

Finding the Loch Ness Monster: Left-Wing Authoritarianism in the United States

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Although past research suggests authoritarianism may be a uniquely right-wing phenomenon, the present two studies tested the hypothesis that authoritarianism exists in both right-wing and left-wing contexts in essentially equal degrees. Across two studies, university (n = 475) and Mechanical Turk (n = 298) participants completed either the RWA (right-wing authoritarianism) scale or a newly developed (and parallel) LWA (left-wing authoritarianism) scale. Participants further completed measurements of ideology and three domain-specific scales: prejudice, dogmatism, and attitude strength. Findings from both studies lend support to an authoritarianism symmetry hypothesis: Significant positive correlations emerged between LWA and measurements of liberalism, prejudice, dogmatism, and attitude strength. These results largely paralleled those correlating RWA with identical conservative-focused measurements, and an overall effect-size measurement showed LWA was similarly related to those constructs (compared to RWA) in both Study 1 and Study 2. Taken together, these studies provide evidence that LWA may be a viable construct in ordinary U.S. samples.

KEY WORDS: left-wing authoritarianism, right-wing authoritarianism, rigidity of the right, ideology

The concept of left-wing authoritarianism—the idea that political liberals may be subject to the same reliance on simple authority and psychological rigidity as political conservatives—has a controversial history in psychology. While some have argued that left-wing authoritarianism (LWA) is a valid construct (e.g., Feldman, 2003; McFarland, Ageyev, & Djintcharadze, 1996; Mullen, Bauman, & Skitka, 2003; Ray, 1983; Van Hiel, Duriez, & Kossowska, 2006), others have claimed that it does not exist (Altemeyer, 1996, 1998; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003; Stone, 1980). Indeed, LWA has been called a “myth” (Stone, 1980) and likened to trying to find the Loch Ness Monster (Altemeyer, 1996, 1998; see Van Hiel et al., 2006, for a review).

Three Views of Authoritarianism

Authoritarianism as Uniquely Right-Wing

There are indeed reasons to believe that authoritarianism may be a uniquely right-wing construct. Jost et al. (2003), in their highly cited article on political conservatism, argue that the political right is asymmetrically rigid in their thinking and that as a result of this *rigidity of the right*, concepts like authoritarianism and dogmatism do not meaningfully or consistently apply to those left of the political center. In their words: “Evidence suggests that dogmatism has been no more useful than the construct of authoritarianism for identifying rigidity of the left” (p. 353). Similarly, in summing up a long history of research on the topic, Altemeyer (1998)—the writer of the most commonly used authoritarian scale—concluded: “I have yet to find a single ‘socialist/Communist type’ who scores highly (in absolute terms) on the [left-wing authoritarianism] Scale. . .the ‘authoritarian on the left’ has been as scarce as hens’ teeth in my samples” (p. 71).

Authoritarianism as Partially Left-Wing, but Mostly Right-Wing

Although many researchers have argued that LWA is not a viable construct, a more moderate view has emerged suggesting that, while authoritarianism is *more likely* to occur in political conservatives than political liberals, it nonetheless does *exist* left of center. This view suggests that researchers should be able to find examples of LWA in samples of extreme leftists, but that in general LWA should be harder to find than right-wing authoritarianism (RWA). For example, Van Hiel et al. (2006) wrote a short LWA scale for Flemish samples in Belgium. Using this scale, they found some evidence of LWA in a sample of extreme left-wing political activists; however, like Altemeyer, they found little evidence of LWA in samples of ordinary voters. Indeed, with respect to these ordinary voters, they concluded: “[A]nalogous to previous studies in Canada (Altemeyer, 1996), we were not able to detect true left-wing authoritarians” (Van Hiel et al., 2006, p. 788) and later commented that a “. . .problem for the further study of LWA is its limited presence” (p. 790).

In other words, Van Hiel et al. (2006) suggest that while it is possible—if one intentionally searches in the most fertile extremist places—to find evidence of LWA, in more “ordinary” voting populations, it is very scarce, while comparatively, right-wing authoritarianism is easy to find everywhere.

The Authoritarianism Symmetry Hypothesis

In the present study, we test a third view (drawn in part from Conway et al., 2015; Crawford, 2012; Suedfeld, Steel, & Schmidt, 1994) that suggests the same processes that create authoritarianism in right-wing persons also operate in left-wing persons in essentially equal degrees. This view would expect *symmetry* across RWA and LWA and thus would explain prior apparent asymmetries in terms of measurement issues and not as reflecting real underlying differences between conservative and liberal populations in their propensity to be authoritarian. This *authoritarianism symmetry hypothesis* suggests that if researchers asked the right questions on the right domains, RWA and LWA would show similar properties for conservatives and liberals.

This hypothesis coincides with a growing literature suggesting that normatively negatively valenced traits once attributed asymmetrically to conservatives may in fact be fairly equally distributed across the political spectrum (see, e.g., Chambers, Schlenker, & Collisson, 2013; Conway et al., 2015; Crawford, 2012; Duarte et al., 2015). For example, although some research suggests that liberals are more integratively complex in their thinking than conservatives (for a review, see, e.g., Jost et al., 2003; but see Van Hiel, Onraet, & De Pauw, 2010), other work demonstrates that this effect is qualified by the surrounding political context (e.g., Gruenfeld, 1995) or by the content domain under investigation (Conway et al., 2015).

