipped or worse”;
- “An insult to our honour should always be punished”;
- “Most of our social problems would be solved if we could somehow get rid of the immoral, crooked, and feebleminded people”

While these content categories were defined in largely attitudinal terms, as is clear from Table 5.1, they came to be seen by the researchers as a set of traits which, they assumed, covaried to form the underlying authoritarian personality syndrome which caused and were expressed in the pattern of covarying attitudes.

► Critique of the original theory of the authoritarianism personality

Initially Adorno *et al.*'s (1950) theory and the F scale elicited a great deal of interest and enthusiasm. In the first decade after the publication of their book, the F scale had already been used in hundreds of studies. However, their theory, research and the F scale itself soon generated a great deal of criticism and controversy (see e.g. Christie & Jahoda, 1954). First, subsequent research did not support the psychodynamic and childhood socialization processes which they had suggested might underlie an authoritarian personality. Second, much of their research validating their F scale, which compared high and low prejudice participants, seemed seriously compromised because of their failure to use blind ratings and to control for socio-demographic and other group differences. And third, the F scale became a particular source of controversy because all its items were formulated so that agreement always indicated high authoritarianism. This meant that scores could be influenced by acquiescence (the tendency to agree irrespective of item content), which could have also spuriously inflated the internal consistency reliability of the F scale and the degree to which it seemed to be measuring a single unitary dimension.

One way in which researchers attempted to redress this psychometric problem of the F scale was in trying to develop a balanced F scale with equal numbers of pro and con trait items to control acquiescence. None of these attempts succeeded, however, with balanced F scales typically having very low levels of internal consistency. At the time, it was thought that this might be because the nature of the original F scale items made it difficult to psychologically reverse their meaning. The alternative possibility, that the F scale might simply be covering a range of item content that was not unidimensional, was not seriously investigated until much later when Altemeyer (1981) showed this was indeed the case.

► Alternatives to the original theory of the authoritarian personality

These criticisms of the theory of the authoritarian personality and the F scale also lead to attempts to develop alternative conceptualizations and even measures. The three most prominent alternative approaches were those of Allport (1954), Rokeach (1954) and Wilson (1973). All three refined and simplified the conceptualization of the personality thought to underlie authoritarian attitudes and discarded Adorno *et al.*'s complex psychodynamic explanation. Two of these approaches also developed new measures of the attitudinal dimension that was thought to be an expression of this personality.

Allport (1954) described an authoritarian personality that would be generally prejudiced, with a list of characteristics very similar to the nine "traits" listed by Adorno *et al.* (1950). However, Allport suggested that the core of this personality did not reside in the psychodynamic conflicts described by Adorno *et al.*, but was characterized by insecurity and fearfulness, or "ego weakness." As a result of this basic insecurity, authoritarian personalities would need structure, order and control in their social environments, and react with punitive hostility to deviance, unconventionality, novelty and change. However, Allport did not develop a measure of his concept of the authoritarian personality so that his ideas never acquired the prominence of those of Adorno *et al.* or of later theorists.

Rokeach (1954) saw the authoritarian personality as characterized by a relatively closed, narrow, limited cognitive style, which would predispose people to adopt authoritarian ideologies in general and react with punitive hostility to novelty or change, and dislike people with different beliefs. He developed a dogmatism or D scale to measure this construct, but its items were very similar to those of Adorno *et al.*'s F scale and it correlated very highly with the F scale. In addition, the D scale shared most of the psychometric weaknesses of the F scale, such as having items that were not balanced to control acquiescence. As result, Rokeach's approach and his D scale failed to provide an effective alternative to Adorno *et al.*'s original approach and F scale.

The third alternative conceptualization of authoritarianism was Wilson's (1973) conservatism. Wilson's concept of the underlying authoritarian or conservative personality was very similar to that of Allport (1954), being characterized by fearfulness, insecurity and a "generalized susceptibility to experiencing threat or anxiety in the face of uncertainty" (p. 259). The conservatism or C scale, which Wilson developed, consisted of social attitude items covering essentially the same range of content as those of the original F scale. The C scale therefore correlated very strongly with the F scale, indicating that the two scales were assessing the same attitudinal dimension.

