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**AUTHORITARIANISM, EDUCATION,
AND SUPPORT FOR RIGHT-WING
POPULISM***Stanley Feldman***Introduction: Right-Wing Populism and
Authoritarianism**

Populism, according to a prominent account (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017), is a “thin ideology.” At its core is the belief that the will of the people is being undermined by manipulative, self-serving elites. Populist leaders promise to reduce the influence of the elites and return governing power to the people. This makes populism useful as a tool to mobilize angry voters that is extremely flexible in its implementation (see also Krekó, this volume). Who are these corrupt elites that are privileging their interests over those of the majority of the public? In some accounts, they are corporate CEOs, big banks, and their lobbyists, who enrich themselves at the expense of workers, create inequality, and undermine democratic governance. Or, they are entertainment and media elites along with intellectuals and universities who advance their left-wing, cosmopolitan values and force fundamental changes in society to reduce the power of traditional majority groups. Populism can thus take on both left-wing and right-wing forms. As well put by Norris and Inglehart (2019, p. 4), it has a “chameleon-like quality.” Bernie Sanders, for example, has been cited as an example of left-wing populist appeal in the US. Venezuela under Hugo Chavez might be a clearer example.

At present, however, there are far more examples of right-wing populism with significant political influence. Donald Trump’s rhetoric evokes themes of a liberal, untrustworthy media, allied with Democrats who encourage illegal immigration, advance a pro-LGTBQ agenda, and seek to eliminate religion from public life. The Brexit movement in the UK challenged decades of open borders and membership in the European Union that allowed the free movement of people into Britain and relinquished some political and economic decision-making to

a group of European elites that it claimed were beyond the control of ordinary people. Right-wing populist parties and leaders control governments in Europe (Hungary, Poland), South American (Brazil), South Asia (India), and the Pacific Rim (the Philippines). They have gained significant public support in recent elections around the world, even in established liberal democracies (France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands). Given the preponderance and political significance of right-wing populism at this point in time, my focus in this chapter will be on understanding their source of support. I do not claim that the same dynamics will explain support for left-wing populism.

What are the primary characteristics of right-wing populist leaders and parties? Opposition to immigration is clearly a universal, or near universal, policy stance. But they are not just concerned with halting new immigration; there are also elements of hostility toward racial/ethnic/religious minorities already in the country (for example, Muslims in Europe and African Americans in the US). At a minimum, those minorities are expected to conform to the norms of the majority group and relinquish their home customs, dress, and perhaps even their religion. Helping to reinforce the status of the majority group is an emphasis on nationalism—the glorification of the nation and its symbols. And it is necessary to have a strong leader who can enforce the “will of the majority” to control the nation’s borders and to require conformity to traditional norms and values.

While it may not receive the same attention as stances on immigration and nationalism, a common focus of many right-wing populist leaders is the defense of traditional morality. This is most commonly seen in hostility toward the LGBTQ community (see also Golec de Zavala, Lantos & Keenan, this volume). In Poland, for example, the governing Law and Justice Party has taken increasingly hostile positions toward the LGBTQ community, portraying them as a threat to Polish society. The ruling Fidesz in Hungary has begun to use more anti-gay rhetoric and has incorporated heterosexual marriage into its constitution. In the US, the Trump administration has challenged legal protections for LGBTQ people and, in particular, has attempted to curb the rights of transgender individuals.

At a more basic level, right-wing populism is frequently associated with a defense of patriarchy. Observers have noted elements of sexism in the rhetoric of right-wing populist parties in Germany, France, Italy, and the Netherlands (Spierings, 2020). One clear example of this is prohibitions on the teaching of gender studies in universities, for example, in Hungary. As Apperly (2019) notes, “for the far right, propping up male authority and promoting a nuclear family sticks that sticks to the gender binary are central tenets of the broader nationalist project.”

What unites these central characteristics of right-wing populism? It is not a coincidence that these positions have all been shown, in decades of research, to be correlates of authoritarianism (Altemeyer, 1988, 1996; Stenner, 2005). Discomfort with diversity (leading to prejudice and intolerance), nationalism, and traditional moral values (conventionalism) are central aspects of authoritarianism.

Norris and Inglehart (2019) even use “authoritarian populism” as a label for many of the right-wing parties and leaders in Europe and the US. The close fit between major characteristics of contemporary right-wing populism and well-documented correlates of authoritarianism suggest support for right-wing populist parties may be most prominent among members of the public high in authoritarianism. To fully understand the dynamics of right-wing populism, it is critical to distinguish between the motivation of right-wing populist leaders and their supporters. While authoritarianism should increase popular support for right-wing populist leaders, those leaders may be motivated primarily to attain political power and could tailor their messaging to appeal to authoritarians to win elections.

