

THE (PERSISTING) AMERICAN AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY

TRACKING POLITICAL AFFINITY, ANTIPATHY, AND POLARIZATION IN POST-TRUMP ERA

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ABSTRACT At a time, ‘American authoritarianism’ was considered an oxymoron; I argue that it has always been a national fairytale. Tracking increased ingroup-outgroup political affinity, antipathy, and affective polarization, this paper provides a scoping review of American authoritarianism since the late nineteenth century. I provide abbreviated cases analyses for the *Reconstruction* and *Jim Crow* authoritarian regimes, George Bush Jr.’s ‘War on Terror,’ and Donald Trump’s 2016 presidency as authoritarianism personified. These cases underscore the growing propensity for authoritarianism in the post-Trump era. As a result, this research fills gaps in extant political and psychological scholarship, focusing on affinity, antipathy, and affective polarization in contemporary US political culture. Using three elements of Adorno et al.’s nine-point scale to classify authoritarian personalities (1950), this paper situates its analysis within Americans’ increasing submission to an acknowledged authority, aggression towards perceived outgroup members, and their belief in simple answers and polemics.

INTRODUCTION

The former United States President Donald Trump’s authoritarian character has amassed great scholarly and media focus. Rather than adding to this literature, this paper traces US citizens’ growing propensity for authoritarian personalities, seeking to answer two questions: a) what are the origins of this affective movement, and b) how does it manifest in the post-Trump presidency? To answer these questions, I marshal extant political science and psychological affect scholarship to track how civic attitudes have evolved towards authoritarian personalities. Moreover, I analyze its relation to three elements of Adorno et al.’s (1950) authoritarian personality scale, submission to an acknowledged authority, aggression towards perceived outgroup members, and belief in simple answers and polemics.

First, I operationalize some key terms and their emergence in a brief literature review. Then, I provide an abbreviated US political history that reveals major figures, events, and trends in US authoritarianism. Next, I examine how this history has contoured contemporary US citizens’ political affect during and following the post-Trump presidency. Finally, I source what future social, political, and security implications this phenomenon poses for US democracy. As such, this research fills gaps in existing scholarship by intersecting political history and affective psychology scholarship to source authoritarianism’s influences and implications in the post-Trump presidential era.

LITERATURE REVIEW AUTHORITARIANISM

Where democracy installs free competition and voting as the “institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions,” authoritarianism is understood as the principle of blind submission to an authority figure or group (Schumpeter 1943, 270-271; Encyclopedia Britannica 1998). The latter counters those tenets of democracy that engender freedom of thought and action, which compromises citizens’ self-determination. Authoritarianism sublimates power, violence, and legitimacy to an autocratic or oligarchic governing force that regulates and disciplines citizens’ conduct and expression (Glasius 2018; Henschke 2021). A regime is authoritarian when it boasts limited political pluralism, minimal political mobilization or protest, ill-defined or shifting political authorities, and garners legitimacy through appeals to emotion and its necessity (Linz 1975). This *appeal to emotion* is a central focus of this paper, tracing ingroup-outgroup distinctions as an effectual polarization tactic.

Juan Linz was reluctant to describe ‘governments’ as authoritarian, instead describing political *regimes* as such to better incorporate the public, institutional, and private factors complicit in the authoritarian mission (1975). Althusser’s classification of ideological and repressive state apparatuses clarifies Linz’s argument; state power (i.e., the government) principally comprises the army, the administration, the police, the prisons, and the courts (1971, 16-17). While these apparatuses can (and do) possess authoritarian characteristics, they only partially describe contemporary authoritarianism. For example, the church, the media, education, political organizations, and unions are ideological state apparatuses that extend the authoritarian mission to regulate and reproduce citizens’ submission to authority ^[1]. Recognizing how these institutions shape citizens’ interpretation and acceptance of

knowledge, power, and responsibility, their consideration better delineates what is authoritarian, what is not, and why citizens’ propensity towards authoritarian regimes is on the rise (Althusser 1971). These individuals’ propensities can be called *authoritarian personalities*.

AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY

This paper principally concerns the growing American predilection for authoritarianism in both its elected leaders and policy. Some describe individuals who possess this propensity as having an **authoritarian personality** or mindset (Adorno 1950; Herzog 2021). Herzog interprets these authoritarian personalities as forming via social constellations that reproduce individuals’ “willingly [to] follow authorities, power, and orders from above,” as well as those leaders “keen to exert authoritarian power” over members of society (2021, 3). Only the former interpretation of authoritarian personalities will be discussed in this paper.

Adorno et al.’s concept of the ‘authoritarian personality’ (1950) has remained a controversial topic in political science, psychology, and sociology (Stewart and Holt 1954). Opponents point to its unrepresentative sampling and ill-devised psychometric properties to discredit its appropriateness for appraising those inclined towards authoritarianism (Christie and Jahoda 1954). Its Freudian psychoanalytic underpinnings—which suggest that repressed sexual urges and childhood parenting styles inform its onset and performance—are outdated and irrelevant to this paper (Stewart and Holt 1954, 274). Instead, following directions from extant political science scholarship, I focus on three elements of Adorno et al.’s nine-point scale to identify authoritarian personalities in contemporary US society and politics.

Principally, I track US citizens' a) respect for submission to an acknowledged authority; b) aggression towards those who are different; and c) belief in simple answers and polemics (1950, 255, 256). This paper will track these three elements across US political history into the post-Trump presidential era. Next, I define *political affinity* and *antipathy*, sourcing their relation to the US authoritarian personality.

POLITICAL AFFINITY, ANTIPATHY, AND AFFECTIVE POLARIZATION

Put simply, political affinity is the perceived closeness to and reverence for a political leader or group bearing partisan or ideological resemblance (Loewen 2010). Political affinity is contralateral to **political antipathy**, or the felt division and animosity towards dissimilar others, often of a different partisan 'stripe' (Pew Research Center 2019). Both terms relate to *political affect*, or one's connection to political leaders, groups, or phenomena based on the extent to which they are associated with a positive or negative appraisal (Stockman, Esarey and Zhang 2018). Political affinity and antipathy help explain the growing American propensity for authoritarianism in two key ways.

First, the US' effective two-party character (identification with either the Democratic or Republican Party) fosters an increasingly 'us versus them' division. This **affective polarization** can be understood as "how much you like your preferred party compared to how much you dislike the opposing party" (Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes 2012, 359). Importantly, political affinity and antipathy's inclusion of one's feelings about their preferred ingroup and outgroup clarifies how authoritarianism can and has been capitalized on by authoritarian leaders and regimes. This, alongside authoritarian personality, are

principal factors driving the increased US predilection for authoritarianism.

ORIGINS ON AUTHORITARIANISM

MacWilliams notes that, at a time, 'American authoritarianism' was an oxymoron (2020); I argue that it has always been a national fairytale. This section provides an abbreviated history of how MacWilliams' (2020) statement came to pass, tracing major figures, events, and trends in US authoritarianism since the Reconstruction period.

RECONSTRUCTION AND JIM CROW: AN EMERGING AUTHORITARIAN REGIME

Extant scholarship argues that the first US authoritarianism regime began in the period after Reconstruction, ending in the early 1960s (Parker and Towler 2019). Parker and Towler inculcate Adorno et al.'s (1950) *authoritarian personality* to explain intolerance towards former Black slaves due to their perceived violation of American whiteness (Parker and Towler 2019): implicating my second extracted element from Adorno et al.'s nine-point scale (1950), aggression towards those who are different. This aggression manifested as racially motivated violence, with nearly 6,500 known lynchings of Black Americans between 1865 and 1950; given the paucity of historical records, it is likely that thousands more instances of racially motivated violence during this era will go unknown (Equal Justice Initiative 2020). Furthermore, Black Americans' social and political exclusion evidences the authoritarian ideal to limit or deny civil liberties or political rights for 'othered' groups (Linz 1975; Mickey 2015). This end was accomplished through "disenfranchisement statutes such as poll taxes, literacy tests, and grandfather clauses," eliminating Black Americans from civic life "without ever

mentioning race” (Parker and Towler 2019, 506).

