

A brief overview of authoritarianism.
by William Tillier

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The need for authority is directly proportional to professional knowledge and one-sided expert knowledge. Conversely, the growth of a multilevel, multidimensional knowledge, the growth of sensitivity in more important domains of reality, is connected with a dislike for authority, and moreover, with a desire and attitude of humility.

(Cienin [Dąbrowski], 1972, p. 19).

The essence of the independent mind lies not in *what* it thinks, but in *how* it thinks.
(Hitchens, 2009).

Executive summary.

Since the early 1940s, psychologists have endeavoured to comprehend the personality traits of authoritarians, as well as the characteristics of individuals who follow them. This informal review provides a brief chronological summary of key events.

A note on references: I have not used complete references (generally lacking page numbers) because I discovered that people copied and pasted my material into their university work. All of the quotes are easily accessible. I am very supportive of students. If any students would like my bibliographic entries, I would be happy to provide them if they contact me. In creating a bibliography, I have cast a wide net for interested readers.

Part 1: Authoritarian personality.

1.1 The Institute for Social Research: Overview.

The Institute for Social Research was the home of the Frankfurt School and critical theory. The

institute was founded in Frankfurt am Main, Germany in 1923. Max Horkheimer took over the directorship from Carl Grünberg, a Marxist professor of law, in 1930. In 1933, after the rise of Hitler, the Institute left Germany for Geneva and then, in 1934, moved to New York City where it became affiliated with Columbia University. The Institute reopened in Frankfurt in 1951 under the direction of Friedrich Pollock.

1.2 Authoritarianism before 1940.

Two essays on authority appeared in 1936 in a book edited by Max Horkheimer (1936). The first was by Horkheimer “Authority and the Family” (2002a) and the other was Erich Fromm’s (1936) “Studies on Authority and Family. Sociopsychological Dimensions.” Here is a book review by Marshall appearing in 1937:

This article is a report on a book, and its main purpose is to explain the nature and the contents of that book to those who are interested in the subject but unlikely to undertake for themselves the task of reading a somewhat formidable volume. *Studien über Autorität und Familie* is a product of the researches of the Institut für Sozialforschung, and it runs to some 850 pages of German text.

Authority is a subject absolutely central to any analysis of the structure of society, and by whatever road one approaches it, whether through history, philosophy, psychology, or the study of institutions, one is led before long to the family, the point where all roads meet. Let me elaborate this point for a moment, drawing mainly on the excellent treatment in the first part of Max Horkheimer’s essay.

Every element in the culture presses every individual in the community into a way of behaviour suited to the whole pattern. It offers at the same time what Malinowski calls “secondary imperatives,” rules of conduct which, even though they may be conscious motives of behaviour, do not win the allegiance of man’s thought and will by appealing to the first, basic principles underlying their claim to exist.

It is as the major force behind these secondary imperatives that authority plays its part.

Whether authority resides in an individual, a moral rule, a religious precept, a custom, a law, or a dictator, it asks to be obeyed without too deep questioning.

Authority is, by definition, a power that enjoys respect and receives allegiance. Conflict there may be, within the individual heart or the social group, but so long as authority lasts, the conflict is resolved in obedience on a scale sufficient to preserve the social pattern that we call culture. Authority in some form is, therefore, not merely a social, but also an individual, necessity.

Erich Fromm finds a possible means of reconciling these divergent views with the help of the super-ego. The argument runs as follows. The super-ego is built up as an internal censor exercising from within that control over the thoughts and deeds of the child which the father exercises from without. Or rather, by repression, it prevents the conflict with the father from taking place. The external force of authority is internalized and becomes an inner compulsion, part of the self, acceptable, good, moral, and these qualities that belong to the super-ego are projected out again on to the external authority of the father, who thereby becomes acceptable, good and moral, and is accorded an obedience that springs, not from reason, but from irrational emotion.

The examination of sadism and masochism is especially interesting because it shows how society both needs and utilizes the two opposite and complementary types that can be produced from the same social situation. There is a fundamental problem here. Any society contains, and must contain, both aggressive and submissive, leading and following, types.

By far the fullest report is that on 500 questionnaires answered by young people, mostly between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one, in Switzerland . . . It was found that on the average parental control diminished and conflict increased as the income level rose. But it was also discovered that cases of maximum interference, if not backed by corporal punishment, were correlated with the greatest confidence in parents and the lowest degree of conflict. A genuine authoritarian type of family emerged. When this evidence is supplemented by means of interviews with various “experts,” it seems to indicate that the Swiss family is firmly established, unshaken by economic crisis, and that parental authority is strong, especially in the working-class, which is markedly

conservative in its ethical and moral views. Where conflict occurs, it seems to result rather from the failure of the parents to provide sufficient leadership and moral support than from the rebellion of their children against excessive discipline and repression. The child, it appears, needs authority, and if it does not find it at home, it will seek it elsewhere. (Marshall, 1937)

1.3 Erich Fromm.

In 1929 Erich Fromm began research on a project called *German Workers 1929: A Survey, Its Methods and Results* (aka the “Frankfurt Labor Study”). The theory of the authoritarian character that Theodor Adorno would make famous with *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950) came directly out of this empirical research (Adorno et al, 1950).

In 1930 Fromm joined the institute bringing expertise in psychoanalytic theory and therapy. Fromm taught psychoanalysis in a program associated with the Institute set up by Horkheimer at Frankfurt University. Fromm was made the tenured director of the Institute for Social Research’s Social Psychology Section in 1930.

Initially Fromm was an orthodox Freudian, promoting libido theory that emphasizing the centrality of instincts, but his views changed over time. By the middle of the 1930s Fromm had broken from orthodoxy to stress the importance of culture and interpersonal relations and an existential analysis of human psychic isolation that gave rise to what he would later call a “fear of freedom.”

In the spring of 1939 Fromm was essentially dismissed from his tenured position at the Institute and the *German Workers* project was dropped. Fromm’s project played a major role in his bitter break with his colleagues. There is dispute among scholars as to why this study was so unpopular among the inner circle of the Frankfurt School. Fromm himself stressed Horkheimer’s concern that controversial Marxism of the study would hurt the institute in anti-communist America. The study disappeared and was later also partly deleted from the annals of the Institute.

Horkheimer’s refusal to publish the Fromm study under the auspices of the Institute was a major factor in the rift between Fromm and the Frankfurt School. In addition, strong personal

animosities between Fromm and Adorno clearly played a major role in the internal conflict within the Institute. Fromm's study would not appear in English until 1984 when it was published posthumously under the title *The Working Class in Weimar Germany: A Psychological and Sociological Study*.

Since Fromm had been excluded from the original Frankfurt School canon, his work was also generally ignored in the broader scholarship on critical theory. The Frankfurt School had been transformed from a relatively obscure network of scholars to become an influential school of thought on the margins of the academy. Fromm had become a forgotten intellectual whose books continued to sell but who was no longer taken seriously as an intellectual, radical or social scientist (above based on McLaughlin, 1999).

The following study focuses on the psychological dynamic behind different attitudes toward authority. It attempts to analyze those instinctual inclinations and psychic mechanisms active in the development of diverse forms of "attitudes toward authority." (Fromm, 1936)

Masochistic as well as sadistic strivings are gratified by the authoritarian structures of society. Everyone is enmeshed in a system of dependencies from above and below. The lower an individual's place in this hierarchy, the greater the number and quality of his dependencies on higher agencies. He must obey the commands of his immediate superior, but even these orders come from the top of the pyramid, that is, from the monarch, the leader or a god. As a result, even the immediate superior, although he may play a less than impressive role in the hierarchy, takes on the glow of the great and powerful. The masochistic character's typical pleasure in surrender and obedience thus finds its gratification, albeit to varying degrees, according to social position. Theoretically, the head of a society would be the only one no longer subject to orders. But the feeling of carrying out the orders of God or destiny also gratifies his masochistic strivings. (Fromm, 1936)

Because the super-ego already emerges in the child's early years as an agency determined by fear of the father and the simultaneous wish to be loved by him, the family proves to be an important aid in the establishment of the adult's later capacity to believe in authority and

submit to it. (Fromm, 1936)

Tillier: The basic thesis of Fromm's 1936 essay was expanded in his book *Escape from Freedom*, initially published by Farrar & Rinehart in New York (in English) in 1941. Below, I am quoting from the 1969 Avon paperback edition.

At first many found comfort in the thought that the victory of the authoritarian system was due to the madness of a few individuals and that their madness would lead to their downfall in due time. Others smugly believed that the Italian people, or the Germans, were lacking in a sufficiently long period of training in democracy, and that therefore one could wait complacently until they had reached the political maturity of the Western democracies. Another common illusion, perhaps the most dangerous of all, was that men like Hitler had gained power over the vast apparatus of the state through nothing but cunning and trickery, that they and their satellites ruled merely by sheer force; that the whole population was only the will-less object of betrayal and terror.

This truth has been so forcefully formulated by John Dewey that I express the thought in his words: "The serious threat to our democracy," he says, "is not the existence of foreign totalitarian states. It is the existence within our own personal attitudes and within our own institutions of conditions which have given a victory to external authority, discipline, uniformity and dependence upon The Leader in foreign countries. The battlefield is also accordingly here-within ourselves and our institutions."

To the degree to which the individual, figuratively speaking, has not yet completely severed the umbilical cord which fastens him to the outside world, he lacks freedom; but these ties give him security and a feeling of belonging and of being rooted somewhere. I wish to call these ties that exist before the process of individuation has resulted in the complete emergence of an individual "primary ties."

Once the stage of complete individuation is reached and the individual is free from these primary ties, he is confronted with a new task: to orient and root himself in the world and to find security in other ways than those which were characteristic of his pre-individualistic existence.

This process [of growing individuation] has two aspects: one is that the child grows stronger

physically, emotionally, and mentally. In each of these spheres intensity and activity grow. At the same time, these spheres become more and more integrated. An organized structure guided by the individual's will and reason develops. If we call this organized and integrated whole of the personality the self, we can also say that the *one side of the growing process of individuation is the growth of self-strength*. The limits of the growth of individuation and the self are set, partly by individual conditions, but essentially by social conditions. For although the differences between individuals in this respect appear to be great, every society is characterized by a certain level of individuation beyond which the normal individual cannot go.

The other aspect of the process of individuation is *growing aloneness*. ... When one has become an individual, one stands alone and faces the world in all its perilous and overpowering aspects.

When one has become an individual, one stands alone and faces the world in all its perilous and overpowering aspects. The first mechanism of escape from freedom I am going to deal with is the tendency to give up the independence of one's own individual self and to fuse one's self with somebody or something outside of oneself in order to acquire the strength which the individual self is lacking.

The child becomes more free to develop and express its own individual self unhampered by those ties which were limiting it. But the child also becomes more free *from* a world which gave it security and reassurance. The process of individuation is one of growing strength and integration of its individual personality, but it is at the same time a process in which the original identity with others is lost and in which the child becomes more separate from them. This growing separation may result in an isolation that has the quality of desolation and creates intense anxiety and insecurity; it may result in a new kind of closeness and a solidarity with others if the child has been able to develop the inner strength and productivity which are the premise of this new kind of relatedness to the world. ... While the process of individuation takes place automatically, the growth of the self is hampered for a number of individual and social reasons. The lag between these two trends results in an unbearable feeling of isolation and powerlessness, and this in its

turn leads to psychic mechanisms, which later on are described as *mechanisms of escape*. In one word, capitalism not only freed man from traditional bonds, but it also contributed tremendously to the increasing of positive freedom, to the growth of an active, critical, responsible self. However, while this was one effect capitalism had on the process of growing freedom, at the same time it made the individual more alone and isolated and imbued him with a feeling of insignificance and powerlessness.

Luther and Calvin psychologically prepared man for the role which -he had to assume in modern society: of feeling his own self to be insignificant and of being ready to subordinate his life exclusively for purposes which were not his own. Once man was ready to become nothing but the means for the glory of a God who represented neither justice nor love, he was sufficiently prepared to accept the role of a servant to the economic machine – and eventually a “Führer.”

