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The Heart of Ideology: Bringing Compassion Into the Political Sphere

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Abstract

Individual differences are pivotal in predicting sociopolitical views, which in turn guide behaviours like voting decisions, career choices, or engagement in activism. Compassion, a trait related to empathy and prosocial behaviour, has shown promise in predicting reduced hostile, anti-egalitarian attitudes. Certain kinds of political beliefs can be termed hierarchy-legitimizing in that they perpetuate or enhance existing societal hierarchies, such as economic inequality or racial discrimination. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between compassion for others and hierarchy-legitimizing viewpoints, as mediated by the characteristic of Social Dominance Orientation (SDO). A sample of 590 undergraduate students completed measures of compassion, SDO, empathic concern, and a social policy questionnaire. A partially latent structural equation model was constructed, finding that SDO mediated the relationship between compassion and hierarchy-legitimization. The results have implications for the relevance of prosocial individual differences in political psychology, and for understanding the personality underpinnings of anti-egalitarianism.

KEYWORDS: Compassion, empathy, social dominance orientation, attitudes, individual differences, structural equation modeling

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Chapter 1

1   Introduction

Some have argued that emotions are an obstacle to thinking logically, or even that they are fundamentally incompatible with moral reasoning (see Eisenberg, 2000a and Nussbaum, 1996 for examples). However, a growing body of research suggests that many judgments are made not solely through logic, but from quick evaluations rooted in prosocial emotions like kindness or aversive emotions like disgust and shame (Greene & Haidt, 2002; Haidt, 2001; Horberg, Oveis, & Keltner, 2011). While it is reassuring to think that our political beliefs are rooted in well-reasoned decision-making, it is likely that these views are (at least partly) shaped by emotional motivations too – or more colloquially, by 'gut feelings' and 'intuitions'. In a world still coloured by violence and inequality, and with political policy-making often gridlocked by rigid, partisan thinking, it is essential to investigate the conditions that give rise to sociopolitical views. These attitudes guide behaviours such as voting decisions, career choices, volunteerism, activism, and day-to-day expressions of individual prejudice and hostility.

The individual differences influencing political ideology have been topics of interest within psychology since the release of Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Nevitt's (1950) landmark work on authoritarian personalities. Whether we are keen social activists or our involvement begins and ends in the voting booth, ideological attitudes shape the political choices we make (Caprara, Barbaranelli, & Zimbardo, 1999). Along the commonly used left-to-right spectrum, right-wing political views can be characterized by a resistance to social change and an acceptance of inequality, and left-wing political views by a desire for social change and egalitarianism (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003a). Right-wing ideologies have received comparatively more scrutiny (Jost et al., 2003a), and have been consistently linked with higher-order personality traits such as conscientiousness (+), openness (-), and honesty-humility (-; Chirumbolo & Leone, 2010; Cooper, Golden, & Socha, 2013; Leone, Chriumbolo, & Desimoni, 2012); with dogmatism and cognitive rigidity (Rokeach, 1960; Sidanius, 1985); and with

existential needs pertaining to fear or threat avoidance, such as terror management (Greenberg & Kosloff, 2008; Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1986).

Central to the political ideology discussion is the role of positive, prosocial individual differences. Positive psychology as a field aims to nurture happiness, autonomy, forgiveness, optimism, and the like, and at a group level to foster tolerance, kindness, and social responsibility; in short, it is dedicated to the creation of better lives through a focus on the positive aspects of human functioning (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). In seeking to explain attitudes about how society should be governed, we would be remiss to ignore the ways human strengths and virtues affect us. In fact, cultivating these virtues could directly inhibit the hostility, vengefulness, and hate that are detrimental to building functioning communities. One of these promising virtues is compassion.

1.1 Compassion

1.1.1   Defining compassion

Compassion can be defined as feelings of concern for others and a desire to alleviate suffering (Neff, 2003a; Pommier, 2011). While there is a great deal of existing literature on related constructs like empathy and altruism, compassion research is still an emerging field. The construct has been receiving increased attention in psychology, particularly within the past two decades (Goetz, Keltner, & Simon-Thomas, 2010; Neff, 2003a; Oman, 2011; Pommier, 2011). Outside of psychology, however, compassion has a rich history. It is integral to many philosophical schools of thought, including Buddhism, for which it is a core element (Dalai Lama, 1995, as cited in Pommier, 2011; Ladner, 1999; Oman, 2011). It is a guiding tenet of major religious doctrines (Oman, 2011), and it is thought to be central to ethical systems around the world – for good reason (Armstrong, 2004; in Stellar, Manzo, Kraus, & Keltner, 2012).

Despite its importance, the term 'compassion' has not always been used consistently. Sprecher and Fehr (2005) conceived of compassion as being a form of self-sacrificial love expressed to humanity in general as well as to those in our personal lives. Neff (2003a) and later Pommier (2011) drew comparatively more on Buddhist interpretations of compassion, and proposed that it contains three main components: mindfulness (a

balanced and accepting approach to suffering); kindness (the expression of warmth instead of criticism or harsh judgment); and the recognition of common humanity (an understanding of humanity's interconnectivity, and the realization that incidents are part of the larger human experience). Others have used the term interchangeably with related constructs. In any empirical investigation, it is important to distinguish first what is meant by compassion versus similar concepts like empathy, sympathy, or pity.

1.1.1.1 Empathy

While empathy – 'feeling with' someone – can lead to compassion, compassion is a distinct emotional response involving the desire to alleviate the suffering of others (Lazarus, 1991; in Goetz et al., 2010). Empathy does not have a clear "moral direction" or motivation towards harm reduction in the way that compassion does (Oman, 2011). At times, empathy has been referred to as a "knowing pursuit of kindness", a definition closer to the compassion construct (Lewin, 1996, p. 27, in Ladner, 1999), but it is generally regarded in psychological literature as the ability to understand and feel the emotions of others, possessing both cognitive and affective components (Davis, 1983).

Empathy and compassion are certainly related; the Compassionate Love Scale, for example, has been found to correlate positively with empathy (Klimecki et al., 2013; Sprecher & Fehr, 2005). However, there is meaning to the term compassion above and beyond what is encompassed by empathy. Importantly, empathy is an insufficient condition for prosocial behaviour. It is compassion that ultimately promotes prosocial acts, not just the ability to accurately assess the emotions of others (Lim & DeSteno, 2016; Lim, Condon, & DeSteno, 2015). It is worth noting that empathic concern in particular (the affective component of empathy, as opposed to the cognitive perspective-taking component of empathy) may be the main factor relating to compassion, though research on the subject is conflicting (Lim & DeSteno, 2016).

1.1.1.2 Sympathy

Sympathy and compassion have been used interchangeably in the past (Ladner, 1999; Wispe, 1986). However, Goetz et al. (2010) prefer the term "compassion" to "sympathy" because compassion encompasses a broader range of emotional states. The authors

proposed that constructs such as sympathy, pity, and empathic concern are all members of a family of compassion-related emotions.

Sympathy on its own does not clearly imply mindfulness or common humanity, while Neff's (2003a) and Pommier's (2011) constructs of compassion do. Mindfulness in particular is important to this definition. Insofar as it involves the desire to alleviate another's suffering, responding compassionately is not possible without personal emotional resources. The experience necessitates a knowledge that one is separate from the target, and that the misfortunate is not their own. Without mindfulness, compassion cannot manifest to its full extent. In other words, when caught up in their own distress, one is not likely to want – or be able – to attend to the needs of others.

In fact, while concern for someone in pain is marked by unpleasant affect, mindful contemplation and compassion training enables individuals to react to the same distressing stimuli with pleasant affect (Klimecki et al., 2013). Without emotional regulation, one might react only with personal distress, rather than compassionate concern (Goetz et al., 2010). As such, the term compassion is preferred here rather than sympathy. With that said, extant literature on both the subjects of sympathy and empathy still provides a relevant theoretical background for compassion research due to the frequency with which these terms have been conflated.

1.1.1.3   Pity

While pity denotes feelings of concern and care for a disadvantaged target and has also been used interchangeably with compassion, the term carries with it a tone of condescension (Nussbaum, 1996). Compassion does not imply a sense of superiority over another. Instead, it increases a sense of interconnectivity, incorporated into the Compassion Scale as the recognition of common humanity (Cassell, 2002; Lazarus & Lazarus, 1994; Pommier, 2010).

1.1.1.4   Compassion for others

It is also important to distinguish between self-compassion and compassion in general. Neff's (2003a) original Self-Compassion Scale refers exclusively to compassion directed

inwards such that one is kind to oneself rather than critical, mindful of one's internal state, and views their pain as part of the spectrum of human experience. While there are undoubtedly some similar benefits to cultivating self-compassion and compassion for others, Pommier's (2011) Compassion Scale is explicitly other-directed and theoretically distinct. It is possible to demonstrate compassion for others while being harsh on the self, and vice versa; in fact, there are gender differences in the expression of these two kinds of compassion. Specifically, women demonstrate higher compassion for others, while men exhibit higher self-compassion (Pommier, 2011; Yarnell, Stafford, Neff, Reilly, Knox, & Mullarkey, 2015). It is compassion for others which is the focus of this research.

1.1.2   Outcomes of compassion

The benefits of compassion are numerous. Not only is it by definition incompatible with aggression and violence, it is positively associated with concrete prosocial behaviours such as volunteering and the provision of social support (Pommier, 2011; Sprecher & Fehr, 2005). Compassion fosters both psychological resilience (Fredrickson, Tugade, Waugh & Larkin, 2003) and physical health (Pace et al., 2009). It is linked to improved self-esteem and a greater proclivity for self-sacrifice (Sprecher & Fehr, 2006), predicts higher life satisfaction (Neff, 2003b), and it improves self-efficacy in healthcare providers – a benefit for both the provider and the patient (Oman, Richards, Hedberg, & Thoresen, 2008). Compassion also relates negatively to undesirable psychological outcomes such as anxiety and neurotic perfectionism (Neff, 2003b).

Loving-kindness meditation, as practiced in Buddhist doctrines to help cultivate compassion, has shown promise in reducing chronic pain and associated distress (Carson et al., 2005), improving symptoms of schizophrenia (Johnson et al., 2011) and PTSD (Kearney, Malte, McManus, Martinez, Felleman, & Simpson, 2013), and reducing self-criticism (Shahar et al., 2015). Compassion training has also been shown to relate to stronger activations in neural networks associated with affiliation, love, and positive affect (Klimecki et al.,2013). While it may be self-evident that compassionate behaviour benefits others, it is clear from the literature that compassion is a virtue with advantages for the self as well.

1.1.3   Linking compassion to social and political attitudes

As the area is relatively new, there is much work to be done linking compassion to other aspects of identity and behaviour. However, because compassion is closely related to more thoroughly researched constructs in personality, social, and positive psychology, research on empathy and similar terms can be used to form interesting hypotheses about compassion and its correlates. One area of interest is compassion's relationship to beliefs, attitudes, and ideology. While it is known that compassion relates to concrete prosocial acts, it is less clear how it might relate to attitudes such as prejudice, discrimination, and dominance. Compassion appears to be conceptually related to these kinds of views, as its other-directedness is fundamentally incompatible with intolerance. It also seems reasonable to assume that the common humanity and kindness that are central to compassion are incompatible with anti-egalitarianism and hostility (Pommier, 2011).

Supporting this idea, Oveis, Horberg, and Keltner (2010) demonstrated that compassion contributes to an increase in perceived similarity between the self and others. Perceiving high self-other similarity facilitates prosociality, whether this similarity is in terms of nationality or simply shared attitudes and values (see Loewenstein & Small, 2007, for a review). It has also been shown that encouraging different groups to re-label themselves as a unified group reduces bias (Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman, & Rust, 1993). Having a sense of "oneness", which is entangled with feelings of concern and acts of kindness, is encapsulated in Neff's (2003) and Pommier's (2011) construct of compassion. More concretely, the deliberate cultivation of compassion towards one individual appears to translate to general compassion for others and for a reduced need for vengeance, even against those who have transgressed. Condon & DeSteno (2011) found that when compassion was induced towards one player in a game, the desire to punish a different player for cheating was diminished; this generalizability effect has also been seen when inducing empathy (Ambrona, Oceja, López- Pérez, & Carrera, 2016)

Empathy's (negative) relationship to prejudicial and hostile viewpoints has been well established, and supports the idea that compassion might also be linked. At the individual level, empathy encourages kindness and reduces aggression (Davis, 1983; Richardson,

Hammock, Smith, Gardner, & Signo, 1994), and enhancing empathy has shown some promise for reducing prejudice (Boag & Carnelley, 2016). Within the terror management framework, high dispositional empathy has been shown to increase the likelihood of forgiveness when mortality salience is elicited (Schimel, Wohl, & Williams, 2006). With regards to policy, empathy predicts support for "human service actions" (actions that have an immediate reparative effect on social ills; Gault & Sabini, 2000) and accounts for the effects of sexual orientation and gender differences on views towards punitive policies like capital punishment (Worthen, Sharp, & Rodgers, 2012). Higher levels of empathy also increase the number of pro-environmental moral arguments provided by an individual (Berenguer, 2010) and predicts vegetarianism in men (Preylo & Arikawa, 2008), indicating that empathy likely pertains to beliefs about environmental sustainability policy. Group-level empathy has been shown to mitigate the desire to tighten borders, reduce immigration, and decrease civil liberties, even among groups who are at the highest risk from political threats (i.e. minority groups; Sirin, Valentino, & Villalobos, 2016; Sirin, Valentino, & Villalobos, 2017). Of particular note is empathy's relationship to Social Dominance Orientation, a characteristic underlying various discriminatory attitudes, for which empathy has been considered the most predictive individual difference variable (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994; Sidanius, Kteily, Sheehy-Skeffington, Ho, Sibley, & Duriez, 2013).

