

## Summary

# Authoritarianism, Social Dominance Orientation and Political Opinion

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Authoritarianism and social dominance orientation, two of the most prominent explanations for prejudice, have been the focus of numerous psychology studies (e.g., Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson and Sanford, 1950; Altemeyer, 2004; Dhont and Van Hiel, 2009; Dixon and Ergin, 2010; Fischer, Hanke and Sibley, 2012). In the recent years, several thesis studies on authoritarianism and social dominance orientation (e.g., Akbaş, 2010; Balaban, 2013; Çağlar Akoğlu, 2014; Göregenli et al., 2009; Güldü, 2010; Hasta, 2002; Karaçanta, 2002) have been conducted in Turkey too. However, number of empirical articles written in Turkish on this subject has remained rather limited. Accordingly, the present study aims to investigate the relationship between authoritarianism and social dominance orientation and their relationship with political opinion and thus aims to contribute to the relevant Turkish literature. Additionally, Social Dominance Orientation Scale developed by Pratto, Sidanius, Stallwort and Malle (1994), which was adapted to Turkish by Karaçanta (2002), was re-evaluated as a dual-factor structure similar to the one in the study of Jost and Thompson (2000). Furthermore, the factor structure of the Authoritarian Personality Scale developed by McClosky and Chong in 1985, which was adapted to Turkish by Hasta (2002), was re-evaluated.

According to the researchers such as Adorno and Altemeyer (Adorno et al., 1950; Altemeyer, 1998, 2004), authoritarians are individuals who obey the authority unconditionally, who act submissively before the authority and who tend to be dogmatic, religious and traditional. authoritarian individuals are found to act quite prejudiced against several out-groups (Eckhardt, 1991; Feather, 1998; Funke, 2005; Morand, 1998; Whitley, 1999).

Social dominance orientation is the tendency to support intergroup inequality and suppression of subordinate groups by dominant groups (Sidanius and Pratto, 1999; Sidanius, Pratto, Van Laar and Levin, 2004; Turner and Reynolds, 2003). Social dominance orientation is composed of two sub-dimensions: “Social Dominance

Orientation-Dominance” (group-based dominance) and “Social Dominance Orientation—Egalitarianism” (opposition to equality) (Jost and Thompson, 2000). In the present study, social dominance orientation was considered similarly as a dual-factor structure. To this end, the factor structure of the Social Dominance Orientation Scale, adapted into Turkish by Karaçanta (2002), was re-analyzed.

Authoritarianism and social dominance orientation have a number of common properties such as prejudice, conservatism, intolerance against the minorities and the ones who seem marginal. Therefore, several studies revealed a positive correlation between these two variables (Altemeyer, 2004; Duckitt, 2006; Duckitt and Sibley, 2010; Güldü, 2011; Sibley, Robertson and Wilson, 2006; Wilson and Sibley, 2012). Accordingly, we expect a positive correlation between “authoritarianism and social dominance orientation” in this study.

One of the prominent common characteristics between authoritarianism and social dominance orientation is that both variables have a positive correlation with right-wing or conservative political attitudes. According to Adorno et al. (1950), authoritarian individuals develop extremist conservative political and economic attitudes in order to defend their ego, so that they could cope with deep psycho-dynamic contradictions rooted back to early childhood period. Research has shown that traditional, conservative, authoritarian individuals who are generally found to be intolerant against minorities and the marginal groups (Altemeyer, 1981, 1998, 2004) tend to adopt right-wing political attitudes which do not question such qualities or support such qualities (Altemeyer, 2004; Ekehammer et al., 2004; Stones, 2006). Likewise in the present study, we expect a positive relationship between respondents’ levels of “authoritarianism” and endorsement of a right-wing political opinion”.

Social dominance orientation also co-varies with right-wing or conservative political attitudes. One of the reasons, according to Pratto et al. (1994), is that political

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conservatism act as a legitimizing myth which attenuates hierarchy. Social dominance orientation and political conservatism (Pratto et al., 1994) were found to be related with right-wing political attitudes such as supporting death penalty (Rabinowitz, 1999; Sidanius and Pratto, 1999). Accordingly, in the present study we expect a positive correlation between “social dominance orientation” and “endorsement of a right-wing political opinion”.

## Method

### Participants

This study includes 286 female (61.2%) and 181 male (38.8%) participants; totally 467 university students. Mean age of respondents was 21.65 ( $S = 2.21$ ) and the range was 18-37.

### Measures

**Political Opinion.** Respondents were asked to indicate their political opinion on a 5-point scale from right to left (1 = *right*, 5 = *left*).

**Authoritarian Personality Scale (APS).** This is a 6-item scale used to determine individuals' political opinions and tendencies in the U.S. (McClosky and Chong, 1985). A study conducted by Hasta (2002) adapted this scale to Turkish language. The results indicated that after dropping one item, the scale had a unidimensional structure and its internal consistency coefficient was  $\alpha = .66$ . Structure of this scale was re-evaluated within the scope of the present study.

**Social Dominance Orientation Scale (SDOS).** This scale was developed by Pratto et al. (1994) and consists of 16 items (7-point Likert type). The scale was adapted to Turkish by Karaçanta (2002), its reliability and validity tests were conducted by the same researcher. Internal consistency coefficient of the scale was  $\alpha = .85$ . In this study, the scale adapted by Karaçanta was re-analyzed as a two-dimensional structure as in the study of Jost and Thompson (2000).

### Procedure

University students filled in the questionnaires voluntarily. Researchers explained the purpose of the study, the points that deserve attention while filling the form and informed the respondents that they could leave the study whenever they wanted.

