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**Right-wing ideology as a predictor of collective action:**

**A test across four political issue domains<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Final submitted copy and does not reflect changes made before publication.

### Abstract

Despite a vast literature documenting motivations for collective action, the role of socio-political ideologies, including right-wing ideologies, in predicting collective action is under-researched. Literature on right-wing ideological beliefs suggests that those higher in right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) or social dominance orientation (SDO) hold specific attitudes or endorse specific policies, in part, because of factors such as perceived fear-based threat or empathy. In the present research, SEM models were run on pooled data from a diverse Canadian university sample and two American adult samples (total  $N=1469$ ). Participants completed measures of RWA, SDO, fear-based threat, empathy, and domain-specific collective action. Results showed that RWA and SDO both related *positively* to collective action targeting societal moral breakdown, but *negatively* to collective action aimed at equalizing race relations or fighting climate change. Whereas the indirect effects of right-wing ideologies via fear-based threat or empathy were significant in all four domains for SDO, the indirect effect of RWA was only significant in the climate change domain. Implications are discussed.

*Keywords:* collective action, threat, right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, political ideology.

Some of the largest protests in American history have included: the 1963 Civil Rights March on Washington with 250,000 people, the March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, and Bi Equal Rights and Liberation in 1993 with 800,000 to 1 million people, and the day after President Trump's inauguration in 2016, when 4.2 million people across 600 cities in the U.S. took part in a Women's March (Garfield, 2017). Common to these events is a desire for reform towards more open, tolerant, and egalitarian societies – goals and values shared by those left of centre on the political spectrum. Other, more conservative movements have been dedicated to preserving tradition, such as the Promise Keepers, an all-male Christian 'New Right' movement (Blee & Creasap, 2010). Right-wing movements often also seek social hierarchy, positioning privileged groups at the top, such as the 'Unite the Right' rally held in Charlottesville in 2017 (Heim, 2017). Arguably, in the social sciences, the study of motivations for collective action has focused predominantly on actions aimed at promoting liberal or left-wing values. However, anecdotally, those on the right are clearly motivated to engage in collective action. For instance, those on the right are more likely to participate in pro-life abortion-related rallies supporting (Duncan, Peterson, & Winter, 1997). Presently, we investigate the relation between right-wing ideologies and collective action in four political issue domains, and consider fear-based threat and empathy as mediators.

### **Collective Action**

Collective action is any act undertaken by individuals on behalf of their group (Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990). Individuals also engage in collective action on behalf of other groups or because of shared beliefs (Bliuc, McCarty, Reynolds, & Muntele, 2007; Simon & Klandermans, 2001). Collective actions might include attending a march, using a cause-related hashtag, signing a petition, or joining a social movement. In psychology, collective action

researchers have studied motivations underlying collective efforts among disadvantaged or marginalised groups, in particular. Three motivational factors have dominated the literature: social identity, perceived injustice, and group efficacy (see van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008; van Zomeren, 2013).<sup>2</sup> The three factors originate in separate scholarly traditions. Relative deprivation theorists (e.g. Crosby, 1976; Folger, 1986; Runciman, 1966) first articulated the role of feeling angry or resentful with ones' perceived unfair personal or group circumstances as a driving force in collective action. Researchers differentiate between personal versus group (Runciman, 1966) and cognitive versus affective relative deprivation (Guimond & Dube-Simard, 1983). Group-based (*vs.* personal) anger or resentment, and feelings of resentment or anger (*vs.* perceptions of discrepancies) more strongly predict collective action (van Zomeren et al., 2008).

Group efficacy, the second factor, stems from sociological literature in the 1970s and 1980s on the costs and benefits of joining social movement organisations (e.g. Resource Mobilization Theory; Klandermans, 1984). Psychologists later embraced the central theme of this work, proposing group efficacy, or the belief that collective actions can engender positive change (e.g. Mummendey et al., 1999). Third, Social Identity theorists (SIT; Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) presented social identity, or the centrality and importance of one's group to the self, as fundamental to participation in collective action. Others maintained that a politicized social identity, or an identity that encompasses a desire for social change, in particular, inspires collective efforts (Klandermans et al., 2002).

In 2008, van Zomeren and colleagues proposed a comprehensive model integrating these factors. In their Social Identity Model of Collective Action (SIMCA), they positioned social identity as the central force underlying collective action both directly and indirectly via

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<sup>2</sup> See also special issues on collective by van Zomeren and Louis (2017), van Zomeren and Iyer (2009), and van Zomeren and Klandermans (2011).

perceptions of injustice (e.g. anger) and efficacy. Meta-analytic results offered strong support for the model (van Zomeren et al., 2008; see also Cakal et al., 2011; Tabri & Conway, 2011). Moreover, their analysis showed that affective and group-based relative deprivation, group efficacy, and politicised social identity, specifically, predicted higher collective action. Alternative models have also received empirical support, including models that position perceived injustice and group efficacy as driving social identity (e.g. Thomas, McGarty, & Mavor, 2009; Thomas, Mavor, & McGarty, 2012). Notwithstanding the utility of SIMCA and the three widely studied factors, there is need to investigate other variables that encourage or hinder collective action. Indeed, van Zomeren and colleagues recently recommended moral beliefs as a fourth motivator of collective action (van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2012; van Zomeren, Kutlaca, & Turner-Zwinkels, 2018). Of relevance to the current research, the role of ideology is notably absent from these models.

### **Ideology**

In addition to the liberal-conservative or left-right continuum, ideology is conceptualised as two separate, but related constructs (Duckitt, 2001; Jost et al., 2003). Right-wing authoritarianism (RWA; Altemeyer, 1998) and social dominance orientation (SDO; Ho et al., 2015; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) present one way of capturing the two broad ideological dimensions. Individuals higher in RWA rigidly adhere to established social conventions, firmly comply with authorities perceived as legitimate, and sanction authoritarian aggression (Altemeyer, 1998). Hence, RWA concerns a tendency to favor tradition over social reform (Jost et al., 2003). Individuals higher (*vs.* lower) in SDO value social hierarchies with higher status groups subjugating lower status groups (Ho et al., 2015; Pratto et al., 1994). Thus, SDO represents individual differences in preferences for inequality (*vs.* equality) (Jost et al., 2003).

