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THE AUTHORITARIAN DYNAMIC

What are the root causes of intolerance? This book addresses that question by developing a universal theory of what determines intolerance of difference in general, which includes racism, political intolerance (e.g., restriction of free speech), moral intolerance (e.g., homophobia, supporting censorship and school prayer), and punitiveness. It demonstrates that all of these seemingly disparate attitudes are principally caused by just two factors: individuals' innate psychological predispositions to intolerance ("authoritarianism") interacting with changing conditions of societal threat. The threatening conditions – particularly resonant in the present political climate – that activate authoritarian attitudes include, most critically, great dissension in public opinion and general loss of confidence in political leaders. Using purpose-built experimental manipulations, cross-national survey data, and in-depth personal interviews with extreme authoritarians and libertarians, the book shows that this simple model provides the most complete account of political conflict across the ostensibly distinct domains of race and immigration, civil liberties, morality, crime and punishment, and of when and why those battles will be most heated.

Karen Stenner is Assistant Professor of Politics at Princeton University, where she has been teaching since 1998. She was previously on the faculty at Duke University. Professor Stenner is the coauthor of *Electoral Behaviour: Introduction to Theories, Methods, and Data* (1992) and has coauthored articles in *Political Behavior*, *Political Psychology*, and the *Australian Journal of Political Science*, among others.

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To Whimsy and Boo, my tiny little comets,
who tore a hole in the sky
and let all the magic of the universe pour through.

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Karen Stenner
Frontmatter
More information

Contents

List of Tables *page* xii
List of Figures xiv
Acknowledgments xvii

1 Introduction: The Authoritarian Dynamic 1
The Concept of Authoritarianism 2
The Philosophy of the Book 6
Data, Methods, Models, and Literature: What to Expect 7
Organization of the Book 10

2 Kindred Spirits, Common Spark: The Theory of the Authoritarian Dynamic 13
Unresolved Issues 14
Societal Threat and Authoritarianism 25
Threat and Constraint in the Intolerance Domain 33

3 Manipulating Threat and Reassurance: Data and Methods 37
The Durham Community Survey 1997 38
The Multi-Investigator Study 1999 44
The Cultural Revolution Experiment 1995 48

4 The Authoritarian Dynamic and the Politics of Fear: Putting the Pieces of the Puzzle Together 52
The Authoritarian Dynamic: An Initial Demonstration 52
Addressing Likely Misconceptions of the Theory 68
Stability and Constraint 76
What Have We Learned? 80

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Cambridge University Press
052153478X - The Authoritarian Dynamic
Karen Stenner
Frontmatter
More information

5 Authoritarianism and Conservatism across Cultures 85
Authoritarianism, Status Quo Conservatism, and Laissez-Faire Conservatism 86
Authoritarianism ≠ Conservatism 89
Authoritarianism versus Status Quo Conservatism in Western Europe 95
Authoritarianism versus Status Quo Conservatism in Eastern Europe 106
A Common Source and a Universal Process 115
Measurement Error and the Apparently Varying Influence of Authoritarianism 116
A Parsimonious Account of General Intolerance of Difference 128
Explaining the Explanatory Gap 135
The Future of Intolerance 136

6 Authoritarianism and Conservatism: How They Differ and When It Matters 138
Prior Research on the Origins of Authoritarianism and Status Quo Conservatism 140
Prior Research on the Origins of Laissez-Faire Conservatism 151
Simple Models of Authoritarianism and Conservatism 155
A Fully Specified Model of Authoritarianism and Status Quo Conservatism 158
Nature or Nurture? Identical Germanies Reared Apart 162
Authoritarianism and "Political Conservatism" as Distinct Predispositions 163
The Contingent Relationship of Authoritarianism and Political Conservatism 174
Authoritarianism and Political Conservatism as Sources of Intolerance 186
The Final Account 195

7 One True People: Putting a Face on the Theory 199
The Roles of the Primary Interviewer and the Interview Partner 200
Race of Interviewers 203
Attempts to Obtain the Interview 204
Impressions from the Interview 208
Overall Characteristics of the Discussion 214
Spontaneous Revelation of Distinctions between the Characters 222
Interview Conduct and Interactions 223
Personality and Demeanor 229

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052153478X - The Authoritarian Dynamic
Karen Stenner
Frontmatter
More information

Cognitive Capacity 234
Uneasy Conclusions 236

8 One Right Way: Fleshing Out the Portrait 239
Racial Animosity, Prejudice, and Discrimination 240
Ethnocentrism, Patriotism, and Politics 250
Morality and Discipline, Crime and Punishment 256
Conclusion: Two Distinguished Characters 265

