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Social Dominance Orientation and Discrimination – Testing the SDO scale

Master's Thesis

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Year of Enrollment: 2018

Brno, 2020

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Abstract

In the 1990s, a new concept emerged that sought to clarify the emergence of prejudice and discrimination. The name conferred to this concept was the social dominance theory[1]. The thesis examines what is the distribution of social dominance orientation among Masaryk University[2] students and whether there is a relationship between social dominance orientation and a number of factors, specifically political orientation, sex, religiosity, field of study, and type of residence. The research is of a quantitative correlational character, which uses the psychometric method of the theory of social dominance known as social dominance orientation[3]. The results of the analysis have revealed that the average SDO among MUNI student population is located in the medium range and that within the chosen factors, sex and political orientation are the most important factors when looking into social dominance, adherence to hierarchical structures, discrimination, and prejudice. It appears that males and conservatives have a greater desire to deepen social inequalities and a greater acceptance of its legitimacy. As a result, a more discriminatory and prejudiced behavior towards minorities may emerge.

Key words: social dominance theory, discrimination, prejudice, negative intergroup relations, group hierarchy

[1] Further referred to as SDT
[2] Further referred to as MUNI
[3] Further referred to as SDO

Humans, as socially living creatures, depend on the social group to which they belong. In many societies, this dependency has been steadily increasing over the ages and nowadays it has come to a stage where a large part of the human species is made up of compact, deeply differentiated social structures with a high degree of specialization and dependence. The time when a person was a relatively independent creature and was able to obtain the necessary resources for life within a small social group is a thing of the past. The construct of social dominance is based on a wide range of philosophical, sociological and psychological ideas which however, have a common postulate in the individual´s ability to socially coexist in the various hierarchical structures and in the communication skills that lead to the creation of these structures. The thesis deals with the theory of social dominance, whose assumptions represent the basis for our research.

The social dominance theory posits that the net effects of discrimination and prejudice across multiple levels of individuals, institutions, and collaborative intergroup processes result in the creation of group-based social hierarchy (Pratto *et al.* 2006). Discrimination and prejudice perpetrated by individuals are linked to their psychological orientation towards group based social hierarchy or inequality. SDT defines this trait as social dominance orientation (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth and Malle 1994, Pratto *et al.* 2006). SDO reflects a preference for hierarchies, i.e., the domination of one or more groups over others. This thesis explores what is the SDO distribution among MUNI students and it reviews the key findings that have been made in this area of interest. The associations between the SDO scale and various attitudes in the scope of politics, race, socioeconomic status, and gender roles have implicated SDO as a possible predictor of prejudice (Poteat and Mereish 2012). Drawing from the abovementioned associations, the main purpose of this thesis is to examine SDO in connection with factors such as political orientation, sex, religiosity, field of study and type of residence. The task is not to

identify these factors as SDO sources, but rather to determine whether there is a mutual relationship between them or in other words, whether these factors affect the SDO.

The thesis is organized as follows: the first chapter is dedicated to the explanation of groups, their emergence, and to how prejudice and discrimination are conceived in intergroup relations. Next, we proceed with an overview of SDT, where its features and mechanisms are presented and the empirical method of SDT, also known as social dominance orientation, is explained. Then, we move into a basic explanation and definition of concepts like stereotype, prejudice, and discrimination and how these phenomena operate within SDO. Moreover, previous researches are presented to highlight the developmental background of the SDO and the importance of the issues discussed further. The thesis also includes criticism of SDO and alternative approaches to prejudice and discrimination in nowadays society. After that, the basic population data and their limitation are presented. Finally, the descriptive statistics and statistical analyses are presented in chapter eight which is dedicated to the analysis. A discussion is presented in chapter nine, and a conclusion summarizes the findings and discusses other possible researches that can be conducted in the context of SDO.

1 Groups defining

Group-living is the basic survival tactic that characterizes human beings. As individuals from various groups engage in multiple activities, ingroup and/or outgroup discrimination sometimes occur. Proof of this trend is extensive and emerges from several studies by diverse scholars worldwide, utilizing specific forms of group roles and different populations (Brewer 1999). Since the social dominance theory is closely related to prejudice and discrimination within intergroup relations and group-based hierarchical systems, it is essential to explain the relevant definition of groups, their emergence, and intergroup relations. Various authors have proposed different components of groups. Lewin (1948) suggested that their common fate is

crucial. He suggests that people are a group to the extent that they experience similar outcomes. Sherif and Sherif (1969) proposed that some form of social structure (status or role differentiation, e.g. leadership role) is essential, because otherwise the group would just be a loose collection of individuals. Bales (1976) stressed the importance of face-to-face interaction. Drawing from Tajfel (1981), Hewstone, Stroebe and Jonas (2015) argue that a group exists when two or more individuals define themselves as members of a group. Hewstone *et al.* (2015) note that many different groups would fit this definition, including religious groups (Christians), national groups (Slovaks), organizational groups (the sociology department), and friendship groups (student society). Furthermore, it is subjective and does not include any objective characteristics of the groups, such as common fate or face-to-face interaction. Rather, it emphasizes common identity: sharing the view with others that belong to the same group.

Why do people form, join, and differentiate groups? Many theoretical standpoints have been created to answer this question. Three dominant theories exist: a sociobiological, a cognitive, and a utilitarian perspective (Hewstone *et al.* 2015). According to Baumeister and Leary (1995), the sociobiological perspective underlines the adaptive value of forming groups. Forming groups helps people (and other social animals) to deal more effectively with enemies and predators allowing cooperation in areas such as raising children, farming or hunting. In earlier times, when food was scarce and enemies constituted a threat, forming groups had a substantial evolutionary advantage. The ability to form groups increased the chances to survive and, through the evolutionary principle of natural selection, this ability was later passed onto next generations. This human tendency to form and maintain stable, strong, and positive relationships with others is called need to belong**.** Baumeister and Leary (1995) suggest that this human need is innate and universal. This tendency to form groups is found in all cultures, suggesting that this tendency is evolutionary "built in".

According to the cognitive perspective, groups help us to understand our world. The social comparison theory (Festinger 1954) suggests that people want to hold accurate views of the world. They do this by validating their beliefs against social reality (e.g. I like this new music, I wonder what my friends think about it?). People turn to others especially for beliefs for which there is no physical reality. Drawing from these ideas, the social identity theory (e.g. Tajfel and Turner 1979) and the self-categorization theory (Turner 1987) argues that people define and describe themselves and others based on the group they belong to. These theories suggest that seeing oneself in a context of a group helps to lessen uncertainty and makes our world more meaningful. Being a group member helps and guides people on how to act and think. If you think about the Slovan Bratislava hockey fans, their behavior is clearly guided by their group membership and the behaviors thought to be appropriate for that group. Moreover, seeing others as members of some particular group helps to interpret their behavior.

A utilitarian perspective suggests that people derive benefits from groups. The social exchange theory (Thibaut and Kelley 1959) suggests that social relations help to achieve an individual´s needs and often act as an exchange process. These exchanges can be material (e.g. borrowing a tool) or interpersonal helping (e.g. helping a friend to move house), but also psychological "goods" such as love, companionship, approval or friendship. Thus, groups exist to facilitate mutually beneficial social exchange. The social exchange theory argues that social relations provide costs and benefits, and if the benefits exceed the costs, the relation will provide a profit. People tend to be unhappy about relations if they invest more in them (e.g. time) than they get back. Moreover, the level of satisfaction with a relationship depends on the existence of alternative relationships that provide more profit. Consequently, people become group members because they gain profit from being a member. People may leave groups when they are unhappy about the benefits relative to the costs of a group membership, or when another

group provides higher benefits. Generally, people will leave groups when better alternatives are available.

1.1 Group socialization

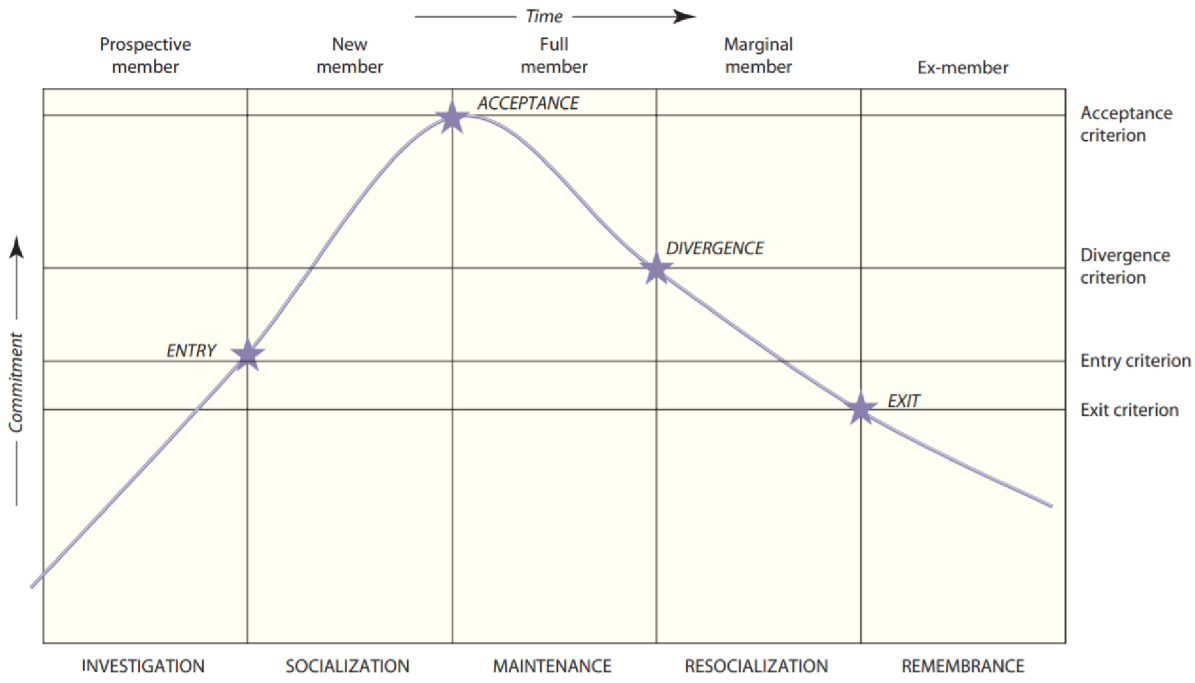
The definition of socialization refers to how people are turned into group members, irrespective of the character of the group involved (Guimond 1994). If socialization refers to the child discovering how to turn into a respectable part of their society, the same mechanism is without a doubt also relevant to the process of becoming a criminal, a priest, a man, a woman, a terrorist or a student. Throughout all these cases, the person has to grasp the norms, beliefs, values and attitudes that are common for other members of the group (Bush and Simmons 2017, Moreland and Levine 1982, Turner *et al.* 1987). Pratto *et al.* (1994) and Bobo (1988) contend that one of the key roles of group socialization for dominant groups is to disseminate attitudes, beliefs and values that legitimize intergroup inequalities. Bobo (1988: 99) argues that "…the dominant group seeks to articulate a set of beliefs that persuades themselves, as well as others, that their privileged status is for the general good". Pratto *et al.* (1994) claims that finding a hierarchy enhancing role and socializing into such role will boost the inclination to believe hierarchy-legitimizing myths. The key concept arising from their work is that, via controlling key institutions, dominant groups ensure that individuals are inclined to assume that intergroup inequality is legitimate. It is apparent that socialization is the initial and inherent part of the cultivation of prejudices and discrimination thus explanation of such process is desirable.

Pioneers of the concept of group socialization are Moreland and Levine (1982: 139) who define group socialization as "the process through which the group tries to assimilate members to existing group norms and practices". Moreland and Levin´s model differentiates among five steps of group membership: investigation, socialization, maintenance, resocialization and remembrance. This model claims that the role transition occurs when

moving from one stage to another. According to Moreland and Levine (1982: 153), "the role transitions are considered as an acceptance (from new member to full member), divergence (from full member to marginal member) and exit (from marginal member to ex-member)". As Figure 1 suggests, the five diverse stages vary in the level of commitment of the individual within the social group. Videlicet, the degree to which a member identifies with the group and its goals and wishes to maintain the group membership. Commitment is a function of the past, present and expected future rewardingness of the group as compared to the rewardingness of alternative groups.

"Commitment increases gradually as people become full members, after which it decreases towards the point that individuals wish to leave the group. Role transitions occur as a result of evaluation processes in which the group and the individual evaluate one another´s ´rewardingness´, or the extent to which the group is rewarding for the member and the member is valued by the group. When the group is rewarding for members, they will try to enter the group or maintain group membership (i.e., feel commitment). Similarly, when a group values a (prospective) member, the group will encourage the person to become or stay a member of the group (i.e., the group is committed to the member)". (Hewstone, Stroebe and Jonas 2015: 207)

Figure 1: The Moreland and Levine (1982) model group of socialization.



The investigation stage is characterized by groups looking for members who might contribute to the fulfillment of group objectives and by potential members who may look for groups that could possibly satisfy their needs. For example, when arriving in a new school, one will try to identify with a certain group to fulfill their social needs. This could mean joining a sports club or a student society to find people to socialize and create new bonds with thus, creating positive and stable relationships. (*Ibid.*)

The socialization stage occurs after one´s successful entry to the group. Members are getting acquainted with the norms of the group (i.e. the unwritten rules that define attitudes and behaviors of the group). The members acquire their roles within the group context and gain the necessary knowledge and skills to operate effectively as a member of the group. It is an assimilation process where the member tries to fit into expectations of the group. During this stage, commitment of the member as well as group will increase (this statement does not hold

true if the member is already dissatisfied with the group). At the certain point, when the stage is successfully reached, the member will be treated without any special attention. The socialization has ended and the new member is acknowledged as a full member. (*Ibid.*)

In the maintenance stage, the main characteristic is the high levels of commitment, for the group as well as the member and the relation between them is seen as rewarding. The role negotiation is the main process at this stage used to secure a high rewardingness. Moreland and Levine (1982) suggest that this means that the member tries to occupy the role within the group that best satisfies their needs, whereas the group tries to appoint roles to members in such a way that the group´s goals can be best achieved. According to this model, the relation between the group and the member will be rewarding and the commitment will remain if the role negotiations are successful.

