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## Dimensions of Political Reasoning: Associations among Informational Assumptions, Sociopolitical Values, and Domain-Specific Judgments about Laws

Benjamin Oosterhoff

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Dimensions of Political Reasoning: Associations among Informational Assumptions,  
Sociopolitical Values, and Domain-Specific Judgments about Laws

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Dissertation submitted to  
the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences  
at West Virginia University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy  
in  
Life-Span Developmental Psychology

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## ABSTRACT

### Dimensions of Political Reasoning: Associations among Informational Assumptions, Sociopolitical Values, and Domain-Specific Judgments about Laws

Benjamin Oosterhoff

Adolescents' beliefs about laws are a critical component of their emerging political reasoning, which is hypothesized to guide political decisions in adulthood. Laws serve a variety of purposes by restricting certain social behaviors. However, little is known about the types of laws adolescents view as important and obligatory to obey, or the amount of punishment that should be received for breaking different laws. Identifying individual differences in these beliefs may help elucidate the developmental origins of political attitudes. Therefore, the current study had three primary goals. The first goal was to utilize social domain theory to assess adolescents' judgments and justifications about different types of laws. The second goal was to examine associations among teens' judgments about laws and other dimensions of their political reasoning, including their broader value systems concerning authority and hierarchy. The third goal was to test whether their factual assumptions about laws, authority, and society were associated with both teens' beliefs about laws and their broader value systems.

To address these aims, 340 adolescents (9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders;  $M_{\text{age}} = 16.64$  years,  $SD = 1.37$ ) were recruited from a mid-Atlantic high school. Using self-report questionnaires and vignettes, adolescents reported on their beliefs about laws hypothesized to regulate moral (e.g., stealing), conventional (e.g., registering one's car), personal (e.g., joining out of school activities), prudential (e.g., wearing a helmet), and personal/conventional multifaceted issues (e.g., loitering). Additionally, teens were assessed on their sociopolitical values (right-wing authoritarianism, RWA; social dominance orientation, SDO; and religious fundamentalism, RF)

and informational assumptions (efficacy of laws, individual attributions of crime, belief in a dangerous world).

As hypothesized, adolescents distinguished between the types of laws in their judgments and justifications. Adolescent girls had more supportive beliefs about laws regulating prudential issues. RWA values were positively associated with judgments about laws regulating personal, prudential, and personal/prudential multifaceted issues. Additionally, SDO values were negatively associated with judgments about laws regulating moral and prudential issues. Teens' informational assumptions were also associated with their judgments about laws and sociopolitical values. While assumptions about individual attributions of crime were associated with more positive beliefs about laws regulating moral, conventional, personal, and personal/conventional multifaceted issues, assumptions about the efficacy of laws and perceptions of a dangerous world were associated with more supportive judgments about laws regulating prudential issues. Additionally, stronger endorsement of the efficacy of laws, individual attributions of crime, and belief in a dangerous world were associated with greater RWA values.

This study extends previous research on adolescents' political understanding by examining the intersection between multiple facets of teens' political reasoning. Findings contribute to research on sociopolitical values by demonstrating differential coordination among specific values and domain beliefs. Additionally, this research demonstrates the importance of examining adolescents' emerging beliefs, values, and assumptions about laws to better understand their emerging political reasoning.

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Dimensions of Political Reasoning: Associations among Informational Assumptions,  
Sociopolitical Values, and Domain-Specific Judgments about Laws

Adolescence is a developmental period marked by greater exposure to social institutions and increased social understanding (Smetana & Villalobos, 2009). Cognitive development during this age period allows teens to form more nuanced beliefs about the role of laws and government in society. In particular, increased abstract reasoning may lead adolescents to question the limitations and boundaries of institutional authority, while recognizing potential social benefit of government sanctions (Adelson, 1972). Distinguishing between issues that are subject to legitimate government regulation versus those that concern one's own prerogative is an important developmental task for all individuals, and variation in these beliefs represents a point of political contention in the United States (e.g., current debates over drug laws). These developing beliefs about laws are an important component of adolescents' political reasoning, which is hypothesized to guide social behavior and serve as a foundation for political decisions throughout adulthood (Yates & Youniss, 1998). Adolescents that view different types of laws as important, feel obligated to obey them, and ascribe greater punishment to violations may use these beliefs to inform political attitudes. Furthermore, criminal justice scholars have stressed that adolescents' beliefs about government have significant social implications, as teens that view laws as more important are less likely to break them (Tyler, 1990). Examining the structure and sources of variation in adolescents' beliefs about laws will help explicate the developmental origins of political attitudes, and further elucidate a critical component of adolescent social development.

Despite increased cognitive development during this age period, not all teens form the same beliefs towards laws and regulation. Heterogeneous beliefs about laws may be due in part

to the coalescence of other developing facets of political reasoning, including sociopolitical values and informational assumptions (Figure 1). Whereas sociopolitical values are defined as a core set of “guiding principles” that are used to inform beliefs about social behavior (e.g., “it is important to listen to authority”; Schwartz, 1994), informational assumptions represent perceptions about factual qualities of the social and physical world (e.g., “humans are responsible for global warming,” “the earth is round”). Sociopolitical values, informational assumptions, and specific beliefs about laws differ in distinct ways. Beliefs about laws are thought to be contextually specific and highly dependent on the content of the rule. In contrast, sociopolitical values are thought to be trans-situational and generalizable (For conceptual comparison, see Figure 1). Additionally, whereas sociopolitical values and beliefs about laws express opinions of worth or favorability for certain social arrangements (i.e., are *prescriptive*), informational assumptions express factual characteristics about individuals, society, and nature (i.e., are *descriptive*).

Adolescents may draw upon their developing sociopolitical values when making social and moral evaluations (Metzger, Oosterhoff, Palmer, & Ferris, 2014). The link between these value systems and domain-specific evaluations may also apply to how adolescents conceptualize certain laws. Additionally, prescriptive moral beliefs may be undergirded by descriptive, factual understanding (Schwartz, 1994; Wainryb, 1991). For example, descriptive beliefs about whether homosexuality is biologically rooted or a matter of personal choice influence judgments about the acceptability of gay marriage (Turiel, Hildebrandt, Wainryb, & Saltzstein, 1991).

Adolescents may endorse factual beliefs about individuals, authority, and society that may influence the meaning or interpretation of different laws, and subsequently effect judgments about whether these laws are important and transgressions deserving of greater punishment. The

current study seeks to help expound individual differences in adolescents' understanding of different laws by examining how these beliefs are linked with other components of their political reasoning, including their descriptive informational assumptions and sociopolitical values.

### **Beliefs about Laws: Developmental and Social Psychological Perspectives**

Establishing an understanding of issues that concern personal autonomy and those that are subject to legitimate government regulation is an important component of adolescents' moral and social development. Historically, developmental psychologists have examined adolescents' understanding of laws utilizing stage theories of moral development. This initial research suggests that with growing autonomy and increased abstract reasoning, individuals progress from a strict and rigid adherence to laws in childhood to a more flexible understanding in late adolescence and early adulthood (Tapp & Kohlberg, 1971). Other scholars have proposed that even young children's understanding of laws is multifaceted and highly dependent on the content and purpose of the rule (Helwig & Jasiobedzka, 2001). Much of this research has focused on children's and adolescents' understanding of laws that explicitly conflict with personal rights (e.g., mandatory flu shots; Helwig, 1995, 1998; Helwig & Jasiobedzka, 2001). Less research has examined how adolescents distinguish between laws that regulate less controversial issues, such as stealing, registering one's car, or loitering. Adolescents may have greater exposure and experience with laws that regulate these issues. Consequently, examining teens' beliefs about a broad range of laws may represent a more comprehensive assessment of adolescents' views of government and thus be more closely tied to their emerging political reasoning.

### **Social Domain Theory**

Social domain theory provides a useful framework to examine adolescent's beliefs about different laws because it incorporates multiple facets of social understanding. According to

social domain theory, individuals judge and reason about social information from different domains of social knowledge (e.g., moral, conventional, personal, or prudential; Turiel, 1983). The moral domain pertains to issues that concern the welfare of others, justice, and rights (e.g., fighting, cheating, stealing). Moral issues are obligatory, unalterable, and universally applicable (not contingent on social rules or authority). In contrast, conventional concepts are alterable, arbitrary, agreed-upon regulations that are dependent on authority and used to govern social interaction (e.g., eating with elbows on the table). The personal domain pertains to matters of personal preference, and is not subject to moral or conventional authority; these issues are not a matter of right or wrong or subject to regulation, but up to the individual (e.g., friendships choices). Prudential issues also concern personal matters, but in the context of prudence or self-harm (e.g., a child purposefully jumping off a swing). Some issues are *multifaceted* and may entail several different features relevant to multiple domains of social knowledge, which leads individuals to interpret the action from different domains (e.g., problem peer friendships may be viewed as personal by a teen, but prudential by a parent or guardian).

### **Social Domain Theory and Beliefs about Authority**

To date, a great deal of research has focused on adolescents' domain-specific reasoning of rules established by proximal authority figures, such as parents (e.g., Smetana, 1988, 1995; Smetana & Asquith, 1994; Tisak, 1986; Yau, Smetana, & Metzger, 2009) and teachers (e.g., Smetana & Bitz, 1996). Less research has examined domain-specific reasoning about different laws directly enforced by governmental institutions. Generally, teenagers view parents and teachers as legitimate authority figures, feel obligated to obey them (even if they do not agree with the rule), and view that they have an obligation to establish rules concerning moral, conventional, and prudential issues (Smetana & Asquith, 1994; Smetana & Bitz, 1996; Smetana,



1995). However, adolescents view personal issues as beyond parental and teacher jurisdiction (e.g., Smetana, 1988; Smetana & Bitz, 1996). Furthermore, with age and growing autonomy, adolescents view a wider range of issues once considered conventional or prudential as personal matters (Smetana & Asquith, 1994).

As adolescents obtain greater autonomy from parents, they also experience increased exposure to social institutions, which may prompt evaluations of laws and the beliefs about the boundaries of government authority. Some evidence suggests that adolescents view government as a legitimate authority over moral, conventional, and prudential issues, but not personal issues (Helwig & Jasiobedzka, 2001; Nucci, Guerra, & Lee, 1991; Smetana & Bitz, 1996). These distinctions have been found both among youth from Western countries (United States and Canada) and China, a society thought to prioritize cohesion, tradition, obedience to authority, and social harmony (Helwig & Jasiobedzka, 2001). However, this research has focused on demonstrating consistency in beliefs concerning the acceptability of rules governed by different authority figures (e.g., teachers, parents, government) or when laws explicitly conflict with personal freedoms. Previous research has not yet examined adolescents' judgments and justifications about laws that are hypothesized to regulate domain-specific issues. Examining adolescents' domain-specific reasoning about different types of laws may help elucidate the normative developmental processes that underlie beliefs about government regulation and contribute valuable insight to teen's moral and social development.

### **Social Domain Methodology**

**Contextual Dependency.** Adolescents' understanding of different laws is complex, and previous research has demonstrated that youth consider multiple elements of rules in their evaluations of laws, such as its utility and social benefit, potential impediments on personal

rights, and the specific setting where the transgression occurred (Helwig, 1997; Helwig & Jasiobedzka, 2001). Thus, beliefs about laws may be highly dependent on the *context* of the transgression. For example, children view violating certain laws when they conflict with principles of justice and welfare (e.g., denial of education) as acceptable (Helwig & Jasiobedzka, 2001). Previous research on social groups and parents' rules has utilized detailed vignettes to account for this contextual dependency in social understanding (e.g., Horn, 2003; Lagattuta, Nucci, & Bosacki, 2010). Similarly, assessing adolescents' judgments and justifications about written vignettes depicting scenarios where individuals violate laws may be an appropriate tool to examine teens' domain-specific beliefs about laws.

**Domain Criterion Judgments.** Domain-specific reasoning is typically measured with ratings meant to distinguish domains of social understanding, termed "criterion judgments" (Nucci, et al., 1991; Smetana & Asquith, 1994). Criterion judgments used to distinguish the moral domain assess principles of obligation and independence of authority. In the context of authority, obligation is typically measured with *obedience* and *rule obligation* judgments, which ask participants to rate if individuals are obligated to obey rules (even rules they don't agree with) and whether authorities have an obligation to create certain rules. Rules restricting moral issues are seen as more obligatory and rules restricting personal issues are seen as less obligatory (Smetana & Asquith, 1994). To assess *independence of authority*, participants rate whether a behavior is permissible if an authority figure granted permission for one to engage in the act. Those who judge the act as wrong regardless of whether authority permits the act treat the act as moral and those that judge the act as wrong only if sanctioned by authority view it as a social convention. Personal evaluations are indicated by views that the act is not a matter of right or wrong, but up to the individual. Individual's *justifications* for the wrongness/rightness of

different rules are also used to inform domain-specific understanding. Whereas moral justifications are those that concern harm, rights, welfare, and justice, conventional justifications reference notions of conformity, tradition, and authority. Personal justifications concern appeals to individual preferences and prudential concerns typically stress self-harm.

**Assessing Within-Domain Variation in Beliefs about Laws.** Traditional domain judgments and justifications are used to classify whether children and adolescents are reasoning about a specific issue from a certain domain of social knowledge. Although adolescents are expected to distinguish between domains of social knowledge in their evaluations of different laws, there may be considerable inter-individual variation *within* domains. For example, adolescents may recognize the moral components of stealing and their criterion judgments may indicate that they view stealing as a moral issue. However, they may vary in the degree to which they view laws regulating stealing as important, obligatory to obey, and the act as worthy of punishment.

Utilizing judgments that assess the importance of different laws (*importance* judgments), individuals obligation to obey these laws (*obedience* judgments), and amount of deserved punishment for transgressions (*punishment* judgments) in conjunction with domain-specific criterion judgments and justifications may be ideal for capturing within-domain variability. Previous research indicates that importance, obedience, and punishment judgments follow domain-specific patterns, and thus may be useful quantitative assessments that retain distinctions between domains. Specifically, compared to conventional issues, children and adolescents view rules that regulate moral issues as more important, obligatory to obey, and transgressions worthy of greater punishment and those that regulate personal issues as less important, obligatory to obey, and worthy of little to no punishment (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Tyler, 1990; Smetana et al.,

2012; Tisak & Turiel, 1988). Social domain research on adolescents' judgments about civic responsibility has demonstrated that quantitative assessments that follow domain specific patterns can be used to capture individual differences within domains of social knowledge (Metzger & Smetana, 2009; Metzger et al., 2014). Capturing this within-domain inter-individual variability while retaining distinctions between domains may help scholars identify sources of individual variation in normative beliefs about specific types of laws, which is thought to be an important developmental antecedent of divergent political attitudes.

### **Sociopolitical Values and Beliefs about Laws**

While beliefs about laws represent one component of adolescents' political reasoning, youth are also developing values that concern the nature and role of political systems. Similar to domain-specific beliefs, sociopolitical values express prescriptive views of worth or favorability for certain social arrangements. However, while domain-specific beliefs are contextually and issue dependent, sociopolitical values represent broader, generalized principles that are thought to guide specific beliefs and attitudes (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001; Figure 1). For example, adolescents may have values that reflect the importance of maintaining social hierarchy, structure, and order (e.g., it is important to have strong authority) and use these values to guide beliefs about the importance specific laws or amount of deserved punishment for transgressions.

Sociopolitical values are diverse and include constructs such as right-wing authoritarianism (RWA), religious fundamentalism (RF), and social dominance orientation (SDO). RWA has been characterized as a malleable, yet relatively stable composite of characteristics favoring submission to authority, punishment for social transgressions, and tradition (e.g., Sibley, Wilson, & Duckitt, 2007). RF has been defined as a strict adherence to

theological doctrines (Altemyer & Hunsberger, 2004). In contrast, SDO represents a preference for group-based social hierarchy and competition (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994).

Adolescents may draw upon RWA, RF, and SDO values to inform their beliefs about laws. Empirical evidence has consistently demonstrated that higher levels of RWA, RF, and SDO, are associated with greater support for punitive policies (Altemeyer, 1996; Peterson, Doty, & Winter, 1993; Sidanius & Liu, 1992; Sidanius, Pratto, & Mitchell, 1994; Sidanius, Liu, Shaw, & Pratto, 1994; Unnever & Cullen, 2006). Some evidence suggests that associations between sociopolitical values and beliefs about laws may be domain-specific. For instance, RWA stresses the importance of traditional American values, which emphasize strict adherence to social conventions (Altemeyer, 1996). Additionally, those higher in religious fundamental values may view moral transgressions as more serious (Narvaez, Getz, Rest, & Thoma, 1999). As SDO is characterized by support for social hierarchy (Pratto et al., 1994), those high in SDO may be more likely to endorse laws that regulate personal issues as a way to promote hierarchy over issues that are not typically regulated. Consequently, those high in RWA may view laws regulating social conventions as more important, more obligatory to obey, and worthy of greater punishment. In contrast, those higher in RF may rate moral issues higher in their importance, obedience, and punishment judgments and those higher in SDO may rate personal issues higher in their importance, obedience, and punishment judgments.

### **Informational Assumptions, Sociopolitical Values, and Beliefs about Laws**

Sociopolitical values and domain-specific beliefs about laws represent important components of adolescents' prescriptive political reasoning. However underlying these prescriptive beliefs may be *descriptive* assumptions about people, the world, and authority figures (Figure 1). Informational assumptions pertain to perceived factual (either accurate or

inaccurate) knowledge of the world. Unlike values or judgments, these factual assumptions are not evaluative, but rather represent an understanding about characteristics of individual, social, or physical phenomena. Informational assumptions have been primarily examined in the context of moral development as a way elucidating cultural differences in moral judgments and have typically focused on assumptions concerning the nature of life and death, origins of sexual preferences, and utility of corporal punishment (Smetana, 1981, 1982; Turiel et al., 1991; Wainryb, 1991). Variation in informational assumptions is thought to influence prescriptive beliefs and values by changing the meaning or interpretation of events. For example, individuals that assume that life originates at conception may view abortion at any gestational age as morally wrong due to impediments on the rights and welfare of the fetus. In contrast, those that assume life originates later in pregnancy or at birth are more likely to judge and reason about abortion as a personal matter that should be up to the individual (Smetana, 1981). Similarly, adolescents may be forming informational assumptions about individuals, authority, and society that may be used to inform their beliefs about laws and government regulation.

