We Will Hunt Them Down: How Social Dominance Orientation and Right-wing Authoritarianism Fuel Ethnic Persecution of Immigrants in Fundamentally Different Ways

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Running head: STATUS BOUNDARIES, CONFORMITY & ETHNIC PERSECUTION

We Will Hunt Them Down:

How Social Dominance Orientation and Right-wing Authoritarianism Fuel Ethnic Persecution

of Immigrants in Fundamentally Different Ways

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Abstract

Despite the fact that SDO and RWA are correlated with one another and both predict support for ethnic persecution of immigrants, it is argued that this aggression is provoked for very different reasons. For authoritarians, outgroup aggression against immigrants should primarily be provoked by immigrant refusal to assimilate into the dominant culture because this violates in-group conformity. In contrast, SDO should be associated with aggression against immigrants who do assimilate into the dominant culture because this blurs existing status boundaries between groups. Using samples of American and Swiss college students, the data was consistent with this status boundary enforcement hypothesis regarding social dominators and largely consistent with the ingroup conformity hypothesis regarding authoritarians. National and ethnic identification did not account for these results. The results further support the argument that outgroup prejudice and discrimination is most fruitfully seen as an interactive function of individual differences and situational constraints.

(149 words)

How could they explain the willingness of great masses of people to tolerate the mass

extermination of their fellow citizens? What tissue of life of our modern society remains

cancerous… And what within the individual organism responds to certain stimuli in our

culture with attitudes and acts of destructive aggression?

Horkheimer & Flowerman (Foreword in Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson &

Sanford, 1950, p. vii).

This paper focuses on the dynamic interaction of individual differences and social context in the

central question lying at the heart of the original authoritarianism research: Namely, what makes

people willing to help hunt down, torture, and kill groups of their fellow citizens? The horrific

events in Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, and Darfur - to mention but a few of the most recent

tragedies - demonstrate that the Holocaust could indeed happen again. Adorno et al (1950, p. 4,

no emphasis added) argued that

Individuals differ in their *susceptibility* to antidemocratic propaganda, in their readiness

to exhibit antidemocratic tendencies. It seems necessary to study ideology at this

"readiness level" in order to gauge the potential for fascism in this country … Overt

action, like open verbal expression, depends very largely upon the situation of the

moment - something that is best described in socio-economic and political terms – but

individuals differ very widely with respect to their readiness to be provoked into action.

The study of this potential is a part of the study of the individual's over-all ideology; to

know what kinds and what intensities of belief, attitude, and value are likely to lead to

action, and to know what forces within the individual serve as inhibitions upon action,

are matters of the greatest practical importance.

We agree wholeheartedly that a person's potential for participation in ethnic persecution must be understood as a complex interplay of individual potentials and the right situational and societal circumstances. Such an approach makes a unified theoretical framework of intergroup relations across individual and societal levels of analysis possible (e.g., Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), in contrast to unimodal and reductionistic approaches, be they methodologically individualist or situationist. However, we would like to suggest that the individual differences affecting predatory intergroup behavior are at least as much a matter of social dominance orientation (SDO; Pratto et al, 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) as of right-wing authoritarianism (RWA; Altemeyer, 1988). In what follows we situate this topic within the context of the integration of immigrants with differing religious and cultural heritage into Western societies – perhaps one of the most crucial challenges to these societies in today's globalized world.

SDO and RWA are best considered measures of individual differences concerning the *relational strategies* that people seek to enact in dynamic interplay with their given *relational position* - between-group hierarchy, in the case of SDO, and in-group homogeneity, conformity, and conventionalism, in the case of RWA. By definition, both SDO and RWA are thus necessarily enacted *in relation* to specific social contexts. While there is strong reason to expect both RWA and SDO to be positively associated with prejudice towards and support of violence against foreign immigrants (see e.g., Bourhis & Dayan, 2004; Esses & Hodson, 2006; Hodson & Esses, 2005; Jackson & Esses, 2000; Schwarzwald & Tur-Kaspa, 1997), the fact that these two individual difference constructs have been shown to have different motivational sources (e.g., Altemeyer, 1998; Duckitt, Wagner, du Plessis, & Birum, 2002) leads us to expect that they will also have differential and even opposing effects on various forms of intergroup prejudice, discrimination and propensity to violence. For example, John Duckitt and his

colleagues have argued in a series of studies that RWA is primarily concerned with social

conformity to ingroup norms and belief in a dangerous world, while SDO is primarily

concerned with toughmindedness and the view of the world as a competitive, dog-eat-dog

environment. Whereas RWA predicts negative reactions towards violators of traditional norms

such as rock stars, SDO predicts negative reactions to low status groups such as single mothers

on welfare (Duckitt, 2001, 2003, 2006; Duckitt et al., 2002; Sibley, Wilson, & Duckitt, 2007b).

Consistent with, while not identical to this view of SDO, Pratto and Sidanius (Pratto et

al., 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) have also defined SDO as the endorsement of intergroup

inequality and hierarchical intergroup relations. Because of the differences in the motivational

bases of RWA and SDO, there is reason to suspect that these two constructs will not only have

slightly different implications for people's intergroup attitudes and behaviors, but in some

circumstances these effects can even be opposite one another. For example, using a sample of

young Lebanese in Beirut, Henry, Sidanius, Levin, and Pratto (2005) found that although RWA

was positively correlated with support for terrorism against the West, SDO was negatively

correlated with support for terrorism against the West. Henry and his colleagues reasoned that

since endorsement of SDO implies support for the existing, salient system of group-based

hierarchy, violence against the West (i.e., the dominant force in world politics) by Arabs and

Muslims (i.e., the subordinates in world politics) would be regarded as subversive to this

hierarchical international order and thus opposed.

We would also expect RWA and SDO to have very different intergroup implications in

the common situation of immigration. Most members of a host society would interpret a greater

difference in cultural values between themselves and immigrants as a larger symbolic threat to

their own culture and collective identity (Esses, Haddock, & Zanna, 1993; Esses, Hodson, &

Dovidio, 2003; Stephan & Stephan, 2000; Zárate, Garcia, Gorza, & Hitlan, 2002; see also

Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006). Research also indicates that most members of a host society

would be pleased if its immigrants voluntarily adopted the language, cultural values and mores

of their new society, dedicating effort and energy to integration (e.g., van Oudenhoven, Prins, &

Buunk, 1998). Furthermore, given the extensive research suggesting that right-wing

authoritarians are especially concerned with conformity to in-group norms and values (e.g.,

Altemeyer, 1998; Duckitt, 1989, 2001, Duckitt et al., 2002), immigrants who refuse to adopt

and conform to their host society's values and cultural standards should especially upset

authoritarians. Because authoritarians are also very punitive (Altemeyer, 1998), we expect that

if they are upset by non-conforming immigrants, they will also be willing to use socially

sanctioned violence and force against them.