Duckitt (2001) proposed the Dual Process Model to understand the origins and outcomes of RWA and SDO. According to the model, RWA and SDO predict common and distinct outcomes. Both, for example, predict prejudice (Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt & Sibley, 2007) and support of right-wing political parties or candidates (Choma & Hanoch, 2017; Duckitt & Sibley, 2016; Hoffarth & Hodson, 2016). Whereas RWA more strongly aligns with outcomes signifying threats to social order or tradition, SDO more strongly connects to outcomes signalling challenges to social hierarchies or group dominance (Altemeyer, 1998; Dhont et al., 2014; Duckitt, 2001; Jost et al., 2003; Milfont et al., 2013; Sidanius et al., 2017). Two distinct pathways explain the effects of RWA and SDO: perceived social threat and perceived competitiveness or challenges to group dominance, respectively. The connection between RWA or SDO and outcomes also varies by context: RWA relates more strongly to outcomes in socially threatening conditions whereas SDO relates more strongly to outcomes in conditions emphasizing group competition or dominance. There is considerable empirical support for these proposed processes (Cohrs & Stelzl, 2010; Craig & Richeson, 2014; Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt & Sibley, 2010; Sibley, Wilson, & Duckitt, 2007; see Duckitt et al., 2017). The Dual Process Model could also serve as a useful framework for studying the relation between ideology and collective action.

There is an extensive literature documenting the association between right-wing ideology and threat (see Jost, Stern, Rule, & Sterling, 2017 for meta-analytic results; see also Hibbing, Smith & Alford, 2014). However, this relation varies by factors such as ideological dimension and threat type (for recent discussions see Choma & Hodson, 2017; Crawford, 2017; Federico & Malka, 2018). There is a robust connection between RWA with threat and fear concepts. A meta-analysis by Perry, Sibley, and Duckitt (2013), for instance, revealed a moderately strong

correlation between RWA and perceptions that the world is a dangerous place. RWA also predicts perceiving greater “external” – mainly social – threats longitudinally (Onraet, Dhont, & Van Hiel, 2014). Cross-sectional studies have similarly noted a positive link between RWA and fear-based threats (e.g. Shaffer & Duckitt, 2013). Relatedly, researchers have studied ideology and risk perception, finding that higher RWA is associated with perceiving potentially precarious social and ethical situations as riskier (Choma & Hodson, 2017), and rating everyday (e.g. vaccinations) and voluntary (e.g. drinking alcohol) hazards for the self as riskier (Choma, Hanoch, Gummerum & Hodson, 2013). Collectively, this literature suggests that individuals higher in RWA are, on average, more threat averse. Consequently, threat might underlie collective action for those who endorse RWA.

The story for SDO is more nuanced, with SDO being unrelated or related negatively to threat. For instance, SDO is generally *unrelated* to perceptions of the world as a dangerous place (Perry et al., 2013), external social threats (Onraet et al., 2013; Shaffer & Duckitt, 2013), risky social or ethical situations (Choma & Hodson, 2017) and everyday or voluntary hazards (Choma et al., 2013), and associated *negatively* with threat or perceiving risk. For example, those higher in SDO rate health (e.g. fire-fighting, mountain climbing) and competitive hazards (e.g. high-risk investment) as less risky (Choma et al., 2013), and perceive potentially dangerous recreational and health situations as less precarious (Choma & Hodson, 2017). Individuals higher in SDO are also more responsive to dominance, and perceive the world as a competitive jungle (Cohrs, 2013; Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt & Sibley, 2009; Perry et al., 2013). Thus, those higher (vs. lower) in SDO are largely *unaverse* to threat. As a result, threat is less likely to motivate collective action for those endorsing SDO.

The responsiveness to competitiveness and dominance among those higher (*vs.* lower) in SDO is theoretically connected to their characteristically lower empathy (Bäckstrom & Björklund, 2007; Duckitt, 2001; Ho et al., 2015; McFarland, 2010; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994; see also Cheon et al., 2011; Chiao et al., 2009). Recent research suggests that the lower empathy experienced by those higher in SDO might be especially relevant to lower (*vs.* higher) status groups (Lucas & Kteily, 2018). Although some theorize that empathy predicts SDO (Duckitt, 2001), a longitudinal study by Sidanius et al. (2013) suggests that the SDO-empathy link is bidirectional, with the longitudinal effect of SDO on empathy stronger than the converse. This notion of SDO predicting empathy is consistent with models showing that those higher (*vs.* lower) in SDO support war, a relation explained in part by lack of concern for human losses (McFarland, 2005). Therefore, empathy might similarly account for any potential association between SDO and collective action.

### **Ideology and Collective Action**

Very recently, researchers have begun to study the potential role of right-wing ideologies in collective action. Using childrearing values as a measure of authoritarianism, Weiner and Federico (2017) examined the relation with willingness to engage in generic collective activities in three waves of the World Values Survey. Their results showed that authoritarianism associated weakly and negatively to collective action. In a more nuanced examination, Osborne, Yogeewaran, and Sibley (2017) found that RWA and SDO related negatively to support for marches and demonstrations advocating Māori rights in samples of Māori and European New Zealanders. Stronger relations emerged among the higher status European New Zealanders. These studies imply that those on the right are somewhat *less* inclined to collective action.



