


Differential and Domain-Specific Associations Among Right-Wing Authoritarianism, Social Dominance Orientation, and Adolescent Delinquency

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Abstract

Using a dual-process model (DPM) framework, this research examined whether right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) and social dominance orientation (SDO) are differentially associated with adolescent delinquency. In Study 1 ($N = 847$; $M_{\text{age}} = 15.96$) and Study 2 ($N = 340$; $M_{\text{age}} = 16.64$), adolescents completed measures of RWA, SDO, and engagement in different forms of delinquency. In Study 2, adolescents also reported their beliefs about obeying different laws. Across both studies, adolescents who endorsed greater RWA engaged in lower levels of delinquency and those who endorsed greater SDO engaged in higher levels of delinquency. Findings from Study 2 suggest that these associations are contingent on the domain-specific purpose of the law being violated and are also present with adolescents' beliefs about their obligation to obey laws. These results extend the DPM, demonstrating that RWA and SDO are differentially linked with youth delinquency.

Keywords

right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, adolescent delinquency, dual-process model

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Adolescence is a developmental period characterized by heightened engagement in delinquency, substance use, and other lawbreaking behaviors (Moffitt, 1993). However, engaging in delinquency during adolescence is associated with several adverse outcomes later in adulthood, including more serious criminal offending, poorer health, and lower well-being (e.g., Lanctôt, Cernkovich, & Giordano, 2007; Simons, Stewart, Gordon, Conger, & Elder, 2002). Thus, adolescent delinquency has been considered an important public health concern, and a large body of research has sought to identify contextual, biological, and emotional risk factors affiliated with various forms of adolescent problem behavior (e.g., Loeber, 1990).

Theoretical models of adolescent delinquency have highlighted the importance of considering *motivation* in research seeking to elucidate variation in problem behavior (Bratt, 2011). One set of motivational factors that may be particularly important for understanding adolescent delinquency, but have received little empirical attention, are adolescents' social and political values. Sociopolitical values including right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) and social dominance orientation (SDO) are theorized to develop during adolescence and guide behavior and beliefs in a manner consistent with their motivational goals (McAdams & Olson, 2010).

According to the dual-process model (DPM; Duckitt, 2001), RWA and SDO are rooted within distinct motivational goals of security and power, respectively. Engaging in delinquency and health-risk behaviors may pose threats to personal security while potentially providing an opportunity to exercise power by infringing on the rights and well-being of others. For adolescents higher in RWA, avoiding delinquency may be a way to achieve safety and security, whereas for adolescents higher in SDO, engaging in delinquency may be a way to establish dominance and promote status (Allen, Porter, McFarland, Marsh, & McElhaney, 2005). The purpose of this research was to utilize the DPM to examine whether RWA and SDO are differentially associated with various forms of adolescent delinquency and problem behavior.

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RWA and SDO

RWA and SDO are thought to represent distinct “sociopolitical values” or “ideological attitudes” that constitute important individual differences in social beliefs and behaviors (Duckitt, 2001). RWA has been characterized as a malleable, yet relatively stable composite of characteristics favoring adherence to tradition, submission to authority, and aggression toward out-group members (e.g., Duckitt, 2001). In contrast, SDO is characterized by a general preference for social hierarchy (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994). Both RWA and SDO are hypothesized to emerge in late childhood and adolescence (e.g., Duckitt, 2001), when individuals begin to establish personalized goals and motives (McAdams & Olson, 2010). With age, these values are thought to stabilize and help structure social beliefs and guide social decisions (e.g., Duckitt, 2001). The majority of research on RWA and SDO among youth has focused on intergenerational transmission and socialization (e.g., Duriez, Soenens, & Vansteenkiste, 2007; Poteat, Espelage, & Green, 2007). Less research has examined the social and behavioral implications of RWA and SDO during adolescence, including whether these values are associated with engagement in delinquency.

Although RWA and SDO are often moderately and positively correlated (Sibley & Duckitt, 2008), the DPM posits that these values are rooted within different motivational goals that have distinct implications for social beliefs and behavior (Duckitt, 2001). According to the DPM, RWA is based on motivational goals for social cohesion and collective security, whereas SDO is based on motivational goals of group-based dominance and superiority. As a means of achieving these goals, those who endorse higher levels of RWA adopt attitudes and engage in behaviors that support group cohesion and security (Duckitt, 2001). In contrast, those higher in SDO adopt attitudes and engage in behaviors that support dominance and competition (Duckitt, 2001). Greater RWA is associated with more strongly valuing conformity, traditionalism, and security, and placing a lower value on self-direction and personal freedom (Altemeyer, 1998a; Duckitt, 2001; Saucier, 2000). Those who endorse higher SDO prioritize power, superiority, and dominance (Altemeyer, 1998a; Lippa & Arad, 1999); express a greater desire for social status (Pratto, Stallworth, Sidanius, & Siers, 1997); and view the world as more competitive (Duckitt, 2001). Thus, individuals who endorse higher RWA generally support greater social order and are more concerned with personal safety, whereas individuals who endorse higher SDO generally favor self-supremacy, social hierarchy, and competition.

Given these distinct motivational goals, there are circumstances in which RWA and SDO are differentially associated with beliefs and behaviors. This “differential prediction hypothesis” has received considerable empirical support, particularly in the domains of political attitudes and prejudice (Duckitt & Sibley, 2010). For instance, RWA

(but not SDO) is associated with greater support for political candidates that uphold traditional values and greater prejudice toward social deviants that threaten traditional values (e.g., rock stars), which may promote in-group cohesion and conformity (Duckitt, 2006; Van Hiel & Mervielde, 2002). In contrast, SDO (but not RWA) is associated with greater support for political parties that are anti-immigration and greater prejudice toward socially subordinate groups (e.g., handicap individuals), which may promote hierarchy and power (Duckitt, 2006; Van Hiel & Mervielde, 2002). Thus, RWA and SDO may be differentially linked to social beliefs and behaviors that are thought to distinguish their theorized motivational goals.

Prior research has often examined RWA and SDO in the context of intergroup phenomena (Duckitt & Sibley, 2010). However, an emerging body of research suggests that RWA and SDO may have broader and differential implications for a wide range of social and interpersonal processes, including those affiliated with antisocial behavior. Individuals who score higher in RWA endorse greater support for rules and authority across a variety of contexts, including child rearing (Altemeyer, 1996), education (Altemeyer, 1981), and legal settings (Heaven & Bucci, 2001). In contrast, greater SDO is associated with lower sympathy, empathy, and moral reasoning, as well as a greater tendency to make unethical business decisions (Duckitt, 2001; Heaven & Bucci, 2001; Lippa & Arad, 1999; Sidanius et al., 2013; Son Hing, Bobocel, Zanna, & McBride, 2007). Although not directly tested, this existing research hints at differential links between RWA, SDO, and antisocial tendencies. Given that problem behavior in adulthood is generally preceded by adolescent delinquency (Simons et al., 2002) and that sociopolitical values are developing during adolescence (Duckitt, 2001), RWA and SDO may be important factors that are differentially associated with engagement in adolescent delinquency.

