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The Effect of Social Dominance Orientation on Reactions to University and Employment Recruitment and Selection Policies

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The Effect of Social Dominance Orientation on Reactions to

University and Employment Recruitment and Selection Policies

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Management

By

Angélica Gutiérrez

2012

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Effect of Social Dominance Orientation on Reactions to

University and Employment Recruitment and Selection Policies

by

Angélica Gutiérrez

Doctor of Philosophy in Management

University of California, Los Angeles, 2012

Professor Miguel M. Unzueta, Chair

This dissertation tests the competing hypotheses that social dominance orientation (SDO) reflects

a specific desire to protect ingroup interests vs. a general desire to maintain status hierarchies by

examining attitudes toward hierarchy-enhancing (i.e., legacy, word-of-mouth referrals) and

hierarchy-attenuating (i.e., affirmative action) selection policies. Study 1 found that social

dominance orientation (SDO) was positively related to support for legacy policies and negatively

related to support for affirmative action. In a more direct test of the ingroup interest vs. general

dominance hypotheses, Study 2 found that among Asian participants, SDO is negatively related

to policy support when a legacy policy is perceived to benefit the ingroup (i.e., fellow Asians);

however, when the policy is perceived to benefit the dominant group (i.e., Whites), SDO is

positively related to support. Study 3 tested the general dominance hypothesis by examining

attitudes toward selection policies used in employment (i.e., word-of-mouth referrals). This study found that SDO was positively related to support for word-of-mouth referrals when this recruitment strategy was perceived to benefit Whites, and negatively related to support for word-of-mouth referrals when this strategy was perceived to benefit racial minorities. In all three studies, the effect of SDO on the perceived quality of the university (Study 1 & 2) and hiring company (Study 3) was mediated by policy support. In all, these findings suggest that attitudes toward selection policies depend not on their specific content or effects on the ingroup, but rather on their impact on status hierarchies.

The dissertation of Angélica Gutiérrez.

Margaret Joan Shih

Maia Young Bauman

Yuen J. Huo

Miguel M. Unzueta, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2012

DEDICATION

Para mi mamá y hermano por su cariño, apoyo, y fe en mí.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Growing up as a Latina in a low-income, single-parent household in Lincoln Heights, I never imagined that I would someday obtain a PhD at a business school. Thanks to the people in my life, however, I have obtained it.

There are many people to whom I'm grateful. I start with the three most important people in my life. I thank God for blessing me with the dream of becoming a professor and granting me immense resources and support to realize this dream. I also thank Him for reminding me, in so many ways, that I am here to serve a purpose and that He will guide me as I pursue the path that will enable me to make a positive impact in people's lives. I thank my mom, Imelda Saucedo, who taught me by example that with strength and perseverance anything is possible. Linguistic and economic barriers did not deter her from raising two children as a single mother, and providing my brother and me with the most incredibly loving, supportive environment and an excellent education. I thank my brother, Jaime Gutierrez, who has always believed in me and told me "Gelica, don't cry" when times were tough. Thank you, bro for the support you've always given me. I am extremely lucky to call you my brother. To my closest friends, Jackie Lopez, Veronica Ramirez, and Nicolle Perras who helped keep me sane over tinis, coffee and dinner, and who always understood my flaking on so many events for the sake of getting work done.

In addition to being blessed with incredible family and friends, I also have had wonderful mentors and professors who instilled in me a love for learning, research, and teaching. Abel Valenzuela, Jr., currently a faculty member at UCLA, first inspired me to conduct research when I was an undergrad student at UCLA in his honors collegium course. Although I originally took the course just to get the stipend that accompanied the research project, I immediately developed a passion for research when I conducted my first field study on teen pregnancy at a local alternative school. Abel, thank you for motivating me to pursue a PhD! J. W. Wiley, former director of the Ronald E. McNair Scholars program at Claremont Graduate University, gave me the opportunity during my sophomore year in undergrad to participate in this program. Through this program, I conducted research, gained exposure to graduate-level courses, and presented my

first conference paper (I'll never forget the 2 faculty members in attendance who made me promise I'd be a professor someday).

During my tenure as a PhD student, I have had amazing professors. Miguel M. Unzueta has been a great mentor and advisor for the past 5 years. His advice to study what upsets me the most has been invaluable – I now study matters that I'm most passionate about. Miguel also taught me how to conduct micro research (my first exposure to this work!). Margaret Shih has been an amazing role model. She is the most brilliant, talented, caring, and compassionate scholar I know, and thanks to her I have a clear vision of the type of researcher and professor I would like to be someday. Maia Young has shown me that having a productive, successful career as a professor and a family is possible. She is an incredible role model. I have also been fortunate to know Yuen Huo, who has provided great support and feedback as a dissertation committee member. William Ouchi has been an outstanding senior faculty advisor. His advice about research and academia has been extremely helpful, and his passion for research that has important implications for organizations, including schools, inspires me to do similar work.

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And finally, thank you to the TELACU Education Foundation, Hispanic Scholarship Fund, and Riordan Programs for helping to finance my education, and to the staff and program participants for serving as constant reminders of why I was pursuing this degree in the first place.

God bless.

VITA

Angélica Gutiérrez

EDUCATION

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Stereotypes, racial/ethnic identity, diversity management, token status, social inequality

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Gutiérrez, A. S., & Unzueta, M. M. (2010). The effects of interethnic ideologies on the likability of stereotypic and counterstereotypic minority targets. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 46,* 743-752.

Unzueta, M. M., Gutiérrez, A. S., & Ghavami, N. (2010). How believing in affirmative action quotas affects White women's self-image. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 46,* 120-126.

Working Papers and Papers Under Review

Gutiérrez, A. S. & Unzueta, M. M. Are admissions decisions based on family ties fairer than those that consider race? Social dominance orientation and attitudes toward legacy vs. affirmative action policies. Invited resubmission at *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*.

Unzueta, M. M., Everly, B. A., & Gutiérrez, A. S. Social dominance orientation predicts differential reactions to Black and White discrimination claimants. Invited resubmission at *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*.

Gutiérrez, A.S. & Unzueta, M. M. Not all minorities are averse to tokenism: How racial regard and ethnic group status affect perceptions of token vs. majority task groups. Invited resubmission at *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*.

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Gutiérrez, A. S. & Unzueta, M. M. (2012). Are admissions decisions based on family ties fairer than those that consider race? Social dominance orientation and attitudes toward legacy vs. affirmative action policies. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Personality & Social Psychology, San Diego, CA.

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Gutiérrez, A. S. & Unzueta, M. M. (2011). Not all ethnic minorities dislike tokenism: The effect of private regard on minorities' group perceptions. Paper presented at the London Business School 2011 Trans-Atlantic Doctoral Conference, London, UK.

Gutiérrez, A. S. & Unzueta, M. M. (2011). Not all ethnic minorities dislike tokenism: The effect of private regard on minorities' group perceptions. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Academy of Management, San Antonio, Texas.

Unzueta, M. M., Everly, B. A., & Gutiérrez, A. S. (2011). Social dominance orientation predicts differential reactions to Black and White discrimination claimants. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Academy of Management, San Antonio, Texas.

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- o UCLA Summer Doctoral Fellowship, 2007-Present
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- o Research Mentorship Award, 2007-2008
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    - ° Executive MBA Elective, Fall 2011, 2010
    - ° Fully Employed MBA Elective, Winter 2010, Fall 2009, Fall 2008
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A large body of literature has examined people's attitudes toward affirmative action policies (Bobo, 2000; Dovidio & Gartner, 1996; Sears, Hetts, Sidanius & Bobo, 2000; Lowery, Unzueta, Knowles, & Goff, 2006). Intended to increase the representation of underrepresented groups in higher education and in the workplace, affirmative action is a collection of policies that take into consideration racial group membership in hiring and admissions decisions (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002). Opponents of affirmative action base their opposition to these policies on the premise that they violate meritocratic principles – i.e., ideals that individuals should be rewarded based only on competence and qualifications rather than group membership (Bobocel, Son Hing, Davey, Stanley, & Zanna, 1998; Heilman, Battle, Keller, & Lee, 1998). Although examining individuals' reactions to affirmative action is important, examining reactions to other selection policies, such as legacy admissions policies in universities and word-of-mouth referrals in employment, may provide insight into people's underlying motivations for supporting or opposing such policies. While susceptible to the same arguments made against affirmative action – namely, that these policies violate meritocracy – reactions to legacy policies and word-of-mouth referrals have not been empirically scrutinized and therefore it is not known if people's reactions to these recruitment and selection policies differ from their reactions to affirmative action.

In the sections that follow, I begin with a review of the literature on Social Dominance Theory, and Social Dominance Orientation – the psychological component of this theory. I then define and describe legitimizing ideologies, which are the processes through which inequality and racial hierarchies are maintained. I then present 3 studies, the first 2 studies are a version of a paper currently under second review (Gutiérrez & Unzueta, 2012). Together, these studies test the hypothesis that group dominance motives explain differential reactions to recruitment and

selection policies, such as affirmative action and legacy policies (Study 1 and 2) and word-of-mouth referrals (Study 3). This research contributes to the literature on social dominance. Study 1 empirically examines the effects of group dominance motives on reactions to legacy policies, which are widely used in admissions decisions at various universities but have not been empirically scrutinized. Study 2 contributes to the current debate on whether group dominance motives (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Pratto, Sidanius, & Levin, 2006) or group interests (Schmitt, Branscombe, & Kappen, 2003) better explains reactions to inequality. And Study 3 tests the generalizability of these findings in a different context (i.e., employment) by examining reactions to word-of-mouth referrals as a function of individuals' desire to maintain status hierarchies.

Social Dominance Theory

Social Dominance Theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) examines why oppression and inequality continue to exist. According to this theory, societies contain three different types of group-based hierarchies: 1) an age-system, in which adults have a disproportionate share of power over children, 2) a gender system, which is characterized by a dominance of males over females, and 3) an arbitrary-set system, which is socially constructed and characterized by the dominance of one group over others; group dominance is based on social distinctions (i.e., race). It is the arbitrary-set system – specifically, group dominance based on race (i.e., racial hierarchy), that we focus on in the present research.

