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The Relationship between Gender and Race on Social Dominance Orientation and Modern Racism

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Abstract

Gender and race have reliably been found to be associated with measures of social dominance orientation (SDO) and modern racism. This study explores the degree of influence from gender and race on SDO and modern racism. Participants for this study consisted of 245 undergraduate and graduates from a small ethnically diverse regional university in the southeastern United States. Gender failed to have a significant on SDO, where race (White) was found to have a significant impact on SDO. White participants were found to be significantly related to attitudes often associated with SDO. A significant relationship was found between males and modern racism. Additionally, White participants were found to have a significant relationship with modern racism. Implications and future research are discussed.

Keywords: gender, race, social dominance, modern racism

1. Introduction

Social psychologists have researched empirical evidence processes thatpropagate intergroup tensions, often centering on gender or race-basedissues(Cokley, Tran, Hall-Clark, Chapman, Bessa, Finley, & Martinez, 2010; Guimond, Crisp, Oliveira, Kamiejski, Kteily, Kuepper, Lalonde, Levin, Pratto, Tougas, Sidanius, & Zick, 2013; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994; Oxendine, 2016a, 2016b, 2017, 2018; Poteat & Spanierman, 2010; Poteat & Spanierman, 2012; Whitley, 1999; Whitley & Kite, 2006). Today there are still many intergroup conflicts related to gender and gender roles (Oxendine, 2016a). Society continues to struggle with defining and dictating behavior which it deems appropriate and that which is inappropriate among the genders. Gender stereotypes continue to be so common in today's world, according to Oxendine that most people are unaware that they are guilty of these behaviors and beliefs. Additionally, modern society has greater difficulty with race and racial discourse. Racial myths and stereotypes continue to permeate the United States, especially after the presidential elections of Barrack Obama and Donald Trump, whether we are beyond racism since we elected a Black man twice, or that Trump makes offensive racial comments nearly on a daily basis (Buffington, 2018; McClure & Harris, 2018; Oxendine, 2018).

According to Oxendine (2018), "Scholars studying human societies find their social structures tend to be group based according to a hierarchical schema" (p. 20). Over time dominant groups develop greater positive social value become the in-group and those with less positive social value become the out-group (Akrami & Ekehammar, 2006; Guimond, Dambrun, Michinov, & Duarte, 2003; Oxendine, 2016a, 2016b, 2017, 2018; Pettigrew, 2017; Pratto, et al.,1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1994; Snellman & Ekehammar, 2000). These groups, historicallyhave been defined by "race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class, region, skin color ... among others (Sidanius&Pratto, 1999, p. 61). These theories are known as social dominance orientation (SDO).

1.1 Social Dominance Orientation

Social dominance orientation theory "postulates that societies minimize group conflict by creating consensus on ideologies that promote the superiority of one group over others" (Pratto et al., 1994, p. 741).

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For discrimination to have legitimacy, these ideologies must maintain a sense of group inequality. According to Sidanius and Pratto (1999), one such theory is the group position model theory. Group position theory is when in situations where there is power inequality, the more powerful groups tend to move to and maintain a dominant power position over less powerful groups. In essence, these powerful groups support social attitudes and beliefs and policies that place themselves to a greater advantage over lesser groups (Costello, & Hodson, 2011; Hodson, & Costello, 2007; Lindén, Björklund, & Bäckström, 2016; Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Sidanius et al., 1994). In terms of race and ethnic relations, American Whites tend to view race as a group position and generally do not support policies that they view may reallocate power and advantage to less powerful groups (Cokely et al., 2010; Crowson & Brandes, 2017; Duckitt & Sibley, 2007; Ho, Sidanius, Kteily, Sheehy-Skeffington, Pratto, Henkel, Foels, & Stewart, 2015; Oxendine, 2016b; Pratto et al.; Sidanius & Pratto; Sibley & Duckitt, 2008; Sibley, Robertson, & Wilson, 2006; Umphress, Simmons, Boswell, & Triana, 2008).

According to Clark and Spanierman (2018), there exists "an asset advantage to Whiteness" (p. 139). In other words, there is an advantage assit economic, civic, and pychosocially for being White. Economically, this can be displayed by the disparities the basic socioeconomic differences between Whites, Blacks, Latino households. Civically, the criminal justice system incarcerates Blacks five times more than are Whites according to Clark and Spanierman.