The resocialization stage is characterized by the attempt of group members to convince the peripheral members not to exit, or by the adaptation to the requirements. "Similarly, group members may try to convince the group not to expel them, and might try to assimilate to the group´s expectations again. This might result in the re-entry to the group when successful. However, when resocialization fails, group members may reach an exit criterion and leave the group. As with other role transitions, this may involve some ritual, such as a goodbye speech or a party. Alternatively, the group may expel the member, which can be quite a painful experience. "(*Ibid.*: 276)

The remembrance stage is characterized by ex-members retrospectively evaluating each other. "The remaining group members will evaluate the ex-member´s contributions to the group and will maintain some degree of commitment to the ex-member if these contributions are seen as positive. Similarly, ex-members look back on their time with the group with either fond or bitter memories. In extreme cases, ex-members may even try to destroy their former group in an act of revenge." (*Ibid.*: 279)

1.2 Intergroup relations

After the creation and socialization in the group, the intergroup relations come into play, in which the seeds of prejudice and discrimination are further sown. Prejudice and discrimination within intergroup relations can manifest in many forms, from the life-threatening to the almost mundane. Ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia, the Holocaust, and the genocides in Rhonda and Ghana, are unequivocal examples of the extreme, life-threatening forms of prejudice. A Jewish person being good with money can be clearly considered as a positive and banal form of prejudice, but a prejudice nonetheless. Hewstone, Stroebe and Jonas (2015) define prejudice as "an attitude or orientation towards a group (or its members) that devalues it directly or indirectly, often to the benefit of the self or own group" (*Ibid.*: 313). To explain a prejudice and discrimination within the modern world we cannot approach it with a "one size fits all" attitude. Instead, we have to draw on many layers of understanding to make full sense of the given phenomenon, and also to understand how it can differ so greatly between groups and within them. (*Ibid.*). Since one of the main postulates of the theory of social dominance is the intergroup interactions and the conflicts between them, it is necessary to shed some light, and explain the phenomenon itself.

Probably the best documentable component of intergroup relations are their manifestations - intergroup behavior. However, research into intergroup relationships cannot be reduced to its external manifestations alone – intergroup behavior is not only the result of a simple response to an external stimulus, but of complex processes taking place in an individual's psychological apparatus and social group. Tajfel (1982) emphasizes the effects of intrapsychic processes and claims that a case of an intergroup behavior emerges whenever an individual belonging to one group comes into contact, either collectively or individually, with another group or its members, in the sense of their group identification. A more appropriate term than

"intergroup behavior" seems to me to be "intergroup interaction", as this term emphasizes the interaction of the participants in the intergroup contact.

Furthermore, according to Tajfel (1982), a feature of intergroup behavior is not only the interactive behavioral activity, but especially the cognitive aspect, related to the very existence of groups. We can look at this existence from two perspectives: (1) from an external point of view we perceive the existence of an external, generally recognizable and recognized feature (such as school class, professional affiliation firefighters, doctors, lawyers, pilots, etc.), according to which we can recognize the group, (2) from an internal point of view, i.e. from the point of view of the mentioned process of group (or social) identification, i.e. the fact that the individuals admit the existence of the group and how they perceive this existence. A group with which an individual identifies himself as a member, is referred to as ingroup, and non-identification groups are referred to as outgroup.

In the previous chapters, we explained the basic concepts that are an integral part and foundation of the theory of social dominance. Group socialization, in the context of SDT, is one of the key processes disseminating and legitimizing intergroup inequalities, which may further convert into severe forms of prejudice and discrimination. Intergroup relations and conflicts among them, as one of basic and main postulates of SDT, functions as a cultivator of preferences for unequal relationships among different categories of people. The SDT builds on this knowledge and further seeks to explain the processes and mechanisms related to social inequalities, prejudice and discrimination.

2 Social dominance theory

Social psychologists James Sidanius and Felicia Pratto observe that the extent of some intergroup conflicts - such as large-scale nationality genocide and the effort to completely exterminate other groups - can hardly be explained by cross-group bias resulting from the need

to increase group self-assessment. Moreover, they draw attention to the tendencies of some social groups to behave in a subordinate context. The view of pre-existing theories is limited in that they, while trying to integrate group and intergroup processes, are still primarily psychological and do not sufficiently reflect on intergroup dynamics from the perspective of other social sciences, especially sociological and economic (Sidanius and Pratto 1999). That is why they propose their own concept: the social dominance theory, which would be neither purely psychological nor sociological, but rather integrative in the sense that it seeks to unite knowledge from multiple disciplines into a single theoretical framework.

2.1 Origins of the theory

Tension between groups, outbreaks of conflict and prolonged hatred have long been some of the central thematic areas of various social science fields. These academic fields tried to develop their own empirical methods, explain the terminology and, within their possibilities, positively influence the unfavorable situation. The theory of social dominance assumes that all societies tend to form a hierarchically structured system of groups, in which dominant groups are favored over subordinate groups. Dominant groups try to maintain their advantageous position, using, among other things, tools of systemic oppression. The personal degree to which an individual manifest these tendencies is determined by their membership in specific social groups, respectively by identifying it with the group in the current context (Sidanius and Pratto 1999, Sidanius *et al.* 2004).

The social dominance theory has created a coherent and integrative model that seeks to explain the persistent oppression among people. Although the theory of social dominance contains new components, it has the advantage of being able to adopt and integrate many important and useful approaches within its own model. The sources underlying the new synthesis that resulted in the SDT (Sidanius and Pratto 1999: 31) include: (1) “the concept of

authoritarian personality (2) Rokeach´s two-value theory of political behavior (3) Blumer´s group positions theory (4) Marxism and neoclassical elite theories (5) results from political attitude and public opinion research (6) social identity theory (7) modern thinking within evolutionary psychology."

2.2 Fundaments of SDT

According to Sidanius and Pratto (1999: 38), the three basic assumptions of the theory of social dominance are: (1) "while age- and gender-based hierarchies will tend to exist within all social systems, arbitrary-set systems of social hierarchy will invariably emerge within social systems producing sustainable economic surplus (2) most forms of group conflict and oppression (e.g., racism, ethnocentrism, sexism, nationalism, classism, regionalism) can be regarded as different manifestations of the same basic human predisposition to form group-based social hierarchies (3) human social systems are subject to the counterbalancing influences of hierarchy-enhancing[4] forces, producing and maintaining ever higher levels of group-based social inequality, and hierarchy-attenuating[5] forces, producing greater levels of group-based social equality."

Sidanius´s and Pratto´s (1999) social dominance theory is based on the basic assumption that any human society without any exception can be characterized as a society based on a group hierarchy. Within hierarchical systems, dominant groups have disproportionately greater power, are associated with positive social values, and possess most of the material and symbolic resources. Dominant groups thus enjoy their position compared to other groups in society. Subordinate groups, on the other hand, have a disproportionately larger share of negative social values, a lower share of power, poor social status, negative attitudes and worse financial situation. In essence, social dominance theory seeks to define, within its

[4] Also referred to as HE
[5] Also referred to as HA

own concept of a group hierarchy-based society, factors and processes that create and maintain group-based hierarchical systems. Unlike other theories of prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination, the theory of social dominance seeks to answer questions about maintaining prejudice and discrimination, taking into account cultural ideologies, political establishment, institutional processes, individual and other individual relationships inside and outside own group, as well as psychological predispositions (Sidanius and Pratto 1999, Pratto, Sidanius and Levin 2006).

The postulate of group-based hierarchical systems differs significantly from individual-based hierarchical systems in which individuals acquire power, prestige and property via their own characteristics. The group-based hierarchical system assumes that the gained power, prestige and benefits are primarily derived from the social group of which an individual belongs to. Of course, this does not mean that the power of the individuals which is reflected in their goods is independent of the personality´s characteristics. This suggests that the success of an individual depends on the social structure, i.e. their success is clearly not only a function of their assumptions but also a function of the group of which they are a member of / they identify with (Sidanius and Pratto 1999).

2.3 Mechanisms for maintaining group-based hierarchical system

The mechanisms that play a role in maintaining and promoting group-based hierarchical systems are in line with the theory of social dominance: aggregated individual discrimination, aggregated institutional discrimination, and behavioral asymmetry. Discrimination which helps dominant groups within society to a superior position at the expense of the subordinate groups, is directed and regulated by so-called legitimizing myths.

According to Sidanius and Pratto (1999), legitimizing myths are consensually, socially shared social ideologies that include attitudes, values, myths, stereotypes and ideologies,

providing moral and intellectual justification for the unequal redistribution of social values within society. Legitimizing myths are divided into two functionally distinct categories: a hierarchy enhancing legitimizing myths whose primary function is to legitimize group inequalities (racism, nationalism, sexism, traditional forms of stereotypes about lower social groups, ideals of personal responsibility, meritocracies) and hierarchy attenuating legitimizing myths that serve to favor group equality (multiculturalism, feminism, universal human rights).

Aggregated individual discrimination refers to different forms of distinction between individuals, often with an everyday nature and manifested in hidden, invincible forms. These are, for example, situations where an employer does not hire an employee because of their ethnic origin or when during an election, a candidate is not elected solely because they are not a member of the majority group, or because of their gender or race (*Ibid.*).

When we summarize all such discriminatory acts of a long-term nature, we find that the very structure of society itself can facilitate such behavior. When they emerge regularly, years after decades, they become the norm that is tolerated by society, so the differences in power among the various groups of society are suddenly clear. People belonging to a group with high power and status usually have more positive resources that can redistribute to others and have more power in redistributing negative social values among other groups of people. This suggests that the hierarchical structure is able to perform activities that maintain and strengthen inequality more easily than those that weaken the hierarchical structure (Pratto, Sidanius and Levin 2006).

Not only discrimination present in the conduct of individuals can create and maintain a group-based hierarchy, it can also be indicated by aggregated institutional discrimination within its system of rules, laws, regulations which of course applies to both private and state institutions (courts, banks, schools, hospitals). Institutional discrimination, appearing in any

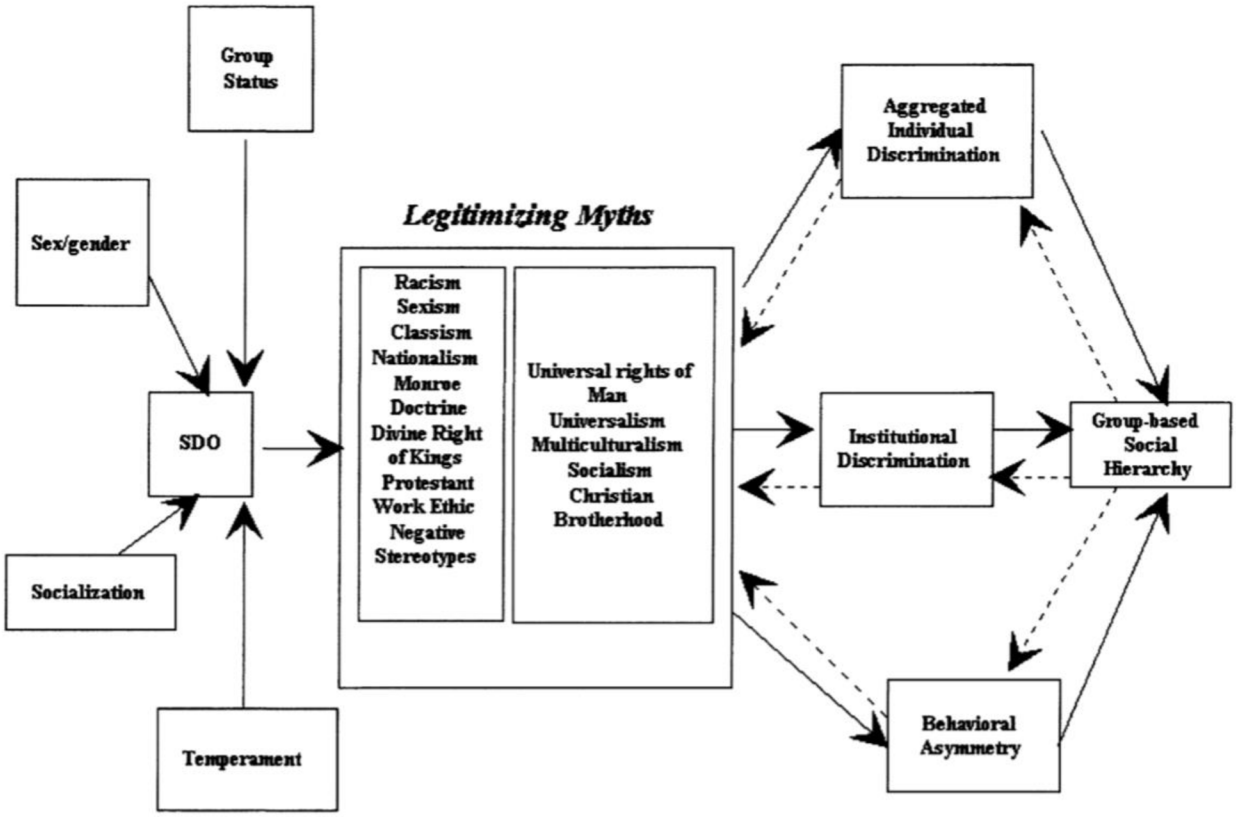
form (i.e. conscious, unconscious, intentional, unintentional) is covertly identifiable in those institutional decisions that redistribute, in accordance with the social hierarchy, unevenly positive as well as negative social values. Like legitimizing myths, institutions can be classified as either hierarchy enhancing or hierarchy attenuating. HE institutions can include maximum profit financial institutions, multinationals, state secret services and criminal justice. HA institutions that have the task of reducing the impact of HE institutions and, to some extent offsetting their influence, are for example charities, religious organizations, a judicial system focusing on human and civil rights, etc. (Sidanius and Pratto 1999).

Behavioral asymmetry is the third mechanism that helps to maintain a group-based hierarchical system. It is assumed that the groups in the continuum of social power represented by individuals manifest themselves in a different repertoire of behavior. On the one hand, intergroup differences in behavior contribute to the maintenance of group hierarchies and on the other hand, they gain continuous reinforcement across the hierarchical order. Behavioral asymmetry is continually reinforced by socializing models, stereotypes, legitimizing ideologies, as well as prejudices and discrimination. The theory of social dominance over other oppression models, such as classical Marxism and neoclassical elitist theories, does not merely underline that dominant groups are actively oppressing other groups of society as in the aforementioned models. On the other hand, social dominance theory, while working with this type of mechanism, highlights and considers equally important that disadvantaged individuals and groups themselves are actively involved in oppression processes: they are not only victims of oppression but also an active and acting agent. This means that oppression between groups arises and works largely through cooperation, although there is always a degree of resistance and efforts to rebuild the current system among the members of disadvantaged groups. (*Ibid.*).