9 Manning the Barricades: Racism and Intolerance under Conditions of Normative Threat 269
The Costs of a Narrow Perspective 270
Difference-ism: The Generality and Primacy of Aversion to Difference 276
Experimental Manipulation of the Authoritarian Dynamic 281
Activation of the Predisposition under Normative Threat 284
Enhanced Effects of Authoritarianism under Normative Threat 288
Racial Intolerance 289
Political Intolerance 298
Moral Intolerance 302
Punitiveness 306
Overview of Findings 309
Replication on Survey Data: Varying Public Discord across Cultures and Time 313
Normative Threat and Attitudinal Constraint 319
The Politics of Ideas versus the Politics of Fear 321

10 The Authoritarian Dynamic: Implications 325
The Political Psychology of Intolerance 325
Authoritarianism versus Status Quo Conservatism: Conservatives as Defenders of Freedom 326
Authoritarianism versus Laissez-Faire Conservatism: Authoritarians as Social Reformers 327
Accepting and Working with Difference-ism 328
The Science versus the Religion of Democracy 330
Community Requires Community 331
The Paradox of American Democracy 332
"Stealth Democracy": Less Is More 333
Democracy Is Bad for the Anti-Democrat 334
Democracy Is Its Own Undoing 334

Bibliography 337
Index 355

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CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
052153478X - The Authoritarian Dynamic
Karen Stenner
Frontmatter
More information

Tables

3.1 Correlates of perceptions of threat *page* 42
3.1.1 Correlates of perceptions of normative threat 42
3.1.2 Correlates of perceptions of economic and personal threat 42
3.2 Threatening/reassuring experimental stimuli – *MIS99* 46
4.1 Over-time stability of major predispositions given varying perceptions of normative threat 78
5.1 Influence of authoritarianism and status quo conservatism on intolerance of difference across cultures and domains: Western Europe 96
5.2 Influence of authoritarianism and status quo conservatism on intolerance of difference across cultures and domains: Eastern Europe 107
5.3 How the apparent impact of authoritarianism on intolerance of difference depends upon scale reliability, region, and normative threat 121
5.4 A parsimonious account of general intolerance of difference: cross-cultural 131
6.1 Nature or nurture? "Twin" nations reared apart 163
6.2 Influence of authoritarianism, "political conservatism," and "right-wing" party identification on intolerance of difference across domains and time: United States, 1972–1982, 1990–2000 190
6.3 Influence of authoritarianism, "political conservatism," and "right-wing" party identification on racial intolerance across subcultures and time: United States 193
6.4 A parsimonious account of general intolerance of difference: United States, *GSS72–00*, *MIS99* 196
7.1 Schedule of questions for the in-depth interviews 202
7.2 Effects of subjects' authoritarianism on outcomes of primary interviewers' attempts to obtain the interview 205

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052153478X - The Authoritarian Dynamic
Karen Stenner
Frontmatter
More information

Tables

7.3 Effects of subjects' authoritarianism on primary interviewers' impressions from the interview 209
7.4 Effects of subjects' authoritarianism on interview partners' impressions from the interview 210
7.5 Differences in overall characteristics of the discussion 215
7.6 Differences in interview conduct and interactions 224
7.7 Differences in personality and demeanor 230
7.8 Differences in cognitive capacity 234
8.1 Differences in interview content – racial animosity, prejudice, and discrimination 241
8.2 Differences in interview content – ethnocentrism, patriotism, and politics 251
8.3 Differences in interview content – morality and discipline, crime and punishment 257
9.1 Internal coherence of authoritarianism given experimental manipulation of normative threat and reassurance 285
9.2 Determinants of archetypical expressions of racial, political, and moral intolerance – *MIS99* 290
9.3 Determinants of overall measures of racial, political, and moral intolerance – *MIS99* 293
9.4 Determinants of racial, political, and moral intolerance – *CRE95* 296
9.5 Constraint among intolerant attitudes given experimental manipulation of normative threat and reassurance 320

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Cambridge University Press
052153478X - The Authoritarian Dynamic
Karen Stenner
Frontmatter
More information