Clark and Spanierman (2018) suggest that the psychosocial or psychological asset advantage of Whiteness applies equally well for Whites that may not appear to benefit on an economic or civic level. For instance, there are remunerations creating differences between "working class Whites from their Black working class counterparts" (p. 141). Therefore, an asset advantage to Whiteness could be another component aiding SDO to become one of the best and widely accepted predictors of prejudice (Hodson & Hoffarth, 2017; McFarland, 2010, Sibley & Duckitt, 2008).

1.2 Gender

In today's world, clear distinctions between what is meant by sex andgender whereas sex refers to the biological categories of being male and female, including all the influences and distinctiveness afforded by genetics and heredity (Helgeson, 2005). On the other hand, gender refers to the socially constructed categories of male and female including societal expectations of male and female behavior and often attitudes (Glenn, 2016; Helgeson, 2005; Sugiura, Mifune, Tsuboi, & Yokota, 2017).

The literature is replete with studies suggesting of the two gender, males tend to score higher on measures of prejudice and modern racist attitudes and beliefs than do females (Allport, 1954; Bakanic, 2009; Helgeson, 2005; Jackson, 2011; Jones, 2002; McConahay, 1983, 1986; Nelson, 2006; Oxendine, 2016a; Ponterotto, Burkand, Rieger, Grieger, D'Onofrios, Dubusison, Heenehan, Millstein, Parisi, Rath, & Sax, 1995; Sugiura et al., 2017). Social dominance orientation theory suggests that males score significantly higher on measures of SDO based on the invariance hypothesis (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). The invariance hypothesis suggests that male should have higher levels of SDO not simply because of male dominance based on societies' social role status, but more mainly aligned with nature's evolutionary role in male status which is independent of social roles.

1.3 Race and Modern Racism

Race has been used for centuries to categorize people among both physical, behavioral, intelligence, and skill sets as distinctive racial groups, although there is no scientific basis for such classification (Buffington, 2018; Coates, Ferba, & Brunsma, 2018; Oxendine, 2016a, 2016b, 2017, 2018; Schaefer, 2015; Smedley & Smedley, 2005). According to Oxendine (2018), "...the term race as we know, it was socially constructed as a means to categorize people to create a hierarchical social order based on physical and socioeconomic dimensions." (p. 6). It is also well established empirically among the social psychological literature of the link between race and measures of modern racism, prejudice, and discrimination. Recent studies confirm that among measures of modern racism, prejudice, and discrimination, those that identify as White tend to score higher levels of these measures (Coates et al.; Oxendine, 2016a, 2016b, 2017, 2018).

During the days of Jim Crow racism was blatant and openly displayed without shame (Brief, Dietz, Cohen, Pugh, & Vaslow, 2000; Cokely et al., 2010; Jackson, 2011; McConahay, 1983, 1986; Schaefer, 2015). Racial relations changed dramatically after the civil rights movement in the late 1960s. Two important areas, however, did not change as much. Negative anti-Black sentiment and racial conflict changed in minuscule ways (McConahay, 1983).

Racism is a learned socially constructed cultural phenomenon that develops as early as the preschool years (Rothenberg, 2007). In the United States, White's as a group, continue to not really comprehend how widespread racial disparities that exist, simply because this is not a salient issue for them (Dhont, Van Hiel, & Hewstone, 2014; Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002; Oxendine, 2016a, 2016b; Utsey et al., 2008). Socially, the United States is still very much composed largely of segregated communities (Bakanic, 2009; Bryan, Lewis, Lewis, & Willis, 2012; Cokely et al., 2010; Gallagher, 2011; Jackson, 2011; Jones, 2002; Merton, 2019; Nelson, 2006; Oxendine, 2016a, 2016b; Rothenberg, 2007; Smedley & Smedley, 2005).

1.4 The Current Study

Previous research has demonstrated that individuals high in social dominance orientation tend to be male and White (Cokely et al.; Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Sidanius et al., 1994). Additionally, studies have shown that individuals having strong SDOand modern racism attitudes and beliefs tend to be White and male. Therefore, the current study attempts to investigate the relationship impact between social dominance orientation and modern racism on dimensions of gender and race. For simplicity, this study utilizes the broader term "racial group" differentiated as White and Non-White.