Selfishness is rooted in this very lack of fondness for oneself. The person who is not fond of himself, who does not approve of himself, is in constant anxiety concerning his own self. He has not the inner security which can exist only on the basis of genuine fondness and affirmation. He must be concerned about himself, “greedy to get everything for himself, since basically he lacks security and satisfaction. The same holds true with the so-called narcissistic person, who is not so much concerned with getting things for himself as with admiring himself. While on the surface it seems that these persons are very much in love with themselves, they actually are not fond of themselves, and their narcissism-like selfishness-is an overcompensation for the basic lack of self-love.

The “self” in the interest of which modern man acts is the social self, a self which is essentially constituted by the role the individual is supposed to play and which in reality is merely the subjective disguise for the objective social function of man in society.

The term normal or healthy can be defined in two ways. Firstly, from the standpoint of a functioning society, one can call a person normal or healthy if he is able to fulfill the social role he is to take in that given society. More concretely, this means that he is able to work in the fashion which is required in that particular society, and furthermore that he is able to participate in the reproduction of society, that is, that he can raise a family.

Secondly, from the standpoint of the individual, we look upon health or normalcy as the optimum of growth and happiness of the individual.

If we differentiate the two concepts of normal and neurotic, we come to the following conclusion: the person who is normal in terms of being well adapted is often less healthy than the neurotic person in terms of human values. Often he is well adapted only at the expense of having given up his self in order to become more or less the person he believes he is expected to be. All genuine individuality and spontaneity may have been lost. On the other hand, the neurotic person can be characterized as somebody who was not ready to surrender completely in the battle for his self. To be sure, his attempt to save his individual self was not successful, and instead of expressing his self productively he sought salvation through neurotic symptoms and by withdrawing into a phantasy life. Nevertheless, from the standpoint of human values, he is less crippled than the kind of normal person who has lost his individuality altogether.

The first mechanism of escape from freedom I am going to deal with is the tendency to give up the independence of one's own individual self and to fuse one's self with somebody or something outside of oneself in order to acquire the strength which the individual self is lacking. Or, to put it in different words, to seek for new, "secondary bonds" as a substitute for the primary bonds which have been lost. The more distinct forms of this mechanism are to be found in the striving for submission and domination, or, as we would rather put it, in the masochistic and sadistic strivings as they exist in varying degrees in normal and neurotic persons respectively.

The most frequent forms in which *masochistic* strivings appear are feelings of inferiority, powerlessness, individual insignificance. The analysis of persons who are obsessed by these feelings show that, while they consciously complain about these feelings and want to get rid of them, unconsciously some power within themselves drives them to feel inferior or insignificant.

Besides these masochistic trends, the very opposite of them, namely, sadistic tendencies, are regularly to be found in the same kind of characters. They vary in strength, are more or less conscious, yet they are never missing. We find three kinds of sadistic tendencies,

more or less closely knit together. One is to make others dependent on oneself and to have absolute and unrestricted power over them, so as to make of them nothing but instruments, “clay in the potter’s hand.” Another consists of the impulse not only to rule over others in this absolute fashion, but to exploit them, to use them, to steal from them, to disembowel them, and, so to speak, to incorporate anything eatable in them. This desire can refer to material things as well as to immaterial ones, such as the emotional or intellectual qualities a person has to offer. A third kind of sadistic tendency is the wish to make others suffer or to see them suffer. This suffering can be physical, but more often it is mental suffering. Its aim is to hurt actively, to humiliate, embarrass others, or to see them in embarrassing and humiliating situations.

Alfred Adler has put the tendencies we are discussing here in the center of his system. But he deals with them not as sado-masochism, but as “inferiority feelings” and the “wish for power.”

The implication of this for masochism is that the individual is driven by an unbearable feeling of aloneness and insignificance. He then attempts to overcome it by getting rid of his self (as a psychological, not as a physiological entity); his way to achieve this is to belittle himself, to suffer, to make himself utterly insignificant.

The pleasure in the complete domination over another person (or other animate objects) is the very essence of the sadistic drive.

It seems that this tendency to make oneself the absolute master over another person is the opposite of the masochistic tendency, and it is puzzling that these two tendencies should be so closely knitted together.

As a matter of fact, for great parts of the lower middle class in Germany and other European countries, the sado-masochistic character is typical, and, as will be shown later, it is this kind of character structure to which Nazi ideology had its strongest appeal. Since the term “sado-masochistic” is associated with ideas of perversion and neurosis, I prefer to speak instead of the sado-masochistic character, especially when not the neurotic but the normal person is meant, of the “*authoritarian character*.” This terminology is justifiable because the sado-masochistic person is always characterized by his attitude toward

authority. He admires authority and tends to submit to it, but at the same time he wants to be an authority himself and have others submit to him. There is an additional reason for choosing this term. The Fascist systems call themselves authoritarian because of the dominant role of authority in their social and political structure. By the term “authoritarian character,” we imply that it represents the personality structure which is the human basis of Fascism.

For the authoritarian character there exist, so to speak, two sexes: the powerful ones and the powerless ones. His love, admiration and readiness for submission are automatically aroused by power, whether of a person or of an institution. Power fascinates him not for any values for which a specific power may stand, but just because it is power. Just as his “love” is automatically aroused by power, so powerless people or institutions automatically arouse his contempt.

The authoritarian character is never a “revolutionary”; I should like to call him a “rebel.” There are many individuals and political movements that are puzzling to the superficial observer because of what seems to be an inexplicable change from “radicalism” to extreme authoritarianism. Psychologically, these people are the typical “rebels.”

The authoritarian character loves those conditions that limit human freedom, he loves being submitted to fate. It depends on his social position what “fate” means to him. For a soldier it may mean the will or whim of his superior, to which he gladly submits. For the small businessman the economic laws are his fate.

The authoritarian character worships the past. What has been, will eternally be. To wish or to work for something that has not yet been before is crime or madness.

The courage of the authoritarian character is essentially a courage to suffer what fate or its personal representative or “leader” may have destined him for.

In authoritarian philosophy the concept of equality does not exist.

For him the world is composed of people with power and those without it, of superior ones and inferior ones. On the basis of his sado-masochistic strivings, he experiences only domination or submission, but never solidarity. Differences, whether of sex or race, to him are necessarily signs of superiority or inferiority.

They expect protection from “him,” wish to be taken care of by “him,” make “him” also responsible for whatever may be the outcome of their own actions. Often the fact of his dependence is something the person is not aware of at all.

1.4 Abraham Maslow.

During World War II Maslow studied the “authoritarian character” extensively. He indicates that this was in part stimulated by the work of Eric Fromm (*Escape from freedom*) and Maslow’s disagreements with some of Fromm’s observations.

Maslow (1943):

Like other psychologically insecure people, the authoritarian person lives in a world which may be conceived to be pictured by him as a sort of jungle in which man’s hand is necessarily against every other man’s, in which the whole world is conceived of as dangerous, threatening, or at least challenging, and in which human beings are conceived of as primarily selfish or evil or stupid. To carry the analogy further, this jungle is peopled with animals who either eat or are eaten, who are either to be feared or despised. One’s safety lies in one’s own strength and this strength consists primarily in the power to dominate. If one is not strong enough the only alternative is to find a strong protector. If this protector is strong enough and can be relied upon, then peace of a certain sort is possible to the individual. (pp. 402-403)

The authoritarian tendency to classify all other human beings into two groups determined by the relation of superiority or inferiority to the subject is furthermore marked by a tremendous over-generalization, namely, to regard the “superior” or stronger person as superior in everything, as generally superior, and to regard the “inferior” person as inferior in everything (since, in a jungle, strength is the only quality that ultimately matters). (p. 404)

The authoritarian person tends to have a strong drive for power, status, external prestige (since in the jungle, power is so necessary). In extreme cases it can be said that he has a psychological need for power which may actually be overtly observed,

especially in the person tending toward neurosis (see writings of Adler, Homey, Fromm). Furthermore, this power is defined characteristically in terms of power over people. The person with democratic character structure tends first of all to be less concerned with power, status, and prestige and secondly, to define it characteristically in relation to power over problems and tasks rather than over people. It is, furthermore, characteristic of the authoritarian individual that if he does have power, he tends to use it primarily to assuage his own psychological needs, that is, in a selfish way, and secondly he tends, especially when challenged, to use it in a hard, cruel, or even sadistic fashion. (p. 405)

Hostility, Hatred, Prejudice: What is necessary *is* hatred and hostility against some group or other, whichever happens to be most convenient. theoretically it might just as easily be peopled with long ears, or blue eyed people, or poets, or butchers, or bald men. Only hatred for a scapegoat is constant here, not the choice of the scapegoat. (p. 406)

Consciously or unconsciously the authoritarian will tend to identify kindness, sympathy, generosity with weakness (inferiority) and to identify cruelty, brutality, selfishness, or hardness with strength (superiority). ... Courtesy, honesty, and a good many other qualities which we consider to be good, an authoritarian will consider simply to be weak or foolish, or degenerate. This is not as arbitrary and senseless as it appears to be. If we go back to our original analogy and understand that our authoritarian is actually living in a psychological jungle, then the lamb who trusts the lion, who believes what he says, who is kind to him, is in actuality an idiot, and such behavior is in actuality dangerous. (p. 407)

It is easy to see from all the characteristics we have discussed so far that the authoritarian will be very apt to regard other human beings only as tools, as means to his end, as pawns on his chessboard, as objects to be exploited. In the extreme we may even detect the tendency to regard inferior people as riot quite human so that it doesn't matter so much if they are pained or deprived or exploited or even killed. This too is logical granted the authoritarian's fundamental outlook on the world

that one must kill or be killed. Furthermore, the very act of killing or hurting or exploiting, is in itself, a kind of validation or proof of his superiority and strength. (p. 408)

The authoritarian can because of his nature practically never be ultimately satisfied. He must go on and on and on. The overt need for power is of course insatiable because the only theoretical satisfaction would be to have complete power over everyone in the world and even then one could be threatened by the resentment of slaves, the lack of friends, the inability to trust anyone, and of course also by the biological exigencies of life – illness, old age, and death itself. The authoritarian must be perpetually and insatiably ambitious. (p. 409)

In western civilization, there are strong cultural forces that foster both authoritarian and democratic characters, e.g., capitalism, nationalism, militarism, authoritarian education, the patriarchal family, etc., versus the Christian ideal, humanitarianism, socialism, cooperative movements, etc. Intra-psychic conflict is therefore practically inevitable for the average authoritarian (p. 410)

Other Characteristics:

1. The abyss between males and females. The tendency to dominate women because they are weaker, and to assign to them a lesser role. With this goes the tendency to divide all women into madonnas and prostitutes, the former being good but non-sexual, the latter being sexual but bad.
2. The development of homosexuality.
3. The soldier-ideal. Ambivalent attitudes toward death.
4. The role of humiliation in an authoritarian world. Its function as a validation of status.
5. The antagonism to education particularly of the “inferior” ones.
6. The tendency to avoid responsibility for one’s own fate.
7. The concept of ecstatic submission, of eager giving up of independence to some stronger protector.
8. The authoritarian’s achievement of a pseudo-security through compulsive routine, order, discipline, fixity, and other compulsive-obsessive mechanisms. (pp. 410-411)

1.5 Nevitt Sanford.

Nevitt Sanford took his doctorate at Harvard and was a student of Gordon Allport and Henry Murray. He became a professor of psychology at the University of California at Berkeley and later at Stanford University.

During World War II Sanford (1986) was studying anti-Semitism and concluded that prejudice arose from deep emotional, personality-based needs. Sanford joined Adorno in investigating “authoritarian potential.” They were concerned American popular culture was fertile ground to create political totalitarianism (Jay, 1973). They felt Americans could be vulnerable to sympathizing with antidemocratic propaganda and they developed the F (fascist) scale to research the “potentially fascistic individual.”

1.6 Authoritarian personality vs authoritarianism.

Authoritarianism refers to political and social systems in which power is concentrated in the hands of a single authority or small elite, often accompanied by limited political freedoms and suppression of dissent. Ideology is used to justify control and demand loyalty from citizens. Examples commonly include Fascist, communist, or military regimes (e.g., Nazi Germany, Stalinist USSR).

Authoritarian personality refers to a psychological construct describing a set of personality traits that predispose individuals to favor obedience to authority, conformity, and hostility toward out-groups. Developed primarily by Theodor Adorno and colleagues in their 1950 book, *The Authoritarian Personality*. Their research sought to understand the psychological roots of fascism and prejudice and to gauge the degree to which American citizens may be predisposed to follow authoritarian leaders. The work examined how authoritarian personality could develop and looked at factors like childhood experiences (e.g., strict parenting), that lead to authoritarian attitudes in individuals.