Yet, Saeri, Iyer, and Louis (2015) uncovered a *positive* relation between right-wing ideology and collective action intentions. American adults higher in RWA or SDO who read about conflicts in Russia, Greece, or a fictional country, endorsed government-initiated measures that would harm lower status groups. These findings suggest that right-wing ideologies predict collective action in specific instances, in this case supporting the established order. Consistent with this notion, Jost, Becker, Osborne, and Badaan (2017) proposed a system justification account of collective action. According to their model, system justification predicts participation in ‘system-supporting protests’ and hinders participation in ‘system-challenging protests’ via the traditional collective action motivators (group identity, perceived injustice, group anger) and system-level anger. Using data from New Zealand and the U.S., Osborne, Jost, Becker, Badaan, and Sibley (2019) found support for the model. In a historical analysis, Varaine (2018) studied social movements in France between 1882 and 1980. Threat - operationalised as increasing inequality and economic recession - facilitated the rise of reactionary movements and the decline of revolutionary movements, in line with the system justification perspective.

Researchers have also drawn on Moral Foundations Theory. Liberals rely on individualizing moral foundations (i.e. care, fairness) in moral decision-making and conservatives rely on binding foundations (i.e. loyalty, authority, sanctity) (Graham et al., 2009). In a series of studies, Milesi and Alberici (2018) showed that individualizing foundations predicted involvement in liberal-leaning movements, whereas binding foundations, namely, loyalty, uniquely predicted involvement in conservative movements. Hence, those on the political right or left might participate in different movements for different reasons. Indeed, the limited research on ideology and collective action seems to suggest those higher in right-wing ideologies might engage in collective action for groups (e.g. authorities), issues (e.g. abortion),

or domains (e.g. moral) that resonate with their values. Little is known about this potential, or if observed, factors that could explain the relations. Presently, we draw on the Dual Process Model (Duckitt, 2001) and related literature to investigate the association between right-wing ideology and collective action.

### **The Present Research**

We investigate the relation between right-wing ideologies and collective action intentions in four political issue domains: the “decline” of the moral fabric of society, “not good” race relations, “chronically ill” financial state of the country, and climate change “for the worse”. The domains capture social and economic issues of relevance to political liberals and conservatives, in particular issues with well-documented political divides. Liberals and conservatives differ in their standing on various *moral issues* such as abortion and sex-education; *race relation issues*, such as whether more is needed to achieve equality between Blacks and Whites; *financial issues*, such as minimum wage, interest rates, and regulation of stock market; and *climate change and environmental regulation* (Pew Research Center, 2017). Research has also identified political divides in perceptions of risk or various political issues and different motivations for denying or supporting particular issues (e.g. Choma et al., 2013; Currie & Choma, 2018; Hoffarth & Hodson, 2016; Jost et al., 2003; Kahan, 2015; McCright & Dunlop, 2011; Milfont et al., 2013).

The nature of the relation was expected to vary by domain, emerging as positive in some domains and negative in others – both because some domains appear to be of greater importance to liberals or conservatives and because of the framing of the domain. Three sets of hypotheses were evaluated. First, RWA was predicted to relate negatively to collective action in the race relations and climate change domains. Such relations would indicate opposition to equalizing race relations or fighting climate change – that is, behavioral intentions consistent with

preferences for conventionalism, tradition, and social order (Altemeyer, 1998; Duckitt, 2001; Jost et al., 2001) (see also Choma et al., 2013; Currie & Choma, 2018; Hoffarth & Hodson, 2016; Kahan, 2015; McCright & Dunlop, 2011; Milfont et al., 2013). In the moral breakdown domain, however, a positive association reflecting a desire to avoid the moral decay of society – that is, behavioral intentions representing a desire for conventionalism and social order (see also Saeri et al., 2017) – was expected. An association between RWA and collective action was not anticipated in the financial domain, given that past research has not found a significant correlation between RWA and, for instance, perceptions of risk associated with high-risk investment (Choma et al., 2013).

Second, SDO was hypothesized to relate negatively to collective action in the race relations, financial, and climate change domains. Such a relation would indicate opposition to equalizing race relations, a lack of desire to improve the financial standing of people and address wealth inequity, or pushback against fighting climate change. In other words, behavioral intentions consistent with preference for hierarchical intergroup relations and desire to dominate nature among those higher in SDO (Dhont et al., 2014; Milfont et al., 2013; Sidanius et al., 2017). A significant association was not expected in the moral breakdown domain, given that those higher in SDO are relatively unconcerned about social order and stability, or traditionalism. Finally, fear-based threat and (lower) empathy were considered as explaining, in part, any relations between RWA or SDO with collective action.

The hypotheses were tested by analysing data from three samples ( $N=1469$ ): an ethnically and religiously diverse sample of undergraduates from a Canadian university ( $n = 338$ ), and two

unique samples of American adults ( $n_s = 565, 566$ ). In the present paper, we focus on the results from the pooled data across the three samples, controlling for the effect of sample<sup>3</sup>.

## Method

### Participants and Procedure

Table 1 presents demographic information for each sample. The first sample was an ethnically and religiously diverse sample of undergraduates from a Canadian university; the second and third samples were American adults recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk who were primarily White. Participants completed the study online. After providing consent, they completed a demographic questionnaire, followed by measures of ideology. Participants then read a list of eight empirically supported facts related to one of the four domains. The *moral breakdown of society* covered topics including sexually transmitted diseases, sexual assault, child abuse, intimate partner abuse, pornography, illicit drug use, education. The *race relations* domain covered topics including ethnic diversity, concern about racism, racial discrimination, disproportionate number of people of colour stopped by police and incarcerated, and lack of adequate education for indigenous peoples. The *financial status* domain covered topics including economic growth projections, GDP, stunted income growth, inequitable wealth distribution, inflation, debt, and commodity prices. Finally, the *climate change* domain covered topics including greenhouse gas emissions, sea ice coverage, carbon dioxide levels, sea levels, temperature rises, health outcomes, precipitation changes, and extreme weather.