The Conceptualization of Authoritarianism

The theory and conceptualization of authoritarianism has undergone a number of changes in a history that spans the work of Erich Fromm (1941), Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, and Sanford (1950), and Altemeyer (1988, 1996). In recent years, research on authoritarianism has been strongly influenced by Altemeyer’s conceptualization and, especially, by his RWA (Right-Wing Authoritarianism) scale. However, Altemeyer’s social learning account of authoritarianism is not completely satisfying for two major reasons. First, it does not easily accommodate some of the major correlates of authoritarianism. There is considerable evidence that relatively stable factors like openness to experience are associated with authoritarianism (Sibley & Duckitt, 2008). Even more fundamentally, studies of twins yield estimates that up to 50 percent of the variance in authoritarianism is heritable (McCourt, Bouchard, Lykken, Tellegen, & Keyes, 1999). All of this suggests that social learning cannot be a complete account of the development of authoritarianism.

Second, most conceptualizations of authoritarianism—Altemeyer’s included—see it as a relatively stable predisposition, either a personality trait or a social attitude. But that does not provide an answer to a critical question in the explanation of support for right-wing populism: if authoritarianism is temporally stable, why are we seeing an increase in support for right-wing parties and politicians now compared to 20, or even 10, years ago? It cannot be due to a rapid increase in levels of authoritarianism in a population, not unless authoritarianism is a relatively fluid trait. Explaining the apparently variable link between authoritarianism and political attitudes and behavior thus needs to be a critical component of any useful conceptualization.

Recent work in psychology and political science that has attempted to develop a new theoretical foundation for authoritarianism has identified the basic characteristics of this dimension in very similar ways (Duckitt, 1989; Feldman, 2003; Stenner, 2005; Stellmacher & Petzel, 2005). An early, clear statement of the core

of authoritarianism by Duckitt (1989, p. 71) defines the end points of the continuum as follows:

At one extreme would be the belief that the purely personal needs, inclinations, and values of group members should be subordinated as completely as possible to the cohesion of the group and its requirements. At the other extreme would be the belief that the requirements of group cohesion should be subordinated as completely as possible to the autonomy and self-regulation of the individual member.

Central to this conceptualization is that authoritarianism is a group-level phenomenon. People that we describe as high in authoritarianism are motivated by a desire to maintain group cohesion. As Duckitt suggests, the desire for group cohesion is at odds with a preference for personal autonomy and individual freedom. In this conceptualization, variation in authoritarianism reflects the tension between prioritizing group cohesion and individual freedom.

There are two important implications of this approach to authoritarianism. First, since authoritarians want to defend group cohesion, they should be most concerned when they see ingroup cohesion threatened. Group cohesion can be threatened by increases in racial/ethnic/religious diversity; immigration, which may bring people with different customs, dress, or religion; or changes in social/moral values. For example, rapid social change in the US is occurring in several ways. There has been a large growth in Latino immigration over the last several decades that has spread, geographically, across much of the country. Alongside this immigration, the relative size of the total minority population has been increasing, leading to a slow but steady decline in the proportion of the White, protestant majority group. There have also been significant changes in gender norms. Same-sex marriage, which was relatively unpopular just 20 years ago, now is legal and has substantial public support. Gender norms are also in flux. Demands for greater gender equality have been magnified by the #MeToo movement. Transgender rights are being public discussed. And religiosity, long a major feature of American society, is being challenged by growing secularization among young people.

The role of threats to social cohesion is critical for understanding the relationship between authoritarianism and political attitudes and behavior (see also Bar-Tal & Magal; Marcus; Kruglanski, Molinario & Sensales; and Vallacher & Fennell, this volume). Authoritarianism becomes more politically relevant when those high in authoritarianism perceive a threat to social cohesion. Increases in immigration or rapid changes in moral or gender values will increase the likelihood that authoritarians will support policies and leaders that promise to put a stop to the forces threatening ingroup cohesion, restore conformity to ingroup norms, and punish norm violators.

Second, since group cohesion is maintained, in part, by common ingroup norms and values, those norms and values will determine the form in which the authoritarian response to threat is expressed. This means that authoritarians may not always hold right-wing attitudes. For example, McFarland, Ageyev, and Abalakina-Paap (1992) found that Russians who were high in authoritarianism shortly after the fall of the Soviet Union were more supportive of left-wing values, such as social justice, than were low authoritarians. Growing up in a society with communist values should lead those who value social cohesion to want to defend egalitarian norms. In addition to potential differences in the expression of authoritarianism cross-nationally, there should also be variation across groups in a society. In particular, authoritarianism should have different effects among members of the national majority group than among minority group members.