Kousser adds that the “white primary’s” maintenance by southern states into the 1940s continued the US authoritarian tradition, excluding “all but a handful of black southerners from registering with the [dominant Democratic] party” (1984) and, thus, from the ability to choose their political candidate (Parker and Towler 2019, 506). Persisting until the desegregation efforts of the 1960s, this original American authoritarian regime planted seeds of division for future authoritarian regimes, bolstering the affective polarization that would re-emerge with the George Bush Jr. presidency and the War on Terror.

GEORGE BUSH JR. AND THE WAR ON TERROR: A NEW BRAND OF AUTHORITARIANISM

George Bush Jr.’s 2000 and 2004 administrations unearthed new American authoritarianism, comprising a war-focused foreign policy, covert domestic surveillance, and a “language of patriotic correctness and religious fanaticism” that instilled affective polarization and antipathy (Gilroy 2000; Giroux 2006, 100). Al-Qaida’s terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, sparked such authoritarian features, rationalizing the US’ military intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq (Giroux 2006). Moreover, the popular belief that Bush Jr. “was chosen by God ‘to lead [the] global war of good against evil’” rationalized this “War on Terror” as a religious duty in the eyes of many Americans (Jacobson, 2010, 586; Connah 2020, 73). So, American authoritarianism was transformed to be more permissible and widely proliferated at the outset of the twenty-first century. This ‘necessary’ war-focused foreign policy required Bush’s reliance on defense experts— like [Dick] Cheney, [Don] Rumsfeld, and

[Condoleezza] Rice—to develop [America’s] international policy. As war [became] the foundation for [the Bush] administration’s empire-driven foreign policy, real and symbolic violence combine[d] with a number of anti-democratic tendencies to make the world more dangerous (Giroux 2006, 100).

Aside from the War on Terror’s detriment to international order and stability, the domestic implications of this ‘state of emergency’ posed egregious immediate and residual consequences for Americans’ security, privacy, and democratic rights. The “national security state of torture, ghost detainees, secret prisons, and domestic eavesdropping” that manifested in early-2000s security measures, like the USA PATRIOT Act, befit Bush’s authoritarian classification (Blumenthal 2006). Kohn argues that the Patriot Act— which used the military establishment to “incarcerate and interrogate suspected terrorists and ‘enemy combatants’ and keep them beyond the reach of the civilian judicial system,” even if they were Americans—was the most draconian aspect of Bush’s authoritarian regime (2003, 174-175). The Patriot Act allocated authority for the National Security Agency (NSA) to confidentially collect Americans’ communication records and conduct secret searches without reasonable suspicion that the records or individuals were related to terrorist activity (“Surveillance under the USA/Patriot Act” n.d.). This authoritarian surveillance of the American public continued unknown in the name of national security until its leak by whistleblower Edward Snowden in 2013 and its subsequent nonrenewal by the US Congress (Greenwald, MacAskill and Poitras 2013; Diamond 2015).

Through its war-focused foreign policy and draconian domestic policies, the Bush administration heightened Americans’ ingroup

affinity and antipathy for perceived others. Principally, these authoritarian measures produced the “crudest expression[s] of racial antipathy [...] redolent of imperial and colonial domination” towards the Arab-American and Muslim-American communities (Gilroy 2005, 142). This antipathy manifested as racially motivated violence towards Black and Brown Americans whose only ‘crime’ was the colour of their skin. Kishi tracks the steady maintenance of such racial violence, noting its increase since September 11, 2001, with survey data revealing that “almost half of American adults (49 percent) [thought] at least ‘some’ Muslims in the US [were] anti-American, including 11 percent who [thought] ‘most’ or ‘almost all’ [were] anti-American” (2016). This antipathy drives US affective polarization, maintaining the most pervasive elements of Bush’s authoritarian regime. However, such antipathy and polarization were exacerbated during and after Donald Trump’s 2016 presidency.