Little research has examined informational assumptions pertaining to laws, authority, and society. Assumptions concerning causes of crime (e.g., individual versus social), prevalence of crime, and efficacy of authority in preventing crime are particularly relevant when considering beliefs about laws. Specifically, these assumptions may influence the perceived intentions of the transgressor and social implications of different laws. For example, adolescents that perceive the individual as responsible for a crime may interpret transgressions as more serious and deserving of greater punishment because they may be viewed as intentional (Cushman, 2008; Rucker, Polifroni, Tetlock, & Scott, 2004; Sims, 2003; Weiner, 2001). Similarly, those who view the world as more dangerous and authority as efficacious in their ability to prevent crime may view

laws as an important mechanism that provide and sustain safety and order (Keil & Vito, 1991; Perry, Sibley, & Duckitt, 2013). While previous research has not examined associations among informational assumptions and domain-specific beliefs, some evidence has found associations among individual attributions of crime and support for greater punishment of moral violations (Cushman, 2008). Additionally, those with stronger beliefs in a dangerous world may endorse greater importance, obedience, and punishment judgments of moral and conventional issues as a means of establishing order and achieving security (Sibley et al., 2007).

Similarly, informational assumptions may influence the social implications of different sociopolitical values (Schwartz, 1994; Figure 1). For instance, beliefs that the world is dangerous and threatening may make values that prioritize general obedience and structure more prominent as a means of alleviating fearsome perceptions. Studies using adult samples have consistently found positive associations among belief in a dangerous world, RWA, and RF values (e.g., Campbell & Vollhardt, 2013; Sibley et al., 2007). Similar associations have been demonstrated with individual attributions of crime, RWA, SDO, and RF values (Bobbio, Canova, & Manganelli, 2010; Grasmick & McGill, 1994; Halkjelsvik & Rise, 2014). Though efficacy of laws was not directly measured, beliefs that punishment teaches right and wrong have been linked with greater RWA values (Benjamin, 2006; Unnever & Cullen, 2006). Together, these findings suggests that adolescents' assumptions about the actor (individual attributions), laws and authority (efficacy of laws in preventing crime), and society (belief in a dangerous world) may be an important component of political reasoning that is used to inform their domain-specific beliefs about laws and their sociopolitical values. Given that sociopolitical values are expected to be associated with domain-specific beliefs about laws, informational assumptions may also be indirectly tied to domain beliefs through sociopolitical values.

### **The Current Study**

The current study had three aims. The first aim was to apply a social domain framework to adolescents' beliefs about laws and extend research examining individual variability in domain-specific reasoning. Specifically, the current study examined whether adolescents distinguish between laws in their domain-specific criterion judgments and justifications. Developmental psychologists have consistently shown that adolescents view parents and teachers as legitimate authority figures over moral, conventional, and prudential issues, but not personal issues (e.g., Smetana & Asquith, 1994; Smetana & Bitz, 1996). However, the extent to which adolescents apply domain criterion distinctions to laws that are hypothesized to regulate moral, conventional, prudential, and personal matters has been relatively unexplored. Examining adolescents' domain-specific understanding of laws may provide valuable insight into the normative processes that are tied to the development of political and social reasoning. Furthermore, although adolescents were expected to distinguish between domains in their criterion judgments and justifications for laws and transgressions, some evidence suggests that there is substantial variability in a preference for laws and structure (Altemeyer, 1996). To capture this variability, the current study utilized importance, obedience, and punishment judgments to assess within-domain variation while preserving between-domain distinctions in beliefs about laws.

The second aim of the current study was to examine associations between adolescents' sociopolitical values and their domain-specific judgments about laws. Scholars have recognized sociopolitical values, including RWA, SDO, and RF, as generalized guiding principles that are used as standards to judge human behavior (Altemeyer, 1996). However, previous research has not yet examined the intersection between sociopolitical values and adolescents' domain-specific



judgments about different types of laws. Examining the intersection between sociopolitical values and domain-specific beliefs about laws may help explicate the developmental origins of political attitudes.

The third aim of the current study was to examine how adolescents' informational assumptions are associated with their beliefs about laws and sociopolitical values. Values and domain-specific beliefs are both integral components of adolescents' prescriptive social understanding. One potential source of variation in prescriptive beliefs is differences in *descriptive* knowledge of the social world. Informational assumptions that concern the actor (individual attributions), laws and authority (efficacy of laws in preventing crime), and society (belief in a dangerous world) may be especially relevant for adolescents' beliefs about different types of laws and values concerning RWA, RF, SDO. Thus, the present study examined associations among informational assumptions, sociopolitical values, and domain-specific beliefs about laws.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

**Research Question 1.** *Do adolescents' judgments about laws that are hypothesized to regulate moral, conventional, personal, and prudential issues follow domain-specific patterns?*

*Hypothesis 1.* Adolescents will make domain-appropriate judgments and justifications for laws that regulate moral, conventional, personal, prudential, and multifaceted issues. Specifically:

- a. Adolescent will view government as a legitimate authority over moral, conventional, and prudential issues, but not personal issues.
- b. Adolescents will view government as having a greater obligation to create laws that restrict moral, conventional, and prudential issues, but not personal issues.

- c. Adolescents will view moral and prudential issues as wrong regardless of rule contingency. However, conventional issues will be contingent on government regulation and personal issues will be judged as not a matter of right or wrong, rather up to the individual.
- d. Adolescents' justification of moral issues will concern harm to other and fairness, while justification for conventional issues will concern the importance of order, courtesy, and avoidance of punishment. Prudential issues will be justified by appeals to self-harm, and personal issues will be justified through the endorsement of individual choice.

*Hypothesis 2.* Adolescents will distinguish between laws which govern moral, conventional, prudential, and personal matters in their judgments concerning the importance of laws, obligation to obey laws, and deserved punishment for transgressions. It is anticipated that importance, obedience, and punishment judgments will follow domain-appropriate patterns. Specifically:

- a. Compared to other laws, laws regulating moral issues were expected to be judged as more important, more obligatory to obey, and violations deserving of greater punishment.
- b. Judgments of importance, obedience, and punishment of laws regulating prudential issues were expected to be significantly greater than judgments for laws regulating conventional, personal issues.
- c. Laws regulating conventional issues were expected to be rated lower in importance, obligation to obey, and deserved punishment than laws regulating moral and prudential issues, but rated higher than laws regulating personal issues.

- d. Laws regulating personal issues were anticipated to be rated lower than all other domains in their importance, obligation to obey, and deserved punishment judgments.

**Research Question 2.** *Are there demographic differences in adolescents' domain-specific judgments about laws?*

*Hypothesis 1.* There will be demographic differences in adolescents' domain-beliefs about laws. Specifically,

- a. Previous research has demonstrated age differences in adolescents' beliefs about laws, with older teens endorsing greater support for laws regulating prudential issues (Flanagan, et al., 2008). Thus, it is hypothesized that older adolescents will view the regulation of prudential issues as more important, more obligatory to obey, and transgressions worthy of greater punishment.
- b. Some evidence suggests that adolescent boys have a greater general support for laws than girls (Gault & Sabini, 2000), so gender differences in domain-specific beliefs about laws will be explored.

**Research Question 3.** *How are adolescents' sociopolitical values concerning RWA, RF, and SDO associated with their domain-specific beliefs about laws?*

*Hypothesis 1.* Sociopolitical values concerning RWA, RF, and SDO will be associated with greater endorsement of importance, obedience, and punishment for laws regulating domain-specific issues. Specifically:

- a. Higher levels of RWA will be associated with greater importance, obedience, and punishment judgments for laws that regulate conventional issues.
- b. Higher levels of RF will be associated with greater importance, obedience, and punishment judgments for laws that regulate moral issues.

- c. Greater SDO values will be associated with higher ratings of importance, obedience, and punishment for laws that regulate personal issues.
- d. Exploratory analyses will examine associations among sociopolitical values and laws that regulate prudential issues and those that have personal/conventional multifaceted components. Though no direct hypotheses are provided, assessing these associations will allow for a more comprehensive assessment of domain-specificity.

**Research Question 4.** *How are adolescents' informational assumptions concerning individual attributions for crime, efficacy of laws, and beliefs in a dangerous world associated with domain-specific beliefs about laws and sociopolitical values?*

*Hypothesis 1.* Informational assumptions concerning individual attributions of crime, efficacy of laws, and beliefs in a dangerous world will be positively associated with domain-specific beliefs about laws. Specifically:

- a. Stronger endorsement of beliefs that individuals are the cause of crime will be associated with greater importance, obedience, and punishment judgments for laws regulating moral issues.
- b. Stronger beliefs in a dangerous world will be associated with greater importance, obedience, and punishment judgments about laws regulating moral issues.
- c. As scholars have not yet examined adolescents' assumptions about the efficacy of laws, no specific hypotheses are provided concerning associations between efficacy of laws and domain-specific beliefs about laws.
- e. Similar to Research Question 3, to allow for a more comprehensive assessment of domain-specificity of the above hypotheses, exploratory analyses will examine

associations among information assumptions and beliefs about laws regulating prudential and personal/conventional multifaceted issues.

*Hypothesis 2.* Informational assumptions concerning individual attributions of crime, efficacy of laws, and beliefs in a dangerous world will be positively associated with RWA, SDO, and RF values. Specifically:

- a. Stronger endorsement of beliefs that individuals are the cause of crime will be associated with greater RWA, SDO, and RF values.
- b. Higher levels of beliefs in a dangerous world will be associated with greater RWA and RF values.
- c. Although scholars have not yet examined adolescents' assumptions about the efficacy of laws, RWA and RF have been consistently linked with beliefs that punishment teaches right from wrong (Benjamin, 2006; Unnever & Cullen, 2006). Thus, it is expected that greater efficacy of laws will be associated with higher RWA and RF values.
- d. Exploratory analyses will examine whether informational assumptions concerning individual attributions for crime, efficacy of laws, and beliefs in a dangerous world are indirectly associated with domain-specific importance, obedience, and punishment judgments through RWA, RF, and SDO sociopolitical values.

## **Methods**

### **Participants**

The sample for the current study consisted of 340 students in grades 9–12 (ages 13–20 years,  $M = 16.64$ ,  $SD = 1.37$ ) at a high school in a mid-sized, Appalachian city. These students represent approximately 34% of those eligible to participate ( $N \sim 1,000$ ). School report data

indicates that 27% of the students at the high school receive free or reduced lunch. The sample was primarily 12<sup>th</sup> graders ( $n = 148, 43.5\%$ ), with fewer 11<sup>th</sup> graders ( $n = 95, 27.9\%$ ), 10<sup>th</sup> graders ( $n = 47, 13.8\%$ ), and 9<sup>th</sup> graders ( $n = 32, 9.4\%$ ). The sample was composed of slightly more females ( $n = 198, 58.2\%$ ) than males ( $n = 137, 40.2\%$ ). Five participants did not report their gender. The sample was primarily White/Caucasian ( $n = 254, 83.5\%$ ), followed by African American/Black ( $n = 18, 5.9\%$ ), Asian American/Pacific Islander ( $n = 12, 4.0\%$ ), other ( $n = 11, 3.6\%$ ) or biracial ( $n = 37, 10.9\%$ ). Very few participants were Hispanic/Latino ( $n = 6, 2.0\%$ ). Based on school report data (Propublica, 2015), the racial/ethnic composition of the sample was similar to the high school from which it was drawn. The majority of students received some A's and some B's ( $n = 128, 37.6\%$ ), followed by mostly A's ( $n = 119, 35\%$ ), mostly B's ( $n = 21, 6.2\%$ ), some B's and some C's ( $n = 50, 14.7\%$ ), some C's and some D's ( $n = 9, 2.6\%$ ), or mostly D's and lower ( $n = 1, .3\%$ ). All participants indicated that they were U.S. citizens.

In terms of family, most teens ( $n = 215, 63.2\%$ ) lived at home with their biological mother and father, and the other participants lived at home with just their mother ( $n = 50, 13.8\%$ ), lived with just their father ( $n = 11, 3.2\%$ ), or lived with one biological parent and one stepparent ( $n = 46, 13.5\%$ ). Eighteen participants did not report which parent they lived with.

### **Procedure**

Adolescents were given parental consent forms in their social studies classrooms to be completed by their parent/legal guardian prior to participation in the study. Those that were granted parental consent also provided informed, signed assent prior to participation.

Adolescents that were 18 years or older gave informed consent prior to participating. Participants completed a survey assessing all measures in the current study during scheduled social studies class periods. Surveys took about 50 minutes to complete. Research assistants were present

within the classrooms to answer questions during the survey administration. All participating adolescents were eligible for randomly drawn cash prizes and gift cards ranging in value from \$10 to \$100.

### **Measures**

**Demographic information.** Participants reported their gender, grade in school, age, ethnicity, household composition, and citizenship status. Demographic measures (along with all other measures used in the current study) are displayed in the Appendices B through F.

### **Vignettes**

Similar to previous research (Horn, 2003), domain-specific beliefs about laws were assessed through responses to written vignettes depicting different transgressions. Based on focus groups and extensive pilot testing, vignettes (see Table 1) were created depicting 16 hypothetical situations describing an individual violating laws that regulate moral (3 vignettes; e.g., stealing money), conventional (3 vignettes; e.g., fishing without a license), prudential (4 vignettes; e.g., using drugs), personal (3 vignettes; e.g., joining out-of-school activities), and personal/conventional multifaceted issues (3 vignettes; e.g., zoning laws).

### **Domain Criterion Judgments and Justifications**

Criterion judgments and justifications about the written vignettes were used to assess whether adolescents judged and reasoned about laws that regulate moral, conventional, personal, and prudential issues from their respective domain.

**Legitimacy of laws.** After reading each vignette, participants were asked to rate whether it was OKAY for government to make a law restricting the described behavior. Responses indicating *legitimacy* (whether the law is viewed as OKAY) were assigned a score of 1, and

responses indicating that it was not legitimate for government to enact a laws were assigned a score of 0.

**Obligation of authority to make law.** After reading each vignette, participants rated whether government has an obligation to make a law restricting the given behavior. Responses indicating *obligation* (government is obligated to make the law) were assigned a score of 1, and responses indicating no obligation were given a score of 0.

**Authority contingency and independence.** Following previous research (e.g., Smetana & Asquith, 1994), participants rated whether the permissibility of the act is contingent on authority by indicating whether the act is “Always wrong whether or not those in government say so” (independent of authority), “Wrong only if those in government say so” (contingent on authority), or “Not an issue of right or wrong – up to the individual” (personal).

**Justifications.** Similar to previous research (e.g., Nucci et al., 1991), domain-specific justifications were assessed by asking participants to indicate which of the following reasons most closely fit their beliefs about why it was OKAY or not OKAY for laws to restrict each behavior. Categorical response options included “It is harmful to others or unfair” (moral), “It could harm yourself” (prudential), “It is important to have order, it’s impolite, or you might get in trouble” (conventional), and “There is nothing wrong with it, it’s okay because it doesn’t affect other people” (personal).

### **Quantitative Domain Judgments**

Participants made a series of judgments (importance, obedience, punishment) about laws regulating the same 16 situations described in the vignettes. For each set of judgments, scale scores were created by computing the mean rating of all items classified within a given domain (moral, conventional, personal, prudential, and personal/conventional multifaceted).



**Importance judgments.** Similar to previous research (Tisak & Turiel, 1988), participants rated the degree to which laws regulating the 16 situations described in the vignettes as important on a 5 point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*not at all important*) to 5 (*very important*). Higher ratings indicated stronger beliefs that laws restricting that behavior are important. Cronbachs alphas were as follows for judgments about laws regulating moral (3 items;  $\alpha = .43$ ), conventional (3 items;  $\alpha = .63$ ), personal (3 items;  $\alpha = .47$ ), prudential (4 items;  $\alpha = .72$ ), and personal/conventional multifaceted (3 items;  $\alpha = .60$ ) issues. Reliability analyses for the moral subscale indicate that omitting the “fighting in public” item would result in an acceptable alpha level (2 items;  $\alpha = .60$ ). Thus, the moral subscale was computed with this item omitted.

**Obedience judgments.** Participants indicated the degree which people have to follow each of the 16 laws depicted in the vignettes, even if they did not agree with them on a 5 point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*don't have to*) to 5 (*definitely have to*). For consistency with the importance scale, the item concerning “fighting in public” was not used in the current analyses, resulting in 15 items. Higher ratings indicated stronger obedience beliefs. Cronbachs alphas were as follows for judgments about laws regulating moral (2 items;  $\alpha = .87$ ), conventional (3 items;  $\alpha = .78$ ), personal (3 items;  $\alpha = .90$ ), prudential (4 items;  $\alpha = .84$ ), and personal / conventional multifaceted (3 items;  $\alpha = .83$ ) issues.

**Punishment judgments.** Consistent with previous research (Tisak & Turiel, 1988) participants indicated how much punishment people should receive for violating laws depicted in each of the 16 vignettes on a 5 point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*no punishment*) to 5 (*a lot of punishment*). Similar to importance and obedience ratings and for consistency, the item concerning “fighting in public” was not used in the current analyses, resulting in 15 items.

Higher ratings indicated stronger punishment beliefs. Cronbachs alphas were as follows for judgments about laws regulating moral (2 items;  $\alpha = .69$ ), conventional (3 items;  $\alpha = .61$ ), personal (3 items;  $\alpha = .63$ ), prudential (4 items;  $\alpha = .79$ ), and personal/conventional multifaceted (3 items;  $\alpha = .59$ ) issues.

### **Sociopolitical values**

**Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA).** Right-wing authoritarianism was assessed using the 20-item Right-Wing Authoritarianism scale (Altemeyer, 1996; e.g., “Our country will be greater if we honor the ways of our forefathers and do what authorities tell us to do”). Responses ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Mean scores were created with higher scores indicating greater right-wing authoritarian values ( $\alpha = .92$ ).

**Religious fundamentalism (RF).** Religious fundamentalism was assessed using the Revised Religious Fundamentalism scale (Altemyer & Hunsberger, 2004). Participants rated 12 items (e.g., “To lead the best, most meaningful life, one must belong to the one, fundamentally true religion”) on a 9-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*). Mean scores were created with higher scores indicating greater religious fundamentalism values ( $\alpha = .95$ ).

**Social dominance orientation (SDO).** Social dominance was assessed using 14 items from the Social Dominance Orientation measure (Pratto et al., 1994). Participants were asked to rate their positive or negative feelings towards certain statements (e.g., “Some people are just inferior to others”) on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*very negative*) to 7 (*very positive*). Mean scores were created with higher scores indicating greater social dominance values ( $\alpha = .89$ ).

### **Informational Assumptions**

**Individual attribution of crime.** Individual attribution of crime was assessed with a 4-item subscale taken from a previously established attribution of crime scale (Cassese & Weber, 2011; e.g., “People commit crime because they lack strong moral fiber”). Participants rated how much they agree or disagree with each item on 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Higher scores indicated greater endorsement of individual attribution of crime ( $\alpha = .60$ ).

**Belief in a dangerous world.** Belief in a dangerous world was assessed using 12 items from an established measure (Altemyer, 1988; e.g., “Any day now chaos and anarchy could erupt around us. All the signs are pointing to it”). Participants rated the extent to which they agree or disagree with each item on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Higher scores indicated greater belief in a dangerous world ( $\alpha = .84$ ).