For most of U.S. history, the racial hierarchy has been characterized by the control of subordinate groups (e.g., Blacks) by the dominant group (e.g., Whites). The dominant group typically has a disproportionate share of resources that have positive social value, such as higher paying jobs, greater wealth, political power, and access to higher performing schools.

Conversely, subordinate groups have a disproportionate share of resources that have negative social value, such as dangerous and unpleasant jobs, underemployment, substandard housing, and greater rates of disease.

According to Social Dominance Theory, this racial hierarchy and inequality are created and maintained through various mechanisms. The primary mechanisms are: institutions, behavioral asymmetry, and individuals (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Below, I briefly describe how institutions and behavioral asymmetry function to maintain inequality, then provide a more thorough account of the role individuals play given that the present research focuses on how individuals – specifically, their social dominance orientation, influences their support and opposition to policies that have differential effects on the racial hierarchy and inequality.

How are inequality and racial hierarchies maintained?

Institutions. Institutions can serve to either enhance or attenuate racial hierarchies. Hierarchy-enhancing institutions tend to defend the interests of the strong against the weak, and serve to maintain inequality by allocating a disproportionate share of positive social value to dominant groups. Examples of hierarchy-enhancing institutions include police departments, law enforcement agencies, and prison systems. These entities tend to allocate resources of positive social value to dominant group members and a disproportionate share of resources of negative social value (i.e., beatings, death sentences) to subordinate group members. For example, data suggest that African Americans are much more likely to be imprisoned for longer terms relative to Whites who commit the same crimes (Sidanius, Liu, Shaw, & Pratto, 1994).

Contrary to hierarchy-enhancing institutions, hierarchy-attenuating institutions tend to defend the interests of the weak against the strong, and seek to promote social equality.

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Examples of hierarchy-attenuating institutions include civil rights groups, charities, and the public defenders office (Sidanius, et. al, 1994). Despite the efforts of hierarchy-attenuating institutions to counter the negative outcomes propagated by hierarchy-enhancing institutions against subordinate groups, the former tend not to have the same degree of resources, power, and influence from which hierarchy-enhancing institutions benefit. As such, the inequality often propagated by hierarchy-enhancing institutions is difficult to counterbalance.

Behavioral Asymmetry. According to social dominance theory, there are differences in the behaviors in which dominant and subordinate groups engage that serve to reinforce racial hierarchy. Findings suggest that subordinate group members tend to engage in more activities that are harmful to their groups relative to dominant group members (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). For example, whereas children from subordinate groups are less likely to read books and more likely to watch television, children from dominant groups are much more likely to be intellectually stimulated through exposure to books. There is also evidence that subordinate group members (i.e., Latinos, Africans) also end to miss classes more often and tend to be less engaged in school relative to dominant group members. In addition to the differences in academic achievement, there are also disparities in health-related behaviors between dominant and subordinate group members.

Studies find that the lower the status of one's group, the more likely one is to smoke (Matthews, Kelsey, Meilhan, Kuller, & Wing, 1989), consume higher amounts of alcohol, and exercise less. While there is evidence that these negative outcomes are explained by disparities in access to economic, education, and social resources between dominant and subordinate group members, the self-debilitating behaviors in which subordinate group members engage also contribute to these outcomes. These self-debilitating behaviors, in turn, serve to maintain

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inequality because they are often used to justify the unequal treatment of subordinate group members by dominant group members.

Individuals. Social dominance theory also posits that racial hierarchies and inequality are not only attributable to institutions and behavioral asymmetry (i.e., self-debilitating behaviors), but also individuals. It is this mechanism for maintaining inequality on which the present research focuses. According to social dominance theory, individuals can help maintain inequality and the dominance of subordinate groups through the discrimination that they perpetrate. For example, individuals maintain inequality by refusing to sell a house, which is the primary means of generating wealth, to members of subordinate groups. In employment, disparities in access to higher-status and higher-paying jobs can also be maintained when an employer chooses not to hire or promote applicants from subordinate groups. Given that dominant group members tend to occupy more positions of power relative to subordinate group members, the former have greater ease in allocating resources of negative social value (i.e., lower paying jobs) to certain groups (i.e., racial minorities) and allocating resources of positive social value to others (i.e., Whites). Individuals help maintain inequality not only through the social roles that they occupy, but also through the types of policies they support.

In 1996, the University of California Regents voted in favor of proposition 209, which made it illegal to use race as a factor in admissions decisions. Evidence suggests that individuals' opposition to policies such as affirmative action, which seek to eliminate discrimination against racial minority groups and level the playing field, is not driven by concerns of fairness but rather a desire to maintain the status of the dominant group (Pratto, et. al. 1994). Whether individuals will support or oppose policies that have important implications

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for status hierarchies will depend on their social dominance orientation (SDO) – that is, on the degree to which they seek to maintain inequality and group dominance.

Social dominance orientation

Social dominance orientation (SDO) is the psychological component of social dominance theory. SDO describes which individuals are likely to support the institutions, processes, and policies that will enhance or attenuate status hierarchies. SDO is defined as "the degree to which individuals desire and support group-based hierarchy and the domination of 'inferior' groups by 'superior' groups" (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999 p. 48). Individuals' SDO may be influenced by various factors. One of these factors is membership in or affinity to the dominant group. There is evidence that all else being equal, dominant group members have higher social dominance orientation relative to subordinate group members (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Another factor that influences SDO is gender. All else being equal, men tend to have higher SDO relative to women (Sidanius & Pratto, 2003; Pratto, Liu, Levin, Sidanius, Shih, Bachrach, & Hegarty, 2000). There is also evidence that individuals have different personalities and predispositions. One of the personality traits that may influence SDO is empathy. There are data that suggest that the lower an individual's level of empathy, the higher the SDO (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In short, SDO can be influenced by various factors.

Social dominance orientation is typically measured using scales developed by Sidanius & Pratto (1999). Individuals are usually asked to indicate how negatively or positively (1-7 scale) they feel about certain items. Sample items include, "It is not a big problems if some people have more of a chance in life than others," "This country would be better off if inferior groups stayed in their place," "If people were treated more equally we would have fewer problems in

this country" (reverse scored). Individuals who are characterized as high in SDO tend to feel

very positively or strongly agree with these statements. Conversely, individuals who are low in

SDO tend to feel very negatively about or strongly disagree with these statements. And although

SDO can vary depending on the specific context (Schmitt, Branscombe, & Kappen, 2003),

studies suggest that relative levels of SDO are consistent over time (Sidanius & Pratto, 2003).

Legitimizing ideologies

Individuals characterized as high SDOs tend to support hierarchy-enhancing processes,

and low SDOs tend to support hierarchy-attenuating processes. Support or opposition to these

processes is justified through legitimizing ideologies. Legitimizing ideologies are the principles,

values, and morals individuals use to justify their actions and behaviors, which have important

implications for status hierarchies. These ideologies are effective at maintaining inequality and

racial hierarchies because they are typically widely endorsed. For example, individuals high in

SDO tend to endorse meritocracy – the belief that resources are already appropriately distributed,

and prejudice – the belief that some individuals are simply inferior and therefore deserve

negative social value. These beliefs serve as hierarchy-enhancing legitimizing ideologies

because they serve to justify individuals' status in the racial hierarchy on the basis that they are

in a position that they earned and thus, deserve. Conversely, individuals low in SDO tend to

support religious doctrines – specifically, egalitarian themes in the New Testament (Sidanius &

Pratto, 1999). These beliefs are hierarchy attenuating because they seek to promote equality. In

all, high SDOs endorse ideologies that justify unequal treatment of groups and group dominance,

and low SDOs tend to endorse ideologies that justify equality and seek to level the playing field.

Depending on individuals' level of SDO, they may employ legitimizing ideologies that have either hierarchy-enhancing or hierarchy-attenuating effects to justify support or opposition to certain policies. For example, affirmative action is a policy that has generated as much support as it has opposition. Individuals on both sides use legitimizing beliefs to justify their positions. Whereas individuals high in SDO oppose affirmative action on the basis that it violates meritocratic ideals, individuals low in SDO support the policy on the premise that it serves to level the playing field (Bobocel, et. al., 1998; Heilman, et. al., 1998).

It is important to note that endorsement of legitimizing ideologies for the purpose of maintaining status hierarchies need not be conscious. Legitimizing ideologies – such as the Protestant work ethic, are often embedded into the culture and viewed as having a high degree of moral, religious, and scientific truth (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Individuals from all spectrums – whether rich or poor, Black or White endorse such ideologies. However, one of the implications of endorsing ideologies such as the Protestant work ethic is that it maintains status hierarchies by propagating the idea that resources are already appropriately distributed according to deservingness, and thus, efforts to redistribute resources are unnecessary because individuals already get what they deserve. Social dominance theory – specifically, individuals' SDO may provide insight on who may endorse ideologies that serve to justify the support of or opposition to policies, such as legacy policies, that have different implications for status hierarchies.

What are legacy policies?

Legacy policies give an admissions boost to children and grandchildren of university alumni (Ladewski, 2010). Given that legacy admissions are based on past patterns of university enrollment, legacy preferences disproportionately benefit White applicants, whose parents are

more likely than the parents of racial minorities to have attended universities (Lamb, 1993).

Studies suggest that an applicant whose parents graduated from an institution are 45% more

likely to gain admission over applicants with no familial connection to the university in question;

applicants who have a sibling, aunt, uncle or grandparent who graduated from an institution are

14% more likely to be admitted relative to someone with no legacy status (Hurwitz, 2010).

In addition to legacy and affirmative action policies, there are employment recruitment

and selection practices that have differential effects on the selection of racial minority vs. White

applicants and, consequently, on the racial hierarchy. One such selection strategy is the use of

word-of-mouth referrals.

What are word-of-mouth referrals?

Word-of-mouth referrals are a common recruitment strategy whereby employers

encourage current employees to disseminate information about job vacancies to their family,

friends, and acquaintances (Shinnar, Young, & Meana, 2004). Findings suggest that word-of-

mouth referrals provide positive outcomes. For example, relative to employees who were

recruited through other sources, employees recruited through word-of-mouth referrals have

longer tenure (Kirnan, Farley, & Geisinger, 1989) and better performance (Kirnan et. al., 1989).

