

## Racism, Conservatism, Affirmative Action, and Intellectual Sophistication: A Matter of Principled Conservatism or Group Dominance?

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Using data from 3 different samples, the authors found that: (a) the relationships between political conservatism and racism generally increased as a function of educational sophistication; however, the relationship between political conservatism and anti-Black affect did not increase with educational sophistication. (b) The correlation between political conservatism and racism could be entirely accounted for by their mutual relationship with social dominance orientation. (c) Generally, the net effect of political conservatism, racism, and social dominance orientation on opposition to affirmative action increased with increasing education. These findings contradict much of the case for the *principled conservatism* hypothesis, which maintains that political values that are largely devoid of racism, especially among highly educated people, are the major source of Whites' opposition to affirmative action.

Conservatives generally voice opposition to civil rights legislation on the grounds that, to avoid costly litigation associated with affirmative action, employers would inevitably resort to hiring quotas for women and minorities. Conservatives generally reject suggestions that their opposition to civil rights legislation is motivated by racism. Instead they maintain that this opposition is strictly driven by a principled consideration of fairness, equity, and the goal of establishing a truly color-blind society. The notion that political conservatism is essentially independent of racism has also been proposed by a number of contemporary scholars (Glazer, 1975; Jacoby, 1994; Sowell, 1984). A number of neoconservative intellectuals have even suggested that the major antidote to racial discrimination is more conservatism and more, not less, free-market capitalism (see Cymrot, 1985; Darity, 1989).

This debate among policymakers and commentators raises a number of questions about intergroup attitudes, political ideology, and issues of racial politics. Many studies have shown a connection between political conservatism and opposition to policies such as affirmative action. Yet there have been few examinations of how conservatism relates to dimensions of rac-

ism other than simple anti-Black affect, affect toward civil rights groups, or Black political figures (e.g., Jesse Jackson). Until recently there has also been little research aimed at understanding the conditions under which conservatism drives racial policy views or at specifying the underlying processes that lead from conservatism to opposition to affirmative action and related social policies. Although there are a number of general approaches to the study of the connections among political ideology, racism, and affirmative action attitudes and related issues (e.g., Barker, 1981; Brewer, 1986; Burkey, 1971; Citrin & Green, 1990; Katz & Hass, 1988; Katz, Wackenhut, & Glass, 1986; Kinder & Mendelberg, 1991; McConahay, 1983, 1986; Orfield, 1991; Sears, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Williamson, 1974; Wright, 1977), in this article we restrict our attention to two of these general approaches.

### The Principled Conservatism Perspective

The first approach can be described as the *principled conservatism model*. This approach suggests that conservatism provides ideological, "political" and "principled" motives for objecting to social policies such as affirmative action. Advocates of the principled conservatism perspective argue that, although racism still is a significant factor in American society, neither political conservatism nor conservative opposition to affirmative action policies is driven by racism but rather by concern for "equity," "color-blindness," and "genuine" conservative values.

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In a recent study, Sniderman, Piazza, Tetlock, and Kendrick (1991) not only failed to find evidence of greater racism among conservatives but also found that under certain circumstances, political conservatives appeared to be *less* racist than liberals. Although principled conservatism theorists do not claim that racism and political conservatism will be completely independent of one another, they maintain that this correlation will be largely restricted to poorly educated people and to those who do not adequately understand the "real" underlying values of conservative political ideology. Because the construct of conservatism is more genuinely understood by the well educated rather than the poorly educated, it is alleged that the *essential orthogonality* of racism and political conservatism should be particularly evident among the highly educated elite. In an important passage, the authors stated

It simply cannot be correct to argue that racism nowadays is driven by the values of the right if the readiness to practice a racial double standard is weakest among those who best understand those values and is strongest among those who least understand them. (pp. 437-438)

Similarly, in a review and endorsement of the principled conservatism position, Jacoby (1994) wrote

Education also plays an important part in determining attitudes, but not simply because more education correlates with less racial prejudice: *More educated Whites are also more influenced by political ideas, thus amplifying the role of ideology and diminishing the relevance of race per se.* (emphasis added, p. 37)

In sum, principled conservatism theorists assert that, although political conservatism is associated with opposition to policies such as affirmative action, neither this conservatism nor its association with affirmative action opposition is a function of racism, and particularly not for those who best understand these conservative values, such as the highly educated (Carmines & Merriman, 1993; Sniderman, Piazza, Tetlock, Carmines, Peterson, & Lawrence, 1991). Principled conservative theorists also suggest that when conservatives possess negative affect toward minority groups, it is probably due to the fact that these minority groups favor social policies to which conservatives object on principled grounds, such as "fairness," "justice," "equity," the principles of self-reliance, and other racism-neutral values embraced by conservative ideology (Sniderman & Piazza, 1993).

### The General Group Dominance Perspective

An alternative approach to understanding the relationship among political ideology, racism, and attitudes toward redistributive racial policy (e.g., affirmative action) can be labeled the *general group dominance approach*. There are a number of recent models of race and ethnic conflict that can be regarded as different variants of this general perspective. These models include the *group positions model* (Blumer, 1961; Smith, 1981; Wellman, 1977), the *expectation states model* (Berger et al., 1970; Cohen, 1982), the *realistic group conflict model* (Bobo, 1983, 1988a, 1988b; Jackman, 1991), the *racial oppression model* (Turner, Singleton, & Musick, 1984), *neoclassical hegemony models* (Gramsci, 1976; Michels, 1959; Mosca, 1939; Pareto, 1943; Scott, 1990), and *social dominance theory* (see

Sidanius, 1993). Although there are several differences among these models, they share some essential assumptions, including: (a) to one degree or another, almost all human societies are viewed as group-based hierarchies in which at least one dominant group enjoys a disproportionate share of positive social value (e.g., wealth, health, leisure time, education), and at least one subordinate group endures a disproportionate share of negative social value (e.g., social restrictions, poor health, low-status occupations, prison sentences). (b) At its core, politics can be viewed as an exercise in intergroup competition over scarce material and symbolic resources (e.g., wealth, high relative social status). (c) In this intergroup competition, groups will use ideological instruments such as notions of natural rights, national superiority, national destiny (e.g., manifest destiny, racism, the Protestant work ethic), and political ideology in an effort to legitimize each group's claims over these real and symbolic resources.

From this perspective, because of their common social function in legitimizing group claims for a disproportionate share of positive social value (i.e., material and symbolic resources), these ideological instruments are expected to be highly correlated with one another (see especially Sidanius, 1993). Thus, in contrast to principled conservatism theorists, group dominance theorists assert that political conservatism and racism should be strongly correlated, because both ideologies are motivated by a common desire to assert the superiority of the in-group over relevant out-groups, and they justify such group superiority in terms that appear both morally and intellectually justifiable. Contrary to the predictions of principled conservatism theorists, group dominance theorists expect that the greater the education and sophistication of members of dominant groups, the greater the correlation between racism and political conservatism. This prediction rests on the assumption that more sophisticated people typically possess a more valid and comprehensive understanding of political ideology and its implications for relative intergroup positions within hierarchical social systems (cf. Bobo & Licari, 1989).