Prefacing each list were two sentences modified for each domain and the country that the study was conducted in. In the moral domain, participants read, “Many people are concerned

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<sup>3</sup> In an earlier version of the manuscript, data from the three samples were meta-analysed, using averaged relations between the variables inputted from a correlation matrix. Upon a reviewer’s recommendation, we modified our analyses by pooling the data and running SEM models that controlled for sample. The results are consistent across the two types of analyses. The meta-analysed results are reported in Tables A4 and A5 in the online appendix.

about the moral breakdown of America. Facts about the moral situation in the United States indicate that the moral fabric is on the decline". In the race relations domain, participants read, "Many people are concerned about race relations in America. Facts about the relations between Blacks and Whites in the United States indicate that race relations are not good." In the financial domain, participants read, "Many people are concerned about the U.S. economy. Facts about the financial situation of the United States indicate that our economy is "chronically ill". Finally, in the climate change domain, participants read, "Many people are concerned about climate change in America. Facts about climate change in the United States indicate that our climate is changing for the worse." For participants in Canada, the sentences referenced Canada instead of the United States. The list of facts for each domain are available in the online Supplementary Appendix. Participants then completed measures of fear-based threat, empathy, and domain-specific collective action intentions, followed by a debriefing form.<sup>4</sup>

## Measures

**Right-wing ideology.** To assess right-wing authoritarianism, participants completed a 12-item version of Altemeyer's (1996) RWA scale. Using a response scale from 1-*strongly disagree* to 7-*strongly agree*, participants responded to items such as "Our country will be destroyed someday if we do not smash the perversions eating away at our moral and traditional beliefs". Participants also completed the 16-item SDO<sub>7</sub> scale (Ho et al., 2015), using a response scale from 1-*strongly oppose* to 7-*strongly favour*. Participants responded to items such as "Superior groups should dominate inferior groups." Scores were created by averaging the items with higher scores indicating higher RWA or SDO.

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<sup>4</sup> As part of a larger project, participants also completed measures of fear of change (Sample 1 only), need for closure (Samples 2 and 3 only), who they were thinking of when reading the passages (self, other), personal distress, perceived distress for self, other, and humanity, and policy attitudes.

**Fear-based threat.** Participants were instructed to think about the domain they had just read about (i.e. moral, race relations, economy, or climate) and then indicate how they felt “right now” on a scale from 1-*very slightly or not at all* to 5-*extremely* in terms of three positive emotions (happy, calm, relaxed) and six negative emotions (worried, agitated, distressed, afraid, concerned, scared). After each emotion it specified “about the moral state [or state of race relations, state of the Canadian economy, or climate state] in Canada/U.S.” (e.g. “Distressed about the moral situation in Canada”). After reverse-keying the positive emotions, the items were averaged to index a fear-based threat score.

**Empathic concern.** Participants completed the 7-item Davis (1983) empathic concern scale. The measure taps feelings of sympathy and concern for others. Participants indicated the extent to which each statement (e.g. “I often have tender, concerned feelings for the people less fortunate than me”) is self-descriptive on a scale from 1-*not at all like me* to 9-*extremely like me*. To create a score, items were averaged with higher scores indicating greater empathy.

**Domain-specific collective action.** Participants completed six items from Foster and Matheson’s (1995) collective action scale tapping behaviors such as donating to charity, signing a petition, voting, writing a letter, organising an event, or volunteering. The items were modified to reflect each domain. Participants indicated their responses on a scale from 1-*not at all willing* to 7-*extremely willing*. For example, one item read, “How willing would you be to donate money to a charity devoted to addressing the moral situation/race relations/financial crisis/climate change?” The average of the six items was used to create collective action scores.

## Results

As noted above, we focus on the combined sample results. Means, standard deviations, Cronbach’s alpha values, and correlations among study variables for each sample are reported in

an online Supplementary Appendix. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from .82 to .97, with the exception of .71 for empathy in Study 1. Power analyses for correlations recommended a minimum sample of 82 for an effect size of .30 with power at 0.80. For SEM analysis, the combined sample sizes (i.e. the sample size combining the three samples) within each domain ranged from 357 to 374, and therefore, are considered large (Kline, 2005). Correlation values from the combined samples are reported in Table 2. Across domains, RWA and SDO correlated moderately. As predicted, RWA was associated *positively* with collective action in the moral breakdown domain, but *negatively* in the race relations and climate change domains; RWA did not relate significantly with collective action in the financial domain. As expected, SDO related *negatively* with collective action in all domains, except the moral domain, where the positive association was not significant ( $p=.076$ ). Therefore, consistent with Hypotheses 1 and 2, right-wing ideologies related to less or more collective action intentions, depending on the domain.

### **Structural Equation Models**

To evaluate the direct and indirect effects of RWA and SDO on collective action structural equation modelling (SEM) was conducted using AMOS version 22.0 software. Separate SEMs were run for each domain. Further, we ran separate SEM models for each right-wing ideology. This was because inclusion of RWA and SDO in the models resulted in artificially inflated as well as potentially misleading coefficients (e.g. opposite direction than zero-order correlations), especially with respect to the paths between RWA and empathy and the indirect effects of RWA on collective action. Results for the SEM models with RWA and SDO as correlated predictors are reported in the online appendix.

Latent variables were created for RWA, SDO, fear-based threat, empathy, and collective action. Parcelling was used; RWA and SDO each had four indicators, and fear-based threat,

empathy, and collective action each had three indicators. Two dummy variables were created to control for the effect of sample. To evaluate model fit, we consulted the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and RMSEA. CFI values of .95 or higher and RMSEA values below .05 indicate excellent fit; CFI values between .90 and .95, and RMSEA values between .05 and .08 indicate good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2005). Chi-square was also reported; however, this statistic was not used to evaluate model fit given that it is biased in larger samples (Kline, 2005). Standardized estimates for direct and indirect effects are reported. Indirect effects were estimated using 1000 bootstrap samples based on bias-corrected estimates using maximum likelihood procedures. To consider whether effects differed across domains, confidence intervals were compared. Results are reported in Tables 3 (for RWA) and 4 (for SDO). For brevity, the effects of the dummy variables are included in Tables A6, A7, and A8 in the online Supplementary Appendix.<sup>5</sup>