However, the use of word-mouth-referrals can also have negative effects, particularly on the

recruitment of racial minorities. For example, studies find that White applicants are more likely

to have been hired through employee referrals relative to racial minorities (Taber & Hendricks,

2003). This recruitment strategy also serves to maintain the current racial composition of the

workforce in organizations since individuals tend to provide information about job vacancies to

their family, friends, and acquaintances that are typically of the same racial group (Taber &

Hendricks, 2003; Mouw, 2002). Moreover, a study by Kasinitz and Rosenberg (1996) found that blacks are excluded from high-paying jobs in firms that use word-of-mouth recruiting because blacks have less contact networks in higher paying, higher status positions. Given the differential effects of word-of-mouth recruiting on blacks and minorities relative to Whites, individuals interested in maintaining inequality may be most apt to supporting the use of this recruitment strategy relative to hierarchy-attenuating policies such as affirmative action.

How affirmative action policies may differ from legacy policies and word-of-mouth referrals

One reason why people may react differently to affirmative action vs. legacy policies and word-of-mouth referrals is that the latter have opposing consequences for racial equality. Whereas affirmative action policies promote equality by attempting to reduce racial gaps in access to jobs and educational opportunities (Blumer, 1958,; Bobo, 1998; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), legacy policies and word-of-mouth referrals could be thought of as promoting inequality by primarily benefitting members of the dominant racial group (i.e., Whites; Ladewski, 2010). Given that affirmative action, legacy policies and word-of-mouth referrals may have opposing consequences for the racial hierarchy, people's social dominance orientation (SDO) – i.e., the degree to which individuals desire inequality between social groups (Pratto et. al., 1994) – may differentially predict support for these policies. Specifically, SDO may predict opposition to hierarchy-*attenuating* affirmative action policies and support for hierarchy-*enhancing* legacy policies and word-of-mouth referrals.

The group interests perspective: An alternative explanation for differential policy support

Recently, scholars have examined whether support for policies reflects individuals' general orientation for group dominance or whether support will depend on the specific policy

examined and on its effects on the ingroup. According to the group interests perspective, reactions to inequality – or policies that result in inequitable outcomes, will depend on whether the ingroup is privileged or disadvantaged by it. For example, Schmitt, Branscombe, and Kappen (2003) contend that in general, women may be opposed to inequality relative to men because women tend to be disadvantaged by inequality – that is, men assume a more powerful, dominant position over women in society. As such, men support inequality not because they have a general orientation toward supporting status hierarchies but rather out of a desire to protect ingroup interests – that is, supporting inequality from which they benefit. Branscombe et. al., contend that if women are led to consider forms of inequality that benefit them, however, then they may be more inclined to support the inequality relative to men.

Extending the group interests perspective to the present research, it then follows that individuals who are advantaged by inequality (i.e., legacy policies, word-of-mouth referrals) should view these policies more favorably than individuals who are disadvantaged by them. As such, support or opposition to policies may be influenced not by a general orientation toward group dominance but instead a desire to protect the ingroup's interests. That is, individuals who benefit from such policies will support them and individuals who are disadvantaged by them will oppose them.

The present research

In the present research I examine whether the differential effect of recruitment and selection policies on the racial hierarchy affects people's support for such policies. In Study 1, we assess people's support for legacy vs. affirmative action as a function of SDO. Consistent with social dominance theory (Sidanius, Liu, Pratto, & Shaw, 1994; van Laar, Sidanius,

Rabinowitz, & Sinclair, 1999), we argue that support for these policies reflects individuals'

desire to preserve or minimize racial inequality regardless of whether such policies actually

benefit the in-group. In Study 2 we directly assess whether SDO reflects a general desire to

maintain inequality (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Pratto, Sidanius, & Levin, 2006) or a specific

desire to protect ingroup interests (Schmitt, Branscombe, & Kappen, 2003; Lehmiller & Schmitt,

2007). In Study 3 we test the general dominance motive hypothesis in a different domain. We

examine reactions to employee selection and recruitment strategies (i.e., word-of-mouth

referrals). Moreover, in the three studies, we explore if people legitimize their support or

opposition toward these policies through perceptions that such policies impact the quality of the

university (Study 1 & 2) and hiring company (Study 3).

Study 1

Study 1 tested the hypothesis that a desire to preserve the racial hierarchy influences

people's attitudes towards legacy vs. affirmative action policies. Consistent with past research,

we expect to find that affirmative action is opposed as a function of SDO (Pratto, Sidanius,

Stallworth, & Malle, 1994). Conversely, given that legacy policies are likely to reinforce the

racial hierarchy by overwhelmingly benefitting Whites (Ladewski, 2010), we expect to find a

positive relationship between legacy policy support and SDO.

Participants

Eighty participants (51 women, 29 men) were recruited from an online participant

database maintained at UCLA; 38 Asians, 36 Whites, 4 Latinos, 2 participants indicated more

than one racial identity. The age ranged from 18 to 36 ($M = 20.76$, $SD = 2.87$). Participants

were paid $2 for their participation.

Procedure

Participants were told that they would be completing two unrelated surveys. Participants first completed an SDO measure, which was described as a survey on individuals' views of groups in society. The second survey was described as a survey on individuals' policy views. Participants were randomly assigned to evaluate either a legacy or an affirmative action policy. In the legacy condition, participants read a paragraph indicating that Ivy League schools and other major universities, including UCLA[1], currently use a legacy admissions policy; this policy was described as giving children and grandchildren of alumni a "nudge" in the admissions process (see Appendix A). In the affirmative action condition, participants read the same paragraph but the term "legacy" was substituted with "affirmative action." In addition, this policy was described as giving underrepresented students a "nudge" in the admissions process (see Appendix B). Participants were then asked to indicate their support for the policy and its impact on the quality of the university.

Measures

Social Dominance Orientation. SDO was measured using an eight-item scale (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Sample items include: "If certain groups stayed in their place, we would have fewer problems" and "It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom" (1 = very negative, 7 = very positive; $\alpha = .93$; $M = 2.43$, $SD = .94$).

Policy support. To assess participants' support of the policy, participants were asked to respond to the following items: "How fair do you think is this policy?" (1 = not fair at all, 7 = very fair), "To what extent do you agree or disagree that this policy is legitimate and should be continued?" (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree), "How much do you oppose or support

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the policy that you read in the previous screen?" (1 = strongly oppose, 7 = strongly support; α =

.91; *M* = 2.95, *SD* = 1.29).

Perceived effect of policy on quality of university. To measure the perceived effect of the

admissions policy on the university, participants completed a five-item scale. Sample items

include: "This admissions policy will help admit highly qualified individuals," "UCLA will be

a much better place if this policy continues to be used in the admissions process," "Given that

university rankings are based on the caliber of students that attend an institution, UCLA will

continue to increase in rankings with this admissions policy," (1 = strongly disagree, 7 =

strongly agree; α = .86; *M* = 3.11, *SD* = 1.18).

Results

No effects of gender or race were found. As such, we collapsed across these variables.

The policy support variable was regressed on Policy Type, SDO, and the interaction between

these two variables. This analysis revealed a significant main effect of Policy Type, *b* = .53, *SE*

b = .27, *β* = .21, *t*(79) = 1.97, *p* < .05, and a significant main effect of SDO, *b* = 1.65, *SE b* = .45,

β = 1.20, *t*(79) = 3.68, *p* < .001. More importantly, however, this analysis revealed a significant

Policy Type × SDO interaction, *b* = -1.06, *SE b* = .28, *β* = -1.22, *t*(79) = -3.72, *p* < .001, R^2 = .19.

To decompose this interaction we conducted simple slope analyses (Figure 1). These

analyses revealed a significant positive relationship between policy support and SDO in the

legacy condition, *b* = 0.59, *SE b* = 0.20, *t*(76) = 2.97, *p* < .01. Conversely, there was a significant

negative relationship between policy support and SDO in the affirmative action condition, *b* = -

0.46, *SE b* = .20, *t*(76) = -2.29, *p* < .05.

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Study 1 also assessed the relationship between the perceived effect of the policy on university quality and SDO.   The perceived effect on quality variable was regressed on Policy Type, SDO, and the interaction between these two variables. This analysis revealed a significant main effect of SDO, $b = 1.48$, $SE\ b = .41$, $\beta = 1.18$, $t(79) = 3.61$, $p < .001$, and no main effect of Policy Type, $b = .26$, $SE\ b = .25$, $\beta = .11$, $t(79) = 1.07$, $p = .29$. More importantly, however, this analysis revealed a significant Policy Type $\times$ SDO interaction, $b = -1.03$, $SE\ b = .26$, $\beta = -1.30$, $t(79) = -3.97$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .18$.

Simple slope analyses (Figure 2) revealed a significant positive relationship between perceived effect on university quality and SDO in the legacy condition, $b = 0.45$, $SE\ b = 0.18$, $t(76) = 2.44$, $p < .01$. Conversely, there was a significant negative relationship between perceived effect on university quality and SDO in the affirmative action condition, $b = -0.58$, $SE\ b = 0.18$, $t(76) = -3.17$, $p < .01$. In sum, as a function of SDO, legacy policies were thought to benefit university quality whereas affirmative action policies were thought to harm university quality.

Mediation analysis

We examined whether policy support mediated the SDO $\times$ Policy Type to University Quality relationship[2]. The SDO $\times$ Policy Type interaction was negatively related to university quality, $b = -1.03$, $SE\ b = .26$, $\beta = -1.30$, $t(79) = -3.97$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .18$, and policy support, $b = -1.06$, $SE\ b = .28$, $\beta = -1.22$, $t(79) = -3.72$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .19$. Also consistent with the possibility of mediation, policy support was positively related to university quality, $b = .73$, $SE\ b = .06$, $\beta = .80$, $t(79) = 11.29$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .70$. To test the final component of mediation, we regressed university quality on SDO $\times$ Policy Type while controlling for policy support. As depicted in

Figure 3, this analysis revealed that the direct effect of SDO × Policy Type on University Quality became non-significant once the effect of policy support was controlled, $b = -.27$, $SE\ b = .17$, $\beta =-.34$, $t(79) = -1.54$, $p = .13$. Sobel tests revealed that policy support significantly mediated the relationship between SDO × Condition and University Quality ($z = -3.53$, $p < .001$).