Figures

2.1 Constraint in the domain of intolerance *page* 34
4.1.1 Experimentally manipulated normative threat increases the expression of authoritarian predisposition in authoritarian attitudes (*CRE95*) 53
4.1.2 Perceived normative threat increases the expression of authoritarian predisposition in authoritarian attitudes (*DCS97*) 57
4.2.1 Authoritarian predisposition changes the impact of experimentally manipulated normative threat on expressed authoritarian attitudes (*CRE95*) 60
4.2.2 Authoritarian predisposition changes the impact of perceived normative threat on expressed authoritarian attitudes (*DCS97*) 61
4.3.1 Effects of authoritarian predisposition on perception of a "dangerous world" given experimental manipulation of normative threat (*CRE95*) 64
4.3.2 Effects of authoritarian predisposition on perception of a "dangerous world" given varying perceptions of normative threat (*DCS97*) 66
6.1 Core determinants of authoritarianism and status quo conservatism (*WVS90–95*) 159
6.2 Core determinants of authoritarianism and "political conservatism" (*GSS72–00*) 168
6.3 Core determinants of authoritarianism and "political conservatism" (*DCS97*) 171
6.4 Hypothesized divergence between authoritarianism and political conservatism under varying conditions 176
6.5.1 Conservatives reject authoritarianism when belief diversity is the status quo and greater unity requires change (*MIS99*) 180

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052153478X - The Authoritarian Dynamic
Karen Stenner
Frontmatter
More information

Figures

6.5.2 Authoritarians are less conservative if we are changing together in pursuit of common goals (*MIS99*) 181
6.6 Effects of authoritarianism on political conservatism given experimental manipulation of normative threat (*CRE95*) 182
6.7 Relationship between authoritarianism and political conservatism under varying conditions (*MIS99*) 184
6.7.1 Under normal conditions 184
6.7.2 If bad leadership 184
6.7.3 If belief diversity 184
6.7.4 If stable diversity 184
6.7.5 If changing together 184
6.8 Relationship between authoritarianism and political conservatism under varying conditions (*CRE95*) 185
6.8.1 Under normal conditions 185
6.8.2 If bad leadership 185
6.8.3 If belief diversity 185
6.8.4 If unjust world 185
6.8.5 If aliens / no afterlife 185
7.1 Grade level of authoritarians' discussion declines 217
7.2 Authoritarians' discussion emphasizes social exclusion 220
7.3 Payment seems critical for authoritarians' participation 225
7.4 Authoritarians avoid interaction with black interview partner 227
7.5 Authoritarians seem psychologically/emotionally disturbed 233
8.1 Authoritarians seem to be racist 246
8.2 Authoritarians put blame on blacks themselves 249
8.3 Authoritarians express sympathy for super-patriot/militia movement 255
8.4 Authoritarians turn everything into issue of crime 260
9.1.1 Effects of authoritarianism on racial intolerance given changing conceptions of "us" and "them" (*CRE95*) 279
9.1.2 Effects of authoritarianism on punitiveness given changing conceptions of "us" and "them" (*CRE95*) 280
9.2 Effects of authoritarianism on archetypical racial intolerance given experimental manipulation of threat and reassurance (*MIS99*) 291
9.3 Effects of authoritarianism on racial intolerance given experimental manipulation of threat (*CRE95*) 295
9.4 Effects of authoritarianism on archetypical political intolerance given experimental manipulation of threat and reassurance (*MIS99*) 299

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Karen Stenner
Frontmatter
More information

Figures

9.5 Effects of authoritarianism on political intolerance given experimental manipulation of threat (*CRE95*) 301
9.6 Effects of authoritarianism on archetypical moral intolerance given experimental manipulation of threat and reassurance (*MIS99*) 303
9.7 Effects of authoritarianism on moral intolerance given experimental manipulation of threat (*CRE95*) 306
9.8 Effects of authoritarianism on punitiveness given experimental manipulation of threat (*CRE95*) 308
9.9 Effects of authoritarianism on general intolerance of difference given experimental manipulation of threat and reassurance (*MIS99*) 312
9.10 Effects of authoritarianism on general intolerance of difference given experimental manipulation of threat (*CRE95*) 313
9.11.1 Effects of authoritarianism on general intolerance of difference given varying experience of normative threat (*GSS72–00*) 314
9.11.2 Effects of authoritarianism on general intolerance of difference given varying experience of normative threat (*WVS90–95*) 314
9.12.1 Effects of experience of normative threat on general intolerance of difference given varying authoritarianism (*GSS72–00*) 318
9.12.2 Effects of experience of normative threat on general intolerance of difference given varying authoritarianism (*WVS90–95*) 318

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Karen Stenner
Frontmatter
More information

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More information

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