In one respect, the C scale was a major improvement on the F and D scales by using items for which high conservatism required both agreement and disagreement, and so controlling acquiescent responding (e.g. Altemeyer, 1981). Unfortunately, this resulted in the C scale having extremely low levels of internal consistency, like the balanced F scales that had been developed. The mean inter-item correlation of the C scale was typically around 0.05 (Altemeyer, 1981),

indicating that it was simply not measuring a unidimensional construct. This was confirmed by factor analytic studies which showed that the C scale was not measuring just one dimension but several different ones which did not emerge consistently enough across studies to enable the extraction of a unidimensional core of items.

The failure of the original theory of the authoritarian personality and of the alternatives to it that followed resulted in a loss of interest in the entire approach in the late 1960s. A major problem of all these early approaches was that the initial premise that all social attitudes were organized along a single dimension had not been supported. In the 1980s and 1990s, however, new research, initially by Bob Altemeyer (1981) and later by Jim Sidanius and Felicia Pratto (1999), produced important new findings that revived interest in the issue of why and how social attitudes were ideologically organized.

3 ► Altemeyer's right-wing authoritarianism (RWA)

Altemeyer (1981) set out to identify a core of items from the original F scale and the alternatives to it that might covary sufficiently to comprise a single attitudinal dimension. He used a large pool of items comprising those used to develop the F scale, items from other previous authoritarianism scales and items he had himself specially written. This item pool was then subjected to repeated item analyses that did identify a core of items that intercorrelated highly enough to form a unidimensional scale that was fully balanced against acquiescence. This produced the initial version of his RWA scale, which showed high levels of internal consistency reliability, and which factor analysis suggested did measure just a single attitudinal dimension (Altemeyer, 1981, 1988).

Altemeyer's (1981) inspection of the content of the final RWA scale suggested that they expressed only three of Adorno *et al.*'s (1950) original nine content categories, that is, authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression and conventionalism. The core themes of these items were therefore of obedience and respect for leaders and authorities ("authoritarian submission"), for adherence to social rules, norms and laws ("conventionalism"), and for strict, harsh punishment for violation or infringements of these rules, norms and laws ("authoritarian aggression").

The development of the RWA scale stimulated a great deal of new research and interest in the construct. This research by Altemeyer (1981, 1998) and others (cf. Duckitt, 1992) showed that the RWA scale was a unidimensional and reliable psychometric measure that powerfully predicted a wide range of political, social, ideological and inter-group phenomena, including generalized prejudice towards out-groups and minorities and chauvinistic ethnocentrism. Research also showed that RWA was consistently and often powerfully associated with attitudes to and the use of punishment over a variety of contexts and situations. These included favouring stricter rules, harsher punishments and physical punishment by

parents (Altemeyer, 1996), by social authorities (Wylie & Forest, 1992) and in learning situations (Altemeyer, 1981, 1988). For example, RWA scores correlated strongly with length of sentences recommended for lawbreakers and with selecting more severe shock levels to punish a learner for mistakes on a task (Altemeyer, 1981, 1988; Wylie & Forest, 1992).

► Social dominance orientation (SDO): a second authoritarianism dimension

During the 1990s, an important new individual difference construct and measure, SDO, was proposed (Pratto *et al.*, 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). The SDO scale taps a “general attitudinal orientation toward inter-group relations, reflecting whether one generally prefers such relations to be equal, versus hierarchical” (Pratto *et al.*, 1994, p.742). Research has shown that the SDO scale powerfully predicts a range of “authoritarian” socio-political and inter-group phenomena similar to those predicted by the RWA scale, such as generalized prejudice, intolerance, right-wing political party preference, nationalism, patriotism, militarism, support for capital punishment and generally punitive attitudes (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). However, a great deal of evidence indicates that the SDO and RWA scales assess different and relatively independent dimensions (Altemeyer, 1998; Duckitt, 2001).

First, the item content of the two scales is clearly different. RWA items express beliefs in coercive social control, in obedience and respect for existing authorities, and in conforming to traditional moral and religious norms and values. SDO items, on the other hand, pertain to beliefs in social and economic inequality as opposed to equality, and the right of powerful groups to dominate weaker ones.