RWA, SDO, and Adolescent Delinquency

The DPM framework may be applied to adolescent delinquency. Engagement in delinquency often entails defiance of authority, violations of social rules, and threats to personal security (Oosterhoff & Metzger, 2016). Thus, engaging in delinquency directly conflicts with many of the principles central to RWA, including obedience of authority, structure, and maintenance of social order, and contradicts the theorized underlying motivational goals of social conformity and security. In contrast, rule breaking may be more consistent with the principles and motivational goals of SDO. Defying rules and laws may be one way to express and promote power, status, and interpersonal competition. Some types of delinquency (e.g., fighting or stealing) are thought to be motivated by beliefs that the perpetrator is superior to the victim or to the legal system more broadly (Petherick &

Sinamon, 2009). In addition, developmental models propose that some adolescents ascribe greater status to delinquent peers because they possess more adult-like qualities, such as greater autonomy (Moffitt, 1993). Thus, delinquency may provide adolescents with short-term social or economic advantages at the expense of others (see Warr, 2002, for a review), including feelings of power and superiority as well as increased social status. Engaging in delinquency may therefore support the principles of self-supremacy and competition central to SDO and the theorized underlying motivational goals of superiority and dominance.

Very little research has examined the behavioral correlates of RWA and SDO during adolescence, but preliminary evidence suggests that these values may be differentially associated with adolescent delinquency. In separate early adolescent samples, values consistent with RWA (i.e., conformity, tradition, security) were correlated with lower engagement in delinquency (Sarracino, Presaghi, Degni, & Innamorati, 2011), and greater SDO was correlated with higher adolescent relational aggression (Mayeux, 2014). However, research has not yet directly and comprehensively assessed whether RWA and SDO are differentially linked with engagement in different forms of delinquency. Directly examining how RWA and SDO are connected with adolescent delinquency may provide further evidence for the nuanced motivational roles of these values and identify important individual differences in adolescent problem behavior.

The Present Research

Prior research suggests that sociopolitical values concerning RWA and SDO are differentially linked with a variety of social and interpersonal processes, including those implicated in antisocial behavior (e.g., Altemeyer, 1996; Son Hing et al., 2007). The purpose of this research was to examine the intersection among RWA, SDO, and adolescents' engagement in various forms of delinquency. Consistent with the DPM and based on prior research (Sarracino et al., 2011; Son Hing et al., 2007), it was hypothesized that greater endorsement of RWA would be associated with lower engagement in delinquency and greater endorsement of SDO would be associated with greater engagement in delinquency.

Study 1

Given the paucity of research examining the social implications of RWA and SDO in adolescence, the purpose of Study 1 was to first examine initial associations among RWA, SDO, and delinquency in a large adolescent sample. Specifically, we examined associations among RWA, SDO, and adolescent engagement in multiple forms of problem behavior, including general delinquency (i.e., acts of crime and age-inappropriate forms of misconduct) and illicit substance use (smoking, drinking, drug use; Miller, Melnick, Barnes, Sabo,

& Farrell, 2007). Illicit substance use was included because it is a common form of lawbreaking behavior among adolescents within the United States that may have legal consequences and poses a threat to personal safety (Oosterhoff & Metzger, 2016). Routine activities theory (Osgood, Wilson, O'Malley, Bachman, & Johnston, 1996) and ecological-developmental models (Ferris, Oosterhoff, & Metzger, 2013) propose that involvement in adult-led organized activities may lower engagement in adolescent delinquency by providing greater adult supervision and promoting developmental skills and competencies. Involvement in specific organized activities is also an important predictor of RWA and SDO (Oosterhoff, Ferris, & Metzger, 2014; Oosterhoff, Ferris, Palmer, & Metzger, 2016). To account for this potential confound, analyses controlled for adolescents' involvement in organized activities.

Method

Participants and procedure. Data were drawn from the second wave of the Youth Civic Development Project (YCDP; Oosterhoff et al., 2014). Participants for the YCDP were recruited from two U.S. high schools. The first high school is located within a small town with a population of approximately 7,000 residents designated as rural by the most recent U.S. Census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The second high school is located within a midsized city with a population of 70,000 residents. The total sample consisted of 847 high school students in Grades 9 to 12 ($M_{age} = 15.96$, $SD = 1.22$, range = 13-20 years; 59.5% female). Adolescents were Caucasian/White (87.9%), African American/Black (2.8%), Asian/Pacific Islander (1.5%), Biracial (5.4%), or Other (2.4%). The racial/ethnic composition of the sample was similar to the high schools from which it was drawn (LaFleur, Shaw, Coutts, & Larson, 2013). Relatively equal numbers of students were enrolled from each of the two sampled high schools (small, rural town: 52%; midsized city: 48%).

Questionnaires were administered in participants' social studies classrooms during regularly scheduled class time.¹ Students who obtained both signed parental permission and completed assent forms were allowed to participate in the study. Members of the research team were available to answer questions and to ensure that participants understood all survey items. Participants were eligible to win randomly drawn cash prizes ranging in value from US\$25 to US\$100.

Measures

RWA. Similar to prior research (Metzger, Oosterhoff, Palmer, & Ferris, 2014), five items ($\alpha = .81$) from the RWA scale (Altemeyer, 1996) were used to assess adolescents' RWA (e.g., "Authorities such as parents and our national leaders generally turn out to be right about things, and the radicals and protestors are almost always wrong"). Responses were given on a 6-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to

6 (*strongly agree*). Higher ratings indicated stronger endorsement of RWA.

SDO. Participants completed eight items ($\alpha = .77$) measuring social dominance from an established measure (Pratto et al., 1994). Participants rated each item (e.g., “Some groups of people are simply not the equal of others”) on a 7-point scale from 1 (*very negative*) to 7 (*very positive*). Higher ratings indicated greater endorsement of SDO.

General delinquency and illicit substance use. Based on prior research (Ferris et al., 2013), adolescent problem behavior was assessed with 13 items measuring general delinquency and illicit substance use. *General delinquency* was assessed with seven items ($\alpha = .61$) and included adolescents’ involvement in behaviors that posed harm to others or have legal ramifications (i.e., gotten into a fight, been in trouble with the law, shoplifted something from a store, destroyed school or other property, took something that belonged to a classmate without their knowing it) as well as age-inappropriate behavior and acts that defy an authority figure (i.e., skipped school or played hooky, stayed out all night without parents’ permission). *Illicit substance use* was assessed using four items ($\alpha = .65$; gotten drunk off alcohol, smoked cigarettes, smoked marijuana, used prescription pills that were not meant for you). Adolescents reported how often they participated in each form of delinquency during the past 30 days. Responses were given on a 4-point scale from 1 (*never*) to 4 (*often*). Higher values represented greater engagement in general delinquency and illicit substance use.