Discussion

Study 1 uncovered a positive relationship between SDO and policy support in the legacy condition, a finding consistent with the idea that people motivated to preserve status hierarchies are supportive of policies that reinforce racial inequality by benefitting the dominant racial group. Conversely, and consistent with past research, SDO was negatively associated with support for hierarchy attenuating affirmative action policies – i.e., policies that benefit minority group members.

Study 1 also provides evidence that the relationship between social dominance orientation and university quality is mediated by policy support. That is, individuals who desire to maintain status hierarchies justify opposition to affirmative action and support for legacy policies by claiming that these policies have a differential effect on the overall quality of the university. In other words, the perceived effect of the policy on university quality functions as a post-hoc rationalization for policy support.

Although the present findings are consistent with the idea that dominance motives predict support for legacy admissions preferences and opposition to affirmative action preferences, it is possible that these findings reflect a desire to protect the ingroup and not status hierarchies *per se*. Specifically, the positive relationship between SDO and legacy policy support in Study 1 may reflect participants' support of a policy from which their ingroup is thought to benefit.

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Recall that the majority of the study participants were Asian and White students, currently the two numeric majority groups at the university in which the study was conducted. Thus, it is possible that both groups may have believed that their own ethnic group would benefit from legacy policies. As such, support for legacy policies may reflect a desire to protect ingroup interests and not a desire to maintain the status hierarchy *per se*.

Moreover, recent research suggests social dominance orientation may not capture a general desire to maintain status hierarchies but rather a specific desire to maintain hierarchies in which one's ingroup stands to benefit. According to the group interests perspective, the position of one's ingroup in the social structure is an important influence on attitudes towards inequality (Schmitt, Branscombe, & Kappen, 2003; Turner & Reynolds, 2003; Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994). Groups that benefit from inequality are more likely to support it relative to groups that are disadvantaged by it because inequality protects the status and power of the privileged group. As such, a desire to protect ingroup interests and not a general desire to protect the status hierarchy may explain why SDO was positively related to support for legacy policies in Study 1.

Study 2

Study 2 was designed to examine whether a general desire to maintain the status hierarchy or a specific desire to protect ingroup interests explains Asians' attitudes towards legacy policies. Given that Study 1 did not explicitly state who would likely benefit from legacy preferences, in Study 2 we explicitly stated that either the ingroup (Asians) or the dominant group (Whites) benefits from these policies. We focused on Asians' reactions to legacy preferences to directly test the hierarchy maintenance vs. group interest idea. Specifically, if SDO is capturing a general desire for hierarchy maintenance (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Sibley,

Robertson, & Wilson, 2006), then as a function of SDO, Asian perceivers should support a legacy policy that benefits Whites but oppose one that benefits fellow Asians. However, if SDO is capturing ingroup interests and indeed attitudes toward inequality depend on whether the ingroup is privileged or disadvantaged (Schmitt, et al., 2003; Lehmiller & Schmitt, 2007), then we should find that SDO predicts support for a policy that benefits Asians and opposition for a legacy policy that benefits Whites.

Method

Participants

Fifty four Asian participants (16 men, 37 women, 1 unreported) were recruited from an online participant database maintained at UCLA. The age ranged from 18 to 35 ($M = 20.31$, $SD = 2.53$). Participants were paid $2 for their participation.

Procedure

The same procedure from Study 1 was employed, but the scenarios also explicitly stated that either the ingroup (Asians) or dominant group (Whites) would benefit from the legacy admissions policy (see Appendix C and D). Since our main predictions concern differences in these two key conditions, we omitted the affirmative action condition in Study 2.

Measures

Social Dominance Orientation. SDO was assessed using the same scale in Study 1 (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Policy support. Policy support was assessed using the same measure as Study 1.

Perceived effect of policy on quality of university. To measure the perceived effect of the policy on the university, the measure from Study 2 was used.

Results

Because no effects of participant gender were found, we collapsed across these variables. The policy support variable was regressed on SDO, policy beneficiary, and the interaction between these two variables. This analysis revealed a significant main effect of SDO, $b = -1.50$, $SE\ b = .53$, $\beta = -1.18$, $t(53) = -2.83$, $p < .01$, and no significant main effect of policy beneficiary, $b = -.37$, $SE\ b = .32$, $\beta = -.15$, $t(53) = -1.16$, $p = .25$. More importantly, however, this analysis revealed a significant Policy Beneficiary $\times$ SDO interaction, $b = 1.01$, $SE\ b = .33$, $\beta = 1.28$, $t(53) = 3.07$, $p < .01$, $R^2 = .17$.

To interpret this interaction, we conducted simple slope analyses (see Figure 4). These analyses revealed a significant negative relationship between policy support and SDO in the condition in which Asian participants believed fellow Asians were the primary beneficiaries of a legacy policy, $b = -0.49$, $SE\ b = .24$, $t(50) = -2.05$, $p < .05$. Conversely, there was a significant positive relationship between policy support and SDO in the condition in which Asian participants believed Whites were the primary beneficiaries of a legacy policy, $b = 0.51$, $SE\ b = .22$, $t(50) = 2.29$, $p < .05$.

Study 2 also assessed the relationship between perceived effect of policy on quality of the university and SDO. To this end we conducted regression analysis in which the perceived effect on quality variable was regressed on SDO, Policy Beneficiary, and the interaction between these two variables. This analysis revealed a significant main effect of SDO, $b = -1.01$, $SE\ b = .45$, $\beta = -.94$, $t(53) = -2.25$, $p < .05$, and no significant effect of policy beneficiary, $b = -.20$, $SE\ b = .27$, β

= -.09, $t(53)$ = -.74, p = .46. More importantly, however, this analysis revealed a significant

Policy Beneficiary × SDO interaction, b = .79, $SE\ b$ = .28, β = 1.19, $t(53)$ = 2.86, $p < .01$, R^2 =

.18.

Simple slope analyses (see Figure 5) revealed a non-significant negative relationship

between perceived effect on quality and SDO in the Asian benefit condition, b = -0.21, $SE\ b$ =

.20, $t(50)$ = -1.06, p = .29. Conversely, there was a significant positive relationship between

effect on quality and SDO in the White benefit condition, b = 0.58, $SE\ b$ = .19, $t(50)$ = 3.05, $p <$

.01.

Mediation analysis

We examined whether policy support mediated the SDO × Policy Beneficiary to

University Quality relationship[3]. The SDO × Policy Beneficiary interaction was positively

related to policy support, b = 1.01, $SE\ b$ = .33, β = 1.28, $t(53)$ = 3.07, $p < .01$, R^2 = .17, and

university quality, b = 0.79, $SE\ b$ = .28, β = 1.19, $t(53)$ = 2.86, $p < .01$, R^2 = .18. Also consistent

with the possibility of mediation, policy support was positively related to university quality, b =

.69, $SE\ b$ = .07, β = .81, $t(53)$ = 9.81, $p < .001$, R^2 = .72 while controlling for SDO, Policy

Beneficiary, and the interaction between these two variables. To test the final component of

mediation, we regressed university quality on SDO × Policy Beneficiary while controlling for

policy support. As depicted in Figure 6, this analysis revealed that the direct effect of SDO ×

Policy Beneficiary on University Quality became non-significant once the effect of policy

support was controlled, b = .10, $SE\ b$ = .18, β = .15, $t(53)$ = .57, p = .57.   Sobel tests revealed

that policy support significantly mediated the relationship between SDO × Policy Beneficiary

and University Quality (z = 2.92, $p < .01$).

Discussion

Study 2 found a positive relationship between SDO and policy support among Asian participants in the condition in which Whites were the perceived beneficiaries of the legacy policy. Conversely, there was a negative relationship between SDO and policy support among Asians in the condition where Asians were the perceived beneficiaries of the legacy policy. These findings suggest that legacy policy support depends, in part, on its effect on the status hierarchy and not on its effect on the ingroup. Contrary to what the group interests perspective would predict, Asians react unfavorably to a policy even when the ingroup is favoured as a function of their desire to protect status hierarchies.

Moreover, we found a positive relationship between SDO and effect of policy on university quality in the condition where Whites were the perceived beneficiaries. And although there was a non-significant relationship between SDO and effect of policy on university quality in the condition where Asians were the perceived beneficiaries, the pattern of results suggests that the perceived positive effect of legacy policies on the university decreases as a function of perceivers' SDO.

In sum, Study 2 suggests that as a function of SDO, Asians support legacy policies thought to benefit Whites but oppose legacy policies that benefit fellow Asians. The positive relationship in the condition in which Whites were the perceived beneficiaries is consistent with the group dominance perspective, which suggests that groups will support policies that are hierarchy enhancing even when these policies disadvantage their own ingroup (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Pratto, Sidanius, & Levin, 2006). Additionally, the negative relationship in the condition where Asians were the perceived beneficiaries provides further evidence against the

argument that group interest explains differential reactions to legacy preferences (Schmitt, et. al., 2003; Lehmiller & Schmitt, 2007). Instead, the present study found that a desire to preserve status hierarchies in general explains support for legacy policies.

A limitation of this study, however, is that the possibility still exists that policy preferences may reflect a motivation to protect ingroup interests if the university and not the racial group is the salient ingroup. Recall that participants were evaluating legacy policies that purportedly would be employed in their university. As such, it is possible that the university represents a salient ingroup for participants. Thus, policies that they viewed as enhancing the university would benefit the ingroup, and policies that lower university quality would harm the ingroup.

If indeed, participants perceived White students as more academically competent – and thus, more likely to improve the quality of the university relative to Asian students, then support for legacy policies that benefit Whites may reflect Asian students' desire to protect the ingroup (i.e., university) interests and not a desire to protect status hierarchies *per se*. Although future research may examine this possibility, we do not believe this is the case in the present study. A study [4] conducted on the perceived academic achievement of various ethnic groups revealed that Asian students are perceived to have higher academic achievement relative to White students. It is important to note that the majority of the study participants were Asian, so Asian students perceived the ingroup as being more academically competent relative to Whites and other ethnic groups. As such, these findings suggest that support for legacy policies perceived to benefit Whites may not in fact reflect a desire to protect ingroup interests (by improving the quality of the university), but rather a desire to maintain status hierarchies.