Although the group dominance perspective assumes that racism and political conservatism are intimately, dynamically, and functionally related to one another, whether one actually finds empirical evidence for this will, of course, depend on how one operationalizes the two concepts. A number of contemporary researchers have a tendency to define racism in terms of anti-Black affect and measure this construct with feeling thermometers (see, e.g., Sears, 1988, p. 70). However, we believe that although anti-Black affect is certainly related to classical or old-fashioned racism, these two dimensions are far from synonymous. In making a distinction between *paternalistic* and *competitive* racism, van den Berghe (1967) comes closest to the heart of the matter. He argued that in the antebellum South and under the regime of British slavery in the Caribbean, White attitudes toward Blacks could be largely characterized by the term *paternalistic racism* or the combination of relatively positive or neutral affect with the notion of inherent White superiority and Black inferiority. In the postbellum period, affect toward Blacks became quite negative, especially in certain segments of the United States. Regardless of whether the affective component of White attitudes toward Blacks was positive, negative, or neutral, the core element characterizing Whites' attitudes toward Blacks for almost all of American history has been the notion of inherent, relative Black infe-

riority. Because the notion of inherent moral and intellectual inferiority is such a ubiquitous and consistent feature of attitudes by dominant groups toward subordinate groups, we choose to define racism within this inherent inferiority–superiority framework.

Within most of the dominance maintenance perspectives, and social dominance theory in particular (Sidanius, 1993; Sidanius & Pratto, 1993a), the ideology of political conservatism can be considered a central and general legitimizing ideology. One function of this ideology is to provide moral and intellectual legitimacy to the unequal distribution of value to different groups in the social system and to thereby give support to continued hierarchical group relations. The groups in question can be of very general character, ranging from racial groups, class groups, gender groups, national groups, or criminal groups. In modern capitalist states, these legitimizing ideologies are often couched in terms of the work ethic, the positive social benefits of individual selfishness, and the beneficial workings of the free market. Within social dominance theory, the basic desire for group-based, antiegalitarianism and in-group dominance is posited to be a primary motivating force behind political conservatism, racism, and a large array of other social attitudes and ideologies. Within social dominance theory, this basic drive toward group-based inequality is referred to as *social dominance orientation* (SDO; see Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994; Sidanius, Liu, Pratto, & Shaw, 1994; Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1994). To support this reasoning, Sidanius and Pratto (1993b) showed that: (a) the correlation between political conservatism and racism tends to be cross-nationally and cross-culturally consistent, and (b) this correlation can be accounted for in terms of their mutual association with SDO. Pratto, Sidanius, et al. (1994) found that political conservatism correlated an average of .28 with SDO across several college student samples. Pratto, Stallworth, and Sidanius (1994) found a significant correlation between SDO and political conservatism within a recent sample of voters as well.

Also contrary to the expectations of the principled conservatism theorists, supporters of the general dominance position expect that, for members of dominant groups, the greater the intellectual sophistication, the *more* racial policy attitudes such as those toward affirmative action will be associated with racism and attitudes of group dominance, even after one controls for purely political factors. The reason for this prediction lies in the basic assumptions of the group dominance approach that: (a) redistributive social policies such as affirmative action will be perceived as adversely affecting the dominant group's symbolic and material interests; (b) the better the education of members of dominant groups (e.g., Whites), the better they will apprehend how social policy (e.g., affirmative action) promotes their group's material and symbolic interests; and (c) the better the education of members of dominant groups the better they will comprehend how ideologies of in-group superiority support these in-group interests and help maintain relative in-group dominance within the context of hierarchical intergroup relations. Therefore, we propose to examine an issue that has rarely been empirically addressed in the past. Namely, from the theoretical perspectives of the principled conservatism and group dominance paradigms, we will explore the relationships among political conservatism, racism (defined in inferiority–superiority terms), SDO, and support for affirmative action as a function

of intellectual sophistication. As we have seen, these two theoretical perspectives will generally lead to very different predictions. Using two samples of non-Black respondents, we examined the following questions:

(1) What is the relationship between political conservatism and racism as a function of intellectual sophistication? Principled conservatism theorists suggest that advanced educational sophistication attenuates this correlation, whereas group dominance theorists predict the opposite.

(2) Even when controlling for racism, what is the relationship between support for affirmative action and political conservatism as a function of intellectual sophistication? The principled conservatism perspective expects the relationship to become stronger with increasing educational sophistication, whereas the group dominance position makes no strong directional prediction.

(3) After controlling for the effects of political conservatism, what is the relationship between support for affirmative action, on the one hand, and racism and SDO on the other hand? The reasoning of the principled conservatism perspective leads us to expect this relationship to decrease as intellectual sophistication increases, whereas the group dominance theorists expect the exact opposite.

## Study 1

### Method

#### *Participants and Procedure*

The data in Study 1 were originally collected as part of a teacher evaluation study at the University of Texas at Austin in 1986 (Sidanius, 1989). The data comprised 5,655 randomly selected students across the entire university. Only the Euro–American students were studied, and of the original 4,064 such students, 3,861 provided complete data in all of the variables of interest.

#### *Measures*

*Educational level.* This was indexed by the students' educational rank at the university (i.e., freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, or graduate student).

*Political conservatism.* This was assessed in a very traditional manner (e.g., Conover & Feldman, 1981; Sniderman, Piazza, Tetlock, & Kendrick, 1991): by having respondents classify themselves into one of five political categories: very liberal, liberal, middle of the road, conservative, and very conservative.<sup>1</sup>

*Affirmative action attitude.* This was assessed by asking participants to indicate their reactions to the stimulus *affirmative action*. The responses were given on a 5-point scale that ranged from *very positive* to *very negative*. The responses were coded such that a high number represented a very negative reaction to affirmative action.

*Classical racism.* This was defined by the use of a balanced, 4-item

<sup>1</sup> The questionnaire was originally designed to investigate the relationship between social and political attitudes and students' evaluations of teacher performance. The political self-label questionnaire was placed among a cluster of questions assessing the students' background and demographic characteristics (e.g., major, gender, religion). The next item cluster consisted of the teacher evaluation items, which were then followed by questions concerning racial attitudes. The racial policy questions were included in the racial attitude item cluster.

Table 1  
Means, Standard Deviations, and Factor Loadings For Four Indicators of Classical Racism (Texas Sample, Whites Only)

Indicator	M	SD	Factor loading
Which of the following objects, statements or events do you have a positive or a negative feeling towards? Circle the number which comes closest to your feelings.			
A Black supervisor	2.17	0.87	.54
White superiority <sup>a</sup>	1.82	0.80	.74
Racial equality	1.55	0.76	.57
Each ethnic group should stay in its own place. <sup>a</sup>	1.88	0.95	.65

Note. N = 3,846. Items were rated on a scale that ranged from 1 (very positive) to 5 (very negative).