Education as a Moderating Force?

While most research on the political effects of authoritarianism focuses on its overall effects, it is important to consider factors that have the potential to diminish its contribution to anti-democratic social and political attitudes. For example, Oyamoto, Borgida, and Fisher (2006) suggest that holding egalitarian values can somewhat ameliorate the effects of authoritarianism on negative attitudes toward immigrants and minorities. There is reason to believe that education may be one potential moderator of the effects of authoritarianism. On the one hand, there is considerable cross-national evidence that increasing education is associated with lower levels of authoritarianism. Lipset (1959) provided an early discussion of this relationship in his exploration of “working class authoritarianism.” Simpson (1972) summarized cross-national evidence of the relationship between education and authoritarianism (see also Federico & Tagar, 2014). However, most of the studies that document this relationship are based on cross-sectional samples. That leaves open the question of causality. It is certainly possible that more education reduces authoritarianism. Education beyond the high school level exposes students to diverse ideas and cultures that should reduce the extent to which people worry about the threat of diversity. In addition, moving from high school to college potential leads to social interactions with a broader range of people across racial, ethnic, religious, and gender lines. Since authoritarianism is correlated with having more homogeneous networks (Altemeyer, 1988), this could also help to reduce levels of authoritarianism. However, it is also possible that the observed relationship between education and authoritarianism is not the result of a causal effect of education. Instead, people high in authoritarianism may be less likely to pursue higher education than those who are low. They may not find the challenges of education—for example, confronting new ideas—to be as motivating as those low in authoritarianism. Or, they may not be as well suited to the demands

of higher education. These selection effects could also account for a relationship between education and authoritarianism.

While we know that greater levels of education are associated with lower authoritarianism, the relationship is far from perfect. There are people who don't have university degrees who have low levels of authoritarianism, just as there are people with BA degrees and above who score high on authoritarianism. Since studies also show that increasing education is related to lower levels of ethnocentrism, prejudice, and intolerance (for example, Bobo & Licari, 1989; but see Jackman & Muha, 1984), it is tempting to hypothesize that more educated authoritarians will be less likely than less educated authoritarians to be attracted to right-wing populism. This logic predicts an interaction between right-wing authoritarianism and education, with the effect of authoritarianism on prejudice, intolerance, etc. diminished as education increases.

There are, however, reasons to doubt that education can offset much of the effect of authoritarianism. While education may reduce levels of authoritarianism, well-educated authoritarians may be better able to link their values to party positions and, ultimately, their vote choices. This is exactly what Federico and Tagar (2014) found in a study of authoritarianism and partisanship in the US. Their analyses of American National Election Study survey showed that authoritarianism is *more strongly* related to Republican Party identification among those with a college degree than those without. It is therefore possible that education may be associated with lower levels of authoritarianism but at the same time has little effect on the political expression of authoritarianism.

The Measurement of Authoritarian Predispositions

Research on authoritarianism has relied on self-report measures that have been widely used in empirical research studies. The first of these was the F-scale developed by Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford (1950). More recently, research has turned to the Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) measure developed by Altemeyer (1988). Both ask respondents to agree or disagree with a set of statements intended to reflect high or low levels of authoritarianism. While RWA scales exhibit high reliability, there are some serious problems using them to study support for right-wing populist politicians and parties. One concern is that the measure is not unidimensional. Recent studies have found that, with carefully worded questions, it is possible to distinguish between three related aspects of authoritarianism: adherence to traditional norms and values, punitiveness and intolerance, and obedience to authorities (Duckitt & Bizumic, 2013). Thus, it is conceptually unclear which of these components of the RWA scale is driving anti-democratic attitudes.

More importantly, the significant overlap in content between the RWA scale and contemporary political rhetoric undermines researchers' use of RWA scores

to explain citizens' illiberal tendencies. Consider the following four items from a recent version of the scale (Altemeyer, 1996). Someone high in authoritarianism should agree with the first two statements and disagree with the second two.

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.

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.

Homosexuals and feminists should be praised for being brave enough to defy "traditional family values."

Our country needs free thinkers who will have the courage to defy traditional ways, even if this upsets many people.

It is not hard to imagine politicians and political commentators using language very similar to this when making arguments in support of or in opposition to illiberal policies. Research using measures like this make it difficult to draw conclusions about causal direction. Suppose we observe a correlation between scores on a measure using statements like this and support for anti-democratic practices. Is this because authoritarianism leads to anti-democratic attitudes or because people who support illiberal parties are responding to the rhetoric they hear from party leaders (Lenz, 2013)?