DONALD TRUMP’S INGROUP-OUTGROUP DISTINCTION: AMERICAN AUTHORITARIANISM PERSONIFIED

Considering that much extant scholarship and media coverage has focused on Donald Trump’s presidential conduct and character, this section more so serves to conceptualize how political affinity, antipathy, and affective polarization were made more salient during his administration [2].

Donald Trump capitalized on Americans’ political affinity for perceived ingroup members through “outward hostility” towards non-majority populations, like Muslim, refugee, and Black communities (Matos and Miller 2021). Matos and Miller found this outward hostility to be Trump’s primary rhetorical device in both his 2016 and 2020 primary and general election

campaigns. Moreover, Trump’s (persisting) use of “first-person plural pronouns,” like ‘we’ or ‘us,’ signals ingroup identity, connecting “outgroup hostility to white ingroup identity” (2021, 1). These campaign tactics propelled Trump to be the thought leader for those Americans fearful of immigrants and refugees: two groups that Trump used to oppositionally frame his ingroup relation, cautioning their inevitable threat to American life (Matos and Miller 2021, 4). Trump fostered a collective affinity between gradations of American conservatives, up to (and including) the White nationalist far-right (Stolee and Caton 2016). In doing so, Trump constituted a “counterpublic” candidate (and president) who challenged an increasingly ‘woke’ liberal left (Stolee and Caton 2016, 151) [3]. Trump encouraged his supporters to “focus on the felt precarity of their existence” through his “fear and anxiety rhetoric,” garnering him the blind support of his support base and representing the often-populist character of authoritarian leadership (Adorno et al. 1950; Johnson 2017, 230; Matos and Miller 2021).

This ingroup affinity necessitated Trump’s curation of two outgroup antipathies: those immigrants and racialized groups that threaten ‘American values’ and opponents to his stated mission to “Make America Great Again” (Matos and Miller 2021, 9). In that, even conservative Americans could consolidate within the outgroup for opposition to Trump’s rhetoric, policy, or conduct. Conservative Senator Mitt Romney (R) is a notable recipient of such outgrouping behaviour; upon Romney’s vote to impeach Trump, Donald Trump Jr. tweeted:

Mitt Romney is forever bitter that he will never be POTUS. He was too weak to beat the Democrats then so he’s joining them now. He’s now officially a member of the

resistance & should be expelled from the @GOP (Trump Jr. 2020).

This ‘everyone-but-us’ outgroup categorization reified the authoritarian ideal of aggression against those who do not subscribe to the ingroup’s motivations or perspective (Adorno et al. 1950). It also depicts the ‘black-and-white’ processing inherent to authoritarian personalities. In sum, Trump’s fostering of ingroup affinity and outgroup antipathy affectively polarized American political and social life, transcending partisan identity to include *racial* and *opponent* markers to delineate his supporters from their purportedly collective opponents (Stolee and Caton 2016; Matos and Miller 2021).

These three historical cases—the *Reconstruction* and *Jim Crow* era, Bush and his War on Terror, and Trump’s 2016 ingroup-outgroup distinction—contribute to the contemporary authoritarian personalities wielded by a significant portion of the American public. With this establishment of American authoritarianism’s origins, I now seek to answer *how* authoritarian personalities manifest in the post-Trump era and their future implications for US democracy.