<sup>a</sup> Item was reverse scored.

racial attitudes scale (see Table 1). All items were answered on a 5-point scale that ranged from very positive to very negative. The items were recoded so that a high score indicated a greater level of racism.<sup>2</sup>

To confirm that these four items measured racism unidimensionally, we performed a confirmatory factor analysis using LISREL VII (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1988). Assuming only one correlated error parameter (i.e., a  $\Theta_{\epsilon}$ -term between Items 1 and 4), and despite the very large sample size, the unidimensional model showed an excellent fit to the empirical data,  $\chi^2(1, N = 3,861) = 2.31, p = .13$ , goodness-of-fit index = 0.99. All four of the manifest indicators were related to the underlying construct and consistent with our conception of racism. The underlying latent construct of classical racism was most strongly defined by the item *White superiority* (i.e., 0.74). Cronbach reliability of this construct was quite acceptable ( $r_u = .80$ ).<sup>3</sup>

### Results

To assess the relationships among classical racism, educational sophistication, political conservatism, and affirmative action attitudes, we used LISREL VII with the variance-covariance matrix as input and estimated the correlations among these constructs. In these analyses, classical racism was treated as a latent construct with four manifest indicators, whereas the other three constructs had single indicators (see Table 2). Because neither political conservatism nor affirmative action attitudes can be assumed to be measured with perfect reliability, we used estimates of each construct's reliability to assess each constructs' epistemic correlation with the single indicator. These estimates were inserted into the  $\lambda_x$  matrix. Similarly, estimates of the error terms were inserted into the  $\Theta_{\epsilon}$  matrix (for a discussion of this procedure, see Herting, 1985, pp. 302-306).<sup>4</sup>

As can be seen in Table 2, all but one of the correlations among these estimated latent continua were statistically significant (i.e., the correlation between affirmative action attitudes and educational level = .00). Consistent with a good deal of empirical evidence and the general group dominance perspective, the correlation between political conservatism and classical racism was substantial and highly significant ( $r[3,859] = .55$ ). These results indicate that the greater their political con-

servatism, the more participants endorsed notions such as White superiority. To cross-validate these basic results, we split the sample into two random halves, separately repeated these analyses, and came to the same general conclusions in both subsamples.

### Political Conservatism, Classical Racism, and Intellectual Sophistication

As can be seen in Table 2, education was negatively correlated with political conservatism and well as with classical racism ( $r[3,861] = -.16$ , and  $r[3,861] = -.15$ , respectively). This negative association is quite consistent with the literature for both American and non-American samples, even if its meaning is still under some dispute (e.g., Ekehammar, Nelson, & Sidanius, 1987; Jackman, 1978, 1981; Jackman & Muha, 1984; Nilsson, Ekehammar, & Sidanius, 1985; Sidanius, Pratto, Martin, & Stallworth, 1991; Weil, 1985).

Despite the fact that political conservatism was clearly not independent of racism, if the major thrust of the principled conservatism position is correct, the strength of this relationship should decrease as a function of increasing educational sophistication. To investigate this, we conducted multigroup structural equation analyses using LISREL VII across the five edu-

<sup>2</sup> Note that these racism scores appear to be relatively low. The point of these analyses is to examine the changes in these scores as a function of political conservatism and increasing levels of education.

<sup>3</sup> We assessed the discriminant validity of the racism and affirmative action indices with item and alpha factor analysis. The data showed that these two indices were distinguishable by the fact that the average intercorrelation among the four racism items was .50, and the average correlation between the affirmative action index and the four racism items was only .14. Furthermore, an alpha factor analysis that included all five indices together disclosed that whereas the average communality of the four racism items was .41, the communality of the affirmative action item was merely .05.

<sup>4</sup> The reliabilities of the two single item measures of political conservatism and affirmative action attitudes were based on classical measurement theory's definition of reliability as  $r_u = h_t^2 + v_t^2$ , where  $h_t^2$  is the communality of variable  $t$ , and  $v_t^2$  is the specific variance of  $t$ . As in general factor analytic approaches, the communality of each variable was estimated as the squared multiple correlation of the variable with all of the other variables in the variable set. To estimate this minimal reliability, we simply used all of the variables in the questionnaire battery as estimates of  $h^2$  and added a small component to represent each variable's specific variance. As one would expect, this estimation technique leads to smaller reliability estimates among the least well-educated people and greater reliability estimates among more well-educated people. For example, the affirmative action variable was estimated to have the lowest reliability, ranging from .50 for the freshmen to .62 for the graduate students. Although this estimation technique will most probably lead to a slightly misspecified model and is only a rough approximation, it is still clearly superior to a manifest-variables model for two reasons: (1) we do not make the unrealistic assumption of error-free measurement of the latent continua, and (2) the fact that the resultant communality estimates systematically increased with increasing educational sophistication allows us to recognize and build into our structural equation models the fact that the reliability of attitude measurement is lower in less educated strata and higher in the more educated strata. This fact lowers the chance that our results are merely the result of reliability artifacts. Finally, because education was assumed to be measured without substantial error, its  $\lambda_x$  was fixed at 1.00, and its  $\theta_{\epsilon}$  was fixed at 0.00.

Table 2  
*Product-Moment Correlations Among Educational Sophistication, Affirmative Action Attitudes, Political Conservatism, and Classical Racism (Whites Only)*

Variable	1	2	3	4	M	SD
1. Education	—				2.94	1.20
2. Affirmative action attitudes	.00	—			2.39	1.00
3. Political conservatism	-.16**	.52**	—		3.03	.98
4. Classical racism	-.15**	.27**	.55**	—	1.86	.71

Note.  $N = 3,861$ .

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

educational strata of freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, and graduate students. In these analyses, political conservatism was treated as the dependent variable, and classical racism (using the same four indicators) was treated as the independent variable. Using the same general approach discussed above, we made independent estimates of the reliability of political conservatism within each educational stratum. To allow comparisons across groups, the covariance rather than the correlation matrices were used as input (see Table 3).

There are two major results of interest in Table 3. First, without exception, classical racism was related to political conservatism within all five levels of educational sophistication. Second, despite the negative relationship between racism and educational achievement, and even after factoring in the fact that the reliability of both the racism and conservatism measures were lower for participants with lower levels of education, inspection of the unstandardized regression coefficients reveals that the strength of the relationship between political conservatism and classical racism increased rather than decreased with increasing educational sophistication. Similarly, whereas 10% of the variance of political conservatism could be accounted for by classical racism among freshmen, 34% of this variance could be accounted for by classical racism among graduate students. In other words, the more intellectually sophisticated the students became, the more their political ideologies could be understood in terms of the desire for White superiority and racial dominance.

To assess whether these apparent differences in the strength of relationships across levels of educational sophistication were statistically reliable, we performed a constrained multigroup analysis using LISREL VII. If we designate  $\gamma^8$  as the disattenuated, unstan-

dardized regression coefficient for classical racism for educational group<sup>8</sup>, then the null hypothesis can be stated as

$$\gamma^{\text{Freshmen}} = \gamma^{\text{Sophomores}} = \gamma^{\text{Juniors}} = \gamma^{\text{Seniors}} = \gamma^{\text{Graduate students}}$$

We tested this hypothesis by constraining  $\gamma^8$  to equality across all five educational groups and then observing whether there was a statistically significant deterioration in model fit as indicated by a significant increase in the chi-square value.

The results of this multigroup regression analysis showed deterioration of model fit,  $\chi^2(4, N = 3,861) = 31.51, p \leq .0001$ . This indicates that the null hypothesis of homogeneity in the relationship between political conservatism and classical racism across levels of educational sophistication must be rejected.

#### *Support for Affirmative Action Attitudes, Political Conservatism, Racism, and Intellectual Sophistication*

Principled conservatism protagonists make two major arguments: (a) the degree to which White opposition to affirmative action can be explained in terms of political ideology should increase as a function of intellectual sophistication, and (b) the degree to which opposition to affirmative action can be explained in terms of racism should decrease as a function of increasing intellectual sophistication.

The data concerning the effects of political conservatism appeared most consistent with the principled conservatism position. First, at all levels of educational sophistication, political conservatism was positively associated with anti-affirmative action attitudes. Second, the strength of this relationship increased with increasing intellectual sophistication, being weakest among freshmen ( $b = .13$ ) and strongest among graduate students ( $b = .66$ ; see Table 4). Third, although the multigroup analysis was not statistically significant,  $\chi^2(4, N = 3,861) = 6.95, ns$ , inspection of the multivariate  $B$  coefficients in Table 4 reveals a tendency for an increasing strength in the relationship between political conservatism and affirmative action opposition even after the simultaneous effects of classical racism are considered.