**Efficacy of laws.** Efficacious perceptions of laws may be reflected through a diverse set of specific assumptions, including perceptions of whether laws actually prevent crime, teach individuals right and wrong, and whether lawmakers are more knowledgeable than most about the best ways to maintain social order. Based on pilot data and focus groups conducted for the purpose of this study, three scales were designed to assess these diverse facets of perceived efficacy of laws (see Appendix F for a list of all items included). Participants rated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a 12 statements depicting assumptions concerning the *perceived knowledge of authority* (4 items; e.g., “Lawmakers know more about how to stop crime than most people”), *utility of punishment to teach obedience* (4 items; e.g., “Harsh punishment makes people reflect on what they did”), and the *ability of laws to effectively stop crime* (4 items; e.g., “Laws effectively stop people from committing crimes”). Chronbachs alphas were as follows for assumptions concerning knowledge ( $\alpha = .67$ ), utility of punishment to

teach ( $\alpha = .67$ ), and ability to stop crime ( $\alpha = .52$ ). Due to the poor reliability for the ability to stop crime subscale, a composite scale representing general efficacy of laws was created by averaging all 12 items ( $\alpha = .80$ ). Higher scores represented greater perceived efficacy of laws.

## Results

### Initial Data Analysis

Data was analyzed for missingness, normality, and multivariate outliers. There was little missing data across scales (< 3%) and no missing data for domain-criterion judgments.

Mahalanobis distance obtained from the importance, obedience, and punishment judgments was used to test for multivariate outliers. A small percent of participants (2.9%) were in violation of mahalanobis distance. Upon further investigation, there was no evidence of problematic (e.g., undifferentiated) responses and these cases were retained for all further analyses. To ensure findings were not due to the inclusion of these multivariate outliers, all analyses were conducted with and without these participants and the pattern of significant findings did not change. Few variables violated assumptions of normality. Specifically, the punishment ratings for laws regulating personal issues were positively skewed and the importance ratings for laws regulating personal issues and obedience ratings for laws regulating moral issues were kurtotic. All variables that violated assumptions of normality were log transformed. Though SEM is robust against assumptions of normality (Kline, 2013), analyses were conducted with and without these transformed variables. The pattern of significant findings did not differ when transformed variables were used and thus, all results for models with untransformed variables are presented.

### Domain-Specificity in Beliefs about Laws

**Research Question 1, Hypothesis 1.** *Adolescents will make domain-appropriate judgments and justifications concerning laws regulating moral, conventional, personal,*

*prudential, and multifaceted issues.* To examine domain specificity in adolescents' perception of government regulation, domain criterion judgments and justifications were examined across moral, conventional, prudential, personal, and multifaceted issues. First, mean percentages for legitimacy judgments, obedience judgments, authority contingency judgments, and youths' justifications were computed for each domain by averaging across issues hypothesized to be categorized within their respective domain (moral, conventional, personal, prudential, personal/conventional multifaceted). A descriptive overview of these mean percentages is given.

Next, for each domain, proportion scores were created for authority contingency judgments representing the proportion of issues within each domain rated as wrong independent of authority, wrong contingent on authority, and under personal jurisdiction. Three repeated-measures ANOVAs were used to examine differences in proportion scores across authority contingency ratings. Domain was specified as the repeated variable and authority contingency category was specified as the outcome (wrong independent of authority, wrong contingent on authority, under personal jurisdiction). Similarly, proportion scores were created for adolescents' justifications of the wrongness/rightness of an act across domains. These scores represented the number of moral (i.e., because it causes harm to others or it is unfair), conventional (i.e., because it is important to have order, it is impolite, or he/she will get in trouble), personal (i.e., it is not a matter of right or wrong – it is up to the individual), and prudential (because he/she might harm themselves) justifications provided for issues hypothesized to regulate moral, conventional, personal, prudential, and personal/conventional issues, respectively. Four repeated-measures ANOVAs were used to examine mean differences in justification proportion scores. Domain was specified as the repeated variable and the justification (harmful to others, important to have order, harmful to self, up to the individual) was specified as the outcome. Post-hoc comparisons

of significant mean differences in proportion scores for each set of ANOVAs were conducted using Bonferoni's *t*-test for within-subject effects.

Mean percentages of youths' legitimacy judgments, obligation judgments, authority contingency judgments, and justifications for domain-specific issues are displayed in Table 2. The majority of youth viewed government regulation of moral, conventional, and prudential issues as legitimate, and personal issues as illegitimate. Additionally, most youth believed that government had an obligation to create laws regulating moral and prudential issues, and viewed these issues as wrong independent of authority. About half of teens believed that government had an obligation to regulate conventional issues and thought these issues were wrong contingent on authority. Youth did not believe that government had an obligation to regulate personal issues and judged these matters as up to the individual. Justifications for judgments about laws also followed domain specific patterns, with a preponderance of youth indicating that violations of moral issues were wrong because of potential harm or fairness concerns, violations of conventional issues were wrong because of impediments on structure and order, violations of personal issues were not viewed as wrong because they are up to the individual, and violations of prudential issues were viewed as wrong because they entail harm to the self.

Repeated-measures ANOVAs with domain specified as the repeated variable and proportion scores for authority contingency responses (independent of authority, contingent on authority, personal) and justifications (moral, prudential, conventional, personal) specified as the dependent variable were conducted. Means, standard errors, main-effects, and effect sizes for all models are displayed in Table 3. Adolescents viewed a greater proportion of moral and prudential issues as wrong independent of authority compared to conventional, personal, prudential, and personal/conventional multifaceted issues. Teens ascribed authority contingent

judgments to a greater proportion of conventional issues compared to all other domains and viewed that a greater proportion of personal issues as a matter of one's own prerogative. Additionally, compared to moral, prudential, and personal issues (but not conventional issues) youth viewed a proportionally greater number of multifaceted issues as wrong contingent on authority, and compared to moral, prudential, and conventional issues (but not personal issues), youth viewed a proportionally greater number of multifaceted issues as up to the individual.

An examination of adolescents' justifications indicates that youth applied moral justifications to a proportionally greater number of moral issues compared to other domains. Conventional justifications were applied to a proportionally greater number of conventional issues, personal justifications were applied to a proportionally greater number of personal issues, and prudential justifications were applied to a proportionally greater number of prudential issues. Compared to moral, prudential, and personal issues (but not conventional issues), a proportionally greater number of multifaceted issues were ascribed conventional justifications. Additionally, compared to moral, prudential, and conventional issues (but not personal issues), a proportionally greater number of multifaceted laws were ascribed personal justifications, indicating that youth view these laws as containing both personal and conventional components. Collectively, the above pattern of adolescents' judgments and justifications indicated that they were distinguishing between laws regulating different issues in the hypothesized domain-specific way.

**Research Question 1, Hypothesis 2.** *Adolescents will distinguish between laws which govern moral, conventional, prudential, and personal matters in their judgments concerning the importance of laws, obligation to obey laws, and deserved punishment for transgressions.* A SEM measurement model was used to simultaneously test the factor structure of adolescents'

domain-specific beliefs about laws and assess mean differences in importance, obedience, and punishment judgments. Specifically, adolescents' importance, obedience, and punishment judgments were used as indicators of five first-order latent variables that encapsulate adolescents' beliefs about laws that regulate moral, conventional, personal, prudential, and multifaceted issues. Measurement error terms for similar indicators (importance, obedience, and punishment) were allowed to covary along with the latent variables. Mean differences were assessed via comparison of critical ratio of differences for each observed judgment and across domains. Significant differences were indicated with a C.R.  $\geq 1.96$ .

The measurement model provided a good fit to the data ( $\chi^2 / df = 2.05$ , CFI = .98, RMSEA = .06). Table 4 displays means, standard deviations, and factor loadings of importance, obedience, and punishment judgments. All indicators had significant factor loadings onto their respective domains, and covariances among latent variables were moderate and significant (see Table 5). Critical ratios of differences for judgment intercepts indicate mean differences across domains (see Table 6). Violations of laws about prudential issues were viewed as worthy of greater punishment than violations of laws regulating moral issues. Importance and obedience ratings for laws regulating moral and prudential issues did not significantly differ (C.R.s = -.63 and -1.45, respectively). Youth viewed laws regulating moral and prudential issues as more important, more obligatory to obey, and transgressions worthy of greater punishment than laws regulating conventional, personal, and personal/conventional multifaceted issues. Laws concerning conventional issues were viewed as more important, more obligatory to obey, and transgressions worthy of greater punishment than laws regulating personal and multifaceted issues, and youth rated multifaceted issues higher in their importance, obedience, and punishment judgments than laws regulating personal issues.



**Individual Differences in Domain-Beliefs**

Table 7 displays means and standard deviations for informational assumptions (individual attributions, belief in a dangerous world, efficacy of laws) and sociopolitical values (RWA, SDO, RF), and Table 8 displays bivariate correlations for all study variables. Correlations among importance, obedience, and punishment judgments were larger within domains than across domains. While across-domain correlations were significant, they were generally small to moderate in size. Demographic characteristics were correlated with judgments about laws. Younger adolescents rated that individuals were more obligated to obey laws regulating personal issues. Girls had stronger beliefs in a dangerous world, ascribed greater importance, obedience, and punishment ratings for laws regulating prudential issues, viewed violations of laws regulating conventions as worthy of greater punishment, and viewed laws regulating personal issues as more important.

There were also moderate correlations among sociopolitical values and judgments about laws. Specifically, RWA and RF were positively correlated with importance and punishment judgments for laws regulating moral, conventional, prudential, and personal/conventional multifaceted issues. RWA was positively correlated with importance and obedience judgments for laws regulating personal issues and obedience judgments for laws regulating prudential issues. SDO was negatively correlated with importance, obedience, and punishment judgments for laws regulating prudential issues and obedience judgments for laws regulating moral issues. Additionally, SDO was positively correlated with punishment judgments for laws regulating personal issues.

Informational assumptions were also correlated with both sociopolitical values and judgments about laws. Efficacy of laws, individual attributions, and belief in dangerous world

were correlated with stronger RWA, SDO, and RF values. Individual attributions for crime were positively correlated with importance and punishment judgments for laws regulating issues across all domains. Belief in a dangerous world was positively correlated with obedience judgments for laws regulating moral issues, importance and obedience judgments for laws regulating conventional and personal/conventional multifaceted issues, importance judgments for laws regulating personal issues, and importance, obedience, and punishment judgments for laws regulating prudential issues. Efficacy of laws was positively correlated with importance and punishment judgments for laws regulating moral issues, importance judgments for laws regulating conventional and personal issues, and importance, obedience, and punishment judgments for laws regulating prudential and personal multifaceted issues.

**Research Question 2, Hypothesis 1.** *There will be demographic differences in adolescents' domain-beliefs about laws.* To test demographic differences in domain beliefs about laws, an additional structural model was used with gender and age specified as exogenous variables and the five latent variables representing youths' beliefs about laws regulating moral, conventional, personal, prudential, and multifaceted issues as endogenous variables. Measurement error terms for similar indicators (importance, obedience, and punishment) were allowed to covary, along with the residual variance among the latent variables.

The model provided a good fit to the data ( $\chi^2 / df = 1.80$ , CFI = .98, RMSEA = .05). Table 9 displays the unstandardized estimates and standard errors of the structural model. Compared to adolescent boys, adolescent girls ascribed more supportive judgments for laws regulating conventional and prudential issues. Contrary to hypotheses, age was not associated with judgments about laws across domains.

**Research Question 3, Hypothesis 1.** *Sociopolitical values concerning RWA, RF, and SDO will be associated with greater endorsement of importance, obedience, and punishment for laws regulating domain-specific issues.* To test hypothesis 1a-d, a structural model was used to examine associations among sociopolitical values and domain specific beliefs about laws. Observed means scale scores for RWA, RF, and SDO were used to predict latent variables representing adolescents' beliefs about moral, conventional, personal, prudential, and personal/conventional multifaceted issues. Age and gender were entered as covariates. Measurement error terms for similar indicators (importance, obedience, and punishment) and were allowed to covary, along with the residual variance among the latent variables. Additionally, sociopolitical values were allowed to covary.

The model provided a good fit to the data ( $\chi^2 / df = 2.27$ , CFI = .96, RMSEA = .06). Unstandardized estimates and standard errors are displayed in Table 10 and a model displaying significant associations is displayed in Figure 2. Contrary to hypothesis 1a, RWA was not associated with judgments about laws concerning conventional issues. RWA was positively associated with judgments about laws regulating personal, prudential and personal/conventional multifaceted issues. Contrary to hypothesis 1b, RF was not associated with judgments about laws that regulate moral issues. RF was not associated with judgments about laws across domains. Contrary to hypothesis 1c, SDO was not associated with judgments about laws regulating personal issues. Stronger endorsement of SDO was negatively associated with judgments about laws regulating moral and prudential issues.

Exploratory analyses examined associations among sociopolitical values and prudential and personal/conventional multifaceted issues (hypothesis 1d). The results outlined above indicate that RWA was associated with more supportive beliefs about laws regulating prudential

issues and SDO was associated with less supportive beliefs about laws regulating prudential issues. Additionally, RWA was associated with more supportive beliefs about laws concerning personal/conventional multifaceted issues.

**Research Question 4, Hypothesis 1.** *Informational assumptions concerning individual attributions of crime, efficacy of laws, and beliefs in a dangerous world will be positively associated with domain-specific beliefs about laws.* A structural model was used to test associations among informational assumptions, sociopolitical values, and domain-specific beliefs about laws. Mean scale score for efficacy of laws, individual attributions of crime, and beliefs in a dangerous world were entered in the model as an exogenous variable. The five latent variables representing adolescents' beliefs about laws that regulate moral, conventional, prudential, personal, and personal/conventional multifaceted issues and observed RWA, SDO, RF scores were entered as endogenous variables. Age and gender were entered as covariates. Measurement error terms for similar indicators (importance, obedience, and punishment) and latent variable residual error terms were allowed to covary. Additionally, informational assumptions were allowed to covary.

The model provided a good fit to the data ( $\chi^2 / df = 1.71$ , CFI = .97, RMSEA = .05). Unstandardized estimates and standard errors are displayed in Table 11 and a model depicting significant associations are displayed in Figure 3. Consistent with hypothesis 1a, greater individual attributions for crime was positively associated with judgments about laws restricting moral, conventional, personal, and multifaceted issues. Contrary to hypothesis 1b, greater endorsement of dangerous world beliefs was positively associated with judgments about laws restricting prudential issues, but not associated with judgments about laws regulating moral, conventional, personal, or personal/conventional multifaceted issues. While there were no

specific *a priori* predictions concerning domain-specific judgments and efficacy of laws (hypothesis 1c), greater endorsement of efficacy of laws was positively associated with judgments about laws regulating prudential issues, but not associated with judgments about laws regulating moral, conventional, personal, or personal/prudential multifaceted issues.

Similar to research question 3, no hypotheses were made concerning associations among informational assumptions and laws regulating prudential and personal/conventional multifaceted issues (hypothesis 1d). The results outlined above indicate that greater efficacy of laws was positively associated with judgments about laws regulating prudential issues. Additionally, greater belief in dangerous world was positively associated with judgments about laws regulating prudential issues, and greater endorsement of individual attributions of crime was positively associated with judgments concerning laws regulating personal/conventional multifaceted issues.

**Research Question 4, Hypothesis 2.** *Informational assumptions concerning individual attributions of crime, efficacy of laws, and beliefs in a dangerous world will be positively associated with RWA, SDO, and RF values.* The model described for hypothesis 1 was used to examine associations among informational assumptions and sociopolitical values.

Unstandardized estimates and standard errors are displayed in Table 11 and a conceptual model depicted significant associations is displayed in Figure 3. Consistent with hypothesis 2a, stronger endorsement of individual attributions of crime was associated with greater RWA, SDO, and RF values. Additionally, consistent with hypothesis 2b, greater endorsement of beliefs in a dangerous world was associated with greater RWA, SDO, and RF values and consistent with hypothesis 2c, greater endorsement of the efficacy of laws was positively associated with RWA and RF values, but not SDO values.

Exploratory analyses examined whether informational assumptions concerning individual attributions for crime, efficacy of laws, and beliefs in a dangerous world were indirectly associated with domain-specific importance, obedience, and punishment judgments through RWA, RF, and SDO sociopolitical values (hypothesis 2e). Observed mean scores for efficacy of laws, individual attributions of crime, and belief in a dangerous world were entered in the model as exogenous variables. Observed mean scores for sociopolitical values (RWA, RF, SDO) were entered as the mediating variables. The 5 latent variables representing adolescents' beliefs about laws that regulate moral, conventional, prudential, personal, and personal/conventional multifaceted issues were entered as endogenous variables. Age and gender were entered as covariates. Measurement error terms for similar indicators (importance, obedience, and punishment) were allowed to covary along with the residual error terms for the latent variables. Additionally, informational assumptions were allowed to covary. Bootstrapped procedures with bias-corrected confidence intervals were used to assess indirect effects of informational assumptions on government regulation judgments through sociopolitical values.

The model provided an acceptable fit ( $\chi^2 / df = 1.84$ , CFI = .96, RMSEA = .05). Unstandardized estimates and standard errors for all parameters are displayed in Table 12 and standardized estimates of significant associations are depicted in Figure 4. Adolescent girls had more positive beliefs than boys about laws regulating prudential issues. Stronger endorsement of the efficacy of laws was associated with more supportive judgments about laws regulating prudential issues. Greater endorsement of individual attributions of crime was associated with more supportive judgments about laws regulating moral, conventional, and multifaceted issues. Additionally, greater SDO was associated with less supportive judgments about laws regulating moral and prudential issues.

Demographic characteristics and informational assumptions were also associated with sociopolitical values. Adolescent boys endorsed greater RWA and SDO values and younger adolescents endorsed greater RWA values. Stronger beliefs about the efficacy of laws were associated with greater RWA and RF values. Greater endorsement of individual attributions of crime and belief in a dangerous world were associated with greater RWA, SDO, and RF values.

Certain informational assumptions were indirectly associated with beliefs about laws through sociopolitical values. Specifically, greater individual attributions of crime and belief in a dangerous world were indirectly associated with less supportive judgments about prudential issues through greater SDO values (Indirect effects:  $B = -.06$ ,  $SE = .02$ , 95% CI [-.02, -.06] and  $B = -.06$ ,  $SE = .02$ , 95% CI [-.02, -.06], respectively).

### **Additional Analyses**

**Alternative model for Research Question 4, Hypothesis 2a-d.** Given the large amount of shared variance among RWA, SDO, and RF, an additional SEM model was conducted to better establish specificity among associations among sociopolitical values and informational assumptions. Sociopolitical values were specified as exogenous variables and informational assumptions were specified as endogenous variables. Age and gender were entered as covariates.

The model provided a good fit to the data ( $\chi^2 / df = 2.19$ , CFI = .95, RMSEA = .06). Unstandardized estimates and standard errors are displayed in Table 13. After accounting for shared variance among sociopolitical values, RWA was associated with greater efficacy of laws, individual attributions of crime, and belief in a dangerous world. SDO and RF were not associated with any informational assumptions.