1.2   Social Dominance Orientation

1.2.1   Social Dominance Theory

Social Dominance Theory seeks to explain the existence of group-based inequalities and hierarchies that develop in societies regardless of governmental style or belief systems (Pratto, Sidanius, & Levin, 2006; Pratto et al., 1994). Individuals in dominant groups – whether their power is gained through age, ethnicity, gender, or any other characteristic – tend to have access to larger shares of tangible and intangible capital such as money, property, food, healthcare, education, and political influence; conversely, those of lower-value groups receive disproportionately fewer resources, and may also be stigmatized (Pratto et al., 2006). Integral to Social Dominance Theory is the concept of "legitimizing myths" (views and attitudes such as beliefs in 'karma', about inherent group superiority,

or other just-world beliefs that promote inequality), hierarchy-legitimizing institutions, and individual discrimination (Pratto et al., 2006). Institutions which promote inequality by allocating greater value to dominant groups (such as multinational corporations or dysfunctional criminal justice systems) are termed "hierarchy-enhancing" institutions, while those which seek to aid lower value groups (such as charities or civil rights groups) are termed "hierarchy-attenuating" institutions (Pratto et al., 2006). Individual discrimination, as the name suggests, is prejudicial behaviour against members of a subordinate group carried out by one person (Pratto et al., 2006). The role of Social Dominance Theory is to explain the processes in human societies that give rise to hierarchy and ultimately foster discrimination.

1.2.2   Defining Social Dominance Orientation

Because those in positions of power – dominant groups – have greater access to resources, they are well-equipped to take actions that either maintain or dismantle the status quo. However, the extent to which individuals prefer the existence of hierarchies varies, even among individuals of comparable social standing (Pratto et al., 2006). Embedded in Social Dominance Theory is the measure of Social Dominance Orientation (SDO), an individual difference predicting one's general preference for inequality and dominance both within and between social groups. SDO is expressed through individual acts of discrimination, and through support for processes that perpetuate disproportionately beneficial outcomes for dominant groups (such as hierarchy-legitimizing social policies; Pratto et al., 2006; Pratto et al., 1994).

Individuals use perceived social hierarchies heuristically to determine appropriate distributions of resources, and they begin doing so early in childhood (Keltner, van Kleef, Chen, & Kraus, 2008). However, there are multiple forces driving the development of SDO. In their review of Social Dominance Theory, Pratto et al. (2006) identified five key determinants: group position (such that dominant individuals have higher SDO), social context (SDO is dependent on one's relative hierarchical position when compared to a given group), individual differences (SDO relates to personality traits such as low dispositional empathy and high tough-mindedness), gender (such that males tend to be higher in SDO across cultures, ages, and belief systems), and socialization (traumatic

experiences, lack of affection, and experiences with other cultures may all affect the development of SDO; Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1994; Pratto, Stallworth, & Sidanius, 1997). Importantly, despite the tendency for members of dominant groups to have higher SDO, it is not exclusive to them. Members of subordinate groups may espouse beliefs that undermine themselves – a phenomenon that is sometimes termed *false consciousness* – due to a strong belief in the legitimacy of hierarchy and a pervasive cultural doctrine that subordinate groups are less deserving (Lee, Pratto, & Johnson, 2011; Sidanius, Levin, Federico, Pratto, Jost, & Major, 2001a).

1.2.3   Social Dominance Orientation and personality

SDO has consistently demonstrated correlations with dispositional empathy (Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius et al., 2013), the "dark triad" (narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy; Hodson, Hogg, & MacInns, 2009), and with higher-order aspects of personality such as the Big Five traits of agreeableness (-) and openness (-) (Heaven & Bucci, 2001; Sibley & Duckitt, 2008). Right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) – a general preference for conformity and submission to authorities coupled with the belief that the world is hostile and dangerous – is frequently studied alongside SDO to examine their respective roles in explaining prejudice, and the two tend to correlate with similar attitudes (Ekehammar, Akrami, Gylje, & Zakrisson, 2004; Sidanius et al., 2013). In fact, SDO and RWA combined have been termed a "lethal union" for their contributions to prejudice and hostile behaviour (Altemeyer, 1998, p. 88, in McFarland, Webb, & Brown, 2012). However, it is SDO that consistently (negatively) relates to agreeableness (the Big Five trait encompassing compassion-like traits of tender-mindedness and altruism), and it does so even after RWA is controlled for (Akrami & Ekehammar, 2006).

SDO is strictly neither a personality trait nor an attitude, but exists at the junction of these two classifications (Bäckström & Björklund, 2007). Much of the current research on SDO indicates that related personality traits usually temporally precede SDO (Ekehammar et al., 2004; Perry & Sibley, 2012; Sibley & Duckitt, 2010b). However, SDO appears to be a powerful characteristic in the sense that it can also seemingly influence upstream variables like empathy (Sidanius et al., 2013). Empathy has been considered an important predictor of SDO since Social Dominance Theory's inception,

and evidence continues to be found for their relationship; Bäckström & Björklund, for example, used structural equation modeling to model the relationship between SDO, empathy, gender, and RWA with the outcome variable of prejudicial views, demonstrating that empathy's effect on prejudice was partially mediated by SDO. However, there is not yet a complete consensus on the order of their relationship. Evidence has also been found suggesting a reverse relationship is possible (in which SDO predicts empathy; McFarland, 2010; Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius et al., 2013).

1.2.4   Social Dominance Orientation and compassion

SDO and compassion appear incompatible by definition. While those high in SDO value hierarchy and believe some groups deserve greater access to resources, compassion necessitates that the self and others are seen as equally valuable members of the human race. SDO has been shown to correlate with McFarland, Webb, and Brown's (2012) Identification with All of Humanity scale, which measures feelings of connectivity with all other humans (as opposed to specific in-groups). Additionally, Oveis et al. (2010) found that compassion enhances feelings of self-other similarity, and that pride diminishes this effect; more specifically, pride was linked to greater feelings of similarity with "strong" others, but less similarity to "weak" others, while compassion theoretically does not make such a distinction. While SDO is not a measure of pride in one's own group specifically, it is a measure of an individual's feelings about the inherent superiority of certain groups. Unsurprisingly, it tends to be more salient in members of dominant groups, particularly if these individuals identify very strongly with the group (Levin & Sidanius, 1999; Sidanius, Levin, Liu, & Pratto, 2000; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

The strong relationship between empathy and SDO also provides a rationale for a potential link with compassion. The desire for hierarchical group relations is entangled with empathic abilities at the neural level; individuals who are higher in SDO demonstrate less activity in brain regions associated with concern for the suffering of others (Chiao, Mathur, Harada, & Lipke, 2009). However, as noted above, the direction of the empathy-SDO relationship remains unclear. Additionally, as of yet, there is little research on SDO and compassion specifically. Martin et al. (2015) did find a negative correlation between self-compassion and SDO, as well as with the fear of both expressing

and receiving compassion, but did not uncover the expected relationship with compassion for others. Given SDO's relationship with constructs relating to compassion for others, the topic deserves further investigation.

1.2.5　Hierarchy-attenuating and hierarchy-legitimizing views

SDO is linked with prejudices against a multitude of oppressed groups, including prejudice as a generalized, composite measure and, more broadly, with ideologies and beliefs that justify extant hierarchies rather than dismantling them (Ekehammar et al., 2004; McFarland, 2010; Pratto et al., 1994). It has been found to predict sexism (Akrami, Ekehammar, & Araya, 2000; Pratto et al., 1994); racism (Akrami et al., 2000; Pratto et al., 1994); homonegativity (Whitley & Lee, 2000); prejudice towards the mentally disabled (Ekehammar et al., 2004); belief in a meritocratic society and opposition to resource-allocation policies (Sibley & Duckitt, 2010a); persecution of immigrants, particularly those who try to assimilate into the host-culture (Thomsen, Green, & Sidanius, 2008); dehumanization of refugees (Esses, Veenvliet, Hodson, & Mihic, 2008); strict criminal punishment and the use of torture (Sidanius, Mitchell, Haley, & Navarrete, 2006); the use of force by police (Lee et al., 2011); support for the war on Iraq, even when given a reminder of the potential cost of citizen lives (McFarland, 2005); and a willingness to exploit the environment, combined with a denial of the reality of man-made climate change (a crisis that disproportionately affects impoverished nations; Jylhä & Akrami, 2015). The common theme underpinning these attitudes and viewpoints is that all perpetuate the boundaries between dominant and subordinate groups and therefore can be said to legitimize hierarchies. By perpetuating and enhancing hierarchies, individuals in dominant groups can maintain their greater access to resources and status.

In contrast, attitudes on policies that serve to equalize groups through the reallocation of resources (such as welfare programs, guaranteed government-supplied minimum incomes, or government-funded healthcare and education), by leveling the playing field for subordinate groups (such as affirmative action policies or less stringent immigration laws), and that are less exploitative of subordinate groups generally (such as an opposition to wars of dominance) can be termed *hierarchy-attenuating*. Hierarchy-

attenuating beliefs like the ones described are typically thought of as left-wing ideologies on a right-to-left conceptualization of political views, with left-oriented individuals tending towards social change and egalitarianism. It is possible that policy beliefs not only link with SDO, but also with compassion, due to its other-focused nature. There is also research supporting the idea that these views are linked with prosocial characteristics like altruism, which have some conceptual similarities to compassion (Zettler & Hilbig, 2010).

1.3   The Present Study

1.3.1   Rationale

As described above, SDO relates to a variety of conservative viewpoints, prejudicial and discriminatory attitudes, and behaviours that perpetuate group dominance. Together with RWA, it has been shown to account for as much as 46% of the variance in general prejudice (McFarland & Adelson, 1996). SDO's link with prejudice and out-group hostility is well-established, as are its consequences for one's own self-esteem and psychological wellbeing (Ekehammar et al., 2004; Jost & Hunyady, 2005; McFarland, 2010). However, grounding SDO in real, applied ways is essential for a complete understanding of how SDO can influence society. One way is to examine its role in driving concrete beliefs on policies, which contribute to support for specific political party platforms and may therefore underlie behaviours such as voting decisions or participation in social resistance movements. This avenue of research has been central to the study of SDO since the creation of the scale, though there has been comparatively less focus on its influence in a modern Canadian sample (Pratto et al., 1994).

A question that is as-of-yet unanswered is how SDO relates to the construct of compassion. While SDO has been linked (negatively) with self-compassion, as well as with a fear of displaying compassion, a definitive relationship between SDO and compassion for others has yet to be established (Martin et al., 2015). However, the study that investigated the aforementioned relationship utilized the Santa Clara Brief Compassion scale (a short form of the Compassionate Love Scale) to assess compassion for others (Martin et al., 2015; Sprecher & Fehr, 2005). As a short form, it cannot be

expected to have an equivalent level of construct validity as its original counterpart; for one thing, scales that are longer and more thorough typically demonstrate higher alpha reliability coefficients (Ghiselli, Campbell, & Zedeck, 1981). Additionally, given that SDO correlated with other measures of compassion such as the Self-Compassion Scale, it is quite possible that using a different measure of compassion will reveal a link. Pommier's (2011) Compassion Scale is the most appropriate measure of compassion for this research, due to its thoroughness, its basis on Neff's (2003a) Self-Compassion scale, and its specificity for other-oriented compassion.

The relationship between SDO and measures of empathy – a construct highly related to compassion, as previously noted – has at some points appeared to be reciprocal. Some studies suggest empathy exerts a strong effect on SDO, while others indicate the reverse effect (Sidanius et al., 2013). SDO may be an ideology powerful enough to influence higher-order traits like empathy, perhaps because it predisposes individuals to avoiding situations where they might be prompted to empathize (Sidanius et al., 2013). The same might be true of SDO and compassion. However, the present study will test a model in which compassion precedes SDO, as dispositional compassion is best characterized as being a personality trait, while SDO lies somewhere between the classifications of trait and attitude (Bäckström & Björklund, 2007).

A secondary concern for this research is potentially supporting the distinction between compassion and empathy. The two have often been conflated, but if compassion is to thrive as an area of study in its own right, it must be fully differentiated from its cousins. In short, the two characteristics should be positively correlated, but the compassion construct contains more facets. It is more than the cognitive understanding and affective concern that comprises empathy; compassion incorporates transcendental qualities about mindfulness and the recognition of common humanity that distinguish it (Pommier, 2011). Empathy and compassion should predict anti-egalitarian beliefs in similar ways. That is, they should both promote tolerance and equality, so they should negatively relate to social dominance and to hierarchy-legitimizing viewpoints. However, it is possible that compassion could actually be a superior predictor variable of SDO and hierarchy-legitimizing views, as a result of its broader scope.