Organized activity involvement. Organized activity involvement was measured using 17 items adapted from prior research (Ferris et al., 2013). Adolescents reported how often they engaged in 17 different types of structured activities including religious activities, sports, school and community clubs, arts/music, and volunteering in an average month on a 5-point scale from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*). Overall mean scores were calculated, with higher values indicating greater organized activity involvement ($\alpha = .84$).

Analytic Strategy

Structural equation modeling (SEM) utilizing weighted least squares means and variance adjusted (WLSMV) estimation was used to test associations among adolescent RWA, SDO, and engagement in delinquency. WLSMV was chosen over other estimation techniques because response options for measures of delinquency were categorical and contained fewer than five categories (see Rhemtulla, Brosseau-Liard, & Savalei, 2012). Item-level indicators were used to specify latent variables representing general delinquency and illicit substance use. In addition, an item-level latent variable was used to represent RWA. Given that SDO was measured with four positively worded and four negatively worded items,

three parcels were created by averaging positively and negatively worded items and were used to specify indicators of a latent variable representing SDO (Little, Cunningham, Shahar, & Widaman, 2002; see Supplemental Material for parcel item composition). A measurement model was first evaluated, followed by a structural model which specified RWA and SDO as exogenous latent variables and general delinquency and illicit substance use as endogenous latent variables while accounting for organized activity involvement and demographic characteristics (i.e., age, gender, school location).² Model fit was evaluated with standard metrics, and acceptable fit was indicated with $\chi^2/df < 3.0$, comparative fit index (CFI) $> .90$, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) $< .08$ (Ullman & Bentler, 2003). All analyses were performed in Mplus Version 7.

Results

Table 1 displays the means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations among all study variables. Race/ethnicity was not significantly correlated with any indices of delinquency or sociopolitical values. In general, age was positively correlated with more engagement in delinquency and illicit substance use. Females were less engaged in delinquency than males. Adolescents from the midsized city were more engaged in illicit substance use than adolescents from the small, rural town. Greater organized activity involvement was correlated with lower involvement in delinquency and illicit substance use.

A measurement model was estimated which specified item-level latent variables encapsulating general delinquency, illicit substance use, and RWA, and parcels representing SDO. Covariances were specified among all latent variables. The fit parameters for the model were acceptable, $\chi^2/df = 2.77$, $p < .001$, CFI = .93, RMSEA = .05; 90% confidence interval (CI) = [.04, .05]. Standardized estimates for the factor loadings were all significant and ranged from .42 to .89 (see Supplemental Material). RWA and SDO were not significantly correlated with one another ($r = .02$, $p = .63$). General delinquency and illicit substance use were positively correlated ($r = .80$, $p < .001$). RWA was negatively correlated with delinquency ($r = -.35$, $p < .001$) and substance use ($r = -.30$, $p < .001$). SDO was positively correlated with delinquency ($r = .24$, $p < .001$) and substance use ($r = .18$, $p < .001$).

An SEM was estimated to test whether RWA and SDO were differentially associated with engagement in delinquency and illicit substance use, controlling for age, gender, school location, and organized activity involvement. Covariances were specified among the residual variances for the general delinquency and illicit substance latent variables. Covariances were also specified between RWA, SDO, and organized activity involvement. The fit parameters of the model were acceptable, $\chi^2/df = 2.72$, $p < .001$, CFI = .91, RMSEA = .05; 90% CI = [.04, .05]. Table 2 presents the

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Bivariate Correlations Among Study 1 Variables (N = 847).

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Covariates																	
1. Age	-.04	.03	-.02	-.09*	-.07	.02	.05	.02	.05	-.01	.13*	.08*	-.07	.19*	.11*	.11*	.02
2. Gender		.00	-.06	.17*	.05	-.17*	-.06	-.08*	.06	-.12*	.00	-.01	-.11*	-.05	.02	-.04	.03
3. Race/ethnicity			.19*	-.04	-.04	-.01	.00	.01	-.03	-.04	-.01	.00	-.07	-.02	.04	-.03	-.04
4. School location				.01	-.02	-.06	.01	-.05	.02	-.02	.13*	-.04	.01	-.11*	-.16*	-.04	-.03
5. Organized activities					.26*	-.12*	-.02	-.07*	-.14*	-.07*	-.09*	-.12*	-.09*	-.14*	-.12*	-.15*	-.07*
Sociopolitical values																	
6. RWA						.03	-.08*	-.11*	-.13*	-.08*	-.14*	-.18*	-.12*	-.13*	-.09*	-.23*	-.08*
7. SDO							.14*	.15*	.05	.06	.09*	.09*	.05	.12*	.08*	.05	-.01
Delinquency																	
8. Fight								.36*	.09*	.16*	.26*	.27*	.12*	.23*	.22*	.11*	.05
9. Trouble with the law									.09*	.33*	.32*	.28*	.14*	.23*	.22*	.16*	.18*
10. Shoplift										.10*	.28*	.20*	.16*	.29*	.18*	.33*	.15*
11. Destroy property											.28*	.10*	.39*	.20*	.14*	.15*	.18*
12. Skipped school												.33*	.09*	.41*	.33*	.36*	.20*
13. Out all night													.08*	.41*	.31*	.26*	.17*
14. Steal from classmate														.02	.04	.07*	.10*
Illicit Substance use																	
15. Gotten drunk															.44*	.44*	.49*
16. Cigarettes																.36*	.20*
17. Marijuana																	.28*
18. Prescription pills																	
M	—	—	—	2.43	3.95	2.73	1.21	1.05	1.06	1.07	1.28	1.25	1.11	1.32	1.21	1.11	1.06
SD	—	—	—	0.71	0.96	1.05	0.52	0.27	0.27	0.33	0.62	0.64	0.39	0.70	0.65	0.67	0.28

Note. Gender coded 1 = male, 2 = female; race/ethnicity coded 1 = non-White/Caucasian, 2 = White/Caucasian; school location coded 1 = midsized city, 2 = rural. RWA = right-wing authoritarianism.

SDO = social dominance orientation.

*p < .05.

Table 2. Standardized Estimates, Unstandardized Estimates, Standard Errors, and 95% CIs for Structural Model Predicting General Delinquency and Illicit Substance Use in Study 1.