But should the same pattern apply for those should with high levels of social dominance

orientation (net of the effects of RWA)? We think not. As we will recall, Sidanius, Pratto and

their colleagues have defined SDO as primarily concerned with the maintenance of group-based

inequality and dominance (Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Social dominance

theory has argued that one of the means by which dominant groups maintain hierarchical

relationships between themselves and subordinate groups is through systematic violence under

the color of law and sanctioned by state agents. For example, between 1997 and 2000, Amnesty

International received reports of state sponsored ill-treatment of citizens in over 150 nations

worldwide. Often involving beatings, torture, rape, and murder, this ill-treatment was

disproportionately directed against minorities.

If the function of such systematic, collective terror of subordinates is indeed to "keep

them in their place", rather than maintaining a constant reign of collective terror, it should most

likely be employed whenever subordinates threaten the existing status boundaries in the group hierarchy. People who are high in SDO should be more willing to enforce the existing group hierarchy by hunting down, torturing, and killing subordinates if they, or somebody from their group, threaten the existing status boundaries along which their group is subordinated. Note that we thus expect <u>individual</u> acts of status boundary transgression to elicit increased ethnic persecution of the entire subordinate outgroup, mirroring the collective guilt ascription found in genocides when innocent civilians and children are killed for the supposed crimes committed by members of their group.

In contrast, subordinates who accept and cooperate in maintaining the existing group hierarchy in an "Uncle Tom manner" should not provoke the same levels of extreme collective violence. In sum, if the social dominance motive is about establishing and reinforcing between-group hierarchy then it should selectively predict extremely violent enforcement of the hierarchical status quo when it is threatened.

This status boundary enforcement hypothesis leads us to expect that those with high levels of SDO should be relatively comfortable with immigrants who maintain their own (and by implication "inferior") cultural values and mores. In doing so, these immigrants are also maintaining the hierarchically structured group-based distinctions between dominants (i.e., native citizens of the host country) and subordinates, as desired by social dominators (see also Pratto & Lemieux, 2001). In contrast, the act of assimilating into the host culture would serve to blur and, in the "worst case", even eradicate group-based distinctions upon which the system of dominance and subordination is built. Congruent with this idea, there is some correlational evidence that SDO is more strongly associated with support for segregation and exclusion than with support for assimilation of immigrants (e.g., Bourhis & Dayan, 2004).

This reasoning leads us to the rather counter-intuitive prediction that while authoritarians will be upset with those foreign immigrants who refuse to assimilate into and conform to the host culture, social dominators will in fact show the opposite reaction. According to the status boundary enforcement hypothesis, social dominators should react most aggressively towards those foreign immigrants who <u>do</u> want to assimilate and thus <u>pass</u> into the host culture, thereby weakening group-based distinctions. Thus, SDO should predict willingness to participate in socially and legally sanctioned persecution of passing, rather than self-segregating, immigrants.

However, alternative explanations grounded in social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Brewer, 1999; Jetten, Spears, & Postmes, 2004) could also account for aggressive reactions to both assimilating and non-assimilating immigrants. As Esses, Dovidio, Jackson, and Armstrong (2001) point out, one is theoretically justified in making two opposing predictions for the consequences of social identity given the same social context where immigrants acculturate to a host culture:

On one hand, immigrants who <u>do</u> assimilate into the host culture may threaten the positive distinctiveness of the national and ethnic ingroup's social identity. As a result, people who strongly identify with their national ingroup should be especially likely to react aggressively to the distinctiveness threats posed by assimilating immigrants (Roccas & Schwartz, 1993; Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 2001; for meta-analytical reviews see also Jetten et al, 2004; Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006). Thus, the optimal distinctiveness and status boundary enforcement hypotheses both imply that collective aggression must be understood as the active (identity or status) differentiation efforts of members of the host culture. However, if our predicted status boundary enforcement results simply reduce to matters of social identity,

then SDO should not predict aggression towards assimilating immigrants over and above

national and ethnic identity.

On the other hand, a social identity inspired perspective might also argue that the more

different the cultural values of immigrants are, the greater (symbolic) threats to social identity

they may pose, as already mentioned. Based in integrated threat theory, one could thus predict

that immigrants who <u>do not</u> assimilate should provoke more aggression (Stephan & Stephan,

2000). Again, persecution of segregating immigrants may result both from both symbolic

identity threats and violations of the in-group conformity valued by authoritarians, but if the

effects of RWA simply reduce to symbolic identity threats, then RWA should not predict over

and above social identification.

This paper's central thesis is that opposing predictions for the <u>same social context</u>, such

as those resulting from symbolic and positive distinctiveness threats with respect to immigrant

assimilation, can be reconciled by taking into account <u>individual</u> differences in SDO and RWA

and how they dissociate: Authoritarians will respond aggressively to the symbolic threats posed

by non-assimilating immigrants to cultural conformity, whereas social dominators will respond

aggressively to the threats to existing status distinctions between groups posed by assimilating

immigrants. Our argument is not that contextual threats are irrelevant, but that people differ

very widely, not only in their readiness to be provoked (Adorno et al, 1950), but also with

respect to <u>which kinds of threats</u> that provoke them into persecutory action. Since our

theoretical point is precisely that ethnic persecution must be understood as a dynamic interplay

between different individual potentials and the social context, we attempt to control for the

possibility that any effects of SDO and RWA simply <u>reduce</u> to nothing but different

(contextual) social identity threats. However, our goal in the current research is not teasing apart

the puzzle of national and ethnic identity processes regarding immigrant acculturation as

such.

In sum, given what is known and theorized about RWA and SDO, there is strong reason

to expect that both of these variables should be positively correlated with willingness to engage

in collective, state sponsored violence and persecution of immigrants (e.g., Altemeyer, 1988,

1996, 1998; Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). However, beyond this assumed effect

and following our reasoning on the motivational differences between RWA and SDO, the

specific goals of this study were to test the following two hypotheses:

1. Net of the effects of SDO, RWA will be most strongly associated with willingness to

engage in state-sponsored, collective violence against foreigners when people have been primed

with an immigrant target who segregates himself, refusing to assimilate into the host culture and

thus not conforming to ingroup norms and values. We will refer to this as the "ingroup

conformity hypothesis".

2. In contrast to the hypothesis regarding RWA, we expect the opposite pattern

regarding social dominance orientation. Here we expect that, net of the effects of RWA, SDO

will be most strongly related to willingness to engage in state-sponsored, collective violence

against foreigners when one has been primed with an immigrant target who is willing to

assimilate into the dominant culture. We will refer to this as the "status boundary enforcement

hypothesis."

<div align="center">STUDY 1</div>

<div align="center">Method</div>

Participants

One hundred and seventy-one participants at a major US research university came into the lab

and filled out an omnibus survey for partial course credit. Since our study involved Muslim and Latino scenario targets, eighteen respondents who identified themselves as either Muslim, Latino, or failed to complete all pertinent questions were excluded from further analysis. This resulted in an ethnically diverse sample of 153 participants (67 males, 86 females; 75 European Americans, 5 African Americans, and 73 Asian Americans) between 17 and 41 years with an average age of 19.9 years.