1.3.2   Hypotheses

In order to explore individuals' beliefs about these issues and how they relate to the aforementioned individual differences of compassion, empathy, and SDO, a selection of social policy issue statements relevant to a Canadian audience was generated. With consideration to the kinds of variables often used in SDO research, such as support for specific wars or for punitive criminal punishment policies, opposition to social welfare and to the general idea of wealth redistribution, and opposition to affirmative action (Ho et al., 2015; Pratto et al., 1994), as well as to recent research linking SDO to anti-environmental attitudes (Jylhä & Akrami, 2015), the items generated for the Social Policy Questionnaire were initially proposed to belong to four separate (but related) groups: *opposition to social welfare policies, opposition to the rights of oppressed groups, support for military domination and general use of force*, and *domination over the environment*.

Of primary interest for this research was to bring compassion – an established construct in the field of positive psychology – into the domain of sociopolitical attitudes, by linking it with the widely used construct of SDO and with views on concrete issues. Figure 1 below illustrates the hypothesized model. As the kinds of attitudes being explored were of a sensitive and politically charged nature, social desirability was taken into account as well. It is possible that participants could have felt pressured to display prosocial traits such as less dominance and enhanced egalitarianism.

In sum, the research questions under investigation are as follows:

1) Does compassion for others correlate negatively with hierarchy-legitimizing views?
2) Does SDO correlate positively with hierarchy-legitimizing views?
3) Are SDO and compassion for others negatively correlated?
4) Does SDO mediate the relationship between compassion and hierarchy-legitimizing views?
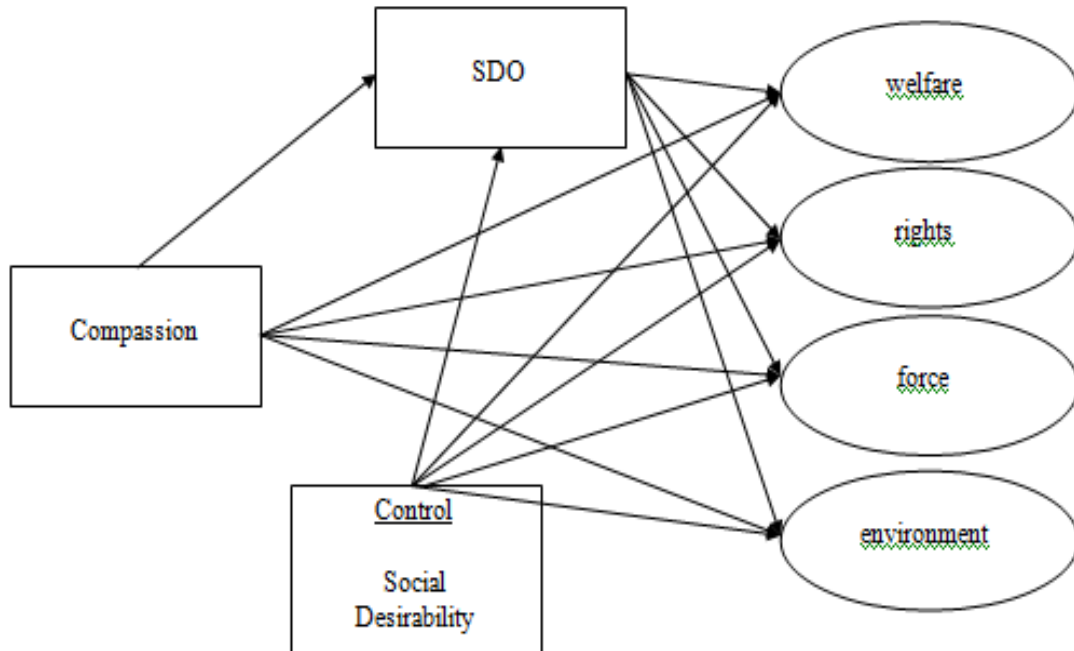
Figure 1: Proposed structural model with compassion and SDO.

Furthermore, alternative models involving empathy in place of compassion, as well as with both empathy and compassion, will be conducted. Empathy and compassion are theoretically related, and should relate to the outcome variables in similar ways; however, as it has been shown that compassion has explanatory power beyond empathy in some cases (in other words, that empathy is necessary but not sufficient for predicting prosocial acts), it is hypothesized that compassion will be a stronger predictor of SDO and hierarchy-legitimizing views (Lim & DeSteno, 2016; Lim, Condon, & DeSteno, 2015).

The research questions regarding empathy are as follows:

5) Does empathy correlate negatively with hierarchy-legitimizing views?
6) Are SDO and empathy negatively correlated?
7) Does SDO mediate the relationship between empathy and hierarchy-legitimizing views?
8) Is compassion a stronger predictor of SDO and hierarchy-legitimizing views than empathy?

Investigating these research questions will illuminate the as-yet unclear nature of SDO's relationship with compassion, identify individual differences that precede the support for hierarchy-legitimizing policies, provide validation for the relevance of SDO – which has been repeatedly linked with hierarchy-legitimizing viewpoints in American populations – in a Canadian sample, and help to further distinguish the constructs of empathy and compassion.

Chapter 2

2   Method

2.1   Participants

Analyses in this research involved tests of mediation models with structural equation modeling (SEM). There are no straightforward guidelines for SEM sample size requirements, and researchers determining appropriate sample size have often relied on rules of thumb that are not model-specific (Wolf, Harrington, Clark, & Miller, 2013). Wolf et al. (2013) determined that in mediation models with larger effects, suitable statistical power can be obtained with relatively smaller sample sizes; specifically, the authors found that a model in which the direct effects accounted for 45% of the variance required 180 participants, while one that accounted for 16% required 440. The primary model of interest is the effect of compassion on policy views as mediated by SDO. As there is evidence that the direct effect of characteristics related to compassion (namely agreeableness) have small direct effects on prejudicial, nationalistic, or hostile attitudes when SDO is considered (Duckitt & Sibley, 2010; Sibley & Duckitt, 2008), to ensure high enough power, a larger sample size greater than 440 participants was obtained ($N =$ 590).

The study involved participants at a Canadian post-secondary institution who were recruited using the SONA system. Of the 590 participants who signed up for the study, 139 (25.0%) were male, 415 (74.8%) were female, and one participant identified as transgender. Participants ranged in age from 17 to 37 years, with a mean age of 18.34 (SD = 1.48). The sample was fairly ethnically diverse, with 319 Caucasian participants (57.5%), 116 East Asian participants (20.9%), 88 South Asian participants (15.9%), 36 Middle Eastern participants (6.5%), 11 Black, Afro-Caribbean, or African Canadian participants (2.0%), 10 Latino or Hispanic participants (1.8%), 9 First Nations or Aboriginal participants (1.6%), and 13 selecting another option (2.3%).

2.2   Measures

2.2.1   The Compassion Scale (Pommier, 2011)

Studies that have purported to measure compassion have often used very short measures or subscales that do not address compassion as defined in this research (for example, measuring self-compassion instead). Lim & DeSteno (2016) utilized the Compassion Subscale of the Dispositional Positive Emotion Scale, as did Stellar et al. (2012), rather than using a scale focused on other-directed compassion exclusively. Some such as Klimecki et al. (2013) have used the aforementioned Sprecher and Fehr (2005) 21-item Compassionate Love Scale; this scale was developed to measure "compassionate love" first for close others, though different versions were developed for strangers or humanity in general (Hwang, Plante, & Lackey, 2008).

The Compassion Scale, devised by Pommier (2011), is based on Neff (2003a)'s Self-Compassion Scale and contains the same six-factor structure (the three factors of mindfulness, kindness, and recognition of common humanity in addition to their opposites disengagement, indifference, and separation). With this in mind, Pommier's (2011) measure was chosen for use in this research due to the theoretical thoroughness and psychometric validity of this construct of compassion (see Neff, 2016 and Neff, 2003a), as well as its explicitly other-directed focus. The Compassion Scale is a 24-item measure measured using a 5-point Likert scale. Example statements include "I tend to listen patiently when people tell me their problems" and "Suffering is just a part of the common human experience" (Pommier, 2011). A reliability analysis of the Compassion Scale in this sample demonstrated excellent internal consistency, $\alpha = 0.91$.

2.2.2   Social Dominance Orientation (SDO7; Ho et al., 2015)

The newest version of the SDO scale, the 16-item SDO_7, was used in this investigation (Ho et al., 2015). The SDO_7 can be divided into two subscales – dominance, or SDO-D, and anti-egalitarianism, or SDO-E – that represent different aspects of the SDO characteristic. SDO-D encompasses support for aggressive and overt dominance behaviours, while SDO-E refers to the possession of more subtle anti-egalitarian ideological positions and a desire to maintain hierarchies (Ho et al., 2015). The SDO_7 is

measured on a 7-point Likert scale assessing agreement with statements such as "Some groups of people must be kept in their place" and "We shouldn't try to guarantee that every group has the same quality of life" (Ho et al., 2015).

Research into the psychometric validity of the SDO scale has indicated that it demonstrates high internal and test-retest reliability (including cross-culturally across America, Israel, New Zealand, Taiwan, and Mexico), as well as high construct and discriminant validity for measuring anti-egalitarian attitudes (Pratto et al., 2006; Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius et al., 2006; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). The SDO_7 correlates significantly with the SDO_6 as well as with relevant criterion variables, and is correlated with the same personality traits that older versions are; thus, the SDO_7 maintains the validity of previous iterations (Ho et al., 2015). For the purpose of this project, the overall mean SDO score will be used. A reliability analysis of the scale in this sample yielded excellent internal consistency, $\alpha = 0.92$.

2.2.3   Social Policy Questionnaire

A cluster of items addressing support for policies pertaining to group hierarchy (designed specifically for this research) was administered. The items that were generated for the Social Policy Questionnaire were partly based on the kinds of hierarchy-legitimizing viewpoint items used in Pratto et al.'s (1994) original paper on SDO. Pratto et al. linked SDO to support for a wide range of hierarchy-legitimizing policies, including (but not limited to): "chauvinist" foreign policy (referring to US dominance over other nations), support for military programs, and support for specific military actions; opposition to the rights of women, racial minorities, and sexual minorities; opposition to general social welfare policies; and opposition to environmental policies (Pratto et al., 1994). It is important to note that Pratto et al.'s sample is two decades old and was composed of American citizens. The political issues relevant to a modern sample of young Canadians are different, and care was taken to ensure that the topics were both common knowledge to Canadians as well as being issues of contemporary concern.

2.2.3.1   Social programs and economic policies

These items were meant to tap into hierarchy-legitimizing views pertaining to redistributive economic policies. Participants' attitudes towards topical economic issues such as government-funded healthcare, government-funded post-secondary education, subsidized housing, guaranteed minimum incomes, increased minimum wages, taking care of homeless populations, and increased taxation on the wealthy were assessed. The *social welfare* section included statements such as "It is unfair to increase taxes on the wealthy just because they are successful" and "Reducing Canada's debt is more important than running social programs".

2.2.3.2   Rights of oppressed groups

These items were intended to tap into hierarchy-legitimizing attitudes towards a variety of subordinate groups with regards to improved social status, civil rights, or access to capital. Participants' attitudes towards policies (either extant or proposed) affecting sexual minorities (such as marriage equality) and racial minorities (such as affirmative action) were assessed. Additionally, as there has been political backlash over government policies regarding refugees and immigration more generally, questions assessing attitudes towards these issues were included. This section included statements such as "There are some jobs which women simply are not able, or should not be allowed, to do" and "Affirmative Action or Equal Opportunity type policies prevent more qualified individuals from getting positions".

2.2.3.3   Military intervention and use of force

This section was intended to represent hierarchy-legitimizing beliefs about Canada's foreign policy or law enforcement at home, including attitudes towards increased defense spending, torture of political prisoners, support for Canada's involvement in wars overseas (including present involvement in the war against the Islamic State of Iraq & the Levant), and for specific military actions such as airstrikes on Iraq and Syria. To my knowledge, though SDO has been linked with support for American wars of domination and military spending, there has been no research yet on SDO's relationship with these attitudes from a Canadian perspective (Pratto et al., 1994). Items included statements

such as "The Canadian military ought to be doing more to combat terrorist groups overseas" and "When police officers use force, it is almost always justified".

2.2.3.4   Environmental domination

This factor was meant to tap into hierarchy-legitimizing views about humanity's right to use and exploit natural resources and lack of concern for the destruction of the environment. The ongoing climate crisis affects third-world nations disproportionately due to a combination of geographic and economic factors. Climate change results in issues that are particularly severe for poor countries, including: a lack of clean drinking water and subsequently higher rates of water-borne illness; reduced access to fertile farmland due to land degradation and resultant food shortages; and a higher susceptibility to natural disasters, such as flooding, with which poor nations have less ability to cope and which will lead to increasing amounts of climate refugees (Adams, 1990; Bachram, 2004). These items included statements such as "The natural environment exists for humans to use" and "Environmental policies must sometimes be sacrificed for the good of the economy".

Some items on the Social Policy Questionnaire were phrased in a hierarchy-attenuating, egalitarian direction (for example, "Increasing taxes on the rich is a fair way to redistribute wealth", and "We cannot have a healthy country without a healthy environment"), and were reverse coded for ease of interpretation. Participants were asked to indicate their agreement with the items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 – "strongly disagree" and 5 – "strongly agree") or to select a sixth "No opinion/not sure" option, which was coded as a non-answer. The full battery of items included in the questionnaire can be found in the appendix.

2.2.4   Empathic Concern Subscale of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI; Davis, 1980)

Empathic Concern measures the tendency to experience empathy for others in distress (Davis, 1980). The decision to include this particular subscale was based on evidence that correlations between SDO with other subscales of the IRI are inconsistent (Pratto et al.,

1994), as well as its greater conceptual similarity to compassion. A reliability analysis of the Empathic Concern subscale demonstrated good internal consistency, $\alpha = 0.80$.