Recent work in political science (and increasingly in psychology) has used measures of authoritarian predispositions that are more reflective of the basic values that anchor opposing ends of the authoritarianism continuum and less contaminated by political rhetoric. A version of this follows the work of Kohn (1989; Kohn & Schooler, 1983) and uses pairs of childrearing values to distinguish people who most value social conformity or personal autonomy:

Although there are a number of qualities that people think children should have, every person thinks that some are *more important* than others. I am going to read you several pairs of desirable qualities for children. Although you may feel that both qualities are important, please tell me which one of each pair you think is *more important* for a child to have.

Independence or Respect for elders?

Curiosity or Good manners?

Obedience or Self-reliance?

Being considerate or Well-behaved?

People who value social conformity over personal autonomy should choose respect for elders, good manners, obedience, and well-behaved in these four paired value

questions. This measure has now been included on American National Election Studies presidential year surveys since 1992, on several waves of the most recent British Election Study, the AmericasBarometer surveys of Latin America, and recent national election surveys in Germany, France, and Switzerland. A major advantage of this measure over RWA-type scales is that framing the value choices in terms of childrearing practices reduces the chances that respondents will be influenced by their political views when answering these questions (or even think that these values are political).

Data and Analysis

Authoritarianism and Education

I draw on data from the 2016 American National Election Study for this paper. This national survey had two components—a sample of Americans interviewed face-to-face and a second sample randomly recruited and interviewed online. Since I am focusing on the appeal of right-wing populism, I only use the subset of data from non-Asian, non-Latino Whites. I pool the White respondents from the face-to-face and internet samples in order to have a large enough sample size to precisely estimate the effects of authoritarianism on the dependent variables conditional on education. The total sample size is 3038. Authoritarianism is the count of the number of conformity values chosen in each of the four value pairs. It thus ranges from 0 to 4. Small numbers of people refused to choose one of the two values in each pair. They are coded as .5. There is a good distribution across the childrearing measure. The highest and lowest categories each contain approximately 15 percent of the respondents. While the modal category is 3, the mean for the White subsample is 2.04.

The relationship between authoritarianism and education is shown in Figure 19.1, a box plot for the distribution of authoritarianism across education. Authoritarianism is recoded to range from 0 (lowest) to 1 (highest) and education varies from less than a high school degree to post-BA degrees. The plotted medians (the thick middle line in each box) decline sharply as education increases. However, there is still substantial variance in authoritarianism at each level of education. Each grey box represents the 25th to 75th percentile of authoritarianism. The line extensions reach the upper and lower values of authoritarianism. Consider the variation for those with a high school degree and those with a BA. While the median of authoritarianism is much lower for those with a college degree, there is substantial variance in authoritarianism for both groups. There are people with scores of 0 and 1 in both groups. For those with only high school degrees as well as those with a BA, the 5th and 95th percentiles of authoritarianism are 0 and 1—there are at least 5 percent of each group with the highest and lowest levels of authoritarianism. Authoritarianism does decline as education increases. At the same time, there are some less well-educated people

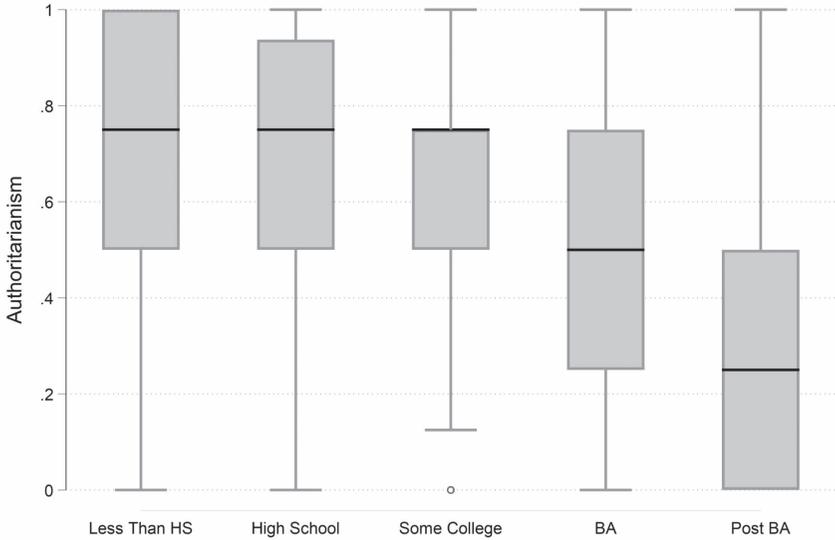


FIGURE 19.1 Box plot distribution of authoritarianism at levels of education.

with very low levels of authoritarianism just as people who score high are found among the best educated.