Key personality traits:

1. Submission: A strong inclination to obey established authorities.
2. Aggression: Hostility directed toward those who deviate from conventional norms or

who are perceived as out-group members.

3. Conventionalism: A rigid adherence to traditional social norms and values.

1.7 Authoritarian personality vs authoritarian attitude.

1. Authoritarian Personality refers to a type of personality characterized by traits such as rigid adherence to conventional values, submission to authority figures, hostility toward those who defy norms, and an inclination toward enforcing strict social hierarchies. The concept was popularized by *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), a seminal study by Adorno and colleagues, which linked this personality type to susceptibility to fascism and prejudice.

Traits:

Rigid thinking and an aversion to ambiguity.

Strong deference to authority figures.

Aggression toward out-groups or perceived “inferiors.”

Black-and-white thinking about morality and social norms.

Development: Often linked to early childhood experiences, particularly strict, punitive parenting that emphasizes obedience and discourages autonomy.

Scope: A deeper, long-term psychological framework that influences an individual’s worldview and actions across various contexts.

2. Authoritarian Attitude refers to a specific set of beliefs or opinions that reflect support for strict authority, conformity, and control, often in specific contexts (e.g., politics, parenting, workplace). Altemeyer was largely responsible for the shift in focus from personality to attitudes.

Scope: Situational and more flexible than personality traits; attitudes may change with circumstances, new information, or changing social norms.

Examples: Supporting laws that favor strong governmental control or suppression of dissent. Advocating strict discipline in schools or homes.

Influence: May be shaped by cultural, societal, or situational factors rather than deep-seated psychological traits.

Individuals with an authoritarian personality are more likely to hold authoritarian attitudes consistently. However, someone with authoritarian attitudes in one context (e.g., favoring strong government action during crises) might not necessarily have an authoritarian personality. Understanding this distinction is crucial in psychology and sociology to address authoritarianism's causes and manifestations effectively.

1.8 The authoritarian personality: Overview.

The authoritarian personality is a concept developed to explain a set of personality traits that may predispose an individual toward rigid obedience to authority, intolerance of out-groups, and adherence to conventional norms. This concept was first introduced in the seminal work *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950). The authors aimed to understand the psychological factors that might lead individuals to support authoritarian, fascist regimes, especially in the context of Nazi Germany.

In *The Authoritarian Personality*, Adorno and his colleagues developed the F-scale (F for "fascism") to measure authoritarian traits. They outlined specific personality characteristics, such as rigid adherence to conventional values, submissiveness to authority, aggression toward out-groups, and a preference for power and toughness. This study was foundational in political psychology and contributed to further research on personality, prejudice, and authoritarianism.

Over the years, the concept of the authoritarian personality has evolved. Later researchers, such as Bob Altemeyer, refined it and introduced the idea of Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA). Altemeyer focused on three key components: authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression, and conventionalism. He argued that RWA can be understood as a more flexible model and that it can fluctuate based on environmental and situational factors rather than being a fixed personality type.

Today, studies of authoritarianism often examine how social, cultural, and situational factors interact with authoritarian traits, focusing on how these tendencies influence political attitudes, prejudice, and responses to threats or crises. This research has shown that

authoritarian personality traits can predict not only political leanings but also responses to social change, support for punitive measures, and intergroup hostility. (ChatGPT, personal communication, 10, 11, 2024)

1.9 *The Authoritarian Personality* (TAP) (the 1950 book).

Horkheimer and Adorno conducted research studies leading to a 1500-page report (which was never published) on “Antisemitism among American Labor.” They found that American workers held strong antisemitic tendencies and were drawn to fascism. They felt fascism was intimately related to [state] capitalism and Americans could be vulnerable to sympathizing with antidemocratic propaganda. They were concerned American popular culture was fertile ground to create political totalitarianism. They developed the F (fascist) scale to research the “potentially fascistic individual.” (Adorno et al., 1950).

Nevitt Sanford joined Adorno to write *The Authoritarian Personality* (also known as “the Berkeley Study”) along with Rorschach expert Else Frenkel-Brunswik and Sanford’s doctoral student Daniel Levinson (later a Yale psychology professor).

The Authoritarian Personality was published in 1950 by Theodor W. Adorno, Nevitt Sanford, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, and Daniel Levinson.

The Authoritarian Personality was part of the “Studies in Prejudice” five book series sponsored by the American Jewish Committee’s Department of Scientific Research [the others are Ackerman and Jahoda, 1950; Bettelheim and Janowitz, 1950; Lowenthal and Guterman, 1949 and Massing, 1949]. From 1936 to 1945, American social scientists conducted over 400 surveys on antisemitism as part of a larger goal of fortifying democracy in the United States against fascism.

The Authoritarian Personality was based in part on earlier Frankfurt School analyses undertaken in Germany, but with a few key changes. First, their Marxist and radical roots were downplayed. For example, the earlier “authoritarian personality/revolutionary personality” axis was changed to an “authoritarian personality/democratic personality” axis in America. Thus, values and behaviors earlier associated with revolutionary Marxism were now associated with support for democracy. Second, the book abandoned

and/or modified traditional Marxist sociological and economic explanations for human behavior in favor of psychological explanations, earning scorn from more orthodox Marxists. (The Authoritarian Personality 2024, October 10).

It [*The Authoritarian Personality*] appears as a study that used recent American empirical techniques, such as attitude scaling, and was informed by a longer European theoretical tradition, which drew both on psychoanalysis and Marxism. It is thus tempting to see it as an uneasy combination of American empiricism and European theory. But a closer look at the study, its authors, their background and its sources of inspiration reveals a more complex picture. (Roiser, 1995)

The main study used four Likert-type scales measuring anti-Semitism (AS), ethno-centrism (E), political and economic conservatism (PEC) and implicit anti-democratic trends, or potentiality for fascism (F). They seem to be an embodiment of American quantitative techniques dating back directly to the pioneering attitude-scale work of Leon Thurstone and Rensis Likert in the 1920s, to which the study refers. Thurstone's approach was psychometric and borrowed from the behaviourist conception of social psychology set out by Floyd Allport in his textbook of 1924. They saw attitude as a measurable variable mediating the relationship between an attitudinal stimulus object and an individual's evaluative response. Here attitudes were not seen as bodies of ideas or ideologies, but as components in a stimulus-response network. (Roiser, 1995)

In dealing with the topics of anti-Semitism, ethnocentrism, conservatism and authority, they [the scale items] encompassed, in addition, opinions about religion, science, morality, superstition and many others. Because of the manner of their collection the items were generally assertions of prejudiced and authoritarian viewpoints. They did not readily lend themselves to simple rephrasing as opposites, which was one of the requirements of the Likert technique. ... Several conventions of attitude-scale design were thus [deliberately] broken. (Roiser, 1995)

[Erich] Fromm not only provided the theoretical underpinning for *The Authoritarian Personality*, he also conducted an empirical study which established the existence of this type in Weimar Germany. This study was not published at the time and disappeared from view

for several decades. (Roiser, 1995)

In 1933, soon after the Nazis came to power, the institute was closed and its members fled.

About half the 1,100 completed questionnaires were lost during the flight into exile.

(Roiser, 1995)

It was Fromm who initiated the introduction of psychoanalytical ideas into the Marxism of the Frankfurt Institute. He sought to add a social-psychological dimension to Marx's economically based view of history and, at the same time, to socialize Freud's individual psychology. This ambitious attempt at theoretical synthesis took place while the study was being conducted. It may be for this reason that the design suggests a Marxist influence, whereas in the handling of the data there is a more psychoanalytical approach.

(Roiser, 1995)

The Authoritarian Personality "invented a set of criteria by which to define personality traits, ranked these traits and their intensity in any given person on what it called the 'F scale' (F for fascist)." The personality type Adorno et al. identified can be defined by nine traits that were believed to cluster together as the result of childhood experiences.

These traits include:

1. Conventionalism. Rigid adherence to conventional, middle-class values.
2. Authoritarian submission. Submissive, uncritical attitude toward idealized moral authorities of the in-group.
3. Authoritarian aggression. Tendency to be on the lookout for and to condemn, reject, and punish people who violate conventional values.
4. Anti-intraception. Opposition to the subjective, the imaginative, the tender-minded.
5. Superstition and stereotypy. The belief in mystical determinants of the individual's fate; the disposition to think in rigid categories.
6. Power and 'toughness.' Preoccupation with the dominance-submission, strong-weak, leader-follower dimension, identification with power figures; overemphasis on the conventionalized attributes of the ego; exaggerated assertion of strength and toughness.
7. Destructiveness and cynicism. Generalized hostility, vilification of the human.
8. Projectivity. The disposition to believe that wild and dangerous things go on in the world; the

projection outwards of unconscious emotional impulses.

9. Sex. Exaggerated concern with sexual ‘goings-on’ [a person who has an exaggerated concern with sexual activity and with sexual promiscuity, especially when concerning women].
(The Authoritarian Personality 2024 [Wikipedia]).

“These variables were thought of as going together to form a single syndrome, a more or less enduring structure in the person that renders him receptive to antidemocratic propaganda”
(Adorno et al., 1950, p. 228).

“For theory as to the structure of personality we have leaned most heavily upon Freud, while for a more or less systematic formulation of the more directly observable and measurable aspects of personality we have been guided primarily by academic psychology. The forces of personality are primarily *needs* (drives, wishes, emotional impulses) which vary from one individual to another in their quality, their intensity, their mode of gratification, and the objects of their attachment, and which interact with other needs in harmonious or conflicting patterns. There are primitive emotional needs, there are needs to avoid punishment and to keep the good will of the social group, there are needs to maintain harmony and integration within the self. Since it will be granted that opinions, attitudes, and values depend upon human needs, and since personality is essentially an organization of needs, then personality may be regarded as a determinant of ideological preferences”
(Adorno et al., 1950, p. 5).

“The major influences upon personality development arise in the course of child training as carried forward in a setting of family life. What happens here is profoundly influenced by economic and social factors. It is not only that each family in trying to rear its children proceeds according to the ways of the social, ethnic, and religious groups in which it has membership, but crude economic factors affect directly the parents’ behavior toward the child. This means that broad changes in social conditions and institutions will have a direct bearing upon the kinds of personalities that develop within a society” (Adorno et al., 1950, p. 6).

Later, Adorno rejected the psychological/Freudian basis of the published study: “the ultimate source of prejudice has to be sought in social factors which are incomparably stronger

than the ‘psyche’ of any one individual involved” ... “anti-Semitism, fascism, and authoritarianism were due to ‘the total structure of our society’” (Gordon, 2017, p. 43). Adorno explained, “men tend to become transformed into ‘social agencies’ and to lose the qualities of independence and resistance which used to define the old concept of the individual” (Gordon, 2017, p. 45).

Adorno: “People are inevitably as irrational as the world in which they live” (Gordon, 2017, p. 46).

Hypothesis: “that the political, economic, and social convictions of an individual often form a broad and coherent pattern, as if bound together by a ‘mentality’ or ‘spirit,’ and that this pattern is an expression of deep-lying trends in his personality” (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950, p. 1).

Though criticized at the time for bias and methodology, the book was highly influential in American social sciences, particularly in the first decade after its publication: “No volume published since the war in the field of social psychology has had a greater impact on the direction of the actual empirical work being carried on in the universities today” (Glazer, 1954).

[However] what strikes us now as most problematic is the shockingly obvious paradox of liberal researchers claiming that there are two types of people: one is our type (“liberals”), while the other type is oriented to a Manichean morality and has a tendency to simplistic and stereotyping thinking, and must therefore be pathologized. To the contemporary reader with more emotional distance, the clearest example of such rigid typologizers and Manicheans is not the authoritarians but the authors. (Martin, 2020)

1.10 Feldman, 2003.

Fifty years after the publication of *The Authoritarian Personality*, the empirical literature on authoritarianism continues to grow even though there is no widely accepted theory to account for the phenomenon. The absence of a secure theoretical grounding severely limits our understanding of authoritarianism.