**RWA models.** The direct effect of RWA on fear-based threat was *positive* in the moral domain, but *negative* in the climate change domain. The direct effect was not significant in the race relations or financial domains. Examination of the confidence intervals indicated that this effect differed between the climate change and other domains. No other comparisons differed significantly. The direct effect of RWA on empathy was significant and negative in the moral and financial domains only. Examination of the confidence intervals showed that this effect was significantly stronger in the moral domain (*vs.* race relations or climate change domains). No other comparisons were statistically significant. Consistent with Hypothesis 1, RWA had a significant *negative* direct effect on collective action in the race relations and climate change

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<sup>5</sup> The effects of the dummy variables were the same in the RWA and SDO models: Fear-based threat and empathy were lower in the MTurk samples versus the Canadian sample. Collective action in the moral domain was higher in the Canadian sample (*vs.* MTurk Samples) and lower in the climate change domain (however, examination of the raw means shows that the Canadian sample ( $M=4.42$ ) reported higher collective action in the climate change domain compared to those in the MTurk samples ( $M_s=4.26, 3.92$ )).



domains, but a significant *positive* direct effect on collective action in the moral breakdown domain. The direct effect was not significant in the financial domain. Examination of the confidence intervals showed that this direct effect differed significantly between the moral breakdown and other domains. Further, fear-based threat directly predicted more collective action in every domain, with this direct effect significantly weaker in the financial (*vs.* race relations or climate change) domain. Empathy also had a significant positive direct effect on collective action in every domain, and no differences emerged across domains. Finally, RWA had a significant negative indirect effect on collective action via fear-based threat and empathy in the climate change domain only (Hypothesis 3), and this indirect effect differed significantly from the indirect effect in the race relations domain.

**SDO models.** As shown in Table 4, SDO had a significant negative direct effect on fear-based threat in the race relations and climate change domains; the effect was not significant in the moral or financial domains. Examination of the confidence intervals revealed that this association did not differ significantly between domains. Further, SDO had a significant negative direct effect on empathy in all four domains; this association did not differ significantly across domains. Consistent with Hypothesis 2, SDO exhibited a significant *negative* direct effect on collective action in the race relations and climate change domains. Unexpectedly SDO also had a direct *positive* effect on collective action in the moral domain. The direct effect was not significant in the financial domain. This direct effect in the moral domain differed significantly from the direct effects in the other domains. Further, fear based-threat also had a positive direct effect on collective action in every domain, with this direct effect significantly weaker in the financial (*vs.* moral or climate change) domain. The direct effect of greater empathy on collective action was significant in every domain (but  $p=.055$  in the race relations domain). These direct

effects were weak, and no differences emerged across domains. Finally, SDO was a significant indirect negative predictor of collective action via fear-based threat and empathy in each of the domains (Hypothesis 3), with no differences between domains.

### General Discussion

Much of the extant research on collective action has been conducted in the context of pursuing predominantly liberal goals or values, such as equality or social reform. Yet the existence of right-wing movements (Blee & Creasap, 2010) shows that those on the right can similarly be inspired to collective action, especially in times of social inequality and economic hardship (see Varaine, 2018). How ideology might inform collective action, however, is understudied. Indeed, this body of research has largely omitted ideology in appreciating why people might be inclined to engage in collective action (see also Jost et al., 2017; see Osborne et al., 2017, 2019; Milesi and Alberici, 2018; Saeri et al., 2016 for exceptions). In the current research, the relation between right-wing ideology – specifically RWA and SDO – and collective action is considered in four political issue domains. Examining these associations in the context of the decline of the moral fabric of society, “not good” race relations, an “ill” financial state of a country, and climate change that is for the worse, permitted a comprehensive test of the relation between right-wing ideology and collective action.

Supporting Hypothesis 1, those higher in RWA were *more* willing to engage in collective action aimed at addressing societal moral breakdown, but *less* willing to engage in collective action aimed at equalizing race relations or fighting climate change. This pattern is consistent with the established inclination for conventionalism and social stability among those higher in RWA (Altemeyer, 1998; Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt & Sibley, 2017). Consistent with Hypothesis 2, those higher in SDO reported *less* willingness to engage in collective action to equalize race

relations, improve the financial state of the country that included tackling wealth inequality (at the zero-order level only), or fight climate change. This disinclination exemplifies the preference of those higher in SDO for groups to be organized as a hierarchy (Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt & Sibley, 2017; Sidanius & Pratto, 2001; Sidanius et al., 2017) and their desire to dominate nature (Dhont et al., 2014; Milfont et al., 2013).

Unexpectedly, a positive association between SDO and collective action targeting the moral decay of society also emerged in the SEM model (but not at the zero-order level). This finding should be interpreted with caution, especially given that the zero-order correlations varied considerably across the three samples (Sample 1:  $r = -.18$ ; Sample 2:  $r = .14$ ; Sample 3:  $r = .25$ ), and additional research is needed to confirm or disconfirm this association. That said, a link between SDO and collective action might be present in the moral breakdown domain if those higher (*vs.* lower) in SDO blame derogated or dissident groups for the moral decay of society. After all, SDO tends to predict negative attitudes toward derogated groups (e.g. gay people, immigrants, Blacks, those who are unemployed) or dissident groups (e.g. atheists, sex workers) rather than dangerous groups (e.g. drug dealers, terrorists, violent criminals; Duckitt & Sibley, 2007). That is, those higher in SDO are particularly prejudiced toward groups that are lower status or disadvantaged, rather than groups seen as threatening to society. Therefore, if those higher (*vs.* lower) in SDO attribute moral decay to derogated or dissident groups, this could help explain why they might, in particular situations, engage in collective action.