Measures of Right-Wing Populist Attitudes

I now turn to the joint relationship between authoritarianism, education, and social and political attitudes associated with support for right-wing populism. To keep the presentation as clear as possible, I coded education in these analyses as less than a BA degree and BA degree or higher. I created eight measures to cover a range of right-wing populist attitudes.

As noted in the introduction, opposition to immigration is one of the factors most consistently related to right-wing populism. The 2016 ANES survey included nine questions on this topic. A factor analysis revealed two correlated but distinct factors. The first includes beliefs that immigrants are detrimental to the US—they take away jobs, are bad for the economy, increase crime, and are a threat to American culture. The second factor taps preferences for actively excluding immigrants: making all unauthorized immigrants return to their home country (including those brought to the US as children), ending birthright citizenship, building a wall on the Mexican border, and opposition to allowing Syrian refugees into the country.

Directly related to concerns about levels of immigration is the question of how recent immigrants should assimilate. I created a scale based on four questions that asked respondents what is important for “being truly American”:

being born in the US; having American ancestry; being able to speak English; and following America's customs and traditions. A close correlate of enforced national assimilation is nationalism—an unconditional attachment to the nation and a sense of national superiority. A measure tapping this was constructed from two questions: how good does the American flag make you feel, and the world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like Americans (agree/disagree).

Right-wing populism draws not only on opposition to immigration but also on concerns about national minority groups. I therefore created a measure of racial hostility—negative attitudes toward African Americans and opposition to policies to improve their status. The scale includes 0 to 100 feeling thermometer questions measuring attitudes toward Blacks and Black Lives Matter; questions tapping opposition to affirmative action in universities and preferential hiring; and beliefs that the government and police *do not* discriminate against African Americans and that there is little or no discrimination against African Americans. A factor analysis shows that all of these questions load on a single factor.

As I noted in the introduction to this paper, somewhat unexpected but important factors that have become associated with many right-wing populist parties and leaders are hostility toward the LGTBQ community and sexism. A measure of anti-gay/transgender attitudes was constructed from questions asking about support for gay marriage; allowing gay and lesbian couples to adopt children; support for laws to protect gays and lesbians from job discrimination; and requiring transgender people to use the bathroom of the gender they were born as. Sexism is measured by four items from the Glick and Fiske (1997) Hostile Sexism measure.

Finally, two questions from the ANES survey were combined to create a measure of support for a strong leader. The first asks whether the country needs a “strong, determined leader who will crush evil and take us back to our true path.” And the second asks whether a strong leader is good for the country “even if the leader bends the rules to get things done.”

Authoritarianism, Education, and Right-Wing Populism Attitudes

For each of these seven measures, I estimated a regression model that includes authoritarianism, education (less than BA/more than BA), the interaction of authoritarianism and education, age, gender, income, and religious affiliation. Since my focus is on the joint effects of authoritarianism and education, I present the estimates of the effects of those two variables in a series of graphs. Each one shows the effects of authoritarianism, as it varies from its lowest to highest values, on the predicted value of the dependent variable for those with less than a BA degree and those with a BA or higher. Vertical bars show 95 percent confidence intervals for the predicted values at each level of authoritarianism (those choosing

0, 1, 2, 3, or 4 of the authoritarian values on the childrearing measure). For ease of presentation, all the dependent variables were coded to range from 0 to 1.

Panels A and B in Figure 19.2 show the estimates of this model for the two immigration measures. In both cases, there is a strong, significant effect of authoritarianism. Compared to those who score low, high authoritarians are substantially more likely to believe that immigrants harm the US economy, take jobs away from Americans, increase crime, and undermine American culture (Panel A). Education has a more modest effect. At all levels of authoritarianism, those with a college degree see somewhat less harm from immigration. There is also no significant interaction between authoritarianism and education. A college education has virtually the same effect on these immigration attitudes for those low and high on authoritarianism. The estimates for the second immigration measure (Panel B)—a willingness to support measures to keep out immigrants—are somewhat different. There is still a substantial effect of authoritarianism. In this case, however, there is a significant interaction of authoritarianism and education. Importantly, having a college degree reduces the desire to exclude immigrants only among those *low in authoritarianism*. At the highest level of authoritarianism, there is no difference in opposition to immigration among those with and without a college degree.