A large literature rapidly developed that examined the correlates of authoritarianism, as measured

by the F-scale or similar measures. As of 1989 there were well over 2,000 publications on authoritarianism and related constructs.

Research on authoritarianism waned in the 1970s and early 1980s but has increased significantly in recent years. One of the major reasons for the revitalization of the study of authoritarianism has been the large body of research reported by Altemeyer (1981, 1988, 1996). From many years of careful studies, Altemeyer has both developed a new and more reliable measure of the construct and advanced a new conceptualization based on social learning theory. Rejecting Adorno et al.'s Freudian explanation, Altemeyer (1988) prefers a simpler conceptualization that sees authoritarianism as a social attitude (or cluster of attitudes) that is learned through interactions with parents, peers, schools, and the media, and through experiences with people who hold conventional and unconventional beliefs and lifestyles [Bandura's framework]. His measure of right-wing authoritarianism (the RWA scale) is more reliable and unidimensional than previous scales and has items balanced for agreement response set.

Absent an accepted theory of authoritarianism, there are many issues that are not adequately addressed in Altemeyer's research, nor in the authoritarianism literature more generally. There is no question that research on authoritarianism has been able to accumulate even as investigators have largely abandoned the original Freudian theory. But without a compelling substitute, many questions about the construct have not been successfully dealt with.

1.11 Duckitt, 2013.

Authoritarian personality: "socially conservative, nationalistic, intolerant of deviance and outgroups, and politically right-wing, preferring strict laws and rules, and supporting tough, punitive social control and authority" (Duckitt, 2013, p. 1).

Later theorists discarded psychodynamic views, but saw stable individual differences in these ideological attitudes as a personality dimension. Altemeyer, developed the construct of Right Wing Authoritarianism (Duckitt, 2013).

"Contemporary theories have [therefore] tended to see Right Wing Authoritarianism (or social

conservatism) as influenced by both personality and situational factors” (Duckitt, 2013, p. 1).

“Altemeyer in 1981. His research suggested that only three of the original nine facets of authoritarianism described by Adorno et al. (1950) – conventionalism, authoritarian aggression, and authoritarian submission – covaried strongly to form a unitary social attitude dimension, and he developed his Right-wing Authoritarianism (RWA) Scale to measure this dimension” (Duckitt, 2001, p. 42).

“the RWA scale is a unidimensional and reliable psychometric measure of authoritarianism” (Duckitt, 2001, p. 42).

“The core model predictions are that the two socialization practice dimensions, [1] punitive and [2] unaffectionate socialization, impact on the two personality dimensions, [1] social conformity and [2] tough-mindedness respectively, which impact on the two social worldviews, [1] belief in a dangerous and [2] competitive-jungle world respectively. Both personality and worldview then impact on RWA and SDO. This core model thus comprises a theory of the dual psychological bases of the two ideological attitude dimensions of authoritarianism and social dominance” (Duckitt, 2001, pp. 58-59).

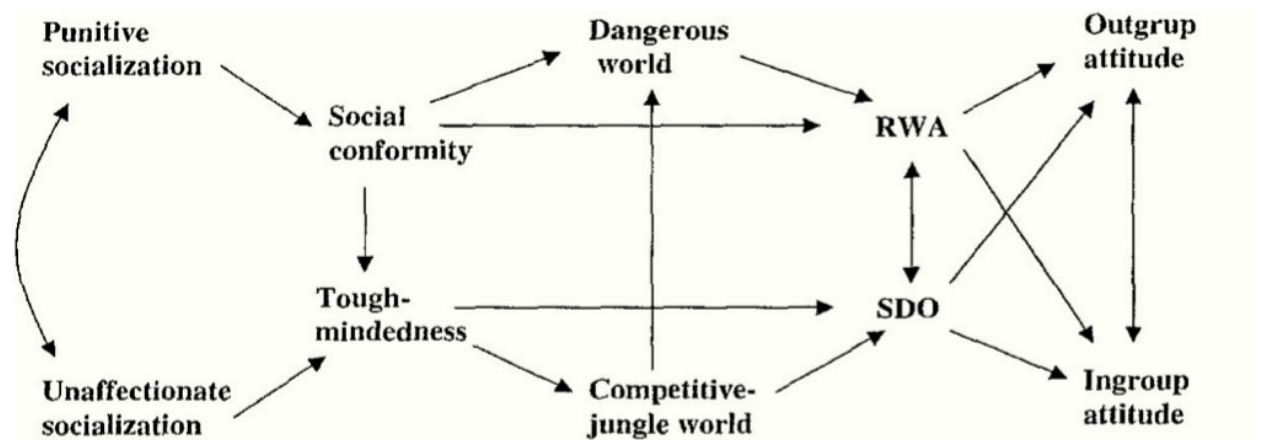


Fig. 1. A causal model of the impact of socialization, personality, and worldview on the two ideological belief or social attitude dimensions of right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) and social dominance orientation (SDO) and their impact on intergroup attitudes. (Duckitt, 2001, p. 58).

1.12 Ivanovic, 2024.

Facing the historical reality of the Holocaust, and the accelerated pace of development of communication technologies, Adorno believed that moral atrophy is an inevitable consequence of modern capitalist societies plagued by fascism, excessive nationalism, and other forms of cultural, and sociopolitical extremism. Even if one may take offense with the grim nature of such a claim and hold Adorno accountable for an exacerbated form of pessimism, decades of human conflict, genocide, towering inequalities, and waves of forceful migration that define our humanitarian present show how pathological aspects of our globalized world foster a culture of individualism, selfishness, and moral atrophy towards others. Furthermore, Adorno's critique of fascism highlights how authoritarian ideologies and structures can manipulate and distort individuals' moral sensibilities. Faced with ongoing brutal conflicts in Europe and the rest of the world, Adorno's focus on pathological social ideologies (such as fascism, nationalism, etc.) promotes a hierarchical and authoritarian worldview that prioritizes the interests of a specific social group (or nation) while dehumanizing and devaluing those deemed outside of that group. These divisive and exclusionary ideologies can foster a sense of moral superiority and entitlement among their adherents, leading to indifference, or even hostility, towards those perceived as different or inferior. In such societies, moral and humanitarian concerns may be subverted or suppressed in favor of loyalty to the authoritarian regime or group identity. What is worse, Adorno saw these systemic influences, combined with individual psychological factors, as the main aspects that contribute to the phenomenon of moral insensitivity and neglect of humanitarian responsibilities in modern societies. The dehumanizing effects of capitalism and the manipulative tactics of authoritarian ideologies can erode individuals' capacity for solidarity and moral responsibility towards others. This can result in a lack of concern or indifference towards humanitarian issues, and even facilitate or justify acts of cruelty or violence against marginalized groups.

. . . Adorno explored the role of the individual in society, particularly the individual's relationship to power and domination. Adorno believed that the increasing rationalization and bureaucratization of modern society had led to a distancing from emotions and a

prioritization of efficiency over moral sentiments and solidarity. This was particularly evident in the context of humanitarian crises where the suffering of others is often ignored or downplayed in the name of maintaining the status quo. He believed that the ruling system encouraged a narcissistic and solipsistic attitude among individuals, who were encouraged to focus on their own narrow, self-centered worldviews that prioritize individual comfort and security at the expense of engagement with broader social issues and collective well-being. Adorno saw this attitude as a fundamental obstacle to any kind of meaningful social change or progress, as he believed that it was essential to challenge the dominant values and assumptions of capitalist society and to create new forms of social solidarity and collective action that could counteract the atomization and isolation of modern life. This not only required a fundamental rethinking of the relationship between the individual and society, but also a rejection of the narrow, abstract, and individualistic understanding of morality.

1.13 California F-scale (Fascism scale).

The California F-scale is a 1947 personality test, designed by Theodor W. Adorno and others to measure the traits associated with a “pre-fascist personality.” The “F” stands for “fascist.” The F-scale measures responses on several different components of authoritarianism, such as conventionalism, authoritarian aggression, superstition and stereotypy, power and “toughness,” destructiveness and cynicism, projectivity, and sex. Scores acquired from the F-scale could be directly associated with background components, educational level, and intellectual capacity.

The F-scale revealed that individuals scoring high tended to support hierarchical structures, were more prejudiced, and exhibited rigid thinking patterns. It linked authoritarianism to early childhood experiences, particularly strict, punitive parenting.

“Initially the theory of the authoritarian personality and the F scale attracted enormous interest, however, by the early 1960s interest in this perspective had largely collapsed because of its numerous weaknesses” (Duckitt, 2001, p. 42).

1.14 Genetic basis for authoritarian personality.

“The results do not suggest that, as Adorno et al. (1950) hypothesized, authoritarian parental behavior or familial structure induces rigid cognitive functioning as a component of the authoritarian personality. RWA and intelligence are heritable and family environment does not predict authoritarianism scores for individuals who are not genetically related to their rearing parents” (McCourt, Bouchard, Lykken, Tellegen, & Keyes, 1999, p. 1008).

“Authoritarianism, as measured by the RWA, is not simply a manifestation of one’s level of intelligence. Instead it appears to exist as a trait influenced by genetic factors largely independent of those that contribute to intelligence” (McCourt, et al., 1999, p. 1008)

“Facets of RWA’s nomological network have been revamped. In contrast with the conclusion of Altemeyer (1981, 1988) that the rearing environment is the primary determinant of attitudes, the results here support the hypotheses that human beings are active in creating and choosing their environments and that these transactions with the environment are influenced in part by the genotype. As Scarr (1997) has long contended, family environment appears to be an important influence mainly because it is confounded with genetic relationship” (McCourt, et al., 1999, p. 1009).

“Individual differences in tendencies to submit to conventional authorities thus represents driving force behind their social, political, and religious attitudes (Bouchard, 2009), though the particular ideas espoused by those high or low in this orientation will vary among cultures and time periods” (Ludeke, Johnson, & Bouchard, 2013, p. 376).

“Our analyses supported the hypothesis that Right-Wing Authoritarianism, Religiousness, and Conservatism are different measures of a single underlying trait. These are not merely highly related constructs, then, but instead are each a manifestation of the same underlying tendency across the social, political, and religious domains. With genetic influences contributing 44% of the variance in this latent trait, the heritability of the TMVT trait was comparable to that found in studies focusing on single-trait measures in this domain” (Ludeke, Johnson, & Bouchard, 2013, p. 378).

Altemeyer (1998) proposed that people who score high on authoritarianism tend to be followers, Altemeyer (1996) reduced the nine components to three in order to focus on aggression,

submission, and conventionalism, Altemeyer (1996, pp. 85–86), higher education significantly reduces scores on authoritarianism, whereas raising children (and fears for their safety) raises scores on the variable.

People who score high on social dominance orientation (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994) tend to be leaders or at least interested in occupying the upper levels of hierarchies (see also Duckitt & Sibley, 2010).

[In the present study,] we showed that the correlation between RWA and SDO, two fundamental dimensions of political orientation, is mainly attributable to a common genetic basis, whereas the overlap of environmental factors was small. Our findings are consistent with the [Dual Process Model] DPM’s assumption about distinct environmental factors influencing RWA and SDO each while, on the other hand, indicating a common personality disposition underlying both. This personality disposition possibly shares most of its genetic variance with openness to experience (Nacke and Riemann, 2023).

1.15 Authoritarian Personality and the Five Factor Model.

“Our findings—based on longitudinal analyses of change in SDO and RWA over a 1-year period—indicate that generalized prejudice may stem primarily from two distinct aspects of personality, one characterized by low Openness to Experience, and one characterized by low Agreeableness (and possibly also high Extraversion)” (Sibley, & Duckitt, 2010a).

A number of authors have demonstrated the relationship between low openness to experience and RWA, for example, Chris Sibley, John Duckitt, Victoria Hotchin, Corey Butler, and Ryan Perry.