2.2.5 Social Desirability (Marlowe & Crowne, 1960)

The nature of this topic involved measuring intolerant, discriminatory, and hostile attitudes (which may be artificially deflated by respondents) in addition to self-reported kindness and benevolence (which may be artificially inflated). As such, a scale assessing social desirability was included in order to control for potentially biased responses. A reliability analysis of the social desirability scale demonstrated borderline acceptable internal consistency, $\alpha = 0.69$.

2.2.6 Right-Wing Authoritarianism (Altemeyer, 1998)

RWA and SDO are often studied in tandem due to their relationships with similar attitudes. RWA and SDO range from being slightly to moderately correlated, and operate largely independently in predicting attitudes (Altemeyer, 1998; Heaven & Connors, 2001). As such, Altemeyer's (1998) RWA scale was included in the battery of measures administered in the interest of providing data for future analyses.

2.2.7 Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Short Form (TEIQue-sf; Petrides & Furnham, 2006)

Emotional intelligence has been linked positively to prosocial characteristics such as empathy (Davis, 1983) and self-compassion (Neff, 2003a). In the interest of providing data for future analyses regarding trait emotional intelligence and compassion for others, a measure of global trait emotional intelligence was included (the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Short Form or TEIQue-sf; Petrides & Furnham, 2006).

2.2.8 HEXACO-60 (Lee & Ashton, 2004)

To facilitate future analyses on the relationship of higher-order personality variables with compassion for others, Lee & Ashton's HEXACO-60 personality inventory was included. The HEXACO-60 is a 60-item short form of the HEXACO inventory containing the domains of Honesty-Humility, Emotionality, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness.

2.3   Procedure

Ethics approval for this study was obtained from Western University's Ethics Board. Participants were recruited via the SONA system and directed to the assessment on Qualtrics survey software, where they received instructions for a study ostensibly on personality and social attitudes. The order of measures was randomized using Qualtrics' Survey Flow Randomizer function to control for order effect. At the end of the study, participants were debriefed. Participants were compensated for their participation with course credit.

2.4   Analytic Methods

To establish whether the hypothesized four-factor model for the Social Policy Questionnaire items demonstrated good fit to the data, a measurement model was conducted using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) procedures in MPlus version 7 with Full Information Maximum Likelihood estimation to account for missing data (FIML; Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2012). Latent variables that were created from the Social Policy Questionnaire items were used in mediation analyses. These items were generated with consideration to questions administered in SDO research in the past (Pratto et al., 1994) and to the likely concerns of a young Canadian sample. This questionnaire was intended to contain the four factors of *opposition to social welfare policy, opposition to the rights of oppressed groups, support for use of force and military domination,* and *opposition to environmental policy*, should the model have a good fit to the data. Ultimately, the latent variables created from the items on the Social Policy Questionnaire were slightly modified from the four originally hypothesized.

To conduct the mediation analyses, a partially latent structural mediation model with bootstrapping (1000) was constructed using the scores of SDO, compassion (or empathy when necessary), and social desirability as single indicators, with the four latent hierarchy-legitimizing views variables as outcomes. Causal modeling aims to test the fit of the hypothesized models and can provide supportive evidence for their temporal order, though it cannot provide definitive proof of causality. The analyses investigated a model

with SDO mediating compassion's (and empathy's) effect on social policy views. The primary model contained four mediation paths of interest:

1) Compassion -> SDO -> Social welfare

2) Compassion -> SDO -> Rights of oppressed groups

3) Compassion -> SDO -> Military intervention and use of force

4) Compassion -> SDO -> Environmental domination

Multiple indices were used to test model fit, including χ^2; however, χ^2 alone is influenced greatly by sample size (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kenny, 2015; McDonald & Ho, 2002). Other measures of model fit used included the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), comparative fit index (CFI), and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI). Also of interest was the question of whether compassion has greater explanatory power than empathy with regards to SDO and hierarchy-legitimizing views, as the relationship between empathy and SDO has been more extensively investigated than that of compassion and SDO (Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius et al., 2013). The same model as described above was run using the Empathic Concern scale instead of the Compassion Scale, and a third model was constructed including both scales. To control for social desirability, it was treated as a covariate and regressed on the exogenous variables (SDO and hierarchy-legitimizing policy views).

Chapter 3

3 Results

3.1 Data Screening and Preliminary Analyses

Before beginning analyses, the data were examined for participants who did not complete the scales of interest. Thirty-five participants who did not complete the entire battery of survey measures were removed from the data, leaving 555 participants in the final sample. In addition to removing participants with incomplete survey data, some problematic items from the Social Policy Questionnaire were excluded. Large amounts of missing data on specific items can indicate an issue within a variable itself, such as poor choice of wording. Participants can also find items uncomfortable to respond to, or an item might require background knowledge that participants do not have. To give a well-founded response to some of the items on the Social Policy Questionnaire, a baseline amount of political knowledge was often necessary; for example, to answer the question of whether Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity policies are appropriate, one must first know what these policies are. Due to the nature of this questionnaire, participants were therefore given the option to select "No opinion/not sure". While an effort was made to generate items that did not demand extensive or obscure knowledge, there were still particular questions that many did not feel able to offer an opinion on. As such, items with over 10% of missing data were removed in order to more fairly represent the informed political opinions of the sample. The remaining missing data in the sample was estimated using Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML) estimation procedures in MPlus, a process which ensures that all available data are used (rather than listwise deletion).

Multivariate normality was assessed through skewness and kurtosis values. Kline (2016) indicates that skewness values outside |3.00| and kurtosis values outside |10.00| are problematic. Table 1 below depicts the descriptive statistics of the variables of interest, including individual indicators from the Social Policy Questionnaire, none of which violated the assumption of normality based on Kline's criteria. With regards to

multicollinearity, the predictor variables of compassion, empathy, and SDO were assessed; this was a distinct possibility between compassion and empathy in particular, due to their similarity. Using a conservative cut-off of $r = .70$, the predictor variables did not present collinearity issues (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Bivariate correlations (shown below in Table 2) indicated that while empathy and compassion correlated moderately to highly as expected, they did not appear to be so similar as to be redundant. Multicollinearity was also examined using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), for which a VIF greater than 10 is problematic (Kline, 2016). Evidence of multicollinearity was not detected.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of all variables.

Variable	Mean	S.D.	Skewness	Kurtosis
Compassion	3.94	.54	-.36	-.52
Empathy	3.88	.69	-.57	.03
SDO	2.72	1.05	.14	-.61
Social Desirability	14.91	4.68	.17	-.21
SoPol1R	1.41	0.81	2.25	5.19
SoPol2R	1.67	0.96	1.42	1.30
SoPol3R	1.87	0.93	.92	0.30
SoPol4R	1.84	1.02	1.10	0.43
SoPol5R	1.81	0.88	0.95	0.49
SoPol6	2.89	.99	0.24	-0.47
SoPol7	3.02	1.28	0.10	-1.13
SoPol8R	2.77	1.15	0.24	-0.80
SoPol10R	2.09	1.02	0.73	-0.22
SoPol11	2.62	1.19	0.40	-0.69

SoPol12R	1.58	0.85	1.42	1.45
SoPol13	1.84	1.00	1.09	0.52
SoPol14R	1.80	0.84	0.91	0.56
SoPol17	2.02	1.08	1.03	0.43
SoPol18	1.89	1.11	1.12	0.26
SoPol19R	1.97	1.00	0.90	0.25
SoPol20R	1.61	0.90	1.46	1.59
SoPol21R	1.82	0.93	1.08	0.73
SoPol22	2.57	1.03	0.47	-0.38
SoPol25R	2.04	1.02	0.86	0.24
SoPol26	2.95	1.04	0.25	-0.63
SoPol27	2.23	0.94	0.72	0.38
SoPol30R	1.65	0.79	1.23	1.65
SoPol32	2.86	1.10	0.10	-0.82
SoPol33R	1.57	0.81	1.56	2.44
SoPol34R	1.62	0.75	1.04	0.58
SoPol35	2.80	1.14	0.12	-0.86
SoPol36R	1.66	0.81	1.24	1.48

Table 2. Bivariate correlations between compassion, empathy, and SDO.

	Compassion	Empathy	SDO
Compassion	1.00	-	-
Empathy	.66	1.00	-
SDO	-.47	-.48	1.00

Note: All correlations are significant at p < .001.

It was expected that compassion and SDO should be negatively related, that compassion should relate negatively and SDO positively to hierarchy-legitimizing views, and that SDO should account for (mediate) the relationship between compassion and these views. Alternative models including empathy were also explored, as the link between SDO and empathy has been demonstrated in past research. These variables correlated in the expected directions, with compassion and empathy relating positively and strongly, and each in turn correlating negatively with SDO. Past research has also demonstrated gender differences in the manifestations of compassion (Pommier, 2011), empathy (Eisenberg & Lennon, 1983; Rueckert & Naybar, 2008), and SDO (Pratto et al., 2006), such that women tend to score higher on compassion and empathy measures, while men score more highly on SDO. A series of independent samples t-tests was carried out to assess gender differences, with all of the findings being consistent with previous research. Table 3 below depicts the results of these analyses. Females reported significantly higher compassion and empathy scores while males exhibited significantly higher SDO, and these effects were moderate in size (Cohen, 1977).

Table 3. Mean scores and gender differences in compassion, empathy, and SDO.

	Total sample (SD)	Males (SD)	Females (SD)	t	df	d
Compassion	3.94 (.54)	3.73 (.51)	4.01 (.52)	-5.52***	552	.54
Empathy	3.88 (.69)	3.58 (.70)	3.98 (.66)	-6.12***	552	.59
SDO	2.72 (1.05)	3.20 (1.06)	2.57 (.99)	6.40***	550	.61

Note: Only those who selected the option "male" or "female" were included in these analyses.

***p < .001

3.2   Measurement Model

To establish a well-fitting measurement model, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) procedures were carried out on the Social Policy Questionnaire; this was done first to identify problems contributing to poor model fit. Other variables relevant to the research questions (compassion, SDO, and social desirability) were used as single indicators, as they are well-established scales that have demonstrated good internal reliability. The Social Policy Questionnaire was modified in order to achieve satisfactory model fit prior to constructing the structural model. Higher scores on a Social Policy Questionnaire item indicate hierarchy-legitimizing views. An "R" indicates that an item was initially worded in a hierarchy-attenuating (egalitarian) direction and was reverse-coded.

Thirteen modifications to the initial model were made, with a total of fourteen models tested. The decision to use model 14 was made as the model was deemed satisfactory across multiple fit indices, and it was important that the indicators were representative of the latent constructs. Making further modifications such as removing more indicators could have substantially changed the meaning of a latent variable. There was also no theoretical justification for cross-loading any items on other factors, or for correlating error variances of specific items. Table 5 depicts the modified models as well as the fit

indices, which include the Chi Square Test[1], the CFI, the TLI, the RMSEA with confidence intervals, and the SRMR.

If a one-factor model is theoretically plausible, Kline (2016) recommends testing this model to begin. It was possible that all hierarchy-legitimizing view items could have loaded well onto a single factor due to their common conceptual grounding in conservative, anti-egalitarian attitudes. However, the one-factor model demonstrated poor fit on all indices, indicating that the questionnaire was not unidimensional. The next model tested was the originally hypothesized four-factor model, with latent variables representing hierarchy-legitimizing viewpoints pertaining to *social welfare, rights of oppressed groups, use of force,* and *environmental domination.* While this model demonstrated improved fit on all indices, the fit was still unsatisfactory when considering the CFI and TLI.

The *opposition to the rights of oppressed groups* factor contained items pertaining to the rights of women, racial minorities, immigrants and refugees, and sexual minorities. Theoretically, it was possible that these items could load onto separate factors. A keen advocate for gender and sexuality rights could possess anti-immigrant prejudices (and vice versa). The first major modification made to the hypothesized model was thus to split the *rights of oppressed groups* factor into one variable representing opposition to the rights of women and sexual minorities, and another representing opposition to the rights of racial minorities and immigrants or refugees. The new five-factor model was an improvement over the previous model on all indices, but was still not satisfactory.

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[1] The Chi Square test of fit, while a useful metric for models with between roughly 50 and 200 cases, is almost always statistically significant when a model has $N > 400$ (Kenny, 2015). The index was included regardless as it is widely reported, and the decreases in the size of the value as modifications are made can be helpful for determining improvement in model fit.

Table 4. Social Policy Questionnaire item analyses.

	Model	χ2	df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
1	One factor	1998.289	350	.667	.641	.092 [.088, .096]	.078
2	Four factor	1528.434	344	.761	.737	.079 [.075, .083]	.076
3	Five factor	1299.754	340	.806	.785	.071 [.067, .076]	.070
4	Removed SoPol14R	1218.873	314	.806	.783	.072 [.068, .076]	.070
5	Removed SoPol6	1091.227	289	.823	.801	.071 [.066, .075]	.065
6	Removed SoPol32	992.973	265	.835	.814	.070 [.066, .075]	.064
7	Removed SoPol22	923.074	242	.843	.821	.071 [.066, .076]	.063
8	Removed SoPol7	638.000	220	.896	.881	.059 [.053, .064]	.052
9	Remove Force factor	583.709	183	.894	.878	.063 [.057, .069]	.054
10	Removed SoPol10R	539.038	164	.898	.882	.064 [.058, .070]	.054
11	Removed SoPol11	492.247	146	.903	.886	.065 [.059, .072]	.053
12	Removed SoPol18	417.590	129	.914	.898	.064 [.057, .070]	.051
13	Removed SoPol4R	347.576	113	.923	.908	.061 [.054, .069]	.050
14	**Removed SoPol8R**	**309.126**	**98**	**.929**	**.913**	**.062 [.055, .070]**	**.049**

Note: χ2 was significant at p < .001 in each model.