THE CHARACTERISTICS AND CONSEQUENCES OF POST-TRUMP AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITIES

This section analyzes the enduring American authoritarian personality in the post-Trump era. I track Trump’s enduring loyalty among his cultivated ingroup and their routine rejection of Joe Biden’s presidency. I also examine the exacerbation of political conspiracy among this same ingroup, sourcing its influences across my three previously examined case studies. Keeping with my methodological approach, this section interrogates only three elements of Adorno et al.’s nine-point scale to measure

authoritarian personality (1950). I continue to analyze the dominant themes of affinity, antipathy, and affective polarization in each element.

ELEMENT A: RESPECT FOR SUBMISSION TO AN ACKNOWLEDGED AUTHORITY

To some Americans, Donald Trump is still president of the United States. This, of course, is notwithstanding Joe Biden’s 2020 victory and roughly ten-month tenure in the Oval Office (at my time of writing). I argue that this delusion is firmly rooted in Adorno et al.’s authoritarian personality scale element: respect for submission to an acknowledged authority (1950). Though logic would dictate Trump’s ousting from elected office via the US democratic election process, recent polling suggests a dominant delusion amongst Trump supporters. A Reuters and Ipsos representative and randomly sampled survey of 2,007 voting-age Americans found that “53 percent of Republicans believe Trump [...] is the ‘true president,’ compared to 3 percent of Democrats and 25 percent of all Americans.” Additionally, 61 percent of Republicans believed that the election was “stolen” from Trump through rigged ballots and a concerted conspiracy effort by the Democratic Party (2021). How can this be?

Trump’s maintenance as the ingroup leader for US conservatives is made more salient through Trump and his associates’ framing of Biden as antithetical to American liberty and freedom (Beckett 2021). A contentious policy like mask mandates, for example, might clarify why some ardent Trump supporters commit to the Trump-2020-victory conspiracy. In response to Biden’s extending mask mandates, Trump stated that:

“We won’t go back; we won’t mask our children. Joe Biden and his Administration learned nothing from the last year. Brave Americans learned how to safely and responsibly live and fight back” (Harington 2021).

In doing so, he positions himself as the ever-present defender of American freedom. Moreover, his continued use of first-person rhetoric—as found in his primary and general election campaigns—fosters an enduring ingroup cohesion amongst his supporters (Matos and Miller 2021). Then, it is easy to understand Trump’s lasting legitimacy as the product of perceived ingroup vulnerability to Biden’s ‘outgroup’ threat.

However, the American authoritarian personality has extended beyond Trump in the Biden era: the introduction of conspiracy pockets, like QAnon, figure American authoritarians receptive to anonymous authority claims. For example, QAnon supporters crowded Dealey Plaza, the site of President John F. Kennedy’s assassination, on November 22, 2021, awaiting “the return of the late JFK Jr. who, they postured, would be running on an imagined 2024 ticket with former President Donald Trump” (Vallejo and Thomas 2021). While this event was certainly strange, it is a deeply troubling demonstration of these supporters’ obedience to an unknown, unnamed authority. There is a spillover effect from Trump’s purported presidential authority to those tangential figures that support the authoritarian mission of ‘rightfully’ re-installing Trump to the Oval Office.

The implications of such blind submission to known and unknown authority figures displaces the legitimate power of the state: the president, Congress, and judiciary. Should a

non-state actor infiltrate the narrative-making core of these conspiracy communities, the potential to instigate symbolic or actual harm becomes very real. In the next section, I relate how the authoritarian personality conditions aggression towards those perceived as different. In conjunction with authority figures that urge violence, those who submit to such acknowledged authorities might find themselves within an American insurrection movement that threatens the future of US democracy.