Between relatively stable hierarchical systems, the behavior of subordinate groups is characterized by cooperation rather than by an attempt to disrupt the dominant system. This is

how the group-based system gains its stability and power, through passive and active involvement and cooperation with the oppressing elite. This suggests, from the point of view of the social dominance theory, that the social hierarchy is not maintained primarily by the oppressive behavior of dominant groups and individuals, but by the respectful and humble behavior of subordinate groups (Sidanius and Pratto 1999). Behavioral asymmetry is manifested in many ways, one of which is the widely accepted observation that people are largely ethnocentric, that is, they prefer their own group over other groups which was as an inspiration for social identity theory. The theory of social dominance assumes that although all groups, both dominant and subordinate, show some degree of preference for their own group over others, there is a noticeable difference in the degree of this phenomenon between them. The members of the dominant groups have the upper hand in this respect compared to the members of the subordinate groups. This asymmetry can take such dimensions that favoring among members of a subordinate group will not be in favor of one´s own group but of another, in this case the dominant group (Jost, Banaji and Nosek 2004, Pratto, Sidanius and Levin 2006). Another example of behavioral asymmetry is self-destructive behavior, the occurrence of which is more frequent in subordinate groups of society and thus contributes to its own subordinate situation which is associated with a higher rate of crime, addiction, and truancy (Sidanius and Pratto 1999). The last asymmetry that SDT works with is the ideological asymmetry that serves the dominant groups more than the subordinate. For example, HE legitimizing myths influence the behavior of both dominant and subordinate, supporting these legitimate myths is much more trouble-free for people in the dominant group. For them, the SDO is more compatible with their social status and the group and system justifying themes are in congruence (Jost and Burgess 2000). This means that their preference for their own group and HE legitimizing myths is not in conflict, as is the case with subordinate groups, where support for HE legitimizing myths devalues their own group.

Figure 2: Schematic overview of social dominance theory.



The social dominance theory seeks to emphasize the cooperative nature of intergroup oppression, as well as the cooperative nature of maintaining group-based hierarchical systems, by pointing out asymmetry in behavior that works because both groups, both dominant and subordinate, participate in it. (Sidanius and Pratto 1999).

3 Method of social dominance theory: construct of social dominance orientation

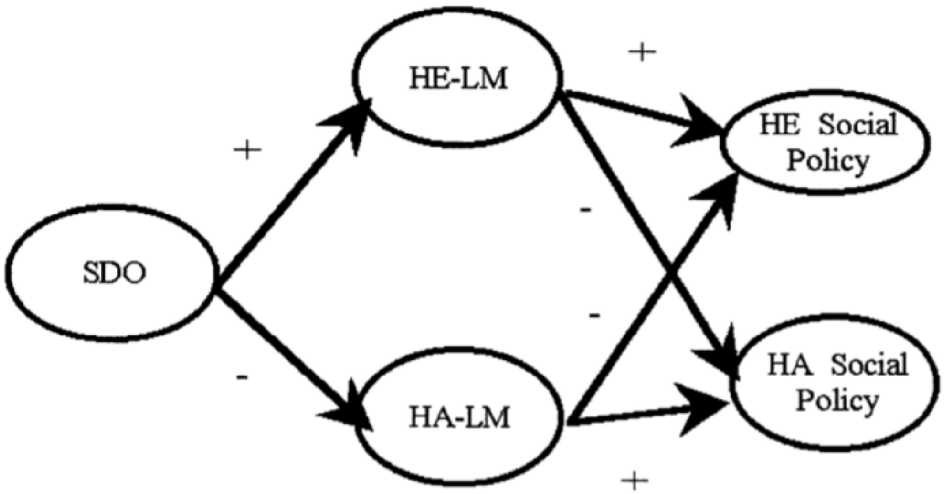
The social dominance orientation construct is the basic construct with which the theory of social dominance works and explains the theoretical postulates of accepting and promoting legitimatizing myths as a measure of inequality within society. It is an important factor in an individual variable, the extent of which determines the level of desire and support of an

individual or group-based hierarchy and the dominance of superior social groups over inferior groups (Pratto *et al.* 1994, Sidanius and Pratto 1999).

The basic postulates of SDO are (1) differences within the ingroup are significantly lower than differences between members of different groups, while with the hierarchically higher position of the member group these differences are even smaller (2) members of hierarchically higher-ranking groups will express a higher degree of preference for intergroup inequalities and dominance (3) the degree of this tendency will be manifested in connection with legitimizing myths or the degree of identification with them (Sidanius and Pratto 1999, Sidanius, Pratto and Levin 2006).

Drawing from point (3): the level of SDO should, according to this consideration, be reflected in the individual´s attitude to individual types of legitimizing myths while members of the dominant groups should be more in line with legitimizing myths supporting intergroup inequalities (and thus higher SDO values), members of subordinate groups should lean more towards a hierarchy suppressing legitimizing myths (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth and Malle 1994).

Figure 3: Schematic overview of social dominance orientation.



Based on these assumptions, Sidanius, together with other authors (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth and Malle 1994) developed the SDO scale method for measuring the SDO. On a scale of one to seven, the respondent agrees with individual claims that are consistent with prototypical legitimizing myths. From the original 70 selected items, the authors significantly reduced their number for the first version to 14. The method has been revised several times, with the number in the subscript changing to differentiate between versions (SDO2 scale means the second version). The fourteen-item version of SDO5 scale and the current 16-item SDO6 scale (Sidanius, Pratto and Levin 2006) were used most frequently in the field of social dominance.

3.1 Dimensions of SDO

According to Sidanius and Pratto (1999), the SDO6 scale is one-dimensional. Confirmatory factor analysis safely showed that all items are saturated by one factor which was confirmed on several samples. Although a two-factor solution was confirmed in some samples, Sidanius *et al.* explained that although the two semantic dimensions of SDO (dominance and equality) seem independent and strongly correlate with each other, they are a uniform characteristic of SDO. In most cases, SDO is considered as one-dimensional and the multiple issue of two-dimensional scale is not widely discussed.

The evidence and usefulness of a two-factor solution was provided by Jost and Thompson (2000), who have demonstrated that group-based dominance or resistance to equality resistance items are two correlating factors, with a two-factor solution more fitting than single-factor one. The correlation between group-based dominance and resistance to equality was higher for students with a higher social status (Americans of European descent) than for students with lower social status (African-Americans). The two-factor solution was also useful with regard to social status in self-assessment. Jost and Thompson (2000) sought to eliminate

the methodological uncertainty of the scale by rephrasing the individual items in such a way that the items of both factors were equally represented in the formulation, having the same number of positive and negative formulated items for both factors. From the point of view of such a solution, they found a more advantageous use of the two-factor variant. Similarly, the impact of both factors on socio-political attitudes varies, political conservatism positively correlates with resistance to equality in both the higher social status group and the lower social status group which is no longer the case with the group dominance factor.

One of the few researches that systematically addressed the controversial dimensionality of SDO is Xin and Chi (2010) who verified by a confirmatory factor analysis several possible models taking into account the potential impact of verbal formulation of SDO items. Their results showed that the most suitable solution for the SDO scale is a one-factor variant in agreement with the authors scale (Pratto *et al.* 1994), but only if the effect of verbal formulation of items is separated and controlled. In their work, one of the possible models was to verify the Jost and Thomson two-factor SDO model which satisfactorily matched data. According to Xin and Chi this was due to the influence of the wording of the items. The disadvantage of this work was in particular a small research samples whose increase would deal with more reliable results.

The results of studies on the SDO dimensionality show that this is an area that is not yet fully elaborated and abounds many ambiguities, although it is a scale that is widely used and adopted. Moreover, in addition to the statistical justification of individual factor solutions, it is also necessary to take into account the added value, the explanatory power of another factor within the SDO (Pratto, Sidanius and Levin 2006).

4 Prejudice, stereotype, and discrimination

Conceptual distinction is important because, although there is a correlation among them, prejudice, stereotype, and discrimination are not identical phenomena and do not overlap absolutely. A simple example is a variant represented by a case where a stereotype about one group does not yet have to result in discrimination and does not affect its behavior, but also someone may have strong emotions, even if they are not based on knowledge. Both thoughts and emotions are neutral until they determine behavior.

Stereotype is a specific category of attitude. The main feature of stereotypes is the established perception of a particular social group, ethnicity, or culture, and this perception is mostly negative. However, there are also neutral and positive stereotypes, which distinguishes them from prejudice. They can be defined as simplified and superficial notions of certain characteristics of an individual, a community or an entire ethnicity or nation. Their supporters are not familiar with the issue, which allows them to enroot in the individual. One of the key points of stereotypes is their irrational character, which makes it difficult to refute them with substantiated arguments or facts. They are also based on their own experience. However, their transmission may also be the result of education, competence within a particular community or social group in which these stereotypes are maintained and established (Petrusek *et al.* 1996).

The process by which stereotypes become well established in the human subconscious is called stereotyping. It places great emphasis on highlighting negative or positive properties. In this process, we do not take into account who a person is, but we automatically assign to them a given property in advance. In the case of group perception, we observe the perception of groups through stereotyping because we do not treat each member as an individual personality with its own unique features but rather, we perceive the whole group / society / nation as a homogeneous whole (Hayes and Orrell 1998). The existence of stereotypes can

become dangerous if misused. One example is the negative image of a Jew in racist anti-Semitic propaganda in Nazi Germany (the image of a worn, ugly, dirty, useless Jew).

The concept of stereotype is inherently associated with prejudices, which are a special category. Prejudices differ from stereotypes in that they can only be negative. According to Petrusek *et al.* (1996), prejudice has a negative connotation, labeling often occurs, and is characterized, among other things, as bias or stiffness of opinion. In a simplified way, Petrusek *et al.* (1996: 875) also describes the concept of prejudice as: "A closed attitude towards anything (to a particular life situation, to the behavior of another person or persons, to an event, etc.) […] while it does not depend on the immediate situation, it does not rely on understanding". The definition implies that, as in the case of stereotypes, prejudices are generalizing - certain views apply to the whole social group / society, disregarding the views of individuals. They are based on an irrational nature, which is also related to their stability and difficult refutation by logical arguments and facts. Ethnocentrism is also a negative feature of prejudice - considering its values and behaviors to be universally valid, elevating itself beyond the culture of a foreign ethnic group / group or nation. In fact, they are based on incomplete and deceptive information and spread through generations, with the use of media, press, socialization, and so on. Prejudice is defined as a special type of aggressive behavior in order to reduce one's own frustration. Prejudices in this form fulfill some form of scapegoat, i.e. replacement of the object of aggression. (*Ibid.*).

Discrimination is action based on prejudice and stereotypes based on social categories such as age, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, gender, etc. It appears to be unfounded unequal treatment, different from the treatment of other groups or individuals in a comparable situation. Discrimination is, therefore, "a disadvantage or restriction of an individual or group of persons that occurs on account of their sex, race, color, language, age, sexual orientation,

belief, religion, political or other thought, national or social origin, nationality or ethnic group, property, gender or other status ” (Debrecéniová 2006: 4).

The sociological understanding of discrimination emphasizes individual aspects of discriminatory behavior, where discrimination is a complex system of social relationships that produce and generate intergroup inequalities. The basis of sociological understanding of discrimination is that intergroup phenomena are socially constructed and discrimination is actually a cultural phenomenon (Marshall 1998). Groups and individuals are therefore not discriminated against what they are and who they are. They are discriminated against because of connotations and constructions in the discriminator's consciousness. That is, according to how the discriminator interprets who they are and what they think of them, that is, based on prejudice and stereotypes (Makkonen 2002). Understanding and interpreting categories such as gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, disability, or sexual orientation is strongly socially constructed. This means that the reality, as we interpret it, has a certain social, historical or cultural context. Its meaning and understanding is derived from social reality and society. The fact that the meanings of the categories are socially constructed is not problematic in itself. It becomes problematic when negative stereotypes are associated with a given category because discrimination is based on them (*Ibid.*).

In real life, discrimination often occurs for several reasons. The combination or synergy of multiple grounds of discrimination reinforces the disadvantage of the individual and intensifies the deteriorated position compared to other individuals who are in a similar situation. Discrimination for several reasons not only enhances the effects of several factors of discrimination, but also places the individual in a specific position, both in legal and social contexts. Discrimination can manifest in multiple forms. For example, verbal discrimination (inappropriate jokes, verbal scorn, etc.), avoidance, segregation, physical attack, genocide, etc. Even though verbal discrimination seems to be the least threatening, it creates room for worse

manifestations of discrimination in society, because verbal discrimination, verbal contempt, especially through the media, can create a standard that justifies and gives a model to such behavior.

4.2 Prejudice, stereotype, and discrimination in the context of SDO

Fiske (2010) states that the issue of stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination is widely researched in social sciences where individual differences have been explained through motivational and cognitive apparatus to varying degrees with the prevalence of one or the other. The theory of social dominance represents a model within individual differences combining both the motivational and cognitive components. The cognitive aspect differentiates between high and low SDO which is based on ideology, myths that legitimize the hierarchical stratification of society in the intentions of groups. Motivation which differentiates people in the scale of SDO focuses on personal choice within group hierarchies. Its manifestation is noticeable, for example, in the selection of the hierarchy enhancing or the hierarchy attenuating professions or field of study.

The social dominance theory was developed to explain phenomena such as prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination. It tried not only to explain, but also to answer the question about what mechanisms are the phenomena maintained and approved. Many studies have pointed out that SDO is a strong predictor of prejudice and discrimination against subordinate groups (Pratto *et al.* 1994, Sidanius an Pratto 1999). The SDO was defined as a generalized orientation, a desire for unequal status and a dominant / subordinate relationship between prominent social groups regardless of whether this indicates a dominant or subordinate position of their own group (Pratto, Sidanius, and Levin 2006). The nature of the SDO as a variable in relation to legitimatizing myths, the content of which represents a justification for oppression, and unequal status, directly implies its relationship to prejudice and discrimination. This is a

variable relating, for example, to racism, sexism, to the support of wars, to generalized prejudice, to discriminatory behavior in the experimental situation of minimal groups, to attitudes against race mixing (Altemeyer 1998, McFarland 2010, Pratto *et al.* 1994, 2006, Sidanius and Pratto 1999).

McFarland (2010) defined a latent prejudice construct as a combination of prejudice against African Americans, homosexuals, women, and the pseudo-patriotic index. Independent variables predicting the latent prejudices construct included the following: right-wing authoritarianism[6], attribution complexity, need for structure, self-assessment, collective self-assessment, neuroticism, psychoticism, belief in a just world, impression management, self-deception, universalism, traditionalism, conformity, security, SDO, and demographic variables. The SDO had the strongest correlation with the latent prejudice variable in both research samples that consisted of a sample of university students and a sample of adults from the southern US with multiple regression analysis showing only RWA, gender, universalism and SDO as a strong and independent utility in predicting latent prejudice, where these 4 variables explained about half the variation in both samples.