Other researchers have suggested that a similar context-dependent qualification should be considered for the relationship between ideology and authoritarianism. In particular, Suedfeld et al. (1994) showed that different measurements of political ideology revealed conflicting results in their likelihood of predicting authoritarian attitudes towards censorship. In interpreting those results, the authors commented that liberal political correctness ideology had “taken on the mantle of ‘conventional morality,’ in that its endorsers score high on measures of authoritarian punitiveness towards transgressors” (p. 777). In other words, they suggested that liberals may be more authoritarian about certain aspects of their ideology.

Further, previous research suggests that RWA is a more nuanced construct than the current zeitgeist may indicate (e.g., see Bilewicz, Soral, Marchlewska, Winiewski, 2015; McFarland et al., 1996). For example, contrary to some conventional conceptualizations of RWA, work has found that in some contexts RWA is positively associated with more traditionally liberal platforms such as pro-environmental attitudes (Reese, 2012), positive intergroup behavior (Oliner & Oliner, 1998), and the prohibition of hate speech towards minorities (Bilewicz et al., 2015). While these results do not mean that LWA exists and is symmetrical with RWA, they do at least suggest that authoritarianism may sometimes be related to a number of more traditionally liberal viewpoints.

The Present Approach: Writing Parallel Items From the Most Widely Used RWA Measurement

Although valuable, none of these prior studies measured LWA specifically or provided a test of the authoritarianism symmetry hypothesis more generally. To fill this gap, in the present study we create a new LWA scale by writing parallel items adapted from the most widely used RWA scale (Altemeyer, 1998). Our newly created scale is designed to capture LWA in ordinary samples in the United States.¹ We then use this new LWA scale to test the authoritarian symmetry hypothesis. We elaborate on and defend this method of attempting to capture LWA below.

Why Use Altemeyer’s RWA Measurement?

Many people have argued that Altemeyer’s measurement is flawed because it confounds ideology and authoritarianism (see, e.g., Duckitt, Bizumic, Krauss, & Heled, 2010). It is then worth asking: Why did we opt to use this particular measurement as a baseline for constructing an LWA measurement in the present work? One might argue that because Altemeyer’s RWA scale is not a good measurement of authoritarianism, we are looking in the wrong place to find the Loch Ness Monster.

As we will illustrate below, we do believe Altemeyer’s RWA scale confounds ideology and authoritarianism—but that makes it more (not less) important to use our method to disentangle those two things in our search for LWA. We discuss the importance of our approach along three different lines: its pragmatic interface with the literature, its methodological disentanglement of ideology and authoritarianism, and its potential contribution to larger theories about ideology.

The pragmatic case: How is RWA measurement used and viewed? It is important to note that whether Altemeyer’s RWA scale is a viable measurement or not, it is widely used as both a measurement of authoritarianism and ideology. Indeed, a *Google Scholar* search revealed that Altemeyer’s (1981) work has been cited 2,244 times, and even the more recent Altemeyer (1998) work has been cited 1,519 times. While not all of these citations are directly for the scale itself, they nonetheless illustrate the impact of Altemeyer’s conceptualization.

Indeed, there is no sign that use of his conceptualization is slowing down: Altemeyer’s RWA measurement continues to be—by far—the most widely used scientific measurement of

¹ We use the term “ordinary” in the same way that prior researchers (e.g., Van Hiel et al., 2006) have used it: fairly representative samples that were not specifically targeted because of their likelihood of being extreme.

authoritarianism. To illustrate, we narrowed our search to a more behavioral-sciences-focused database: *PsychInfo*. Produced by the American Psychological Association, *PsychInfo* is a long-running standard for searchable databases in the field. It covers journals that are “psychologically relevant, archival, scholarly, peer-reviewed, and regularly published with titles, abstracts, and keywords in English. . .99% are peer-reviewed journals.”² This method allows us not only to more directly illustrate a behavioral-sciences-specific focus on Altemeyer’s scale, but it also allows for a controlled slice of general, consensually accepted scientific mechanisms. Thus, while not fully capturing the potential influence of other conceptualizations in other fields, *PsychInfo* is at least a good barometer of the current relative influence of various scales in the behavioral sciences.

Using *PsychInfo*, we further narrowed our search to recent articles (from January 2016 to December 2016) using “authoritarianism,” “RWA,” and “right-wing authoritarianism” as search terms. We focused on recent articles to illustrate current trends as a counterpart to the general historical dominance of Altemeyer’s scale. We then looked in the methods sections of all studies that contained measurements of authoritarianism and noted which measurement was used. Results are presented in Table 1. As can be seen there, this survey of the most recent authoritarianism articles overwhelmingly supported the notion that Altemeyer’s RWA scale is by far still the most-used scale: Altemeyer’s RWA scale was used in 18 published papers, more than triple the next closest authoritarianism scale (Zakrisson’s 2005 RWA scale, which was used in five published papers)³ and more than four times Duckitt et al.’s (2010) RWA scale (used in four published papers). Many of the other scales we found in our search were not intended to measure general right-wing authoritarianism at all but were specific to a particular context (such as evaluating mental illness attitudes, parenting, or teaching). When RWA as a general construct was the conceptual target of the article, the majority of the time it was measured using Altemeyer’s scale.⁴

Further, specific arguments by researchers show that, while the measurement is sometimes viewed controversially, it is not universally considered to be a “bad” measurement of right-wing authoritarianism. For example, Crouse and Stalker (2007) argue that Altemeyer’s RWA scale items “provide a widely accepted operational definition of how strongly a person holds right-wing authoritarian beliefs” (p. 25). As late as 2014, the same authors (Crouse & Stalker, 2014) defended the wide use of the scale in *Political Psychology* against an attack upon it: “Altemeyer has shown that his RWA scale, despite Thomas’s dislike of it, has good reliability, predicts many things it should predict, and does not predict things it should not predict. The scale thus appears to have both predictive and discriminant validity. It does its sorting job well enough to be a standard psychometric instrument on this topic, if not the standard instrument” (p. 115).