	General delinquency				Illicit substance use			
	β	B	SE	95% CI	β	B	SE	95% CI
Covariates								
Age	.13*	.12	.05	[.03, .21]	.25***	.24	.05	[.14, .34]
Gender	-.09*	-.21	.12	[-.43, .01]	-.01	-.05	.12	[-.28, .18]
School	-.11	-.24	.12	[-.46, -.02]	-.18***	-.43	.12	[-.66, -.19]
Organized activities	-.10*	-.15	.06	[-.28, -.03]	-.15***	-.22	.09	[-.39, -.06]
Sociopolitical values								
RWA	-.30***	-.34	.06	[-.46, -.22]	-.28***	-.32	.07	[-.45, -.19]
SDO	.19***	.21	.05	[.12, .31]	.13**	.15	.06	[.04, .27]
R ²			.21				.24	

Note. Gender coded 1 = male, 2 = female; school coded 0 = midsized city, 1 = rural. Model fit: $\chi^2/df = 2.72$, $p < .001$, CFI = .91, RMSEA = .05; 90% CI = [.04, .05]. CIs = confidence intervals; RWA = right-wing authoritarianism. SDO = social dominance orientation; CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.

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

standardized estimates, unstandardized estimates, standard errors, and 95% CIs for the structural paths as well as the variance explained (R^2) for each outcome. After controlling for demographic characteristics and organized activity involvement, adolescents who endorsed higher levels of RWA reported lower levels of engagement in general delinquency and illicit substance use. In contrast, adolescents who endorsed higher levels of SDO reported greater engagement in general delinquency and illicit substance use.³

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to provide initial evidence of differential associations between RWA and delinquency compared with SDO and delinquency in a large sample of adolescents. RWA and SDO were both associated with adolescents' engagement in delinquency and substance use, even after accounting for a variety of demographic covariates (age, gender, school location) and adolescents' organized activity involvement. However, associations varied for RWA and SDO in the anticipated direction.

Consistent with hypotheses and the DPM (Duckitt, 2001), adolescents who endorsed greater RWA were less engaged in general delinquency and illicit substance use, whereas those who endorsed greater SDO were more engaged in general delinquency and illicit substance use. Potentially, engaging in delinquency may conflict with the central concepts and underlying motivational goals of RWA while supporting the central concepts and underlying motivational goals of SDO. Many of the delinquent behaviors assessed in this study involved direct defiance of established rules or laws (e.g., being in trouble with the law), and illicit substance use may entail threats to personal safety. Those higher in RWA may engage in lower levels of delinquent behavior and substance

use as a means of obeying authority and promoting individual security. It is also possible that adolescents lower in RWA are more inclined to engage in delinquency and substance use, potentially as a means of explicitly defying authority. Conversely, those higher in SDO may violate rules and laws to obtain immediate, short-term advantages, including monetary gain (e.g., stealing), feelings of power and excitement (e.g., fighting, skipping school, staying out late), and increased peer status (e.g., substance use), which might promote social hierarchy (Diego, Field, & Sanders, 2003; Matsueda, Kreager, & Huizinga, 2006). These findings support the motivational roles and early distinctions between RWA and SDO, and suggest that these values may have important implications for social behavior during adolescence.

These findings should be interpreted in light of certain limitations. Although item-level latent variable modeling was used to directly model measurement error, measures of delinquency and substance use had low internal consistency. Additional research is needed to replicate these findings with a broader measure of delinquency. Inconsistent with prior research (Duckitt, 2001), RWA and SDO were uncorrelated with one another in this study. Potentially, the use of abbreviated scales may not have captured the full breadth of these constructs. In addition, the DPM proposes that RWA and SDO may guide both *behaviors* and *beliefs* in a manner consistent with the theorized motivational goals. Thus, support for the DPM would be further bolstered if similar distinctions among RWA and SDO were found within adolescents' beliefs about laws. In Study 2, we attempted to address these limitations by using full measures of RWA and SDO and including assessments of adolescents' beliefs about laws. We also sought to extend the findings from Study 1 by testing whether RWA and SDO were associated with a wider range of delinquent behaviors that vary based on the purpose of law being violated.

Study 2

The purpose of Study 2 was to replicate and extend findings from Study 1 by examining whether RWA and SDO are associated with behaviors and beliefs concerning violations of laws designed to regulate different issues. Laws are necessary to promote qualitatively distinct facets of the common good, such as protecting the rights and well-being of others, preventing personal harm, and establishing customs that help sustain order (Oosterhoff & Metzger, 2016). In Study 1, delinquency was assessed through an established measure that distinguished between general delinquency and substance use, which may not have clearly captured violations of laws designed for different purposes (e.g., “being in trouble with the law” may encompass several delinquent acts, including seatbelt violations, trespassing, or assault).

Social domain theory has been used to categorize laws designed for different functions (Oosterhoff & Metzger, 2016), and posits that individuals judge and reason about social information from different domains of social knowledge (Turiel, 1983). *Moral* issues concern the welfare of others, justice, and rights (e.g., fighting, cheating, stealing). In contrast, *conventional* issues are alterable, agreed-upon regulations that are dependent on authority and used to govern social interaction (e.g., parking). *Personal* issues pertain to matters of personal preference that are not subject to moral or conventional authority and are not typically regulated by rules or laws (e.g., friendship choices). *Prudential* issues also concern personal matters, but in the context of self-harm (e.g., seatbelt use). Some issues are *multifaceted* and may entail different features which lead individuals to interpret the action from different domains (e.g., loitering may be viewed as a conventional issue by some but a personal issue by others). Adolescents judge and reason about laws from different domains of social knowledge, suggesting that adolescents recognize the domain-specific purpose of social regulations (Oosterhoff & Metzger, 2016).

A goal of Study 2 was to extend findings from Study 1 by testing whether RWA and SDO are differentially associated with laws designed to regulate domain-specific issues. For instance, prudential issues are those that explicitly concern self-harm and subsequently pose an immediate threat to personal safety. RWA is thought to be motivated by greater concern for safety and security (Duckitt, 2001). Thus, those higher in RWA may be more inclined to follow laws that regulate prudential issues. In contrast, engaging in moral forms of delinquency entails infringing on the rights and welfare of others and may subsequently provide an opportunity to express power and promote status. Given that SDO is thought to be motivated by superiority and dominance, those higher in SDO may be more likely to violate laws regulating moral issues. Utilizing domain-specific categories of delinquency may further elucidate the motivational functions of these values by testing whether associations among RWA, SDO, and delinquency vary based on the type of law being violated.