4.3 SDO and the case of invariance hypothesis

The claim that men show on average a higher degree of social dominance than women is the most controversial hypothesis based on the theory of social dominance (Sidanius and Pratto 1999). This hypothesis, also called the "invariance hypothesis" within the SDT is based on the ideas of evolutionary psychology that claim that men, throughout human history, in an environment of surplus economy, relatively higher social status, power and dominance have served the environment to a greater extent that provide a greater advantage in this regard for men compared to women. Acquisition and the maintenance of status, social resources and

[6] Also referred to as RWA

domination were maintained and protected within the framework of cooperating social groups. SDO facilitates the acquisition and the maintenance of status, power, and dominance. Because the reproductive advantage of inequality in social status intentions is more favorable for men than for women, greater support for group-based hierarchies is also more favorable for men (*Ibid.*).

From the perspective of the invariance hypothesis, the appropriation and accumulation of economic goods, social power, and social dominance unwinds from the reproductive success of a man. Their predisposition towards social power contributes to their position which is reflected in higher SDO in men compared to women. According to the authors, a higher rate of SDO in men may also serve as a justification for the dominant position of men but first of all the higher SDO is part of the male reproductive strategy. From the point of view of the invariance hypothesis, the importance of having a higher SDO in men is that it can be helpful in understanding the differences between women and men in socio-political matters, and also provides a new insight into partner selection and partner life (Sidanius and Pratto 1999). Despite the controversial nature of the invariance hypothesis it is one of the most empirically substantiated claims based on SDT that research in this area has brought. At the same time, gender differences in SDO are not moderated by the culture, education, employment, nationality, ideology, religion, ethnicity, gender roles or other situational influences provided that everything else is consistent. (Levin 2004, Pratto *et al.* 1994, Sidanius and Pratto 1999, Sidanius, Pratto and Bobo 1994, Whitley and Lee 2000).

This assumption of SDT is strongly opposed to the gender similarity hypothesis, the comparison of the gender similarity and gender difference hypothesis in relation to the SDO contains far-reaching implications for many social psychology assumptions (Whitley and Lee 2000). However, not all papers coincided with the invariance hypothesis: for example, Wilson and Liu (2003) found that women with low gender identification were characterized by higher

SDO values compared to women with higher gender identification. The effect was also significant in men but in the opposite way. Higher self-gender identification resulted in higher SDO rates. However, Sidanius and Pratto (2003) opposed this research and criticized it for disregarding the principle of "when everything else coincides / is equal", they pointed out that Wilson and Liu did not compare men and women to the same degree of gender identification.

The issue of invariance hypothesis within the SDO is largely empirically documented, and the difference in the SDO score between women and men has been examined with 45 independent samples. These studies worked together with 19,000 respondents from 10 countries (Austria, Canada, Mexico, Israel, China, New Zealand, the former Soviet Union, Sweden and the USA). In terms of results, men reported higher SDO in 39 cases out of the 45 samples, and there was no case out of the 45 samples where women had significantly higher SDO compared to men (Sidanius and Pratto 1999). There is no doubt that this is an open topic whose final consensus must be preceded by many empirical researches, mainly on the basis of experimental design and long-term research that must take into account many situational variables that require large samples of participants.

4.4 SDO and field of study

A great body of studies within SDT (Pratto and Espinoza 2001, Sidanius and Pratto 1999, Sidanius) suggested a variant of congruence between personality and environment with regard to sociopolitical attitudes. Implications based on SDT distinguish between the hierarchy attenuating, and the hierarchy enhancing institutions. Similarly, each field of employment or field of study can be divided into a hierarchy enhancing, attenuating and neutral one. An example of a HE discipline could be law, economics, an example of HA disciplines, sociology, psychology, and social work. Neutral disciplines include, for example, life sciences and mathematics. HE institutions and fields of study can be identified as those that are more likely

to promote hierarchically structured relationships between social groups with a disproportionately greater allocation of positive values for dominant groups than for subordinate ones (politics, behavior confirming economic inequality between social groups, ethnic groups, etc.). In contrast to HE institutions and fields of study, HA institutions dampen and weaken the effect of HE institutions. This distinction between HA and HE institutions that can be analogously converted to HE or HA study fields respectively, represents the central assertion of SDT, the assertion regarding the congruence of personality and the environment, as well as socio-political attitudes (Haley and Sidanius 2005).

The SDO reflects support for group-based hierarchies that correlates with behaviors such as the promotion of the death penalty, discrimination, stereotyping, support for militarization, and social reform issues (Sidanius and Pratto 1999). Based on this, people manifesting in accordance with the aforementioned characteristics of SDO, in this case, having a higher SDO rate, suggest that people with high SDO will prefer and feel more comfortable with HE institutions. The relationship was confirmed among UCLA students, measuring attitudes against egalitarianism as a combination of SDO and symbolic racism (Sidanius and Pratto 1999).

4.5 SDO and political orientation

At first glance, the views and beliefs arising from the definition of the SDO and its implications seem to be intuitively very close to political conservatism. However, the identification of SDO with conservatism would not be correct. The SDO focuses on general issues of group dominance and group equality the desire for group hierarchies (Pratto *et al.* 1994). On the other hand, conservatism presents a wide range of definitions (Sidanius and Pratto 1999): (1) resistance to change (2) worship of traditional institutions based on political philosophy (3) distrust of any government activity, pessimism regarding the possibility of a

positive change in the behavior of an individual through social change (4) promoting a reduction in the tax burden (5) promoting one, true religion (6) universal suffrage, social and political equality, rejection of democracy and others. None of these definitions overlap the definition of SDO except for social and political equality.

Sidanius and Pratto (1999) suggest that the correlation between SDO and political conservatism is too low for the two constructs to be considered identical. As part of the partial correlation, the research found that, after the elimination of the influence of political conservatism, the correlation between SDO and socio-political attitudes decreased but was still a reliable value. Political conservatism was measured in terms of voter preferences in individual policy areas and within the self-assessment scale where participants were to assess liberalism conservatism in the continuum. (Sidanius and Pratto 1999)

This means that the SDO as a variable represents an important component in the prediction of socio-political attitudes and cannot be replaced by a construct of political conservatism and its replacement would be a mistake.

5 Criticism of SDO

Social dominance orientation is an attempt to clarify the preservation and expansion of group-based social hierarchies (Sidanius and Pratto 1999). Particularly, SDO accounts for sustaining and expanding of group-based hierarchies via forecasting people´s intergroup attitudes and support for ideologies (Pratto *et al.* 1994, Sidanius and Pratto 1999, Levin *et al.* 1998). Regardless of its effectiveness in forecasting a multitude of intergroup attitudes and ideologies, SDO has had numerous approaches that ignited multiple debates (Kteily, Sidanius and Levin 2011).

Rubin and Hewstone (2004) draw attention to the methodological problems brought about by the redefinition of the SDO construct definition: in different studies, different variables

were actually measured, the informative value of the research is thus reduced and this has to be taken into account in theoretical argumentation and comparison of results. They even speak of duality of SDO in this sense. Rubin and Hewstone (2004) draw attention to the paradox that this duality brings: in the case of people with higher SDO who are members of hierarchically lower-ranking groups, there would necessarily be a conflict between general and specific SDO - an individual oriented towards a general intergroup hierarchy (also called general SDO) would identify with it even though it does not allow group dominance (also called specific SDO).

According to Pratto *et al.* (2006), this argumentation can be mitigated by considering the situational dependency of the SDO: as the perceived rather than the real position of the group in the hierarchical system is essential, the two types of SDO do not necessarily conflict with each other. Furthermore, this inconsistency is fortunately not so much reflected in the measured values, but rather in the definition of the SDO construct itself: different versions of SDO scale measured the same variable. Rubin and Hewston´s attention to the fact that SDO definitions that actually reflect different hypotheses may have been used in various studies of social dominance theories must be taken into account in any research in the field of SDT.

Turner and Reynolds (2003) are quite sharply opposed to the whole theory of social dominance. In their criticism, the SDO is even described as a "dark instinct, a beast" (Turner and Reynolds 2003: 199), calling it "the originator of intergroup inequalities" derived from our evolutionary past, the ubiquitous power, or predisposition, to form intergroup social hierarchies, authoritarian, essentially fascist systems" (*Ibid.*: 199). The designation of SDO as the cause of intergroup inequalities is probably a manifestation of the misunderstanding of the basic postulates of SDT.

It is astounding to think that the SDT "…not only disrespects human endeavors towards liberation from oppression, but also claims that (intergroup) conflict and domination are

adaptive and good for us." (*Ibid.*: 199), or that, according to SDT, "societies controlled by force and coercion that oppress half of their members are more effective and successful than those characterized by acceptance, unity, mutual respect and care" (*Ibid.*: 201). Turner and Reynold´s concerns about the general human tendency to create hierarchically unevenly structured societies are understandable, but their arguments and the use of strong expressions - although the postulates of SDT may seem controversial and unsympathetic - do not stand academically. Rather, they should try to refute the individual hypotheses of this theory.

Overall, different conflicting meanings and definitions account for SDO. Some interpretations claim that SDO is a "globalized" or "general" perception of group dominance, whereas the other opposing interpretations accept the "global" viewpoint but applies the conceptualization of SDO as a framework responsive to particular intergroup contexts (Pratto *et al.* 1994: 742, Levin *et al.* 1998). Closely linked to this ambivalent conceptualization of SDO, more complex discussions took place. Researchers coming from a social identity tradition assert that SDO represents only intergroup attitudes that are important in a specific context (Schmitt *et al.* 2003, Lehmiller and Schmitt 2006).

6 Alternative approaches

Several theories have shaped our understanding of intergroup relations, prejudice, and discrimination and we focus on two pioneering theories here: the social identity theory and the concept of the authoritarian personality. We consider them to be crucial as they are not only two of the basic concepts from which the theory of social dominance draws, but they are also primary theories that dealt exclusively with prejudice, discrimination and intergroup relations. Although these approaches underlying prejudice, and discrimination are not by no way conclusive in psychological and sociological research. These theories help clarify whether, when and how prejudice and discrimination arise and become reinforced over time. Thus, these

approaches, including social dominance theory, provide a firm base on analysis of these phenomena.

6.1 Social Identity Theory

The central premise of Social Identity Theory[7] is that individuals are driven to preserve and enhance their positive distinctive character (Tajfel and Turner 1979). Thus, SIT implies that groups comparing themselves with specific outgroup will contribute to a positive or negative assessment of their ingroup; i.e., a positive or negative comparative outcome (*Ibid.*). The theory describes the mechanism of preserving or aiming toward a good social identification by suggesting that the repercussions of a derogatory association with a similar outgroup contribute to the usage of specific identity maintenance techniques.

Particularly, subordinate group members are more inclined to achieve positive social identity because of their "subjective low status" (*Ibid.*: 43) Therefore, subordinate group members use various identity building techniques to gain positive distinctiveness The form of identity management approach used is dictated by the views of the subordinate group members perception of the validity, consistency, and permeability of the intergroup context, factors known as socio-structural variables (*Ibid.*).

The SIT system conceptualized three main identity management techniques, specifically social competition, individual mobility, and social creativity. As previously mentioned, the understanding of socio-structural factors can decide the form of identity management approach utilized (Tajfel 1974). Therefore, identity management techniques are effective for subordinate group members in achieving a positive comparative outcome and for dominant group members in preserving a positive comparative outcome (Tajfel and Turner 1979). One tactic subordinate group member can utilize is individual mobility. Turner and

[7] Also referred to as SIT

Brown (1978: 204) claimed that individual mobility occurs when "an individual leaves or disassociates from his former group." Differently said, an individual disassociates psychologically from their ingroup as a consequence of an unfavorable comparative outcome and enters or attempts to enter the dominant group to satisfy their desire for meaningful distinctiveness (Tajfel and Turner 1979). In general, for individual mobility to be successful there must be permeable intergroup borders and a belief that the dominant intergroup structure is valid and secure (Tajfel 1974, Tajfel and Turner 1979). SIT predicts that members of a subordinate community can use social creativity or social competition as identity management techniques under conditions where intergroup borders are not permeable (Tajfel 1974, Tajfel and Turner 1979).

Social creativity is a complex identity building tool. Turner and Brown (1978) stated that subordinate group members should compete with the related dominant outgroup on different comparative measurements to establish a positive social identity. For instance, black South Africans may choose to equate their group with white South Africans (outgroup) in terms of political status rather than economic status to create meaningful differentiation. An alternative within social imagination is reducing the derogatory connotation of an ingroup trait. Turner and Brown (1978) noted that such a shift in a person's intergroup reference beliefs occurs if a formerly negative group trait is transformed into positive. An instance would be a black individual saying that black is beautiful. Some other differences in social creativity would be to resist comparison with dominant groups in favor of intragroup comparisons or associations with other subordinate outgroup (Tajfel and Turner 1979). It is common among social creativity and individual mobility that intergroup status relations remain the same. That is, a person's status can shift as they engage individual mobility, but intergroup status relationships stay the same (Tajfel 1974). Likewise, by utilizing social creativity, people adjust the comparison aspect, comparison group or modify their beliefs, but the intergroup structure remains

unchanged (Becker 2012). Consequently, social competition is the only identity building technique aimed at explicitly improving intergroup status ties (Tajfel and Turner 1979, Becker 2012).

Social competition arises as ingroup members attempt constructive differentiation by "direct outgroup competition" (Tajfel and Turner 1979: 44). This tactic is said to create intergroup tension between dominant and subordinate groups when subordinate group members attempt to displace themselves from their role (Tajfel and Turner 1979, Turner and Brown 1978). In fact, social competition is used where the existing status quo between dominant and subordinate classes is rendered unconstitutional and dysfunctional and intergroup borders are impervious. (Tajfel and Turner 1979, Ellemers, Wilke and Knippenberg 1993). Tajfel (1974: 79) alluded to illegitimate intergroup inequality as the dominant group's position based on "unfair advantages," "various other forms of injustice," "exploitation", and "illegitimate use of force" disputed by members of dominant or subordinate groups. At the other side, uncertainty includes the degree to which the status of the dominant group is perceived as mutable or endangered (*Ibid.*).

Consequently, it may be claimed that social competition is important in promoting social reform, as subordinate group members use social competition to threaten the position of the dominant group (Tajfel and Turner 1979, Turner and Brown 1978), whereas dominant group members can use social competition to preserve established intergroup ties (Dumont and van Lill 2009). Having noted that in choosing identity management approaches, consistency, credibility, and permeability are essential, the degree to which dominant and subordinate group members identify with the ingroup is also critical in deciding how they use social competition (Ellemers *et al.* 1993, Turner 1999).