Measures and materials

   Individual difference measures. The survey first included demographic questions, immediately after which followed a 3-item measure of national identity (*How strongly do you identify with other people of your nationality, how close do you feel to other people of your nationality, how often do you think about yourself in terms of your nationality;* α =.89), and a similar 3-item measure of ethnic identity that simply replaced the word "nationality" with "ethnicity" in the previous measure (α =.85)*.* After this, participants completed the 20-item RWA scale (Altemeyer, 1988, α =.88) and the 16-item SDO6 Scale (Pratto et al, 1994, α =.91). All items were assessed with likert-scales ranging from 1 to 7 where higher scores indicated stronger agreement with the question.

   Experimental manipulation. After this, participants were presented with the following scenario that manipulated the acculturation strategies of *assimilation* (adapting to host culture and giving up home culture) and "self-segregation" or *separation* (holding onto home culture and forgoing host culture) (e.g., Berry & Sam, 1997). In addition, the scenario manipulated the ethnicity of the immigrant target by describing a foreign immigrant who was either called Mohammed (a typical Muslim name) or Carlos (a typical Latino name):

   Mohammed (Carlos) is a young man who came to your country some years ago hoping

to find a better life here. In general, he feels that your country is very different from the one he comes from.   He does his very best to adjust and fit in here, even if this means that he cannot completely hold onto the values and traditions of his home country (He does his very best to hold onto the values and traditions of his home country even if this means he cannot completely adjust and fit in here).

This scenario was followed by a filler task in which participants rated their preference for a series of graphical icons.

Dependent variable. After the experimental manipulation and filler task, participants then completed a version of Altemeyer's (1996) posse scale which we adapted to measure one's willingness to participate in the socially sanctioned persecution of immigrants (rather than communists and radicals). Participants were asked to "*imagine that some day in the future the US government decides to outlaw immigrant organizations and requests all citizens to do their best to make sure that the law has a successful effect*." Participants then indicated on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) how much they agreed with the following statements: 1) "*I would tell my friends that it was a good law";* 2) "*I would tell the police about any members of immigrant organizations that I knew";* 3) "*I would help hunt down members of immigrant organizations and turn them over to the police";* 4)"*I would participate in attacks on immigrant headquarters if supervised by the proper authorities";* 5) "*I would support the use of physical violence to make members of immigrant organization reveal the identity of other immigrants"* ; and 6) "*I would support the execution of immigrant leaders.*" These six items formed a reliable composite scale ($\alpha = .89$)[1, 2].

<div align="center">Results</div>

We first explored the zero-order relationships of the individual difference variables, one's

willingness to engage in ethnic persecution of immigrants, and the experimental manipulation

(see Table 1). SDO and RWA were robustly correlated with each other ($r =.43$, $p <.001$), but, as

should be the case, were not correlated with the experimental manipulation (i.e., $r =.03$, n.s., and

$r =.01$, n.s. respectively). Furthermore and not surprisingly, both SDO and RWA were

correlated with one's willingness to participate in the ethnic persecution of immigrants (i.e.,

SDO, $r =.47$, $p <.001$; RWA, $r =.35$, $p <.001$; see Table 1). However, national and ethnic

identity did not correlate with ethnic persecution ($r = .06$ and $r = .09$, respectively), nor was

there any simple correlation between the assimilation manipulation and one's willingness to

persecute immigrants ($r =.13$, all ps $> .10$).

Next, we tested the unique contributions of our individual difference variables and the

assimilation manipulation on ethnic persecution, employing a standard hierarchical multiple

regression (and centering all independent variables) for the analysis of interaction (see Aiken &

West, 1991) in which national and ethnic identity, SDO, RWA, and the assimilation

manipulation were entered in stage 1 (i.e., 0 = not assimilation, 1 = assimilation)[3] and their two-

way product terms were entered in stage 2. This analysis also showed that neither national nor

ethnic identity made unique or significant contributions to ethnic persecution ($b = -.08$, $\beta = -.13$,

n.s. and $b =.00$, $\beta = .00$, n.s, respectively) over and above the unique effects of SDO ($b = .35$, β

$= .40$, $p < .0005$) and RWA ($b = .21$, $\beta = .23$, $p = .01$). Furthermore, neither national nor ethnic

identity interacted with the assimilation manipulation when the two-way interaction terms were

entered in the next stage of the analysis *($b = -.14$, n.s., and $b = .09$, n.s., respectively).* Thus, for

the sake of simplicity and clarity we removed the non-significant national and ethnic identity

controls from subsequent analyses in order to focus on the central thesis of this paper, namely

the dissociation of SDO and RWA (see Table 2)[4].

The critical issue to be explored here is whether or not SDO and RWA will interact with the assimilation manipulation in the predicted, opposite fashion. As we recall, we expect that RWA will be most strongly associated with one's willingness to persecute foreigners when people have been primed with foreigners who are <u>not</u> willing to assimilate into the host culture. In contrast, we expect that SDO will be most strongly associated with people's willingness to persecute foreigners when they have been primed with foreigners who <u>are</u> willing to accept and assimilate into the host culture. Inspection of Table 2 (stage 2) shows that both SDO and RWA were, in fact, found to have significant interactions with the assimilation manipulation ($b = .52$, $\beta = .29$, $p < .01$ & $b = -.30$, $\beta = -.16$, $p < .03$, respectively).[5]

To explore the exact nature of these significant interactions, we performed simple slopes analyses of SDO and RWA by assimilation manipulation. As can be seen in Figure 1, when the respondents had been primed within the segregation condition, RWA showed the predicted and significantly positive association with willingness to persecute foreigners ($b = .33$, $t(145) = 3.05$, $p < .01$). However, in the assimilation condition the relationship between RWA and persecution willingness fell below significance ($b = .03$, $t(145) < 1$, n.s.).

In contrast, the exact opposite pattern was found with respect to SDO (see Figure 2). For those respondents who were primed with an immigrant in the self-segregation condition, SDO had no significant relationship with one's willingness to engage in the socially sanctioned persecution of foreigners ($b = .08$, $t(145) < 1$, n.s.). However, among those respondents who were primed with a foreigner willing to assimilate into US culture, there was a quite powerful relationship between SDO and one's willingness to engage in the violent persecution of immigrants ($b = .58$, $t(145) = 6.22$, $p < .001$)[6] .

Preliminary discussion

This study bore out our general prediction that RWA and SDO would be correlated with one's willingness to actively participate in the persecution of foreigners under different conditions. As predicted from the in-group conformity hypothesis, RWA was found to be associated with willingness to persecute foreigners when respondents were primed with an immigrant target who was <u>unwilling</u> to assimilate to US culture. In contrast, and as predicted from the status boundary enforcement hypothesis, SDO was associated with willingness to persecute foreigners among those who were primed with an immigrant who was <u>willing</u> to assimilate to US culture. Note that these results also demonstrate that actions by individual subordinate targets that violate status boundaries (or in-group conformity) in fact elicit ethnic persecution of the entire subordinate out-group.