**Alternative model for Research Question 4, Hypothesis 2e.** An additional exploratory SEM model was estimated to test whether sociopolitical values were indirectly associated with

judgments about domain-specific laws through informational assumptions. The model specifications were similar to those outlined for hypothesis 1d, only sociopolitical values (RWA, SDO, RF) were specified as exogenous variables and informational assumptions were specified as mediating variables.

The model provided an acceptable fit ( $\chi^2 / df = 1.97$ , CFI = .95, RMSEA = .05). Unstandardized estimates and standard errors are displayed in Table 14 and significant standardized estimates are displayed in Figure 5. Adolescent girls ascribed more supportive judgments for laws regulating prudential issues. Stronger endorsement of the efficacy of laws was associated with more supportive judgments about laws regulating prudential issues. Greater SDO values were associated with less supportive judgments about laws regulating moral and prudential issues. Greater endorsement of individual attributions of crime was associated with more supportive judgments about laws regulating moral, conventional, and personal/conventional multifaceted issues.

Demographic characteristics and sociopolitical values were associated with informational assumptions. Adolescent boys endorsed greater efficacy of laws and adolescent girls endorsed greater belief in a dangerous world. Additionally, greater RWA values were associated with stronger endorsement of the efficacy of laws, individual attributions, and belief in dangerous world.

Sociopolitical values were indirectly associated with beliefs about laws through informational assumptions. Specifically, greater of RWA values were indirect associated with more supportive judgments about laws regulating moral, conventional, and personal/conventional multifaceted issues through greater individual attributions of crime (moral issues indirect effects:  $B = .08$ ,  $SE = .03$ , 95% CI [.03, .06]; conventional issues indirect effects:



$B = .09$ ,  $SE = .03$ , 95% CI [.04, .07]; multifaceted issues indirect effects:  $B = .12$ ,  $SE = .02$ , 95% CI [.03, .06]). Additionally, higher levels of RWA values were indirectly associated with more supportive judgments about laws regulating prudential issues through greater endorsement of the efficacy of laws (Indirect effects:  $B = .06$ ,  $SE = .03$ , 95% CI [.02, .07]).

### Discussion

The current study examined adolescents' beliefs about laws and the role of government in regulating different types of issues. Using assessments informed by social domain theory, the current study demonstrates that adolescents distinguished between laws hypothesized to regulate moral, conventional, personal, and prudential issues in domain-consistent ways. These distinctions were reflected in traditional domain criterion judgments and justifications and in quantitative assessments designed to capture within-domain variability in beliefs about laws. Additionally, teens' beliefs about laws were linked with other facets of their political reasoning, including their emerging sociopolitical values and informational assumptions. Convergence between sociopolitical values, informational assumptions about laws and authority, and domain-beliefs about laws provides novel insight into developmental processes related to the emergence of adolescents' emerging political identity, which is thought to guide political decisions in adulthood.

This study contributes to the literature on adolescent political reasoning in several distinct ways. Specifically, the current study was one of the first to examine the interrelation between sociopolitical values, informational assumptions, and domain beliefs. By examining these diverse facets of adolescents' political reasoning, the current study provides initial insights into the ways in which sociopolitical values and informational assumptions are connected with teens' beliefs about laws. Elucidating this area of political reasoning provides developmental theorists with a foundation to further examine the formation of political identity across adolescence and

into adulthood. Additionally, the current study successfully developed a group of vignettes that describe individuals breaking laws that most adolescents judged from specific domains of social knowledge. These vignettes may be used in future research to examine domain-specificity in adolescents' beliefs about laws. Lastly, drawing upon moral development research, the current study employed theoretically informed judgments to assess inter-individual variability in adolescents' domain-specific beliefs about laws, which can be used in future research to elucidate individual differences in these beliefs.

### **Adolescents' Domain-Specific Beliefs about Laws**

A central goal of the current study was to utilize a social domain framework to help explicate the structure of adolescents' beliefs about laws and government. The current study investigated whether adolescents distinguish between laws that were hypothesized to regulate moral, conventional, personal, prudential, and multifaceted issues in their judgments and justifications. Little developmental research has examined how these political processes are intertwined with social and moral reasoning. Beliefs about the appropriateness of government regulation represent a key component of sociopolitical reasoning that may be largely contingent on adolescents' conceptualizations of social issues. Indeed, laws are tailored to address divergent facets of the common good (Tapp & Kohlberg, 1971), which may include preventing harm to others (e.g., assault), reducing harm to oneself (e.g., wearing a seatbelt), or providing structures that help maintain social systems (e.g., registering one's car). By explicating how adolescents' beliefs about laws are influenced by the type of behavior being regulated, scholars are better able to understand normative social-cognitive developmental processes that undergird emerging political reasoning.

Findings from this study add to research on adolescent social and moral development by demonstrating that teens' distinguish between different types of laws in their domain-criterion

judgments and justifications. A central goal of many laws is to protect citizens' rights and welfare, which may entail preventing harm imposed by others or oneself. In the current study, adolescents viewed government as an authority that is obligated to create laws that prevent harm, indicating that youth recognized the function of these types of laws. For instance, laws that were hypothesized to regulate moral issues (i.e., fighting, stealing, vandalizing) were viewed as legitimate and wrong independent of authority for reasons that concern rights, welfare, and harm to others. Similarly, laws regulating prudential issues (i.e., drug use, seatbelt, and helmet regulations) were viewed as legitimate and wrong independent of authority, but for reasons concerning personal harm. Furthermore, adolescents believed that laws regulating these issues were highly important, obligatory to obey, and transgression worthy of a large greater punishment compared to laws regulating other types of issues.

Legal scholars have also highlighted that certain laws are established to ensure structure, and facilitate social and civic functioning (Tyler, 2006). Teens recognized government as a legitimate authority over these conventional issues (i.e., parking, registering one's car, fishing without a license), but unlike moral issues, these laws were contingent on government authority for reasons concerning avoidance of punishment and order. In other words, laws governing conventional issues were viewed as wrong only if sanctioned by government and were viewed as legitimate because they helped coordinate social interactions. Conventional rules and laws are designed to ensure the smooth and effective functioning of social systems (e.g., Turiel, 2008) and adolescents' judgments and justifications reflected that they distinguished between laws that prevent harm to the self and others, and those that entail maintenance and order. Additionally, youth recognized the social benefit of laws regulating conventional issues and rated them as

important, obligatory to obey, and punishable, more so than laws regulating personal or personal/conventional multifaceted issues.

In contrast to moral and conventional issues, government regulation over personal issues was not viewed as legitimate. Certain behaviors such as joining out-of-school activities, getting a job, and wearing baggy clothes in public were judged as up to the individual for reasons that concerned personal choice. Furthermore, these laws were viewed as relatively unimportant, were not obligatory to obey, and transgressions were worthy of little to no punishment. These findings demonstrate that youth view certain issues, especially those that do not entail welfare concerns or contribute to efficient social functioning, as beyond government control, and matters of their own prerogative.

While the majority of youth categorized laws hypothesized to regulate moral, prudential, convention, and personal issues in their respective domains, beliefs about some laws were expected to be heterogeneous. Specifically, laws concerning visiting the park after dark, loitering, and zoning were expected to have both personal and conventional components. Adolescents' judgments and justifications indicated that some teens viewed government regulation of these issues as illegitimate for personal reasons and others viewed them as legitimate for conventional reasons. Domain theorists have stressed the variation in multifaceted beliefs may result from differences in an individual's position within hierarchical social relationships or differences in interpretation of behaviors based on personal experience (Smetana, 2006). Although youth likely share similar positions in the social relationship when considering these laws (i.e., all being governed and none governing), adolescents may vary in their personal experiences with these issues. For example, some youth may live in communities that enact zoning laws while others may live in areas where these laws are less prevalent (e.g.,

rural communities). Future research is needed to examine whether personal experience with these laws accounts for variation in adolescents' domain-specific understanding.

The domain specificity in teens' beliefs about laws builds off research that has focused on adolescents' reasoning concerning rules established by parents (e.g., Smetana, 1988, 1995; Smetana & Asquith, 1994; Tisak, 1986; Yau et al., 2009) and teachers (e.g., Smetana & Bitz, 1996). Furthermore, these findings support previous research that demonstrates adolescents' beliefs about laws are nuanced and highly contingent on the content of the rule (Helwig, 1995). Establishing domain specificity in adolescents' beliefs about laws has important implications for social science research. Scholars interested in the elucidating the developmental roots of teens' political identity may benefit from examining how growth trajectories in beliefs about laws change over the course of adolescence. Furthermore, political scientists may integrate this information to help disentangle cultural variation in support for different types of political structures. For example, youth residing in countries that employ socialist or totalitarian regimes have may have a more expansive view of conventional relative to personal issues, or may view a wider array of issues as multifaceted, entailing both personal and conventional components. Additionally, criminal justice or developmental scholars interested in how teens' beliefs about the legitimacy of government are linked with their engagement in delinquency should consider whether these associations are domain-specific. Some evidence suggests that youths' domain-specific beliefs about certain forms of delinquency (i.e., substance use) are closely tied to their behavior (e.g., Nucci et al., 1991). Similar trends may be found with other forms of prudential issues (e.g., seatbelts, helmet use) and personal/conventional multifaceted issues.

**Within-Domain Variability in Beliefs about Laws.** An additional goal of this study was to build upon recent methodological advancements in social domain research (Metzger &

Smetana, 2009) by assessing importance, obedience, and punishment judgments and utilizing latent variable modeling to measure within-domain variability in adolescents' beliefs about laws. Confirmatory factor analyses suggest that adolescents' importance, obedience, and punishment ratings followed domain specific patterns. These findings also suggested that although most youth share a common understanding of government's role in regulating certain issues as indicated by their domain-criterion judgments, there is still variability in the degree to which youth *prioritize* different type of laws. Creating assessments that capture within-domain variation in adolescents' beliefs about laws provides useful tool to capture individual differences in teens' normative developmental understanding of government and authority. This is particularity pertinent for examining potential sources of variation in adolescents' emerging political attitudes.

### **Demographic Differences in Beliefs about Laws**

Demographic characteristics were one source of within-domain variation in adolescents' beliefs about laws. Girls ascribed more supportive judgments (higher importance, obedience, and punishment judgments) towards laws regulating conventional and prudential issues than boys. These findings are consistent with previous research that has demonstrated that girls are less likely to engage in risky behavior and delinquency than boys (e.g., Harre, Field, & Kirkwood, 1996) and are more likely to support laws that regulate risky behaviors (Flanagan et al., 2008). Contrary to hypotheses, adolescent age was not associated with domain beliefs about laws. The relatively low number of participating freshmen ( $n = 32$ ) and sophomores ( $n = 47$ ) may have limited the ability to detect hypothesized age differences in the current study and future research is needed to examine these associations across a wider age range.

### **Sociopolitical Values and Beliefs about Laws**

Adolescents' sociopolitical values are an additional component of their political reasoning that was hypothesized to account for variation in judgments about laws. Findings from

the current study demonstrate domain-specific coordination among sociopolitical values concerning authority (RWA), group based hierarchy (SDO), and strict adherence to religious doctrines (RF). These findings support previous research that has characterized sociopolitical values as overarching principles used to guide social beliefs and behavior (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001), and suggests that youth may use their emerging sociopolitical values systems to inform their beliefs about government regulation.

Right-wing authoritarian values were associated with teens' judgments about laws. Specifically, greater endorsement of RWA was associated with more positive beliefs about laws regulating personal, prudential, and multifaceted issues. These findings are consistent with previous research on adults that has found that those higher in RWA are more likely to advocate for government authority over certain personal freedoms (Altemeyer, 1988) and support laws restricting drug use (Duckitt, Bizumic, Krauss, & Heled, 2010). Adolescents may draw upon values that support the importance of authority more generally when evaluating whether government has legitimate jurisdiction over issues that concern the self (both personal and prudential) or those that have personal components. Interestingly, RWA was not associated with beliefs about laws that regulate moral or conventional issues. Potentially, even youth with lower RWA values recognize the social benefit of government regulation over moral and conventional issues and ascribe similar levels of importance, obedience, punishment ratings for these behaviors. In contrast, the social benefit of laws regulating issues concerning the self may be more ambiguous or controversial and beliefs about these laws may entail greater heterogeneity. Thus, adolescents may draw upon values that concerning authority and hierarchy more generally when evaluating the importance of these laws, their obligation to obey these laws, and the deserved punishment for transgressions.

Social dominance values were also associated with domain-specific beliefs about laws. Interestingly, adolescents that endorsed greater social dominance were *less* likely to prioritize laws regulating moral and prudential issues. These results were unexpected given that previous research suggests that those higher in SDO endorse greater social regulation and stricter punishment for criminal offender as a means of perpetuating structural inequality (Mitchell & Sidanius, 1995). Much of this research has primarily focused on support for the death penalty and the effectiveness of firm punishment to prevent crime (e.g., Sidanius, Mitchell, Haley, & Navarrete, 2006). Potentially, those with higher SDO values are less likely to support laws against moral (e.g., stealing, vandalism) and prudential (e.g., drug use) violations because violating these laws may directly contribute to social stratification. Laws regulating moral and prudential issues help maintain social equality by preventing illegitimate self-advancement or potential self-degradation. Youth with greater SDO values may be less supportive of these laws, which potentially counteract individual strategies for increasing or maintain social stratification. For example, someone with greater SDO values may view laws preventing stealing as less important because thievery may provide individuals with a means of advancing one's status at the expense of a lower-status victim. Additionally, those willing to engage in risky behaviors (e.g., drug use) may be more likely to incur the accompanied cost (self-harm) that may place them lower on the social hierarchy than those who do not engage in these behaviors. Thus, potentially, those higher in SDO may be more accepting of removing sanction on moral and prudential issues as way of promoting social hierarchy.

Contrary to hypotheses, religious fundamentalism was not associated with domain-specific beliefs about laws after accounting for RWA and SDO beliefs. Consistent with previous research (Altemyer & Hunsberger, 2004), bivariate correlations indicated that RF and RWA



were highly correlated ( $r = .70$ ). Though obedience and harsh punishment are common themes stressed within RF (e.g., Rose, 1988), RF also entails a wide variety of other diverse principles emphasized within theological doctrines, such as beliefs concerning the origins of life, the nature of the afterlife, and the importance of spiritual meaning and fulfilment (Altemyer & Hunsberger, 2004). In contrast, RWA is a value system that more directly encapsulates obedience, punishment, and traditionalism (Altemyer, 1996). Although RWA may share components of RF, the explicit focus of obedience and punishment characterized by RWA may lead RWA to be more closely aligned with individuals beliefs about laws compared to RF values.

### **Informational Assumptions and Relations with Beliefs about Laws and Sociopolitical Values**

Descriptive informational assumptions about laws and authority, beliefs in a dangerous and threatening world, and individual attributions of crime, are an additional component of political reasoning that are thought to influence teens' prescriptive understanding of laws by changing the interpretation or meaning of an event. Findings from the current study provide support for links between descriptive and prescriptive social understanding by demonstrating associations among informational assumptions, judgments about laws, and sociopolitical values.

Consistent with hypotheses, informational assumptions concerning the efficacy of laws and beliefs in dangerous world were an important individual difference predicting variability in domain-specific beliefs about laws. Specifically, youth that endorsed greater individual attributions of crime ascribed more supportive judgments about laws regulating morel, conventional, personal, and multifaceted issues. The link between individual attributions of crime and support for laws that regulate personal issues is especially notable, and suggests that beliefs about intentionality may inform beliefs about laws even when regulation is not viewed as legitimate. These findings are consistent with previous research indicating that those who

perceive crime as a consequence of individual nature view transgressions as more serious and endorse more punitive judgments to violations than those who endorse social explanations (Sims, 2003; Weiner, 2001). Potentially, those who endorse individual attributions of crime view transgressions as intentional and controllable, as opposed to outside of the transgressor's power. This shift in blame may account for this greater support of laws.

Exploratory analyses indicated that assumptions concerning beliefs in a dangerous world and perceived efficacy of laws, but not individual attributions of crime, were associated with greater support for laws about prudential issues. Adolescents that perceive the world as dangerous and threatening or that laws are efficacious in preventing crime may support laws that regulate prudential issues as means of limiting the likelihood of encountering situations that cause self-harm. Furthermore, concerns of personal safety and the effectiveness of laws may outweigh beliefs about whether crime is controllable or intentional when evaluating beliefs about laws regulating prudential issues because the outcome concerns harm to the self and not to others. Beliefs in a dangerous world and perceived efficacy of laws were unrelated to judgments about laws regulating moral, conventional, personal, and conventional/personal multifaceted issues after accounting for attributions of crime. When considering issues that have potential impediments on others, assumptions about controllability and intentionality may have greater overlap with beliefs about laws relative to assumptions about the prevalence of crime and effectiveness of laws.

In the current study, informational assumptions were also associated with greater endorsement of RWA, SDO, and RF values and assumptions concerning individual attributions of crime were associated with greater RWA and RF values. However, when accounting for shared variance among sociopolitical values, RWA was the only value that remained

significantly associated with informational assumptions. Higher levels of RWA was associated with greater efficacy assumptions, belief in a dangerous world, and individual attributions. Youth that view individuals as responsible for crime may be more likely to adopt RWA values as a means of providing social structure and order (Halkjelsvik & Rise, 2014), while individuals high in dangerous world beliefs may adopt RWA values as a means of coping with fear and uncertainty (Duckitt, 2001; Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004). Additionally, those that assume authority knows what is best for citizens and can efficiently address social issues may have endorse generalized RWA values because they have greater overall trust in authority. Alternatively, adolescents may draw upon RWA values when interpreting or encoding social information, making them more attuned to details that prompt beliefs in a dangerous world, the efficacy of laws, or the individual attributions of crime. Future research is needed to test the temporal sequence of associations between these informational assumptions and RWA. Together, these findings indicate that factual assumptions teens making about authority figures, causes of crime, and perceptions of about society are uniquely tied to more generalized principles concerning obedience and authority.

**The mediating role of assumptions and values.** An exploratory aim of this study was examine whether associations among informational assumptions were indirectly associated with domain-specific beliefs through sociopolitical values and if associations among sociopolitical values were indirectly associated with domain-specific beliefs through informational assumptions. Findings provided little evidence for the anticipated indirect associations between informational assumptions and beliefs about laws via sociopolitical values. However, findings suggests that individual attributions of crime and belief in a dangerous world were indirectly associated with less supportive judgments about laws regulating prudential issues through greater

social dominance values. A core tenet of SDO is the endorsement and promotion of social competition (Pratto et al., 1994). Potentially, youth that view the world as dangerous or hold individuals more responsible for crime may adopt values that support social competition as a means of promoting sustainability or self-enhancement within a perceived competitive society. These youth may then be less supportive for laws that prevent self-harm as means of disadvantaging others through self-degradation. However, it should be noted that associations between belief in a dangerous world, individual attributions, and SDO did not control for RWA values. Findings from the current study suggest that when controlling for RWA, associations among belief in a dangerous world, individual attributions of crime, and SDO become non-significant (Table 13). Thus, not controlling for RWA may have amplified the indirect effects of these assumptions on beliefs about laws regulating prudential issues and future research is needed to replicate these findings.