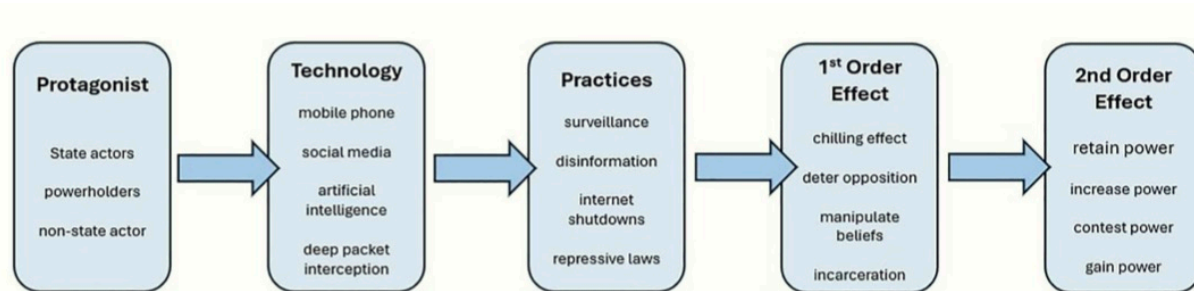
1. Openness is negatively correlated with authoritarian attitudes. Individuals low in openness prefer structure, tradition, and conformity, which aligns with authoritarian tendencies. High openness fosters tolerance for ambiguity and diversity, traits that counter authoritarianism.
2. High conscientiousness can align with authoritarian traits when focused on order and adherence to rules. However, conscientious individuals may also resist authoritarianism if their values emphasize fairness and responsibility.

3. Extraversion has a weaker and inconsistent correlation with authoritarianism. Highly extraverted individuals may align with authoritarianism if it appeals to their social dominance tendencies or group loyalty. For example, authoritarian leaders often display extraversion traits like assertiveness, but the general population's extraversion is less predictive.
4. Agreeableness is negatively correlated with authoritarian aggression (e.g., hostility toward out-groups). However, highly agreeable individuals may show submission to authority if they value harmony and obedience.
5. Neuroticism is often positively correlated with authoritarianism due to heightened sensitivity to perceived threats and a desire for security. Individuals high in neuroticism may be drawn to authoritarian systems that promise protection and order. In times of uncertainty, those high in neuroticism are more likely to support authoritarian policies. (ChatGPT, personal communication, 13, 11, 2024)

1.16 Digital authoritarianism.

Roberts & Oosterom, 2024.

Competing terms have emerged to conceptualize the use of digital technologies to repress rights and freedoms. The concept of digital authoritarianism has circulated since 2011 (Erixon & Lee Makiyama, 2011), to describe the use of a range of digital technologies by the state to 'surveil, repress, and manipulate domestic and foreign populations' (Polyakova & Meserole, 2019). A range of related terms including 'networked authoritarianism', 'digital repression', and 'techno-authoritarianism' are used across different disciplines, from political science and media studies to international development studies, and by legal scholars working on human rights. ... this paper carries out the first systematic literature review of digital authoritarianism and related concepts. It is based on an in-depth analysis of 32 articles generated by our search criteria. In doing so, we produce the most comprehensive overview to date of the current state of scholarship on digital authoritarianism.



Five stages of digital authoritarianism.

Pearson, 2024.

This paper explores the tension between the intention-based definition and current usage of the term DA. I argue that the intention-based definition is, as it stands, untenable and requires revision. ... A. Intentional DA: Where a repressive agent intentionally leverages digital technologies to promote their authoritarian ends. B. Unintentional DA: Where digital technologies systematically foster authoritarianism without this being intentionally caused by a politically repressive agent.

1.17 Different “types” of authoritarians.

Lilly et al., 2024.

Our results suggest that the majority of the population is low on authoritarianism. However, we identified a small group that scored highly on left-wing authoritarianism (named Left-wing Authoritarians) and another small group that highly endorsed group-based hierarchies and inequality (named High Social Dominators). Younger, non-religious, more liberal people, and people living in deprived areas were more likely to be Left-wing Authoritarians. In contrast, older conservative people were more likely to be High Social Dominators. These groups also differed in personality and attitudes toward institutions, political parties, and social issues. Overall, our study suggests that authoritarians on the left and right are more different than similar. For this reason, it is important to consider different types of authoritarians as distinct from each other in the population rather than two sides of the same coin. ... Five-profile solution: Profile I (Left-wing Authoritarians) Profile 2 (Low Social Dominators) Profile 3 (Moderate Right-wing Authoritarians)

Profile 4 (Moderate-Moderates) Profile 5 (High Social Dominators).

Part 2: Right-wing and left-wing authoritarianism.

The next major advance in the literature was the 1981 publication of *Right-wing authoritarianism* by Bob Altemeyer. Right-wing authoritarianism encompasses three main attitudes:

- obedience to authorities viewed as legitimate,
- hostility towards individuals or groups perceived as deviant or dissenting from societal norms, and,
- a commitment to conventional societal norms and values.

Individuals who score high in right-wing authoritarianism typically prioritize order, tradition, and national unity, demonstrating robust support for authorities that uphold these ideals.

Right-wing authoritarianism has been extensively studied since 1981.

Right-wing authoritarians typically support the existing hierarchy, whereas left-wing authoritarians usually challenge it.

2.1 Cramer, 2024.

Historically, authoritarianism is thought of as an extreme on the continuum from conservative to liberal. More recent thought argues that right and left have their own distinct versions of the characteristic.

Decades of psychological science have been devoted to right-wing authoritarian (RWA) beliefs.

RWA has many elements: Folks high in the attitudes tend to embrace “traditional” family values, hierarchy, and the status quo, among other social values. They also tend to be supportive of aggression and prejudice in many forms. We know a great deal about its relevance in the legal, political, and healthcare arenas, among others.

We know far less about its counterpart: Left-wing authoritarianism (LWA).

LWA attitudes are characterized by favoring punishment of those who dissent from group opinion, desiring to overturn existing hierarchies, expecting everyone to hold the same

left-wing views, believing there is only one correct moral perspective, focusing solely on one's own norms and boundaries, and needing rigid certainty. In other words, people high in LWA may struggle with skills like perspective taking, flexible thinking, and engaging with others of varying moral or personal beliefs systems.

2.2 Right Wing Authoritarianism.

By “right-wing authoritarianism” I mean the covariation of three attitudinal clusters:

- 1 Authoritarian submission – a high degree of submission to the authorities who are perceived to be established and legitimate in the society in which one lives;
- 2 Authoritarian aggression – a general aggressiveness, directed against various persons, which is perceived to be sanctioned by established authorities; and
- 3 Conventionalism – a high degree of adherence to the social conventions which are perceived to be endorsed by society and its established authorities.

Many of the “authoritarian behaviors” we should be most concerned about are themselves attitudes, that is, specific attitudes toward public officials and courses of action. The “mood of the people” can affect public policy, sometimes dramatically.

The central concern underlying this book is that there may be a vast potential for the acceptance of right-wing totalitarian rule in countries such as Canada and the United States. This acceptance is essentially an attitude, a state of mind, a willingness to see democratic institutions destroyed, which in some people may even be a desire. Right-wing authoritarianism has been defined as a state of mind, rather than a set of acts, but it is still dangerous. The mood of the people can create a climate of public opinion which promotes totalitarian movements. It can intimidate politicians, journalists, and religious leaders who might otherwise oppose repression. It can encourage a bold, illegal, grab for power as it did in Italy in 1922. It can elect a Hitler to office as it did in Germany in 1933.

I do not wish to imply, in concentrating on threats to democracy from the political right, that equally grave dangers cannot arise on the radical left. History has shown that totalitarianism threatens democratic institutions on either side. But I doubt that there is an “authoritarian,” as I have defined the term, on the left (Shils, 1954). The radical leftists

of the late 1960s who were dynamiting buildings (and thereby driving millions of Americans to rally behind Nixon and Agnew) may be called doctrinaire, dogmatic, fanatic, and many other things. But they were not submissive to established authorities, nor were they particularly conventional.

The right-wing authoritarian believes authorities should be trusted to a relatively great extent, and that they are owed obedience and respect. He believes these are important virtues which children should be taught, and that if children stray from these principles it is the parents' duty to get them back in line. Authoritarians would ordinarily place very narrow limits on people's right to criticize authorities. They tend to believe that officials know what is best, and that critics do not know what they are talking about. Criticism of authority is viewed as divisive and destructive, motivated by sinister goals and a desire to cause trouble.

The authoritarian does not ordinarily feel vulnerable to established authorities. On the contrary, he feels safer if authorities are strong. He supports government censorship in order "to control others," never imagining that the government would feel it necessary to censor what he reads, sees, and hears. His reaction to electronic surveillance, unlawful search, and mail-opening by officials is that only wrongdoers would object. To a considerable extent, he believes that established authorities have an inherent right to decide for themselves what they may do, including breaking the laws they make for the rest of us.

The construct I am advancing is called "right-wing" authoritarianism because the submission is to established authorities. There is no underlying assumption that the government must be right-wing to command this submission. Right-wing authoritarians would, in general, prefer "right-wing" governments, but the "center-oriented" political parties which typically form the governments in Canada and the United States are quite conventional enough to command the respect and submission of authoritarians. Right-wing authoritarians say they will even submit to legally established left-wing governments, at least more so than nonauthoritarians will submit to a government they do not like.

Right-wing authoritarians are predisposed to control the behavior of others through punishment.

They advocate physical punishment in childrearing and beyond. They deplore leniency in

the courts and believe penal reform just encourages criminals to continue being lawless. They are strong advocates of capital punishment. All in all, there is an “Old Testament harshness” in their approach to human conduct. They consider transgressions against the law very serious offenses and believe punishment will help wrongdoers mend their ways. They also consider criminals repulsive and disgusting, and admit that it feels good to punish someone who has done wrong.

Vials (2017, p. 7): “Applying this conception to our time, movements of the right – from the Goldwater campaign to the Tea Party – are ‘rebellions’ ultimately submissive to authority because their members know that private-sector employers, not the government, are the real forces in control of daily life.”

“RWA is now also considered an ideological belief (Duckitt, 2001) that people should obey and respect authorities deemed as legitimate, abide by social conventions, and endorse harsh punishment of norm violators” (Choma & Hanoach, 2017, p. 287).

Franz Samelson (1992) has stressed how the “positivist-empiricist” cast of American behavioral science underlay the reduction of the rich ingredients of TAP to just the F-scale project. Because the reduction did occur, the resurrection of authoritarianism in American psychology had to await Bob Altemeyer’s (1981) careful work to replace the F-scale with the psychometrically sound Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) scale. ...

The good psychometrics that made RWA unidimensional leave unresolved serious questions about the causal model assumed to underlie the authoritarian syndrome. ...

Bob Altemeyer favors a social learning model in the manner of Bandura (1986). This is in sharp contrast with the psychoanalytic model assumed by the authors of TAP. I have to agree with Stone (1992, p. 167) that Altemeyer “has not proven that the social learning approach describes the authoritarian more aptly than does the psychoanalytic approach underlying the F-scale” (Smith, 1997).

The RWA scale is a powerful predictor of various kinds of political beliefs and social attitudes, e.g., endorsing the death penalty, voting behaviour, opposition to civil rights, or prejudices against people who violate traditional social norms (like rockstars or drug

dealers). RWA is also moderately linked to lower levels of openness to experience and higher levels of conscientiousness (Nacke and Riemann, 2023).

2.3 Left-Wing Authoritarianism.

The idea that liberals can show rigid adherence to authority figures – known as leftwing authoritarianism (LWA) – has a rocky history in psychology. Indeed, some scholars have expressed extreme skepticism about the validity or real-life viability of the construct, with researchers calling it a *myth* on par with the *Loch Ness Monster*, or suggesting that left-wing authoritarian persons are *as rare as hen's teeth*.

Burgeoning evidence spanning multiple nations, independent research programs, and cultural contexts suggests that LWA exists and has important consequences.

Taken together, this array of triangulating evidence points to the conclusion that – as is the case for the scientific consensus on the Altemeyer RWA scale on which it was based – Conway et al.'s LWA scale is a valid measurement of authoritarianism. (Conway, 2023)

Under the light of these results, left-wing authoritarianism may be deemed a reactive standpoint: an illiberal opposition to a wide variety of constructs that are perceived as commonly related to the preservation of the current social structure – even though their relation to right-wing authoritarianism is indirect, as is the case of economic conservatism and religiosity. Accordingly, left-wing authoritarianism would not be the opposite of right-wing authoritarianism; instead, it would be the opposite of conservatism in a broad sense. This interpretation would explain, among others, why left-wing authoritarianism is strongly opposed to the conservatism-related constructs included in this study, regardless of their real authoritarian nature. Left-wing authoritarianism is being better understood as an antiestablishment attitude against the conventional socio-political system of values, norms, and beliefs. (Fasce, 2020)

2.4 Critical race theory vs critical theory.

1. Critical Theory is an intellectual tradition that critiques and seeks to change society by examining structures of power, ideology, and domination. Developed in the early 20th

century by the Frankfurt School, a group of Marxist scholars including Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Jürgen Habermas. Focused on critiquing capitalism, culture, and modernity, using interdisciplinary approaches from sociology, philosophy, and psychoanalysis to expose how these systems manipulate ideology and culture to maintain control. The movement advocates the role of critical thinking in questioning authority and societal norms; it empowers people to resist authoritarian ideologies and practices.