Study 3

Study 3 was designed to test the general dominance hypothesis in a different domain. Specifically, this study sought to examine the effects of Social Dominance Orientation on reactions to policies used in employment hiring and selection decisions – i.e., word-of-mouth referrals. To our knowledge, this is the first study to empirically examine reactions to this recruitment strategy, which is commonly used to fill job vacancies.

Consistent with the group dominance perspective, we expected to find a positive relationship between SDO and policy support when the word-of-mouth referral policy is perceived to benefit Whites. Conversely, we predicted a negative relationship between SDO and policy support when the policy is perceived to benefit racial minorities. We also hypothesized that support or opposition to this policy would be justified on the basis that it has differential effects on the hiring company.

Method

Participants

One hundred sixty-nine participants (98 women, 69 men, 2 unreported) were recruited from Mechanical Turk (M-Turk), a participant database maintained by online retailer Amazon.com. Although M-Turk is comprised of participants from around the world, we limited participation in this study to individuals living only in the United States. Participants were paid $0.25 for completing this web-based survey. Participant age ranged from 18 to 79 years ($M =$ 36.21, $SD = 12.88$). The self-identified racial breakdown of the sample was as follows: 142 Whites, 12 Black, 8 Asian, 2 Latino, 4 multi-racial, 1 unreported.

Procedure

Participants were told that they would be completing two unrelated surveys. Participants first completed an SDO measure, which was described as a survey on individuals' views of groups in society. The second survey was described as a survey on hiring policies. Participants were randomly assigned to evaluate a Word-of-Mouth (WOM) policy that benefitted either racial minorities or Whites (see Appendix E and F). In both conditions, participants read a paragraph that indicated that companies, including Fortune 500 companies, grant hiring preferences to individuals who were referred to the company by current employees. Participants further read that word-of-mouth referrals get a hiring boost. In the condition where Whites benefitted from WOM policies, participants were told that the racial composition of a company was predominantly White. In the condition where racial minorities benefitted from WOM policies, participants were told that the racial composition of a company was predominantly racial minority. Participants were then asked to indicate their support for the word-of-mouth referrals as a hiring practice and its impact on the quality of the hiring company.

Measures

Social Dominance Orientation. SDO was measured using the same eight-item scale used in Study 1 & 2 (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Policy support. To assess participants' support of the hiring practice, participants were asked to respond to the following items: "How fair/unfair do you think this hiring practice is?" (1 = not fair at all, 7 = very fair), "To what extent do you agree or disagree that this hiring practice is legitimate and should be continued?" (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree), "How much do you oppose/support the hiring practice that you read about?" (1 = strongly

oppose, 7 = strongly support; α = .94; *M* = 3.94, *SD* = 1.69).

Perceived effect of hiring practice on quality of the company. To measure the perceived

effect of word-of-mouth referrals on the hiring company, participants completed a five-item

scale. Sample items include: "Individuals hired under this hiring practice will improve the

quality of the company," "Given that company rankings are influenced by the talent of their

employees and their ability to perform well, the employees hired under this hiring practice will

help increase company rankings," "Individuals hired with this hiring practice will make positive

contributions to the company," (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree; α = .90; M = 21.58,

SD = 6.33).

Results

No effects of race or gender were found. As such, we collapsed across these variables.

The policy support variable was regressed on Policy Type, SDO, and the interaction between

these two variables. This analysis revealed a significant main effect of SDO, b = 1.02, SE b =

.31, β = .77, t(165) = 3.31, p < .001, and a non-significant main effect of Policy Type, b = .22,

SE b = .25, β = .06, t(165) = .86, p = .39. More importantly, however, this analysis revealed a

significant Policy Type x SDO interaction, b = -.66, SE b = .20, β = -.75, t(165) = -3.25, p <

.001, R^2 = .07.

Simple slope analyses were conducted to decompose this interaction. These analyses

revealed a significant positive relationship between policy support and SDO in the condition

where Whites benefit from word-of-mouth referrals, b = .36, SE b = .13, t(165) = 2.71, p < .01.

Conversely, there was a significant negative relationship between policy support and SDO in the

condition in which racial minorities benefit from word-of-mouth referrals, $b = -.29$, SE $b = .15$, $t(165) = -1.94$, $p < .05$.

Study 3 also assessed the relationship between the perceived effect of the word-of-mouth policy on the quality of the hiring company and SDO. To this end, we conducted regression analyses in which the perceived effect of the policy was regressed on SDO, Policy Beneficiary, and the interaction between these two variables. This analysis revealed a significant main effect of SDO, $b = .76$, SE $b = .23$, $\beta = .76$, $t(165) = 3.34$, $p < .001$, and a non-significant effect of Policy Type, $b = .08$, SE $b = .19$, $\beta = .03$, $t(165) = .40$, $p = .69$. More importantly, however, these analyses revealed a significant Policy Type x SDO interaction, $b = -.57$, SE $b = .15$, $\beta = -.87$, $t(165) = -3.79$, $p < .001$.

To decompose this interaction, we conducted simple slope analyses. A significant positive relationship was found between the perceived effect of the hiring policy and SDO when Whites were the perceived beneficiaries of the hiring policy, $b = .20$, SE $b = .10$, $t(165) = 1.97$, $p < .05$. Conversely, there was a significant negative relationship between effect of policy and SDO when racial minorities were the perceived beneficiaries, $b = -.37$, SE $b = .11$, $t(165) = -3.32$, $p < .001$.

Mediation analysis

To test for mediation, we examined whether policy support mediated the SDO x Policy Beneficiary to Company Quality relationship. The SDO x Policy Beneficiary interaction was negatively related to hiring company quality, $b = -.57$, SE $b = .15$, $\beta = -.87$, $t(165) = -3.79$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .08$, and policy support, $b = -.66$, SE $b = .20$, $\beta = -.75$, $t(165) = -3.25$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .07$. Also consistent with the possibility of mediation, policy support was positively related to

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company quality, b = .60, SE b = .03, β = .81, t(164) = 18.04, p < .001, R^2 = .69 while

controlling for SDO, Policy Beneficiary, and the interaction between these two variables. The

final component of mediation was tested by regressing company quality on SDO x Policy

Beneficiary while controlling for policy support. This analysis revealed that the direct effect of

SDO x Policy Beneficiary on Company Quality became non-significant once the effect of policy

support was controlled, b = -.17, SE b = .09, β = -.26, t(164) = -1.89, p = .06. Sobel tests

revealed that policy support significantly mediated the relationship between SDO x Policy

Beneficiary and Policy Support   (z = -3.20, p < .001).

Discussion

Study 3 found a positive relationship between SDO and policy support when the word-of-

mouth hiring policy was perceived to benefit Whites. However, when the policy was perceived

to benefit racial minorities, there was a negative relationship between SDO and policy support.

We also examined the perceived effect of the use of word-of-mouth referrals on the

hiring company. There was a positive relationship between SDO and the quality of the company

when the policy benefitted Whites. Conversely, there was a significant negative relationship

between SDO and quality of the hiring company when the policy was perceived to benefit racial

minorities.

Taken together, these findings suggest that, as a function of SDO, individuals support the

use of word-of-mouth referrals when White applicants benefit but oppose their use when racial

minority applicants benefit. The positive relationship between SDO and policy support in the

condition where White applicants benefit suggests that support for the use of word-of-mouth

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referrals as a recruitment and selection policy will depend not on its content, but rather on its perceived effect on the status hierarchy.

General Discussion

The present findings provide a direct test of the competing hypotheses that attitudes towards inequality reflect group interests (Schmitt, et. al., 2003) vs. a generalized orientation towards status hierarchies (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). The results from three studies provide evidence that dominance motives seem to account for differential reactions to policies that disproportionately privilege some groups and disadvantage others. Even when the ingroup (Asians; Study 2) is privileged by legacy preferences, there is a predisposition to support legacy policies only when such policies benefit the dominant group (i.e., Whites). These findings support the argument that individuals' support for policies that produce inequality (i.e., legacy policies, word-of-mouth referrals) are driven by a desire to maintain status hierarchies and not a desire to protect ingroup interests. Moreover, this support is justified on the premise that these recruitment and selection policies serve to improve the quality of the universities (Study 1 & 2) and companies (Study 3) in which these are employed. The perpetuation of such legitimizing beliefs may explain why the use of policies that disproportionately advantage the dominant group (e.g., Whites) continues to be justified while the use of policies that disproportionately benefit subordinate groups (e.g., ethnic minorities) is deemed unmeritocratic and harmful to universities and companies. Together, the present findings suggest that attitudes toward selection policies (i.e., legacy, affirmative action, word-of-mouth) will depend not on their specific content or objectives, but rather on their assumed effect on status hierarchies. Contrary to the group interests perspective, which would predict that policy support depends on its

perceived effect on the ingroup – specifically, on whether it is privileged or disadvantaged by it, the findings from Study 2 suggest that ingroup members (i.e., Asians) are willing to support a policy that benefits the dominant group (i.e., Whites) as a function of their desire to maintain inequality.

Practical Implications

The present findings have important implications for recruitment and selection practices in universities and companies. Specifically, the findings that support for policies is influenced by individuals' group dominance motives underscore the importance of examining whether the recruitment and selection policies employed serve their intended purpose or instead, serve to maintain status hierarchies. For example, in light of evidence that the use of legacy preferences is not associated with increased generosity (i.e., alumni donations) (Kahlenberg, 2010), as some universities often claim to justify admissions preferences for kin of university alumni, legacy admissions policies may not serve their intended effect and instead, may have the unintended consequence of thwarting university efforts to reap the benefits of diversity. Moreover, companies who also seek to diversify their workforce may need to recognize that, as a function of their desire to maintain inequality, recruiting managers or personnel may use word-of-mouth referrals to the extent that these are perceived to benefit Whites applicants. And given previous research that finds that the current racial composition of the workforce influences who is hired through referrals, companies who seek to diversify their workforce may find that word-of-mouth referrals may maintain the racial homogeneity of the current employee population.