According to Sidanius and Pratto (1999), the greatest weakness in terms of prejudice and discrimination of social identity theory is its limited ability to explain the outgroup´s favor which is first and foremost noticeable in individuals with low social status. However, as it is based on the minimal group paradigm, the motivational background of discrimination is to obtain a positive social identity. This suggests that individuals from a low social status group will show much higher motivation and discrimination compared to those with higher social status. In contrast, research shows the opposite of the above assumption and that individuals with low social status often recognize the superiority of individuals with high social status and are characterized by positive discrimination at the relative expense of their own group.

6.2 The Authoritarian Personality

In the mid-20th century, a group of social science researchers was formed with the intent of answering the question of how the event that made people during WWII obedient to commit acts that had nothing to do with humanity could possibly emerge. The answer to this question came in the form of a published research entitled “The Authoritarian Personality” (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson and Sanford 1950), in which authors argued that there was a person referred to as an authoritarian representative who comprised of complex of "symptoms" that made fascism in Europe unimaginably prevalent, and that at the same time conditioned the interpersonal, social, political, and economic-political beliefs of the individual.

Concerning the personality theory that was based on a psychoanalytic tradition, representatives of the concept of the authoritarian personality assumed that the personality traits underlying the authoritarian personality came from childhood and from an environment characterized by severely punitive educational practices. In such an environment, a socialized individual is forced to suffer humiliation and devaluation by educators, while also idealizing and identifying with them, and transmitting the resulting anger, frustration, and aggressive

impulsiveness to individuals of an outgroup. A socialized individual will be prone to define social relationships in the categories of dominance and superior / subordinate relationship (Sidanius and Pratto 1999). In such an environment, the individual adopts a specific attitude towards the social hierarchy that manifests itself directly from such a person deriving humiliation against the weak, defenseless, and social conventions of the outgoing persons and, on the other hand, of eulogy and blind devotion to the powerful and power-possessing persons.

According to Sibley and Duckitt (2008), the empirical background that served to verify these postulates initially enjoyed widespread popularity and seemed to be stable. In particular, it was argued that one who is prejudiced against one group is also strongly prone to show prejudice against other groups characterized by low power in society. Most of the theoretical postulates regarding the emergence of such a form of personality that was to blame for the Holocaust and genocide were based on family upbringing and Freudian interpretation, although the supposed relationship between socialization and personality structure was extremely unstable. The model of authoritarian personality was one of the most influential approaches in terms of prejudice-related concepts but it was also one of the most criticized. In researches investigating authoritative personality through, there were also methodological flaws in the F-scale which included: unrepresentative sample, researcher´s bias, ignoring such variables as education, social status. And because the scale did not contain reverse-coded items, the effect of agreement among respondents could be reflected in the measurement results. Although the research inspired by the concept of authoritarian personality has helped us to understand the dynamics of prejudice, it is important to recall on which methodological basis the researches were carried out. These were mostly correlational studies, which do not give an answer directly to a causal relationship, but rather suggest that there is a relationship between variables which may also be conditioned by many other variables not included in the research concept. (*Ibid.*).

Interest in constructing authoritarianism was reincarnated in the 1980s by Altemeyer (1998), who reformulated and modernized the original scale from a methodological point of view, thus eliminating the mainstream of criticism against the original F-scale, and also changed the concept name from authoritarian personality to right-wing authoritarianism. Instead of looking at RWA as a personality trait with deviation-related components, as was the case with the F-scale (Adorno *et al.* 1950), Altemeyer conceived his RWA as an attitude group consisting of three components and explicitly confirmed RWA´s relationship to the original concept of authoritarian personality. The RWA questionnaire contains a total of 30 items representing three main positions:

1. authoritarian submission - represents a high degree of compliance and submission to strong, legitimate authorities in society.
2. conventionalism - conformity to traditional values
3. authoritarian aggression - punishment of people whose opinions are beyond the conventions, especially on condition that punishment is legitimized by a recognized authority

The RWA scale appears to be highly reliable and valid, correlating to a sufficient extent with many variables that should be related to the author´s concept. The scale correlates with prejudice expressed in prejudices, such as homosexual, Francophone Canadians, immigrants, Jews, etc. In the concept of right-wing authoritarianism, three of its claims appear to be sufficiently validated and substantiated. Firstly, it is the general ethnocentrism with which the concept is widely used, the general ethnocentrism that expresses negative discrimination and sees in the negative intentions a wide range of representatives representing the outgroup (ethnic minorities, political groups, homosexuals, etc.). Secondly, derogations and negative attitudes that are also evident in the proceedings, point to a general tendency that is consistently linked to the concepts of dominance and oppression. Third, contrary to the implications of the theory

of principled conservatism, general conservatism is in a positive relationship with ethnocentrism (Sidanius and Pratto1999).

Interestingly, the RWA scale which conceptually distanced itself from political conservatism, was unable to demonstrate the signs of authoritarianism in left-wing oriented people. This requirement was met by the Left-Wing Authoritarianism[8] concept, where LWA represents an individual opposite to RWA in such a way that authority and compliance with it and its followings are moved from established and traditional standards to revolutionary norms, by which it wants to reframe established norms with its own norms. LWA items are analogous to the RWA scale, and dimensions also represent a fairly identical approach. The difference is mainly represented by an authority that is followed and considered to be a credible representative through which the negative attitudes manifested in the proceedings are legitimized. Research confirming the validity of LWA (Altemeyer 2006) was characterized by sufficient scale reliability.

The criticism of Hiel *et al.* (2006) was based on results and theoretical assumptions which were not sufficiently answered or clarified within the LWA scale. One of them was a sample that was relatively high in terms of the number of respondents but was not sufficiently variable. The variability of respondents was under-represented by members of extreme left movements in such a way that they were not included in the sample at all. Another criticism was aimed at the notion of conventionalism that is one of the three dimensions that are noticeable on both scales. Conventionalism is understood as a belief that, by its very nature represents resistance to change in society. Altemeyer (2006), on the other hand, defined conventionalism in the LWA as adherence to standards of behavior that are consistent with and support the authorities of revolutionary movements. Therefore, Hiel *et al.* (2006) reject the

[8] Further referred to as LWA

inclusion of conventionalism in the concept of left-wing authoritarianism because its significance is contradictory to that represented in the distinction of both the LWA and RWA scales. This is a formal rather than a functional scale problem. It is also interesting that the RWA and LWA scales correlate slightly positive to each other in Altemeyer´s research (2006). In research conducted by Hiel *et al.* (2006), this value was even higher.

Altemeyer (1998) contends that social dominators and right-wing authoritarians are not exactly identical. Combined, however, they could make a lethal union. Altemeyer maintains that people high in SDO, who crave both intergroup hierarchy and interpersonal dominance make strong candidates for dominant leaders who are likely to seek to maximize their influence and power even though it means behaving unethically. People high in right-wing authoritarianism, by contrast, exemplify the submissive follower who would unquestionably support the choices of their leader.

7 Data and methods

This survey is a quantitative study measuring social dominance orientation within MUNI student population and the main goal is to explore the relationship between SDO and factors such as sex, religiosity, type of residence, and field of study. Data collection took place from 3rd to 14th of March 2020 in Brno Czech Republic. The data were collected via Google Forms online questionnaire which is a web-based instrument available on the Google website. University students were solicited via Facebook to participate in the survey. Participants were given access information to enter the survey website; they completed the form online and clicked on the "submit" button when they had completed it. To improve the response rate, the introductory letter was included within the survey, outlining the project and estimated time needed to complete the questionnaire. The respondents were acquainted with the fact that the questionnaire is anonymous and serve only for the master thesis. Clear instructions on how to

complete the questionnaire were provided. Personal information was requested at the beginning of the survey. The questionnaire was 16 questions long ensuring a short time to complete; thus, participants did not get bored and presumably did not stop halfway through. The online questionnaire form is particularly beneficial because in a relatively short period we can gather data from the respondents we are not able to be in personal contact with. The advantage of online questionnaires is their flexibility in obtaining a hard-to-reach sample and of course, time, and material savings. Online based questionnaires can attract participants who would otherwise have little time to participate. Online data collection has also different drawbacks and it can lead to different biases. A sample bias could be one of the main issues that might present. Access to the internet remains unequally distributed and absence of the interviewer may result in answer uncertainties which will be partially solved by offering comprehensive instructions beforehand. Measurement errors may occur as well. For example, if a participant did not scroll down to see an entire list of options in a list box or did not understand how to correct a mistaken response, this could adversely affect the survey result. Participants were provided with authors name/e-mail address in case of being uncertain about the questionnaire questions or requesting research results.

The participants were administered a questionnaire with 16 questions consisting of a set of items measuring social dominance orientation and sociodemographic questions and the data obtained from the respondents were processed and evaluated by the means of statistical program IBM SPSS Statistics 20 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

The research sample consists of 267 MUNI university students, of whom 126 are females and 141 are males, aged 18 – 45 (M = 23.07; SD = 3.61). The number of students studying "Hierarchy Enhancing" fields of study is (n=67, 25.1%). Similarly represented are the "Hierarchy Attenuating" fields (n=66, 24.7%), and the most represented category defined is "Neutral" (n=134, 50%). According to Sidanius *et al.* (1999) Hierarchy attenuating academic

majors are characterized as something to do with, or aim to benefit, groups of low social status and hierarchically subordinate social groups. Therefore, any field of study which includes assistance to and sympathy for the weak is marked as HA. Hierarchy enhancing academic majors have been described as those which include assistance with and sympathy with the socially strong. Students in those without an entirely clear classification were identified as belonging to the neutral category. There are (n=73, 27.4%) students who identify as liberals, (n=155, 58,1%), are those who identify themselves as conservatives, and the last category within the variable (n=38,14,2%) are those who identify as centrists. Considering that the study took place in the Czech Republic, a country with the highest number of people claiming to be non-religious, it is interesting to see that more students identified themselves as religious (n=147, 55,1%) than those who do not practice any religion (n=120, 44,9%). The number of students coming from urban areas was (n=103, 38,6%) which was lower compared to their counterparts coming from rural areas (n=164, 61,4%).

The social dominance orientation is "the extent to which one desires that one's ingroup dominate and be superior to outgroup" (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth and Malle 1994: 742). The desire to maintain the superior position of their ingroup motivates people high in SDO to denigrate members of outgroup, to oppose equality-enhancing social programs such as affirmative action, and, when possible, to discriminate against members of outgroup in order to enforce the status quo (Sidanius and Pratto 1993). Thus, people high in SDO tend to hold negative attitudes toward a variety of groups that push for social equality, such as ethnic minorities, feminists, and LGBTQ+ community (Altemeyer 1998, McFarland and Adelson 1996, 1997, Pratto *et al.* 1994, Sidanius, Pratto and Bobo 1994, 1996)

In the social dominance model, stereotypes play the role of legitimizing myths that people high in SDO use as means of justifying their negative attitudes (Sidanius 1993, Sidanius and Pratto 1993, Sidanius *et al.* 1994). For example, the belief that members of other racial

groups are inherently inferior legitimizes prejudice and discrimination against members of those groups: Why should society expend precious resources to provide people with opportunities they are inherently unfit to take advantage of? Thus, high SDO causes people to endorse stereotypes of outgroup, and this adherence to stereotypes leads to negative attitudes toward members of those groups.

SDO focuses on dominance over outgroup independent of the views of ingroup authority figures. Meaning that SDO is an intergroup phenomenon (Altemeyer 1998, Pratto *et al.* 1994). SDO is rooted in opposition to the redistribution of the benefits that derive from holding a dominant position in society, such as wealth, education, and jobs (Pratto *et al.,* 1994, Sidanius *et al.* 1996)

Because of its roots in opposition to the redistribution of societal benefits and promotion of social equality, SDO is reflected more in attitudes toward the enhancement of intergroup equality than in affective responses to members of minority groups. For example, Sidanius *et al.* (1996) found a higher correlation between SDO and opposition to affirmative action policies than between SDO and anti-Black affect. Thus, people high in SDO devalue members of outgroup and oppose their efforts to close social and economic gaps between themselves and the dominant social group, but they do not necessarily dislike them. From the empirical perspective, the SDO is closely related to prejudice against other groups (Altemeyer 1998, McFarland and Adelson 1996)

The SDO6 scale[9] is applied as a measuring tool which is worded as follows:

1. Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups.
2. In getting what you want, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other groups.

[9] The full version of the questionnaire is available in appendix or at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1_hVCvJZGOX1WS6pQ_JQphs6dvtSW9bLqm1j2zMhrFpA/edit

3. All groups should be given an equal chance in life.
4. To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other groups.
5. Inferior groups should stay in their place.
6. It is probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom.
7. We should strive for increased social equality.
8. People in my group could learn a lot from people from other groups.
9. It would be good if groups could be equal.
10. Groups at the bottom are just as deserving as groups at the top.
11. It is OK if some groups have more of a chance in life than others.
12. We should work to give all groups an equal chance to succeed.
13. Group dominance is a poor principle.
14. We would have fewer problems if we treated people more equally.
15. We should strive to make incomes as equal as possible.
16. No one group should dominate in society.

Items 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 should be reverse coded. The response scale is 1 = Strongly Oppose to 7 = Strongly Favor

First, the analysis of internal consistency is presented (Cronbach´s $\alpha = .87$). Then, within every subchapter of the analysis, the descriptive statistics of the SDO level among MUNI university students and categories defined by our selected factors are introduced. Then, Kruskal-Wallis, T-test, and Mann-Whitney U tests are conducted to check whether there is significant a relationship between SDO and potential factors that may affect it. Finally, with the help of ETA test of association, the selected factors showing SDO a significant relationship strength were examined. A number of variables are recoded for a more meaningful interpretation which is described within the analysis.

7.1 Independent variables and hypotheses

Political orientation

Social dominance theory predicts that individuals who essentially disagree with group-based dominance will be in favor of socially and politically aimed policies and practices that benefit low-power groups. Furthermore, SDT suggests that this interaction will be more prominent with category differences that are particularly prominent in people's culture. Pratto *et al.* (1999) found proof that high SDO scores positively correlate with conservative political orientation and hostility towards policies and programs that aspire to encourage egalitarianism. The concept of social dominance orientation is a relatively useful tool for grasping, for example, right-wing extremism which is accompanied by escalated nationalism and xenophobia, and refers, for example, to national socialism.