Estimates for the cultural assimilation measure (Panel C of Figure 19.2) show that there is a significant and substantial effect of authoritarianism. The effect of education is also significant but much weaker. Those with a college degree are a little less likely to demand strict cultural assimilation for immigrants than those without a degree, and this effect is relatively constant across the range of authoritarianism; there is no significant interaction between the two variables. Regardless of education, as authoritarianism increases, White Americans have increasingly stringent standards for being a “true American.”

Panel D of Figure 19.2 shows the estimates for the nationalism scale. Overall, White Americans score relatively highly on this measure; even at low levels of authoritarianism, the predicted value of nationalism is above the midpoint of the scale. However, nationalism still increases significantly as authoritarianism increases. By comparison, the effect of education is quite small (though marginally significant). Although the effect of a college degree is a bit larger at low levels of authoritarianism, the interaction is not significant.

Panel A of Figure 19.3 shows the joint effects of authoritarianism and education on the racial hostility measure. There is a significant relationship between authoritarianism and negative attitudes toward African Americans and government policies to improve their status. The interaction of education and authoritarianism yields a result similar to what was found for the exclusion of immigrants measure—a college education reduces negative attitudes toward African Americans only among those *low in authoritarianism*. The predicted value of racial hostility at the maximum level of authoritarianism is actually a little higher for those with a college degree, though the difference is not quite significant.

The estimates of the regression for anti-gay/transgender rights are shown in Panel B. Most strikingly, education has almost no effect on attitudes toward the

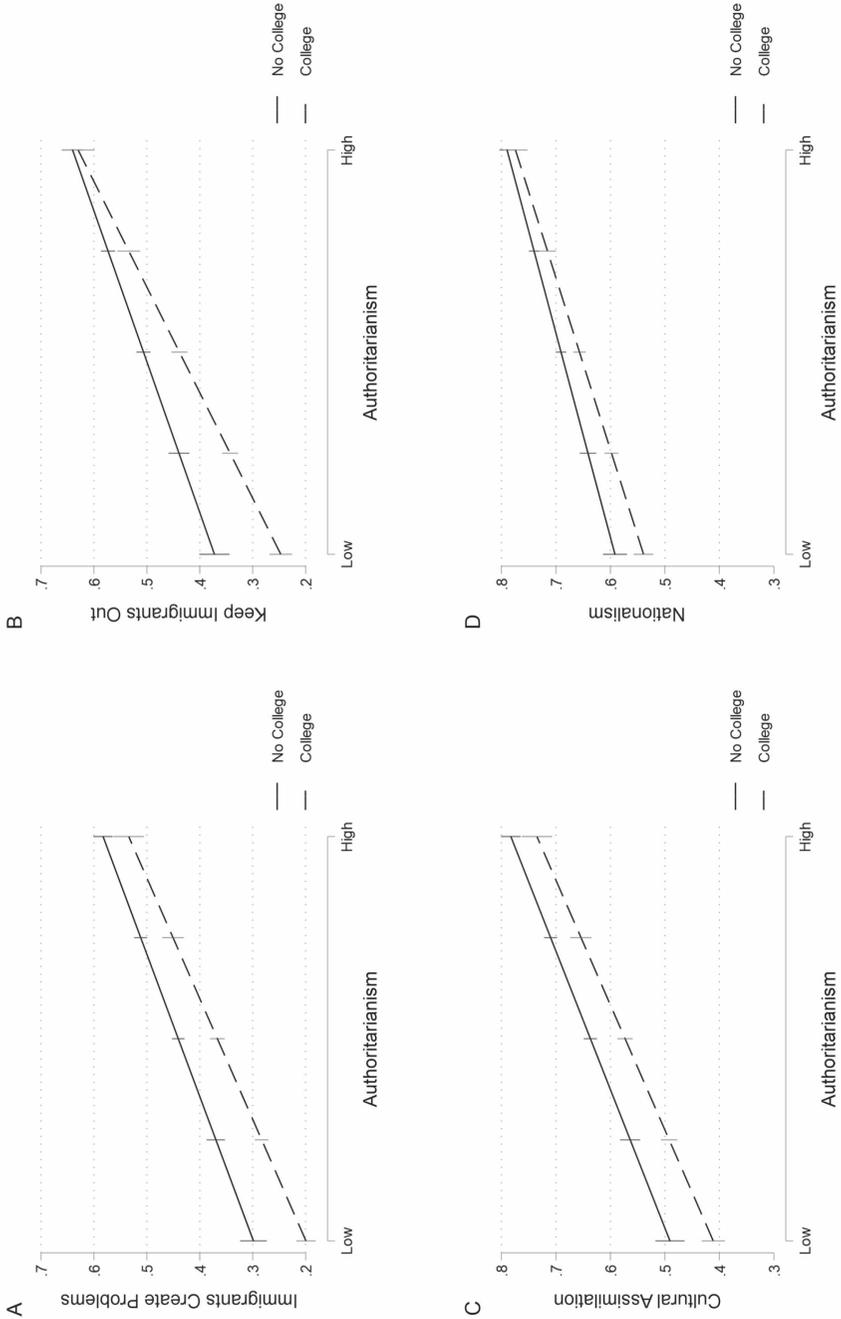


FIGURE 19.2 Predicted values for scales tapping A. beliefs that immigrants create problems for the US; B. wanting to exclude immigrants from the US; C. A desire for cultural assimilation; D. nationalism by authoritarianism and education.