More consistent findings emerged that supported potential indirect effects of sociopolitical values on domain beliefs about laws through informational assumptions, particularly for RWA. Specifically, RWA was indirectly associated with greater support for laws regulating prudential issues through greater perceived efficacy of laws. Individuals that value obedience and authority may support laws that prevent self-harm because they trust that authority has the knowledge and skills to protect citizens from making risky decisions that impact their welfare. Additionally, RWA was indirectly associated with greater support for laws concerning moral, conventional, and multifaceted issues through greater assumptions concerning individual attributions of crime. Although there were no direct links between RWA and beliefs about laws that regulate moral and conventional issues, those higher in RWA may be more inclined to adopt individual attributions of crime, which may lead to a prioritization of these

laws. Overall, this pattern of findings indicates that assumptions concerning individual attributions of crime, belief in a dangerous world, and efficacy of laws are uniquely tied to RWA values and RWA values are primarily associated with beliefs about laws through these assumptions.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

This research provides several novel contributions to research on moral and social development in adolescents, and is one of the first studies to investigate how adolescents reason about laws that regulate prototypical domain issues. However, findings from the current study should be taken in light of certain limitations. Concordant data does not allow for causal inferences about the associations found in the current research, and longitudinal data is needed to determine the temporal order of these associations to further explicate the developmental trajectories underlying these values, beliefs, and assumptions. Although sociopolitical and informational assumptions are hypothesized to guide beliefs about laws, adolescents may also draw upon these beliefs when appraising the importance of different value systems.

Additionally, self-report measures are susceptible to social-desirability biases, and adolescents may have over-reported positive beliefs about laws. Given the nature of some of the questionnaires, shared method variance may have contributed to the current findings. Specifically, the measures assessing sociopolitical values contained similar wording and were not analyzed using latent variables that account for measurement error. Some of the scales in the current study also had notably low reliability, particularly those assessing the importance (personal:  $\alpha = .47$ ) and punishment judgments (personal/conventional multifaceted:  $\alpha = .59$ ) for different laws, which was likely due to the low number of items that made up these scales.

Future research should employ a wider array of items assessing adolescents' beliefs about laws regulating domain-specific issues.

Findings in the current study may not generalize to all adolescents. Participants from the current study were primarily White/Caucasian from a mid-sized city. Although the sample was similar to the demographic characteristics of the local community and the recruited high school, future research should examine how these findings replicate based on regions or states that may vary in social norms or laws. It may also be important for future research to examine beliefs about laws, informational assumptions, and sociopolitical values in more urban environments and for youth from immigrant families. For example, in urban environments, youth may be exposed to more crime and potential danger, which may alter their informational assumptions and beliefs about laws. Additionally, youth from immigrant families may have different perceptions of laws –particularly those restricting conventional issues –as conventional laws and rules are highly contextually and culturally dependent (e.g., Turiel, 1983). Although previous research has indicated that socioeconomic status (SES) is not associated with adolescents' domain beliefs about civic behaviors (e.g., Metzger & Smetana, 2009; Metzger & Ferris, 2013), future research is needed to explore the role of SES on adolescents' beliefs about laws. Some of the findings from the current study may be due to variation in socioeconomic status, although unfortunately SES was not assessed. For example, previous research has found that youth from less affluent families are more likely to provide internal explanations for wealth and poverty (Flanagan et al., 2014) and endorse greater SDO values (Oosterhoff, Ferris, & Metzger, 2014). Similarly, youth from less affluent backgrounds may endorse greater individual attributions of crime and not accounting for this shared variance may be why unique associations among SDO and individual attributions were not found in the current study.

Findings from this study provide many questions for future research. Sociopolitical values and information assumptions are one potential source of variation in adolescents' beliefs about laws. Other domain research has highlighted that social beliefs are largely influenced by individual experiences (e.g., Metzger & Smetana, 2009; Nucci et al., 1991). Thus, a fruitful direction for future research would be to examine how adolescents' engagement in activities that violate laws is associated with their domain-specific beliefs. Additionally, the assumptions used in the current study were uniquely associated with RWA values. An important future direction would be to identify assumptions that more closely align with other sociopolitical values, including RF and SDO. For example, the primary focus of SDO on group-based inequality, so one assumption that may be particularly relevant for associations among SDO and beliefs about laws is perceptions about equality under the law (e.g., laws equally apply to everyone).

Future research is also needed to examine adolescents' beliefs about laws longitudinally. Examining these processes over time would provide evidence of temporal sequencing between sociopolitical values, informational assumptions, and domain beliefs. Additionally, longitudinal data would allow for the examination of growth trajectories of beliefs about laws. Some evidence suggests that with age and increased abstract reasoning, adolescents begin to recognize the limitations and benefits of institutional authority, yet, perhaps paradoxically, also believe that government should assume a larger role in regulating issues that may entail self-harm (Flanagan et al., 2008). Examining whether these developmental processes follow domain specific patterns would provide valuable insight into social and political development.

Future research should also examine how early adolescents or older children coordinate these nascent values with beliefs about laws. While the current study focused on middle to late adolescence, some evidence suggests that even young children's understanding of laws is

complex (Helwig 1995). Furthermore, while sociopolitical values are hypothesized to develop during adolescence (Altemyer, 1996), emerging evidence suggests that these values may be rooted in early childhood (Tagar, Federico, Lyons, Ludeke, & Koenig, 2014). Examining how multiple facets of political reasoning begin to converge earlier in development may provide insight into sources of heterogeneity in beliefs about laws and later delinquent behavior.

An additional fruitful avenue of future research would be to examine social factors that influence the adoption of informational assumptions concerning laws and authority. As noted by Wainryb (2004), informational assumptions may be derived from a variety of different sources, including negative attentional biases and emotional processes. Socialization factors, such as parental messages about the potential threats and dangers, may be an additional source of variation in informational assumptions. Previous research has suggests that parents' messages about citizenship are an important source of variation in their adolescents' beliefs about civic duty (Oosterhoff & Metzger, 2015). Similarly, parents' messages about individual attributions of crime, and the efficacy of laws and authority may be an addition developmental antecedent of these assumptions. Examining sources of variation of information assumptions, particularly attribution biases, may help explicate social and individual factors that contribute to different political and social views.

While the current study employed theoretically derived measures and comprehensive structural modeling techniques, future research should also utilize multiple methodologies to assess domain-specific beliefs. Consistent with previous search (Nucci et al., 1991), survey methods were used to assess domain criterion judgments and justifications. Traditional social domain research employs semi-structured interviews, which allow for additional probing and integration of multiple justifications. While the majority of youth classified each law within the



hypothesized domain, there was some heterogeneity in these responses. Future research should integrate forced-choice survey responses with semi-structured interviews or free response formats to assess the variety of different justifications youth may provide for why different issues are wrong. Similarly, attributions for crime were assessed using Likert-type scales. Utilizing free-response formats may allow scholars to capture the variety of explanations teens may provide for social issues.

### **Conclusions**

The current study employed social domain theory to examine how sociopolitical values and informational assumptions relate to adolescents' beliefs about laws. By integrating research on social and developmental psychology, the current study provides new insights into adolescent political reasoning. Elucidating the multiple facets of political reasoning will provide valuable insight into the developmental processes responsible for adult political attitudes and behavior. Adolescents' developing value systems and assumptions concerning their social world may be associated with their emerging conceptualizations of laws and government. This early coalescence of political reasoning may contribute to broader ideological systems in adulthood.

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Table 1

*Vignette Categories and Descriptions.*

<b>Moral</b>	
Stealing	Morgan lives in state that has laws about stealing. Morgan takes money out of a stranger’s purse when they are not looking.
Fighting	Jessie lives in a state that has laws against physically hurting another person. Jessie gets into a fist fight with a neighborhood kid for no reason.
Vandalism	Alex lives in a state that has laws against vandalism. A new recreation building is built in Alex’s community. Late at night, Alex spray paints graffiti on the side of the newly built community building.
<b>Conventional</b>	
Parking	Taylor drives into an empty parking lot of a state owned building and parks next to a sign that clearly states "No parking without permit".
Car Registration	Ryan lives in a state that requires all cars to be registered at the DMV each year. Ryan’s car was registered when it was purchased. However, Ryan did not renew the registration when it expired. Ryan drives to the convenience store with an expired registration.
Fishing License	Sam goes fishing at a state owned pond without buying a fishing license. At this pond, there is a sign that clearly states “All fishermen must have valid fishing license.”
<b>Personal</b>	
Out-of-School Activities	Jamie lives in a state that requires all high school kids to join out-of-school activities every year, but he did not sign up for any activities.
Job	Casey’s state requires teenagers to get a job at the age of 16. Casey’s parents both work, and her family can easily pay their bills. Casey decides that she does not want a job, and instead spends free time with friends.
Clothes	Jordan lives in a state that doesn't allow teenagers to wear baggy pants in public. Jordan walked to the store wearing a baggy shirt and shorts.
<b>Prudential</b>	
Cocaine	Avery lives in a state that has laws against using drugs. Avery is offered cocaine at a party. Although he has never tried cocaine before, he decides to use it.
Prescription Pills	Riley lives in state that has laws against using prescription pain killers not meant for you. A friend offers Riley prescription pain killers. Riley is not experiencing any pain. Riley’s friend says that they "just feel good". Riley takes the pain killers to get that "good feeling".
Seatbelt	Cory lives in a state that requires all passengers in a car to wear seatbelts. Cory is riding in the front passenger seat of a car without wearing a seatbelt.
Helmet	Alex lives in a state that requires all motorcycle riders to wear a helmet. Cory is riding on a motorcycle without wearing a helmet.
<b>Personal/Conventional Multifaceted</b>	
Park	Parker is walking home at midnight talking with a couple of friends. They enter an empty park and walk past a sign that says “closed at sun down” and continue to talk.
Loitering	Sam and Corey live in a community that doesn't allow teenagers to loiter (hang around) outside of local businesses. Sam and Corey talk outside of the convenience store for a couple of hours in front of a sign that says “No loitering”.
Zoning	Jamie owns a house in a community that does not allow above ground swimming pools. Jamie decides to install an above ground pool.

Table 2

*Mean Judgments in % of Legitimacy, Obligation, Authority Contingency, and Justifications.*

	Moral	Conventional	Personal	Prudential	Multifaceted
Legitimacy	92.5	85.9	8.2	94.9	51.9
Obligation	75.7	55.4	4.2	75.4	22.2
<b>Authority Contingency</b>					
Not contingent	75.5	36.7	2.1	72.1	10.5
Contingent	9.2	42.8	4.7	9.5	34.8
Personal	15.4	20.5	93.2	18.3	54.6
<b>Justification</b>					
Moral	68.8	33.4	2.6	12.1	13.2
Conventional	20.9	42.4	3.2	1.9	44.5
Personal	5.7	15.8	91.0	3.1	52.0
Prudential	6.6	8.4	2.3	82.8	4.4

Table 3

*Within-Subject ANOVAs Comparing Proportion of Judgments Endorsed by Domain*

	Moral		Conventional		Personal		Prudential		Multifaceted		Main Effects	
	M	SE	M	SE	M	SE	M	SE	M	SE	<i>df</i> = (4, 340)	$\eta_p^2$
<b>Authority Contingency</b>												
Not contingent	.75 <sub>a</sub>	.02	.37 <sub>b</sub>	.02	.02 <sub>c</sub>	.01	.72 <sub>a</sub>	.02	.11 <sub>d</sub>	.01	655.10***	.66
Contingent	.09 <sub>a</sub>	.01	.43 <sub>b</sub>	.02	.05 <sub>c</sub>	.01	.10 <sub>ac</sub>	.01	.35 <sub>d</sub>	.02	189.82***	.36
Up to the individual	.15 <sub>a</sub>	.01	.21 <sub>b</sub>	.02	.93 <sub>c</sub>	.01	.18 <sub>ab</sub>	.01	.55 <sub>d</sub>	.02	633.24***	.65
<b>Justifications</b>												
Moral	.68 <sub>a</sub>	.02	.33 <sub>b</sub>	.02	.03 <sub>c</sub>	.01	.12 <sub>d</sub>	.01	.14 <sub>d</sub>	.02	452.50***	.57
Conventional	.21 <sub>a</sub>	.01	.42 <sub>b</sub>	.02	.04 <sub>c</sub>	.01	.02 <sub>c</sub>	.01	.30 <sub>d</sub>	.02	188.63***	.36
Personal	.04 <sub>a</sub>	.01	.16 <sub>b</sub>	.01	.91 <sub>c</sub>	.01	.03 <sub>a</sub>	.01	.53 <sub>d</sub>	.01	1130.40***	.77
Prudential	.06 <sub>a</sub>	.01	.16 <sub>b</sub>	.01	.03 <sub>c</sub>	.01	.65 <sub>d</sub>	.01	.14 <sub>b</sub>	.02	598.90***	.64

Notes: Means with different subscripts significantly differ from one another. \*\*\**p* < .001.

Table 4

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Factor Loadings of Indicator Variables Representing Domain Specific Beliefs about Laws.*

	Moral			Conventional			Personal			Prudential			Multifaceted		
	Factor Loading	M	SD	Factor Loading	M	SD	Factor Loading	M	SD	Factor Loading	M	SD	Factor Loading	M	SD
Importance	.57	4.20 <sub>a</sub>	.71	.81	2.66 <sub>b</sub>	.78	.58	1.31 <sub>c</sub>	.50	.87	4.17 <sub>a</sub>	.77	.76	1.83 <sub>d</sub>	.70
Obedience	.35	4.34 <sub>a</sub>	1.03	.65	3.31 <sub>b</sub>	1.05	.52	2.10 <sub>c</sub>	1.29	.63	4.27 <sub>a</sub>	.94	.52	2.58 <sub>d</sub>	1.20
Punishment	.94	3.68 <sub>a</sub>	.79	.85	2.48 <sub>b</sub>	.71	.69	1.28 <sub>c</sub>	.51	.88	3.81 <sub>d</sub>	.90	.85	1.78 <sub>e</sub>	.69

Notes: Means with different subscripts significantly differ from one another.

Table 5

*Covariances among Latent Variables Representing Domain-Specific Beliefs about Laws.*

	2	3	4	5
1. Moral	.35***	.17*	.34***	.39***
2. Conventional		.40***	.52***	.65***
3. Personal			.22**	.57***
4. Prudential				.46***
5. Multifaceted				

Note: \*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$ .

Table 6

*Critical Ratios of Differences Comparing Mean Differences among Importance, Obedience, and Punishment Judgments across Domains.*

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Moral Imp	11.16	13.24	-25.39	-5.79	-19.90	-51.51	-20.11	-48.45	2.43	9.86	9.33	-42.36	-15.4	-38.17
2. Moral Ob	-	-2.21	-28.50	-17.42	-25.07	-49.41	-26.83	-48.77	-7.44	-1.46	-2.51	-39.87	-24.41	-38.85
3. Moral Pun		-	-34.67	-13.80	-32.16	-64.07	-27.09	-62.61	-6.88	1.09	-.63	-50.23	-22.23	-50.99
4. Conv. Imp			-	16.68	5.56	-30.19	-5.17	-27.17	29.86	32.81	37.97	-19.07	1.57	-15.84
5. Conv. Ob				-	-12.67	-34.29	-20.36	-33.38	7.89	18.68	14.25	-26.87	-16.76	-25.49
6. Conv. Pun					-	-30.71	-7.44	-30.35	22.60	28.52	32.81	-20.86	-1.1	-21.78
7. Pers. Imp						-	12.57	1.03	48.14	54.01	61.83	14.71	19.74	13.77
8. Pers. Ob							-	-11.80	21.19	28.50	26.77	-4.53	10.51	-3.85
9. Pers. Pun								-	46.93	53.08	61.44	11.80	19.03	14.33
10. Pru. Imp									-	9.70	11.41	-41.58	-16.79	-38.39
11. Pru. Ob										-	-2.16	-45.09	-25.80	-43.51
12. Prub. Pun											-	-52.42	-22.66	-50.97
13. Mult. Imp												-	13.40	1.39
14. Mult. Ob													-	-12.29
15. Mult. Pun														-

Notes Imp = Importance, Ob = Obedience, Pun = Punishment

Table 7

*Means and Standard Deviations for  
Sociopolitical Values and Informational  
Assumptions*

	M	SD
Efficacy of Laws	4.02	.86
Individual attributions	3.05	.95
Belief in a Dangerous World	3.86	.92
RWA	3.84	1.45
SDO	2.36	1.04
RF	4.22	2.09

Note: RWA = right-wing authoritarianism,  
SDO = social dominance orientation,  
RF = religious fundamentalism,



Table 8  
*Bivariate Correlations among Demographic Characteristics, Informational Assumptions, Sociopolitical Values, and Domain Beliefs about Laws.*

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
1. Age	-.07	.04	-.01	.00	-.07	.05	-.08	.00	-.01	-.01	-.04	-.05	-.03	.00	-.12*	.01	-.04	-.08	-.03	.00	-.04	.01
2. Gender		-.12*	-.05	.12*	-.10	-.35**	.03	-.06	-.10	-.07	.07	.13*	.12*	-.02	-.01	.25**	.13*	.22**	.07	.03	-.02	-.02
3. Efficacy			.35***	.14*	.32***	.16**	.23***	.19***	.08	.12*	.11*	.09	.07	.15**	.09	.03	.16**	.16**	.17**	.17**	.13**	.16**
4. Attribution				.42**	.55**	.24**	.42**	.14*	-.07	.22**	.24**	.08	.20**	.14*	.09	.14*	.12*	.08	.16**	.28**	.11	.31**
5. BDW					.63**	.20**	.55**	.07	-.11*	.09	.17**	.05	.14**	.20**	.01	.03	.17**	.15**	.22**	.14*	.00	.15**
6. RWA						.44**	.78**	.14*	-.07	.14**	.16**	.07	.13*	.26**	.12*	.12*	.11*	.12*	.19**	.22**	.09	.23**
7. SDO							.19**	.01	-.14**	-.01	.03	-.05	.00	.06	.03	.15**	-.26**	-.19**	-.15**	.07	.01	.11
8. RF								.12*	-.08	.15**	.17**	.03	.15**	.18**	.10	.10	.16**	.12*	.22**	.15**	.06	.19**
9. Moral Im									.26**	.54**	.30**	.19**	.10	.03	.13*	.01	.27**	.17**	.19**	.26**	.19**	.19**
10. Moral Ob										.29**	.07	.43**	.05	-.19**	.07	-.09	.09	.58**	.13*	-.02	.26**	-.02
11. Moral Pun											.32**	.20**	.31**	.09	.13*	.16**	.26**	.16**	.31**	.31**	.22**	.38**
12. Con Im												.50**	.69**	.28**	.23**	.21**	.40**	.24**	.40**	.57**	.32**	.47**
13. Con Ob													.53**	.07	.57**	.10	.28**	.54**	.31**	.26**	.76**	.29**
14. Con Pun														.20**	.22**	.28**	.35**	.26**	.50**	.42**	.32**	.53**
15. Per Im															.25**	.40**	.22**	.06	.23**	.40**	.10	.29**
16. Per Ob																.40**	.08	.20**	.15**	.16**	.77**	.30**
17. Per Pun																	.01	-.06	-.07	.26**	.23**	.50**
18. Pru Im																		.56**	.77**	.33**	.18**	.30**
19. Pru Ob																			.58**	.19**	.37**	.16**
20. Pru Pun																				.32**	.25**	.38**
21. Mult Im																					.36**	.65**
22. Mult Ob																						.44**
23. Mult Pun																						

Notes: \*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$ . Im = Importance judgments, Ob = Obedience judgments, Pun = Punishment Judgments. Con = Conventional, Per = Personal, Pru = Prudential, Mutl = Multifaced.