The data were also consistent with the general group dominance paradigm. Not only did the bivariate relationship between classical racism and affirmative action opposition increase among groups with greater educational sophistication, but also this trend held even after the simultaneous effects of political conservatism were considered. For example, although

Table 3  
*Political Conservatism Regressed on Classical Racism as a Function of Educational Sophistication (Whites Only)*

Educational sophistication	Unstandardized regression coefficient	R <sup>2</sup>
Freshmen ( $N = 678$ )	.58**	.10
Sophomores ( $N = 812$ )	.87**	.28
Juniors ( $N = 919$ )	1.08**	.33
Seniors ( $N = 926$ )	1.23**	.35
Graduate students ( $N = 511$ )	1.34**	.34

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

Table 4  
*Affirmative Action Attitudes Regressed on Political Conservatism and Classical Racism as a Function of Educational Sophistication (Whites Only)*

Education sophistication	Independent variables						R <sup>2</sup>
	Political conservatism			Classical racism			
	Bivariate B	Multivariate		Bivariate B	Multivariate		
	B	β	B	β			
Freshmen	0.13	.13	0.13	-0.03	.00	0.00	.02
Sophomores	0.39***	.35**	0.34	0.42**	.14	0.09	.16
Juniors	0.45***	.42**	0.47	0.32**	-.07	-0.04	.20
Seniors	0.53***	.45**	0.45	0.76**	.28*	0.14	.30
Graduate students	0.66***	.50**	0.51	1.20**	.62**	0.30	.52

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

racism made no significant net contribution to affirmative action opposition among freshmen, sophomores, or juniors, it was significantly related to affirmative action opposition among seniors ( $b = .28$ ) and graduate students ( $b = .62$ ). Finally, a formal test of the equality of these multivariate regression coefficients across groups showed that the equality constraint did produce a deterioration of model fit,  $\chi^2(4, N = 3,861) = 9.91$ ,  $p < .04$ .

*Summary*

These data support one aspect of the principled conservatism thesis. Independent of racism, political ideology has an effect on Whites' opposition to affirmative action, and this effect increases as a function of intellectual sophistication. Therefore, one cannot account for conservative opposition to affirmative action solely in terms of racism, especially at higher levels of formal education. However, the positive correlation between political conservatism and racism also increased rather than decreased with greater education.

The secondary data analysis of this university sample contains both advantages and disadvantages. On the positive side, this university sample was quite large and allowed us to test the hypotheses with a good deal of precision and statistical power. The analyses were powerful enough to detect systematic differences in both the level of conservatism and racism as a function of increasing educational sophistication. We also had a number of items measuring the inferiority–superiority aspects of racism, an aspect that is not commonly assessed by most contemporary public opinion surveys. This is a conceptually important but widely neglected aspect of racial attitudes. There are two possible disadvantages associated with the use of this university sample that might account for the fact that we did not find more consistent support for the principled conservatism position. First, this sample contained only university students, imposing a potential restriction of range on intellectual sophistication. Because principled conservatism theorists have formulated their models within the context of large, random samples of adults, many of whom are less educated than university freshmen, the principled conservatism hypothesis might receive

more support if respondents who are less well educated than freshmen were included. Second, we had access only to single indicators of political conservatism and affirmative action attitudes. Despite our efforts to accommodate the fact that these constructs will be less reliably measured within the less educationally sophisticated subsamples, more multifaceted indices of these constructs may provide stronger evidence for the principled conservatism position. To further explore the questions before us in a manner that eliminates the possible limitations of the student sample, in Study 2 we used public opinion data from a random sample of adults from a much broader spectrum of the educational continuum and used multiple indicators for all abstract constructs.

Study 2

*Method*

*Participants*

The data come from the Los Angeles County Social Survey (LACSS) conducted every year by the Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR) at the University of California, Los Angeles. The LACSS is a large omnibus survey of the residents of Los Angeles County that assesses approximately 250 variables, including such things as standard demographics, feeling thermometers concerning numerous social groups, general ethnicity attitudes, political ideology, attributions of social phenomenon, job satisfaction, income distribution, and ethnic dispersal.<sup>5</sup> The 1992 sample consisted of 1,897 randomly selected adults from Los Angeles County during Spring 1992. Of these, 618 were Euro-American, 475 were Latino-American, 282 were Asian-American, 474 were African-American, and 48 were categorized as *others*. However, only a random 34% of the total was queried about their attitudes regarding affirmative action toward Blacks. Most of the analyses were con-

<sup>5</sup> For a more thorough description of the variables in this omnibus interview, see Bobo, Johnson, Oliver, Sidanius, and Zubrinsky (1992). For even further details concerning the Los Angeles County Social Survey 1992, contact Elizabeth Stephenson, Institute for Social Science Research, University of California, Los Angeles, 405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90024-1484.

ducted with the Euro-Americans only, and whenever possible used the entire Euro-American subsample.

### Sampling Procedure

The survey used a random digit dial telephone technique and was conducted by the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing unit of ISSR. To fully capture the views and opinions of Los Angeles's very large Latino population, a Spanish language translation of the questionnaire was developed. Monolingual Spanish speakers and those preferring to conduct the interview in Spanish were interviewed in Spanish. Interviews are conducted by trained student interviewers taking part in an undergraduate survey research methods course and by regular interviewing staff of ISSR. Student interviewers receive 12 hours of training. The surveyors use a 12-call-back procedure, systematically varying the day of the week and time of day, before dropping any numbers from the sample. The study had a lower bound response rate estimate of 45% and an upper bound cooperation rate of 55%. Within each major racial-ethnic group the distribution of sample characteristics on key social background factors (native-born status, sex, education, age, family income, and occupation) closely resemble data from the 1990 Census for Los Angeles County (see Bobo et al., 1992, for details). A systematic analysis of potential nonresponse bias, based on the procedure developed by O'Neil (1979), indicated no pattern of significant nonresponse bias (Greenwell, Strohm, & Bobo, 1994).

### Variables

To further explore the issues raised above, we operationalized six central variables: education level, political conservatism, classical racism, anti-Black affect, affirmative action attitudes, and SDO.

**Education.** Education was indexed by the respondents' amount of formal education. There were six educational classes: non-high-school graduates, high school graduates, some college, associate's degrees, bachelor's degrees, and graduate degrees.

**Political conservatism.** Political conservatism was operationalized by use of three indices: self-classification into one of seven categories (1 = *very liberal* to 7 = *very conservative*), political partisanship (1 = *strong Democrat* to 7 = *strong Republican*), and political issues positions. This was indexed as the respondents' average degree of support for or opposition to eight political issues, including: support for the death penalty, spending to improve the environment, spending for health care, spending for educational improvement, spending for Social Security, spending for the poor, spending for the military and defense, and affective response to business executives (i.e., using the standard feeling thermometer scale). The conservatism variable was coded so that a high score indicated higher conservatism. The final political conservatism index was simply the average standardized score across the three major indices ( $\alpha = .72$ ).

**Classical racism.** Classical racism was defined by use of three manifest indicators concerning the attributions used to explain the relatively poor social situation of Blacks compared with Whites. The global question read

Now I will read a list of reasons some people give to explain why, on average, Blacks have worse jobs, income and housing than White people. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following reasons why Blacks are worse off, on average, in this country.

The three specific attributions were: (1) "Because most Blacks have less in-born ability to learn," (2) "Because other races are just more capable than Blacks," and (3) "Because most Blacks just

don't have the motivation or will power to pull themselves up out of poverty."