Previous research indicates that anti-egalitarianism policies that do not benefit low-power minority groups are predominantly supported by conservative political parties. Based on these studies we formulate the following hypothesis:

H1: *Conservative students will prejudice and discriminate towards minorities more than liberals.*

Sex

The claim that men show on average a higher rate of social dominance than women is the most controversial hypothesis based on the theory of social dominance (Sidanius and Pratto 1999). This hypothesis, also called the "invariance hypothesis" within the SDT is based on the ideas of evolutionary psychology that claim that men throughout human history in an environment of surplus economy, relatively higher social status, power, and dominance have served the environment to a greater extent to the reproductive benefits that provide a greater advantage in this regard for men than for women (*Ibid.*). Although the issue of the invariance

hypothesis within the SDO is largely empirically documented, the relevant researchers have massively been prioritizing professional individuals. The aim in this regard is to test whether this hypothesis stands true among university students.

In the spirit of the invariance hypothesis, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H2: *Male students will have the tendency to be more prejudiced and discriminate towards minorities than females.*

Religiosity

Not just the Christian doctrine but all notable world religions are emphasizing compassion for the vulnerable and supporting the poor. Consequently, people who believe in these religions are expected to have lower SDO results. However, it is fairly well-founded in social psychological research that religious individuals are also prone to prejudice (Allport and Ross 1967, Altemeyer 2003). One would believe that the very essence and fundaments of religious belief calling for love, respecting others, and compassion for the vulnerable would not consider prejudice and discrimination amid its attributes. A great body of research proved these assumptions. For example, Altemeyer (2003), Altemeyer and Hunsberger (2004), Beller (2017), Beller and Kröger (2017), Blogowska and Saroglou (2013), Brandt and Van Tongeren (2017), Jackson (2020), Jackson and Hunsberger (1999), Laythe, Finkel, and Kirkpatrick (2001) found that individuals who are religious tend to be prejudiced towards those who differ from them. All dominant civilizations have their own faith. The irony though is that these views and ideas are internalized as the ones that are right, thus, the clash between adherents in the ingroup and outgroup emerges.

Drawing from previous researches that suggests that religious individuals are prone to prejudice and discrimination, we formulate following hypothesis:

H3: *Religious students will prejudice and discriminate towards minorities more than non-religious.*

Type of residence

The empirical evidence of the impact of the place of residence on prejudice and discrimination remains uncertain. For instance, Wilson (1991) found that individuals from urban areas are more open-minded and tolerant of various worldviews, but Nata (2011) and Mcintosh *et al.* (1995) found no significant relationship between the size of the type of the residence and support for members of minority groups and their rights. Minorities gravitate towards metropolitan areas and thus, both connection and economic competition between different groups are typically more pronounced in large cities (Côté and Erickson 2009). Another research conducted by Haubert and Fussel (2006) found that principally individuals who are educated, highly skilled natives of urban areas show a more welcoming approach toward minorities and immigrants. The contact hypothesis suggests that when relations are based on common interests, no competition between groups and equal status of groups and the approval of the contact authorities, positive tolerances against other groups can be encouraged through interaction with outside group members (Allport 1958). Overall, this sociodemographic factor may affect prejudice towards minorities.

As an already established empirical research suggests, individuals coming from an urban area are generally warmer and more welcoming towards minorities since the metropolitan area is more diverse, thus we formulate the following hypothesis:

H4: *Urban native students will prejudice and discriminate towards minorities less than their counterparts coming from rural areas.*

Field of study

Researches conducted by various authors (e.g. Pratto and Espinoza 2001, Sidanius and Pratto 1999, Rabinowitz 1999) have suggested that socio-political implications based on SDT operate with a differentiated hierarchy attenuating and hierarchy enhancing institutions. Similarly, each field of employment or field of study can be divided into a hierarchy enhancing attenuating and neutral. For example, law and economics could be mentioned as an example of the HE disciplines. Sociology, psychology and social work could serve as an example of HA disciplines. Neutral disciplines include, for example, sciences, mathematics (Sidanius *et al.* 2005). HE institutions and fields of study can be identified as those that are more likely to promote hierarchically structured relationships between social groups with a disproportionately greater allocation of positive values for dominant groups than for subordinate ones (politics, behavior confirming economic inequality between social groups, ethnic groups, etc.). In contrast to HE institutions and field of study, HA institutions dampen and weaken the effect of HE institutions. This distinction between HA and HE institutions which can be analogously converted to HE respectively HA study fields represents the central claim of SDT. People manifesting in accordance with the characteristics of SDO, in this case, having higher SDO levels, suggest that people with high SDO will prefer and feel more comfortable with HE institutions (Sidanius, Pratto, Martin and Stallworth 1991).

As a great body of research suggests, the higher the levels of SDO the more comfortable people feel within HE professions, institutions, and fields of study. Consequently, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H5: *Students focusing on HE fields of study will prejudice and discriminate more towards minorities than those focusing on HA fields of study.*

Additionally, what relates to the total SDO score in our sample, the research conducted by Newcomb (1943) showed that socio-political attitudes of students changed significantly

throughout their university years. More recently, multiple findings have found that prejudice and discrimination towards minority and disadvantaged groups appear to decline with increased exposure to higher education (e.g. Bobo and Licari 1989, Pascarella *et al.* 1996, Sinclair *et al.* 1998). For instance, a study by Sinclair *et al.* (1998) found that UCLA students were substantially less discriminatory and more inclusive after only 9 months at university. Consequently, since our research sample consists of university students, we assume that the SDO levels will be somewhere between low to medium range.

7.2 Limitations of the research

One of the limitations of the research includes a methodological issue regarding the method used. The questionnaire method, which is solely a self-assessment of a scale and the use of which inherently implies sufficient self-knowledge of the person under investigation, their sufficient intelligence, and motivation for accurate completion of the questionnaire, may result directly in the lower credibility of the data obtained by the respondents falsely or intuitively marking their answers. Social desirability bias may be considered as another limitation of the study. This bias entails respondents addressing questions in a manner they believe would be welcomed and liked. Regardless of the study style, certain individuals may report inaccurately on important or personal topics to portray themselves in the best light possible.

Another limitation is the way the data were collected. Students were acquainted with the research through the relevant Facebook university groups and we cannot confirm, even though the Facebook group members were kindly asked not to participate if they are not students, that all respondents were actually students. This could result in data distortion.

Another limitation of the research is the sample size. Within our research, the sample size comprises of 267 university students. Compared to original researches conducted by

Sidanius and Pratto (1999) whose sample size consisted of over 5000 students from different U.S universities, it is a very small sample that causes a reduction in statistical power. The power of a study is its ability to detect an effect when there is one to be detected. This depends on the size of the effect, because large effects are easier to notice and increase the power of the study. The small sample size may cause the emergence of statistical errors, such as Type I or Type II error skewing the results, which decreases the power of the study. We suspect that this was the case in our research where some factors, that within a copious number of different researches proved to affect SDO, were proven as statistically insignificant (for example field of study, religiosity or type of residence).

The original focus of the research was also to examine the effect of the factor of socio-economic origin of students on SDO, but due to the fact that the analysis found that the items in the questionnaire related to a worsened socio-economic status (low education level of parents, unemployment, and money issues when growing up) were massively underrepresented (< 1%). For this reason, we decided to exclude this factor from research as no valuable information could be possibly gathered from the analysis.

We also cannot omit the fact that the thesis is designed as a correlational research that derives only indirectly from real behavior. Relationships cannot be seen as causal. Experimental verification would be needed to confirm the indicated causal relationships in correlational research.

8 Analysis

8.1 Index of total SDO scores

One way we can determine the presence of general social dominance orientations is by demonstrating that they can be measured reliably. Most social researchers embrace two types of reliability measures: one indicating that different measurements of the same construct

converge (normally calculated by a coefficient of Cronbach's alpha), and the other indicating that measures are stable over time. In researches conducted by Sidanius *et al.* (1999), the median reliability for SDO6 scale was .89. Such reliabilities are considered acceptable to excellent. The SDO6 scale also proved to be quite stable over time. Over a one-month period, SDO6 scores of 25 university students displayed a substantial correlation[10].

We operate with a one-dimensional composition index of SDO6, and to test the reliability of the scale in the MUNI student population we compute total SDO6 scores index. Subsequently, we run the reliability test whose results are presented in the following subchapter.

8.1.1 Test of reliability

Cronbach´s Alpha was created to calculate the internal consistency of a test or scale; it is interpreted as a number between 0 and 1. The internal consistency test was calculated from SDO6 items which were worded as follows: *1. Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups., 2. In getting what you want, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other groups., 3. All groups should be given an equal chance in life., 4. To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other groups., 5. Inferior groups should stay in their place., 6. It is probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom., 7. We should strive for increased social equality., 8. People in my group could learn a lot from people from other groups., 9. It would be good if groups could be equal., 10. Groups at the bottom are just as deserving as groups at the top., 11. It is OK if some groups have more of a chance in life than others., 12. We should work to give all groups an equal chance to succeed., 13. Group dominance is a poor principle., 14. We would have fewer problems if we treated people more equally., 15. We should strive to make incomes as equal as possible., 16. No one group should dominate in society.*

[10] ($r = .86$, $p < .001$)

The result of Cronbach´s α within the research conducted on MUNI university students is satisfactory with the coefficient value of .87. As can be seen from the analysis of homogeneity and reliability of the SDO6 scale (Table 1), the resulting Cronbach α values do not change much when individual items are removed.

Table 1: Analysis of SDO6 scale homogeneity and reliability (N = 267)

Items	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach´s α if Item Deleted
1	0.624002	0.851103
2	0.480212	0.858613
3	0.476470	0.858852
4	0.463201	0.859421
5	0.551451	0.855246
6	0.682766	0.848640
7	0.677404	0.850134
8	0.379356	0.862685
9	0.660085	0.850170
10	0.572796	0.854199
11	-0.577565	0.902269
12	0.615104	0.852667
13	0.641390	0.851363
14	0.621463	0.851654
15	0.561033	0.854551
16	0.674957	0.848788

Given the results of reliability analysis (see table above), it would be advisable to exclude item 11 *(It´s OK if some groups have more of a chance in life than others).* When the item was excluded, the value of Cronbach alfa increased to .90. However, the improvement in Cronbach alfa was not very high and we decided to work with all items and create the index.

8.2 Results

As an abundant body of researches suggests (e.g. Newcomb 1943, Alwin *et al.* 1991, Bobo and Licari 1989, Pascarella *et al.* 1996, Sinclair *et al.* 1998), the sociopolitical attitudes of students changed significantly during their university years.

As these developments stayed fairly constant for a long period of time, the results of university socialization seemed reasonably steady and significant (Alwin *et al.* 1991). Recently, many reports have found that discrimination and prejudice towards vulnerable groups continue to diminish with greater access to higher education

We operate with a one-dimensional composition index of SDO6 and construct an additive index consisting of the 16 scores for SDO items (Cronbach's alpha is .87). These scores have been added and the resulting value was divided by 16, which led to an index taking the same values as the initial measured items.

Figure 4: SDO categorization based on the number of students (N = 267)

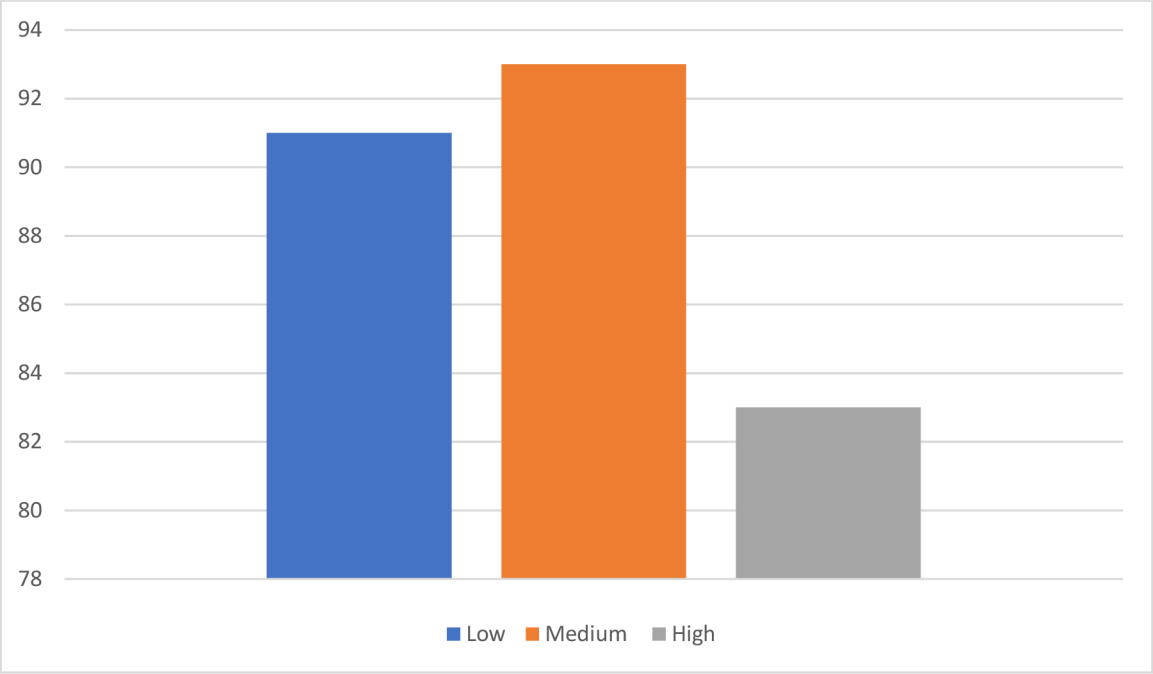


Figure 4 shows that results are consistent with the hypothesis. The average SDO score for the whole sample is 3.20 (SD=1.09). Students are located within the medium range of SDO.

The socialization of HE structures is likely to promote discrimination and group dominance. Conversely, socialization in an HA institution is believed to attenuate social dominance. In fact, many studies recorded lower SDO scores for people socializing in HA settings than those socializing in HE ones (Dambrun, Guimond and Duarte 2002, Guimond *et al.* 2003, Sidanius *et al.* 1991).