Second, research has indicated that the RWA and SDO scales correlate quite differently with important external variables (Altemeyer, 1998; Duckitt, 2001; McFarland, 2006; Van Hiel & Mervielde, 2002). RWA is powerfully associated with religiosity and valuing order, structure, conformity and tradition, while SDO is not. SDO, on the other hand, is strongly associated with valuing power, achievement and hedonism and being male, while RWA is not. RWA is influenced by social threat and correlated with a view of the social world as dangerous and threatening, while SDO is not. SDO is powerfully correlated with a social Darwinist view of the world as a ruthlessly competitive jungle in which the strong win and the weak lose, while RWA is not.

And third, the correlations between the RWA and SDO scales suggest that they are substantially independent dimensions. While some studies, notably in Western European countries, have reported strong positive correlations (e.g. Duriez & Van Hiel, 2002; Van Hiel & Mervielde, 2002), most research, and particularly that in North America, has found weak or non-significant correlations (see the reviews and meta-analyses by Duckitt, 2001, and Roccato & Ricolfi, 2005). Some studies, notably in East European countries, have even found

significant negative correlations between RWA and SDO (e.g. Krauss, 2002; Van Hiel, Duriez & Kossowska, 2006).

These findings indicate that although SDO and RWA tend to predict very similar social attitudes, values and responses, they seem to be quite independent dimensions or syndromes. Altemeyer (1998) has noted that the RWA and SDO scales seem to relate to different sets of the original nine “trait” clusters listed by Adorno *et al.* (1950). He therefore concluded that these scales measure two different kinds of authoritarianism dimensions (the “submissive” and the “dominant”).

One implication of there being two “authoritarian” dimensions is that it helps to explain the chequered history of the authoritarian personality and the difficulties of the early theorists. It seems that Adorno *et al.*'s (1950) original conceptualization of the authoritarian personality and their F scale had combined both these dimensions and syndromes, resulting in the F scale's lack of unidimensionality. Allport (1954), Rokeach (1960) and Wilson (1973) had attempted to simplify the conceptualization of the kind of personality that was believed to underlie these social attitudes by focusing on a “submissive” authoritarian personality, but they failed to narrow their measures of the attitudinal syndrome correspondingly. The success of Altemeyer's (1981) RWA scale thus seems largely due to its having stripped off those items tapping the factorially different “authoritarian dominance” syndrome in his item development studies.

► What are RWA and SDO?

Over the past half century, research has therefore shown that two distinct social attitude dimensions both predict right versus left political orientation, ethnic and political intolerance versus tolerance, nationalism versus internationalism, militarism versus pacifism and favouring tough, strict, harsh punishment and control versus greater tolerance, leniency, openness and permissiveness in society and personal life. What do these social attitudes express and what causes them?

Two interpretations have been important in the research literature. First, the traditional interpretation that was widely held until recently was that these social attitudes were direct expressions of personality. This personality assumption derived from Adorno *et al.* (1950) originally and was shared by those theorists who followed them, notably Allport (1954), Rokeach (1954) and Wilson (1973). Most recently, it was also adopted by Altemeyer (1981, 1988, 1996), who argued that both RWA and SDO were direct expressions of personality, with the former an expression of a submissive authoritarian personality, and the latter the expression of a dominant authoritarian personality.

In the 1990s, the view of authoritarianism as a personality dimension began to be questioned for a number of reasons. First, it was noted that the items of authoritarianism measures, be they the F, D, C, RWA or SDO scales, were all statements of beliefs and attitudes of a broadly ideological nature and did not describe behavioural dispositions or traits as the items of personality inventories

typically do (Duckitt, 2001; Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Goertzel, 1987; Rosier & Willig, 2002). Indeed, Pratto *et al.* (1994) have generally described their SDO scale as a measure of enduring beliefs rather than of personality. The view that these social attitude and belief items were measuring something more than social attitudes or values, that is, personality, has been an assumption that has never been empirically verified.

Research relating RWA to independently developed and validated personality measures, such as the Big Five or facets of them, has also typically found no more than moderate associations (Sibley & Duckitt, in press). RWA and SDO, and similar measures, have also been shown to be highly reactive to priming or situational manipulations or socio-political changes (Duckitt & Fisher, 2003; Huang & Liu, 2005; Sales, 1973; Sales & Friend, 1973; Schmitt, Branscombe & Kappen, 2003). In addition, Altemeyer's (1996) own research has shown powerful effects on the RWA of social experiences during late adolescence and adulthood, such as exposure to liberal higher education, becoming a parent and exposure to social threat. These environmental influences seem more compatible with RWA as a social attitude or value dimension than personality.