Limitations and Future Directions

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Although the reported experiments provide evidence for the group dominance hypothesis, there are some limitations that must be considered. First, future research should explore whether more subtle manipulations of recruitment and selection policy beneficiaries produce the same differential support for the use of these policies. For example, in the present studies, participants were explicitly told that either whites or Asians (Study 2) and racial minorities (Study 3) would benefit from these recruitment and selection policies. It is possible that, if individuals are not aware that different groups will benefit from such policies, support will not differ – that is, individuals may support the use of legacy policies and word-of-mouth referrals without recognizing their effects on the recruitment and selection of White vs. minority applicants and thus, the effects on status hierarchies.

Another limitation is that in Studies 1 and 2, policy support and university quality had reversal effects – that is, policy support and university quality may serve as mediators and outcome variables. As such, it is possible that the perceived effect of the policy on the quality of the university (Study 1 & 2) and company (Study 3) may serve not only as post-hoc rationalizations for policy support but also a cause of support. However, given the study design and theoretical arguments, the mediational model included in the body of the paper is the most appropriate mediational model. Theoretically, the perceived effect of the policy on the quality of the university (Study 1 & 2) and company (Study 3) should proceed policy support given our hypotheses that the perceived effects on quality function as post-hoc rationalizations. Moreover, according to Judd and Kenny (2010) the mediator should be measured temporally before the outcome variable. In all three studies, policy support was measured before the perceived effect of the policy on quality. As such, given the theoretical arguments and design considerations, the mediational model with policy support as the mediator and effect of policy on quality as the

outcome variable is the most appropriate. That said, an important implication is that when (or if) the perceived effect of the policy on quality of the university (or company) functions as a mediator – that is, causes policy support, then it is possible that support for recruitment and selection strategies that benefit racial minorities may garner support, even among individuals high in SDO, provided they are convinced that such policies can also have a positive effect on the quality of the university (Study 1 & 2) and company (Study 3).   Future research is needed to better determine when such legitimizing beliefs (i.e, university quality, company quality) will serve to justify differences in policy support and when these beliefs will cause the differences in policy support.

[1]Participants were debriefed with UCLA's admissions policy and told that UCLA does not grant preferential treatment on the basis of an applicant's family ties (i.e., legacy) or race (i.e., affirmative action).

[2]Given that we are interested in examining the perceived effect of the policy on the quality of the university as post-hoc rationalization for policy support, and that policy support was measured temporally before university quality (outcome variable) (Judd & Kenny, 2010), we believe that the mediational model that we included in the main body of the paper is the most appropriate. However, we also examined whether perceived effect on university quality mediated the SDO × Policy Type to Policy Support relationship. The SDO × Policy Type interaction was negatively related to university quality, $b = -1.03$, $SE\ b = .26$, $\beta = -1.30$, $t(79) = -3.97$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .18$, and policy support, $b = -1.06$, $SE\ b = .28$, $\beta = -1.22$, $t(79) = -3.72$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .19$. Also consistent with the possibility of mediation, university quality was positively related to policy support, $b = .87$, $SE\ b = .08$, $\beta = .79$, $t(79) = 11.29$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .70$. To test the final component of mediation, we regressed policy support on SDO × Policy Type while controlling for university quality. This analysis revealed that the direct effect of SDO × Policy Type on Policy Support became non-significant once the effect of the policy on university quality was controlled, $b = -.16$, $SE\ b = .19$, $\beta = -.19$, $t(79) = -.84$, $p = .40$. Sobel tests revealed that the perceived effect of the policy on university quality significantly mediated the relationship between SDO × Condition and Policy Support ($z = -3.74$, $p < .001$).

[3]Similar to Study 2, we believe that the mediational model with the university quality variable as the outcome variable best reflects our hypotheses that the effect on university quality

functions as post-hoc rationalization/justification for policy support (and thus, should proceed the policy support variable). However, we also examined whether perceived effect on university quality mediated the SDO × Policy Beneficiary to Policy Support relationship. The SDO × Policy Beneficiary interaction was positively related to university quality, $b = 0.79$, $SE\ b = .28$, $\beta = 1.19$, $t(53) = 2.86$, $p < .01$, $R^2 = .18$, and policy support, $b = 1.01$, $SE\ b = .33$, $\beta = 1.28$, $t(53) = 3.07$, $p < .01$, $R^2 = .17$. Also consistent with the possibility of mediation, university quality was positively related to policy support, $b = .97$, $SE\ b = .10$, $\beta = .82$, $t(53) = 9.81$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .72$ while controlling for SDO, Policy Beneficiary, and the interaction between these two variables. To test the final component of mediation, we regressed policy support on SDO × Policy Beneficiary while controlling for university quality. This analysis revealed that the direct effect of SDO × Policy Beneficiary on Policy Support became non-significant once the effect of the policy on university quality was controlled, $b = .24$, $SE\ b = .21$, $\beta = .31$, $t(53) = 1.17$, $p = .25$. Sobel tests revealed that the perceived effect of the policy on university quality significantly mediated the relationship between SDO × Policy Beneficiary and Policy Support ($z = 2.74$, p < .01).

[4]In this pilot study, 88 participants (61 Asians, 13 Whites, 6 Latinos, 1 Black, 1 Native American, 6 race unreported; 61 women, 27 men) completed an online study in exchange for $1. The age ranged from 18 to 37 ($M = 19.74$, $SD = 2.46$). Participants were asked to indicate what they believed was the grade point average and SAT scores for incoming Asian and White students, and the grade point average for currently enrolled Asian and White students. Grade point average was measured using a 2.0 (lowest) – 5.0 (highest) scale, and SAT scores were measured using a 600 (lowest) – 2400 (highest) scale. This study found that participants perceived incoming Asian students as having a higher g.p.a. (M = 4.21, SD = .37) relative to

White students (M = 3.99, SD = .41). The perceived g.p.as between Asian and White students were significantly different t(85) = 6.70, p < .001. The SAT scores of incoming Asian students (M = 2055.06, SD = 202.96) were believed to be higher than those of incoming White students (M = 1950.62, SD = 226.97). The perceived scores of incoming Asian students were significantly higher than White students t(86) = 4.79, p < .001. When asked to estimate the g.p.a of currently enrolled students, participants reported higher g.p.a for Asian students (M = 3.68, SD = .40) relative to White students (M = 3.52, SD = .39). These g.p.as were significantly different t(86) = 5.48, p < .001.

[5]Similar to Study 1 and 2, we also examined whether the perceived effect of the hiring policy mediated the SDO x Policy Beneficiary to Policy Support relationship. The SDO x Policy Beneficiary interaction was negatively related to hiring company quality, b = -.57, SE b = .15, β = -.87, t(165) = -3.79, p < .001, R^2 = .08, and policy support, b = -.66, SE b = .20, β = -.75, t(165) = -3.25, p < .001, R^2 = .07. Also consistent with the possibility of mediation, company quality was positively related to policy support, b = 1.10, SE b = .06, β = .82, t(165) = 18.04, p < .001, R^2 = .69 while controlling for SDO, Policy Beneficiary, and the interaction between these two variables. The final component of mediation was tested by regressing policy support on SDO x Policy Beneficiary while controlling for company quality. As depicted in Figure 9, this analysis revealed that the direct effect of SDO x Policy Beneficiary on Policy Support became non-significant once the effect of the policy on the quality of the company was controlled, b = -.03, SE b = .12, β = -.04, t(165) = -.27, p = .79. Sobel tests revealed that the perceived effect of the policy on the hiring company significantly mediated the relationship between SDO x Policy Beneficiary and Policy Support (z = -3.69, p < .001).

Appendix A

Since Yale first introduced legacy preferences in 1925, such policies have become widespread in both public and private universities across the nation, including UCLA. Legacy admissions give an admissions "boost" to university applicants whose parents or grandparents attended a particular institution. In 1992, 16% of public institutions and 21% of private institutions employed some form of legacy preference.

As of 2003, legacies comprised 10-15% of the student body at Ivy League schools and up to 23% of the students at other major institutions, including UCLA. Legacy applicants are said to receive a "nudge" in the admissions process, meaning that, all else equal, they are admitted over nonlegacy students. A former dean of a top university explained that during her tenure, applicants were placed into three categories, corresponding to deny, further consideration, and admit; legacy status effectively moved the applicant up one category.

Appendix B

Since Yale first introduced affirmative action preferences in 1925, such policies have become widespread in both public and private universities across the nation, including UCLA. Affirmative action admissions give an admissions "boost" to university applicants who are underrepresented at a particular institution. In 1992, 16% of public institutions and 21% of private institutions employed some form of affirmative action preference.

As of 2003, affirmative action admits comprised 10-15% of the student body at Ivy League schools and up to 23% of the students at other major institutions, including UCLA. Affirmative action applicants are said to receive a "nudge" in the admissions process, meaning that, all else equal, they are admitted over non-affirmative action students. A former dean of a top university explained that during her tenure, applicants were placed into three categories, corresponding to deny, further consideration, and admit; affirmative action status effectively moved the applicant up one category.

Table 1

Study 1 Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Among Measured Variables

	M	SD	1	2
1. Policy support	2.95	1.29		
2. Effect of policy on university quality	3.11	1.18	.82**	
3. Social dominance orientation	2.43	0.94	.06	-.05

Note. **$p < .01$.