As a result of its continued wide usage and its continued defense as a standard measurement of the construct it is named for, the research community should not dismiss it out of hand as a lens for viewing RWA (and thus LWA). Whether we happen to like the measurement or not, it is continuing to shape the field as we know it. And that has practical implications for our theoretical understanding of conservatives and liberals. As a result, it is important to better evaluate what might happen if we try to balance this highly used scale from an ideological perspective.

² See <http://www.apa.org/pubs/databases/psycinfo/index.aspx>

³ It is noteworthy that the Zakrisson (2005) scale is in actual fact adapted from and compared to Altemeyer’s scale. As Banyasz, Tokar, and Taut (2016) commented on the Zakrisson scale: “This scale was found to function similarly to the original, full-length RWA scale developed by Altemeyer (1998), while measuring a slightly narrower version of the construct” (p. 28). In other words, even for some of the other scales currently in use, Altemeyer is often considered the gold standard for adaptation. We felt it best here to cleanly separate the scales for comparison, but no matter how these data are parsed, they lead to the same conclusion: The Altemeyer scale still dominates the field.

⁴ We do not mean to imply this search is comprehensive. Indeed, a reviewer pointed out two additional usages of the child-rearing scale in 2016 that are not in *PsychInfo*. Thus, we are not attempting to say that our search covers all legitimate scientific possibilities. However, it is a standard search mechanism that uses consistent criteria. As such, we feel it is a representative sample of the relative proportional use of the constructs.

Table 1. Measurements of Authoritarianism Used in Published Research From January to December, 2016

	Number of Articles
Altemeyer's (1981) RWA Scale	18
Zakrisson's (2005) RWA Scale	5
Duckitt et al.'s (2010) RWA Scale	4
CAMI Authoritarian Subscale	3
Parenting Practices Questionnaire	3
F-scale	2
ANES Child-Rearing Items	2
Parenting Authority Questionnaire	1
Irrational Teacher Beliefs Subscale	1
Lederer's (1982) RWA scale	1
Dunwoody, Hsiung, & Funke's (2009) RWA scale	1
World Values Survey Items	1

Note. CAMI = Community Attitudes Towards Mental Illness, Authoritarian subscale; ANES = American National Election Survey's four parenting-related items; *F*-scale = authoritarianism scale from Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, and Sanford (1950)

The methodological case: Two ways to disentangle authoritarianism from ideology. We agree with other researchers (e.g., Thomas, 2013) who have argued that the scale confounds ideology and authoritarianism. Indeed, practically, it has been used as a measurement of both—and the fact that it clearly taps into both makes it in our view a potentially problematic measurement of *both* ideology *and* conservatism. But that does not make it *irrelevant* to authoritarianism. Quite the contrary: It clearly taps into something about authoritarianism beyond *mere* ideological conservatism. Rather, it means that as a marker of whether or not conservatives are themselves more authoritarian than liberals, it is not a very good measurement because it confounds conservatism and authoritarianism in the measurement itself.

How can we go about unconfounding them? One way to disentangle the two is to create value-neutral measurements that have no ideology in them at all and then see how those measurements relate to ideology. And yet, while this method is of course valid and useful, it is prone to error: Supposedly value-neutral measurements can contain loaded responses that predetermine a conclusion. For example, although Rokeach's dogmatism measurement has been hailed as value neutral (Jost et al., 2003), research suggests that it leans ideologically conservative (Ray, 1970; for discussions, see Conway et al., 2015; Van Hiel et al., 2003), and therefore a correlation between dogmatism and conservatism may say more about the ideological bent of the dogmatism items, rather than the fact that conservatives are dogmatic.

In the present project, we follow a different approach for teasing apart authoritarianism from ideology: Rather than attempt to create value-neutral items, we instead try to create parallel authoritarian items on both sides of the political spectrum (for an exemplar with dogmatism, see Conway et al., 2015). To the degree that politically charged items on the left show the same pattern as politically charged items on the right, this suggests a fairly symmetrical pattern of authoritarianism on both sides.

The theoretical case: Rigidity of the right and authoritarianism. From a theoretical point of view, the inability to find LWA with an Altemeyer-style measurement has been consistently used as evidence of the conservative rigidity theory. Indeed, the rigidity-of-the-right theory has been largely fueled by measurements, such as Altemeyer's RWA scale, that demonstrate conservatives have many rigid characteristics that liberals are presumably less likely to have. In fact, in their widely cited article that argued for the rigidity of the right, Jost et al. (2003) commented: "W. F. Stone (1980) concluded that there was virtually no evidence for the syndrome of left-wing authoritarianism and that rigidity and closed-mindedness were consistently associated more with conservative thinking styles than with

their alternatives. This position has been echoed by Altemeyer (1981, 1998) and Billig (1984), among others” (p. 352). In other words, it is evidence by absence: We have a number of RWA measurements that show conservatives are doing all kinds of simple-minded and rigid things, but no corresponding LWA measurements showing liberals doing those things—and therefore, LWA is unlikely to meaningfully or consistently exist.