The view of the RWA and SDO scales as measuring social or ideological attitudes has also been supported by a review of research showing that investigations of the structure of socio-political attitudes and socio-cultural values have typically revealed two roughly orthogonal dimensions, with one corresponding closely to RWA and the other to SDO (Duckitt, 2001; see table 3). Investigators have usually labelled the RWA-like dimension as social conservatism, traditionalism or collectivism versus personal freedom, openness or individualism, and the SDO-like dimension as economic conservatism, belief in inequality or power distance versus social welfare, egalitarianism or humanitarianism. Moreover, the social conservatism dimension of social attitudes, when reliably measured, has correlated powerfully with the RWA scale and has scaled with it as a single general factor or dimension (Forsyth, 1980; Raden, 1999; Saucier, 2000). For example, Saucier (2000), in a large-scale study of social attitudes, obtained a correlation of 0.77 between the RWA scale and attitudinal measures of social conservatism.

Central to these two social attitude dimensions seem to be two basic sets of higher-order social and cultural values. RWA expresses conservatism or collective security values (valuing tradition, conformity, cohesion, security, social harmony) versus liberalism or openness values (valuing openness to change, novelty, diversity, individual freedom and autonomy). SDO expresses hierarchy or enhancement values (valuing power, dominance, hierarchy and inequality) versus egalitarianism or universalism values (valuing equality, altruistic social concern, helping others). These two sets of opposing values have been most clearly measured by Schwartz's (1992) widely used value inventories as openness to change versus conservation values, and self-enhancement versus self-transcendence values, which have correlated very powerfully with RWA and SDO, respectively (see also, Stangor & Leary, 2006). They were also found in the classic research by Hofstede (1980) on cultural values with RWA represented

by his uncertainty avoidance and collectivism dimensions and SDO by his power distance and masculinity dimensions.

► What are the psychological bases of RWA and SDO?

Over the past few decades, a good deal of research has investigated what psychological factors might dispose people to adopt the social values and attitudes expressed in RWA and SDO. These findings have been integrated into a dual motivational model of the psychological bases of these two ideological attitude dimensions.

This model suggests that the two sets of opposing values or motivational goals that are expressed by the ideological attitude dimensions of RWA and SDO are made chronically salient for individuals by their personalities and social worldview beliefs (Duckitt, 2001). Thus, persons high in RWA value the motivational goals of establishing or maintaining social cohesion, order, stability and security, which is made salient by having been socialized to believe that the social world is a dangerous and threatening place. The predisposing personality trait is that of social conformity (or, in Big Five terms, low openness and high conscientiousness), which leads individuals to identify with the existing social order, be more sensitive to threats to it, and so contributes to a perception that the social world is dangerous and threatening. High social conformity also has a direct impact on RWA attitudes by making the motivational goal of social control, security and stability salient to the individual.

In the case of SDO, the model proposes that the predisposing personality trait dimension is toughmindedness versus tendermindedness (or, in terms of the Big Five, low versus high agreeableness). Tough-minded personalities tend to adopt a view that the social world is a ruthlessly competitive jungle in which the strong win and the weak lose, which activates the motivational goals of group power, dominance and superiority over others, which are then expressed in the ideological attitudes of high SDO.

These two worldview beliefs, belief that the social world is dangerous and threatening, or that it is a competitive jungle, should generally be relatively stable, reflecting the influence of individuals' socialization and personalities. However, they would also be influenced by social reality. Thus, when individuals' social realities are really dangerous and threatening, this should result in high-RWA attitudes being adopted. When individuals' social realities are characterized by inequality and competition over power and status, this should cause them to adopt high-SDO attitudes. In both cases, the effect ought to be mediated through change in individuals' corresponding world views. This causal model of personality, social situation, world view, ideological attitudes and prejudice is summarized in Figure 5.1.