The responses were given on a 5-point scale that ranged from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*, and the items were scored such that a high score represented a high degree of classical racism. A LISREL, congeneric measurement model with the entire White subsample indicated that all three manifest indicators had substantial and statistically significant loadings on the underlying latent continuum ( $\alpha = .68$ ).

**Anti-Black affect.** Anti-Black affect was defined in the standard manner by use of a feeling thermometer. Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they felt warm feelings toward Blacks; 100 degrees represents *very warm and favorable* feelings and 0 represents *very cold and unfavorable* feelings.

**SDO.** SDO is a central construct within social dominance theory (Sidanius, 1993; Sidanius & Pratto, 1993a) and is conceived of as the degree to which people possess general antiegalitarian values and wish to establish hierarchically organized, group-based systems of social inequality. In this sample, SDO was measured by four items (for a full version of the SDO Scale, see Pratto, Sidanius, et al., 1994). The four items were: (1) "Sometimes war is necessary to put other countries in their place," (2) "This country would be better off if inferior groups stayed in their place," (3) "Some people are just better cut out than others for important positions in society," and (4) "Some people are better at running things and should be allowed to do so."<sup>6</sup> Although the alpha coefficient was relatively low ( $\alpha = .60$ ), use of the congeneric measurement model showed that all four manifest indicators were substantially and significantly related to the underlying latent continuum.

**Affirmative action attitudes.** A random third of the total sample was asked questions concerning affirmative action for Blacks ( $N = 477$ ). Within this subsample, affirmative action support was assessed by four indicators: (a) "Affirmative action for Blacks is unfair to Whites," (b) "Affirmative action in education gives an opportunity to qualified Blacks who might not have had a chance without it," (c) "Affirmative action for Blacks may force employers to hire unqualified people," and (d) "Affirmative action in the workplace for Blacks helps make sure that the American workforce and economy remain competitive." All questions were answered on a 5-point scale that ranged from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree* and scored such that a high score represents opposition to affirmative action.

Use of confirmatory factor analysis showed that all four indices had substantial loadings on a single underlying construct and that the overall reliability appeared reasonably acceptable ( $\alpha = .63$ ).<sup>7</sup>

### Results

Table 5 shows the pairwise correlations among the variables defined above for the White respondents only. Consistent with the results from Study 1, political conservatism was positively correlated with classical racism ( $r [482] = .23, p < .01$ ). Also consistent with the findings from Study 1, education was negatively correlated with classical racism ( $r [604] = -.25, p < .01$ ).

Whereas anti-Black affect was positively correlated with classical racism ( $r [600] = .26, p < .01$ ), this correlation was much too low to consider these two measures as equivalent to one another. Furthermore, anti-Black affect was also not significantly related to either political conservatism ( $r [483] = .00$ ), or to

<sup>6</sup> The numbers in Figure 1 refer to the numbers associated with the classical racism and SDO variables.

<sup>7</sup> In addition, the discriminant validity of these indices were attested to by the fact that an exploratory alpha factor analysis tended to reproduce the distinctions among these hypothesized dimensions.

**Table 5**  
*Pairwise Correlations Among Political Conservatism, Education, Anti-Black Affect and the Latent Continua of Affirmative Action Attitudes, Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) and Classical Racism (Los Angeles County Residents, Whites Only)*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	M	SD
1. Affirmative action opposition	—						3.18	0.83
2. Political conservatism	.39**	—					0.17	0.71
3. SDO	.27**	.30**	—				2.98	0.76
4. Classical racism	.19**	.23**	.47**	—			2.11	0.73
5. Anti-Black affect	.10 <sup>a</sup>	.00 <sup>a</sup>	.09*	.26**	—		41.51	18.66
6. Education	-.08 <sup>a</sup>	-.01 <sup>a</sup>	-.23**	-.25**	-.12***	—	3.79	1.49

Note. Largest pairwise  $N = 614$ .  
<sup>a</sup> *ns.*  
 \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

opposition to affirmative action ( $r [210] = .10, ns$ ). Therefore, if one had used anti-Black affect as an indicator of racism, principled conservatism's thesis of the essential independence of political conservatism and racism would have been easily supported.

Finally, inspection of Table 5 also provides support for the construct validity of the measure of SDO. Consistent with the expectations of social dominance theory (see Pratto, Sidanius, et al., 1994), this index was substantially related to opposition to affirmative action ( $r [203] = .27, p < .001$ ); political conservatism ( $r [468] = .30, p < .001$ ); classical racism ( $r [578] = .47, p < .001$ ), and anti-Black affect ( $r [579] = .09, p < .05$ ).

*Political Conservatism, Racism, SDO, and Intellectual Sophistication*

The primary issue of concern to us here is whether these relationships increase or decrease as a function of increasing educational sophistication. If the principled conservatism thesis is correct, these correlations should decrease in strength with increasing intellectual sophistication. From a general dominance perspective, these correlations should increase, even after one considers the increasing reliability with which each construct is measured as a function of increasing intellectual sophistication.

To examine this question, we used only the data from White respondents and formed three categories of educational sophistication: (a) low education (high school diploma or less;  $N = 96$ ),<sup>8</sup> (b) medium education (some college or associate's degree;  $N = 164$ ), and (c) high education (bachelor's or graduate degree;  $N = 198$ ). We used a multigroup structural equation model to examine the covariances of political conservatism, on the one hand, and anti-Black affect, classical racism, and SDO, on the other hand. We performed three separate analyses in which the index of political conservatism was regressed on each of the independent variables in turn.<sup>9</sup> The unstandardized regression coefficients across the three categories of educational sophistication are found in Table 6.

*Conservatism and anti-Black affect.* Consistent with our expectations, the relationship between anti-Black affect and political conservatism was essentially zero across all three levels of educational sophistication (i.e., .00, -.01, and .00).

*Conservatism and classical racism.* Contrary to the expectations of the principled conservatism position, classical racism was not related to political conservatism among the poorly educated (i.e.,  $b = .23, ns$ ) but was related to political conservatism among the well educated and those with some college and beyond ( $b = .80, p < .01$ ; and  $b = .44, p < .01$ ).

*Conservatism and SDO.* Similarly, and again contrary to principled conservatism theory, political conservatism was not related to SDO among the poorly educated (i.e.,  $b = .39, ns$ ), but it was related to political conservatism among the relatively well educated.

*Affirmative action attitudes as a function of political conservatism, classical racism, and SDO.* The principled conservatism position argues that conservatives' opposition to social policies such as affirmative action is primarily motivated by political and moral values rather than by racism or the desire to dominate outgroups, particularly among highly educated and intellectually sophisticated people. The general group dominance position, on the other hand, suggests that these latter motives, rather than becoming less important as a function of educational sophistication, will become increasingly important with increasing levels of intellectual sophistication. Furthermore, this will hold even when one simultaneously considers the effects of political conservatism.

To examine these questions, we tested a series of multigroup structural equation models in which attitudes toward affirmative action served as the dependent variable, and political conservatism plus one other covariate—such as anti-Black affect (Model 1), classical racism (Model 2), and SDO (Model 3)—served as the independent variables. Because only about a third of the White sample was asked about affirmative action for Blacks, dividing the White sample into three educational categories as before would have resulted in groups too small for use with LISREL. Therefore, we divided the White sample into only two educational categories: Group 1—those who did not graduate from either high school or

<sup>8</sup> We combined the educational categories to increase the sizes of each group necessary to satisfy the sample size demands of structural equation analysis.