We found no general main effects of immigrant assimilation and of national and ethnic identity and no interaction of immigrant assimilation with national and ethnic identity. The fact that both of these subscales were highly reliable and did predict the control identity item *The United States risks to lose its true identity because too many cultures are mixed* (see footnote 2) indicates that this is not simply due to a measurement problem. We did not make unidirectional predictions regarding the effect of ethnic and national identity within assimilation and segregation conditions since both conditions might activate identity threats. However, if either the symbolic identity threat posed by non-assimilating immigrants or the positive distinctiveness threat posed by assimilating immigrants had been driving ethnic persecution, one more strongly than the other, this might have resulted in an interaction of identity and immigrant assimilation (if not in main effects) on ethnic persecution. And if the different kinds of threats in the two different immigration scenarios had fueled ethnic persecution equally strongly, this might have resulted in a main effect of national and ethnic identity on ethnic

persecution (albeit for different reasons in each scenario), but not in an interaction of identity

and immigrant assimilation, nor in a main effect of assimilation on ethnic persecution. At the

very least, these null findings indicate that it is highly unlikely that the effects of SDO and

RWA on ethnic persecution of immigrants simply reduce to processes of national and ethnic

social identity.

The dissociation of SDO and RWA, the focus of present study, support the idea that

there will be a certain degree of situational flexibility when authoritarian or social dominance

motivations come online to enforce the consistent goals of norm conformity or the maintenance

of group hegemony. Thus the somewhat counter-intuitive interaction between assimilation

condition and SDO is thought to result from desire to enforce the status boundaries between

natives and foreigners.   What is not yet clear is the degree to which the phenomenon observed

in the United States will also generalize to other nations.

STUDY 2

The aim of Study 2 is to replicate, in a Swiss sample, the seemingly paradoxical finding that

SDO was related to legally and socially sanctioned persecution of immigrants who are willing

to assimilate to the host culture together with the finding that RWA was related to willingness to

violently persecute immigrants unwilling to assimilate into the host culture.

Method

Participants

Ninety-four students (25 males, 69 females) at a major French speaking Swiss research

university filled out an identical survey to Study 1 in class. Their ages ranged between 22 and

31 with an average of 22.5 years. All participants identified as Christian or agnostic/atheist and

none were excluded from the sample. In return for participation, respondents were given a

lottery ticket to win the equivalent of $50. All measures were translated into French by the second author and independently checked by a native French speaker.

Measures and materials

As in Study 1, the survey began with demographic questions, immediately followed by the national and ethnic identity scales (in both cases α =. 85). This was followed by the SDO scale (α =.89), and finally the RWA (α =.91).

The experimental manipulation was also identical to that performed in Study 1, except that only one rather than two immigrant primes were used since immigrants of Latin American descent are not a target of common prejudice in Switzerland. Accordingly, respondents in this sample were all primed with an immigrant named Mohammed. Thus, the assimilation manipulation consisted of a random half of the sample being primed with a target, Mohammed, who wanted to assimilate into Swiss culture, while the other random half of the sample was primed with a Mohammed who wanted to segregate himself from Swiss culture.

Finally, the dependent variable was again willingness to participate in ethnic persecution of immigrants (α =.89)[7].

<div align="center">Results</div>

Once again and as expected, one's willingness to engage in ethnic persecution was related to both SDO ($r =.44$, $p < .001$), and RWA ($r =.39$, $p < .001$) and SDO and RWA were again substantially correlated ($r = .43$, $p < .001$). In this Swiss sample, national and ethnic identity were also strongly correlated with ethnic persecution ($r = .35$, $p <.001$ $r = .35$, $p <.001$, respectively, Table 3). However, a two-stage hierarchical multiple regression analysis (where the centered variables national and ethnic identity, SDO, and RWA were entered simultaneously with the assimilation manipulation in stage 1 and their two-way product terms were entered in

stage 2) again showed that the national and ethnic identity made no independent and unique

contributions to ethnic persecution ($b = .02$, $\beta = .03$, n.s.; $b = .07$, $\beta = .14$, n.s., respectively)

over and above the unique effects of SDO ($b = .22$, $\beta = .29$, $p = .01$) and RWA ($b = .15$, $\beta =$

$.21$, $p = .08$). Again, national and ethnic identity also did not interact with the assimilation

manipulation ($b = .01$, n.s., & $b = .08$, n.s., respectively). Accordingly, we again removed the

identity controls from subsequent analyses in order to focus on the central thesis of this paper:

The dissociation of SDO and RWA in their interactions with immigrant assimilation.

As with Study 1, the crucial question here was whether the effects of RWA and SDO are

contingent upon whether or not people are primed with an assimilating or self-segregating

immigrant. Once again, to explore this question we regressed willingness to persecute

foreigners simultaneously on both RWA and SDO under the assimilation and non-assimilation

conditions (see Table 4). In this case, however, only the interaction between SDO and the

assimilation manipulation was found to be statistically significant ($b = .34$, $t(86) = 2.12$, $p < .05$)

and found to be quite similar to the results found in the American case: Once again, simple

slopes analyses revealed that SDO was weakly (albeit marginally in this case) related to

persecution willingness in the segregation condition ($b = .21$, $t(86) = 1.71$, $p < .09$), but was

quite strongly related to persecution willingness in the assimilation condition ($b = .55$, $t(86) =$

4.43, $p < .001$; see Figure 3).

However, even though the interaction between RWA and the assimilation manipulation

was not found to be statistically ($t(86) < 1$, *n.s.*), simple slopes analyses again revealed that

RWA made a significant contribution to persecution willingness in the self-segregation

condition ($b = .19$, $t(86) = 2.13$, $p < .01$), but not in the assimilation condition ($b = .17$, $t(86),=$

1.46, n.s.).

General Discussion

The studies presented above dealt not with allocation of real or imagined resources using Tajfel matrices, nor with people's evaluative ratings of ingroups vs. outgroups. Rather, this research dealt with people's willingness to actively participate in and support state-sponsored, violent persecution of outgroups – that is, to participate in hunting down, torturing, and killing immigrants under the color of law, as indexed by our adapted version of Altemeyer's (1996) posse measure. In other words, this research dealt with the potential for participating in the type of ethnic persecution which originally inspired the classical Adorno et al (1944) work on ethnocentrism. While the overall willingness to participate in ethnic persecution were low in both the American and Swiss samples, the range of persecution endorsement varied from 1 to 5 on a 7-point scale, allowing us to meaningfully test the patterns of association between SDO, RWA, and persecution willingness. We would like to emphasize that hunting down, torturing, and killing immigrants are such extreme actions that anything but absolute refusal to participate in such actions is itself noteworthy.