Initial support was obtained for this model by four studies using structural equation modelling with latent variables, which showed excellent overall fit for the causal relationships proposed among the two personality, two worldview and

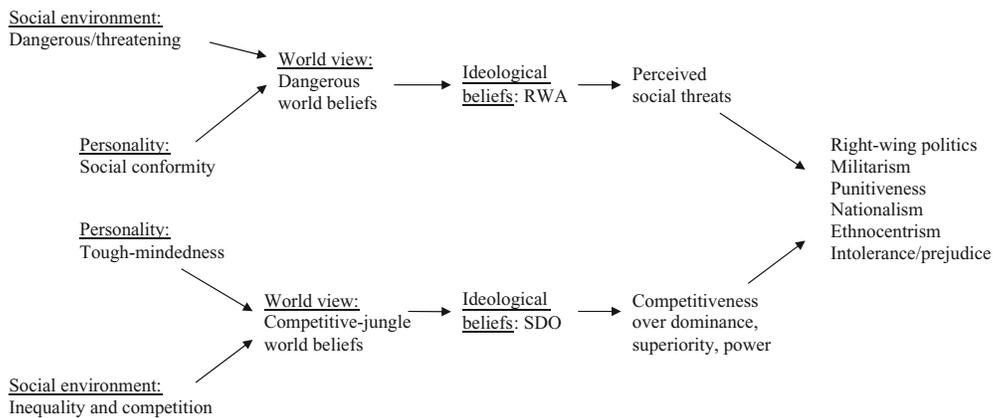


Figure 5.1 A causal model of the impact of social environment, personality and social worldview beliefs on the two ideological attitude-value dimensions of right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) and social dominance orientation (SDO) and their impact on socio-political and other outcomes, such as punitiveness and intolerance as mediated through perceived social threat or competitiveness over dominance and power.

two ideological attitude dimensions with each other and with inter-group attitudes for large samples in New Zealand (NZ), South Africa and the United States (Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt *et al.*, 2002). Subsequent to these initial findings, a good deal of research using experimental and longitudinal as well as correlational data that supports the model has been reported (see Duckitt & Sibley, in press, for a recent review).

► Why do RWA and SDO influence punishment attitudes?

The dual motivational model suggests that RWA and SDO express different values or motivational goals, but that these values often have the same or similar outcomes (i.e. right-wing politics, nationalism, punitiveness, ethnocentrism, prejudice), though for different reasons. For example, both RWA and SDO are powerful predictors of generalized prejudice against out-groups and minorities, but the outgroup dislike stems from different values of motivational goals.

High RWA, for example, expresses the value or motivational goal of collective security (valuing social order, stability and cohesion), so persons high in RWA will tend to dislike social groups that seem to threaten social order, cohesion or security. This would include deviant and culturally different groups, such as ethnic minorities, who would be perceived as socially threatening and disliked for that reason. Persons high in SDO value power, dominance and superiority, and so would tend to dislike social groups who are low in status and power (disliking them would justify their subordinate status, and so would legitimize power and superiority over them) and also groups who might be competing with the majority group over relative power and status. These low-status or competing



groups would often be the same kind of groups as those disliked by persons high in RWA, such as ethnic or social minority groups, but would be disliked because they would arouse tough-minded competitive motives to maintain or establish group dominance and superiority.

Several experimental studies have supported this hypothesis that the effects of RWA and SDO on prejudice or outgroup negativity might be differentially caused. First, Dru (2007) investigated the effects of priming an ingroup norm preservation orientation and a competitiveness orientation on French students' attitudes to various immigrant groups (Arabs, Black people, Asians). He found that when an ingroup norm preservation orientation was salient, RWA was a significant predictor of anti-immigrant attitudes, while SDO was not. On the other hand, when group competitiveness was made salient, SDO significantly predicted anti-immigrant attitudes, while RWA did not.

Second, Cohrs and Asbrock (2006) investigated the effect of depicting an immigrant group (Turks) as either threatening or competitive on German students' attitudes to that group. There was a significant interaction between perceived threat and RWA, and not SDO, such that persons high in RWA became more negative to Turks when they were depicted as threatening. Depicting Turks as competitive did not, however, produce the expected interaction with SDO, possibly because this manipulation may have made personal competitiveness salient (which high SDOs should admire) rather than inter-group competitiveness.