<sup>9</sup> These analyses were conducted separately so as to avoid possible problems of multicollinearity among the variables of classical racism, anti-Black affect, and SDO.

Table 6

*Unstandardized Regression Coefficients for Political Conservatism Regressed on Positive Affect Toward Blacks, Racism, and Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) for Three Levels of Education*

Education level	Model 1: anti-Black affect	Model 2: classical racism	Model 3: SDO
High school or below ( $N = 96$ )	.00 <sup>a</sup>	.23 <sup>a</sup>	.39 <sup>a</sup>
Some college and associate's degree ( $N = 164$ )	-.01 <sup>a</sup>	.80**	.54**
Bachelor's degree and graduate degree ( $N = 198$ )	.00 <sup>a</sup>	.44**	.63**

<sup>a</sup> *ns.*

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

college ( $N = 95$ ), and Group 2—those with bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, or doctoral degrees ( $N = 66$ ; see Table 7).

Model 1 examined affirmative action attitudes as a function of both political conservatism and anti-Black affect. Consistent with the principled conservatism position, the results showed that, even after controlling for the effect of anti-Black affect, political conservatism was positively related to opposition to affirmative action. Furthermore, this effect was found for both the less well-educated ( $B = 0.963$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and the more well-educated ( $B = 0.794$ ;  $p < .05$ ). However, somewhat inconsistent with the expectations of the principled conservatism model, controlling for political conservatism, anti-Black affect did not independently contribute to affirmative action opposition among the relatively poorly educated.

Model 2 assessed the relative effects of political conservatism and classical racism on affirmative action attitudes. The results again largely confirmed the principled conservatism expectation: Even though racism had significant bivariate correlations with affirmative action opposition among both the less well-educated and more well-educated subsamples, after the effect of political conservatism was controlled classical racism made no contribution to the prediction of affirmative action opposition within either educational category ( $B = 0.002$ , *ns*;  $B = .342$ , *ns*, respectively).

Model 3 examined the relative contributions of political conser-

vatism and SDO as a function of educational sophistication. Here, however, there are two differences to note. First, among the relatively poorly educated respondents, neither political conservatism nor SDO made independent contributions to affirmative action opposition. Second, among the relatively well-educated respondents, both political conservatism and SDO made independent contributions to affirmative action opposition ( $B = 0.563$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ;  $B = 0.407$ ,  $p \leq .05$ , respectively). Contrary to the expectations of the principled conservatism thesis, rather than being less important among well-educated respondents, these results suggest that generalized group dominance motives are more strongly associated with racial policy attitudes.

#### *Political Conservatism and Racism: The Social Dominance Connection*

Even though political conservatism and racism are not "logically" connected, social dominance theory suggests that they are psychologically connected because both constructs will be strongly driven by the same underlying psychological motive, namely, SDO. If so, it is reasonable to expect that when one controls for SDO, the residual correlation between political

Table 7

*Unstandardized and Standardized Regression Coefficients Relating Opposition to Affirmative Action Policies as Functions of Political Conservatism, and Affect Toward Blacks (Model 1), Racism (Model 2), and Social Dominance Orientation (SDO; Model 3)*

Education level	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Political conservatism	Anti-Black affect	Political conservatism	Classical racism	Political conservatism	SDO
Non-high-school and non-college graduates ( $N = 95$ )						
Bivariate $B$	1.017**	0.012*	—	0.407**	—	1.285*
Multivariate $B$	0.963**	0.008 <sup>a</sup>	1.162**	.002 <sup>a</sup>	.856*	0.189*
Multivariate $\beta$	.611	.133	.610	.002	.503	.168
Bachelor's degrees and graduate degree ( $N = 66$ )						
Bivariate $B$	0.784***	.002 <sup>a</sup>	—	1.135**	—	1.118**
Multivariate $B$	0.794**	-.001 <sup>a</sup>	.733**	.342*	.563**	0.407*
Multivariate $\beta$	.791	-.032	.715	.155	.524	.334

<sup>a</sup> *ns.*

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

conservatism and classical racism should largely, if not completely, disappear.

Using LISREL, we observed that the product-moment correlation between the latent construct of classical racism and political conservatism was .29 ( $p < .001$ ). As can be seen in Figure 1, after accounting for the effect of SDO, the residual correlation between racism and political conservatism was not significantly different from 0 (i.e.,  $\Psi = -.05, ns$ ). In other words, consistent with social dominance theory, once one considers the effects of SDO, the correlation between political conservatism and racism evaporates. We also estimated two other latent models, to serve as a basis for comparison: one in which classical racism and SDO were mutually driven by political conservatism (Model 2) and one in which political conservatism and SDO were mutually driven by classical racism (Model 3; see standardized coefficients in Figure 1).

In contrast to Model 1, political conservatism did not account for the correlation between SDO and racism (Model 2; residual  $\Psi = .56, p < .001$ ). Likewise, racism did not fully account for the correlation between political conservatism and SDO (Model 3; residual  $\Psi = .28, p < .001$ ).

Because the idea that SDO can account for the relationship between classical racism and political conservatism is central to the social dominance paradigm, a stronger case could be made if the results in Figure 1 could be replicated in an independent sample. Also, although the operationalization of SDO in Study 2 was reasonably adequate, we now have measures of this construct that have a substantially greater correspondence with its conceptual definition (see Pratto, Sidanius, et al., 1994). Therefore, we attempted to replicate these basic findings using stronger indices of the underlying constructs.

### Study 3

#### Method

#### Participants and Procedure

This sample consisted of undergraduates at the University of California, Los Angeles across all educational strata (i.e., freshman to senior) in Fall 1993. Participants' median age was 21.16 years. The participants were enticed to participate by the offer of four \$50 prizes (prizes actually were awarded, and all ethnic groups were eligible for the rewards). Only the Euro-American students with complete data for all variables of concern were used ( $N = 148$ ) for the analyses. The students were given a long questionnaire primarily assessing their attitudes toward life on campus and their political and racial views. They also were given the full 16-item Social Dominance Orientation Scale (see Pratto, Sidanius, et al., 1994).

#### Variables

For these analyses, we used only items measuring political conservatism, classical racism, and SDO. A 7-point response scale was used for all items, with the endpoints defined as *strongly disagree/disapprove* and *strongly agree/favor*.

**Political conservatism.** Political conservatism was defined by use of four indices: political party preference (1 = *strong Democrat* to 7 = *strong Republican*), political partisanship (1 = *very liberal* to 7 = *very conservative*), degree of support for free-market capitalism, and the students' average degree of support for or opposition to five policy issues,