An additional goal of Study 2 was to provide a more thorough application of the DPM to adolescent delinquency by examining associations among RWA, SDO, and adolescents' beliefs about an obligation to obey domain-specific laws. Adolescents' beliefs concerning an obligation to obey laws represent an important component of their social-cognitive understanding that is linked with their engagement in delinquency (Oosterhoff & Metzger, 2016). Demonstrating consistent domain-specific associations among RWA, SDO, and beliefs about an obligation to obey laws provides stronger evidence of the motivational function of RWA and SDO and further supports that links between these values and delinquency are rooted within adolescents' understanding of the nature of the rule being violated. It was hypothesized that greater endorsement of RWA would be associated with less engagement in prudential delinquency and a stronger endorsement of an obligation to obey laws regulating prudential issues among adolescents. It was also hypothesized that greater endorsement of SDO would be associated with higher levels of moral delinquency and endorsement of a lower obligation to obey laws regulating moral issues among adolescents.

Method

Participants and procedure. Participants were 340 students in Grades 9 to 12 ($M_{age} = 16.64$, $SD = 1.37$, range = 13–20 years, 58.2% female) from a high school in a mid-Atlantic U.S. city. Adolescents were Caucasian/White (73.6%), African American/Black (5.9%), Asian American/Pacific Islander (4.0%), Hispanic/Latino (2.0%), Other (3.6%), or Biracial (10.9%). The racial/ethnic composition was similar to the community from which the sample was drawn (LaFleur et al., 2013). All participants indicated that they were U.S. citizens.

Participants completed a survey during scheduled social studies class periods.⁴ Only students who obtained both signed parental permission and completed assent forms were allowed to participate in the study. Members of the research team were available to answer questions and to ensure that participants understood all survey items. All participating adolescents were eligible for randomly drawn cash prizes and gift cards ranging in value from US\$10 to US\$100.

Measures

RWA. RWA was assessed with the full 20-item ($\alpha = .92$) RWA scale (Altemeyer, 1998b; for example, “What our country really needs is a strong, determined leader who will crush evil, and take us back to our true path”). Responses ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Higher scores indicated greater RWA.

SDO. SDO was assessed using the full 14-item ($\alpha = .89$) SDO measure (Pratto et al., 1994). Participants rated their feelings

toward certain statements (e.g., “Some people are just inferior to others”) on a 7-point scale from 1 (*very negative*) to 7 (*very positive*). Higher scores indicated greater SDO.

Domain-specific delinquency. Similar to prior research (Oosterhoff & Metzger, 2016), participants rated the frequency with which they engaged in 10 delinquent acts that corresponded to four distinct categories of behavior consistent with social domain theory (moral, conventional, drug-related prudential, personal/conventional multifaceted). Given that each typology was assessed with only a few items, item-total correlations (ITCs) were used as an indicator of internal consistency, with acceptable values $>.30$ (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Participants rated how often they had violated laws regulating moral issues (three items; stealing money, vandalism, fighting in public; ITCs = .30 to .49), conventional issues (three items; fishing without a license, parking violations, failure to register vehicle; ITCs = .30 to .32), drug-related prudential issues (two items; using drugs like cocaine, using prescription pills not meant for you; ITC = .30), and personal/conventional multifaceted issues (two items; loitering, going to a park after dark; ITC = .49) in the past 30 days on a 5-point scale from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*). Higher scores indicated greater delinquency within the respective category.

Beliefs about an obligation to obey laws. Similar to prior research (Oosterhoff & Metzger, 2016), participants rated the degree to which they have to follow laws regulating the 10 delinquency behaviors described above (even if they do not agree with them) on a 5-point scale from 1 (*don't have to*) to 5 (*definitely have to*). ITCs within each subscale ranged from .54 to .80. Higher ratings indicated a stronger obligation to obey laws.

Organized activity involvement. Similar to Study 1, 17 items assessed how often adolescents engaged in different types of structured activities including church, sports, school and community clubs, arts/music, and volunteering in an average month on a 5-point scale from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*). Mean scores were calculated ($M = 1.90$, $SD = 0.66$), with higher values indicating greater organized activity involvement ($\alpha = .82$).

Analytic Strategy

SEM was used to test associations among RWA, SDO, and domain-specific forms of delinquency and beliefs about laws. Item-level indicators of engagement in moral, conventional, drug-related prudential, and personal/conventional multifaceted forms of delinquency were specified as separate first-order latent variables. RWA and SDO were measured using unidimensional scales that consisted of positively and negatively worded items. Thus, similar to Study 1, item parceling was used to counterbalance and average positively

and negatively framed items into three separate indicators of latent variables representing RWA and SDO, respectively. A measurement model was first evaluated, followed by a structural model which specified RWA and SDO as exogenous latent variables and domain-specific forms of delinquency as endogenous latent variables while accounting for organized activity involvement and demographic characteristics (i.e., age, gender, race/ethnicity).⁵ A similar series of analyses were then tested using measures of adolescents' beliefs about an obligation to obey domain-specific laws instead of their engagement in delinquency. Model fit was evaluated with standard metrics, and acceptable fit was indicated with $\chi^2/df < 3.0$, CFI $> .90$, and RMSEA $< .08$ (Ullman & Bentler, 2003).

Results

Table 3 displays the means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations among study variables. In general, age was positively associated with more engagement in conventional forms of delinquency. Non-White/Caucasian adolescents engaged in higher levels of drug-related prudential forms of delinquency and endorsed lower obedience judgments for laws regulating moral, conventional, and multifaceted issues than White/Caucasian adolescents. Greater organized activity involvement was correlated with a greater obedience beliefs for laws regulating conventional forms of delinquency.

RWA, SDO, and engagement in delinquency. A measurement model was estimated which specified item-level latent variables encapsulating engagement in moral, conventional, drug-related prudential, and personal/conventional multifaceted forms of delinquency and parcels representing RWA and SDO. Covariances were specified among all latent variables. The fit parameters for the model were strong, $\chi^2/df = 1.25$, $p = .05$, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .03; 90% CI = [.01, .04]. Standardized estimates for factor loadings were all significant and ranged from .35 to .92 (see Supplemental Material). Domain-specific forms of delinquency were all strongly correlated ($r_s = .78$ to $.90$, $p_s < .001$). RWA was negatively correlated with drug-related prudential ($r = -.25$, $p = .01$) and personal/conventional multifaceted ($r = -.30$, $p < .001$) delinquency. RWA was not significantly correlated with conventional ($r = -.11$, $p = .17$) or moral ($r = .05$, $p = .62$) delinquency. SDO was negatively correlated with moral delinquency ($r = .37$, $p < .001$) but not significantly correlated with conventional ($r = .07$, $p = .42$), drug-related prudential ($r = .09$, $p = .34$), or personal/conventional multifaceted ($r = -.02$, $p = .81$) forms of delinquency.

The fit parameters for the SEM testing associations among RWA, SDO, and domain-specific engagement in moral, conventional, drug-related prudential, and personal/conventional multifaceted forms of delinquency were acceptable, $\chi^2/df = 1.96$, $p < .001$, CFI = .91, RMSEA = .05; 90%

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviations, and Bivariate Correlations for Study 2 Variables ($N = 340$).