ELEMENT B: AGGRESSION TOWARDS THOSE WHO ARE DIFFERENT

Adorno et al. notes that a preoccupation with violence characterizes the authoritarian personality (1950). Understanding the post-Trump reification of his illegitimate authority as the product of such a personality causes concerns for immediate or impending violence. This paper has extensively discussed Trump’s ingroup-outgroup distinction and how it breeds animosity between perceived ‘others.’ US affective polarization trends in 2019 found that animosity among American partisans was a record high, with 79% of Democrats and 83% of Republicans giving their opponents a ‘cold’ rating on the feeling thermometer index (Pew Research Center 2019). This aggression towards those who are different can manifest in violent, reactionary conduct between ingroup-outgroup members. For example, should a conspiracy emerge that necessitates Trump supporters’ violent intervention, there already exists an observable militia of disgruntled Americans prepared to compromise established systems of power. At an October 25, 2021, rally hosted by conservative pundit Charlie Kirk, one Trump supporter spoke:

“At this point, we’re living under corporate and medical fascism.

This is tyranny. When do we get to use the guns? [audience laughs] No, and I'm not — that's not a joke, I'm not saying it like that. I mean, literally, where's the line? How many elections are they going to steal before we kill these people?" (Bump 2021).

The growing restlessness of an aggrieved conservative-right cautions further insurrections like those at the Capitol on January 6, 2021, where a group of Trump supporters "overran the nation's Capital as lawmakers hid in fear," resulting in five deaths and multiple injuries (Barry, MacIntire and Rosenberg 2021). In the moments before the Capitol siege, one man can be heard on video stating: "our president wants us here [...] we wait and take orders from our president" (Barry, MacIntire and Rosenberg 2021). This alarming submission to Trump's acknowledged authority legitimizes such violence; future aggression, be it symbolic or actual, can re-emerge should it go unchecked by established, recognized institutions. One way in which this aggression is being combatted is by prosecuting insurrectionist transgressors (Anello 2021). Future authoritarian personalities might be extinguished via similar judicial checks and balances.

ELEMENT C: BELIEF IN SIMPLE ANSWERS AND POLEMICS

This element provides support for why both *respect for submission to an acknowledged authority* and *aggression towards those who are different* characterize authoritarian personalities in the post-Trump era. Psychological insecurity positions authoritarians (though not exclusively) to adhere to specific kinds of anxiety-reducing political attitudes and values to moderate perceived threats to their identity or way of life

(Gillath and Hart 2010). Thus, the authoritarian personality wields the simplest, most readily available answer. For those that posit Trump's continued presidency during Biden's administration, the 'election that delivered the unfavourable result' must be rigged. Those who decry the news coverage of Trump's myriad unfounded or untethered claims point toward a global media conspiracy in which "the mainstream media are handmaidens [of] Hillary Clinton and the secretive denizens of the deep state" (LaFrance 2020). So, American authoritarian personalities in the post-Trump era approach rectifying their precarious psychological security by adopting what answers come swiftly with little psychological resistance—often facilitated by the widespread adoption of such answers: implicating my first discussed element, as often simple answers can come from acknowledged authorities to dispel what insecurities might afflict a support base.

As for the authoritarian propensity for polemics—or aggressive attacks on or refutations of others' opinions or principles—the post-Trump era reveals patterns of discourse around Trump's cultivated outgroup (Merriam-Webster Dictionary 2006). For example, Trump's frequent framing of the "radical left democratic party" as a "crooked and vicious foe" has infiltrated the vernacular of the everyday American authoritarian (Trump 2020). Similarly, polemic statements by Trump advocates inspire fictitious narratives; Donald Trump Jr. sold "Fauci Kills Puppies" T-shirts and hoodies, prompting *#FauciLiedDogsDied* to trend on Twitter (Abutaleb and Reinhard 2021; Shopdonjr.com 2021). Dr. Anthony Fauci, the US Chief Medical Advisor, has become "a controversial figure during the [COVID-19] pandemic," partially due to his "public clashes with President Donald Trump over Fauci's support for masks and opposition

to unproven covid cures” (Abutaleb and Reinhard 2021). The result of Trump Jr.’s Twitter and merchandise campaign: “far-right platforms such as 8kun were awash in memes casting Fauci as a mad, puppy-killing scientist” (Abutaleb and Reinhard 2021). Future implications of this rhetoric fulfill the authoritarian mission to denigrate outgroup members, legitimizing the ingroup’s actions regardless of their validity. In doing so, legitimate sources of authority, like Dr. Fauci, are undermined via hyperbolic attacks or the mockery of important portfolios such as his.