Item 14 (*SoPol14R*) was removed because it was ultimately thought that the statement did not actually address views on a policy issue (i.e. a concrete policy that could be put into practice), but instead addressed overall attitudes towards a specific group. Other

items were removed for poor factor loadings when appropriate. In the case of item 35 (*SoPol35*), though it loaded relatively poorly onto the *environmental domination* factor, it was kept in the model; removing this item adversely affected fit on several indices.

The *military domination and use of force* factor was left with only two indicators. Additionally, the factor demonstrated extremely high correlations with several others, to the point of redundancy, indicating collinearity issues (.903 with *environmental domination*, .916 with *rights of gender and sexual minorities*, and .887 with *social welfare*). Furthermore, the remaining two indicators did not reflect the theoretical construct of interest, nor would they fit well conceptually onto factors reflecting other kinds of hierarchy-legitimizing views. *SoPol30* ("Canada should strive to be a peacekeeping nation"), for example, might not necessarily tap into views on (the opposition to) wars of dominance; it could instead reflect participants' feelings about maintaining Canada's peaceful reputation on the global stage. It was suspected from these results that the *use of force* factor could be negatively affecting model fit, and it was considered unlikely that it represented the hierarchy-legitimizing attitudes towards military domination and force that it was intended to. As such, the decision was made to eliminate the factor. This was the second major modification made to the structure of the model[2]. The model was left with the four factors of *social welfare* (*welfare*), *rights of women and sexual minorities* (*rightsge*), *rights of racial minorities and immigrants* (*rightsra*), and *environmental domination* (*enviro*). Following this modification, several additional items that loaded poorly onto their respective factors were removed until satisfactory model fit was achieved.

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[2] The issue with the use of force variable as well as with indicators might reflect a larger limitation of the sample population. Undergraduate participants (many of whom in this study were first-years) are not likely to be as politically informed as samples of older adults. These young adults – many of whom were too young to have voted in a previous Canadian election – might not feel comfortable commenting on topics they have never considered.
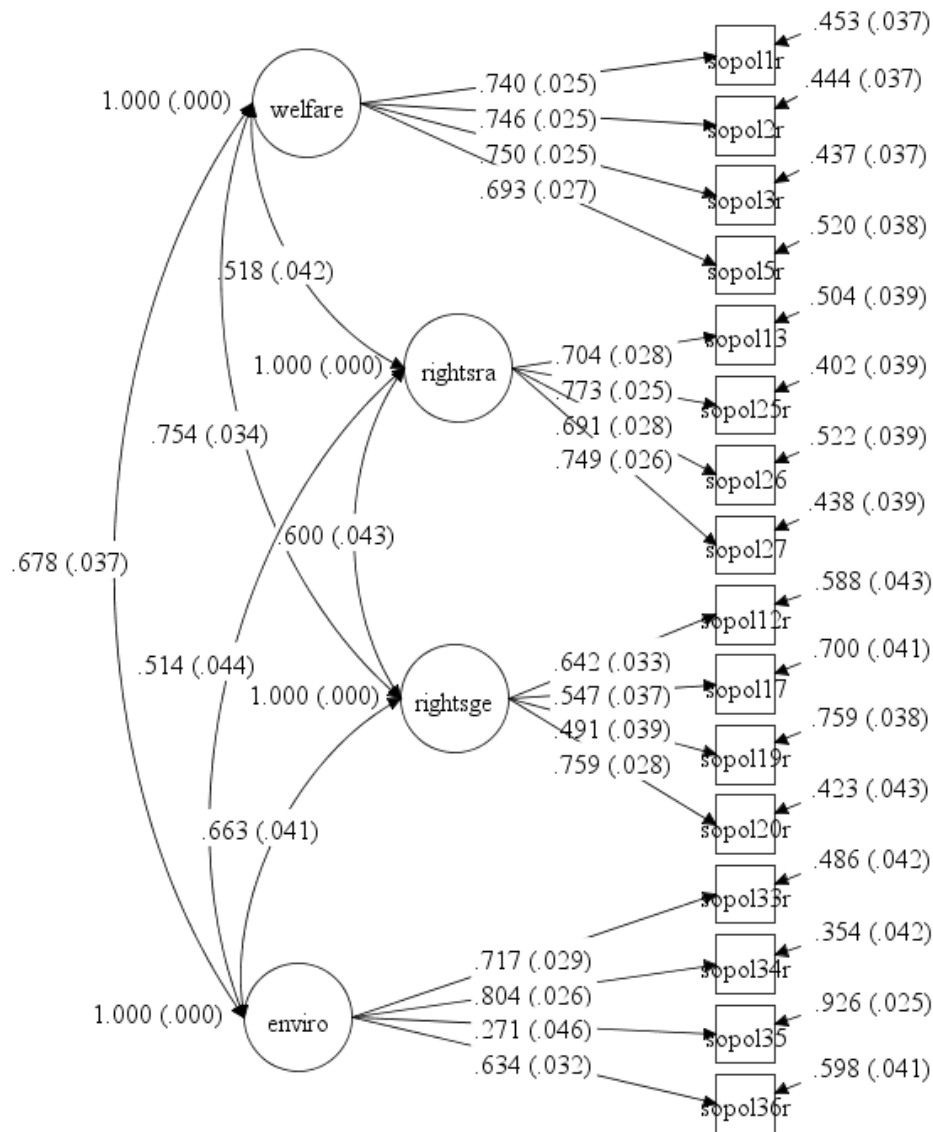
Figure 2. Diagram of measurement model for Social Policy Questionnaire, with standardized factor loadings, standard errors, and correlations between latent variables.

With regards to the fit indices, the final model was considered acceptable. CFI values can range from 0 to 1.0, with 1.0 representing ideal fit. A CFI/TLI greater than .90 has traditionally been considered indicative of good model fit, though more recently .95 is preferred (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The CFI and TLI of the final model are .929 and .91,

respectively. These values pass the .90 threshold and are approaching the more recent recommended cut-off criteria. Regarding RMSEA, values between .05 and .10 have been considered indicative of reasonable model fit, and later that values below .08 indicate good fit (MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996). Steiger (2007) proposed a cut-off of .07. The obtained RMSEA value of .062 can be considered acceptable. SRMR is a badness-of-fit index in which ideal model fit is indicated by a value of 0 and values over .10 indicate bad fit (Kline, 2016). Hu and Bentler (1999) suggest .08 as an appropriate cut-off. By these measures, the SRMR of the final model (.049) is indicative of good model fit. Figure 2 illustrates the final model including standardized factor loadings, correlations between latent variables, and residual errors. Note that all factor loadings and factor correlations were significant at $p < .001$.

3.3   Structural Model

3.3.1   Compassion, SDO, and hierarchy-legitimizing views

A partially latent structural model with bootstrapping (1000) was carried out and was found to have acceptable model fit across CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR fit indices: CFI = .923; TLI = .902; RMSEA = .060, 90% CI [.053, .067]; SRMR = .048. The model explained a good deal of variance in hierarchy legitimization, accounting for approximately 33.5% of the variance in *welfare* views ($R^2 = .335$), 34.7% of the variance in *rightsra* ($R^2 = .347$), 37.7% of the variance in *rightsge* views ($R^2 = .377$), and 29.1% of the variance in *environment* views ($R^2 = .291$). Each mediation path is depicted separately for ease of interpretation in figures 3 through 6. The standardized estimates of total, direct, and indirect effects can be seen in these figures as well.

3.3.1.1   Social welfare.

The *welfare* variable was designed to tap into general opposition towards policies of economic redistribution – in other words, the legitimization of wealth inequality. The total effect of compassion on *welfare* was significant and moderately sized, with those higher in compassion being less likely to hold these views, $c = -.493$, $SE = .040$, $p < .001$. SDO significantly mediated this effect, $ab = -.173$, $SE = .027$, $p < .001$, reducing the direct effect of compassion to $c` = -.321$, $SE = .051$, $p < .001$. Individuals higher in

compassion thus reported less hierarchy-legitimization with regards to economic redistributive policy partly because they are lower in socially dominant attitudes. However, compassion retains a moderately sized effect on these views even when social dominance is taken into account.
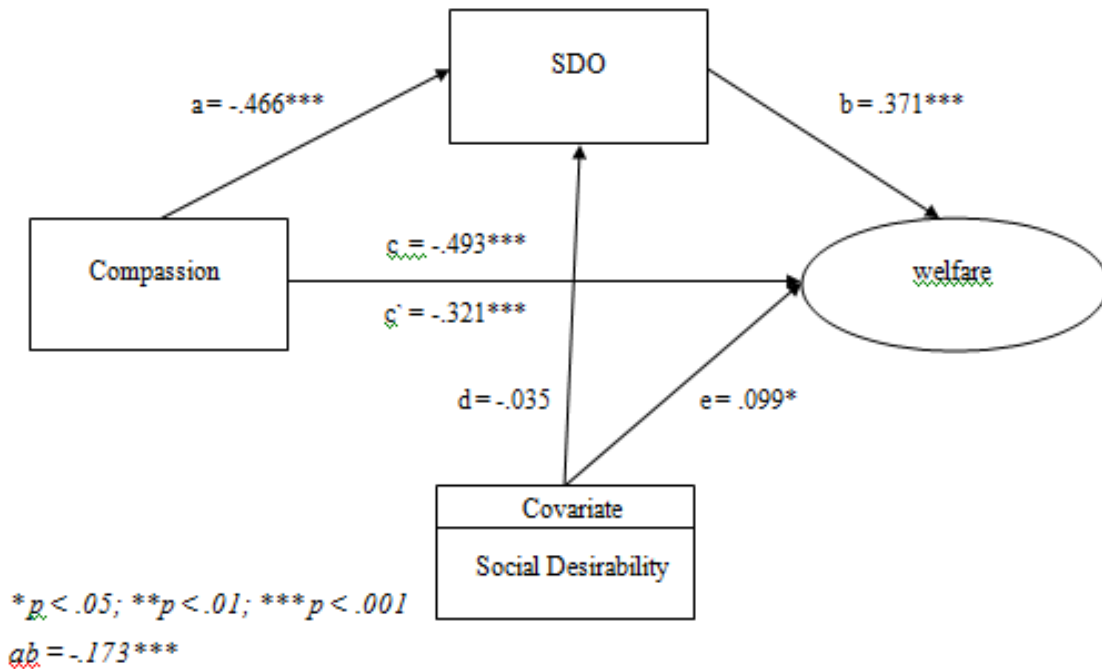

Figure 3. Mediation model of the relationship between compassion and SDO on social welfare policies with standardized coefficients.