If one accepts the premise that RWA is confounded with ideology and therefore RWA might be better construed as a measurement of conservatism than of authoritarianism, then it becomes even more puzzling that no parallel LWA measurement exists—and more important to make a fair attempt to do so. Consider that in Jost et al.’s (2003) widely cited meta-analysis, the RWA scale was used 21 times as a measure of *conservatism*. Yet just as this measurement is not a pure measurement of authoritarianism, it is also not a pure measurement of conservatism. So it is unclear whether authoritarians are more likely to engage in rigid behaviors—or if conservatives are—or if only conservative authoritarians are. It is unclear because no corresponding studies were reported with an LWA scale. What a different view we might have of the relationship between ideology and rigidity if, instead of those 21 studies using an RWA scale, each of them had used a parallel and valid LWA scale. If that were the case, it is entirely possible that we might view *liberals* (instead of conservatives) as being *high in the need for structure, lower in attributional complexity, lower in openness to experience, higher in perceptions of threat, and more likely to be persuaded by threat-based messages* (to name but a few of the findings often used to make a case that conservatives are uniquely rigid and threat-based). We do not know what would happen because we do not have a scale that we could use to test in a parallel fashion—and the goal of the present research is to help provide such a scale.

The Present Studies

In the present studies, we use Altemeyer’s (1998) RWA scale items to design a parallel LWA scale. We then correlate both the RWA and LWA scales with measurements of ideology and variables often associated with rigidity. Our primary hypotheses are that (1) the correlation between LWA and liberalism will be equally strong as the correlation between RWA and conservatism. We view these basic descriptive statistics relating LWA to ideology as a critical starting point: Because the case for the rigidity of the right has been built in part upon the fact that conservatives (and not liberals) are uniquely prone to agree with statements favoring rigid authority figures, it is vital that we provide an empirical test to show that liberals also can (and with equal strength) favor rigid authority figures. That is what the relationship between ideology and LWA represents.

It is further expected that LWA will show similar relationships with liberal-focused measurements of (2) prejudice, (3) dogmatism, and (4) attitude strength, as compared to RWA’s relationship with more traditionally conservative-focused measurements of those constructs. These predictions also follow from our basic logic: The fact that RWA has been associated with prejudice, dogmatism, and strong attitudes is partially why conservatives are considered asymmetrically rigid (see, e.g., Jost et al., 2003). Thus, to the degree that LWA shows similar relationships with related constructs, this would provide initial evidence for the symmetry hypothesis.

These two studies help fill in several existing gaps in the literature: First, to our knowledge, there is currently no LWA scale in the United States that has been validated for use on ordinary populations. Second, there is currently very little existing evidence, in any population, for LWA in ordinary samples. Thus, demonstrating the parallel predictive validity of an LWA measurement in ordinary U.S. samples is an important starting point for our understanding of the authoritarianism symmetry hypothesis.

To accomplish this, Study 1 uses a U.S. college sample. Study 2 uses a national U.S. sample from *Mechanical Turk*.

STUDY 1

Method

Overview of Design

Participants completed RWA/LWA and several other scales related to sociopolitical beliefs and ideology. In order to avoid potential response overlap that might result from completing similar scales, participants completed *either* the RWA scale *or* the newly developed LWA scale, but not both. Participants further completed political ideology measurements that were held exactly identical across condition. Finally, participants completed three focused domain-specific scales that, although maintaining the same basic wording, differed in content domain by RWA/LWA condition: prejudice (modern racism), dogmatism, and attitude strength (all measurements described in more detail below).

Participants

Four hundred and seventy-five undergraduates at the University of Montana participated for course credit in large-group sessions.

Questionnaire Packets

Participants completed a questionnaire packet that contained a dogmatism scale, a prejudice scale, an authoritarianism scale, an attitude strength measurement, a political ideology scale, and some demographic information, in that order. We describe the constructs here in conceptual, rather than chronological, order.

LWA/RWA. Some participants received the standard RWA scale (Altemeyer, 1998), which is directed at the acceptance of conservative authoritarian leaders and punishing those who oppose them. Other participants received the new LWA version of the scale, rewritten by the authors to be targeted towards acceptance of *liberal* authoritarian leaders. This scale replaced the domain content of each item, such that rather than referring to causes and groups that conservatives would support, it instead refers to causes and groups that liberals would support.

An example will illustrate. An item from the standard RWA scale reads “It’s always better to trust the judgment of the proper authorities in government and religion than to listen to the noisy rabble-rousers in our society who are trying to create doubts in people’s minds.” For the LWA scale, this item was adapted to read “It’s always better to trust the judgment of the proper authorities in science with respect to issues like global warming and evolution than to listen to the noisy rabble-rousers in our society who are trying to create doubts in people’s minds.”