Table 9

*Unstandardized Estimates and Standard Errors for Associations among Demographic Characteristics and Domain Specific Beliefs about Laws.*

	Moral		Conventional		Personal		Prudential		Multifaceted	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Age	-.02	.04	-.02	.04	-.05	.05	-.03	.04	.00	.04
Gender	-.16	.12	.26*	.12	-.03	.14	.55**	.12	.06	.13

Notes: \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$ .

Table 10

*Unstandardized Estimates and Standard Errors for Associations among Sociopolitical Values and Domain Specific Beliefs about Laws*

	Moral		Conventional		Personal		Prudential		Multifaceted	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Age	.00	.05	.01	.05	-.04	.06	.03	.05	.03	.05
Gender	-.24	.14	.28*	.13	.07	.16	.42***	.13	.13	.14
<b>SP Values</b>										
RWA	.11	.08	.13	.08	.18*	.09	.25**	.08	.19*	.08
SDO	-.15*	.07	-.05	.07	.04	.08	-.34***	.07	-.01	.07
RF	.04	.05	.02	.05	.01	.05	.02	.05	.00	.05

Notes: SP RWA = right-wing authoritarianism, SDO = social dominance orientation, RF = religious fundamentalism. \*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$ .

Table 11

*Unstandardized Estimates and Standard Errors for Associations among Informational Assumptions and Domain-Specific Beliefs about Laws and Sociopolitical Values.*

	Moral		Conventional		Personal		Prudential		Multifaceted		RWA		SDO		RF	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Age	-.02	.04	-.02	.04	-.06	.05	-.03	.04	.00	.05	-.09	.04	.02	.04	-.13	.07
Gender	-.12	.12	.27*	.13	-.02	.14	.59**	.12	.11	.13	-.40**	.11	-.76**	.11	-.01	.19
<b>Assumptions</b>																
Efficacy of Laws	.10	.08	.04	.07	.08	.08	.23**	.07	.13	.08	.23**	.07	.05	.06	.24*	.11
Ind. Attributions	.21**	.07	.24**	.07	.21*	.08	.07	.07	.35**	.08	.43**	.07	.16*	.06	.43**	.11
BDW	.00	.07	.09	.07	.06	.08	.20**	.07	.02	.07	.80**	.07	.20**	.06	1.02**	.11

Notes: \*\* $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$ . RWA = right-wing authoritarianism, SDO = social dominance orientation, RF = religious fundamentalism, BDW = belief in a dangerous world.

Table 12

*Unstandardized Estimates and Standard Errors for a Model Testing Indirect Effects of Informational Assumptions on Domain-Specific Beliefs about Laws through Sociopolitical Values.*

	RWA		SDO		RF		Moral		Conventional		Personal		Prudential		Multifaceted	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Age	-.09*	.04	.02	.04	-.13	.07	-.01	.04	-.02	.04	-.04	.05	-.02	.04	.01	.05
Gender	-.39**	.11	-.76**	.11	-.01	.19	-.23	.14	.24	.14	.08	.16	.41**	.13	.14	.14
<b>Assumptions</b>																
Efficacy of Laws	.23**	.07	.05	.06	.24*	.11	.10	.08	.04	.08	.05	.09	.22**	.08	.11	.08
Ind. Attributions	.43**	.07	.16*	.06	.43**	.11	.20**	.08	.24**	.08	.13	.09	.07	.08	.31**	.08
BDW	.80**	.07	.20**	.06	1.02**	.11	-.03	.09	.08	.09	-.09	.10	.16	.09	-.06	.09
<b>SP Values</b>																
RWA	-	-	-	-	-	-	.03	.09	.00	.09	.15	.10	.12	.09	.08	.09
SDO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.15**	.07	-.05	.07	.03	.08	-.33**	.07	-.01	.07
RF	-	-	-	-	-	-	.04	.05	.02	.05	.02	.05	.02	.05	.01	.05

Notes: \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$ . RWA = right-wing authoritarianism, SDO = social dominance orientation, RF = religious fundamentalism, BDW = belief in a dangerous world.

Table 13

*Unstandardized Estimates and Standard Errors for Associations among Sociopolitical Values and Informational Assumptions.*

	Efficacy of Laws		Ind. Attributions		BDW	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Age	.03	.03	.02	.03	.05	.03
Gender	-.15	.10	.02	.10	.32**	.08
<b>SP Values</b>						
RWA	.21**	.06	.37**	.05	.39**	.05
RF	-.02	.04	-.01	.03	.04	.03
SDO	-.02	.05	.01	.05	-.02	.04

Notes: \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$ . RWA = right-wing authoritarianism, SDO = social dominance orientation, RF = religious fundamentalism, BDW = belief in a dangerous world.

Table 14

*Unstandardized Estimates and Standard Errors for a Model Testing Indirect Effects of Sociopolitical Values on Domain-Specific Beliefs about Laws through Informational Assumptions.*

	Efficacy		Ind. Attributions		BDW		Moral		Conventional		Personal		Prudential		Multifaceted	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Age	.03	.03	.02	.03	.04	.03	-.01	.04	-.02	.04	-.04	.05	-.02	.04	.01	.05
Gender	-.16	.10	.02	.10	.31**	.08	-.22	.14	.25	.14	.10	.16	.41**	.13	.16	.14
<b>SP Values</b>																
RWA	.21**	.06	.37**	.05	.38**	.05	.03*	.09	.00	.09	.16	.10	.12	.09	.08	.09
SDO	-.02	.05	.01	.05	-.02	.04	-.15	.07	-.05	.07	.03	.08	-.33**	.07	.00	.07
RF	-.01	.04	-.01	.03	.04	.03	.04	.05	.02	.05	.02	.05	.02	.05	.01	.05
<b>Assumptions</b>																
Efficacy of Laws	-	-	-	-	-	-	.10	.08	.04	.08	.05	.09	.22**	.08	.11	.08
Ind. Attributions	-	-	-	-	-	-	.20**	.08	.24**	.08	.13	.09	.07	.08	.31**	.08
BDW	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.03	.09	.08	.09	-.09	.10	.16	.09	-.06	.09

Notes: \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$ . RWA = right-wing authoritarianism, SDO = social dominance orientation, RF = religious fundamentalism, BDW = belief in a dangerous world.

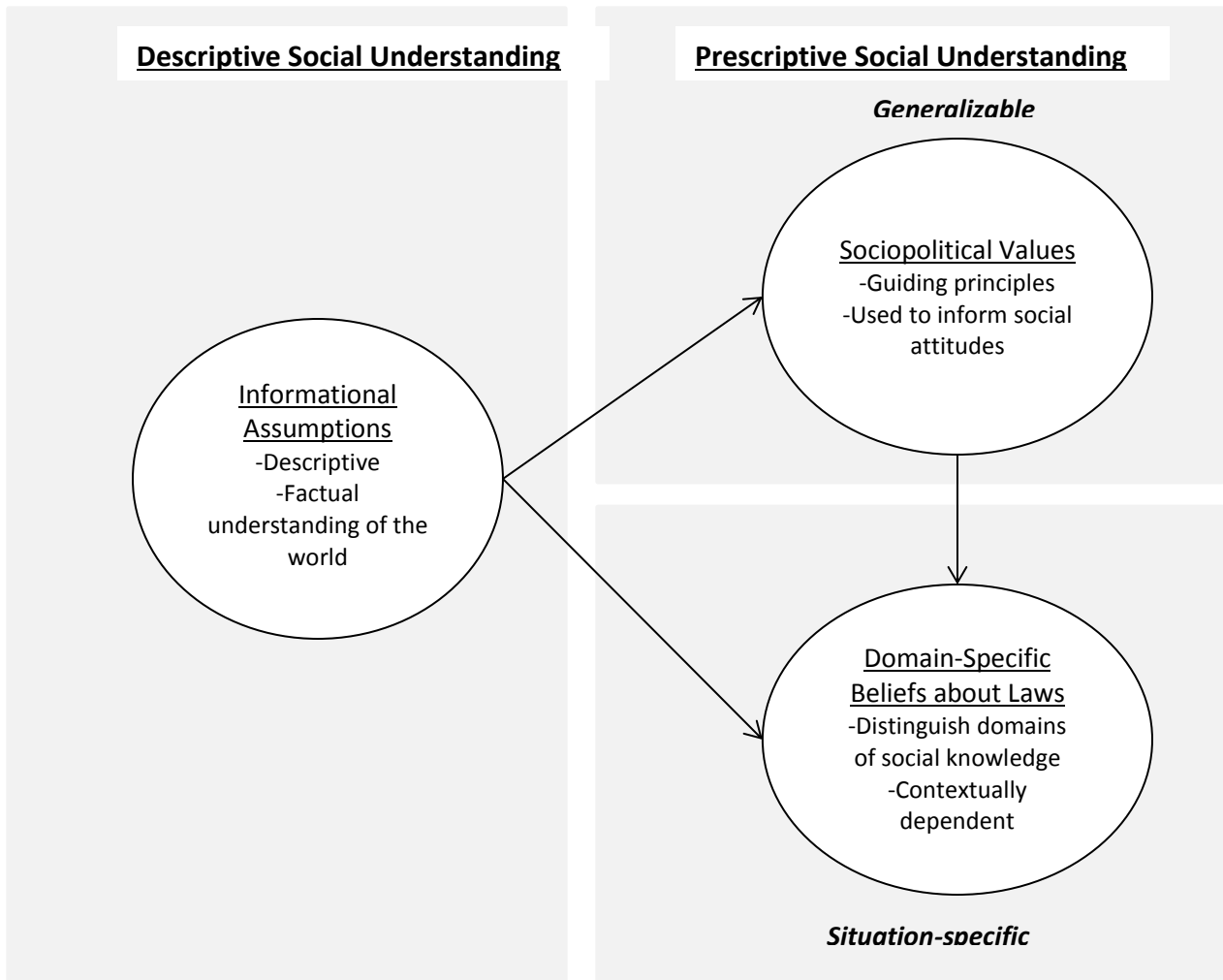


Figure 1. Model Displaying Conceptual Links among Information Assumptions, Sociopolitical Values, and Domain-Specific Beliefs about Laws.



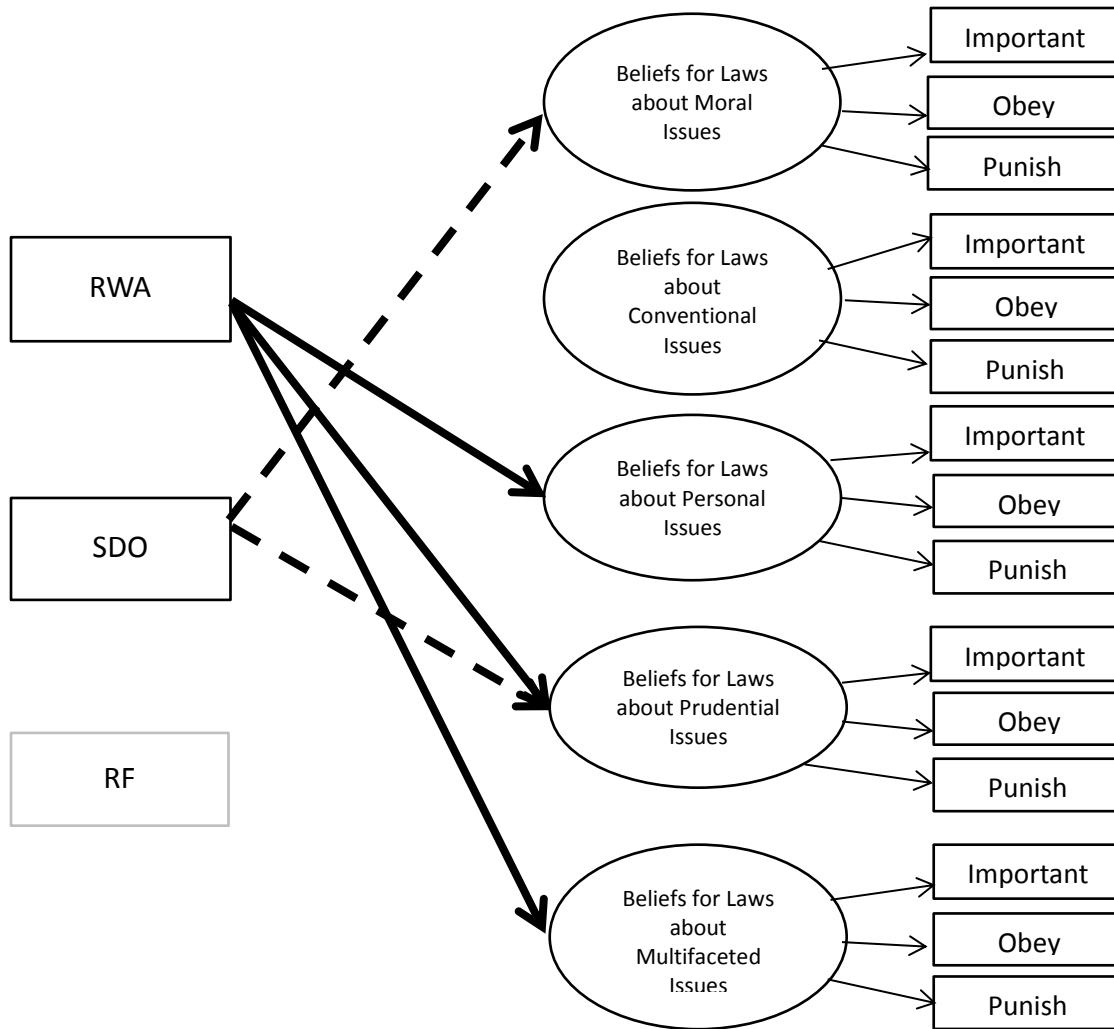


Figure 2. Significant Associations among Sociopolitical Values and Domain-Specific Beliefs about Laws (RQ2).

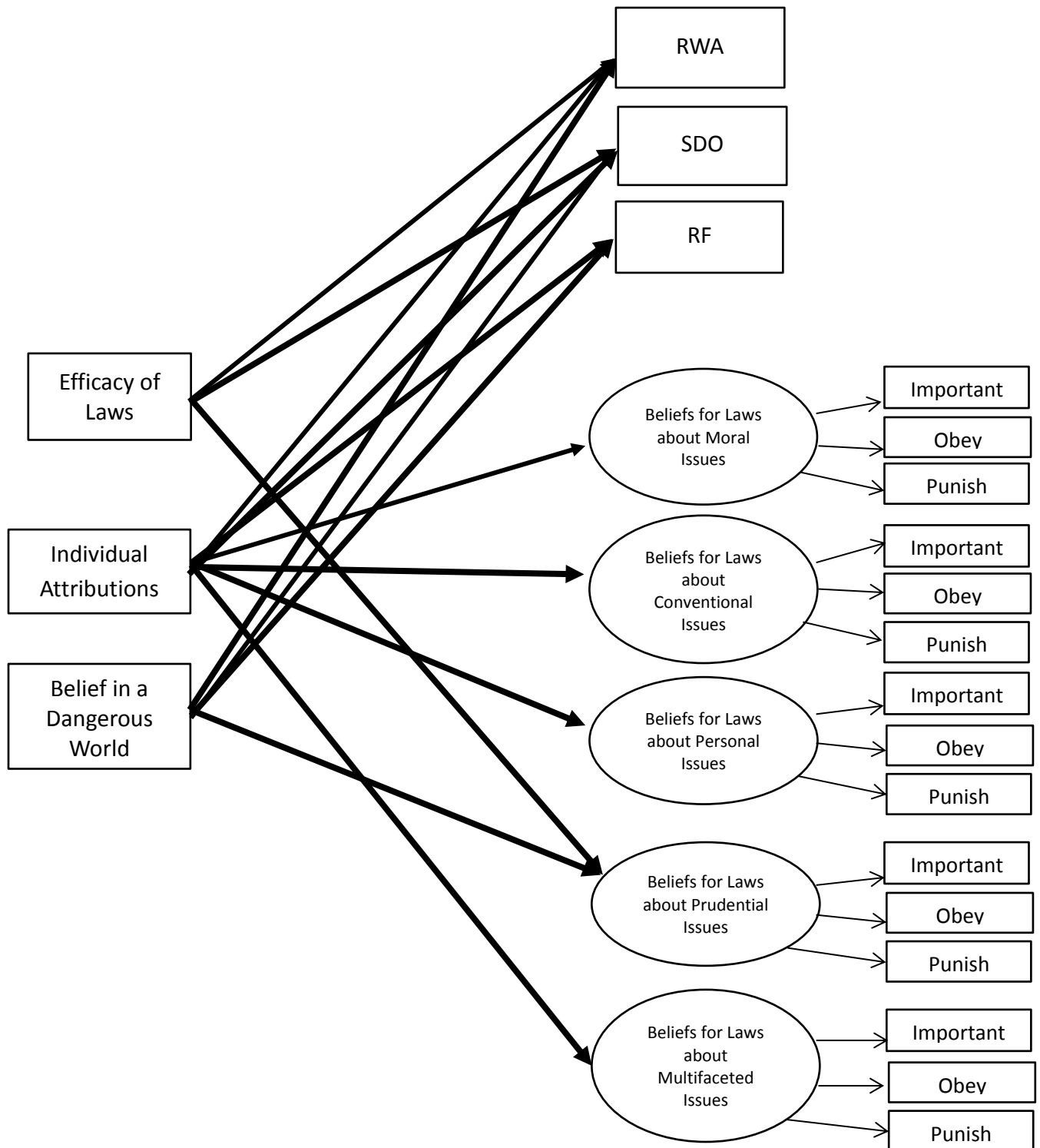


Figure 3. Significant Associations among Informational Assumptions, Sociopolitical Values, and Domain-Specific Beliefs about Laws (RQ3).