1.5 Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 states that there is a significant effect between gender (male) and social dominance orientation. Hypothesis 2 states there is a significant effect between racial group (White) and social dominance orientation. Hypothesis 3 states there is a significant effectbetween gender (male) and modern racism. Hypothesis 4 states that there is a significant effect between racial group (White) and modern racism.

2. Method

2.1 Participants

Participants were 245 undergraduate and graduate college students (females 174=71% and males 71= 29%) enrolled at a small southeastern university. As participants entered the classroom on the first day of class, they were informed of the study. An informed consent form was given explaining that participation in the study was voluntary and would not affect their grade in the course.

2.2 Political Orientation and Racial Group Membership

Political orientation and racial group membership was obtained by having participants self-report their political orientation into these categories: Democrat (n=104) 42.4%, Republican (n=58) 23.7%, Independent (n=24) 6.7%, Other (n=10) 4.1%, and None (n=49) 20.0%.Participants self-reported their ethnicity as follows: American Indian¹ (n = 68) 27.8%, Black (n = 41) 16.7%, Hispanic (n = 4) 31.6%, White (n = 125) 51%, and those identified as Other (n = 7) 2.9%. This sample is representative of the university population (White=124, 50.6%; Non-White=121, 49.4%).

2.3 Measures

SDO variables were measured with 14 item Social Dominance Orientation Scale (Prattoet al., 1994). The SDO scale is rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale with 1 = Very Negative to 7 = Very Positive, where higher scores indicate greater levels of social dominance. Item 8-14 are reversed scored. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha for the current study yielded a coefficient of .85 (M = 3.498, SD = 1.278) consistent with Prattoel al.'s findings. See Table 1.

Table 1. Social Dominance Orientation Scale

-	0	Slightly Negative	Neutral	Slightly Positive	Positive	Very
Negat		•		_		Positive
1	2	3	4	5	6	./
1. Son	ne groups of	people are simply no	ot the equals	of others		
2. Sor	ne people are	e just more worthy th	an others			
3. Th	is country wo	ould be better off if w	e cared less	about how equal all	people were	
	•	e just more deserving			•	
		,		a chance in life than	others	
		e just inferior to othe				
		*		step on others		
8. Inc	reased econo	mic equality	*	•		
		equality.				
		*				
			we would h	ave fewer problems	in this country	*
		ld, all nations would		*	ĺ	
				much as possible	*	
	e snould try	to treat one another i				

Note. N=245. Items scored on the following response choices (1=Very Negative-7=Very Positive. *Items 8-14 were reverse scored. Social Dominance Orientation Scale (SDO).

McConahay's (1986) Modern Racism Scale is a 7-item instrument that measures racist attitudes and beliefs. According to McConahay (1983, 1986), the MRS measures affective and cognitive relationships related to modern racism. The MRS is rated on a 5-point Likert type scale with 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Higher scores reflect greater racist attitudes and beliefs. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha for the current study yielded a coefficient of .82 (M = 2.217, SD = 0.890), which is consistent with McConahay's findings of Cronbach's alpha of .86. See Table 2.

Table 2. Modern Racism Scale

1	2	3	4	5				
Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly				
Disagree				Agree				
1. Over the	e past few years, t	he government and	d news media hav	re shown more	respect to	Blacks	than	they
deserve	·	-			_			
2. It is easy	to understand the an	ger of Black people	in America	•				
3. Discrimin	ation against Blacks	is no longer a probl	lem in the United St	tates*				
4. Over the	past few years, Black	ks have gotten more	economically than	they				
deserve	·		·	•				
5. Blacks ha	ve more influence u	on school desegreg	ation plans than the	ey ought				
to have	·		*					
6. Blacks are	e getting too demand	ling in their push for	r equal rights	·				
7. Blacks sh	ould not push thems	selves where they are	e not wanted	·				
	•	•						

Note. *Item scored for Racism Denial subscale. N=225. Items scored on the following response choices (1=Strongly Disagree-5=Strongly Agree). Modern Racism Scale (MRS).

2.4 Procedures

The first day of class students in the School of Education were informed of the study and received an informed consent form and the questionnaire packet.

Respondents voluntarily completed the questionnaires without incentives. Debriefing of all participants concerning the nature of the study occurred immediately after completion of thequestionnaire packet.