In this way, all items were rewritten to direct the focus of the item on supporting authoritarian leaders that liberals would be more likely to agree with. However, the key content words of the items that focus on authoritarian support (e.g., words dealing with the *might* of the leaders and their ability to *crush* dissidents) were left identical in all cases. Inter-item Reliability for the scale was satisfactory in both conditions (standard RWA-scale $\alpha = .91$; LWA-scale $\alpha = .84$).⁵ Please see the appendix for the entire LWA scale.

⁵ Although our primary purpose involves comparing RWA and LWA as larger constructs, we also evaluated the three components of each scale: authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression, and conventionalism (see Altemeyer, 1998; Van Hiel et al., 2006). Exploratory factor analyses (with Varimax rotations) revealed similar structures across both the RWA and LWA scale. Consistent with typical subscale expectations, both conventional authoritarianism and authoritarian submission showed nearly identical loadings for both RWA and LWA. However, authoritarian aggression showed very few unique factor loadings for either the LWA or RWA scale. Though this was unanticipated for the aggression subscale, it is nonetheless common for subfactors to show such inconsistencies. Indeed, Funke (2005) argues that the RWA subdimensions often show “intradimensional discrepancies,” as factor loadings are in part dependent on the research question. In the main, these factor analyses are almost entirely consistent with prior work on the first two factors of RWA and demonstrate similar item loadings for LWA. A more complete summary of these results is available on request.

Political ideology. Participants also completed several items relevant to their political ideology. We focus on two of those here: standard bipolar items anchored by liberal/conservative and democratic/republican that have been used in prior research (e.g., Conway et al., 2012; Conway et al., 2015; Conway, Houck, Gornick, & Repke, 2016) and are similar to the vast majority of standard ideology measures (see e.g., Frederico, Deason, & Fisher, 2012; Jost et al., 2003). These two items were highly correlated and thus averaged into a single measure of *political conservatism* (standardized $\alpha = .86$). Because one of our primary purposes in this study is to compare the effect sizes for RWA and LWA, for ease of comparison, in LWA conditions we reverse-scored this measurement and refer to it as political “liberalism.”⁶

Prejudice scale. Participants completed one of three prejudice scales, all direct adaptations of the Modern Racism Scale (McConahay, 1986). We targeted each LWA/RWA condition in a focused way. In particular, participants in the RWA condition received one of two versions of the Modern Racism Scale: (1) Some RWA-condition participants received the standard Modern Racism scale, which is directed at ethnic minorities (McConahay, 1986), while (2) some RWA participants received a similar scale—adapted for the present study—targeted at environmental groups. This scale kept wording identical to the ethnic minority scale, except that it replaced references to ethnic minorities with references to environmental groups.

Participants in the LWA condition received a similarly adapted version of the scale targeted towards *religious* minorities: References to ethnicity and race were replaced with references to Christian groups that liberals are more likely to view in opposition to their ideology (see Chambers et al., 2013). Inter-item Reliability for the scale was satisfactory for all three versions of the scale (standard scale directed at ethnic minorities $\alpha = .63$; environmental-groups scale $\alpha = .79$; religious-minority scale $\alpha = .74$).

Dogmatism. Participants were assigned one of three versions of the dogmatism scale (adapted from Rokeach, 1960).⁷ Participants in the RWA condition got either (1) the standard version of the scale as typically used in previous research on ideology (obtained from Ray, 1970) or (2) a domain-specific version of the scale designed around a topic on which conservatives are more likely to be dogmatic (religion; see Conway et al., 2015). All participants in the LWA condition received a domain-specific dogmatism scale (see Conway et al., 2015, for more details) on which liberals were more likely to be dogmatic (environmental issues; see Reese, 2012; Schultz & Stone, 1994).

These domain-specific dogmatism scales were nearly identical to the standard scale and to each other, but they differed only in intentionally injecting content domains (either religion or environmental issues; see Conway et al., 2015, for details). Inter-item Reliability for the scale was satisfactory in all three conditions (standard-scale $\alpha = .74$; environmental-scale $\alpha = .74$; religious-scale $\alpha = .88$).

Four items on each domain-specific scale were kept in their original (purportedly domain-general) wording. Below, we present analyses on the full 18-item scale and also break the scale down by type of item.

Attitude strength. Participants completed several items relevant to the strength of their attitudes similar to those used in prior work (Conway et al., 2008; Conway, Dodds, Hands Towgood, McClure, & Olson, 2011; Conway et al., 2015). Although the focal attitude differed by condition, both RWA and LWA participants completed parallel items pertaining to: (1) topic importance, (2) participant involvement with the topic, (3) participant experience with the topic, (4) participant confidence in their opinion on the topic, and (5) the extremity of the participant’s attitude on the topic (represented

⁶ This is the exact same measurement statistically as the political conservatism measure; the reverse-scoring only serves to allow easier comparisons of effect sizes.

⁷ Results from this study on the relationship between these dogmatism scales and political conservatism were presented in Conway et al. (2015). However, all results presented in the present article are entirely novel and have never been published before.