## Results

### Findings Relevant to the Social Dominance Orientation Scale

A principal component analysis was conducted on the 16 items of Social Dominance Orientation Scale,

and the item-total correlations were inspected. Results of these exploratory analyses, consistent with the study of Jost and Thompson (2000), indicated that while 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> items were gathered under “group based dominance” factor; 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> items loaded under “opposition to equality” factor. Next, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using LISREL 8.51. Comparison of a single-factor model with the two-factor model revealed [ $\chi^2(100, n = 467) = 235.67, p < .001, \chi^2/df = 2.36, GFI = .94, AGFI = .92, NNFI = .93, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .05$ ] that the dual-factor structure fitted the data better [ $\chi^2(4, n = 467) = 483.48, p < .001$ ]. Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficients of “Group based dominance” and “Opposition to equality” components were .70 and .84, respectively.

### Findings Relevant to the Authoritarian Personality Scale

Firstly, explanatory factor analysis was conducted by means of item-test correlation and principal component analysis on the 6 items of the Authoritarian Personality Scale. A single-factor structure explaining 40.72% of the variance was obtained. Appropriateness of the structure obtained as a result of the factor analysis was examined through the CFA as well. Model conformity indexes suggested that collected data could be described by means of the single-factor resolution [ $\chi^2(5, n = 467) = 10.44, p < .00, GFI = .99, AGFI = .97, NNFI = .96, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .05$ ]. Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficient was estimated at .62 for the scale employed in this study.

### Correlations Among Variables

Findings revealed that authoritarianism has a positive correlation with “group-based dominance” and “opposition to equality” dimensions of social dominance orientation ( $r$  values: .29 and .15, respectively; and  $p$  values  $< .001$ ). Authoritarianism and both of the sub-dimensions of social dominance orientation (group-based dominance and opposition to equality) have negative correlations with left-wing political opinion ( $r$  values: -.39, -.21 and -.22, respectively; and  $p$  values  $< .001$ ).

### Regression Analysis Results

A hierarchical multiple regression was conducted with authoritarianism and both dimensions of social dominance orientation as predictors and political opinion as the outcome. First, authoritarianism was entered explained 15% of the variance in political opinion ( $R^2 = .15, F(1, 435) = 77.31, p < .001$ ). Authoritarianism predicted left-wing political opinion negatively ( $B = -.45, SH = .05, p = .001, 95\% \text{ GA } [-.55, -.35]$ ). Next,

“group-based dominance” and “opposition to equality” variables were entered into analysis, and the model with three predictors explained a total of 18% of the variance in political opinion ( $\Delta R^2 = .03$ ,  $\Delta F(2, 433) = 6.82$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Political opinion was negatively and significantly predicted only by the “opposition to equality” variable ( $B = -.10$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $p = .003$ , 95% CI [-.16, -.03]). Group-based dominance was not significantly related to political opinion,  $p > .05$ .

### Discussion

Findings revealed that authoritarianism is positively correlated with “group-based dominance” and “opposition to equality” dimensions of social dominance orientation. This finding was consistent with the results of the numerous other studies (e.g., Altemeyer, 2004; Stones, 2006). The relationship observed between authoritarianism and social dominance orientation could be explained by common characteristics of individuals with high authoritarianism and social dominance orientation. As it has been indicated by previous studies (Pratto et al., 1994; Rabinowitz, 1999), there is a positive relationship between social dominance orientation and gender discrimination, conservatism, racism and prejudice against out-groups. Similar characteristics also exist for authoritarian individuals who display exaggerated loyalty to their in-groups and approach out-groups with prejudice and discrimination, and who are inclined to adopt conservative ideologies (Adorno et al., 1950; Ekehhammar et al., 2004).

Findings suggest that as authoritarianism increases among respondents, their tendency to view themselves on left-wing decreases and on right-wing increases, respectively. While these findings consistent with the results of previous studies (Altemeyer, 2004; Duckitt, 1993; Funke, 2005), they could be explained by the authoritarian personality theory (Adorno et al., 1950). According to the theory, authoritarian individuals develop excessively orthodox conservative attitudes so that they could handle inner conflict caused by punitive and loveless parental attitude that they encounter during their early childhood period. These conservative attitudes serving defense of ego directs them mostly to the right-wing political movements in consistence with their aforesaid attitudes.

It is indicated that, both of the sub-dimensions of social dominance orientation (group-based dominance and opposition to equality) has negative correlations with the political opinion. Consistent with this result, it was found that the opposition to equality dimension was negatively correlated with and predicted the political opinion. In other words, while respondents' degree of opposition to equality increases, their level of view-

ing themselves as left-wing decreases. This relationship could be understood better when political conservatism is considered as a hierarchy attenuating legitimizing myth (Pratto et al., 1994) and as degree of support for such legitimizing myths increases, social dominance orientation level increases. Moreover, previous studies investigated the common characteristics between the individuals with higher social dominance orientation and the ones adopting right-wing political attitudes and revealed that both group approve the hierarchy attenuating practices such as support for prejudice, racism, gender discrimination, death penalty, and political conservatism (Dambrun et al., 2004; Pratto et al., 1994, 2006; Sidanius and Pratto, 1999).

In the present study, it was found that “Social Dominance Orientation Scale” has a dual-factor structure (Karaçanta, 2002; Pratto et al., 1994), consistent with the study of Jost and Thompson (2000). According to the CFA results conducted for the Authoritarian Personality Scale (Hasta, 2002; McClosky and Chong, 1985), it was found that a unidimensional structure indicated in the both studies reported by McClosky and Chong (1985) and by Hasta (2002) was quite appropriate for the scale. Values obtained for both scales suggested that these scales were valid and reliable scales that could be used in future studies.