To summarize, replicating the few studies that have directly investigated the connection between right-wing ideological beliefs and collective action (Osborne et al., 2017; Saeri et al., 2015; Weiner & Federico, 2017), the present research, based on 1,469 participants across three samples, revealed a nuanced relation between right-wing ideology and collective action. On one

hand, individuals higher in RWA or SDO were opposed to taking action intended to change the current situation with respect to race relations or the environment, with those higher in SDO also averse to taking action to tackle financial instability and inequity. Yet, those higher in RWA or SDO were more willing to engage in collective action to address the moral breakdown of society. In general, the pattern of findings suggests that individuals are more inclined to participate in collective action in domains that align with their existing values or political affinity.

Whether the links between right-wing ideologies and collective action were, in part, explained by fear-based threat or empathy was also considered (see Figure 1). As anticipated, greater SDO had a negative indirect effect on collective action in the race relations, financial, and climate change domains. Unexpectedly, SDO also had a negative indirect effect on collective action in the moral breakdown domain. That is, those higher in SDO reported less fear-based threat and less empathy with respect to moral breakdown of society, race relations, the financial standing of the nation, and climate change, and this in turn predicted less willingness to engage in collective action. In other words, individuals who more strongly endorse SDO did not experience the fear-related emotions or empathy that otherwise might drive interest in collective action. Importantly, findings are germane to the specific political issue domains considered, and how these issues were framed. And the chosen domains and framing used in the current study may have not resonated with those higher in SDO. Re-framing collective action in the race relations domain, for example, to maintain social hierarchies would likely produce different results, with those higher in SDO indicating interest in advocating on behalf of advantaged, higher status groups (see e.g. Saeri et al., 2015).

The indirect effect of RWA only emerged in the climate change domain: higher RWA predicted lower fear-based threat and this in turn predicted less collective action. Thus, whereas

fear-based threat and empathy helped to explain the connection between SDO and collective action, they did not explain the link between RWA and collective action. There are a number of potential reasons why fear-based threat or empathy did not mediate the relations between RWA and collective action in the moral breakdown or race relations domains. In the race relations domain, RWA did not significantly correlate or predict fear-based threat or empathy in any of the three samples, and related significantly to collective action in only one of the three samples. This lack of significant relations suggests that individuals higher in RWA were somewhat unresponsive or unmoved by the content of this domain. The emphasis of the race relations domain was on the lower status position of Blacks, highlighting Blacks as a derogated group in Western society. Thus, in retrospect, the lack of indirect effect of RWA and the weak direct effect of RWA in this domain is consistent with other research and theory proposing that SDO (not RWA) should emerge as the key predictor when the focus is on hierarchical positioning of Whites and Blacks (e.g. Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt & Sibley, 2017).

Why RWA did not exert a significant indirect effect in the moral breakdown domain is less clear. Although RWA did not significantly predict fear-based threat in the race relations or financial domains, it did predict greater fear-based threat in the moral breakdown and climate change domains, consistent with research showing that RWA relates to perceiving social threats (e.g. Jost et al., 2017a; Onraet et al., 2013; Perry et al., 2013). The lack of significant indirect effects leaves open the question of why those higher (*vs.* lower) in RWA might engage in collective action in the moral breakdown domain if not for fear-based threat or low empathy reasons. One potential mediator is anger. Given the documented role of anger in predicting collective action (Crosby, 1976; van Zomeren et al., 2008), anger might be a key player in driving collective action among those higher in right-wing ideologies. Furthermore, it would be

valuable to consider how ideology predicts collective action alongside other key predictors of collective action, namely, social identity, group-based anger, and group efficacy (see van Zomeren et al., 2008; see also van Zomeren & Louis, 2011; van Zomeren & Iyer, 2009; van Zomeren & Klandermans, 2011). Following from and extending traditional collective action research, Jost and colleagues' (2017) system justification account of collective action incorporates group-based and system-level anger. In a test of the model, Osborne et al. (2019) reported some support for group- and system-anger in connecting system justification and system-supporting and system-challenging protests.

Some of our findings could be interpreted as consistent with the system justification model. For example, engaging in collective action to equalize race relations, redistribute wealth or tackle financial inequity, or fight climate change could all be categorized as system-challenging. And indeed, right-wing ideologies related *negatively* to collective action in these domains. However, the content of the moral breakdown domain in the present research does not necessarily fit neatly into either a 'system-challenging' or a 'system-supporting' category. Tackling sexual assault, child abuse, and intimate partner violence, for example, are not necessarily indicative of system-supporting issues. Hence, those on the right might engage in collective action for these issues because they tend to prioritize moral issues over other domains in general.

Research showing links between political conservatism and moral-based concerns with purity are consistent with this interpretation (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009). In other words, individuals higher in right-wing ideologies may engage in collective action because a particular cause or issue resonates with their values or outlook (see Sidanius, Kteily, Levin, Pratto, & Obaidi, 2016), not (just) because it is system justifying. Indeed, Milesi and Alberici (2018) demonstrate that participation in liberal- or conservative-leaning movements is associated with

specific moral foundations. Future research examining links between ideology, moral foundations, and collective action would be informative. Further, the negative relations between right-wing ideology and collective might be about the presumed solutions to the problems. Specifically, the commonly proposed solutions to climate change, race relations, and inequality tend to be system-challenging (i.e. opposing free market capitalism). In contrast, the potential solutions to societal moral breakdown are not necessarily system challenging, and in fact can be very authoritarian in nature (e.g. harsher sentences, greater internet censorship) – typically aimed at greater enforcement of social stability and cracking down on immoral individuals. Future research is needed to investigate these possibilities.

In our study, SDO significantly predicted lower fear-based threat in the race relations and climate change domains, adding to a growing literature showing that those endorsing SDO tend to be non-averse to threat and risk (e.g. Choma et al., 2013; Choma & Hodson, 2017). The negative paths between RWA and SDO with fear-based threat in the climate change domain replicates previous work showing that those higher in right-wing ideologies resist perceiving climate change as threatening or risky (e.g. Choma et al., 2013). Also replicating previous research (Ho et al., 2015; Hodson, 2008; Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius et al., 2013), SDO consistently predicted lower empathy, highlighting the importance of (low) empathy in understanding those higher in SDO.