CONCLUSION

This paper sourced the origin of American authoritarianism across US history, commencing with *Reconstruction* and enduring in the post-Trump era. Analyzing the growth of American authoritarian personalities is an ongoing project with far too abundant and intricate considerations to fit within this term paper. As such, this paper recognizes its limited scope, addressing the most pertinent historical motivations for American authoritarian personalities and their immediate implications. For brevity’s sake, this paper

omitted further analyses of interim American authoritarian regimes between the *Jim Crow era* and George Bush Jr.’s presidency. Existing scholarship has interrogated the authoritarian character of the Joseph McCarthy ‘Red Scare’ period ^[4], as well as Ronald Reagan’s rebuke of Cold War-era communist encroachment (Koeppen 1969; Glad 1983) ^[5]. These regimes intersect with unmentioned elements of Adorno et al.’s nine-point scale, providing directions for further scholarly inquiry (1950).

This research fills gaps in extant political and psychological scholarship, focusing on affinity, antipathy, and affective polarization in US political culture. By using Adorno et al.’s nine-point scale to classify authoritarian personalities (1950), this paper situates its analysis within Americans’ increasing submission to an acknowledged authority, aggression towards perceived outgroup members, and belief in simple answers and polemics. In doing so, my findings apply to future reproductions of American authoritarian personalities, should authoritarian leaders, like Trump, continue to necessitate or acclaim their supporters’ continued submission.

ENDNOTES

[1] Althusser conceptualizes ideological state apparatuses as apolitical structures in civil society, rather than formal repressive state bodies like prisons or the police. He explains how these ideological state apparatuses mobilize the psychosocial components of civic life to inculcate ways of appraising and interpreting one’s own and others’ beliefs or actions in reference to an idealized submission to a hegemonic authority. Ideological state apparatuses forego violent coercion for installing socially agreed-upon principles that reinforce the control of the citizenry. Co-opting individuals’ fear of social rejection, ideological state apparatuses provide insights into the growing propensity towards authoritarian political leaders and realities.

[2] Anne Applebaum (2020) tracks the rise of anti-democratic and authoritarian policies during the Trump administration in

her book, *Twilight of Democracy: The Seductive Lure of Authoritarianism*. Applebaum contends that political systems with radically simple beliefs (like authoritarianism) are inherently appealing, especially when they marshal loyalty around the exclusion of threatening others. Additionally, David Frum’s (2018) article, “America’s Slide Toward Autocracy,” does a good job of tracking Trump’s increasingly autocratic and authoritarian practices at his midterm of power.

[3] The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2022) defines being ‘woke’ as being “aware of and actively attentive to important facts and issues (especially issues of racial and social justice).”

[4] Koeppen (1969) provides a more detailed discussion of right-wing authoritarianism during Senator Joseph McCarthy’s

political influence in the 1950s and early 1960s (notwithstanding his 1957 death). In his article, "The Republican Radical Right," Koeppen (1969) relates alienation and affinity among American Republicans during the communist 'Red Scare,' mentioning its relation to Adorno et al.'s (1950) 9-scale elements: a) authoritarian aggression against people who violate conventional values, and b) projectivity—the perception of the world as dangerous. This seminal work provides a strong starting point for those interested in future late-twentieth-century U.S. authoritarian regimes.

[5] Glad (1983) tracks Ronald Reagan's "black-and-white" appraisals of the Soviet Union and the simultaneous inflation of his own "virtue and capacity to defeat them if he is strong and so wills it" (33). This implicates an additional element proposed in Adorno et al.'s (1950) scale: superstition and stereotypy—a belief in individual fate or thinking in rigid categories. While this element is not analyzed in this paper, it might provide future directions for similar research.

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