Core Ideas:

- Society is shaped by systems of power and domination, particularly related to class, economics, and ideology.
- Individuals are influenced by cultural and ideological systems that perpetuate inequality and hinder emancipation.
- Emphasizes critique to foster social change and human liberation.
- Explores topics like capitalism, mass media, and consumer culture.
- Often associated with discussions on alienation, commodification, and ideology.

2. Critical Race Theory is an intellectual and legal framework that examines how laws, policies, and institutions perpetuate systemic racism and inequality. Emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as an offshoot of critical legal studies, influenced by scholars like Derrick Bell, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Richard Delgado. Critiques liberal approaches to racial justice, which often focus on formal equality rather than substantive equality.

Core Ideas:

- Race is a social construct: Racism is embedded in legal systems and societal structures, not merely the result of individual prejudice.
- Intersectionality: Examines how overlapping systems of oppression (e.g., race, gender, class) shape experiences and outcomes.
- Challenging colorblindness: Argues that ignoring race perpetuates systemic inequities rather than addressing them.
- Analyzes disparities in criminal justice, education, housing, and healthcare.

– Advocates for policies that address structural and historical injustices.

Summary:

Both theories challenge traditional narratives of neutrality, objectivity, and fairness in society, arguing that they often conceal systems of oppression.

Critical Theory provides a broad framework for analyzing power and domination, while Critical Race Theory uses this lens to specifically examine and address racial inequality.

(ChatGPT, personal communication, 21, 11, 2024)

2.5 The role of pluralism.

Pluralism is essentially the idea that in democracies, diverse and competing groups (political, cultural, religious, etc.) must find ways to work together to promote growth, preventing the dominance of any single one. Thus, pluralism opposes authoritarianism.

In terms of psychology, William James suggested reality is a collection of interconnecting but distinct experiences and perspectives. For James, truth is not absolute. Instead, it emerges from the experience of multiple situations and World views. This implies that no single truth, worldview, or philosophy can encompass all human experience and understanding. Tolerance, dialogue, and openness to different views are critical for successful coexistence and creativity. James' views laid the foundation for his psychological ideas to be applied to social and political theory.

Part 3:

3.1 Gordon Allport.

In *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954) Allport examined how individuals develop and maintain prejudiced attitudes, which are often linked to authoritarian personality traits such as rigidity, conformity, and hostility toward out-groups. He argued that authoritarian attitudes often arise from personality structures shaped by early experiences of strict discipline, insecurity, or fear.

Allport introduced the concept of intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity to explain how authoritarian personalities often use religion as a means to justify prejudice and conformist behaviors.

His focus on individual differences helped clarify why some people are more susceptible to authoritarian ideologies than others.

Allport stated that “The word *norm* means ‘an authoritative standard,’ and correspondingly *normal* means abiding by such a standard. It follows that a normal personality is one whose conduct conforms to an authoritative standard, and an abnormal personality is one whose conduct does not do so” (Allport, 1958, p. 167). In this essay Allport differentiated “normal” into two spheres: the statistical (average or usual) and the ethical (desirable or valuable). He suggested that psychologists should not accept statistical norms as criteria; working with philosophers, psychologists must develop moral guidelines reflecting what “is right and good” to guide society and act as external criteria. Allport (1958) explained:

Our concern for the improvement of average human behavior is deep, for we now seriously doubt that the merely mediocre man can survive. As social anomie spreads, as society itself becomes more and more sick, we doubt that the mediocre man will escape mental disease and delinquency, or that he will keep himself out of the clutch of dictators or succeed in preventing atomic warfare. The normal distribution curve, we see, holds out no hope of salvation. We need citizens who are in a more positive sense normal, healthy and sound. And the world needs them more urgently than it ever did before.

It is, for this reason, I think, that psychologists are now seeking a fresh definition of what is normal and what is abnormal. They are asking questions concerning the *valuable*, the *right*, and the *good* as they have never asked them before. (p. 168)

Several quotations will illustrate Allport’s position:

“Bergson, Jung and Angyal are among the writers who agree that normality requires a balance between individuation and socialization, between autonomy and heteronomy. There seems to be considerable consensus in this matter” (Allport, 1958, p. 171).

While there is much agreement that the normal personality must strike a serviceable balance between growth as an individual and cohesion with society, we do not yet have a clear criterion for determining when these factors are in serviceable balance and when they are not” (Allport, 1958, p. 171).

Growth we know is not due to homeostasis but to a kind of ‘transistasis.’ And cohesion is a matter of keeping our human relationships moving and not in mere stationary equilibrium. Stability cannot be a criterion of normality since stability brings evolution to a standstill, negating both growth and cohesion. Freud once wrote to Fliess that he finds ‘moderate misery necessary for intensive work’ ” (Allport, 1958, p. 171).

Allport stated that values reflect an individual’s priorities and goals and are integral to their personality structure. Values develop through both biological predispositions and social influences, shaping how people interact with the world. They become key motivators of behavior, determining how individuals allocate their energy and make decisions.

3.2 Stanley Milgram/Philip Zimbardo.

“After witnessing hundreds of ordinary people submit to the authority in our own experiments, I must conclude that Arendt’s conception of the *banality of evil* comes closer to the truth than one might dare imagine. The ordinary person who shocked the victim did so out of a sense of obligation – a conception of his duties as a subject – and not from any peculiarly aggressive tendencies. This is, perhaps, the most fundamental lesson of our study: ordinary people, simply doing their jobs, and without any particular hostility on their part, can become agents in a terrible destructive process. Moreover, even when the destructive effects of their work become patently clear, and they are asked to carry out actions incompatible with fundamental standards of morality, relatively few people have the resources needed to resist authority. A variety of inhibitions against disobeying authority come into play and successfully keep the person in his place” (Milgram, 1974, p. 6).

Stanley Milgram’s 1961 experiment on obedience ostensibly demonstrated the power of authority figures in “making” individuals conform and act on external instructions, even when it involves harming others. These experiments supported the idea that individuals in authoritarian regimes may engage in harmful behaviors solely due to obedience to authority.

There is a wealth of existing and still emerging literature, much of it critical, on Milgram's experiment and its subsequent reanalysis and reinterpretation. I will simply point out the topic and suggest Russell's various works, such as Russell and Künstler (2024), as a starting point to work backwards for examining these issues.

Philip Zimbardo

Philip Zimbardo's influential Stanford Prison Experiment, conducted in 1971, also examined the role of authority in determining behaviour. Like Milgram's work, this work came under intense scrutiny and criticism. Zimbardo constructed a simulation where 12 College students were assigned the role of prison guards and 12 students were assigned the role of prisoners. The experiment had to be terminated after six days due to the extreme behaviour of the so-called prison guards. Zimbardo explained the results by saying "Before we blame individuals, the charitable thing to do is to first find out what situations they were in that might have provoked this evil behavior. Why not assume that these are good apples in a bad barrel, rather than bad apples in a good barrel?" (Shermer, 2015, July 29).

3.3 Emilie Caspar.

"Over the last eight years, I have given 45,000 orders to individuals to administer a real painful electric shock to someone else. Only about 1,340 orders were refused (roughly 2.97 percent). In other words, only about 54 individuals out of 1,500 refused an order to hurt another person – although they did not necessarily refuse every order they were given.

When I started working on obedience and designed this experiment that was about to attract massive media coverage, I really thought that no one would ever agree to administer a real and painful shock to someone else, especially not for a monetary reward as small as £0.05 per shock. In addition, the majority of the people I tested knew the experiments of Stanley Milgram, a famous scientist in social psychology who studied destructive obedience in the 1960s and the 1970s. So why would they obey orders that involve inflicting real physical pain on someone else?

The capacity for humans to obey orders, even atrocious ones, does not have to be proven anymore. As Howard Zinn famously pointed out in his book published in 1997, "Historically, the most terrible things – war, genocide, and slavery – have resulted not

from disobedience, but from obedience.” Many societies rely on hierarchical institutions. Without a strict organization in which citizens follow the rules mandated by societal representatives, humans would probably not have achieved such an advanced degree of networking and interaction. However, the dark side of obedience results in societies being able to orchestrate the extermination of entire populations. Sadly famous examples include the Nazi genocide (1939-1945), when the Nazis exterminated millions of Jews and other ethnic minorities, as well as those they considered to be pariahs, such as homosexuals, Roma and Sinti, communists, or disabled persons. Another example is the Khmer Rouge army, led by Pol Pot, which exterminated between 1.7 and 2.2 million Cambodian citizens who were perceived as enemies or opposed their values and political vision between 1975 and 1979.

But such examples have been observed not only in soldiers given orders in the context of genocidal wars. Numerous historical episodes have shown that civilians are also capable of atrocious acts against other groups while following figures of authority.

In this book, I offer insight based on my years of neuroscientific research combined with first-person interviews with the perpetrators of violence in Rwanda and Cambodia. What I have found is that the activity in some brain regions – although critical for understanding the pain we cause to others and our responsibility in the act – is reduced when people obey orders compared to when they are acting freely. In other words, when people accept and comply with the orders of someone else, they do not fully take the measure of the consequences of their action. Their brains do not process the information as it should.

3.4 Albert Bandura.

Bandura: morality is rooted in self-regulation of behavior, part of an agentic perspective—“to be an agent is to intentionally produce certain effects by one’s actions” (Bandura, 2018, p. 130).

Essentially a socially based alternative theory to the genetic explanation of psychopathy.

Agency locus: displacement or obfuscation of blame regarding who is responsible for harmful acts.

Outcome locus: attempted explanations for effects of behavior.

Victim locus: attempts to displace blame onto the victim.

Moral disengagement is a subset of social cognitive theory.

Bandura outlined eight mechanisms:

Moral, social and economic justification. People do not ordinarily engage in reprehensible conduct until they have justified to themselves the rightness of their actions. In the process of moral justification, detrimental conduct is made personally and socially acceptable by portraying it in the service of valued social or moral purposes. (behavior locus)

Euphemistic labeling. Activities can take on markedly different appearances depending on what they are called. Euphemistic labeling provides a tool for masking reprehensible activities or even conferring a respectable status upon them. Through sanitized or convoluted language, destructive conduct is made benign or acceptable [“collateral damage”]. (behavior locus)

Advantageous (palliative) comparison. Behavior can assume different qualities depending on what it is contrasted with. By exploiting advantageous comparisons, injurious conduct can be rendered benign or made to appear to be of little consequence. The more extreme the contrasted activities, the more likely it is that one’s own injurious conduct will appear trifling or even benevolent [“the lesser of two evils”]. (behavior locus)

Displacement of responsibility. Under displacement of responsibility people view their actions as springing from the social pressures or dictates of others rather than as something for which they are personally responsible. Because they are not the actual agents of their actions, they are spared self-censuring reactions. Hence, they are willing to behave in ways they normally repudiate if a legitimate authority accepts responsibility for the effects of their actions [“just following orders”]. (agency locus)

Diffusion of responsibility. The exercise of moral control is weakened when personal agency is obscured by diffusion of responsibility for detrimental conduct. Any harm done by a group can be attributed largely to the behavior of others. People behave more cruelly under group responsibility than when they hold themselves personally accountable for their actions [“I was just one soldier”]. (agency locus)

Minimizing, ignoring, or misconstruing the consequences. The agent of harm may deny that people were seriously harmed, or say that the punishment actually was good for the

individual because it toughened him up. In addition to selective inattention and cognitive distortion of effects, the misrepresentation may involve active efforts to discredit evidence of the harm that is caused [“It was just an insurance company—no one got hurt”] [Catholic Church ignored abuse of children]. (outcome locus)

Dehumanization. Self-censure for injurious conduct can be disengaged or blunted by dehumanization that divests people of human qualities or attributes bestial qualities to them. Once dehumanized, they are no longer viewed as persons with feelings, hopes, and concerns but as subhuman objects [“he was a cockroach”]. (victim locus)

Attribution of blame. Blaming one’s adversaries or circumstances is another expedient that can serve self-exonerating purposes. By fixing the blame on others or on circumstances, not only are one’s own injurious actions excusable but also one can even feel self-righteous in the process. This process dehumanizes or diminishes the worth of the victim, making harmful actions appear justified. [“she was asking for it”]. (victim locus)

1. Observational Learning: Bandura suggested that people learn behaviors by observing others, particularly authority figures (e.g., parents, teachers, leaders, etc.). In authoritarian systems, individuals may learn authoritarian attitudes and behaviors by observing leaders or authority figures who model dominance, submission, or strict adherence to rules.
2. Reinforcement and Punishment: Authoritarian systems often use strict reinforcement structures, rewarding obedience and punishing dissent. Bandura’s work on reinforcement highlights how these systems can shape behavior.
3. Bandura developed the concept of moral disengagement to describe the psychological mechanisms that allow individuals to justify or rationalize unethical behavior, thereby disengaging from their moral standards. He outlined this concept to explain how people commit harmful acts without feeling guilt or shame, often by reframing their actions, blaming others, or minimizing the consequences. This concept is applied to understand behaviors in contexts such as aggression, corporate misconduct, suppressing dissent, violating human rights, and war crimes.