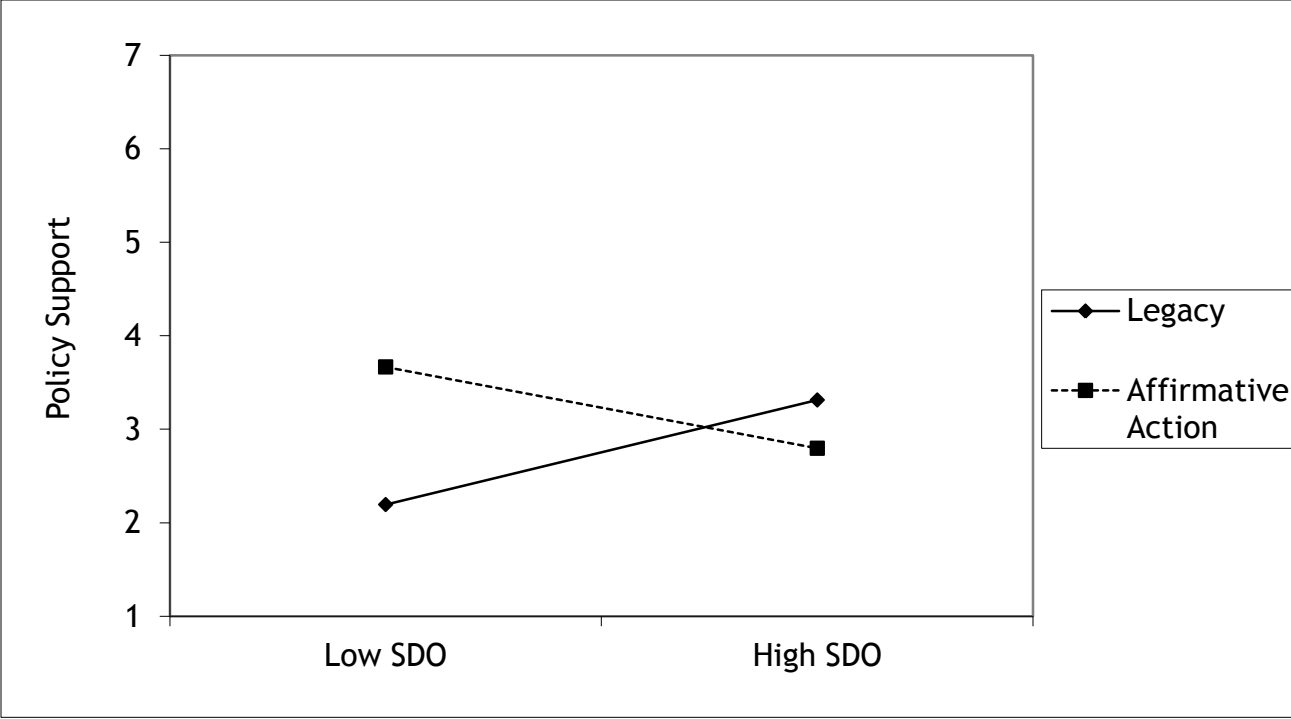*Figure 1*. Policy support as a function of social dominance orientation and policy type in Study 1.

7
6
5
4
3
2
1

Perceived effect of policy on university quality

Legacy

Affirmative Action
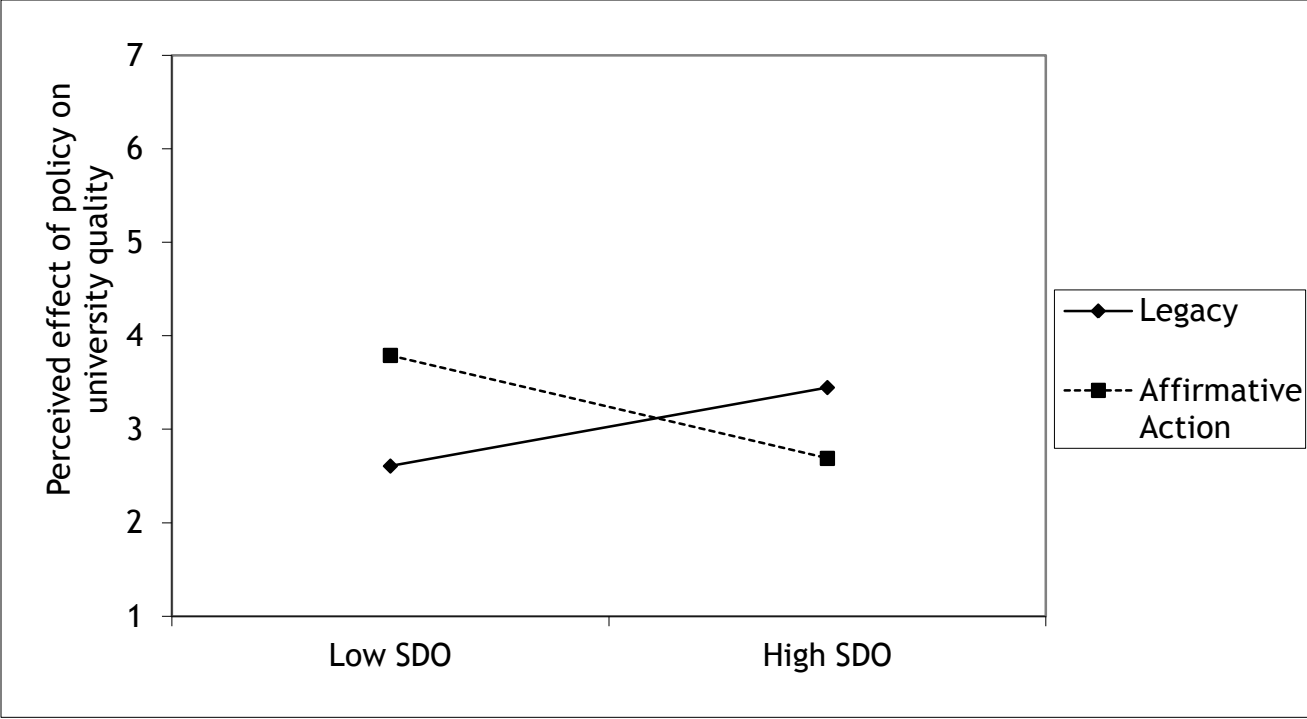
Low SDO   High SDO

Figure 2. Perceived effect of the policy on the quality of the university as a function of social