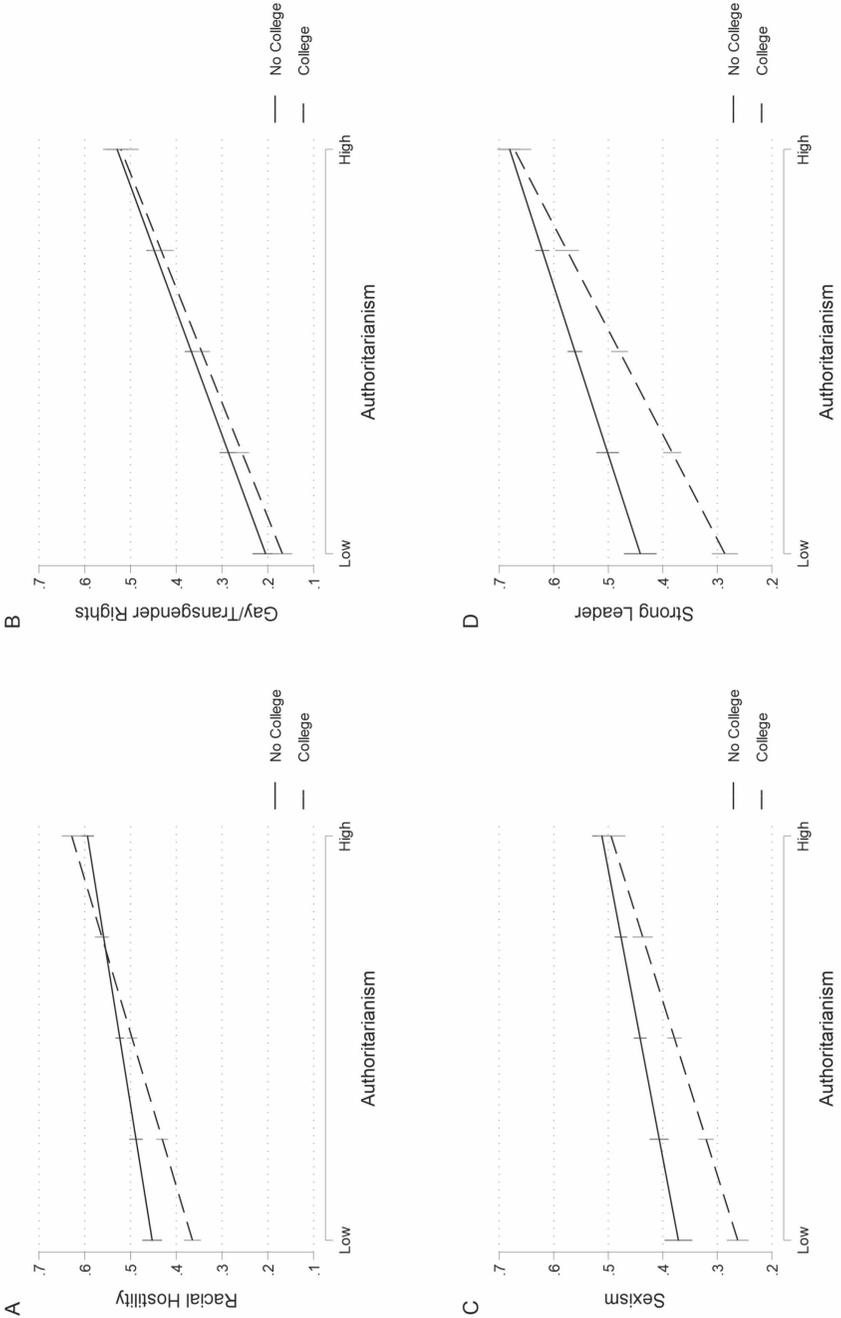


FIGURE 19.3 Predicted values for A. racial hostility; B. opposition to gay/transgender rights; C. hostile sexism; D. support for a strong leader by authoritarianism and education.