An assumption can be made that socialization within the university environment (HA institution) generally positively affects and enhances egalitarianism through educational processes and interaction between either informational influences such as teachers and normative influences emanating from student interactions (Deutsch and Gerard 1955). It appears that the suggestion of Sidanius *et al.* (1999) that education increases understanding and acceptance of egalitarian norms and non-prejudiced attitudes is relevant

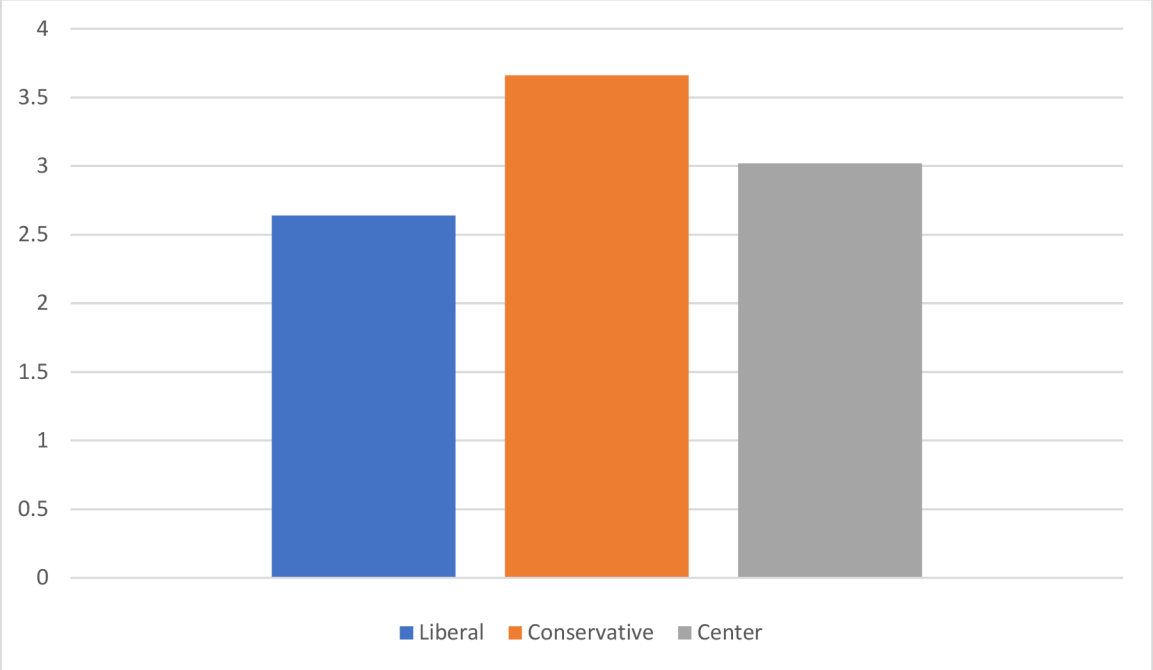
8.2.1 Political orientation

The hypothesis states that conservatives who are generally less fond of policies and various programs that promote and encourage egalitarianism will discriminate and prejudice more towards minorities than liberals. Researches conducted by Sidanius and Pratto (1999) already indicate that elevated SDO scores strongly correlate with conservative political spectrum.

The original 10 scale item is the most commonly used to measure left – right political dimension. The respondent´s choice varying from 1 – 3 indicates that they are oriented on the left, liberal side of the political spectrum, the choice between 4 – 7 denotes a centrist and variation ranging from 8 – 10 captures individuals leaning on the right, conservative side of the political spectrum. To simplify the results interpretation the scale was later categorized into variants: 1 – 3 = "Left", 4 – 7 = "Center", 8 – 10 = "Right"

Figure number 5 shows that the conservatives in the sample actually achieved the highest average SDO scores. Conversely, liberals score the lowest average SDO.

Figure 5: Average SDO score within political orientation categories.



Based on the normality test[11] at the level of α = .05, the null hypothesis of a normal distribution is rejected. Consequently, the data do not meet the conditions for using parametric tests and therefore the Kruskal-Wallis was conducted to examine whether there were statistically significant differences among students leaning towards different political orientations in relation to SDO levels. The results revealed statistically significant differences among the political orientation categories, F=12.21, p=.000. Post-hoc tests revealed statistically significant differences between liberals (M=2.64, SD=1.08) and conservatives (M=3.66, SD=1.26). Conservatives reported significantly higher SDO levels compared to liberals. There were no other significant differences between other groups.

To verify if there is any statistically significant relationship between SDO levels and political orientation, an ETA test of association was performed. The calculated ETA test of association was conducted in order to see the strength of relationship. The results (r=.292, p=.000) showed moderate, statistically significant relationship strength, therefore at the level

[11] "Left" (p=.089), "Center" (p=.200), "Right" (p=.014)

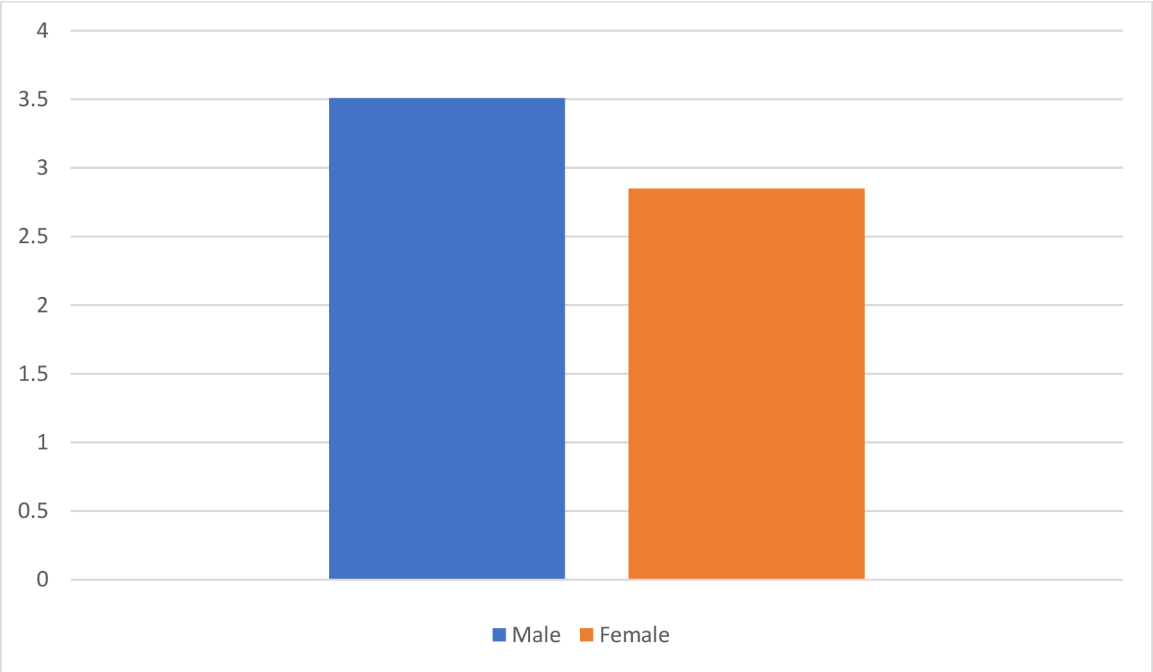
of α = 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis that the variables are independent and accept the hypothesis that states that conservative students are disposed to discriminate, and are prejudiced against minority groups more than liberals.

8.2.2 Sex

Previous researches (Sidanius and Pratto 1999) suggest that due to the evolutionary reasons´ men, throughout human history, in a surplus-economy climate, comparatively higher social standing, strength, and superiority have benefited the society to a greater degree by offering reproductive advantages to men

Figure 6 shows that the men in the sample indeed achieved higher average SDO values than women.

Figure 6: Average SDO score between males and females.



The test of normality[12] showed that the data are normally distributed within both categories. Consequently, the data do meet the conditions for using parametric tests, therefore the parametric independent t-test was conducted to examine whether there was a significant difference between gender groups in relation to their SDO levels. The test revealed a statistically significant difference between males and females (t=-5.127, p=.000). Males (M=3.51, SD=1.05) reported significantly higher levels of SDO than females (M= 2.85, SD=1.04).

To see if there was any significant relationship between the variables the ETA test of association was conducted. The results (r=.300, p=.000) show moderate, statistically significant relationship strength, therefore at the level of $\alpha = 0.05$, we reject the null hypothesis that the variables are independent and accept the invariance hypothesis which stands undefeated also within MUNI university students´ population. Male students are prone to dominance, discrimination and prejudice more than their female counterparts.

8.2.3 Religiosity

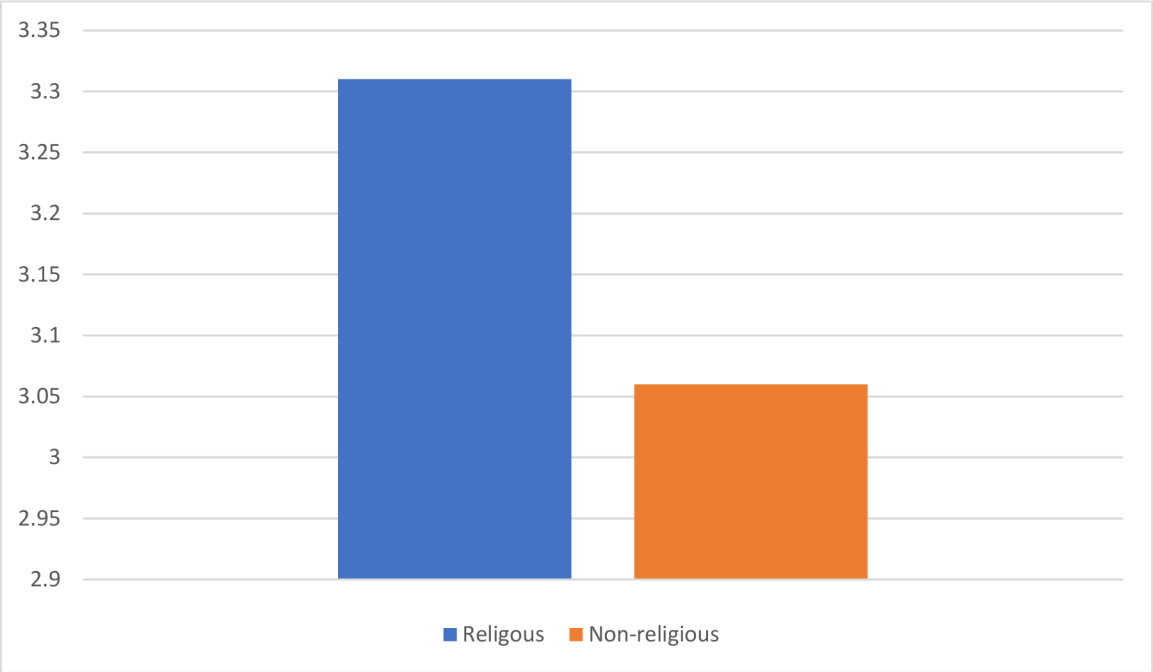
An abundant number of established researches (e.g. Allport and Ross 1967) suggests that religious individuals, even though religious churchgoers oftentimes call for compassion to vulnerable, poor and less fortunate, are prone to discriminate and to be prejudiced towards those who differ from them.

The original item in the administered questionnaire that contained various categories of religious affiliations was later transformed into variant "Religious" (categories: Roman Catholic, Evangelic, Greek Catholic, Christian, Orthodox, Other). Variant "Non-religious" remained in its original version.

[12] "Male" (p=.200), "Female" (p=.054)

Figure 7 suggests that religious students truly score higher average SDO than non-believers.

Figure 7: Average SDO score based on religiosity.



The test of normal distribution[13] revealed that data are not normally distributed, therefore the Mann-Whitney U was conducted to examine whether there was a significant difference between religious categories in relation to their SDO levels. The test revealed (U=776, p=.090) no statistically significant differences between religious (M=3.31, SD=1.13) and non-religious (M=3.06, SD=1.03) students thus we accept null hypothesis of group equality.

To verify the relationship strength the ETA test of association is calculated and the results (r=.112, p=.067) show weak, insignificant relationship strength, therefore at the level of $\alpha = .05$, we accept the null hypothesis that the variables are independent and reject the hypothesis stating that religious students will tend to be more prejudiced and discriminatory

[13] "Religious" (p=.030), "Non-religious" (p=.200)

than those who do not affiliate with any religion and accept the alternative hypothesis that the adherence to religious beliefs does not stand true in the context of being discriminatory and prejudiced. Although the religious students scored higher in SDO the compared average means were situated in close vicinity.

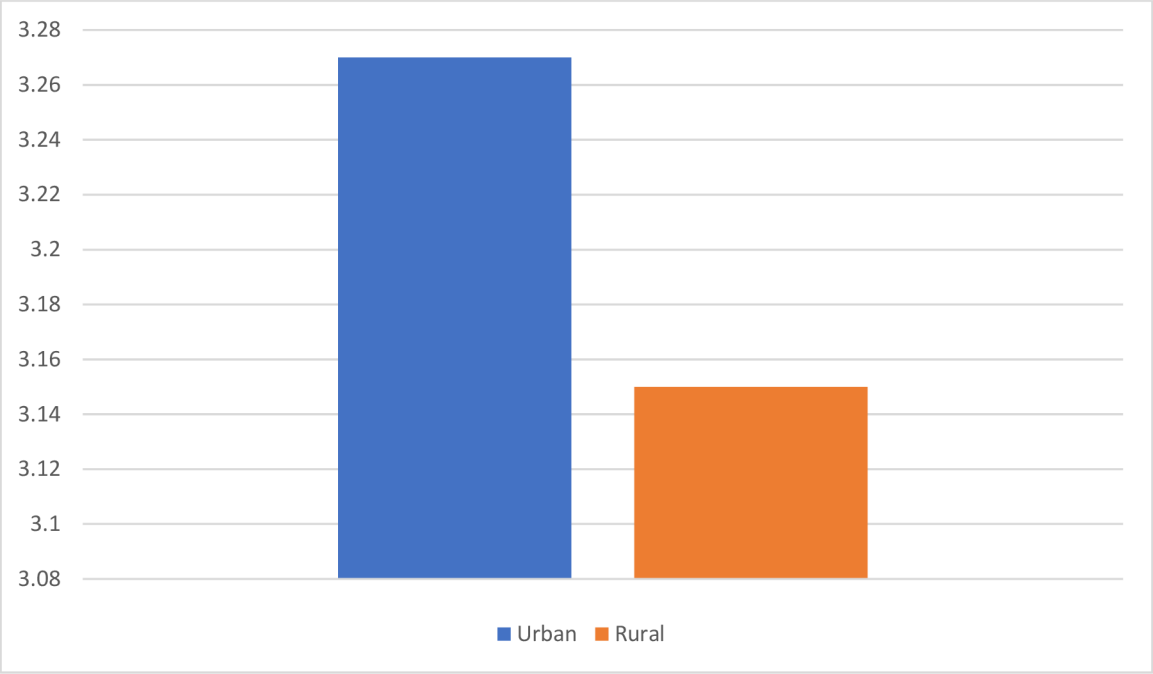
8.2.4 Type of residence

Several empirical studies (e.g. Wilson 1991, Côté and Ericson 2009) states that inhabitants of urban areas tend to be more tolerant than those coming from rural regions. This may be caused by the general open-mindedness of urban residents due to the elevated exposure levels to various groups whether it be ethnic, racial, wealth-related.