Third, research by Duckitt, Nasoordeen and Sibley (2008) investigated NZ students' attitudes to a bogus new immigrant group ("Sandrians"). Sandrians were depicted as either culturally different and threatening NZ values (threat condition), likely to compete for jobs and resources with New Zealanders (competitive condition), low in status and power (disadvantaged condition) or as similar in status and culture to New Zealanders (control condition). As expected, neither RWA or SDO predicted negativity to Sandrians in the control condition; only SDO predicted negativity in the disadvantaged condition; both RWA and SDO predicted negativity in the competitive condition (this was expected, because the competitive manipulation should elicit both perceived threat and competitiveness over relative dominance), and RWA predicted negativity to Sandrians in the threat condition.

Essentially, the same reasoning would apply to why and how RWA and SDO influence punishment attitudes. Persons high in both RWA and SDO would favour greater use of punishment and the use of more severe, harsh, brutal punishment, but would tend to do so for different reasons, stemming directly from their different values and motivational goals. Persons high in RWA value collective security (order, stability, harmony, cohesion, control) and would therefore favour punishment to maintain collective security, and punish and control behaviours that violate and threaten order and security in society.

Persons high in SDO value power, dominance, hierarchy and inequality. They would therefore favour the use of punishment to establish and maintain power

and dominance hierarchies in society or in personal life. Because of their tough-minded personalities and belief that the social world is a competitive jungle, high-SDO persons would also tend to be hard, unfeeling and unempathic, and would favour harsh punishments out of a lack of compassion for others and competitiveness towards them.

Although little research has yet directly investigated if RWA and SDO predict punishment attitudes for different reasons, some interesting findings on closely related attitudes do seem to support this. A study by McFarland (2005) found that both RWA and SDO were significantly related to American students' support for the war on Iraq and the ensuing destruction and hardship for the people of that country. A structural equation model analysis indicated that these effects were differentially mediated. The effect of RWA was fully mediated by perceived threat from Iraq. On the other hand, the effect of SDO was fully mediated by a lack of concern for the human costs of war, a finding which fits with the tough-minded, hard, competitive motivational orientation expected to be characteristic of SDO. Thus, the aggressive, punitive, pro-war attitudes expressed in support for the war in Iraq were predicted by both RWA and SDO, but for seemingly quite different reasons.

This finding, and the dual motivational approach to explaining the effects of RWA and SDO on punishment attitudes, also has implications for changing peoples' punishment attitudes. They suggest quite different kinds of interventions would be best suited for changing punishment attitudes, such as attitudes about physical punishment of children, in people with different values, as expressed in RWA and SDO. For example, persons high in RWA should be most likely to reduce the punitiveness of their attitudes as a result of interventions that decreased their tendency to perceive the social world as dangerous, uncertain and threatening (threat reduction). Such interventions should be relatively ineffective with persons high in SDO who would not be particularly motivated by threat or security values. For people high in SDO, interventions that reduced perceptions of the social environment as inevitably competitive and hierarchical, or that increased empathy and identification with persons likely to be subject to punishment, should be most effective.

► Cultural or societal bases of punishment attitudes

The dual motivational model focuses on RWA and SDO as value-based social attitude dimensions characterizing individuals. It therefore explains individual differences in punitive attitudes. However, the approach can also be extended to explain cultural and societal differences in punitive attitudes, or why some cultures and societies may be generally more punitive than others. It does so by suggesting that just as the punitive attitudes held by individuals are determined by two different kinds of values or motivational goals, there should also be two correspondingly different cultural and societal patterns that support generally punitive attitudes (Duckitt, 2004). One cultural pattern, termed threat-

authoritarian, will be characterized by a socially normative view of the world as a dangerous and threatening place and by RWA as the culturally dominant ideology and values. The second cultural pattern, termed competitive-dominance, would be characterized by a socially normative view of the world as inherently unequal and hierarchical with high levels of competitiveness over dominance and power and by SDO as a culturally dominant ideology and values.

These two cultural patterns have been well documented by ethnographic studies. For example, competitive-dominance cultures with high levels of punitiveness and aggression have been documented in the American South (Nisbett & Cohen, 1996), in fascist movements (Billig, 1978), in the post-Vietnam paramilitary subcultures of America (Gibson, 1994) and in violent underclass and gang subcultures (Toch, 1992). These subcultures are typically characterized by a view of the social world as a competitive jungle in which power, toughness, machismo, defence of one's honour and dominance become important values and goals.