While both SDO and RWA should be generally associated with outgroup aggression (see also Bourhis & Dayan, 2004; Esses & Hodson, 2006; Hodson & Esses, 2005; Jackson & Esses, 2000; Schwarzwald & Tur-Kaspa, 1997), our core prediction was that there are predictable, specifiable circumstances under which these two variables are especially strongly associated with the support of coalitional violence. Thus, the current paper focused not on absolute levels of agreement with ethnic persecution across conditions and not only on how "individuals differ very widely with respect to their readiness to provoked into action" (Adorno et al 1950, p.4), but also on how SDO and RWA differ with respect to the circumstances under which they are likely to support violence against immigrants.

As predicted, the higher people's RWA scores, the more violently they reacted to immigrant outgroups when primed with the notion that an immigrant target would fail to enforce ingroup norms. These results further support the suggestions by Altemeyer (1998) and Duckitt (1989, 2002) that people high in RWA are primarily concerned with the enforcement of and adherence to ingroup rules and norms.

In contrast, SDO has long been conceived of as expressing people's desire for the production and maintenance of status and power differences between salient social groups (see Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In order to enforce the existing group hierarchy, this social dominance motive should selectively trigger violent persecution of subordinates who threaten the specific status boundaries along which they are subordinated, but not of subordinates who accept such status boundaries, thus cooperating in their own subordination. Given this status boundary enforcement hypothesis, we expected (and found) SDO to selectively predict ethnic persecution of "passing" low status immigrants (e.g. Latinos and Muslims) in our experimental paradigm because assimilation violates the status boundary that defines immigrants as members of a segregated, inferior culture. Paradoxically, an individual immigrant target "who does his very best to fit in and adjust to your country, even if this means that he cannot completely hold on to the values and beliefs of his home country" thus triggers more extreme forms of ethnic persecution of his entire immigrant group in both the US and Switzerland, the higher people score in social dominance.

On a related note, Danso, Sedlovskaya, and Suanda (2007, Study 3) recently demonstrated that when participants focus on how their own values are similar to those of immigrant outgroups, SDO predicts prejudice at the same level as in an untreated control group, but the effect of SDO falls below significance when participants simply focus on their own

individual values. On the other hand, Esses and colleagues found that when focusing

participants' attention on how they share common ethnic and national roots with immigrants,

the prejudice of high-SDO participants was reduced (Esses, Dovidio, Jackson & Armstrong

2001; Esses, Dovidio, Semenya, & Jackson, 2005). From the point of view of social dominance

theory, these apparent contradictory findings are not surprising due to the subtle, but

qualitatively important, differences in the experimental manipulations that were employed:

People high in SDO are extremely sensitive to the group coalitions indexed by *arbitrary sets*

(Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In essence, Esses and colleagues used highly salient arbitrary sets in

a North American context - ethnicity and nationality - to tell social dominators that immigrants

were in fact already part of their own coalition or "team". Thus, prejudice should go down

towards coalition members. In contrast, our present experimental manipulation, as well as that

of Danso et al (2007), defined immigrants as a clearly distinct outgroup that was seeking to

"infiltrate," or was already similar to, the ingroup coalition. Thus, SDO should predict

aggression and prejudice against these subordinate outgroups for not "staying in their place."

Previous research in the social identity tradition has demonstrated that the relationship

between intergroup distinctiveness threat and outgroup bias is moderated by group

identification or the salience of a superordinate group (as demonstrated by the meta-analysis by

Jetten, Spears, & Postmes, 2004). This implies that highly identified group members should feel

more threatened by assimilating outgroup members (i.e., immigrants) that decrease intergroup

distinctiveness. On the other hand, one might also predict that the symbolic identity threats

posed by non-assimilating immigrants should elicit more aggression (e.g., Stephan & Stephan,

2000; Esses et al, 2001). Both of these possibilities imply an interaction of national and ethnic

identification by immigrant assimilation on ethnic persecution, but we saw no evidence of this

in any sample. Surprisingly, we also found no correlation with national and ethnic identity in the American sample. We did find a zero-order correlation between national and ethnic identity and ethnic persecution in the Swiss sample, although our identification measures failed to uniquely predict ethnic persecution when also considering SDO and RWA. Together with the fact that the national and ethnic identity scales were highly reliable and did predict a control identity threat item in both samples, this suggests that these null findings are not simply due to inadequate measurement. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that the effects of SDO within the assimilation condition and of RWA within the segregation condition reduce to processes of intergroup distinctiveness and symbolic identity threats, respectively. Had this been the case, SDO and RWA should have no unique effects over and above national and ethnic identity, but we found that the opposite was the case. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, neither of the alternative explanations above can explain why SDO and RWA have opposite effects depending on whether immigrants seek to assimilate into the dominant culture (or not).

In the current research our goal was to test the predicted dissociation of SDO and RWA with respect to immigrant assimilation that follows from the ingroup conformity and status boundary enforcement hypotheses, and simply control for social identity processes. Whilst not the focus on the current paper, we are not seeking to argue that social identity should have no effects on majority-minority dynamics with respect to immigrant acculturation. Although national and ethnic identity would seem an obvious domain for the kind of symbolic and distinctiveness threats to ingroup identity that could be posed by segregating versus assimilating immigrants, it is possible that such threats operate in more fine-grained ways: They may be activated by other domains of identification more specifically tuned to the characteristics of each immigrant outgroup. This could be one reason that national and ethnic identity did not

predict ethnic persecution in the American sample, although we have found that it is related

to group dominance and xenophobia elsewhere (Staerklé, Sidanius, Green, & Molina, 2005;

Sidanius, Feshbach, Levin, & Pratto, 1997). Assimilating Muslim immigrants, for instance,

may be especially threatening to those who identify strongly with their (non-Islamic) religious

group, rather than to those strongly identified with their nation and ethnicity as such. Last, but

not least, as suggested by Brewer (1999), it is also possible that social identity processes are

more strongly associated with ingroup favoritism rather than outgroup aggression.

Further research

Despite the promising nature of our findings regarding status boundary enforcement and its

effect on ethnic persecution of assimilating immigrants, there are still unanswered questions and

ways in which this line of research should be extended in order to solidify the basic

interpretations of our findings.

We suspect that the status boundary enforcement effect is essentially driven by a

contextual response that implies an increased vigilance of the processes already demonstrated

by social dominance theory to play a motivated, functional role in the maintenance of between

group hierarchy (for reviews, see Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Sidanius, Pratto, Levin, & van Laar,

2004; Pratto, Sidanius & Levin, 2006). Thus, we expect that willingness to participate in ethnic

persecution of outgroups as a response to status boundary threats should be mediated by

endorsement of hierarchy-enhancing ideologies that justify the hierarchical status quo (such as,

amongst others, conservatism, racism, and belief in the protestant work ethic) together with

increased levels of aggression and decreased empathy. Indeed, SDO may itself increase as a

contextual response to status boundary threats, an effect that should be amplified the higher

people's chronic SDO levels and the greater the status gap to the "rebelling" group.