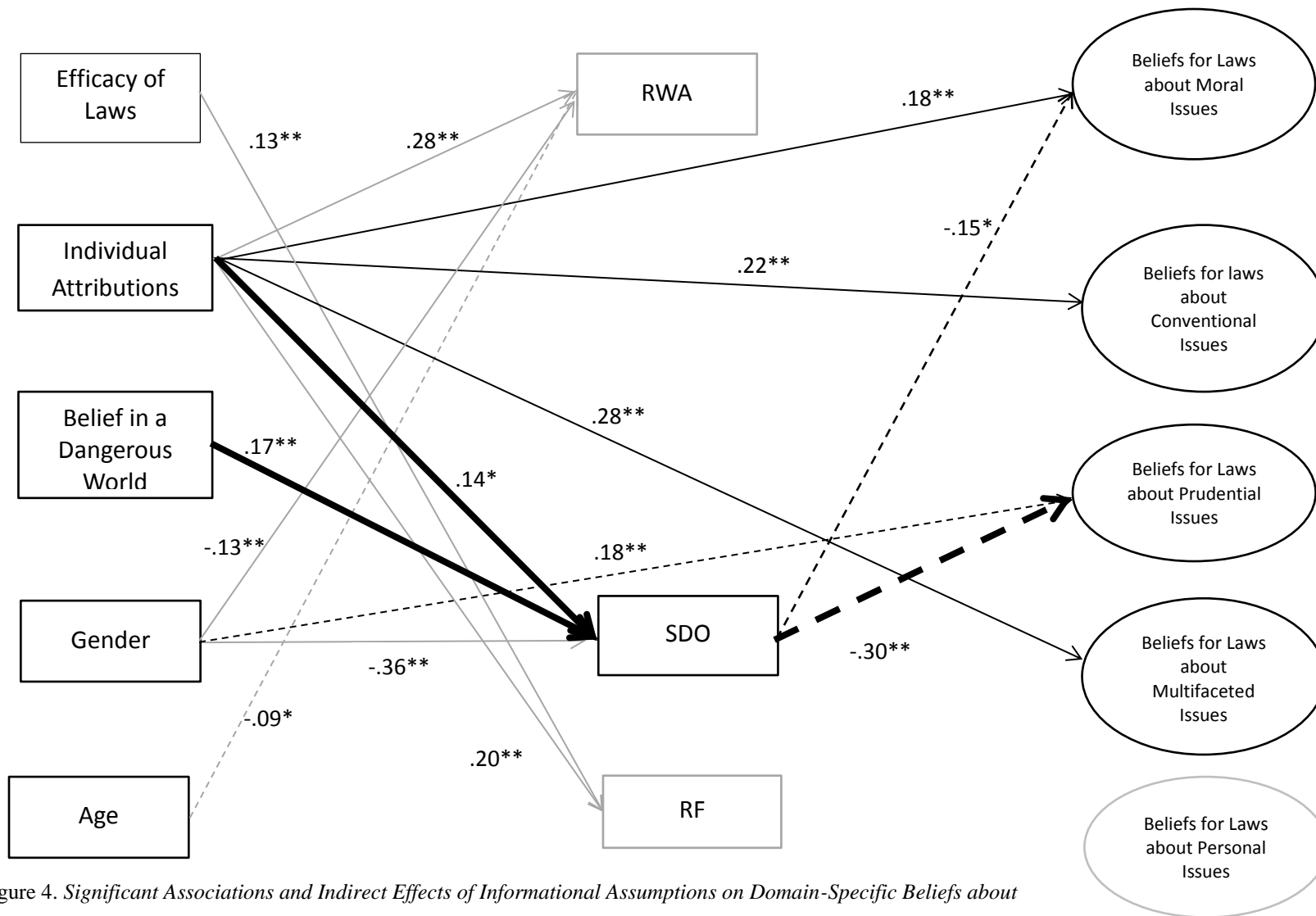


Figure 4. Significant Associations and Indirect Effects of Informational Assumptions on Domain-Specific Beliefs about Laws through Sociopolitical Values (RQ3).

Notes: Bold lines indicate significant indirect effects. Solid lines indicate significant positive associations and dashed lines indicate significant negative associations.

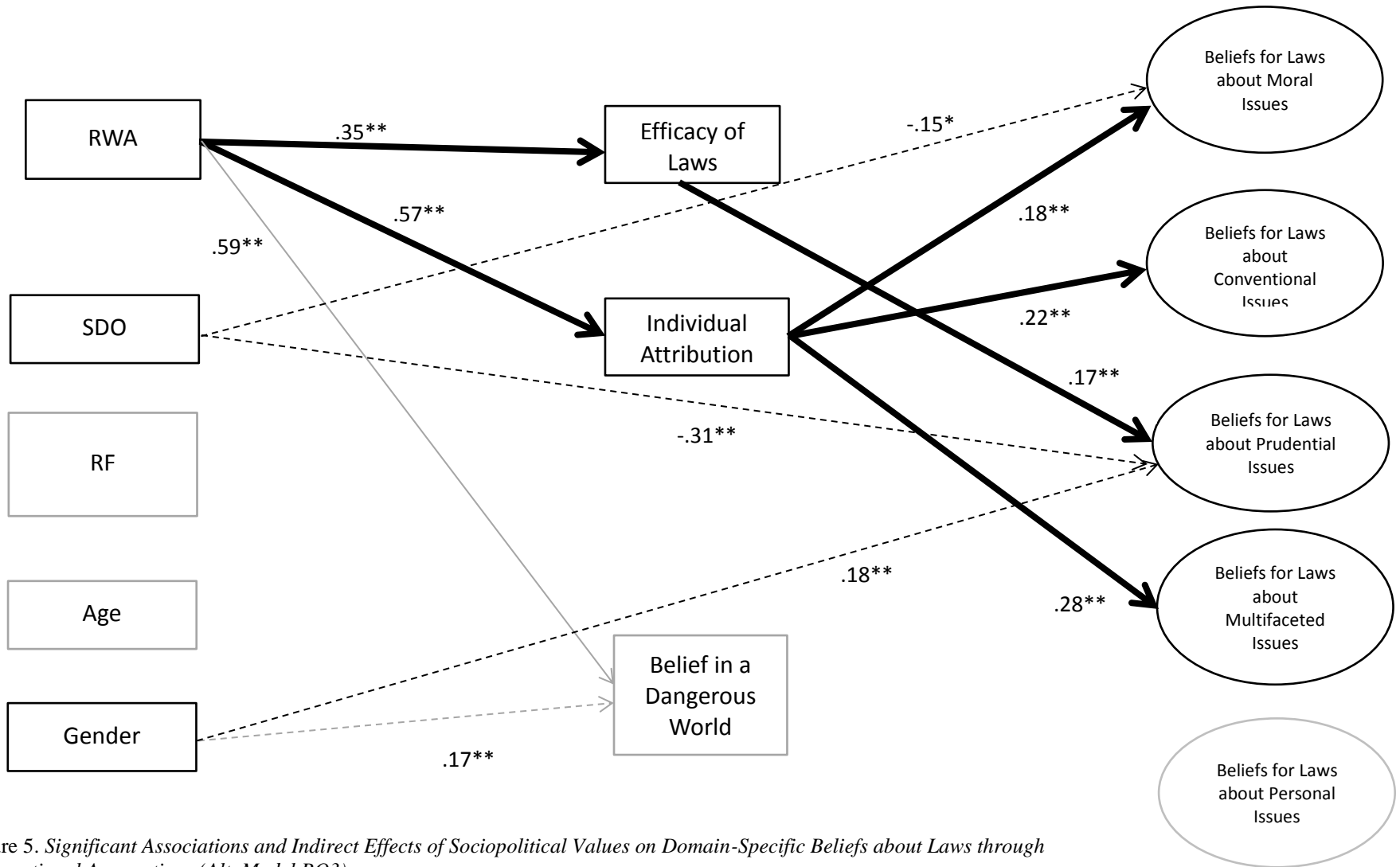


Figure 5. Significant Associations and Indirect Effects of Sociopolitical Values on Domain-Specific Beliefs about Laws through Informational Assumptions (Alt. Model RQ3).

Notes: Bold lines indicate significant indirect effects. Solid lines indicate significant positive associations and dashed lines indicate

Appendices

Appendix A: Domain Placement by Issue

*Judgments in % of legitimacy, obligation, authority contingency, and justifications by issue.*

	Moral		Conventional			Personal			Prudential			Multifaceted				
	Stealing	Fight	Vandal	Parking	Register	Fish	Activities	Job	Clothes	Cocaine	Pills	Helmet	Seatbelt	Park	Loiter	Zoning
Legitimacy	97.1	82.6	97.6	86.8	93.2	76.5	7.9	7.6	8.8	91.8	93.8	96.8	96.2	57.1	66.8	30.9
Obligation	85.6	67.1	73.8	50.6	71.2	43.5	3.2	5.1	4.3	71.8	75.6	80.3	73.5	25.9	31.2	9.1
<b>Authority</b>																
Not contingent	93.8	61.5	70.9	47.1	42.4	20.3	1.8	2.9	1.5	67.9	77.6	74.7	67.4	14.4	14.1	2.9
Contingent	1.5	5.9	20.0	32.4	45.6	50.3	3.2	4.1	6.8	8.2	6.5	9.1	14.1	36.2	41.2	26.5
Up to the individual	4.7	32.6	8.8	20.3	11.8	29.4	94.7	92.9	91.2	23.5	15.0	16.2	18.2	49.1	43.8	70.0
<b>Justification</b>																
Moral	83.2	67.9	53.2	42.9	27.6	28.8	1.5	4.4	1.8	16.2	12.9	10.0	8.2	7.9	22.6	8.8
Prudential	2.9	13.5	3.2	8.8	12.9	3.2	2.4	1.5	2.9	74.7	81.5	81.8	86.8	9.4	1.5	2.1
Conventional	13.5	10.0	38.8	38.8	49.1	38.5	4.1	5.0	3.2	2.9	1.5	2.1	0.9	39.1	35.3	15.6
Personal	0.0	6.8	4.4	9.1	8.8	29.4	91.8	88.8	91.5	3.8	2.6	2.9	2.6	42.6	39.4	72.9

## Appendix B: Demographic Questionnaire

## Tell us about yourself ...

1. What gender are you?  
 Male    Female
2. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_ (years) What is your birthday? \_\_\_\_\_ (Month/Day/Year)
3. What is your grade in school? 9th 10th 11th 12th
4. School grades (average for the year):
  - Mostly A's
  - Some A's some B's
  - Mostly B's
  - Some B's some C's
  - Mostly C's
  - Some C's some D's
  - Mostly D's or lower
5. What is your ethnicity (check all that apply)?
  - African-American/Black       Hispanic/Latino
  - Asian-American/Pacific Islander       Native American
  - Caucasian/White       Other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Who currently lives in your home (check all that apply)?
  - mother (birth or adopted)       stepmother
  - father (birth or adopted)       stepfather
  - brothers/sisters? (ages of siblings) \_\_\_\_\_
  - other adults (who?) \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many miles is your home away from the CENTER of town?
  - a. Less than 5 miles from the center of town
  - b. Between 6-10 miles from the center of town
  - c. Between 11-15 miles from the center of town
  - d. Between 16-20 miles from the center of town
  - e. Between 21-30 miles from the center of town
  - f. Between 31-40 miles from the center of town
  - g. Between 41-50 miles from the center of town
  - h. More than 50 miles from the center of town
8. How many minutes does it take you to get to school by car? \_\_\_\_\_ minutes
9. What is your citizenship status?
  - a. U.S. Citizen
  - b. Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_.

Appendix B: Vignettes and Domain-Criterion Judgments

**For each of the following questions, a description of a situation is given. Please read the description of the situation and answer the following questions based on your beliefs about the situation. There are no right or wrong answers.**

**Situation #1: Morgan lives in state that has laws about stealing. Morgan takes money out of a stranger’s purse when they are not looking.**

Is it OKAY for government to make a law against stealing money?	Yes	No		
Does government have an obligation to make a law about stealing?	Yes	No		
Stealing money from a stranger is...(circle one)	Always wrong whether or not those in government says so	Wrong only if those in government say so	Not an issue of right or wrong – up to the individual	
Why can or can't Morgan take money from a stranger? (circle one)	It is harmful to others or unfair	It is harmful to himself/herself	It's important to have order or he/she will get in trouble	There is nothing wrong with it



**Situation #2: Taylor drives into an empty parking lot of a state owned building and parks next to a sign that clearly states "No parking without permit".**

Is it OKAY for government to make laws about parking?	Yes	No		
Does government have an obligation to make a law about parking?	Yes	No		
Parking next to a "No parking" sign is... <b>(circle one)</b>	Always wrong whether or not those in government says so	Wrong only if those in government say so	Not an issue of right or wrong – up to the individual	
Why can or can't Taylor park in front of the "No parking" sign? <b>(circle one)</b>	It is harmful to others or unfair	It is harmful to himself/herself	It's important to have order or he/she will get in trouble	There is nothing wrong with it

**Situation #3: Jessie lives in a state that has laws against physically hurting another person. Jessie gets into a fist fight with a neighborhood kid for no reason.**

Is it OKAY for government to make laws about fighting in your neighborhood?	Yes	No		
Does government have an obligation to make a law about fighting?	Yes	No		
Fighting in your neighborhood is... <b>(circle one)</b>	Always wrong whether or not those in government says so	Wrong only if those in government say so	Not an issue of right or wrong – up to the individual	
Why can or can't Jessie fight in his neighborhood? <b>(circle one)</b>	It is harmful to others or unfair	It is harmful to himself/herself	It's important to have order or he/she will get in trouble	There is nothing wrong with it

**Situation #4: Jamie lives in a state that requires all high school kids to join out-of-school activities every year, but he did not sign up for any activities.**

Is it OKAY for government to make laws about joining out-of-school activities?	Yes	No		
Does government have an obligation to make a law about joining out of school activities?	Yes	No		
<u>NOT</u> participating in out-of-school activities is...(circle one)	Always wrong whether or not those in government says so	Wrong only if those in government say so	Not an issue of right or wrong – up to the individual	
Why can or can't Jamie NOT participate in out-of-school activities? (circle one)	It is harmful to others or unfair	It is harmful to himself/herself	It's important to have order or he/she will get in trouble	There is nothing wrong with it

**Situation #5: Avery lives in a state that has laws against using drugs. Avery is offered cocaine at a party. Although he has never tried cocaine before, he decides to use it.**

Is it OKAY for government to make laws about trying cocaine?	Yes	No		
Does government have an obligation to make laws about trying cocaine?	Yes	No		
Trying cocaine is...(circle one)	Always wrong whether or not those in government says so	Wrong only if those in government say so	Not an issue of right or wrong – up to the individual	
Why can or can't Avery try cocaine? (circle one)	It is harmful to others or unfair	It is harmful to himself/herself	It's important to have order or he/she will get in trouble	There is nothing wrong with it

**Situation #6: Alex lives in a state that has laws against vandalism. A new recreation building is built in Alex’s community. Late at night, Alex spray paints graffiti on the side of the newly built community building.**

Is it OKAY for government to make laws about vandalism?	Yes	No		
Does government have an obligation to make a law about vandalism?	Yes	No		
Spray painting a community building is...(circle one)	Always wrong whether or not those in government says so	Wrong only if those in government say so	Not an issue of right or wrong – up to the individual	
Why can or can’t Alex spray paint the building? (circle one)	It is harmful to others or unfair	It is harmful to himself/herself	It’s important to have order or he/she will get in trouble	There is nothing wrong with it

**Situation #7: Jordan lives in a state that doesn't allow teenagers to wear baggy pants in public. Jordan walked to the store wearing a baggy shirt and shorts.**

Is it OKAY for government to make laws about wearing baggy clothes?	Yes	No		
Does government have an obligation to make laws about wearing baggy clothes in public?	Yes	No		
Wearing baggy clothes in public is...(circle one)	Always wrong whether or not those in government says so	Wrong only if those in government say so	Not an issue of right or wrong – up to the individual	
Why can or can't Jordan wear baggy clothes in public? (circle one)	It is harmful to others or unfair	It is harmful to himself/herself	It's important to have order or he/she will get in trouble	There is nothing wrong with it

**Situation #8: Riley lives in state that has laws against using prescription pain killers not meant for you. A friend offers Riley prescription pain killers. Riley is not experiencing any pain. Riley’s friend says that they "just feel good". Riley takes the pain killers to get that "good feeling".**

Is it OKAY for government to make laws taking prescription pills not meant for you?	Yes	No		
Does government have an obligation to make laws about taking prescription pills not meant for you?	Yes	No		
Taking prescription pills not meant for you is... <b>(circle one)</b>	Always wrong whether or not those in government says so	Wrong only if those in government say so	Not an issue of right or wrong – up to the individual	
Why can or can't Riley take prescription pills not meant for her? <b>(circle one)</b>	It is harmful to others or unfair	It is harmful to himself/herself	It's important to have order or he/she will get in trouble	There is nothing wrong with it

**Situation #9: Parker is walking home at midnight talking with a couple of friends. They enter an empty park and walk past a sign that says “closed at sun down” and continue to talk.**

Is it OKAY for government to make laws about when you can go to a park?	Yes	No		
Does government have an obligation to make laws about when you can go to the park?	Yes	No		
Going to park after it is closed is...(circle one)	Always wrong whether or not those in government says so	Wrong only if those in government say so	Not an issue of right or wrong – up to the individual	
Why can or can't Parker go to the park after it is closed? (circle one)	It is harmful to others or unfair	It is harmful to himself/herself	It's important to have order or he/she will get in trouble	There is nothing wrong with it



**Situation #10: Sam and Corey live in a community that doesn't allow teenagers to loiter (hang around) outside of local businesses. Sam and Corey talk outside of the convenience store for a couple of hours in front of a sign that says “No loitering”.**

Is it OKAY for government to make laws about loitering?	Yes	No		
Does government have an obligation to make laws about loitering?	Yes	No		
Loitering outside of a local business is...(circle one)	Always wrong whether or not those in government says so	Wrong only if those in government say so	Not an issue of right or wrong – up to the individual	
Why can or can't Sam and Corey hang around outside of the business? (circle one)	It is harmful to others or unfair	It is harmful to himself/herself	It's important to have order or he/she will get in trouble	There is nothing wrong with it

**Situation #11: Jamie owns a house in a community that does not allow above ground swimming pools. Jamie decides to install an above ground pool.**

Is it OKAY for government to make laws about whether people can install above ground swimming pools?	Yes	No		
Does government have an obligation to make laws about installing above ground swimming pools?	Yes	No		
Installing an above ground pool is ... <b>(circle one)</b>	Always wrong whether or not those in government says so	Wrong only if those in government say so	Not an issue of right or wrong – up to the individual	
Why can or can't Jamie install an above ground swimming pool? <b>(circle one)</b>	It is harmful to others or unfair	It is harmful to himself/herself	It's important to have order or he/she will get in trouble	There is nothing wrong with it