dominance orientation and policy type in Study 1.

```
                         Policy
                         Support

      -1.06***                            .73***



  SDO x Policy
     Type                                        University
                                                  Quality

                 -1.03*** / .13,


                *** p < .001
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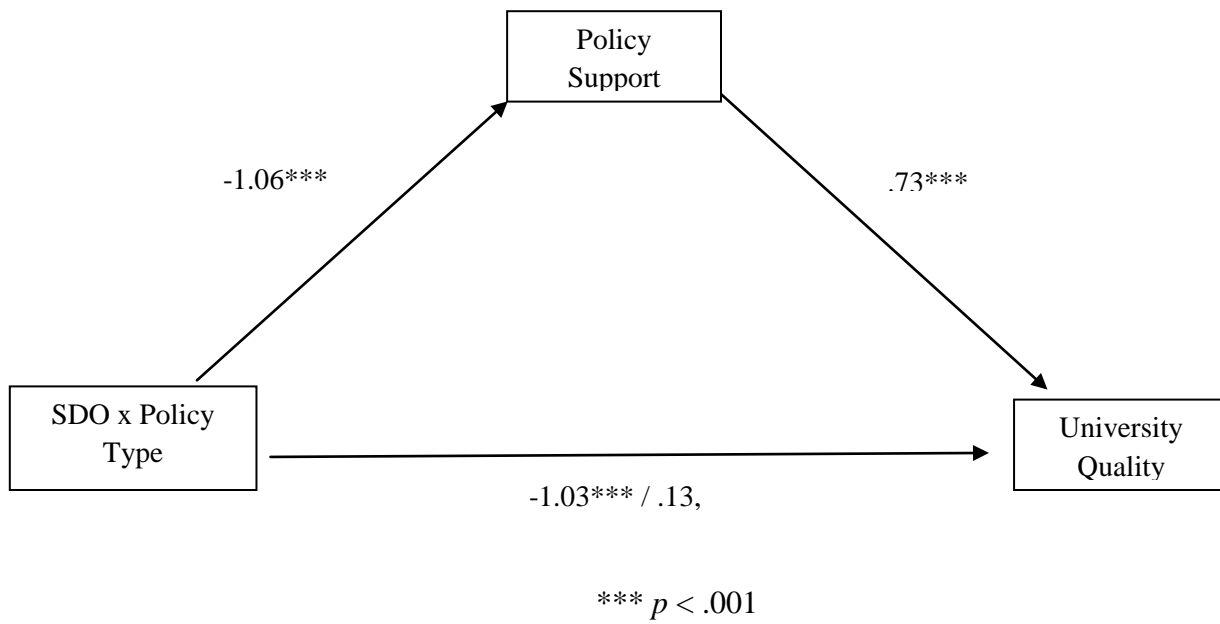
Figure 3. Mediation analysis for Study 1.

Appendix C

Since Yale first introduced legacy preferences in 1925, such policies have become widespread in both public and private universities across the nation. Legacy admissions give an admissions "boost" to university applicants whose parents or grandparents attended a particular institution. In 1992, 16% of public institutions and 21% of private institutions employed some form of legacy preference.

As of 2003, legacies comprised 10-15% of the student body at Ivy League schools and up to 23% of the students at other major institutions. Legacy applicants are said to receive a "nudge" in the admissions process, meaning that, all else equal, they are admitted over nonlegacy students. A former dean of a top university explained that during her tenure, applicants were placed into three categories, corresponding to deny, further consideration, and admit; legacy status effectively moved the applicant up one category.

Because legacy policies improve admissions prospects for alumni children, Asians will be the primary beneficiaries of these policies.

Appendix D

Since Yale first introduced legacy preferences in 1925, such policies have become widespread in both public and private universities across the nation. Legacy admissions give an admissions "boost" to university applicants whose parents or grandparents attended a particular institution. In 1992, 16% of public institutions and 21% of private institutions employed some form of legacy preference.

As of 2003, legacies comprised 10-15% of the student body at Ivy League schools and up to 23% of the students at other major institutions. Legacy applicants are said to receive a "nudge" in the admissions process, meaning that, all else equal, they are admitted over nonlegacy students. A former dean of a top university explained that during her tenure, applicants were placed into three categories, corresponding to deny, further consideration, and admit; legacy status effectively moved the applicant up one category.

Because legacy policies improve admissions prospects for alumni children, Whites will be the primary beneficiaries of these policies.

Table 2

Study 2 Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Among Measured Variables

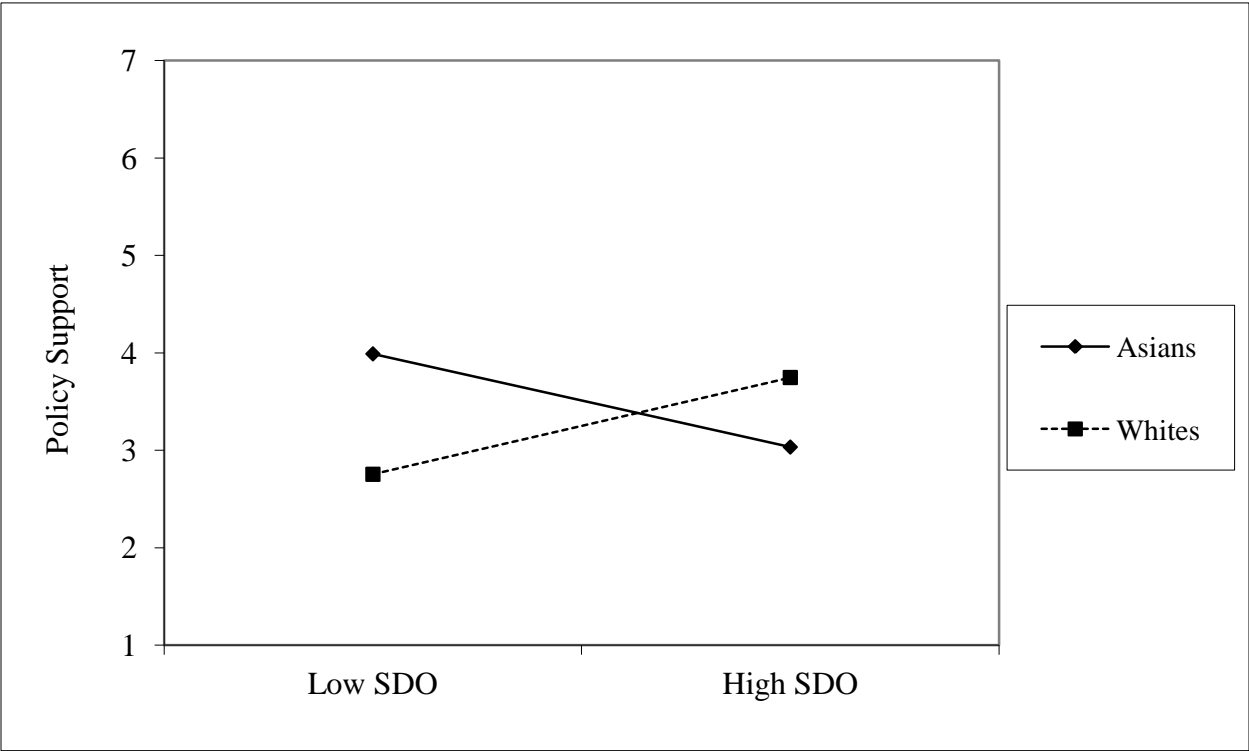|	M	SD	1	2
1. Policy support	3.36	1.23		
2. Effect of policy on university quality	3.45	1.04	.83**	
3. Social dominance orientation	2.77	0.97	.04	.19

Note. **$p < .01$.

Figure 4. Policy support as a function of social dominance orientation and policy beneficiary in Study 2.
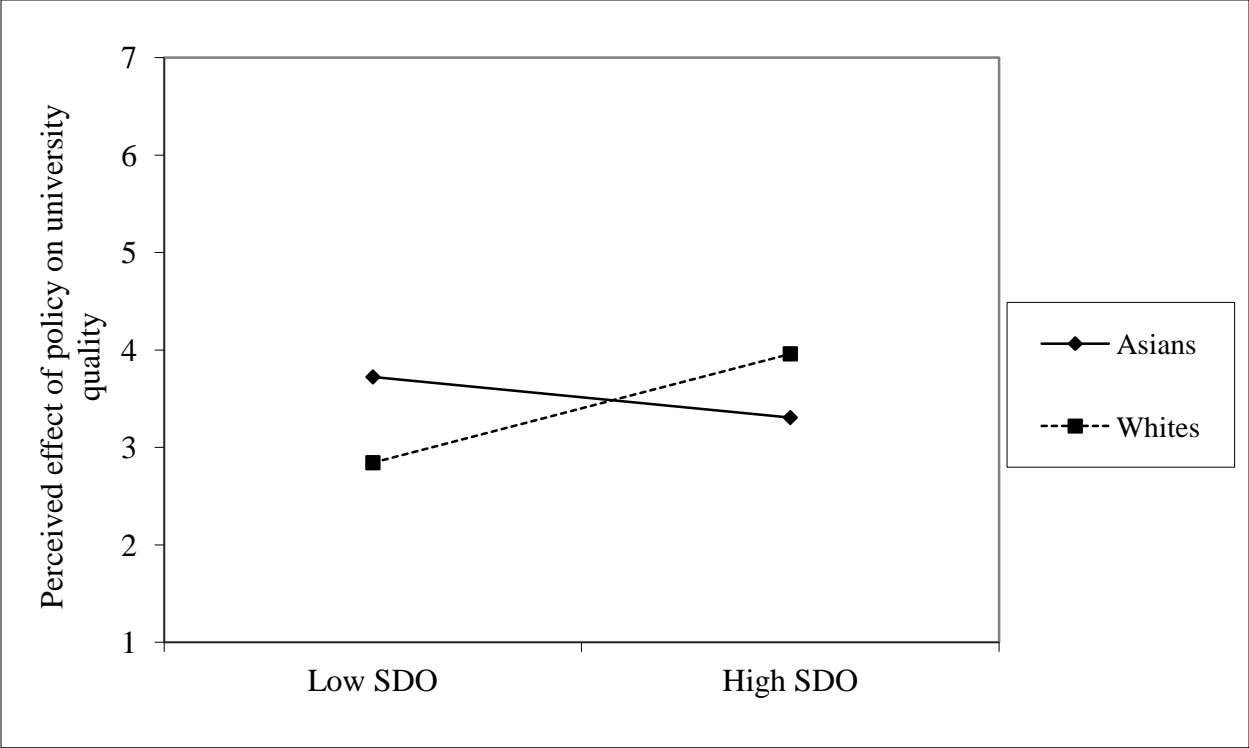
Figure 5. Perceived effect of the policy on the quality of the university as a function of social

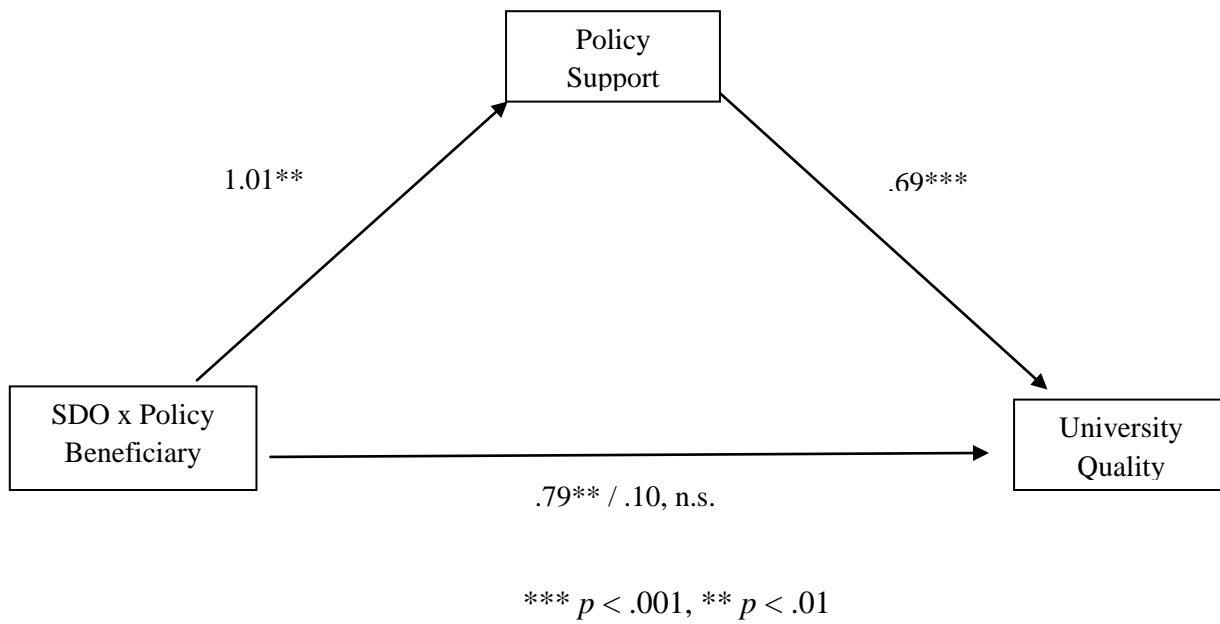dominance orientation and policy beneficiary in Study 2.

Policy
Support

1.01**

.69***

SDO x Policy
Beneficiary

.79** / .10, n.s.

University
Quality

*** *p* < .001, ** *p* < .01

Figure 6. Mediation analysis for Study 2.

Appendix E

A recent study on the hiring practices of Fortune 500 companies, which are companies that are considered leaders in their respective industries and have the highest gross revenue, found that many of these companies grant hiring preferences to individuals who were referred to the company by current employees. The CEO of Strathmore, one of the leading financial firms in the U.S. with headquarters in Chicago, recently noted in an interview that "a significant percent of my current employees were referred to by current employees…word-of-mouth referrals definitely get a hiring boost when we review job applications."

More than half of the employees at Strathmore are currently White.

Appendix F

A recent study on the hiring practices of Fortune 500 companies, which are companies that are considered leaders in their respective industries and have the highest gross revenue, found that many of these companies grant hiring preferences to individuals who were referred to the company by current employees. The CEO of Strathmore, one of the leading financial firms in the U.S. with headquarters in Chicago, recently noted in an interview that "a significant percent of my current employees were referred to by current employees…word-of-mouth referrals definitely get a hiring boost when we review job applications."

More than half of the employees at Strathmore are currently racial minorities, including African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans.

Table 3

Study 3 Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Among Measured Variables

	M	SD	1	2
1. Policy support	3.94	1.69		
2. Effect of policy on company quality	4.31	1.26	.82**	
3. Social dominance orientation	2.35	1.27	.06	-.05

Note. **$p < .01$.

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