	Moral			Conventional			Prudential-drug		Multifaceted	
	Steal	Vandalize	Fight	Parking	Register	Fish	Pills	Drugs	Loiter	Park
Delinquency										
Age	.02	-.01	.06	.17*	.07	.03	.01	.06	.00	.06
Gender	-.03	-.08	-.09	-.09	.10	-.09	-.04	-.09	.08	-.05
Race/ethnicity	-.08	.01	-.04	.04	-.02	-.04	-.08	-.13*	-.05	-.13
Organized activities	.06	.10	.09	.08	-.05	.02	-.05	.05	.04	.09
RWA	-.02	-.01	-.13*	-.15*	-.08	.04	.06	-.10*	-.13*	-.16*
SDO	.07	.12*	.21*	-.02	.02	.05	.07	.05	.01	-.01
<i>M</i>	1.08	1.05	1.04	1.24	1.22	1.10	1.07	1.21	1.30	1.25
<i>SD</i>	0.30	0.28	0.22	0.54	0.56	0.46	0.31	0.64	0.65	0.66
Beliefs about obedience										
Age	-.02	-.01	-.06	-.01	-.03	-.02	-.06	-.01	-.09	-.09
Gender	-.08	-.10	.00	.02	-.01	.05	-.02	-.01	.01	.09
Race/ethnicity	.18*	.14*	.17*	.05	.02	.15*	-.03	.05	.20*	-.08
Organized activities	.03	.00	.00	.05	.06	.11*	.00	.05	.10	.08
RWA	-.16*	.02	.14*	.17*	-.04	.14*	.07	.05	.21*	.06
SDO	-.19*	-.08	-.11	.05	.00	-.18*	.02	-.02	-.06	-.03
<i>M</i>	4.46	4.23	4.17	2.75	2.48	3.60	2.34	2.88	4.22	3.13
<i>SD</i>	1.07	1.12	1.20	1.37	1.45	1.30	1.45	1.38	1.25	1.30

Note. Gender coded 1 = male, 2 = female; race/ethnicity coded 1 = non-White/Caucasian, 2 = White/Caucasian. For the purpose of space, parcels for RWA and SDO were collapsed into a single scale. RWA = right-wing authoritarianism. SDO = social dominance orientation.

* $p < .05$.

CI = [.04,.06]. Table 4 displays the standardized estimates, unstandardized estimates, standard errors, and 95% CIs for the structural paths as well as the variance explained (R^2) for each outcome. Adolescents who reported greater RWA engaged in less conventional, drug-related prudential, and personal/conventional multifaceted forms of delinquency. RWA was not significantly associated with engagement in moral forms of delinquency. Adolescents who reported greater SDO engaged in more moral and drug-related prudential forms of delinquency. SDO was not significantly associated with engagement in conventional or personal/conventional multifaceted forms of delinquency.⁶

RWA, SDO, and obligation to obey laws. A measurement model was estimated which specified item-level latent variables encapsulating adolescents' obligation to obey laws regulating moral, conventional, drug-related prudential, and personal/conventional multifaceted forms of delinquency, as well as parcels representing RWA and SDO. Covariances were specified among all latent variables. The fit parameters for the model were acceptable, $\chi^2/df = 2.59$, $p < .001$, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .07; 90% CI = [.06, .08]. Standardized estimates for factor loadings were all significant and ranged from .61 to .90. RWA and SDO were positively correlated ($r = .46$, $p < .001$). RWA was positively correlated with obedience beliefs for laws that regulate drug-related prudential ($r = .22$, $p < .001$) and personal/conventional multifaceted ($r = .18$, $p = .003$) forms of delinquency. RWA was not

significantly correlated with obedience beliefs for laws that regulate conventional ($r = .08$, $p = .18$) or moral ($r = -.11$, $p = .07$) delinquency. SDO was negatively correlated with obedience beliefs for laws that regulate moral ($r = -.19$, $p = .002$) and drug-related prudential ($r = -.13$, $p = .05$) delinquency. SDO was not significantly correlated with obedience beliefs for laws that regulate conventional ($r = -.05$, $p = .48$) or personal/conventional multifaceted ($r = -.02$, $p = .77$) forms of delinquency.

The fit parameters for the SEM testing associations among RWA, SDO, and beliefs about an obligation to obey laws regulating domain-specific moral, conventional, drug-related prudential, and personal/conventional multifaceted forms of delinquency were acceptable, $\chi^2/df = 3.19$, $p < .001$, CFI = .93, RMSEA = .07; 90% CI = [.06, .08]. Table 5 displays the standardized estimates, unstandardized estimates, standard errors, and 95% CIs for the structural paths as well as the variance explained (R^2) for each outcome. Adolescents higher in RWA reported a greater obligation to obey laws regulating drug-related prudential and personal/conventional multifaceted issues. RWA was not significantly associated with an obligation to obey laws regulating moral forms or conventional forms of delinquency. Adolescents higher in SDO reported a lower obligation to obey laws regulating moral and drug-related prudential forms of delinquency. SDO was not significantly associated with an obligation to obey laws regulating conventional or personal/conventional multifaceted forms of delinquency (see Note 6).

Table 4. Standardized Estimates, Unstandardized Estimates, Standard Errors, and 95% CIs for Structural Model Predicting Domain-Specific Types of Delinquency in Study 2 (N = 340).

Covariates	Moral delinquency				Conventional delinquency				Prudential-drug delinquency				Multifaceted delinquency			
	β	B	SE	95% CI	β	B	SE	95% CI	β	B	SE	95% CI	β	B	SE	95% CI
Age	.11	.10	.10	[-.10, .31]	.22*	.19	.08	[.03, .35]	.08	-.08	.12	[-.16, .31]	.08	.07	.08	[-.08, .22]
Gender	-.18	-.41	.29	[-.44, .28]	-.04	-.08	.18	[-.44, .28]	-.15	-.34	.27	[-.86, .19]	-.01	-.03	.17	[-.36, .31]
Race/ethnicity	-.15	-.41	.34	[-.35, .47]	.02	.06	.21	[-.35, .47]	-.24*	-.63	.29	[-1.21, -.06]	-.09	-.24	.19	[-.60, .13]
Organized activities	.18*	.31	.11	[.09, .53]	.09	.14	.12	[-.10, .39]	-.02	-.03	.16	[-.34, .29]	.11	.18	.10	[-.01, .36]
Sociopolitical values																
RWA	-.15	-.17	.10	[-.36, .02]	-.13*	-.14	.07	[-.27, -.01]	-.36***	-.40	.11	[-.61, -.19]	-.34***	-.35	.09	[-.52, -.19]
SDO	.40***	.45	.11	[.24, .65]	.10	.10	.08	[-.06, .27]	.23**	.25	.09	[.07, .43]	.13	.14	.08	[-.02, .29]
R ²					.22		.08				.18				.11	

Note. Gender coded 1 = male, 2 = female; race/ethnicity coded 1 = non-White/Caucasian, 2 = White/Caucasian. Model fit: $\chi^2/df = 1.96$, $p < .001$, CFI = .91, RMSEA = .05; 90% CI = [.04, .06]. CIs = confidence intervals; RWA = right-wing authoritarianism. SDO = social dominance orientation; CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 5. Standardized Estimates, Unstandardized Estimates, Standard Errors, and 95% CIs for Structural Model Predicting Beliefs About an Obligation to Obey Domain-Specific Types of Laws in Study 2 ($N = 340$).