Finally, fear-based threat and empathy were consistent positive predictors of collective action. Fear-based threat demonstrated a stronger direct effect across all domains, except in the financial domain where the magnitude was equivalent. This pattern suggests that, at least in the domains we studied, willingness to engage in collective action is tied more closely with feelings

of fear than concern for others. This pattern is generally consistent with collective action research more broadly (van Zomeren et al., 2008).

### **Limitations**

The present findings should be considered with some caveats. First, although the student sample was extremely diverse ethnically and religiously, the community samples consisted primarily of White, liberal-leaning individuals. Research targeting individuals on the political right, including those who belong to right-wing movements or organisations, would provide valuable insight into how right-wing ideology facilitates collective action. Second, we cannot make strong claims about the direction of effects. Although this ordering of variables in our analyses is consistent with past theory and research (e.g. Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt & Sibley, 2017; Sidanius et al., 2013; Sidanius et al., 2017), it is also plausible and likely that engaging in collective action also facilitates the development of specific political beliefs. Indeed, consistent with self-perception theory, behaviors (e.g. collective action) may predict attitudes (e.g. right-wing ideologies).

Third, the framing of the issues is important. Explorations of different framings would help to disentangle the relative influence of issue (i.e. whether some issues are just more important to those on the political left or right, or for one ideological dimension over another – that is, ideological asymmetry) and/or whether the issue is equally relevant, just in the opposing direction. Presently, it is noteworthy that the link between RWA and collective action was strongest in the moral domain. This pattern is consistent with data from Pew Research Centre (2017) that conservatives and liberals prioritise issues differently. Finally, we needed to test the effects of RWA and SDO in separate models because of artificially inflated or inaccurate and misleading values.



## Conclusion

Overall, this research illustrates that ideology is a key factor in understanding collective action and that the relation between right-wing ideologies and collective action is nuanced, with right-wing ideologies predicting both more and less collective action. The direction of this association appears connected to the specific issues, values, and the status of those the action represents (e.g. higher status *vs.* lower status groups). That is, the specifics of the issue or cause must resonate with those on the right to motivate action. In other words, they must be consistent with their existing ideological, moral, and value-based outlook. These findings complement other research that has uncovered a negative association between right-wing ideologies and collective action on behalf of lower status groups or general willingness to participate in collective action (Osborne et al., 2017; Weiner & Federico, 2017), and a positive association between right-wing ideology and collective action on behalf of authorities (Saeri et al., 2015). Together, these studies contribute to an emerging picture of when and why particular ideologies can inspire collective action.

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**Table 1***Sample characteristics*

Statistic	Sample 1 (Canadian university)	Sample 2 (US MTurk)	Sample3 (US MTurk)
<i>n</i>	338	565	566
Age <i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	20.53 (4.73)	37.48 (12.41)	35.61 (11.24)
Age range	17-51	18-77	19-74
% Male	19.8	45.8	45.9
% Female	80.2	54.2	53.5
% Other gender	-	-	0.6
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
% White	36.2	83.4	79.9
% South Asian	20.2	<1	<1.4
% Filipino	6.8	<1	<1.4
% Chinese	6.2	2.1	<1.4
% Black	5.9		
% African-American		4.6	5.1
% Arab	5.6	<1	<1.4
% Southeast Asian	2.1	<1	<1.4
% Korean	<2	<1	<1.4
% Latin	<2		
% Latin-American		2.8	3.2
% Japanese	<2	<1	<1.4
% Indigenous	<2	<1	-
% Multi-ethnic	7.4	3	4.6
% Other	5.6	<1	<1.4
% Prefer not to say	-	<1	<1.4
<b>Religious affiliation</b>			
% Catholic	26.9	16.8	14.1
% Muslim	17	<2	<1.1
% Hindu	5.9	<2	<1.1
% Protestant	<5	17.9	19.8
% Baptist	<5	5.3	6
% Anglican	<5	<2	<1.1
% United	<5	-	<1.1
% Jewish	<5	<2	<1.1
% Other	12.7	9.7	13.8
% Agnostic	15.7	26.6	21.9
% Atheist	9	20.5	17.7
% Multiple religions	<5	-	-
% Prefer not to say	-	-	3.2

Estimated pre-tax household income			
% Under \$15k	14.8	8.6	8.1
% \$15-30k	13.2	18	17.3
% \$30-45k	10.9	17.1	20.7
% \$45-60k	15.8	19.1	16.4
% \$60-75k	14.1	12.3	13.8
% \$75-100k	14.8	12.3	11
% \$100-150k	9.6	8.8	8.8
% Over \$150k	6.8	3.8	2.1
Highest education completed			
% Less than high school		0.7	-
% High school		12	11.3
% Some college		36.3	37.8
% Completed college		38.4	38.5
% Master's degree		10.1	8.7
% Doctoral degree		2.5	3.7
Political party affiliation			
% Democrat		51.4	48.8
% Republican		24.5	23.5
% Other		24.1	26.3

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*Note.* Participants could select more than one ethnic or religious category.