**Situation #12: Ryan lives in a state that requires all cars to be registered at the DMV each year. Ryan’s car was registered when it was purchased. However, Ryan did not renew the registration when it expired. Ryan drives to the convenience store with an expired registration.**

Is it OKAY for government to make laws about car registration?	Yes	No		
Does government have an obligation to make laws about registering your car?	Yes	No		
Not registering your car is...(circle one)	Always wrong whether or not those in government says so	Wrong only if those in government say so	Not an issue of right or wrong – up to the individual	
Why can or can’t Ryan drive with an expired registration? (circle one)	It is harmful to others or unfair	It is harmful to himself/herself	It’s important to have order or he/she will get in trouble	There is nothing wrong with it

**Situation #13: Sam goes fishing at a state owned pond without buying a fishing license. At this pond, there is a sign that clearly states “All fishermen must have valid fishing license”.**

Is it OKAY for government to make laws about fishing?	Yes	No		
Does government have an obligation to make laws about fishing without a license?	Yes	No		
Fishing without a license is ... <b>(circle one)</b>	Always wrong whether or not those in government says so	Wrong only if those in government say so	Not an issue of right or wrong – up to the individual	
Why can or can't Sam fish without a license? <b>(circle one)</b>	It is harmful to others or unfair	It is harmful to himself/herself	It's important to have order or he/she will get in trouble	There is nothing wrong with it

**Situation #14: Casey’s state requires teenagers to get a job at the age of 16. Casey’s parents both work, and her family can easily pay their bills. Casey decides that she does not want a job, and instead spends free time with friends.**

Is it OKAY for government to make laws about whether teenagers get a job?	Yes	No		
Does government have an obligation to make laws about teenagers getting a job?	Yes	No		
Not getting a job is ... <b>(circle one)</b>	Always wrong whether or not those in government says so	Wrong only if those in government say so	Not an issue of right or wrong – up to the individual	
Why can or can’t Casey NOT get a job? <b>(circle one)</b>	It is harmful to others or unfair	It is harmful to himself/herself	It’s important to have order or he/she will get in trouble	There is nothing wrong with it

**Situation #15: Cory lives in a state that requires all passengers in a car to wear seatbelts. Cory is riding in the front passenger seat of a car without wearing a seatbelt.**

Is it OKAY for government to make laws about wearing seatbelts?	Yes	No		
Does government have an obligation to make laws about wearing seatbelts?	Yes	No		
Riding in the front seat of a car without wearing a seatbelt is... ( <b>circle one</b> )	Always wrong whether or not those in government says so	Wrong only if those in government say so	Not an issue of right or wrong – up to the individual	
Why can or can't Cory ride in the front seat of a car without wearing a seatbelt? ( <b>circle one</b> )	It is harmful to others or unfair	It is harmful to himself/herself	It's important to have order or he/she will get in trouble	There is nothing wrong with it

**Situation #16: Alex lives in a state that requires all motorcycle riders to wear a helmet. Cory is riding on a motorcycle without wearing a helmet.**

Is it OKAY for government to make laws about motorcyclists wearing a helmet?	Yes	No		
Does government have an obligation to make laws about motorcyclists wearing helmets?	Yes	No		
Riding a motorcycle without wearing a helmet is... <b>(circle one)</b>	Always wrong whether or not those in government says so	Wrong only if those in government say so	Not an issue of right or wrong – up to the individual	
Why can or can't Alex ride a motorcycle without wearing a helmet? <b>(circle one)</b>	It is harmful to others or unfair	It is harmful to himself/herself	It's important to have order or he/she will get in trouble	There is nothing wrong with it

Appendix C: Domain-Quantitative Judgments

<b>How IMPORTANT is it to have a law about...(Circle the number)</b>	Not at all important	A little important	Somewhat important	Quite important	Very important
1. Taking money from other people without their permission	1	2	3	4	5
2. Vandalizing a community building in your neighborhood	1	2	3	4	5
3. Whether those 16 and older are required to get a job.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Using prescription pills not meant for you	1	2	3	4	5
5. Getting in a fist-fight in public	1	2	3	4	5
6. Fishing without a license	1	2	3	4	5
7. Using drugs (e.g., cocaine)	1	2	3	4	5
8. Loitering (standing around without any purpose) outside of a local store	1	2	3	4	5
9. Parking in empty parking lot that has “no parking” signs posted	1	2	3	4	5
10. Going to a local park after it has closed	1	2	3	4	5
11. Building garages or above ground swimming pools on your own property	1	2	3	4	5
12. Wearing baggy pants or low cut shirts in public	1	2	3	4	5
13. Joining out-of-school clubs or activities	1	2	3	4	5
14. Not renewing your car registration at the DMV	1	2	3	4	5
15. Riding in the front seat of a car without wearing a seatbelt.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Riding on a motorcycle without wearing a helmet.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Teasing others online	1	2	3	4	5

<b>If the government made a law about each of the following things and you didn't agree with it, do</b>	Don't have to	Maybe have to	Probably have to	Mostly have to	Definitely have to
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<b>you have to follow it? (Circle the number)</b>					
1. Taking money from other people without their permission	1	2	3	4	5
2. Vandalizing a community building in your neighborhood	1	2	3	4	5
3. Whether those 16 and older are required to get a job.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Using prescription pills not meant for you	1	2	3	4	5
5. Getting in a fist-fight in public	1	2	3	4	5
6. Fishing without a license	1	2	3	4	5
7. Using drugs (e.g., cocaine)	1	2	3	4	5
8. Loitering (standing around without any purpose) outside of a local store	1	2	3	4	5
9. Parking in empty parking lot that has “no parking” signs posted	1	2	3	4	5
10. Going to a local park after it has closed	1	2	3	4	5
11. Building garages or above ground swimming pools on your own property	1	2	3	4	5
12. Wearing baggy pants or low cut shirts in public	1	2	3	4	5
13. Joining out-of-school clubs or activities	1	2	3	4	5
14. Not renewing your car registration at the DMV	1	2	3	4	5
15. Riding in the front seat of a car without wearing a seatbelt.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Riding on a motorcycle without wearing a helmet.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Teasing others online	1	2	3	4	5

<b>If the government made a law about each of the following things and someone broke that law, how much PUNISHMENT should they receive? (Circle the number)</b>	None	A little	Some	Quite a bit	A Lot
1. Taking money from other people without their permission	1	2	3	4	5
2. Vandalizing a community building in your neighborhood	1	2	3	4	5
3. Whether those 16 and older are required to get a job.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Using prescription pills not meant for you	1	2	3	4	5
5. Getting in a fist-fight in public	1	2	3	4	5
6. Fishing without a license	1	2	3	4	5
7. Using drugs (e.g., cocaine)	1	2	3	4	5
8. Loitering (standing around without any purpose) outside of a local store	1	2	3	4	5
9. Parking in empty parking lot that has “no parking” signs posted	1	2	3	4	5
10. Going to a local park after it has closed	1	2	3	4	5
11. Building garages or above ground swimming pools on your own property	1	2	3	4	5
12. Wearing baggy pants or low cut shirts in public	1	2	3	4	5
13. Joining out-of-school clubs or activities	1	2	3	4	5
14. Not renewing your car registration at the DMV	1	2	3	4	5
15. Riding in the front seat of a car without wearing a seatbelt.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Riding on a motorcycle without wearing a helmet.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Teasing others online	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix D: Sociopolitical Values – Right-Wing Authoritarianism

Please indicate your reaction to each statement according to the following scale:	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree
1. Our country desperately needs a mighty leader who will do what has to be done to destroy the radical new ways and sinfulness that are ruining us.	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
2. Gays and lesbians are just as healthy and moral as anybody else.	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
3. It is always better to trust the judgment of the proper authorities in government and religion than to listen to the noisy rabble-rousers in our society who are trying to create doubt in people’s minds.	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
4. Atheists and others who have rebelled against the established religions are no doubt every bit as good and virtuous as those who attend church regularly.	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4

<b>Please indicate your reaction to each statement according to the following scale:</b>	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree
5. The only way our country can get through the crisis ahead is to get back to our traditional values, put some tough leaders in power, and silence the troublemakers spreading bad ideas.	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
6. There is absolutely nothing wrong with nudist camps.	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
7. Our country needs free thinkers who will have the courage to defy traditional ways, even if this upsets many people	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
8. Our country will be destroyed someday if we do not smash the perversions eating away at our moral fiber and traditional beliefs.	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
9. Everyone should have their own life-style, religious beliefs, and sexual preferences, even if it makes them different from everyone else.	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
10. The “old-fashioned ways” and “old-fashioned values” still show the best way to life.	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4

Please indicate your reaction to each statement according to the following scale:	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree
11. You have to admire those who challenged the law and the majority’s view by protesting for abortion rights, for animal rights, or to abolish school prayer.	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
12. What our country really needs is a strong, determined leader who will crush evil, and take us back to our true path.	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
13. Some of the best people in our country are those who are challenging our government, criticizing religion, and ignoring the “normal way things are supposed to be done.”	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
14. God’s laws about abortion, pornography, and marriage must be strictly followed before it is too late, and those who break them must be strongly punished.	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4

<b>Please indicate your reaction to each statement according to the following scale:</b>	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree
15. There are many radical, immoral people in our country today, who are trying to ruin it for their own godless purposes, whom the authorities should put out of action.	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
16. A “woman’s place” should be wherever she wants to be. The days when women are submissive to their husbands and social conventions belong strictly in the past.	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
17. Our country will be great if we honor the ways of our forefathers, do what the authorities tell us to do, and get rid of the “rotten apples” who are ruining everything.	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
18. There is no “ONE right way” to live life; everybody has to create their own way.	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
19. Homosexuals and feminists should be praised for being brave enough to defy “traditional family values.”	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
20. This country would work a lot better if certain groups of troublemakers would just shut up and accept their group’s traditional place in society.	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4

Appendix D: Sociopolitical Values – Social-Dominance Orientation

**Please read each of the following statements carefully. Indicate how positive or negative you find each statement using the scale shown below. Please fill in the number that best corresponds to your feelings about each issue. Please think carefully before answering.**

	Very Negative			Neither Negative or Positive			Very Positive
1. Some groups of people are simply not the equals of others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Some people are just more worthy than others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. This country would be better off if we cared less about how equal all people were	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Some people are just more deserving than others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. It is not a problem if some people have more of a chance in life than others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Some people are just inferior to others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Increased economic equality.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Increased social equality.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Equality.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. If people were treated more equally, we would have fewer problems in this country	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. In an ideal world, all nations would be equal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. We should try to treat one another as equals as much as possible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. It is important that we treat other countries as equals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix D: Sociopolitical Values – Religious Fundamentalism

<b><i>DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE...</i></b>	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree
1. God has given humanity a complete, unfailing guide to happiness and salvation, which must be totally followed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2. No single book of religious teachings contains all the intrinsic, fundamental truths about life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3. The basic cause of evil in this world is Satan, who is still constantly and ferociously fighting against God.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4. It is more important to be a good person than to believe in God and the right religion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
5. There is a particular set of religious teachings in this world that are so true, you can't go any "deeper" because they are the basic, bedrock message that God has given humanity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
6. When you get right down to it, there are basically only two kinds of people in the world: the Righteous, who will be rewarded by God; and the rest, who will not	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9



<b><i>DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE...</i></b>	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree
7. Scriptures may contain general truths, but they should NOT be considered completely, literally true from beginning to end	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8. To lead the best, most meaningful life, one must belong to the one, fundamentally true religion.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9. Satan" is just the name people give to their own bad impulses. There really is no such thing as a diabolical "Prince of Darkness" who tempts us	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10. Whenever science and sacred scripture conflict, science is probably right	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
11. The fundamentals of God's religion should never be tampered with, or compromised with others' beliefs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
12. All of the religions in the world have flaws and wrong teachings. There is no perfectly true, right religion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Appendix E: Informational Assumptions – Efficacy of Laws

**Thinks about laws and the people that make them (e.g., government officials, police officers, the president). Indicate how much you agree with the following statements...**

<i><b>Do you agree or disagree....</b></i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Lawmakers know more about why we need rules than most people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Lawmakers know more about how to prevent crime than most people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Lawmakers have a better understanding of social problems than most people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Lawmakers do not have the skills to prevent crime	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Harsh punishment teaches people what they can and cannot do	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Laws make sure that people who get caught committing crimes won't do it again.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Getting in trouble with the law makes people think about breaking laws before they actually do it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<i><b>Do you agree or disagree....</b></i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
8. Getting in trouble with the law teach people that what they did was wrong.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Laws effectively stop people from committing crimes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Laws are typically not enforced	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. People usually follow laws	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Violence would be much more common if we didn't have laws	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix E: Informational Assumptions – Individual attributions of Crime

<i><b>Do you agree or disagree....</b></i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. People break the law because they do not want to make an honest living.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Just because someone breaks the law does not mean they're a bad person.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. People commit crime because they lack a strong moral fiber	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. People break the law because deep down they're evil.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix E: Informational Assumptions – Belief in Dangerous World

<i><b>Do you agree or disagree....</b></i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. It seems that every year there are fewer and fewer truly respectable people, and more and more persons with no morals at all who threaten everyone else.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Although it may APPEAR that things are constantly getting more dangerous and chaotic, it really isn't so. Every era has its problems, and a person's chances of living a safe, untroubled life are better today than ever before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. If our society keeps degenerating the way it has been lately, it's liable to collapse like a rotten log and everything will be chaos.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Our society is NOT full of immoral and degenerate people who prey on decent people. News reports of such cases are grossly exaggerating and misleading.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. The 'end' is NOT near. People who think that earthquakes, wars and famines mean God might be about to destroy the world are being foolish.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. There are many dangerous people in our society who will attack someone out of pure meanness, for no reason at all.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<i><b>Do you agree or disagree....</b></i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
7. Despite what one hears about 'crime in the street', there probably isn't any more now than there ever has been.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Any day now chaos and anarchy could erupt around us. All the signs are pointing to it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. If a person takes a few sensible precautions, nothing bad will happen to him / her. We do NOT live in a dangerous world	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Every day, as our society becomes more lawless, a person's chances of being robbed, assaulted, and even murdered go up and up.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Things are getting so bad, even a decent law-abiding person who takes sensible precautions can still become a victim of violence and crime.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Our country is NOT falling apart or rotting from within.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

### Appendix F: Scale Creation and Piloting

For the vignettes and scales created for this study, extensive pilot testing was conducted. Pilot testing occurred in two phases. The first phase consisted of a series of focus groups with sophomore, junior, and senior students from a local high school. As a part of the focus groups, vignettes and measures were designed specifically for this study. The second phase consisted of a large-scale online study that was used to examine the measurement properties of these scales.

#### **Phase 1: Focus Groups**

Focus groups were conducted with 10 -12 high school students to identify issues that adolescents' viewed as moral, conventional, personal, prudential, and personal/conventional multifaceted that may be subject to government regulation. Potential issues were identified by informally interviewing the groups and assessing their domain criterion judgments and justifications.

Surveys were then created based on the issues identified from the focus groups. These surveys consisted of the vignettes, domain-criterion judgments, and domain quantitative assessments. Cognitive interviews were then performed on an additional sample of 20 high students to identify problematic or confusing verbiage. Appropriate adjustments were made to the vignettes based on these interviews.

#### **Phase 2: Online Pilot Study**

An online pilot study was conducted with an emerging adult sample ( $N = 260$ ,  $M_{age} = 22.04$ ,  $SD = 1.83$  Range: 18 – 24 years of age) using Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Participants rated 20 vignettes depicting individuals breaking different laws on their acceptability, independence of authority, and provided justifications for these judgments (see Tables 1 and 2 for ratings). Of these 20 vignettes, 4 (bungee jumping, jaywalking, speeding, driving past midnight) were judged and reasoned from multiple domains and were excluded from the current study.

Participants also provided importance, obedience, and punishment ratings for each of these vignettes. Mean scores for these judgments were used as indicators for 5 latent variables that representing beliefs about moral, conventional, personal, prudential, and personal/conventional multifaceted issues. Model fit statistics indicate that this measurement model provided a good fit to the data ( $\chi^2/df = 1.51$ , CFI

= .99, RMSEA = .04). See Tables 1 and 2 for means and standard deviations of importance, obedience, and punishment judgments.



Table 1

*Frequencies, Means, and Standard Deviations of Domain Criterion and Quantitative Judgments*

	Moral				Conventional				Personal				Multifaceted													
	Steal	Paint	Fight	Fish	Parking	Register	Out School	Clothes	Get Job	Zoning	Go to Park	Loitering														
<b>Legit</b>	<i>N's</i>																									
Yes	245	244	203	176	194	219	24	30	23	77	133	144														
No	20	15	44	71	51	22	218	206	203	141	105	93														
<b>Contingency</b>																										
Moral	248	198	142	52	93	91	11	15	18	16	27	28														
Conv	6	28	17	111	101	111	21	22	18	67	75	90														
Pers	12	30	94	82	54	40	211	201	194	140	142	120														
<b>Justification</b>																										
Moral	250	220	230	103	129	105	12	14	11	43	41	66														
Prud	105	48	211	18	26	72	20	21	16	22	62	15														
Conv	191	115	162	120	162	166	19	39	15	70	94	116														
Pers	3	15	12	92	37	39	170	156	150	117	106	78														
<b>Quant Judge</b>																										
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Import	4.64	0.74	3.94	1.02	3.6	1.2	2.4	1.24	2.58	1.07	3.9	1.1	1.42	0.88	1.47	1.01	1.66	1.16	1.88	1.15	2.02	1.07	2.27	1.08		
Obey	4.47	0.99	4.1	1.1	3.88	1.22	3.11	1.47	3.24	1.35	4.35	1.07	2.37	1.57	2.31	1.554	2.58	1.50	3.05	1.48	2.71	1.46	2.87	1.37		
Punish	4.48	0.76	3.65	1	3.42	1.09	2.16	1.06	2.29	0.93	3.04	0.95	1.35	0.75	1.47	0.85	1.53	0.88	2.00	1.07	1.78	0.94	1.96	1.04		

Table 2

*Frequencies, Means, and Standard Deviations of Domain Criterion and Quantitative Judgments  
Continued*

	<u>Prudential</u>			
	<b>Pills</b>		<b>Cocaine</b>	
<b>Legitimacy</b>	N's		N's	
Yes	200		200	
No	33		30	
<b>Contingency</b>				
Moral	157		153	
Conv	19		25	
Pers	62		58	
<b>Justification</b>				
Moral	118		130	
Prud	205		215	
Conv	64		75	
Pers	22		24	
<b>Quant Judge</b>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Import	4.08	1.25	4.22	1.18
Obey	4.01	1.32	4.11	1.29
Punish	3.77	1.16	3.92	1.19