	Moral obedience			Conventional obedience			Prudential-drug obedience			Multifaceted obedience					
	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE			
Covariates															
Age	-.02	-.01	.05	[-.12, .09]	.00	.05	[-.09, .10]	-.10	-.09	.06	[-.20, .02]	.01	.01	.05	[-.09, .11]
Gender	-.04	-.09	.13	[-.35, .17]	.08	.13	[-.09, .41]	.02	.05	.15	[-.24, .34]	.05	.10	.13	[-.15, .36]
Race/ethnicity	.16**	.40	.15	[-.11, .69]	-.06	.15	[-.43, .13]	.18**	.46	.16	[-.14, .77]	.01	.01	.15	[-.29, .29]
Organized activities	.05**	.08	.09	[-.10, .23]	.08	.09	[-.05, .31]	.03	.06	.10	[-.15, .26]	.09	.15	.19	[-.03, .32]
Sociopolitical values															
RWA	-.02	-.02	.07	[-.16, .12]	.11	.07	[-.04, .25]	.35***	.38	.08	[.23, .53]	.20**	.21	.08	[.06, .36]
SDO	-.20**	-.21	.08	[-.36, -.06]	-.06	.07	[-.20, .09]	-.30***	-.32	.08	[-.49, -.16]	-.05	-.06	.08	[-.21, .10]
R^2			.08			.03				.15				.05	

Note. Gender coded 1 = male, 2 = female; race/ethnicity coded 1 = non-White/Caucasian, 2 = White/Caucasian. Model fit: $\chi^2/df = 3.19$, $p < .001$, CFI = .93, RMSEA = .07; 90% CI = [.06, .08]. CIs = confidence intervals; RWA = right-wing authoritarianism. SDO = social dominance orientation; CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.

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

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to test whether RWA and SDO were differentially associated with domain-specific forms of delinquent behavior and beliefs about laws. Structural models indicated that RWA and SDO were differentially linked with violations of laws that serve distinct functions. This pattern of findings was further demonstrated in adolescents' beliefs about an obligation to obey similar types of laws. Similar to Study 1, these findings were significant even when accounting for important covariates (demographics and organized activity involvement) and suggest that links between RWA, SDO, and delinquency may be more nuanced and contingent on the type of rule being violated.

As hypothesized, adolescents who reported higher RWA were less engaged in drug-related prudential forms of delinquency and endorsed a greater obligation to obey laws restricting these issues. Prior research indicates that adolescents view laws regulating drug-related prudential issues as legitimate and obligatory to obey because of potential impediments on personal harm (Oosterhoff & Metzger, 2016). Adolescents higher in RWA may be less inclined to engage in drug-related prudential behaviors and endorse a greater obligation to obey these laws as a means of promoting personal security. Those higher in RWA were also less likely to engage in conventional and personal/conventional multifaceted forms of delinquency, and they endorsed a greater obligation to obey personal/conventional issues. RWA is thought to motivate behaviors and beliefs that promote conformity and social cohesion (Duckitt, 2001). Social conventions are arbitrary rules that are highly dependent on culture and context (Turiel, 1983), so adhering to social conventions would be consistent with personal beliefs about the importance of upholding social and cultural norms. Potentially, adolescents higher in RWA may be less likely to engage in delinquency that involved violation of conventional laws because they value adherence to culturally based rules, standards, and practices. Adolescents lower in RWA may also violate and endorse a lower obligation to obey conventional issues as a means of defying arbitrary rules established by authority (Turiel, 1983).

Domain-specificity was also demonstrated in associations among SDO, delinquency, and beliefs about laws. Adolescents who reported greater SDO were more engaged in moral and drug-related prudential forms of delinquency, and they reported less obligation to obey similar laws. Violating laws that regulate moral issues may provide those higher in SDO with a means of exercising power (e.g., fighting) or facilitating illegitimate self-advancement (e.g., stealing) at the expense of others, which may promote social competition and increased social status. Greater SDO was also associated with more frequent engagement in drug-related prudential forms of delinquency. Substance use during adolescence is often affiliated with greater popularity (Diego et al., 2003), and adolescents higher in SDO may engage in substance use

as a means of promoting their social status. Together, these findings provide support that RWA and SDO may play an important role in structuring behavior and beliefs in a manner consistent with their motivational goals, particularly in the context of adolescent delinquency and concepts of laws.

General Discussion

Engaging in delinquency during adolescence is an important risk factor for criminal activity, poor health, and lower well-being throughout adulthood. The current research examined whether and how adolescents' sociopolitical values concerning RWA and SDO intersect with their engagement in various forms of delinquency and beliefs about laws. Across two studies using large adolescent samples, we consistently demonstrated that adolescents who report higher RWA are less involved in delinquency, whereas those higher in SDO are more involved in delinquency. Furthermore, these links varied based on the types and purpose of the law being violated, and this variation was mirrored in adolescents' beliefs about obedience concerning different types of laws. These findings support the motivational functions of RWA and SDO, and provide important insight into individual differences in adolescent delinquency and beliefs about laws.

The DPM posits that RWA and SDO represent two sociopolitical value systems with distinct characteristics and underlying motivational goals. The majority of research examining RWA and SDO has focused on political and intergroup processes (e.g., Altemeyer, 1996). Very few studies have examined the implications of these values for adolescent social behavior. This research provides evidence that RWA and SDO are important individual differences that are differentially linked to adolescents' engagement in delinquency and beliefs about laws. One explanation for these differential links is that participation in delinquency conflicts with the core principles (obedience, structure, order) and theorized motives (security, cohesion) inherent to RWA and supports the principles (superiority, status, competition) and theorized motives (group dominance, power) inherent to SDO. By nature, delinquent behaviors entail violations of social rules, structure, and order, and may pose threats to personal harm. However, delinquent behaviors may also promote status, allow individuals to exercise power, and encourage competition. Across both studies, adolescents who endorsed values that prioritize structure, order, and conformity were less engaged in delinquency, whereas those who endorsed values that support hierarchy, status, and competition were more engaged in delinquency.