**Table 2**

Means, standard deviations and correlations on combined sample data

	1	2	3	4	Mean (SD)
<b>Moral Breakdown (<i>n</i>=357)</b>					
1. RWA					2.73 (1.42)
2. SDO	.65** [.56, .72]				2.46 (1.34)
3. Fear-Based Threat	.13* [.02, .24]	-.12* [-.23, -.01]			2.91 (1.05)
4. Empathy	-.22** [-.34, -.10]	-.45** [-.54, -.36]	.26** [.17, .35]		6.80 (1.55)
5. Collective Action	.37** [.27, .46]	.09 [-.006, .20]	.52** [.43, .59]	.20** [.11, .30]	3.34 (1.87)
<b>Race Relations (<i>n</i>=370)</b>					
1. RWA					2.74 (1.50)
2. SDO	.49** [.39, .58]				2.32 (1.21)
3. Fear-Based Threat	.08 [-.03, .18]	-.12* [-.22, -.02]			2.81 (0.95)
4. Empathy	.01 [-.10, .11]	-.44** [-.53, -.34]	.17** [.06, .27]		6.96 (1.59)
5. Collective Action	-.11* [-.22, -.005]	-.33** [-.42, -.22]	.43** [.34, .52]	.28** [.16, .38]	4.04 (1.67)
<b>Financial (<i>n</i>=368)</b>					
1. RWA					2.75 (1.42)
2. SDO	.54** [.44, .63]				2.44 (1.37)
3. Fear-Based Threat	.06 [-.05, .17]	-.05 [-.15, .05]			2.91 (0.97)
4. Empathy	-.11* [-.22, .01]	-.39** [-.49, -.28]	.16** [.05, .26]		6.82 (1.65)
5. Collective Action	-.10 [-.20, -.001]	-.15* [-.26, -.05]	.21** [.11, .31]	.23** [.14, .33]	4.13 (1.41)
<b>Climate Change (<i>n</i>=374)</b>					
1. RWA					2.73 (1.45)
2. SDO	.54** [.46, .63]				2.39 (1.29)
3. Fear-Based Threat	-.12* [-.21, -.03]	-.20** [-.30, -.09]			2.77 (1.08)
4. Empathy	-.06 [-.17, .04]	-.37** [-.49, -.25]	.30** [.21, .38]		6.88 (1.62)
5. Collective Action	-.32** [-.41, -.22]	-.35** [-.45, -.25]	.43** [.35, .51]	.34** [.24, .43]	4.16 (1.73)

Note. *N*=1496. Estimates based on bootstrapped estimates.



**Table 3**

SEM results for RWA predicting collection action via fear-based threat and empathy at the latent level

Panel A		Moral			Race Relations		
		FBT	Empathy	CA	FBT	Empathy	CA
RWA	Direct	.11* [.002, .20]	-.26* [-.36, -.17]	.38* [.29, .47]	.07 [-.02, .18]	.03 [-.08, .14]	-.17* [-.27, -.07]
FBT	Direct			.34* [.24, .43]			.41* [.31, .51]
Empathy	Direct			.13* [.04, .23]			.23* [.14, .33]
RWA	Indirect			.03 [-.05, .05]			.04 [-.02, .09]
$R^2$		.21	.14	.49	.20	.01	.30
FBT~Empathy		.22			.21		

Panel B		Financial			Climate Change		
		FBT	Empathy	CA	FBT	Empathy	CA
RWA	Direct	.05 [-.05, .15]	-.12* [-.23, -.02]	-.09 [-.20, .02]	-.13* [-.22, -.05]	-.06 [-.17, .05]	-.26* [-.34, -.17]
FBT	Direct			.19** [.08, .31]			.48* [.36, .59]
Empathy	Direct			.22* [.10, .33]			.22* [.12, .31]
RWA	Indirect			-.02 [-.05, .02]			-.08* [-.13, -.03]
$R^2$		.10	.03	.12	.37	.02	.37
FBT~Empathy		.15			.31		

*Note.* FBT = fear based threat. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .001$ . 95% confidence intervals are shown in parentheses. Standardized values are shown. ~ denotes correlations. Fit indices: Moral Breakdown,  $\chi^2(77) = 247.90$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $CFI = .965$ ,  $RMSEA = .079$ ; Race Relations,  $\chi^2(77) = 212.26$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $CFI = .972$ ,  $RMSEA = .069$ ; Financial,  $\chi^2(77) = 144.8$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $CFI = .983$ ,  $RMSEA = .049$ ; Climate Change,  $\chi^2(77) = 203.67$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $CFI = .975$ ,  $RMSEA = .066$ .

**Table 4**

SEM results for SDO predicting collection action via fear-based threat and empathy at the latent level

Panel A		Moral			Race Relations		
		FBT	Empathy	CA	FBT	Empathy	CA
SDO	Direct	-.09[-.20, .003]	-.47*[-.55, -.38]	.25* [.16, .36]	-.13*[-.23, -.02]	-.47*[-.55, -.37]	-.26*[-.37, -.16]
FBT	Direct			.42** [.33, .51]			.38* [.28, .48]
Empathy	Direct			.14* [.04, .25]			.11+ [-.004, .22]
SDO	Indirect			-.11* [-.18, -.04]			-.10* [-.17, -.04]
$R^2$		.21	.28	.41	.21	.22	.33
FBT~Empathy		.14			.16		

  

Panel B		Financial			Climate Change		
		FBT	Empathy	CA	FBT	Empathy	CA
SDO	Direct	-.04[-.14, .06]	-.41*[-.49, -.32]	-.08[-.20, .04]	-.18*[-.26, -.09]	-.38*[-.47, -.29]	-.23*[-.32, -.13]
FBT	Direct			.19* [.08, .30]			.50* [.38, .61]
Empathy	Direct			.19* [.07, .32]			.14* [.03, .24]
SDO	Indirect			-.09* [-.15, -.03]			-.14* [-.20, -.08]
$R^2$		.10	.19	.12	.39	.17	.35
FBT~Empathy		.14			.26		

*Note.* FBT = fear based threat.  $^+p<.055$ ,  $*p<.05$ ,  $**p<.001$ . 95% confidence intervals are shown in parentheses. Standardized values are shown. ~ denotes correlations. Fit indices: Moral Breakdown,  $\chi^2(77) = 181.02$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $CFI = .980$ ,  $RMSEA = .062$ ; Race Relations,  $\chi^2(77) = 154.05$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $CFI = .984$ ,  $RMSEA = .052$ ; Financial,  $\chi^2(77) = 102.32$ ,  $p = .028$ ,  $CFI = .995$ ,  $RMSEA = .030$ ; Climate Change,  $\chi^2(77) = 131.08$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $CFI = .990$ ,  $RMSEA = .043$ .