Table 2. Study 1: Effect Sizes for RWA and LWA Across Main Dependent Measurements

	RWA	LWA	Fisher's Z
Political Ideology	.50***	.59***	1.35
Prejudice	.59***	.65***	0.93
Dogmatism	.66***	.38***	3.73**
Attitude Strength	.11	.22**	1.06
Cumulative Effect Size	.73***	.70***	0.57

Note. Fisher's Z = test for difference between RWA and LWA correlations; for RWA, political ideology = political conservatism; for LWA, political ideology = political liberalism (inverse-scored conservatism); dogmatism RWA = religious dogmatism (see text for standard dogmatism); prejudice RWA = environmental prejudice scale (see text for ethnic prejudice scale); cumulative effect size includes attitude strength (see text for description). ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

by how far they were from the midpoint in absolute terms on a favorability item). In a manner identical to prior work (Conway et al., 2015), we converted each measurement to a z-score (within condition) and averaged them into an overall *attitude strength* score.

In the LWA condition, these items pertained to their attitudes towards the liberal-focused statement "Global warming is occurring and is human caused." For a subset of participants in the RWA condition,⁸ these items pertained to their attitudes towards the conservative-focused statement "Christianity is absolutely true."

Results and Discussion

Primary Analyses

Our main analytic technique involved correlating RWA and LWA with the primary dependent measures within the RWA/LWA condition (please see Table 2 for a summary). We further compared the effect size of RWA and LWA in each case by using Fisher's Z test for comparing correlations (see, e.g., Conway et al., 2008; Conway et al., 2011; Conway et al., 2015).

Political ideology. Consistent with prior work, RWA was positively correlated with political conservatism ($r[294] = .50$, $p < .001$; 95% CI lower = .38, upper = .57). However, consistent with the authoritarianism symmetry hypothesis, our newly developed LWA scale was significantly positively correlated with political *liberalism* ($r[180] = .59$, $p < .001$; 95% CI lower = .47, upper = .71).⁹ The difference between the RWA-conservatism and LWA-liberalism effect sizes was not significant (Fisher's Z = 1.35, $p > .05$).

Prejudice. RWA was positively correlated with the prejudice scale that has ethnic minority groups as the target ($r[111] = .42$, $p < .001$; 95% CI lower = .25, upper = .56) and the prejudice scale that has environmental groups as the target ($r[186] = .59$, $p < .001$; 95% CI lower = .49, upper = .68). However, consistent with the authoritarianism symmetry hypothesis tested in this study, LWA was

⁸ For RWA participants, these attitude strength items were only asked of participants who received the domain-specific religious-dogmatism scale.

⁹ Some prior research suggests that the relationship between ideology and outcome variables may be curvilinear, and as such represents more about ideological extremism than about ideological content (e.g., Tetlock, 1994). As a result, we tested for the possibility that our results represent a curvilinear, rather than a linear, relationship. In particular, we ran linear regression on all key results while entering a linear and two separate nonlinear terms for political conservatism as simultaneous predictors: (1) a mean-centered quadratic term for conservatism, and (2) an extremism score for conservatism (computed as the absolute difference from the midpoint of the conservatism scale). All analyses were performed within-condition in a way parallel to that described in the text. Results overwhelmingly support a linear, rather than a nonlinear, interpretation of our results. All linear effects remained significant in each condition (p 's < .001). For the RWA condition, no nonlinear effects emerged (p 's > .58); for the LWA condition, small nonlinear effects emerged (p 's < .02). However, even in that condition, the linear effects were substantially larger than the nonlinear effects (linear standardized *betas* = .53 and .47; nonlinear standardized *betas* = .11 and .13). In summary, across multiple analyses, it is clear that (1) all linear effects remained significant—and were of similar size and direction as in zero-order analyses—when accounting for nonlinear effects, and (b) nonlinear effects overall accounted for very little of the variance. Thus, our results are much better construed as linear effects than as nonlinear.

positively correlated with prejudice when religious-minority groups were made the target ($r[180] = .65, p < .001$; 95% CI lower = .53, upper = .76). Statistical tests comparing the size of these correlations revealed a nonsignificant effect for comparing LWA with RWA-environmental groups (Fisher's $Z = 0.93, p > .05$), but a significant effect for comparing LWA with RWA-ethnic groups (Fisher's $Z = 2.68, p < .01$), with the LWA effect significantly larger.

Dogmatism. RWA was positively correlated with the standard dogmatism scale ($r[112] = .49, p < .001$; 95% CI lower = .31, upper = .62) and with the religious-dogmatism scale ($r[186] = .66, p < .001$; 95% CI lower = .55, upper = .77). In a manner partially consistent with the authoritarian symmetry hypothesis, LWA was positively (and overwhelmingly significantly) correlated with the environmental dogmatism scale, although the effect size was smaller than that for RWA ($r[181] = .38, p < .001$; 95% CI lower = .24, upper = .51). Statistical tests comparing the size of these correlations revealed a nonsignificant effect for comparing LWA-environmental dogmatism with RWA standard dogmatism (Fisher's $Z = 1.12, p > .05$), but a significant effect for comparing LWA-environmental dogmatism with RWA-religious dogmatism (Fisher's $Z = 3.73, p < .01$).

For the two domain-specific dogmatism scales, we further compared correlations of RWA/LWA with both (1) the 14 domain-specific items and (2) the four that were kept from the original scale (purportedly "domain general" items). Unlike prior analyses, these additional analyses showed evidence of asymmetry that is more consistent with the rigidity of the right approach than the authoritarian symmetry hypothesis. In particular, while RWA showed similar correlations for the domain-specific ($r[186] = .64, p < .001$) and domain-general ($r[186] = .56, p < .001$) items, LWA showed a markedly different pattern, with a strong correlation for domain-specific items ($r[181] = .45, p < .001$), but essentially no correlation for domain-general items ($r[181] = .02, p = .805$).