3.3.1.2   Rights of racial minorities and immigrants.

The *rightsra* variable was designed to assess general opposition to the rights of members of these demographic groups. The total effect of compassion on *rightsra* was significant and moderately sized, with those higher in compassion being less likely to hold these views, $c = -.431$, $SE = .045$, $p < .001$. SDO significantly mediated this effect, $ab = -.215$, $SE = .027$, $p < .001$, reducing the direct effect of compassion to $c` = -.216$, $SE = .049$, $p < .001$. Individuals higher in compassion thus reported less hierarchy-legitimization with regards to race and immigration policy partly because they are lower in socially dominant attitudes, but compassion retained a small effect on these views even when social dominance was taken into consideration.
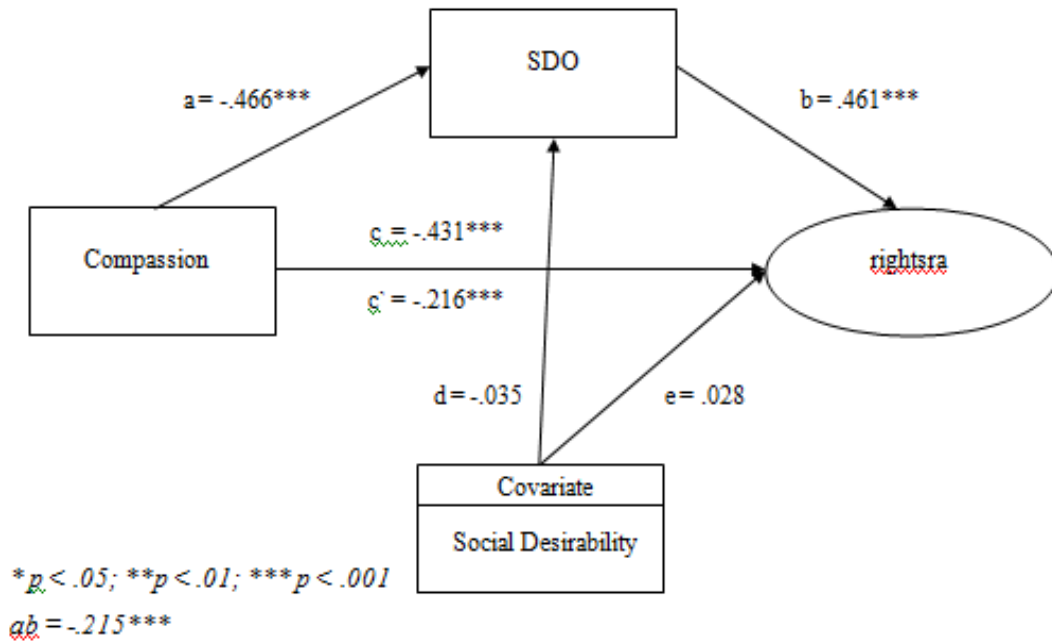
Figure 4. Mediation model of the relationship between compassion and SDO on the rights of racial minorities and immigrants with standardized coefficients.
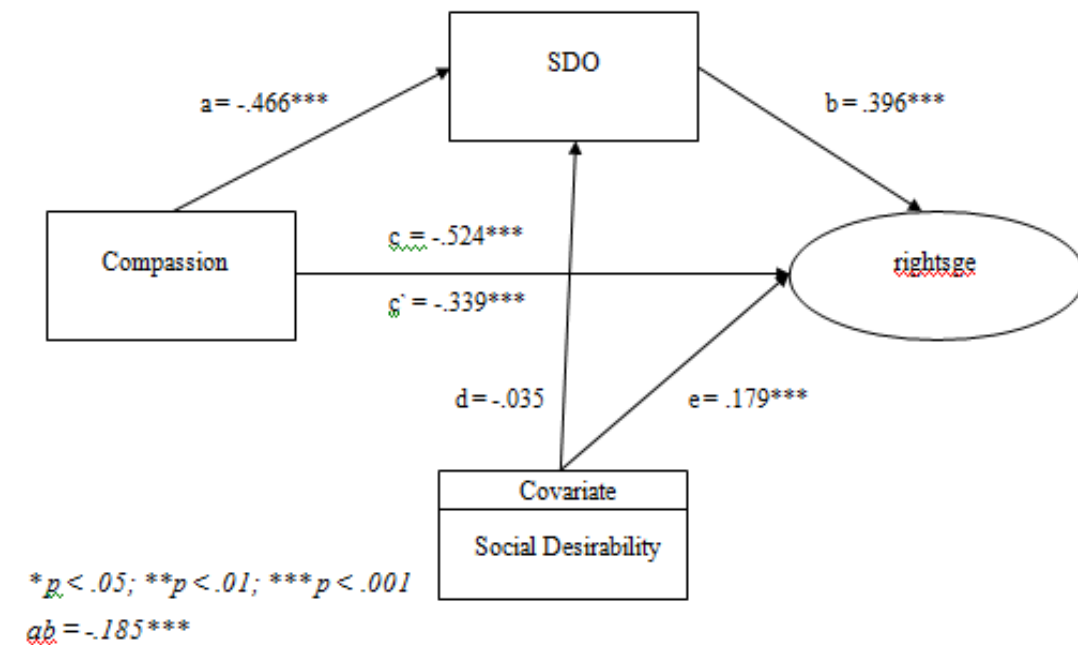

Figure 5. Mediation model of the relationship between compassion and SDO on the rights of gender and sexual minorities with standardized coefficients.

3.3.1.3   Rights of gender and sexual minorities.

Like the previously described latent variable, the *rightsge* variable was designed to assess general opposition to the rights of members of these demographic groups. The total effect of compassion on *rightsge* was significant and moderately sized, with those higher in compassion being less likely to hold these views, c = -.524, SE = .045, $p < .001$. SDO significantly mediated this effect, ab = -.185, SE = .028, $p < .001$, reducing the direct effect of compassion to $c`$ = -.339, SE = .050, $p < .001$. Individuals higher in compassion thus reported less hierarchy-legitimization with regards to sexual and gender identity policy partly because they are lower in socially dominant attitudes. However, compassion retains a moderately sized effect on these views even when social dominance is taken into account.
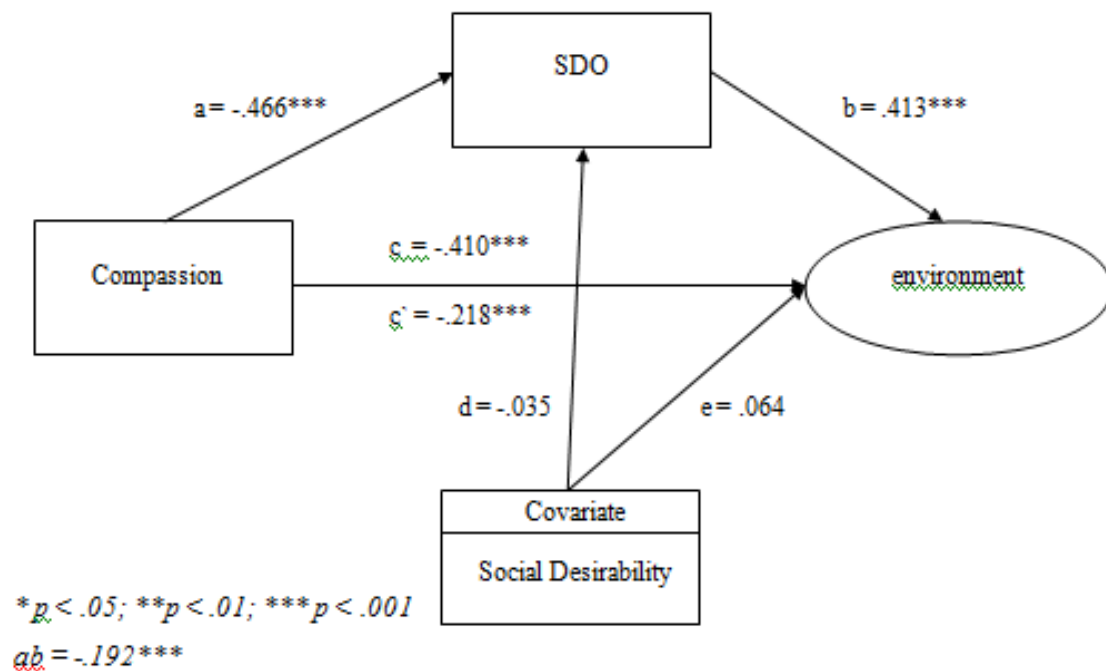

Figure 6. Mediation model of the relationship between compassion and SDO on environmental domination with standardized coefficients.

3.3.1.4   Environmental domination

The *environment* variable was designed to assess general opposition to sustainability policy. The total effect of compassion on *environment* was significant and moderate in size, with those higher in compassion being less likely to hold these views, $c = -.410$, *SE* $= .052$, $p < .001$. SDO significantly mediated this effect, $ab = -.192$, *SE* $= .024$, $p < .001$, reducing the direct effect of compassion to $c` = -.218$, *SE* $= .058$, $p < .001$. Individuals higher in compassion thus reported less hierarchy-legitimization with regards to environmental and sustainability policy partly because they are lower in socially dominant attitudes. However, compassion retains a small effect on these views even when social dominance is taken into account.

3.3.2   Empathy, SDO, and hierarchy-legitimizing views

The same analyses were carried out using a measure of empathy – the empathic concern subscale of the IRI – in place of compassion (Davis, 1980). A partially latent structural model with bootstrapping (1000) was carried out and was found to have satisfactory model fit across CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR fit indices: CFI $= .919$; TLI $= .897$; RMSEA $= .062$, 90% CI [.053, .067]; SRMR $= .049$. The model explained a comparable amount of variance in hierarchy legitimizing policy views when compared with compassion, accounting for approximately 30.5% of the variance in *welfare* views ($R^2 = .305$), 32.7% of the variance in *rightsra* views ($R^2 = .327$), 33.5% of the variance in *rightsge* views ($R^2 = .335$), and 26.0% of the variance in *environment* views ($R^2 = .260$). With the exception of the *rightsge* variable, the models containing compassion explained a slightly higher amount of variance. With regards to the mediation models, empathy's influence was generally comparable to that of compassion, with one exception: SDO completely mediated the relationship between empathy and *environment,* leaving no significant direct effects of empathy on these policy views.

3.3.2.1   Social welfare.

The total effect of empathy on *social welfare* was significant and moderately sized, with those higher in empathy being less likely to hold these views, $c = -.439$, *SE* $= .044$, $p < .001$. SDO significantly mediated this effect, $ab = -.189$, *SE* $= .026$, $p < .001$, reducing

the direct effect of empathy to $c` = -.250$, $SE = .051$, $p < .001$. Individuals higher in empathy thus reported less hierarchy-legitimization with regards to economic redistributive policy partly because they are lower in socially dominant attitudes. However, empathy retains a small effect on these views even when social dominance is taken into account.

3.3.2.2   Rights of racial minorities and immigrants.

The total effect of empathy on *rightsra* was significant and moderately sized, with those higher in empathy being less likely to hold these views, $c = -.375$, $SE = .047$, $p < .001$. SDO significantly mediated this effect, $ab = -.232$, $SE = .027$, $p < .001$, reducing the direct effect of empathy to $c` = -.143$, $SE = .051$, $p < .01$. Individuals higher in empathy thus reported less hierarchy-legitimization with regards to race and immigration policy partly because they are lower in socially dominant attitudes. Empathy retained a small effect on these views when SDO was taken into consideration.

3.3.2.3   Rights of gender and sexual minorities.

The total effect of empathy on *rightsge* was significant and moderately sized, with more empathetic individuals being less likely to hold these views, $c = -.446$, $SE = .057$, $p < .001$. SDO significantly mediated this effect, $ab = -.208$, $SE = .030$, $p < .001$, reducing the direct effect of empathy to $c` = -.238$, $SE = .061$, $p < .001$. More empathetic individuals thus reported less hierarchy-legitimization with regards to sexual and gender identity policy partly because they are lower in social dominance. However, empathy retains a small effect on these views even when social dominance is taken into account.

3.3.2.4   Environmental domination.

The total effect of empathy on *environment* was significant and small to moderate in size, with those higher in empathy being less likely to hold these views, $c = -.305$, $SE = .055$, $p < .001$. SDO significantly and completely mediated this effect, $ab = -.222$, $SE = .026$, $p < .001$, reducing the direct effect of empathy to $c` = -.084$, $SE = .061$, $p = .171$. More empathetic individuals thus reported less hierarchy-legitimization with regards to

environmental and sustainability policy because they possessed a socially dominant orientation.

3.3.3   Compassion, empathy, SDO, and hierarchy-legitimizing views

Lastly, a model was created including both compassion and empathy as predictors, with SDO as a mediating variable and social desirability as a control. A partially latent structural model with bootstrapping (1000) was carried out and was found to have satisfactory model fit across CFI, RMSEA, and SRMR fit indices: CFI = .915; TLI = .891; RMSEA = .061, 90% CI [.055, .068]; SRMR = .049. Figures 7 through 10 depict the four mediation pathways. The model explained a comparable amount of variance in hierarchy legitimization as the initial model, indicating that the inclusion of empathy in the model does not add any explanatory power beyond what is encompassed by compassion alone. This model accounted for approximately 34.1% of the variance in *welfare* views (R^2 = .341), 34.7% of the variance in *rightsra* views (R^2 = .347), 38.1% of the variance in *rightsge* views (R^2 = .381), and 29.1% of the variance in *environment* views (R^2 = .291).

As in the first model, compassion demonstrated significant, moderately sized effects on the latent outcome variables, and these effects were in all instances partially mediated by SDO. Regarding empathy, significant total effects were found on *welfare, rightsra,* and *rightsge* variables; however, for the latter two, the sizes of the effects were small (-.169 and -.188, respectively). Empathy was not shown to have a significant total effect on *environment* (-.079). In each instance where empathy demonstrated a significant direct effect on the latent outcome variable, this effect was entirely mediated through SDO; the direct effects of empathy on *welfare* (-.108), *rightsra* (-.035), and *rightsge* (-.075) were non-significant.
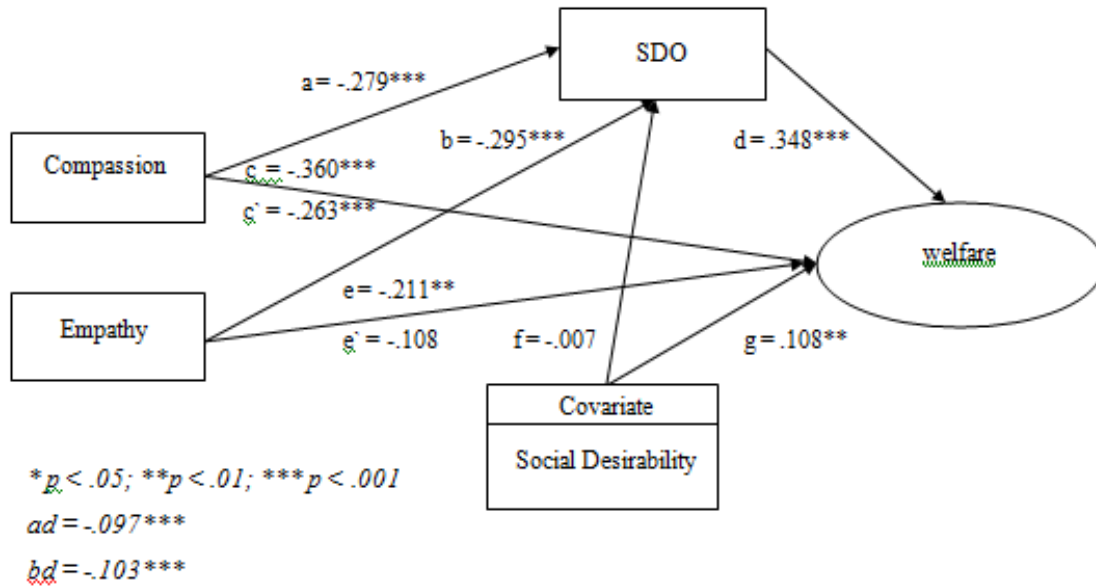
Figure 7. Mediation model of the relationship between compassion, empathy, and SDO on social welfare policies with standardized coefficients.