Results also indicated that links between RWA, SDO, and delinquency varied based on the purpose of the law being violated in a manner consistent with their theorized motivational goals. Adolescents higher in RWA were less involved in behaviors that entailed a direct threat to personal safety (prudential issues) or decreased collective conformity (conventional, personal/conventional multifaceted issues). In

contrast, adolescents higher in SDO were more engaged in behaviors that directly infringe on the rights of others (moral issues) and those that may promote adolescents' social status (prudential issues). Similar domain-specificity was found in adolescents' beliefs about an obligation to obey laws, which suggests that RWA and SDO are connected with adolescents' understanding of the function and purpose of the rule being violated.

Implications for Theory and Practice

Demonstrating nuanced associations among sociopolitical values and adolescent delinquency has several important implications for theory and practice. First, these findings expand the DPM by demonstrating the far-reaching implications of RWA and SDO beyond personality, politics, and prejudice, and suggest that these values may be intertwined with adolescent social behavior and social-cognitive beliefs. This research demonstrates that the DPM may be used to elucidate how RWA and SDO are linked with a variety of social experiences, including the way adolescents interact with others within their community. Second, these results provide support for the "differential prediction hypothesis" (Duckitt & Sibley, 2010), which suggests that although RWA and SDO may similarly predict behaviors and beliefs within certain contexts, they may also differentially predict behaviors and beliefs that theoretically distinguish their motivational goals. In the context of laws and delinquency, prior research suggests that RWA and SDO are similarly associated with stronger beliefs about punishment for violating social rules (Duckitt, 2009). Despite these similarities, findings from this research suggest that adolescents' concepts of obedience and engagement in lawbreaking behavior may be one topic that differentiates RWA and SDO.

Although our findings are consistent with research on adult samples (Son Hing et al., 2007), establishing a connection between RWA, SDO, and adolescent delinquency provides important information about the developmental implications and origins of these values. Models seeking to integrate and explain processes involved in adolescent delinquency and crime should incorporate adolescents' sociopolitical values, including RWA and SDO. Furthermore, given that adolescence is a period when values are thought to develop (McAdams & Olson, 2010), it is also possible that delinquency and problem behavior act as a context that facilitates sociopolitical value development. Engaging in delinquency may prompt adolescents to place less value on obedience and authority while also increasing value placed on superiority and dominance. When seeking to identify contexts that might contribute to the development of RWA and SDO, it may be beneficial to consider adolescents' experiences with delinquency and lawbreaking behavior.

These results also have implications for youth programs seeking to reduce crime and substance use. RWA and SDO

may represent modifiable points of intervention among programs seeking to reduce adolescent delinquency. These programs may benefit from considering the implications of their interventions for adolescents' views toward authority and preference for social dominance. Furthermore, programs that adopt this approach may be more efficacious if they target values that align with the specific form of delinquency they seek to reduce.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although this research has several strengths, including the use of two large adolescent samples and latent variable modeling to account for measurement error, there are some limitations to consider. Data were cross-sectional, and causal interpretations cannot be made. As noted above, it is possible that adolescents' engagement in delinquency may inform their values concerning the importance of authority and group-based hierarchy. Future research utilizing longitudinal designs and autoregressive cross-lagged modeling is needed to test the temporal sequencing of associations among RWA, SDO, and delinquency. In addition, self-report methods were used to assess adolescent delinquency and values, which may be susceptible to social desirability bias, especially among adolescents higher in RWA given the inherent emphasis on social conformity. Future research utilizing multi-informant and multimethod designs is needed to replicate these findings.

Consistent with prior research (Oosterhoff & Metzger, 2016), the prudential issues measured in Study 2 exclusively concerned "hard" drug use. Future research is needed to examine whether these links extend to issues that concern other threats to self-harm (e.g., helmet and seatbelt use). In addition, correlations among domain-specific forms of delinquency were strong. It is important to note that even with these strong correlations, our findings indicate differential associations among RWA, SDO, and delinquency in a manner that is consistent with theory and bivariate correlations, which supports the utility of this domain-specific characterization of delinquency. Future research may benefit from assessing adolescent report of their engagement in a wider range of domain-specific delinquent behaviors over a longer period of time (e.g., occurrences in the past 3 months) to capture greater variability in delinquency.

Although we found theoretically consistent links among RWA, SDO, and adolescent delinquency and beliefs about laws, it is possible that potentially related constructs including personality and risk-taking tendencies may have accounted for these effects. Future research should replicate these results accounting for personality and risk taking. Furthermore, consistent with theory on adolescent delinquency (Bratt, 2011), future research may also benefit from considering how aspects of the situation may potentially moderate links between sociopolitical values and adolescent delinquency.

Future research is also needed to identify the potential mechanisms that explain connections between RWA, SDO, and delinquency, and consider whether similar processes are present during other periods of the life span. For instance, during adolescence, SDO may be linked with greater delinquency as means of promoting status, power, and superiority, which may be achieved through increased popularity from peers or feelings of dominance over potential victims of the transgression. With age and the acquisition of greater adult responsibilities, it is possible that delinquency no longer provides individuals higher in SDO with greater peer status. Accordingly, in adulthood, the links between SDO and delinquency may either dampen or be motivated by expressing power over others (e.g., Petherick & Sinnamon, 2009).

Conclusion

The current studies suggest nuanced links among sociopolitical values, delinquent behavior, and beliefs about laws. By demonstrating and replicating associations among RWA, SDO, and delinquency, this research provides novel insight into potential individual differences that undergird adolescent delinquency and builds on existing theory by demonstrating the far-reaching implications of these values. Coordination among RWA, SDO, and domain-specific delinquency and beliefs about laws highlights the need to consider the multidimensionality of delinquency and how sociopolitical values are intertwined with a variety of social experiences.

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Notes

1. All questionnaire items for this study are available in Supplemental Material.
2. The pattern of significant findings is similar without these covariates. See Supplemental Material for a figure depicting this model.
3. To ensure findings were not due to variation across school context, multigroup models were used to compare the structural paths for youth from the rural high school versus midsized city high school. After establishing metric invariance within the measurement model, we did not find evidence that the structural paths differed across schools (Δ CFIs [confirmatory fit indices] ranged from .003 to .007).
4. See Supplemental Material for a list of all questionnaire items used in this study.
5. The pattern of significant findings is similar without these covariates. See Supplemental Material for a figure depicting this model.

6. A similar pattern of findings emerged when using the abbreviated measures of RWA (right-wing authoritarianism) and SDO (social dominance orientation) outlined in Study 1, suggesting that any variation in results was not due to the use of full scales.

Supplemental Material

Supplementary material is available online with this article.

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