At the level of cognitive encoding, we suspect that social dominators under status

boundary threat may also show increased coalitional encoding (e.g. Kurzban, Tooby, &

Cosmides, 2001) and sensitivity to the relevant arbitrary set distinctions. For instance, social

dominators under status boundary threat should be better at detecting and keeping track of the

parts of a multiethnic individual's genetic and cultural heritage that stems from a subordinate

outgroup (e.g. detecting if people are remotely Black or still counting 3rd or 4th generation

immigrants as foreigners). Additionally, social dominators under status boundary threat may

show decreased individual encoding. Together, this would seem to facilitate the principle of

collective guilt ascription that is present in genocide and other ethnic persecutions: If people do

not count as individuals but only as members of a subordinate group that "should" be put in its

place or eradicated, then the killing of innocent civilians and children in retaliation for the

actions of other group members is "justified" and increased levels of aggression and decreased

levels of empathy may enable one to go through with the atrocities of ethnic persecution.

Indeed, our current study provided initial evidence for such collective punishment, since the

status boundary transgression of an individual immigrant target elicited increased endorsement

of ethnic persecution of the entire subordinate outgroup, the higher people scored in SDO.

In the assimilation manipulations used in the current research, foreigners always came

from relatively low-status immigrant groups. However, if the status boundary hypothesis is

correct, then SDO should selective predict persecution of assimilating immigrants when

subordinates attempt to assimilate into a high-status ingroup, but not if members of high-status

outgroups assimilate into the ingroup. Thus for example, when examining the assimilation/SDO

connection among respondents in Switzerland, it should matter whether the immigrant is a

white German (high-status) or a black African (low status). If distinctiveness of group identity

per se is the issue, however, it should not make much of a difference whether or not the

immigrant group is high or low status, nor should SDO and RWA dissociate in their interactions

with immigrant assimilation.

Importantly, the status boundary enforcement effect should generalize across different

domains, being sensitive to the major lines along which each outgroup is subordinated. For

instance, in the US, Latino immigrants may be seen as more different from European Americans

in terms of their low socio-economic status on the labor market than in terms of their cultural

values. If so, there should be an even stronger effect of being primed with a Latino who has a

good job, which is a means for gaining the status reserved for the dominant national group (see

also Zárate et al., 2004), than of being primed with an assimilating Latino. On the other hand,

Muslims may be perceived as more different in terms of cultural values than in terms of SES. If

so, the effect of an assimilating Muslim on ethnic persecution of the group as a whole should be

stronger than the effect of a Muslim with a good job. The fact that the effect of SDO on ethnic

persecution of assimilating Muslims was somewhat stronger than the effect on assimilating

Latinos provides suggestive evidence that this may be the case.

Likewise, and going back to the question of whether assimilating Muslims pose greater

distinctiveness threats to the strongly religiously identified, Muslim immigrants may be

perceived to differ greatly in religious and cultural values from their host culture. If so, we

assume that high social dominators will opportunistically use religion as a legitimizing myth to

justify the existing hierarchical status quo. So if ethnic persecution of Muslim immigrants is

driven by threats to status distinctiveness rather than by threats to the distinctiveness of ingroup

identity at large, then SDO should further qualify any moderating effect of religious

identification on the effect of immigrant assimilation on ethnic persecution. Future studies

should pursue all of these possibilities to more fully explore the function of status

maintenance and boundary control in immigrant acculturation (see also Green, 2007, 2008).

Conclusion

So far, the present set of studies establishes that individual differences of SDO and RWA

dissociate in their effects on ethnic persecution given the same situational assimilation

manipulation. Thus, whereas there is no main effect of immigrant assimilation, SDO and RWA

predict opposite reactions to the assimilation and segregation of immigrants. This provides

further support for the meta-theoretical position of social dominance theory that intergroup

prejudice and discrimination cannot be reduced to either individual differences or the social

situation alone, but must be seen as the dynamic interplay between both.

This interaction between individual differences and social context was previously

emphasized by Adorno et al (1950) - psychodynamic assumptions and methodological flaws

aside – and has been the core point of social dominance theory since its conception (Sidanius &

Pratto, 1999; Pratto, Sidanius & Levin, 2006). Among other things, social dominance

researchers have shown that the higher individuals are in SDO, the more they are selectively

drawn to hierarchy-enhancing institutions, such as careers in law-enforcement, and the better

they do in such institutions (Haley & Sidanius, 2005; Sidanius, Pratto, Levin, & van Laar,

1996). As argued elsewhere, this all also implies that people's SDO levels dynamically vary

with how hierarchical their current group position and context is (Levin, 1996, 2004; see also

Guimond, Dambrun, Michinov, & Duarte, 2003), and that SDO levels and their effects depend

on mutual, overlapping group memberships (of self and other) in interactive, not merely

additive, ways.

Although this interactionist position, stressing the importance of person by situation

interaction, has long been accepted in the general field of social psychology (for reviews see

Blass, 1991; Endler & Magnusson, 1976; Canarhan & McFarland, 2007), much research in the

field of intergroup relations, and the understanding of its original core focus, the Holocaust, has

been guided by situationism (following, and inspired by, the banality-of-evil hypothesis of

Arendt, 1963 as well as the classical experiments by Milgram, 1963; Haney, Banks, &

Zimbardo, 1973; Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood & Sherif, 1961; and Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Recently, however, more and more intergroup researchers are also converging in their

arguments for, and demonstrations of, the general point that the interaction of both individual

differences and social context is crucial for understanding intergroup phenomena (e.g., Duckitt,

2003, 2006; Sibley, Wilson, & Duckitt, 2007a, 2007b; Son Hing et al., 2007; Huddy, 2004;

Haslam & Reicher, 2007; Postmes & Jetten, 2006). For example, in their recent and elegant

experiment, Carnahan & McFarland (2007) used an identical recruitment ad to the one that was

originally used in the Stanford prison study. Their results showed that individual differences in

SDO predict one's likelihood of volunteering to participate in the prison study, long considered

a classical demonstration of how social roles and situational identities shape the way we act

towards other groups. Quoting Vetlesen (2005) in their historical review, Haslam and Reicher

(2007, p. 619) remark that "those drawn to Nazism and similar groups do so 'on the condition

that *the ideology in question resonate deeply and existentially with psychological dispositions -

needs and longings, desires and fears* – to be found in the individual". Furthermore, in a recent

strong test of social dominance theory in the minimal-group paradigm, Reynolds, Turner,

Haslam, Ryan, et al. (2007) demonstrated that SDO predicts acting to create general group

hierarchy <u>even when it is uncertain if one's own group will be subordinated</u> as a result.

Reynolds et al. (2007, p. 537) concluded: "The path forward is to continue to move

away from a dichotomy between the personality and the intergroup traditions, and to further

investigate the interdependencies between group and personality processes." We agree entirely

and submit that the present pair of studies constitutes yet another demonstration of this simple,

yet compelling truth.