Attitude strength. RWA was positively correlated with participants' attitude strength about Christianity, but the correlation was not significant ($r[298] = .11, p = .151$; 95% CI lower = $-.04$, upper = .26). LWA, however, was significantly positively correlated with participants' attitude strength about climate change ($r[180] = .22, p = .003$; 95% CI lower = .07, upper = .36). These correlations were not significantly different from each other (Fisher's $Z = 1.06, p > .05$).

Overall effect-size measurements. Because part of our larger purpose is to compare the effect-size strength of LWA and RWA, we further computed a summary measurement that included all key dependent variables measured in the study. We do not claim that this overall measurement is a coherent theoretical unit; rather, it is a means of capturing the average effect sizes in the study for LWA and RWA across multiple measurements that were expected to be in the same direction according to the authoritarian symmetry hypothesis.

To compute this summary measurement, (1) all measurements (political ideology, dogmatism, prejudice, and attitude strength) were converted to Z-scores within RWA/LWA condition,¹⁰ and (2) the resulting measurements were averaged into a single score within condition. Because attitude-strength measurements were not available for all participants, we also computed this overall measurement both with and without attitude strength.

Results were consistent with the authoritarianism symmetry hypothesis. For the measurement that excluded attitude strength, the effect size for LWA and this overall measurement ($r[181] = .75, p < .001$) was roughly the same as that for RWA ($r[298] = .70, p < .001$; Fisher's Z comparing the two correlations = 1.11, $p > .05$). A similar result emerged for the measurement that included attitude strength, with the effect size for LWA ($r[178] = .70, p < .001$) again nearly identical as that for RWA ($r[172] = .73, p < .001$; Fisher's Z comparing the two correlations = 0.57, $p > .05$).

¹⁰ For the purpose of computing the overall scores, the standard dogmatism measurements and the religious-dogmatism measurement for the RWA condition were treated as the same measurement. Further, the environmental-group prejudice scale and the ethnic-group prejudice scale were treated as the same measurement for the RWA condition.

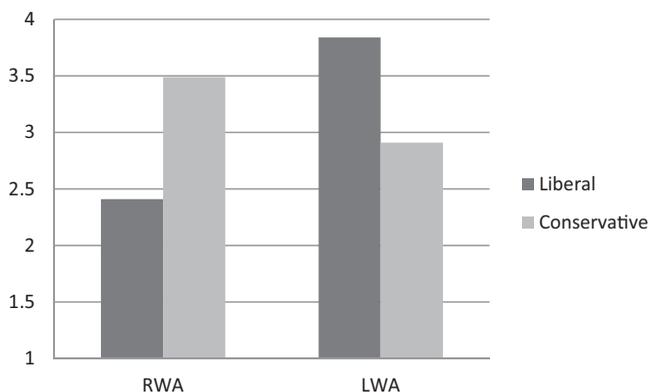


Figure 1. RWA and LWA in liberals and conservatives (study 1).

Absolute Values for Conservatives and Liberals on LWA and RWA

When evaluating only correlations between scales, it is conceptually possible that the positive correlation between LWA and political liberalism could be driven more by a rejection of those items by conservatives than by an acceptance by liberals, and thus it may be that this significant correlation may not indicate the presence of LWA among liberals. To look at the plausibility of this alternative, we divided participants up categorically into those who were *conservative* (defined as those who scored above 5 on the conservatism scale) and those who were *liberal* (those who scored below 5 on the scale). This analysis thus drops those directly at the midpoint of the scale. Descriptive statistics are presented in Figure 1. As can be seen there, the highest score for authoritarianism was for *liberals* on LWA. These additional analyses with absolute values make any interpretation of these results based on a lack of liberal authoritarianism implausible. It is clear in these results that there is at least as much evidence of LWA in this sample of college students as there is of RWA.

Transitional Discussion

Study 1 showed evidence of LWA in a U.S. college sample. Study 2, which was largely identical in its methods, aimed to replicate and extend these results in two ways. First, and most importantly, although college samples make up the bulk of the case for rigidity of the right in the United States (see, e.g., Jost et al., 2003),¹¹ it is nonetheless important to collect a larger and more representative sample. To accomplish this, we recruited a nationwide U.S. sample through *Mechanical Turk* and had them participate in a study that was identical in most respects to Study 1. *Mechanical Turk* has been particularly validated for use as a representative sample for research related to politics and political ideology (see, e.g., Clifford, Jewell, & Waggoner, 2015; Conway, Repke, & Houck, 2017) and generally shows similar results as other samples (for an example, see Houck, Conway, & Repke, 2014).