The original item inquiring for a type of residence was adapted before the analysis. The initial categories were transformed into category “Urban” (variants: big city (metropolitan city), suburbs or outskirts of a larger city), and “Rural” (variants: medium-sized or smaller city, village, farm, or solitude).

Figure 8 shows that the students coming from urban areas score slightly higher average SDO than those coming from rural areas.

Figure 8: Average SDO score between urban and rural residents.



Test of normality[14] revealed that data are normally distributed. Since both variants do meet the conditions for using parametric tests, the independent sample t-test was conducted to examine whether there was a significant difference between residence groups in relation to their SDO levels. The test revealed no statistically significant difference between students coming from urban and rural areas (t=.812, p=.417). Individuals coming from urban areas (M=3.27, SD=1.07) reported no significantly higher levels of SDO than rural inhabitants (M= 3.16 SD=1.10).

The calculated ETA test of association (r=.050, p=.417) shows trivial almost non-existent relationship strength, therefore at the level of α = .05, we accept the null hypothesis that the variables are independent and thus accept the alternative hypothesis that whether students come from an urban or rural area does not affect their prejudice and discriminatory dispositions towards minority groups.

[14] "Urban" (p=.200), "Rural" (p=.096)

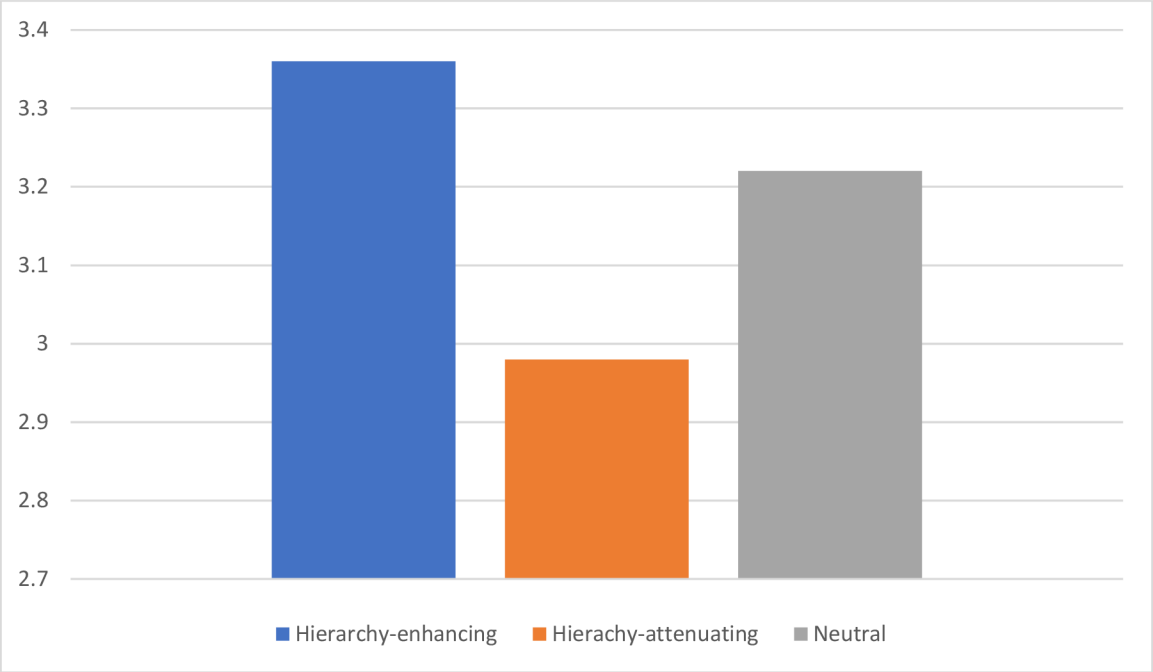
8.2.5 Field of study

A great body of researches (e.g. Pratto and Espinoza 2001) proposes that socio-political associations based on SDT function with a manifold hierarchy attenuating and hierarchy enhancing institutions. Field of study, as well as employment, can be separated into a hierarchy enhancing attenuating and neutral. This distinction between HA and HE institutions can be therefore respectively converted into HA and HE study fields. Sidanius *et al.* (1991) suggest that people manifesting in accordance with the characteristics of SDO, in this case, having higher SDO levels, will prefer and feel more comfortable with HE institutions, in our case study fields and people with low SDO levels will favor HA study fields.

The original variable was in the form of an open question in which respondents wrote respected fields of study. The initial item was transformed before conducted analysis into attributable categories "Hierarchy Attenuating" (anthropology, sociology, psychology, politology, gender studies, cultural studies, linguistics, human resources), "Hierarchy Enhancing" (economics, business, law, finance, banking, management, marketing, diplomacy, international relations), and "Neutral" (biology, engineering, IT, chemistry, veterinary, math, physics, translatology).

Figure 9 suggests that HE study fields actually achieved the highest average SDO scores. Opposite, the HA study fields score the lowest SDO.

Figure 9: Average SDO score between study fields categories.



Since not all categories meet the criteria of normal distribution[15] the Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to examine whether there were statistically significant differences among students studying different fields of study in relation to their SDO. The results (F=2.06, p=.134) disclosed no statistically significant differences among "HA" (M=2.98, SD=1.08), "HE" (M=3.36, SD=1.28), and "Neutral" (M=3.22, SD=.98), fields of study.

The calculated ETA test of association (r=.124, p=.129) shows trivial, insignificant relationship strength, therefore at the level of $\alpha = .05$, we accept the null hypothesis that the variables are independent and we accept the alternative hypothesis stating that students studying HE study fields do not appear to be more prejudiced and discriminatory against minority groups than those who study HA study fields.

[15] "Hierarchy-enhancing" (p=.012), "Hierarchy-attenuating" (p=.200), "Neutral" (p=.200)

9 Discussion

The influence of social group membership on the individual's experience and behavior is one of the main topics of sociology and social psychology. The theory of social dominance enriches these disciplines with a wider perspective to verify related postulates using a specific SDO scale method, which measures the so-called social dominance orientation construct. The SDO can be defined as an orientation that expresses the level of agreement and support for an anti-egalitarian, hierarchical and group-based system of intergroup relations (Sidanius *et al.* 1999). The main goals of the thesis were (1) to clarify the social dominance theory, its origin, basic assumptions and mechanisms, and (2) to compare the results of the SDO questionnaire with other variables that were selected on the basis of prior research in relevant SDT studies. Before we started the statistical analyzes, the reliability of the SDO was calculated. The results of the statistical analyses indicate that the SDO6 scale is sufficiently reliable, and the values are consistent with the values measured by the original Sidanius´s version of SDO scale: in the case of SDO6 scale distributed among MUNI university students, the reliability indicator of Cronbach α reached .87.

Moreover, statistical tests verified that (1) it appears that the suggestion of Sidanius *et al.* (1999) that education increases understanding and acceptance of egalitarian norms and nonprejudiced attitudes is relevant (2) men achieved statistically significantly higher average SDO values than women. This result is consistent with the invariance hypothesis (3) conservatives achieved a statistically significant higher score than liberals which is aligned with the previous results conducted in the context of SDT. Surprisingly, the investigation of other factors revealed that (4) persons studying in the disciplines defined as "Hierarchy Enhancing" achieved no statistically significantly higher SDO values than those in the "Hierarchy Attenuating" fields which runs counter to the results of Sidanius *et al.* However, HE fields scored the highest SDO scores among all categories in contrast to HA fields where the score

was the lowest. So, these results may stem from the lack of representativeness within the categories. Also, it is necessary to clarify the concept of hierarchy enhancing and hierarchy attenuating fields of study, and its categories are not very clearly defined (classification of individual fields according to the intergroup hierarchy). Other results revealed that (5) religious students do not score significantly higher SDO scores than non-religious individuals which contradicts many of the results of studies that deal with the correlation of religiosity discrimination and prejudice. This result could be a consequence of the fact that the research took place in a country which is known as one of the least religious countries in the world. Consequently, individuals who identified themselves as religious could only be characterized by a weak affiliation to a religion that they did not actually practice, or practiced it very poorly. It would be appropriate to carry out a further investigation in this context in order to confirm or reject this assumption. Finally, the last result uncovered the fact that (6) rural residents did not score significantly higher SDO scores compared to urban inhabitants. This result does not match the vast majority of the various empirical studies investigating the impact of the place of residence on prejudice and tolerance. For example, Wilson (1991), found that urban inhabitants tend to be more tolerant and open-minded towards minority groups due to their increased exposure towards them. It seems to be the opposite in Czech Republic. Individuals coming from urban areas scored actually higher SDO than their rural counterparts. One would assume that since the residents of rural areas do not usually come into contact with minority groups, and are generally less exposed to them, they would achieve higher scores. One possible explanation may lay in the fact that the majority of minority groups (especially Romas) who are frequently seen as "freeloaders" that are a burden on Czech´s collective wealth via social welfare payments are often visible within urban areas. Hence, the rancor towards them is more prominent in there. Nevertheless, a long line of empirical studies must be conducted to further illuminate this finding.

Conclusion

The thesis begins with a short summarization of the basic definition of group, its definition, the process of group socialization in which individuals become adjusted to already established group norms and practices and its model that represents the lifespan of the whole process, and we briefly outlined how are the prejudice and discrimination understood within intergroup relations. The main focus within the theoretical part of the thesis lies in clarifying the social dominance theory, its origin, basic assumptions, and mechanisms. The primary objective of the thesis was to focus on verifying the psychometric properties of the SDO6 scale within MUNI university students. We have investigated what sociodemographic factors affect the level of SDO and what is the average levels of SDO among university students. The research results have revealed that within the university students the average mean score of SDO is located in the medium range of the spectrum. Therefore, even though the students´ scores are not within the high range, there might be some tendencies to discriminate and to be prejudiced towards minority groups. Finally, we can conclude that within the chosen factors, sex and political orientation are the most important factors when looking into social dominance, adherence to hierarchical structures, discrimination and prejudice. It appears that males and conservatives have a greater desire to deepen social inequalities and greater acceptance in its legitimacy. As a result, a more discriminatory and prejudiced behavior towards minorities may emerge. Other factors turned out to have no effect on SDO.

SDO6 scale seems to be a sufficiently reliable tool for further research in the field of social dominance theory. Given that this theory has not been widely studied in Czech, nor Slovak conditions, the possibilities of using SDO6 scale are quite wide. As we have witnessed in recent years, Europe have been marked by a refugee crisis and as the number of refugees and asylum seekers continues to increase, European sentiments against them become overwhelmingly pessimistic. People fleeing from hostile and dangerous living conditions in

their countries are mainly Muslim who may be conceived as outgroup members. To employ SDO study in the light of migration crisis could help to underline the possible risk of a desire to concentrate on nationalistic, ingroup, ideology and identity, as such an emphasis may contribute to greater support for aggressive policies in the war against terrorism due to diminished concern for possible civilian casualties and furthermore it could possibly highlight an uprising of blatant populism within European countries. Subsequently, the method can be used for research in the field of social psychology and other related applied disciplines (e.g. in the field of political psychology to compare SDO levels and election preferences, or level of agreement with individual statements in election programs).

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Appendix

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear colleagues!

I kindly ask you to fill in my questionnaire which will serve as a basis for my master's final thesis on the topic of "social dominance orientation". I would also like to ask you to complete the questionnaire as accurately and truthfully as possible.

In case of any questions or interest in regard to research results, please contact me at paveljanci0@gmail.com

Participation in research is anonymous and voluntary. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Instructions: Show how much you favor or oppose each idea below by selecting a number from 1 to 7 on the scale below.

1 – Strongly Oppose, 2 – Somewhat Oppose, 3 – Slightly Oppose, 4 – Neutral, 5 – Slightly Favor, 6 – Somewhat Favor, 7- Strongly Favor

1. Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. It's OK if some groups have more of a chance in life than others.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. All groups should be given an equal chance in life.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other groups.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. Inferior groups should stay in their place.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. We should strive for increased social equality.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. People in my group could learn a lot from people from other groups.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. It would be good if groups could be equal.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10. Groups at the bottom are just as deserving as groups at the top.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. In getting what you want, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other groups.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

12. We should work to give all groups an equal chance to succeed.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

13. Group dominance is a poor principle.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14. We would have fewer problems if we treated people more equally.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

15. We should strive to make incomes as equal as possible.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

16. No one group should dominate in society.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

In the second part of the questionnaire, I would like to know some information about you.

What is your age?
.....

What is your field of study?
.....

How would you describe the type of residence you live in?

a) Big city (metropolitan city)
b) Suburbs or outskirts of a larger city
c) Medium-sized or smaller city
d) Village, farm or solitude

What is your current religion, if any?

a) Non-religious
b) Roman Catholic
c) Evangelic
d) Greek Catholic
e) Christian
f) Orthodox
g) Other

In political matters, people talk of ‘‘the left’’ and the ‘‘the right’’. How would you place your views on this scale, generally speaking? (1=left, 10=right)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What is the highest degree or level of education your father has completed?

a) Unfinished elementary education
b) Elementary education
c) Secondary education with vocational certificate
d) Secondary education without GCSE (maturita), followed by further studies completed with final exam (language studies, retraining courses...)
e) Secondary education with GCSE (maturita)
f) Secondary Grammar school with GCSE (gymnázium)
g) Higher Baccalaureate Education (Bc.)
h) Higher Master´s Education (Mgr., Ing., Ing. arch., MUDr., MDDr., MVDr….)
i) Doctoral education, post gradual education (Ph.D., Th.D., CSc...)

What is the highest degree or level of education your mother has completed?

a) Unfinished elementary education
b) Elementary education
c) Secondary education with vocational certificate
d) Secondary education without GCSE (maturita), followed by further studies completed with final exam (language studies, retraining courses...)
e) Secondary education with GCSE (maturita)
f) Secondary Grammar school with GCSE (gymnázium)
g) Higher Baccalaureate Education (Bc.)
h) Higher Master´s Education (Mgr., Ing., Ing. arch., MUDr., MDDr., MVDr….)
i) Doctoral education, post gradual education (Ph.D., Th.D., CSc...)

When you were 14, was your father employed, self-employed or unemployed?

a) He was employed
b) He was self-employed
c) He was unemployed

When you were 14, was your mother employed, self-employed or unemployed?

a) She was employed
b) She was self-employed
c) She was unemployed

Could I ask you to think back to when you were about 14 years old? Could you say to what extent these statements correctly describe your parents when you were about 14?

	Yes	To some extent	Rarely	No
My parents had difficulties to make both ends meet				
When something broke my parents had difficulties to replace it				