LGBTQ community once authoritarianism is taken into account. In general, White Americans have become relatively supportive of gay/lesbian/transgender rights. Even so, the effect of authoritarianism is quite large. Those low in authoritarianism are extremely supportive of LGBTQ rights. As authoritarianism increases, that support wanes considerably. Effects of authoritarianism on the transgender bathroom issue are particularly pronounced. When I extract that question from the scale and estimate the probability of requiring transgender people to use the bathroom of their birth gender, support for that policy varies from .24 to .7 as authoritarianism varies from low to high with a negligible effect of education.

As shown in Panel C, expressions of hostile sexism increase with authoritarianism, more strongly for those with a BA degree than those without. The different slopes for authoritarianism are again a function of education reducing hostile sexism much more for those low in authoritarianism than for those high. At the highest levels of authoritarianism, there is no significant difference in hostile sexism by education. As authoritarianism decreases, greater education becomes more associated with less sexism.

There is a strong relationship between authoritarianism and support for a strong leader who is willing to ignore democratic norms (Panel D). And education reduces support for a strong leader only among those low in authoritarianism. Consistent with previous analyses, there is no significant difference in support for a strong leader among the more and less well educated who are high in authoritarianism.

Conclusions

In the first half of this chapter, I offered a conceptual analysis of the psychological roots of populist ideology and argued that authoritarianism represents a core feature of right-wing populism. Using a representative national survey from the 2016 US presidential election, I have shown that there are substantial relationships between authoritarianism, measured via an unobtrusive set of four pairs of child-rearing values, and political attitudes that are core characteristics of right-wing populist support. Those high in authoritarians believe that immigration is a threat to the US and support a range of policies to halt, or even reverse, recent immigration. As well, they set a high bar for being a “true American”: people should speak English and adopt the customs of native Americans, and in the extreme, they should have American ancestry or even be born in the US. Authoritarians are not only opposed to immigration; they have negative attitudes toward minority groups in the US. In the case examined in this paper, authoritarianism is associated with negative attitudes toward African Americans and the Black Lives Matter movement and with opposition to government programs to reduce the effects of racial discrimination and to improve the status of African Americans. All of this is bound up with a heightened nationalism—highly positive feelings

for the symbols of the US (the flag) and a belief that the US is a better place to live than any other country.

Just as right-wing populists tend to fall back on socially conservative (religious) moral values, people high in authoritarianism hold more negative attitudes toward members of the LGBTQ community (especially transgender people; see also Golec de Zavala et al., this volume). And authoritarianism is also related to the belief in hostile sexism. If authoritarianism is a significant factor in public support for right-wing populist parties, the association of authoritarianism and traditional, morally conservative values may help to explain why right-wing populist leaders appeal to these values to garner votes.

Perhaps the hallmark of right-wing populism is the image of strong leadership—leaders who are willing to sidestep democratic norms in order to advance their agenda (see also Cooper & Avery; and Krekó, this volume). The two questions used in this study to tap support for a strong, anti-democratic leader make the link to right-wing populist support clear: “Having a strong leader in government is good for the United States even if the leader bends the rules to get things done”; and “What our country really needs is a strong, determined leader who will crush evil and take us back to our true path.” There is a pronounced relationship between authoritarianism and agreement with these two statements. The contrasting views of democratic leadership between those high in authoritarianism and those with college degrees who are low are striking. As I noted in the beginning of this chapter, authoritarianism is a significant factor in public support for right-wing populist leaders. It is also possible that those leaders advance authoritarian policies simply for political purposes.

As previous studies have found, education is associated with lower levels of authoritarianism. Higher levels of authoritarianism, and thus support for the tenets of right-wing populism, are therefore more likely to be found among the less educated. While there is a significant decline in authoritarianism as education increases, there are still a substantial number of college-educated people with high scores on authoritarianism. The analyses in this chapter provide little hope that education will moderate the effects of authoritarianism. For a few of the dependent variables, those with a college education are a little less likely to hold ethnocentric, anti-democratic attitudes among people high in authoritarianism. Even in these few cases, the moderating effect of education is small. In most cases, we see no effect of education at high levels of authoritarianism. In those analyses where there is a significant interaction between education and authoritarianism, the liberalizing effect of a college education is only evident for those low in authoritarianism. One possible explanation for this result is that increasing education—exposure to new ideas and diversity—leads to less prejudice, intolerance, and anti-democratic attitudes only when people are able or willing to respond positively to these experiences. And that is more likely among people low in authoritarianism. The important conclusion from this examination of the joint effects of education and authoritarianism is that education, by itself, has a limited ability to lessen the link between authoritarianism and support for right-wing populism.

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