3. Results

3.1 Theoretical Predictions

A one-way ANOVA was utilized to test Hypothesis 1, the relationship between gender and social dominance orientation. This ANOVA revealed a significant result F(1, 243) = .004, p = .951, $\eta_p^2 = .000$. A closer look at the means and standard deviations of this relationship reveals males (M = 2.493, SD = .984) and females (M = 2.501, SD = .885). These results indicate there was not a significant effect on gender by social dominance orientation. Therefore, hypothesis 1was not supported. See Table 3.

A one-way ANOVA was utilized to test Hypothesis 2, the relationship between racial group and social dominance orientation. This ANOVA revealed a significant result F(1, 243) = 3.350, p < .04, $\eta_p^2 = .02$. A closer look at this relationship reveals White group participants (M = 2.614, SD = .940) reported greater levels of social dominance behavior than did Non-White group participants (M = 2.380, SD = .872), therefore, supporting hypothesis 2. See Table 3.

Table 3. Gender & Racial Group ANOVA Means and Standard Deviations for Social Dominance Orientation

Social Dominance Orientation	G	RG	
	M SD	M SD	
Male	2.493 (.884)	2.614	(.940)* White
Female	2.501 (.885)	2.380	(.872) Non-White

Note. * p< .05 level. N = 245. Items scored on the following response choices (1=Very Negative-7 =Very Positive). Social Dominance Orientation Scale (SDO).

A one-way ANOVA was utilized to test Hypothesis 3, the relationship between gender and modern racism. This ANOVA revealed a result F(1, 243) = 10.296, p < .002, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. These results indicated that males (M = 2.336, SD = .457) scored higher in modern racism than did females (M = 2.095, SD = .560), therefore, supporting hypothesis 3. See Table 4.

A one-way ANOVA was utilized to test Hypothesis 4, the relationship between racial group and modern racism. As expected, the ANOVA revealed a result F(1, 243) = 8.783, p < .003, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. A closer look at the means and standard deviations of this relationship indicate White participants (M = 2.265, SD = .491) scored higher in modern racism than did Non-White participants (M = 2.063, SD = .576), therefore, supporting hypothesis 4. See Table 4.

Table 4. Gender & Racial Group ANOVA Means and Standard Deviations for Modern Racism

Modern Racism	G M SD	M	RG SD		
Male Female	2.336 (.4 2.095 (.5	,		(.491)* (.576)	White Non-White

Note. * p< .05 level. N = 245. Items scored on the following response choices (1= Strongly Disagree-5= Strongly Agree). Modern Racism Scale (MRS).

As a follow-up, according to McConahay (1986), MRS item 3 represents a subscale, racism denial. A one-way ANOVA with the item 3 subscale racism denial and racial group revealed a significant result F(1,224) = 17.582, p < .0001, g = .07. A closer look at the means and standard deviations of this relationship indicate White participants (M = 2.234, SD = .938) scored higher in racism denial than did Non-White participants (M = 1.744, SD = .890).

These results appear to contradict the findings of Hypothesis 4. According to Oxendine (2016b), "The magnitude of the significance level of this analysis suggests that the racial group that believes racism is no longer an issue today also appears to be the racial group that holds greater levels of modern racist attitudes." (p. 74).

4. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship betweengender and race on social dominance orientation and modern racism. Among the leading definitions of social dominance orientation theory is that individuals, groups, and societies reduce societal conflict by developing a consensus on ideologies that create group inequality by promoting group superiority over lesser out-groups (Cokely et al., 2010; Duckitt & Sibley, 2007; Ho et al., 2012; Pratto et al., 1994; Oxendine, 2016b; Pettigrew, 2017; Sibley &Duckitt, 2008; Sibley et al., 2006; Sidanius et al., 1996). SDO manifests politically on the Republican or conservative end of the spectrum (Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius et al., 1994; Sidanius et al., 1996). Racially, those high in SDO tend to be White conservatives that oppose civil rights legislation, and other such social initiatives have developed an ideology that groups are unequal, therefore, they support policies that legitimize these myths (Ho et al., 2012; Pratto et al., 1994; Oxendine, 2016b; Pettigrew, 2017; Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius et al., 1996).

Previous research on modern racism has consistently found that groups or individuals scoring high on items of modern racism were most often males. The current study hypothesized that this particular sample, those individuals high onmodern racism, would be White.