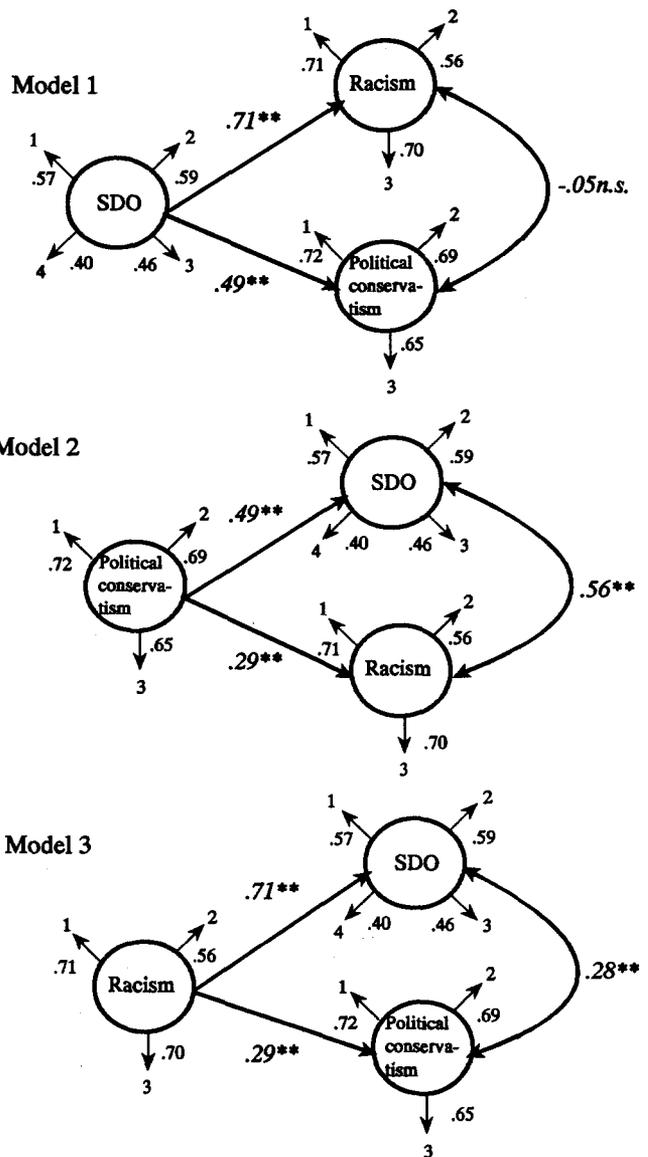


Figure 1. Three alternative models of the interface between racism, political conservatism, and social dominance orientation (SDO; Sample 2).

including (a) greater assistance to the poor, (b) increased taxation of the rich, (c) universal health care, (d) reduced public support for the homeless, and (e) reduced benefits for the unemployed. The alpha reliability of the entire four-index scale was .84 ( $M = 3.91, SD = 5.25$ ).

**Classical racism.** Classical racism was defined with four indices that included responses to the phrases: (1) "Blacks are inherently inferior" and (2) "White superiority." In addition, participants were asked to rate several attributions for the lower standard of living among Blacks. The attributions were: (3) "Blacks are less intellectually able than other groups" and (4) "Blacks are lazier than other groups" ( $\alpha = .82, M = 1.58, SD = 3.88$ ).

**SDO.** SDO was defined by use of six of the items from the Social Dominance Orientation Scale (see Pratto, Sidanius, et al., 1994): (1) "If certain groups of people stayed in their place, we would have fewer problems," (2) "It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom," (3) "Sometimes other groups

must be kept in their place," (4) "Group equality should be our ideal," (5) "We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups," and (6) "Increased social equality" ( $\alpha = .85$ ,  $M = 2.36$ ,  $SD = 7.44$ ).<sup>10</sup>

### Results

Using full-scale structural equation models, we repeated the series of partial correlation analyses reported in Study 2. Consistent with the results from the previous two studies, there was a positive and statistically significant correlation between the latent continua of political conservatism and classical racism ( $r [146] = .23$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ). Following the reasoning of social dominance theory and the results from Study 2, one would expect that the residual correlation between political conservatism and classical racism would disappear once the effects of SDO have been partialled out (see Figure 2).

Inspection of Figure 2 confirms this expectation and shows that the results from Study 2 were replicated. Inspection of the standardized coefficients in Figure 2 (Model 1) reveal that after SDO is partialled out, the residual correlation between racism and political conservatism was no longer positive or statistically significant ( $r [145] = -.06$ ,  $ns$ ). Also consistent with the results from Study 2, political conservatism was not able to completely account for the relationship between SDO and racism, and racism was not able to completely account for the relationship between SDO and political conservatism. The residual correlations remained positive and statistically significant in both cases ( $r [145] = .37$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ;  $r [145] = .46$ ,  $p \leq .01$ , respectively).

### Discussion

Advocates of the principled conservatism model make three claims about the racial attitudes of White Americans: (1) political conservatism is essentially orthogonal to classical racism; (2) although conservatism might be associated with racism among the intellectually unsophisticated, among those who are intellectually sophisticated this correlation should be weak or nonexistent; (3) conservative opposition to government-sponsored social policy, such as affirmative action, is not driven by racism or the desire for group dominance but rather by political values that are independent of these two factors. More important, the unique contribution of political conservatism to racial policy attitudes should increase as a function of increasing educational sophistication.

The general dominance paradigm maintains that (a) political conservatism and racism are not orthogonal to one another but rather share a common core concerning the desire to establish unequal and hierarchical relationships among groups; (b) the relationship between racism and political conservatism will increase, not decrease, as a function of increasing intellectual sophistication; (c) whereas political conservatism may influence opposition to affirmative action independently of classical racism or group dominance drives, the effect of these latter factors on affirmative action attitudes will nevertheless increase rather than decrease as people become more intellectually sophisticated.

Congruent with the principled conservatism position (and with several other models, including symbolic racism, see Sears, 1988), the data showed that opposition to affirmative action among Whites cannot be exclusively understood in terms of ei-

ther anti-Black affect, classical racism, or SDO. As suggested by Sniderman, Piazza, Tetlock, and Kendrick (1991) and many others, political values that are quite irreducible to these more "aggressive" factors seem involved as well. Most important for the principled conservatism position, the net effect of political values on affirmative action attitudes tended to increase as a function of increasing intellectual sophistication.

However, this is the only point for which we found support for the principled conservatism position. Proponents of this model (e.g., Jacoby, 1994; Sniderman, Piazza, Tetlock, & Kendrick, 1991) suggest that although political conservatives might well harbor some negative affect toward Blacks, conservatism should neither be strongly correlated with classical racism nor with related constructs such as SDO. To the degree that there is any relationship between political conservatism and racism, this relationship should systematically decrease with advancing educational and intellectual sophistication. However, data from all three samples here offer no support for this hypothesis. The exact opposite trend presented itself. The correlations among political conservatism, racism, and SDO tended to be weakest among the most poorly educated and strongest among the very well educated. Because these analyses adjusted for the fact that these attitudes will be less reliably measured within less well-educated groups (Converse, 1980; Judd, Krosnick, & Milburn, 1981; Judd & Milburn, 1980), these results are not likely to merely reflect measurement artifacts.

From a social dominance perspective, principled conservatism theorists came to the wrong conclusion, but for the right reason. Following the lead of Converse's (1964) classic work on political attitudes among Americans, both social dominance and principled conservatism theorists assume that better educated people have a more well-understood, enriched, and constrained set of political attitudes than the less well-educated. Both theories also assume that the better educated have a more accurate understanding of how the implications of sociopolitical beliefs might affect the nature of power and status relationships among groups within the social system. However, unlike principled conservatism theorists, social dominance theorists suggest that political conservatism and racism are not essentially independent of one another but rather are both functionally and psychologically associated. Because well-educated people really do have a more valid understanding of the social implications of both political conservatism and racism, there is every reason to believe that they will also be the ones to best apprehend this inherent association and its larger social implications.

We are not simply stating that political conservatism and classical racism are related, for there is now relatively little doubt that this is true (for evidence see Dator, 1969; Eysenck, 1951, 1971, 1976; Eysenck & Coulter, 1972; Jackson & Kirby, 1991; Nias, 1972; Sidanius, 1987; Sidanius & Ekehammar, 1979; Sidanius, Ekehammar, & Ross, 1979; Stone & Russ,

<sup>10</sup> We used only 6 of the 16 items in this scale so as not to have a disproportionate number of items compared to the number of indices used to define conservatism and racism and also because of the well-known difficulties in trying to fit a latent structural equation model using a large number of manifest indicators. The correlation between this 6-item scale and the full 16-item Social Dominance Orientation Scale was .96.