4. Bandura also suggested people with low self-efficacy may feel powerless to challenge authoritarian systems, while those with high self-efficacy might be more inclined to resist authority or advocate for change.
5. Finally, Bandura emphasized the role of the impact of media and propaganda (we would include today disinformation) used by authoritarian regimes to control individuals.

3.5 Hans Eysenck.

It may be of interest to state briefly the hypotheses regarding the nature of this authoritarian-Fascist character which guided Adorno and his co-workers in their selection of items. In their view, authoritarianism was characterized by *conventionalism*, or the rigid adherence to conventional middle-class values; *authoritarian submission*, or a submissive uncritical attitude toward idealized moral authorities of the in-group; *authoritarian aggression*, or the tendency to be on the look-out for and to condemn, reject, and punish people who violate conventional values; *anti-intraception*, or opposition to the subjective, the imaginative, and the tender-minded; *superstition and stereotypy*, the belief in mystical determinants of the individual's fate—the disposition to think in rigid categories; *power and toughness*, preoccupation with the dominance-submission, strong-weak, leader-follower dimension; identification with power figures, exaggerated assertion of strength in attitudes; *destructiveness and cynicism*, generalized hostility, vilification of the human; *projectivity*, the disposition to believe that dangerous things go on in the world, the projection outwards of unconscious emotional impulses; *sex*, exaggerated concern for sexual 'goings-on'.

...

Proof for the hypothesis that the F-scale is essentially a measure of tough-mindedness rather than of Fascism comes from the work of Dr. T. Coulter, ... Thus, there is strong support in favour of the hypothesis that the F-scale is a measure of tough-mindedness and that it is not restricted to the measurement of *Conservative* authoritarianism.

There is the general suggestion that the authoritarian has strong personal psychological needs to be met by the leader and he is concerned more with the leader's ability to meet these

personal needs than he is with the leader's ability to meet the social needs inherent in the leadership situation.

Sanford's interpretation of the results obtained from these devices were as follows: 'The people who score high on the A-E scale tend either definitely to accept strong leadership or definitely to reject it. We have good evidence that for them any directive authority is emotionally charged. Often this authority is immediately accepted. Sometimes it is immediately rejected. There is some support for the general interpretation that authority is rejected if it is perceived as weak or if it seems And then, to go too far beyond conventional bounds perhaps, it is rejected most often when of propriety. there is a safe way – like resigning authoritarians appear from the group – to express to perceive with suspicion rejection. The a leader who is "sure of himself" but to accept a leader who is described as actually doing very directive things – telling people exactly what to do. And their willingness to accept strong leadership may be behind their feeling that followers who disagree with the leader should be suppressed. The data on these functional items give us indications of a strongly ambivalent feeling toward leaders on the part of authoritarians. They accept direct authority but, when given half a chance, react to it with vigorous hostility.

People with high authoritarianism scores predominantly accepted prestigious figures as leaders and rejected women, while interviewees low in authoritarianism were very unimpressed by mere status and accepted women as leaders. Authoritarians admired those figures who are symbols of power and conventional American values. 'In talking about their heroes they put emphasis on the power and prestige of the man they choose – his personal magnetism, his general but vaguely conceived competence, his statusful social role. And they demonstrate the previously noted bargaining or "what's in it for me?" relation with their heroes. For villains they appear to fix on those who have failed. Equalitarians admire the more humanitarian people. And they admire them for humanitarian reasons, thinking, as in the case of leaders, about the great person's feeling for people and his performance in their behalf. They also demonstrate again the ability to go beyond the narrow confines of egocentrism in demonstrating an interest in the personal history of

their heroes and showing a concern for the heroes' political beliefs. They regard as villainous those who are seen as having insulted human rights and interfered with human welfare.'

A third source of differentiation is labelled by Frenkel-Brunswik 'Conventionalism versus Genuineness'. The authoritarian person shows a high degree of conformity; he appears to need external support given by authorities or public opinion in order to find some assurance of what is right and what is wrong. Attitudes towards parents, children and members of the other sex tend to be conventionalized. The unprejudiced person on the other hand is not governed in his attitude by conventional approaches to the same extent and displays more genuine feelings and reactions. One implication of the factors discussed so far is what Frenkel-Brunswik calls the 'power-orientation' of the authoritarians as opposed to the 'love-orientation' of the non-authoritarians. The prejudiced person is oriented towards a search for power. 'The comparative lack of ability for affectionate and individualized interpersonal relations, together with conception of threatening and dangerous environment, must be seen as underlying the prejudiced person's striving for the attainment of power either directly or by having the powerful on his side.'

[These] two variables are *intelligence* and emotional instability or *neuroticism*. Politicians habitually accuse their opponents either of stupidity and ignorance, or of lack of emotional stability – apparently on the ancient principle that 'any stigma is good enough to beat a dogma with'. We may therefore briefly consider the question of whether there is any factual evidence to support the view that these variables play an important systematic part in the genesis of social attitudes. (Eysenck, 1954).

3.5 Jos Meloen.

Unfortunately, some critics seem to have played a role in discrediting this type of research.

Supported by the Cold War climate, these critics have succeeded to some extent, at least so it appeared to outsiders. Although TAP was part of the education of a whole generation of social scientists in the 1950s, it is significant that insiders mentioned that Levinson did

not speak up on this topic in public for some thirty years. This was the first time he clearly stated his discontent over the unfair and politically biased treatment the research received. Indeed, I understood as well that secondary, non-scientific views concerning this research seemed to have had an important effect (Meloan 1983, 46-48). This was recognized by the “witnesses,” who told me that it was their personal experience that in the late 1950s it had become almost impossible to get this type of research sponsored. The most important reason was probably the result of TAP, that authoritarianism seemed to be predominantly a feature of political “conservatives” (at least in western societies). “Conservatives” and those who joined the bandwagon of the Cold War therefore received a powerful counter-argument: the research itself was a “trick” of “liberals,” who declared themselves a better kind of people: the non- authoritarians. Therefore, this research could only be a moralistic rationalization of “liberals,” since among them there were also “authoritarians,” as Shils (1954) and others argued (e.g. Eysenck, 1954, see also his debate with Christie, 1956a/b). I will return to this later on. In support of the view that the research was mainly built on the “gross exaggerations” of “extreme left wing intellectuals,” methodological criticism was put forward (e.g. Hyman & Sheatsley, 1954), often mainly aimed at the famous F-scale.

The authoritarianism syndrome with its nucleus of ethnic prejudices, ethnocentrism, antisemitism, antifeminism, anti-dissidents (or anti-opposition), anti-democracy, anti-free press, and pro-nationalism can be found in much the same way in the Soviet Union, as it has manifested itself in forty years of Western research. Also, in agreement with Western research is that extreme nationalist groups show the highest scores on authoritarianism, in this case the Pamyat group, often referred to as “extreme right wing” and “antisemitic.” The perestroika supporters on the other hand scored low and anti-authoritarian. At variance with the results in the West is that the Soviet communist party members scored relatively high, around the scale midpoint, although they scored lower than the Pamyat group. This latter finding is possibly the most important empirical result. Authoritarians, not “revolutionary” anti-authoritarians seem to support the remains of soviet communism. It also appeared that authoritarianism may be independent of socio-

economic ideology, as in the Soviet predicts in general “anti-communism.” Union authoritarianism predicted surprisingly “anti-capitalism,” while in the West it predicts in general “anti-communism.”

The first notion is that the “left wing” Soviet system in its final phase seems to be supported by the most authoritarian part of the population, as was the case with other “right wing” authoritarian regimes. This strengthens the view about the authoritarian personality as the backbone of every anti-democratic system or of dictatorships of various types: empirically a completely “new” understanding. Even though Shils (1954) suggested something like this, as a political scientist he did not draw too many conclusions on personality dynamics (he mentioned only some traits, he considered similar for “left” and “right wing”). The present results suggest that “left wing” as well as “right wing” dictatorships produce roughly the same authoritarian personality, and not two or more different ones, as has been believed for a long time, also in liberal circles. For instance, it has been suggested that “right wing” authoritarians use more “person blame,” and “left wing” authoritarians use more “system blame” reasoning. However, the present results suggest that it is mainly “person blame” reasoning that is part of the authoritarianism syndrome, as was originally suggested by TAP. It seems to be the anti-authoritarians, who consistently and independently of socio-economic ideology, prefer “system blame” reactions: for instance, the anti-authoritarian “1968” opposition and student protests in the West and the dissidents and perestroika-supporters in Eastern Europe in the 1980s. (Meloan, 1991).

3.6 Andrew Łobaczewski.

Łobaczewski’s interest in the science of psychology was born during the years of World War II and after the war he studied at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. The situation in the People’s Republic of Poland drew his attention to the problem of psychopathology, especially the role of psychopathic people in government. When others learned about his research, it turned out that similar work was under construction, started by secret agreement scientists of the older generation, among whom Kazimierz Dąbrowski was

included. Łobaczewski joined this team, but their work soon aroused the attention of the Communist secret police.

Łobaczewski received a tip that the authorities were about to raid his apartment. He managed to go to the basement and burn the manuscript of his study in the furnace. ... He was forced to leave Poland, going to New York he rewrote the manuscript in 1984 and eventually was able to return to Poland.” Source: <https://lubimyczytac.pl/autor/102013/andrzej-lobaczewski>

Łobaczewski’s resulting book, *Political ponerology: A science on the nature of evil adjusted for political purposes*, was published in 1984 is still available in Polish (2006) and English (2007, 2022).

In proposing the term ponerology, Nitzsch, (1849) proposed this division:

I. Agathology, or the doctrine of the good.

1. Of God.

2. Of the creature.

II. Ponerology, or the doctrine of the bad.

1. Of sin.

2. Of death.

III. Soteriology, or the doctrine of salvation.

1. Established in the person of the Redeemer.

2. The appropriation of salvation.

3. The fellowship of salvation.

4. The completion of salvation. (Terry, 1895, p. 203).

“Nevertheless, based on the work of myself and others in that past tragic time, a new discipline arose that became our beacon; two Greek philologists/monks baptized it “ponerology” from the Greek *poneros* = evil. The process of the genesis of evil was called, correspondingly, “ponerogenesis”. I hope that these modest beginnings will grow so as to enable us to overcome evil through an understanding of its nature, causes, and development” (Łobaczewski, 2006, p. 71).

This is the version from the 2022 book: “Thus arose a new discipline; two monks, excellent Greek philologists, baptized it “ponerology” from the Greek *poneros* = evil. The process of the genesis of evil was called, correspondingly, “ponerogenesis.” I hope that these modest beginnings will grow so as to enable us to overcome evil through an understanding of its nature, causes, and development.”