Figure 8. Mediation model of the relationship between compassion, empathy, and SDO on the rights of racial minorities and immigrants with standardized coefficients.

Figure 9. Mediation model of the relationship between compassion, empathy, and SDO on the rights of gender and sexual minorities with standardized coefficients.
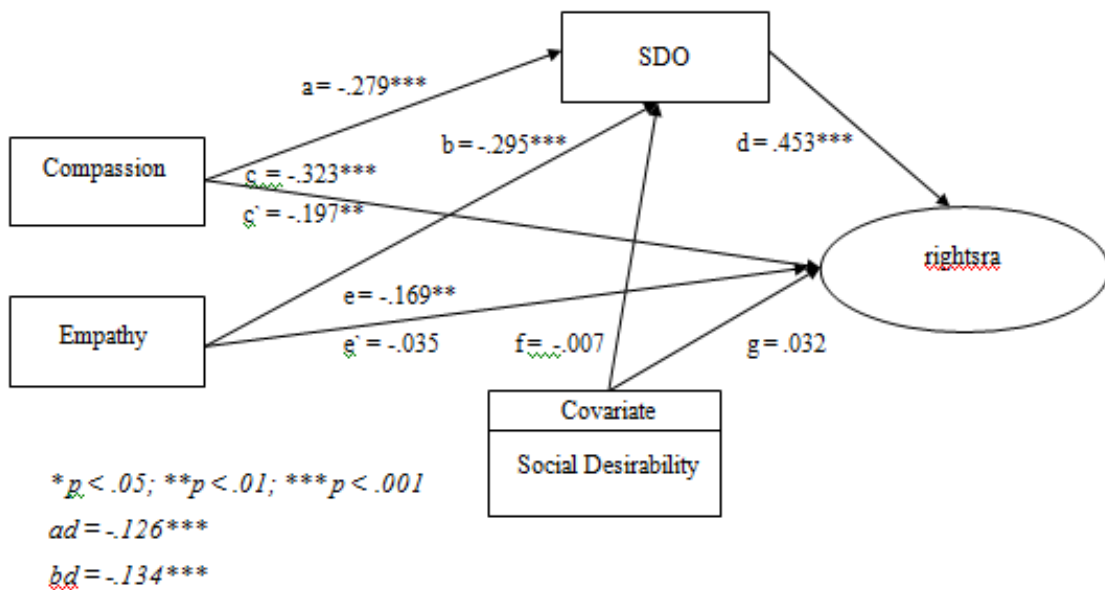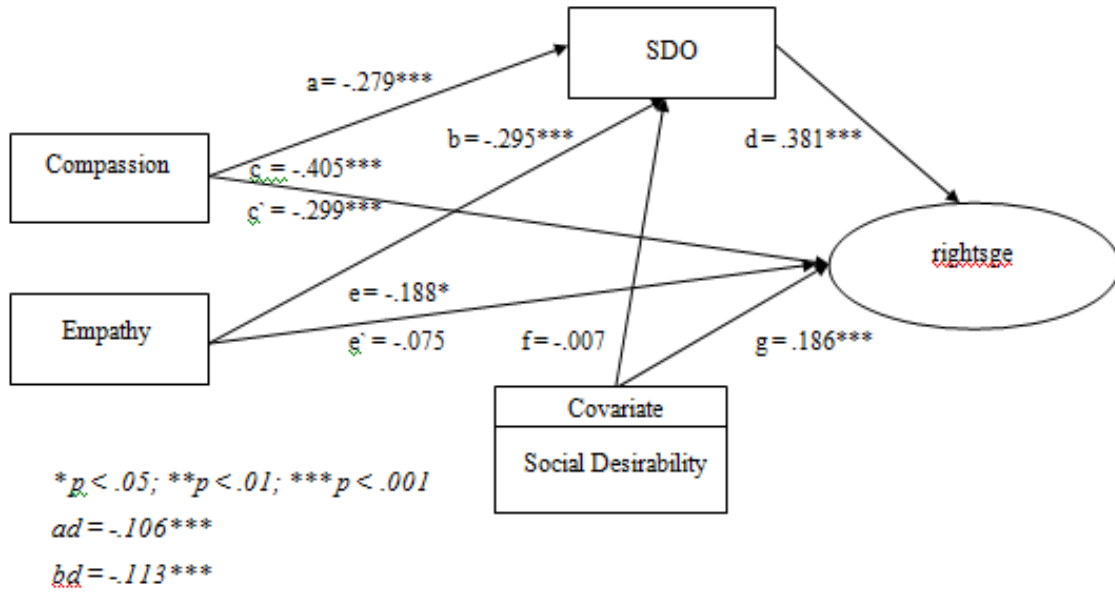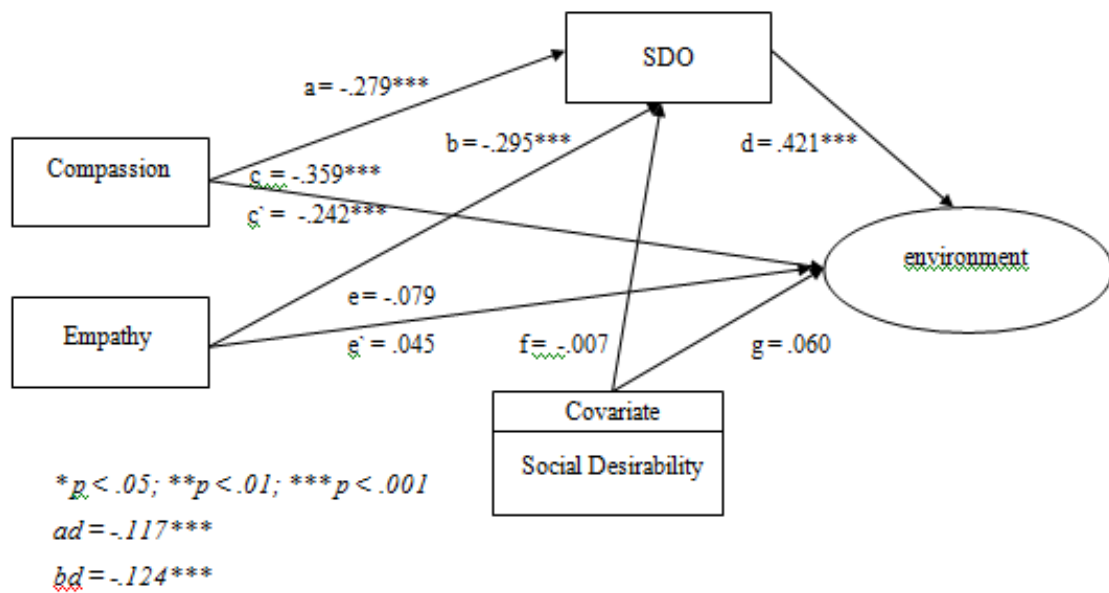

Figure 10. Mediation model of the relationship between compassion, empathy, and SDO on environmental domination with standardized coefficients.

Chapter 4

4   Discussion

4.1   Compassion

The present study found that as predicted, less compassionate individuals tend to possess hierarchy-legitimizing, anti-egalitarian views, and that this link could in part be accounted for by a greater preference for group-based dominance (social dominance orientation; SDO). Empathy influenced these views similarly when considered in a separate model, but does not seem to provide explanatory power over and above what is predicted by compassion. Based on the final model, the opposite seems to be true: empathy's direct effect on the latent variables became negligible when both predictors were included. Thus, as predicted, compassion seems to have predictive value regarding these political beliefs.

Hierarchy-legitimizing views were assessed with a questionnaire developed based on policy viewpoints addressed in previous SDO research (Pratto et al., 1994). The fit of the measurement model for this component of the analyses was acceptable across multiple indices, and was composed of four latent variables: *opposition to social welfare, opposition to the rights of racial minorities and immigrants, opposition to the rights of gender and sexual minorities,* and *domination over the environment.* These variables differed slightly from the four originally hypothesized to manifest from the questionnaire, but nonetheless captured a wide variety of hierarchy-legitimizing views that are salient concerns for young Canadian individuals. The modifications made to the model at an item level did not change the meanings of the latent constructs dramatically, and each latent variable refers to a conceptually distinct and important form of hierarchy legitimization. The factors did, however, demonstrate significant positive correlations – something which is to be expected between variables that all pertain to anti-egalitarian, conservative policies. SDO positively correlated with each of these latent variables, in keeping with past research on social dominance with economic policy, environmental

policy, and various prejudices (Akrami et al., 2000; Ho et al., 2015; Jylhä & Akrami, 2015; Pratto et al., 1994; Sibley & Duckitt, 2010a).

The main purpose of the study was to explore how compassion drives anti-egalitarian views and whether SDO mediates the relationship. Ultimately, the structural model found all of the hypotheses supported, and no modifications were made to the pathways. As predicted, compassion was linked negatively with SDO, as well as negatively with opposition to economic redistribution and social welfare, with the opposition to the rights of racial minorities and immigrants, with opposition to the right of women and sexual minorities, and with opposition to sustainability policy. Additionally, individuals high in SDO – who believe that some groups are more deserving and that group equality is undesirable – are, consistent with predictions, more likely to espouse hierarchy-legitimizing views regarding economic policy, the rights of subordinate groups, and environmental sustainability. SDO partially mediates the relationship between compassion and hierarchy-legitimizing views; in other words, beliefs about the validity of group dominance and inequality explain part of the relationship between a compassionate disposition and the four kinds of policy views, but not all.

Less compassionate individuals are more likely to support political policies that maintain the economic inequalities that are part of Canadian society, and are not motivated to support policies that aim to redistribute resources more fairly. Part of this is due to attitudes about group dominance (i.e. believing the groups with access to more capital must have earned it fairly), but another part can be linked directly to compassion – a kind, mindful disposition. As compassion is characterized as the recognition of others' suffering and a desire to help alleviate it, it is not surprising that lower amounts of this trait is linked with unwillingness to redistribute social capital. An understanding of suffering can act as a "common denominator" between individuals, enabling them to relate to each other (Pommier, 2011). This feeling of commonality seems to facilitate the desire to increase tangible economic supports for those with few resources.

Individuals lower in compassion are also less likely to support policies that improve the status of subordinate groups, and more likely to support ones that legitimize oppression.

While the rights of these groups do not present a tangible threat to majorities (i.e. money is not being redistributed to them at the apparent loss of a dominant group), these are still not policies that less compassionate individuals agree with. Providing safe spaces such as women's shelters, or resettling refugees from war-torn countries into Canada – examples of policy issues in the latent variables – might not come at a physical cost, but it seems because they elevate the status of subordinate groups, they are unappealing. Part of this is again accounted for by group dominance beliefs, but not all; low compassion in itself relates to disagreement with policies that improve the lives of others.

On the other hand, cultivating the attitude that all humans deserve kindness wanting to alleviate suffering is linked with egalitarian political views. Perhaps the most compassionate individuals are best able to put themselves in other's shoes, or to consider them part of an 'in-group' deserving of care (the recognition of common humanity). If one feels that we are all valuable members of the human race who suffer equally, it follows that they would want to help improve the social status of others. Additionally, compassion has the potential to insulate us from negative emotions such as fright and hostility (Pommier, 2011). It is possible that those who are compassionate are less anxious about potential threats from outgroups, and therefore are more supportive of policies that elevate them. This idea is in keeping with literature on terror management that suggests empathy can buffer against the deleterious effects of mortality salience (Schimel et al., 2006).

Also in keeping with predictions, less compassionate individuals do not tend to support sustainability policy. This finding is particularly intriguing, as while compassion is very clearly conceptually linked to the desire to improve human suffering, it was less clear how it might relate to beliefs about the environment. Compassionate individuals might understand (either intuitively or through education) the devastating impact that climate change has on humans, or compassion as a construct might extend to the desire to alleviate the suffering of all life, including animals and nature more generally. Taking notice of the effects of climate change on others might itself be part of the mindful awareness that characterizes compassion. On the other hand, low-compassion individuals might view enhanced environmental regulations as an impediment to economic growth or

to the dominance of powerful groups, or perhaps they are less likely to believe in the validity of climate science (though is it unclear what the mechanism for the latter might be).

4.2   Empathy

Compassion appears to have somewhat greater explanatory power than empathy with regards to predicting hierarchy-legitimizing views. In the model with both predictors, compassion's effects remained moderate in size, while empathy's direct effect on the latent variables became negligible. With the exception of the *environmental domination* path (in which SDO completely mediated the effect of empathy on the outcome variable, as opposed to partially), when considered separately, the predictors demonstrated similar effects on policy views.