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Figure Captions

Figure 1. Ethnic Persecution Scores as an Interactive Function of RWA and Assimilation

Manipulation (US Sample, Study 1).

Figure 2. Ethnic Persecution Scores as an Interactive Function of SDO and Assimilation

Manipulation (US Sample, Study 1).

Figure 3. Ethnic Persecution Scores as an Interactive Function of SDO and Assimilation

Manipulation (Swiss Sample, Study 2).

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Footnotes

1. While the distribution of the ethnic persecution scores was positively skewed, there was sufficient range in the scores (1 to 5 points) to capture meaningful variance (see also means and standard deviations in Table 1).

2. To ensure that all our individual difference measures in addition to being reliable, were also validly predicting the kinds of things they should in the current study, we also included a control item indexing perceived immigrant threat: *The United States risks loosing its true identity because too many cultures are mixed* ($\underline{M}$ = 1.95, *SD* = 1.34). Since this item is ambiguous as to whether the cultures are mixed because immigrants assimilate and mix with mainstream culture, or because they segregate themselves, maintaining their separate mores, this item should capture both symbolic/conformity and positive distinctiveness/status boundary threats. As expected this control item correlated with both national *(r = .24, p = .003)* and ethnic *(r = .25, p = .002)* identity, SDO *(r = .36, p < .0005)* and RWA *(r = .33, p < .0005)*, indicating that all of our individual differences constructs were measured adequately. As expected, this control item also predicted ethnic persecution across conditions *(r = .38, p < .0005)*.

3. Since the pattern of results was the same when using both Mohammed and Carlos as the stimulus targets, the data were collapsed over the stimulus target condition to maximize the statistical power for the major factors of interest.

4. Furthermore, we examined the interactions between the two forms social identity (national and ethnic) and the assimilation manipulation when neither SDO nor RWA were involved in the equation. In both cases the identity variables failed to significantly interact with the assimilation manipulation.

5. To insure that the results were not restricted to only one of our two major American ethnic groups (whites and Asians), we also ran these analyses separately for White and Asian respondents and got a similar pattern of results for both groups. We also tested a model including the SDO X RWA two-way interaction and the three-way interaction of SDO X RWA X assimilation condition. However, neither interaction was significant in the American sample used in Study 1 nor in the Swiss sample used in Study 2.

6. Furthermore, the same pattern of results was found when using either the Muslim or Latino targets alone. Specifically, for those given Carlos as the immigrant target the relationship between RWA and persecution willingness in the non-assimilation condition was $b = .24$, $t =1.67$, $p < .05$. The RWA-persecution relationship in the assimilation condition was $b = -.02$, $t < 1$, n.s. The SDO-persecution effect in the non-assimilation condition was $b = .25$, $t = 1.88$, $p < .05$. However, the SDO-persecution effects in the assimilation condition was $b = .38$, $t = 3.32$, $p < .001$. For those given the Mohammed target, the results were: RWA-persecution in non-assimilation condition: $b = .38$, $t = 3.14$, $p < .002$; RWA-persecution in assimilation condition: $b = .12$, $t <1$, n.s.; SDO-persecution effect in the non-assimilation condition was $b = -.19$, $t = -1.52$, n.s. However, the SDO-persecution effect in the assimilation condition was $b = .66$, $t = 4.84$, $p < .0005$; one-tailed significance tests reported throughout this footnote. Despite this similar pattern of significant and non-significant relationships across targets, significant interaction across conditions was only found with respect to SDO and the Muslim target.

7. Once more, we also included the control identity threat item Switzerland risks loosing its true identity because too many cultures are mixed ($\underline{M}= 2.15$, $SD = 1.47$). Again, endorsement of this item that was ambiguous as to whether the identity threat is posed by immigrant

assimilation or immigrant segregation was predicted by both national ($r = .31$, $p = .002$) and

ethnic identity ($r = .22$, $p = .04$); SDO ($r = .34$, $p = .001$); and RWA ($r = .32$, $p = .002$). It also

strongly predicted ethnic persecution across conditions ($r = .53$, $p < .0005$).

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations among Variables in US Sample (Study 1)

Variables	*M*	*SD*	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. SDO	2.41	1.01	.43***	.18*	.20*	.03	.47***
2. RWA	3.81	.97	-	.46***	.31***	.01	.35***
3. National Identity	4.81	1.46		-	.61***	.00	.06
4. Ethnic Identity	4.81	1.39			-	.01	.09
5. Assimilation (0 = no, 1= yes)	.51	.50				-	.13
6. Ethnic persecution score	1.66	.89					-

Note. * *p* < .05. ** *p* <.01. *** *p* < .001.

Table 2

Regressing Ethnic Persecution on Immigrant Assimilation, SDO, and RWA (Study 1, US

Sample; $N = 153$)[a]

Model	Predictors	*b*	β	Adj. R^2	ΔR^2
1				.25***	.27***
	SDO	.35***	.40***		
	RWA	.16*	.17*		
	Assimilation	.21†	.12†		
2				.30***	.07**
	SDO	.34***	.39***		
	RWA	.18*	.19*		
	Assimilation	.21	.12		
	SDO X Assimilation	.50***	.28***		
	RWA X Assimilation	-.30*	-.16*		

Note. [a] All variables were centered.

† $p < .10$. *. $P < .05$. **$p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations among Variables in Swiss Sample

(Study 2)

Variables	*M*	*SD*	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. SDO	1.94	.78	.43***	.32**	.26*	-.03	.44***
2. RWA	3.14	.90	-	.46***	.40***	-.03	.39***
3. National Identity	3.84	1.25		-	.73***	.05	.35***
4. Ethnic Identity	3.66	1.28			-	.10	.35***
5. Assimilation (0=no, 1=yes)	.50	.50				-	.12
6. Ethnic Persecution score	1.30	.61					-