For example, in their book *Culture of Honor: The Psychology of Violence in the South*, Nisbett and Cohen (1996) have shown how the culture of the South is characterized by an overriding importance to men of strength, power and toughness, and always being ready to respond to any challenge to one's honour to maintain respect from others. They argue that this culture emerged from an economy of cattle herding and relative lawlessness. In this competitive-jungle situation self-preservation and the preservation of ones' property required strength, toughness and a readiness to retaliate violently if challenged. Nisbett and Cohen (1996) have argued that this culture helps to explain why levels of punitiveness and interpersonal violence are so much higher in the American South than in the North.

Threat-authoritarian cultures seem quite different from competitive-dominance cultures. Threat-authoritarian societies tend to be characterized by a widespread acceptance of a view of the social world as threatening and dangerous (as opposed to safe and secure) with the dominant ideological beliefs being authoritarian-conservative (as opposed to liberalism and personal autonomy). These societies value collective security (social order, control, security and stability) and use punishment as a major social mechanism to maintain collective security. For example, Michael Bond (1988) investigated cultural values across 22 cultures and found that these cultures could be clearly differentiated along a cultural value dimension ranging from one pole characterized by generalized tolerance, openness and non-punitiveness to an opposing pole characterized by cultural inwardness, traditionalism, authoritarianism, intolerance of outsiders and punitiveness.

Ethnographic descriptions of the White Afrikaner culture that gave rise to apartheid in South Africa have noted that authoritarianism, conservatism and punitiveness were prominent features of this culture. An empirical comparison of White Afrikaners in South Africa with a comparable sample of European-origin New Zealanders showed that the White Afrikaners were very much higher in dangerous-world beliefs and in RWA, and that it was their markedly elevated

levels of these belief and social attitudes that seemed to be responsible for their higher ethnocentrism and punitiveness (Duckitt, 2004).

► Conclusions

7 Although many surveys have investigated the degree to which people endorse the use of more severe, harsher punishments in criminal justice and child rearing, there has been less direct interest and research on the way in which peoples' attitudes and beliefs about the use of punishment are psychologically structured and determined. However, these are important questions since punishment attitudes will influence peoples' use of punishment, notably in child rearing, and their support for punitive criminal justice systems in society. They will also contribute to cultures of violence and punitiveness in societies that may well influence their readiness to make war or to adopt punitively aggressive foreign policies.

Research on how social attitudes are structured and determined, however, has important implications for understanding punishment attitudes. This research indicates that punishment attitudes tend not to be held in isolation, but form part of a broader ideological patterning of social attitudes. Originally, this was thought to comprise a single dimension ranging from pro-authority, conservative, punitive attitudes at one extreme to liberal, tolerant, more permissive attitudes at the other extreme.

More recent research has, however, revealed that social attitudes are organized along two quite distinct dimensions, one typically measured by the RWA scale, (authoritarian or conservative attitudes) and the other by the SDO scale (inequality or social dominance attitudes). These two dimensions seem to be social attitudinal expressions of two basic sets of socio-cultural values or motivational goals, being respectively values of collective security and values of power, dominance and hierarchy. RWA and collective security values seem to arise from personalities that are high in social conformity (or, in Big Five terms, low openness) and a socialized schema-based perception of the social world as dangerous and threatening. SDO and dominance values seem to arise from personalities that are high in tough-mindedness (or, in Big Five terms, low agreeableness) and a socialized schema-based social Darwinist view of the social world as a ruthlessly competitive jungle.

These two motivational and value-based social attitude dimensions both influence punishment attitudes but do so through different mechanisms and for different reasons. Persons high in RWA favour strict, harsher punishments in order to establish and maintain collective security in the form of social order, stability, cohesion, consensus and conformity. Persons high in SDO favour tough, harsh punishments to establish and maintain power, dominance and competitive advantages for themselves and their groups over others.

This suggests that pro-punishment attitudes do not always have the same functional significance and motivational basis for individuals, and can therefore

be influenced by quite different social and psychological factors. In addition, this perspective suggests that the two sets of values or motivational goals underlying individual differences in punitive attitudes are also expressed at the cultural or societal level, where they create two quite different cultural patterns (threat-authoritarian and competitive-dominance cultures) associated with punitiveness and aggression.

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