Empathy and compassion are conceptually similar and highly correlated, and as such, some of empathy's explanatory power for political ideology may be accounted for within the compassion construct. This finding that compassion retains a demonstrable effect when included in a model with empathy can also be taken as evidence that compassion and empathy cannot be conflated, and that in certain scenarios compassion is the more powerful predictor. In other words, as previous literature has suggested, there is meaning to the compassion construct beyond what is captured by that of empathy (Lim & DeSteno, 2016; Lim, Condon, & DeSteno, 2015). This makes sense when considering that the definition of compassion includes the desire to alleviate the suffering of others, while empathy does not; in fact, while empathy can precede acts of kindness, it can also be used for manipulation (Pommier, 2011). This finding is important in order to differentiate compassion as a unique construct within the fields of social and positive psychology and to facilitate its empirical study.

4.3   Future Directions

While identifying the individual differences that predict ideology is an important first step, there are plenty of avenues for future research. Cultivating compassion appears be a mitigating factor for anti-egalitarianism generally, so it is possible that compassion has

similar effects with regards to other known predictors. Most obvious would be to link compassion with other variables related to ideology, such as right-wing authoritarianism (RWA). Preliminary studies have not found a link (ex. Osborne, Wootton, & Sibley, 2013), but have not used psychometrically thorough measures of compassion such as the Compassion Scale (Pommier, 2011), relying instead on items from other personality inventories. The question of how compassion might relate to traditionalism and resistance to change – aspects of RWA – is particularly relevant considering how often RWA and SDO are studied together (Ekehammar et al., 2004; Sidanius et al., 2013). Investigating how compassion predicts political behaviours and outcomes is also a promising direction. For example, exploring how compassionate individuals vote (for which parties and how often), whether they tend to seek out hierarchy-enhancing (like law enforcement) or hierarchy-attenuating careers (such as advocacy, or positions in non-profit organizations), and whether they are engaged in any kind of social resistance movements or activism.

It is important to note that this research did not differentiate between low-status and high-status individuals. As it is known that SDO can manifest even in oppressed groups (Lee et al., 2011; Sidanius et al., 2001a), many of the individuals that were low in compassion might have indicated their agreement with policies that are detrimental to their own groups – or perhaps to other oppressed groups, so long as they themselves aren't the ones who stand to suffer. Some research has already been conducted suggesting that low-status groups experience more compassion (Stellar et al., 2012). Future research could further unpack how compassion links with political views in individuals of different social class, and whether both lower- and upper-class individuals with high compassion might espouse egalitarian policy. Another potential research direction could be exploring the role of state compassion – elicited through experimental manipulation –and its role on political views, as opposed to the dispositional form investigated here. For example, guided compassion meditation could be studied as a possible mechanism for enhancing egalitarian ideals, either in the form of support for specific policies, or in influencing attitudinal dispositions like SDO, RWA, and others. Deliberately cultivating compassion through compassion training or meditation could also be explored as a method for attenuating beliefs about group dominance.

This study was somewhat limited by the fact that the sample population consisted of undergraduate students, who may or may not possess the kind of political knowledge necessary to accurately and truthfully respond to questions about policy. Future research would do well to investigate the driving forces behind policy views in adult samples that are more representative of the general population. Middle-aged adults and older adults have had the education and life experience to provide nuanced opinions on political topics that younger adults have not, and have been able to vote in elections and engage in other political behaviours for much longer. This is of particular importance with regards to the topic of military intervention and use of force, as the factor addressing these issues was eliminated from this study. Compassion is a potentially incompatible disposition with views that legitimize wars overseas or excessive force from authorities at home is necessary. Indeed, it has been suggested that one tactic to engender civilian support for war is to dehumanize the target (Hopkins, 2001); cultivating compassion could buffer individuals against this strategy by reminding them of the equal value of all human life.

The current research adds to the literature on SDO and political psychology by exploring SDO's influence in a Canadian sample. However, investigating the influences on policy views in countries outside of North America is essential; the bulk of research on SDO in particular has been conducted on American samples. Additionally, the use of the Social Policy Questionnaire – which contained items that were meant to tap into the distinct concerns of young Canadians at this moment in history – is not necessarily generalizable to other studies. If compassion were to be linked with policy views in the future, it would have to be modified, or the use of more established scales (regarding racism, sexism, and the many other attitudes addressed here) could be used.

It is evident that compassionate individuals are less likely to believe that some groups are inherently more deserving than others, and in turn they are less likely to support anti-egalitarian policies. Compassion for others is a multifaceted construct incorporating components of kindness, mindfulness, and the recognition of common humanity (as well as their opposites; Pommier, 2011). It is possible that some of these factors could be irrelevant to group dominance beliefs while directly facilitate attitudes towards political policies; for example, regardless of what one believes about the 'natural order' and

deservingness of different groups, the desire to be kind to others of a subordinate group could influence views about economic redistribution or civil rights. Future work on compassion and political ideology could attempt to parse out the distinct influences of the compassion factors on these beliefs.

4.4   Implications and Concluding Remarks

Members of dominant groups are the best equipped to enact societal change. With their greater access to resources, both tangible and not, those in positions of power can use their influence in the sociopolitical sphere to enact policies that improve the lives of others. As such, understanding the motives behind support for policies which improve the conditions of subordinate groups is instrumental in catalyzing change. Attitudinal variables like SDO can create a reluctance to alter society in a way that decreases the influence of their own in-group and sacrifices their power – and as past research has shown, individuals in dominant groups tend to be higher in this characteristic (Pratto et al., 2006). Clearly, attitudes which enhance existing hierarchies are a barrier to equality and the fair treatment of subordinate groups. Furthermore, the attitudes of high SDO individuals work with oppressive institutions in a mutually reinforcing loop, perpetuating societal hierarchies (Pratto et al., 1994).

These findings have implications for the role of positive psychological traits (such as compassion) and their place in political psychology, which has so often focused on the study of right-wing, prejudicial, and hostile attitudes (Jost et al., 2003a). They speak to the power of prosocial, virtuous characteristics for helping to construct more fair and equal societies. What remains to be explored is how to harness these traits and encourage their development within people so that they might go on to create a better world. It is known that compassion meditation can help promote feelings of love and concern (Klimecki et al.,2013). Some promise has even been shown for the use of simulation games to stimulate empathic concern for others on a global scale (Bachen, Hernández-Ramos, & Raphael, 2012). By awakening others to the reality of global suffering, and by encouraging individuals to think of each other as members of a unified group – the human race – rather than warring factions, we can help instill the kinds of values that will make the world more equitable.

None of this is intended to paint a picture of oppressed individuals as powerless. If those who desire a better quality of life and more opportunities join together in the form of activist movements, collective resistance to structural oppression becomes possible. By empowering members of disenfranchised groups – the working class, minority groups, and so forth – to participate in the political sphere, their lives and positions in society can be improved in material ways. The question that remains is how to get there; while countless social justice movements work tirelessly for a better society, what differentiates the politically active from the causeless? Perhaps compassion for others can be an empowering force that gives us the motivation to resist social barriers.

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Appendix A

Western Research

Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board
NMREB Delegated Initial Approval Notice

Principal Investigator: Dr. Donald Saklofske
Department & Institution: Social Science\Psychology, Western University

NMREB File Number: 108542
Study Title: Compassion and Social Attitudes

NMREB Initial Approval Date: October 31, 2016
NMREB Expiry Date: October 31, 2017

Documents Approved and/or Received for Information:

Document Name	Comments	Version Date
Western University Protocol	Received October 18, 2016	
Recruitment Items	SONA Advertisement/Description - Received October 18, 2016	
Letter of Information & Consent		2016/10/18
Instruments	Measures - Received September 26, 2016	
Other	Debriefing Form	2016/10/18

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the above named study, as of the NMREB Initial Approval Date noted above.

NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the NMREB Expiry Date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario.

Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB.

The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Appendix B

Items in Social Policy Questionnaire.

V1. I support free (government-funded) access to healthcare. (R)

V2. I support implementing free (government-funded) access to post-secondary education. (R)

V3. I support subsidized (low-rent, rent-geared-to-income) housing. (R)

V4. I support implementing a guaranteed minimum income for all Canadians. (R)

V5. The Canadian government should do more to address homelessness. (R)

V6. If someone is homeless, it is up to them to improve their situation.

V7. It is unfair to increase taxes on the wealthy just because they are successful.

V8. Increasing taxes on the rich is a fair way to redistribute wealth. (R)

V9. Reducing Canada's debt is more important than running social programs.

V10. The minimum wage should be a living

V19. I support safe spaces for women (ex. women-only fitness centers, women-only clubs and groups). (R)

V20. I am proud that Canada was one of the first countries to legalize same-sex marriage. (R)

V21. Police officers should wear body cameras so that they can be held accountable for abuses of power. (R)

V22. When police officers use force, it is almost always justified.

V23. Racial profiling by law enforcement is not really a problem in Canada.

V24. Law enforcement often unfairly targets minorities. (R)

V25. The Canadian government's decision to welcome and resettle Syrian refugees was appropriate and necessary. (R)

V26. The Canadian government should focus on helping its own citizens instead of accommodating refugees.

V27. Allowing refugees into Canada will be detrimental to our country.

V28. Withdrawing Canadian fighter jets from

wage. (R)

V11. Groups like Black Lives Matter harm their own cause by being too hostile.

V12. LGBT parents are just as capable and nurturing as any other parents. (R)

V13. The religion of Islam is a danger to Canadian society.

V14. The vast majority of Muslims want peace. (R)

V15. "Affirmative Action" or "Equal Opportunity" type policies are necessary to ensure minority groups have the same chances as majorities. (R)

V16. "Affirmative Action" or "Equal Opportunity" type policies prevent more qualified individuals from getting positions.

V17. Feminism is not relevant or necessary in this day and age.

V18. There are some jobs which women simply are not able, or should not be allowed, to do.

Iraq and Syria was a mistake and a step backwards.

V29. The Canadian military ought to be doing more to combat terrorist groups overseas.

V30. Canada should strive to be a peacekeeping nation. (R)

V31. Canada does not need to increase its defence spending. (R)

V32. The natural environment exists for humans to use.

V33. Human-driven climate change is real and a threat. (R)

V34. The government should invest money towards the development of green energy technologies. (R)

V35. Environmental policies must sometimes be sacrificed for the good of the economy.

V36. We cannot have a healthy country without a healthy environment. (R)

Curriculum Vitae

Education

Masters of Science, Personality & Measurement (In progress)   2015-Present

Western University, London, ON

Advisor: Dr. Donald Saklofske

Bachelor of Science (Honours), Psychology   2010-2014

Trent University, Peterborough, ON

Advisor: Dr. Elizabeth Nisbet

Honours Thesis: "Students and nature: The link between time outdoors and student wellbeing"

Academic Contributions

Publications

Palma, P. A., **Sinclair, V. M.,** & Esses, V. M. (manuscript submitted). Fear or friendship: The role of demographic diversity in Brexit and Euroscepticism.

Sinclair, V. M., & Smith, M. M. (in press.) Empathy, personality correlates. In B. J. Carducci (Editor-in-Chief) & A. Di Fabio, D. H. Saklofske, & C. Stough (Vol. Eds.), The Wiley-Blackwell encyclopedia of personality and individual differences: Vol. III. Personality processes and individual differences. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Babcock, S., Li, Y., **Sinclair, V. M**., Thomson, C., & Campbell, L. (2017). Two replications of an investigation on empathy and utilitarian judgement across socioeconomic status. *Scientific Data, 4*(160129). doi:10.1038/sdata.2016.129

Conference Presentations

Sinclair, V. M., & Saklofske, D. H. *Personality correlates of compassion*. Poster presented at the 2017 Western-Waterloo-Wilfrid Laurier Social Psychology Conference, London, ON.

Palma, P. A., **Sinclair, V. M.,** & Esses, V. M. *Fear or friendship: The role of demographic diversity in Brexit and Euroscepticism.* Talk presented at the 2017 Western-Waterloo-Wilfrid Laurier Social Psychology Conference, London, ON.

Sinclair, V. M., Feher, A., & Saklofske, D. H. *The influence of self-oriented and other-oriented mindfulness on trait emotional intelligence.* Poster presented at the Canadian Psychological Association 77th Annual Conference, Victoria, BC.

Academic Poster Presentation

Sinclair, V. M. (2014). *Students and nature: The relationship between time outdoors and wellbeing.* Poster presented at the Trent University Department of Psychology Undergraduate Conference, Peterborough, ON.

Unpublished Undergraduate Thesis

Sinclair, V. M. (2014). *Students and nature: The link between time outdoors and student wellbeing*. Unpublished undergraduate thesis, Trent University, Peterborough, ON.

Teaching Assistantships

Introductory Psychology (PSYCH 1000)   January 2016-April 2017
Western University, London ON

Understanding Yourself and Others (PSYCH 2035A)   September 2015-December 2015
Western University, London ON

Funding and Distinctions

President's List at Trent University   2014

Dean's List at Trent University   2013-2014

Trent University National Renewable Scholarship   2013-2014

- Value: $1,000

Trent University Entrance Scholarship   2010-2011

- Value: $ 1,000

Community Involvement

Society of Graduate Students (SOGS) Councilor

Western University   2016-Present

- Represent the Psychology department at SOGS Council and General meetings
- Communicate with constituents regarding the activities, programs, and decisions of SOGS

TeleCare Distress Centre of Peterborough   2013-2015

- Provided compassionate active listening and conducted crisis intervention
- Referred callers to community resources