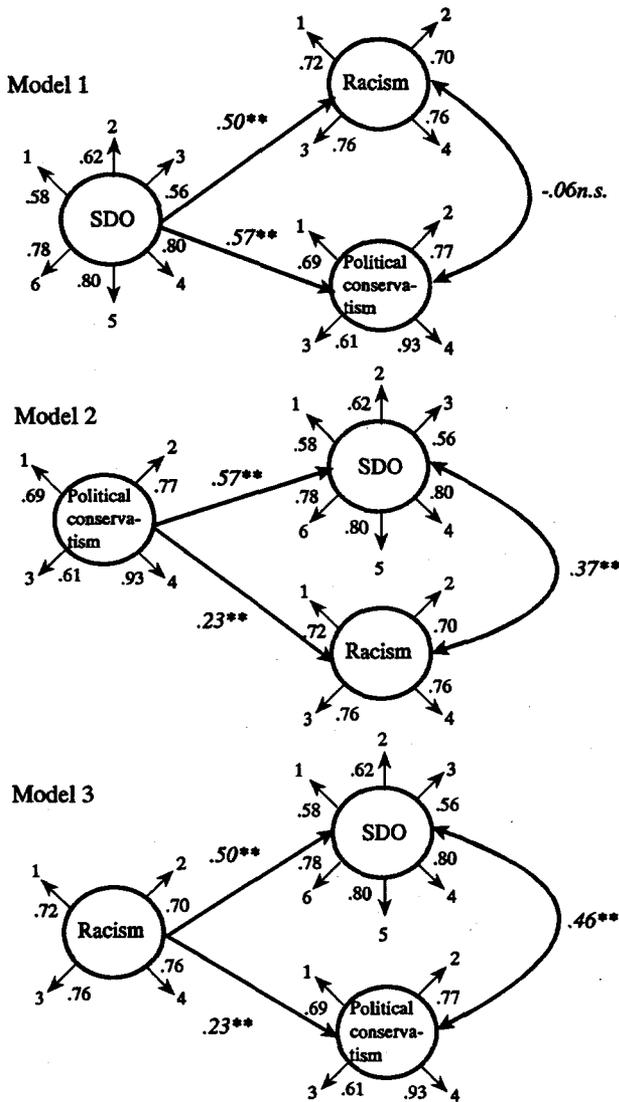


Figure 2. Three alternative models of the interface between racism, political conservatism, and social dominance orientation (SDO; Sample 3).

1976; Wilson, 1973; Wilson & Bagley, 1973; Wilson & Lee, 1974; Wilson & Patterson, 1968; also Barker, 1981). The social dominance perspective provides us with an explanation as to why racism and political conservatism are so consistently and ubiquitously related. Social dominance theory suggests that the relationship between these two domains is grounded in their proponents' common desire for nonegalitarian and hierarchically structured group relations.<sup>11</sup> Political conservatism can be most often regarded as concerned with the social equality of economic or class groups (e.g., Centers, 1949; Eysenck, 1951, 1971; Hamilton, 1972; Huber & Form, 1973; Welch & Foster, 1987), whereas racism is most directly concerned with the equality of racial groups. However, at the cores of both belief systems lies an opposition to group equality, and the endorsement of hierarchical group relations. This interpretation of the interface between racism and political conservatism is most di-

rectly supported by Study 3, which showed that the positive correlation between racism and political conservatism completely disappeared once SDO was partialled out (see also Sidanius & Pratto, 1993b). Using a random sample of Swedish young people, Sidanius and Pratto (1993b) also found that the correlation between racism and political conservatism could be completely accounted for in terms of generalized antiegalitarianism.

It is important to point out, however, that the group dominance paradigm is not the only theoretical paradigm one could use to understand the apparent ubiquitousness of the correlation between political conservatism and racism. Members of the Frankfurt school argue that this correlation can be explained in terms of their common root in the authoritarian personality (Adorno, Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950), whereas supporters of Wilson's (1973) general conservatism model would argue that it can be explained in terms of a common aversion to stimulus-and-response uncertainty. However, the supporters of these alternative paradigms have yet to present empirical evidence showing that the correlation between racism and political conservatism can be eliminated once the theoretically assumed connection between them is taken into account.

Although it would be a serious mistake to assume that Whites' opposition to redistributive policies such as affirmative action are primarily driven by either racism or group dominance motives, assuming that racism and group dominance motives become less important as intellectual sophistication among Whites increases, would be equally mistaken. Both sets of motives are important to understanding Whites' opposition to redistributive social policies, and both sets of motives appear to become increasingly important the more sophisticated one becomes.

Our results also underscore the need to be very careful about how to conceptualize and measure the concept of "racism." Although anti-Black affect is an interesting variable in its own right and should certainly be correlated with racism, it is best not to regard the two as synonymous or to treat anti-Black affect as simply another index of racism. Following a common dictionary definition of the term, we propose that racism be thought of as

... any theory or doctrine stating that inherited physical characteristics, such as skin color, facial features, hair texture, and the like, determine behavior patterns, personality traits, or intellectual abilities. In practice, racism typically takes the form of a claim that some human 'races' are superior to others (*The New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia*, 1993).

Defined in this manner, it easy to see that racism can be regarded as a special case of SDO (Pratto, Sidanius, et al., 1994) and, following van den Berghe's (1967) reasoning, racism might or might not be associated with negative affect toward an assumably inferior racial group. Dominance theorists would assert that classical racism, rather than being a construct whose time has past in American politics, still plays a very active role in American politics and the politics of many other modern states (e.g., the former Yugoslavia). We have seen that anti-Black affect was only mildly correlated with our measure of racism and, consistent with results found by Sears (1988) and others, anti-Black affect had essentially

<sup>11</sup> See similar, but not identical reasoning by Rokeach (1979).

no relationship with political conservatism at any level of educational or intellectual sophistication. Therefore, had one decided to restrict the definition of *racism* to anti-Black affect, the evidence would have been overwhelmingly consistent with the principled conservatism thesis.

In conclusion, we can concur with Sniderman and Piazza (1993) that the racial policy attitudes of Whites are neither undetermined nor simple, a position that no serious student of contemporary American racial attitudes has contested. However, the principled conservatism proposition that the relationship between political conservatism and affirmative action, on the one hand, and racism, on the other hand, dissipates with increasing intellectual sophistication was clearly not supported. Moreover, it is simply not the case that principled conservatism (i.e., conservatism among the intellectually sophisticated) obviates the influence of group dominance beliefs in individuals' formulation of support for group-relevant social policies. Classical racism and SDO were strongly related to affirmative action attitudes, especially among well-educated respondents. These results belie the oft-made claim, by both political party leaders and many social scientists, that classical racism and concerns over relative group status are primarily to be found among the poor and the ignorant. In fact, given the greater political participation of better-educated people (e.g., Milbrath & Goel, 1977), the presence of racism and group dominance striving among this group may have more influence on the output of public policy than is the case with less politically active *lumpenproletariat*. In short, these data suggest that our understanding of the interface among racism, political conservatism, and racial policy attitudes is likely to be highly flawed if we view racism and group dominance drives as being largely restricted to the ideologically unsophisticated.

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