Hypothesis 1 states that regarding gender, male participants would score significantly higherin social dominance oriented behavior, which was not supported (Allport, 1954; Bakonic, 2009; Helgeson, 2005; Jackson, 2011). According to Pratto et al. (1994), individuals or groups high in SDO regarding interpersonal relations prefers a hierarchical trajectory. In other words, they view the social order along a superior-inferior status in which their ingroup is dominant to all other out-groups (Akrami & Ekehammar, 2006;Cokely et al., 2010; Crawford & Pilanski, 2014; Duckitt & Sibley, 2007; Ho et al., 2012; Ho et al., 2015; Oxendine, 2016a, 2016b, 2017; Pettigrew, 2017; Sibley &Duckitt, 2008; Sibley et al., 2006). One possible explanation for hypothesis 1 not being supported could be the nature of the sample for this study. According to *U.S. News and World Report* (October 2019), the university from which this sample was drawn is listed as one of the most ethnically diverse student bodies from a regional university in the southeastern United States. Participants from such a diverse campus may have other issues that are more salient for them than gender.

Hypothesis 2 states that White participants would score significantly higher in social dominance oriented behavior, which was supported. The social psychological literature is replete with empirical evidence supporting modern racism and prejudice, and the dominant ethnic culture (White) as core components of social dominance orientation theory (Akrami & Ekehammar, 2006; Cokley et al., 2010; Guimond et al., 2003; Oxendine, 2016a, 2016b, 2017; Pratto et al., 1994; Poteat & Spanierman, 2010; Poteat & Spanierman, 2012). Poteat and Spanierman (2012) suggest that White participants that are highly socially dominant embrace these beliefs systems to substantiate their modern racism attitudes to not having them questioned.

Hypothesis 3 states that male participants would score significantly higheron modern racism, which was supported. This result is supported by previous empirical evidence suggesting that males scored higher in modern racism attitudes and beliefs than did females (Allport, 1954; Bakanic, 2009; Helgeson, 2005; Jackson, 2011; Jones, 2002; McConahay, 1983, 1986; Nelson, 2006; Oxendine, 2016a; Ponterotto et al., 1995). According to Oxendine (2016a), this finding follows previous research suggesting that males are more reactive in their responses than are females.

Hypothesis 4 states that there is a significant effect between racial group (Whites) and modern racism, which was supported. This result is consistent with the research literature (Allport, 1954; Bakanic, 2009; Helgeson, 2005; McConahay, 1983, 1986; Nelson, 2006; Oxendine, 2016a, 2016b; Ponterotto et al., 1995).

4.1 Limitations and Future Research

As with all studies, there are methodological limitations which may limit conclusions drawn from this study. One obvious limitation is this was a sample of convenience. Although this study drew from a population of university undergraduate and graduate students, it did have an advantage of including non-traditional age students which offeran age-related experiential variety which aids generalizability and external validity of the results.

Another possible limitation of this study may be an apparent unrealistic racial group component of this sample as compared with the average population. This sample was composed of White=124, 50.6%; Non-White=121, 49.4%. In other words, 68 identified as Lumbee American Indian and 41 identified as Black, meaning 109 of the total sample of 245 were Lumbee and Black. The university from which this sample came is unique in its own right. Therefore, this university and region have a long and storied history of tri-racial (Lumbee American Indian, Black, and White) intergroup contact creating a sociohistorical environmental context leading to intergroup tensions for over 250 years (Dial, 1993; Dial &Eliades, 1996). It should be understood that university campuses are a collective fusion of diverse cultural, racial, ethnic, and social contexts including those of White students.

Future research should investigate how SDO and modern racism are mediated across gender and race with a sample more normally distributed as the general population. Examining a normally distributed population across race and gender, male participants should score higher in SDO than in the present study. Additionally, future research should investigate these attitudes and beliefs among faculty and administrators.

The current study explores the relationship between gender and race as a function of social dominance orientation and modern racism. The results of this study support previous research that find significant relationships between SDO and modern racism as mediated by race. Although a significant result was not found between gender and SDO with this particular sample, important information for future research concerning the contextual make-up of potential samples of participantswas established. Studies of this type are vitally important in the future for a better understanding of the impact of gender and race confronting issues of social dominance and modern racism.

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Note

Note¹. Throughout this paper, the term *American Indian* is used to indicate indigenous peoples of North America. The term Native American is incorrect in that all peoples born on the North American continent could be considered Native American (Oxendine, 2017; Oxendine &Nacoste, 2007; Wilkins, 2002).