“*Essential psychopathy*: Within the framework of the above assumptions, let us characterize another heredity-transmitted anomaly whose role in ponerogenic processes on *any* social scale appears *exceptionally great*. We should also underscore that the need to isolate this phenomenon and examine it in detail became quickly and profoundly evident to those researchers – including the author – who were interested in the macrosocial scale of the genesis of evil, because they witnessed it. I acknowledge my debt to Kazimierz Dabrowski in doing this and calling this anomaly an “essential psychopathy” (Łobaczewski, 2006, p. 89).

“The ponerogenesis of *macrosocial phenomena* – large scale evil – which constitutes the most important object of this book, appears to be subject to the same laws of nature that operate within human questions on an individual or small-group level. The role of persons with various psychological defects and anomalies of a clinically low level appears to be a perennial characteristic of such phenomena. In the macrosocial phenomenon we shall later call “pathocracy”, a certain hereditary anomaly isolated as “essential psychopathy” is catalytically and causatively essential for the genesis and survival of large scale social evil” (Łobaczewski, 2006, p. 31).

“Łobaczewski’s research also led him to conclude that, by a long shot, not all psychopaths run afoul of the law and end up in jail. He states that psychopaths and other personality disorders can be very successful and are actually overrepresented in many social, business, and political settings. Surprisingly, they are overrepresented in prison systems, politics, law enforcement agencies, law firms, and in the media” (Kirkconnell, 2013, pp. 74-75).

A contemporary application of the construct of pathocracy can be seen in the work of Kirkconnell (2013, 2020) as well, Frum (2018) coined the term “Trumpocracy” to apply to the situation in America.

3.7 Kazimierz Dąbrowski.

The state of primary integration is a state contrary to mental health. A fairly high degree of primary integration is present in the average person; a very high degree of primary integration is present in the psychopath. The more cohesive the structure of primary integration, the less the possibility of development; the greater the strength of automatic functioning, stereotypy, and habitual activity, the lower the level of mental health. The psychopath is only slightly, if at all, capable of development; he is deaf and blind to stimuli except those pertaining to his impulse-ridden structure, to which intelligence is subordinated. The absence of the development of personality means the absence of mental health. (Dąbrowski, 1964, pp. 121-122)

Observation of everyday life and of environments at various cultural levels leads to a conclusion that self-dependency in feelings, judgment, and action is a very rare faculty among people. There are very few people among us who are consciously independent of the external environment and of the lower layer of their internal environments. To make oneself independent of both these environments one must go through the process of disintegration, which develops the faculty of using the moral judgment by resorting to a true sense of morality, and instills in one the readiness to act accordingly. A moral judgment not backed by the sense of morality and by the ability to effect its realization is nothing but conformity and reveals our superficial attitude toward a given phenomenon. We can point to many cases of such a deficient moral attitude. We disapprove, for example, of this or that egoistical deed, though we ourselves are ready to act in just the same way. School pupils and students consider the practice of informing by their mates and lying by their teachers as the most immoral acts but themselves inform and lie, to a smaller or greater extent. All indiscreet persons and meddlers agree during a discussion

that meddling and indiscreetness are blemishes, but they themselves will continue to be indiscreet and meddling. (Dąbrowski, 1967, pp. 12-13)

Thus, at the level of personality, there occurs a weakening of susceptibility to various environmental influences – that is, to impulses stemming from the lower nature of man, to multidirectional, discordant stimuli, influences of public opinion, and so on. It should be clearly stressed here that the attitude of constant refashioning and of selectiveness in relation to external stimuli is opposed to instinctive and stereotyped mechanisms. Such an attitude requires the controlling of our own internal environment, and principally control of its instinctive and habitual level. Man as a personality accepts, therefore, only such stimuli as are in harmony with his developing structure; he conditions himself to an ideal and makes himself independent of all he overcame in himself while struggling along the road of evolution, from the level of primitive and civilized man to the level of personality. (Dąbrowski, 1967, p. 14)

The road towards an independent authentic hierarchy of values is certainly very difficult, but it must be made clear that there is no other safe method open to man, because even the best system of moral norms does not work in practice, if its assimilation is not authentic and does not involve genuine inner psychic transformation. The idea of indiscriminate social adjustment, adaptation to what is, conformity to prevailing social standards, has to be replaced by qualified adjustment and, where necessary, positive maladjustment. (Dąbrowski, 1970, p. 120)

The growing inner psychic milieu, self-consciousness and self-control work towards an increasingly autonomous and authentic hierarchy of values which is independent of and, in some aspects, directly opposed to the values respected in the social environment. The attitudes of adjustment to “what is” is transformed into adjustment to “what ought to be.” The individual critically approaches the standards and patterns dominant in his family, his social group and society at large and postulates new ideals. It would be totally mistaken to consider mental development as culminating in the attitude of complete conformity. On the contrary, a highly developed individual is of necessity to some extent a “nonconformist.” (Dąbrowski, 1970, p. 138)

The adjustment to all social patterns of a given society is an expression of negative conformity and lack of authenticity. It is negative from the standpoint of growing moral sensitivity and development. The very concept of mental development and of the transition to higher levels involves maladjustment to some elements of reality, of “what is,” and the disposition to adjust to the patterns implied by the new hierarchy of values, that is the adjustment to “what ought to be.” (Dąbrowski, 1970, p. 144)

Negative or non-developmental adjustment means an acceptance of and conformity without an independent critical evaluation, to the norms, customs, mores prevailing in one’s social environment. Negative adjustment may also take the form of acceptance of one’s actual needs and inclinations without attempts to modify and transform them creatively. This kind of adjustment is incompatible with the autonomy and authenticity of the individual. It does not yield any positive developmental results either for the individual or for the society. (Dąbrowski, 1970, p. 162)

[W]e may say that both ‘normal’ and one-sided development proceed in conformity with the general maturational pattern of the human species of infancy, childhood, adolescence, maturity, aging and culminate in death. It is characterized by gradual psychobiological integration of functions. There is adjustment to external conditions of life, and conformity to a prevailing in a given culture pattern of professional, social, and sexual pursuits. Mental overexcitability and maladjustment appear only in specific phases of development, such as puberty and adolescence, or under stressful conditions, but disappear when the maturational phase or the stress pass. In this type of development we observe the prevalence of biological and social determination which gives it a fairly narrow and inflexible pattern. In ‘normal’ development the level of intellectual functions is usually average, while emotional functions appear to some degree underdeveloped. In one-sided development intellectual functions may be superior, but emotional functions may still be underdeveloped, only a few of them are developed. (Dąbrowski, 1996, p. 22)

Second factor. Susceptibility to social opinion and the influence of others. Behavior is guided by what people will think or say, or by the need for recognition and approval. Feelings of inferiority toward others. Values are internalized from external sources: parents, church,

government, authority of the printed word. Acceptance of stereotyped ideas and values is a function of the need to conform since there is no internal structure to *generate and support non-conformity*. Relativism of values and ideas. (Dąbrowski, 1996, p. 33)

Primary integration represents a state of psychological unity and simplicity, dominated by biological drives, instincts, and rigid adherence to external norms or expectations. It is characterized by a lack of internal conflict or self-awareness necessary for personal growth. Actions are guided primarily by egocentric and survival-oriented motives. Behavior is dictated by societal or cultural standards without questioning or critical reflection. Individuals experience a narrow range of emotions and lack the ability to process higher emotional states such as empathy or self-reflection. There is minimal tension between desires, values, or goals because the person has not yet developed a capacity for introspection or moral reasoning. (ChatGPT, personal communication, 20, 11, 2024)

People in primary integration might exhibit behaviors like blind obedience to authority, hedonism, or unreflective pursuit of personal gain, without consideration for broader ethical or emotional concerns. This state can be observed in both individuals and groups that prioritize rigid hierarchies, self-interest, or unquestioned traditions. Dąbrowski associated primary integration with authoritarian attitudes, as such individuals tend to rely on external authority and social norms for guidance. Authoritarian personalities often lack the emotional depth and self-awareness required to question authority or conventional values. (ChatGPT, personal communication, 20, 11, 2024)

3.8 Michael Piechowski: Vis-à-vis Authoritarian Personality.

Tillier: Piechowski endorses a social learning explanation for authoritarian behaviours rather than more biologically based approaches that typically emphasize psychopathy.

“The characteristics of authoritarian personality (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford, 1950) seem to correspond closely to primary integration as well as to the lower stages in Kohlberg’s and Loevinger’s approach (Schmidt, 1977)” (Piechowski, 1977, p. 23).

“Is primary integration a personality structure? To my mind, one of the five levels is highly problematic. It is Level I or primary integration. Dąbrowski viewed primary integration as a rigid personality structure. The closest to this idea is the concept of authoritarian personality (Adorno et al., 1950). It began as a study of personality traits found in prejudiced, or ethnocentric individuals. They are non-reflective, egocentric and they identify only with their own group, they lack empathy, insight and self-criticism. Their thinking is stereotyped, they hold black and white conceptions of good and bad, and have a tendency toward physical aggression. “They view others as objects and are manipulative and exploitative. They value status, power, and wealth (Schmidt, 1977). But the study found that prejudice and ethnocentrism are not built into people but are the result of child rearing that emphasizes obedience to authority, respect for power, and which sanctions aggression against all those who are perceived as a threat. This means that such individuals are made, not born. They are the outcome of particular socialization which fosters antagonism toward anything that is different, unfamiliar and contrary to one’s tradition” (Piechowski, 2002, p. 178).

“My first graduate student, Margaret Lee Schmidt, chose for her Master’s thesis the comparison of Kohlberg’s and Dąbrowski’s theories (Schmidt, 1977). Her analysis led her to several conclusions, three of which are relevant here. One, that the first four stages of Kohlberg’s sequence of moral reasoning are encompassed within Dąbrowski’s Level I (primary integration). Two, that the study of authoritarian personality (Adorno, Fraenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950) was the best description of behavior characterizing Level I. And three, that Level I is not a personality structure, but instead is the result of limited developmental potential of people trying to survive in a ruthlessly competitive and economically uncertain world. While Dąbrowski, just like Adorno et al., viewed primary integration as a rigid personality structure, now it makes more sense to see it as the outcome of social conditions. If people are operating at Level I, it is because this is the condition of their world, not because they are constituted that way” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 55).

“The concept of primary integration – originally called *primitive* integration by Dąbrowski – was not examined until Margaret Schmidt showed in her thesis that it largely corresponds to the concept of authoritarian personality (Schmidt, 1977). Authoritarian personality results from strict parenting and social pressures that enforce conformity and respect for authority; that is, those who hold power. Therefore, it is not an integration either inherited genetically or arrived at by the individual himself” (Piechowski, 2014, p. 13).

The high proportion of people who obeyed the authority figure to the end [in Milgram’s obedience experiment] demonstrates that the concept of *primary integration* does not fit reality. It is the response to the situation, and the person’s assigned role in it, that for a period of time leads to harming others. Does this make people part-time psychopaths, as Dabrowski would have it?

A person who goes through life in more or less conventional ways is, presumably, the sort of person who is most susceptible to the dehumanizing conditions of our civilization. It is possible that the person’s identity pattern can make some difference, but probably not much. It does not happen overnight. Bandura said that “self-inhibitory devices will not instantaneously transform a considerate person into a callous one. Rather, the change is usually achieved through gradual disinhibition in that people may not fully recognize the changes they are undergoing” [(Bandura, 1986, p. 385).]

Disengagement of conscience through these mechanisms may be an everyday phenomenon, but it has an opposite in the humanizing power of acting on a sense of common humanity when persons are visible, known, suffering, or in need of assistance. We should not think that some sense of common humanity is necessarily absent at Level I. (Piechowski, 2014, p. 16).

“In regard to ‘authoritarian personality’ and ‘moral disengagement’ it needs to be clarified that we are not talking about auth. personality but auth. behavior. We live in a world in which authoritarian behavior is rampant. Moral disengagement is an expression of the authoritarian world we live in” (Piechowski, 2018, March 27, e-mail).

Piechowski’s position – Summary (chronological):

- Primary integration corresponds to the authoritarian personality (Schmidt).
- Authoritarian personality is the best description of behavior characterizing Level I.
- Such individuals are made, not born; i.e., they are the outcome of a particular type of socialization.
- Piechowski now states it's not an authoritarian *personality*, but authoritarian *behavior* stemming from moral disengagement due to our authoritarian world (Bandura: social causes).

Part 4: Bibliography.

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