Note. * *p* < .05 ** *p* <.01 *** *p* < .001
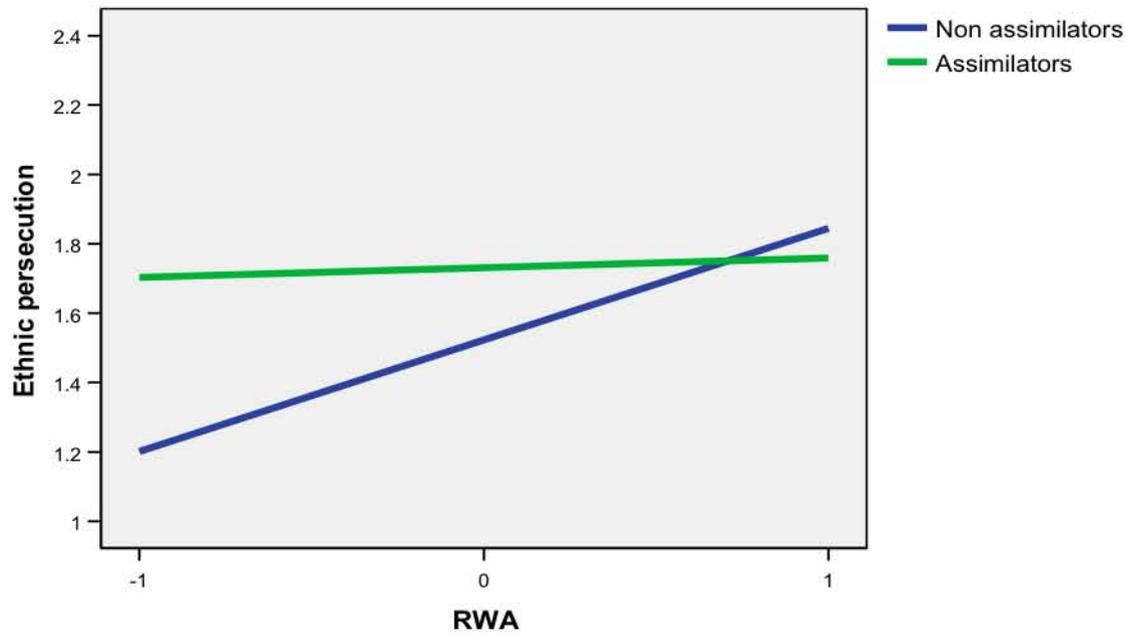
Table 4

Regressing Ethnic Persecution on Immigrant Assimilation, SDO, and RWA (Study 2, Swiss Sample; $N = 94$)[a]

Model	Predictors	*b*	β	Adj. R^2	ΔR^2
1				.24***	.27***
	SDO	.26***	.34***		
	RWA	.17*	.25*		
	Assimilation	.18	.15		
2				.29***	.07*
	SDO	.38***	.49***		
	RWA	.18*	.27*		
	Assimilation	.28*	.23*		
	SDO X Assimilation	.34*	.25*		
	RWA X Assimilation	-.02	-.02		

Note. [a] All variables were centered.

† $p < .10$. * $p < .05$ **$p < .01$ ***$p < .001$
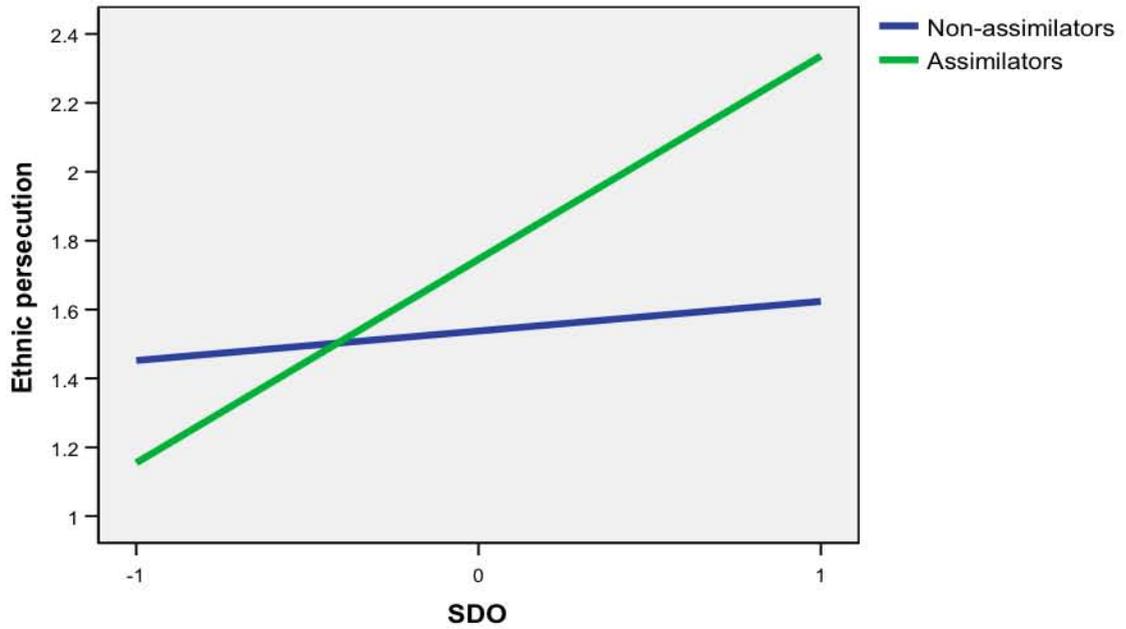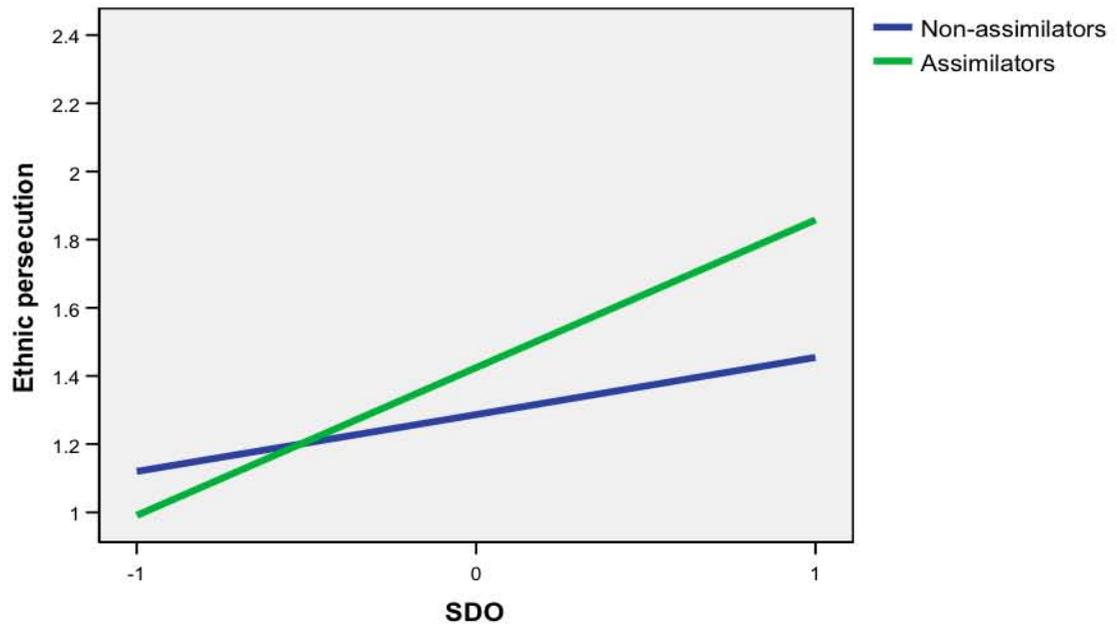
Figure 1

Note. Values at the X-axis range from 1 *SD* below to 1 *SD* above the sample mean.

Figure 2

Note. Values at the X-axis range from 1 *SD* below to 1 *SD* above the sample mean.

Figure 3

Note. Values at the X-axis range from 1 *SD* below to 1 *SD* above the sample mean.