Second, Study 2 also aimed to deal with a potential alternative explanation for the prejudice results from Study 1. Specifically, it is possible that these results reflect differences in the likelihood that participants would feel communication discomfort in discussing the target groups. To the degree that participants in general felt more concern about (for example) discussing environmental groups

¹¹ Indeed, the part of the case against LWA that comes from U.S. research stems almost entirely from college samples. For example, in Jost et al.'s (2003) highly cited meta-analysis, they included six nonoverlapping studies in the United States using RWA—and all six of them were based on college samples (the only other North American sample was from Canada, and it was also a college sample). Thus, at the very least, Study 1 taken alone provides some important counterbalance to existing work on U.S. samples. To the degree that prior work has been used to make the case that authoritarianism is a uniquely right-wing phenomenon, Study 1 (using a similar college sample) suggests that this conclusion may be premature.

than religious minorities, this would make effects sizes smaller overall for environmental groups than for religious minorities. Since only RWA conditions received environmental groups and only LWA conditions received religious minorities, this could artificially increase the effect sizes for LWA (relative to RWA).

To account for this potential alternative explanation, we directly measured participants' communication discomfort for each relevant target group and included those measures in covariation analyses.

Although Study 2 replicated and extended Study 1, to simplify the design, we opted to only use one alternative RWA condition for dogmatism and prejudice. In both cases, we chose the condition that showed the strongest effect sizes for RWA (religious-dogmatism scale and the environmental-groups-targeted prejudice scale) in Study 1, thus making it maximally difficult for our authoritarianism symmetry hypothesis to manifest.

STUDY 2

Method

Participants

Three hundred and five participants were recruited through *Mechanical Turk*. We excluded seven participants who failed to answer an attention-check question accurately, leaving 298 for final analyses.

Questionnaire Packets

All measurements and methods were identical to Study 1 unless otherwise noted. Participants were randomly assigned to either an LWA or an RWA condition.

LWA/RWA. As in Study 1, some participants got the RWA scale and others the newly developed LWA scale. Inter-item Reliability for the scale was satisfactory in both conditions (standard RWA scale $\alpha = .96$; LWA scale $\alpha = .89$).

Political ideology. Participants also completed the two *political conservatism* items used in Study 1 (standardized $\alpha = .92$). For ease of comparison, in LWA conditions we again reverse-scored this measurement and refer to it as "political liberalism."

Prejudice. In Study 2, Participants completed one of two versions of the prejudice scales (from McConahay, 1986) used in Study 1: LWA participants received the scale targeted at religious minorities ($\alpha = .85$), while RWA participants received the scale targeted at environmental groups ($\alpha = .89$).

Dogmatism. Participants were assigned one of two versions of the dogmatism scale used in Study 1. Participants in the RWA condition got the religiosity-focused domain-specific version of the scale ($\alpha = .94$). Participants in the LWA condition received the environmental issues domain-specific dogmatism scale ($\alpha = .87$). As in Study 1, four items on each scale were kept in their original (domain-general) wording.

Attitude strength. Participants completed the same attitude-strength measurements used in Study 1 and a summary attitude-strength score was computed in an identical manner.

Additional communication-discomfort measurement. To analyze the likelihood that differences in the communication discomfort of target groups accounts for the support shown for the symmetry hypothesis in Study 1, we asked participants additional questions about the likelihood that persons would feel uncomfortable communicating negative information about different target groups (six questions total). Two of those are directly relevant to Study 2 (those pertaining to religious minority groups and pro-environmental groups): "If someone was talking to a group of strangers and expressed a negative opinion about a religious minority group (e.g., Christian fundamentalists), to what degree

Table 3. Study 2: Effect Sizes for RWA and LWA Across Main Dependent Measurements

	RWA	LWA	Fisher's Z
Political Ideology	.68***	.56***	1.67 [†]
Prejudice	.73***	.73***	0.00
Dogmatism	.79***	.41***	5.43***
Attitude Strength	.14 [†]	.32***	1.63 [†]
Cumulative Effect Size	.82***	.73***	1.91[†]

Note. Fisher's Z = test for difference between RWA and LWA correlations; for RWA, political ideology = political conservatism; for LWA, political ideology = political liberalism (inverse-scored conservatism). [†] $p < .15$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

do you think it would make the other people in the group uncomfortable?" and "If someone was talking to a group of strangers and expressed a negative opinion about a pro-environmental group, to what degree do you think it would make the other people in the group uncomfortable?"

Results

Primary Analyses

Table 3 provides a summary of our primary analyses.

Political ideology. Results for political ideology mirrored those of Study 1: RWA was positively correlated with political conservatism ($r[148] = .68, p < .001$), but LWA was significantly positively correlated with political *liberalism* ($r[150] = .56, p < .001$). The difference between the RWA-conservatism and LWA-liberalism effect sizes approached, but did not attain, statistical significance (Fisher's $Z = 1.67, p < .10$).

Prejudice. RWA was positively correlated with the prejudice scale that had environmental groups as the target ($r[148] = .73, p < .001$). However, as in Study 1, LWA was positively correlated with prejudice when religious-minority groups were made the target ($r[150] = .73, p < .001$). These correlations did not significantly differ from each other (Fisher's $Z = 0.00, p > .05$).

These prejudice analyses are (like the data from Study 1) clearly consistent with the authoritarianism symmetry hypothesis. We further analyzed the degree that communication-discomfort differences could account for the support given to the symmetry hypothesis. First, the overall means for the two communication-discomfort measures revealed that participants found communicating negatively about religious minorities ($M = 4.76$) to be more uncomfortable than communicating negatively about environmental groups ($M = 4.21$, paired sample $t[298] = 5.29, p < .001$). This is inconsistent with an explanation based on differential communication discomfort: If communication discomfort makes effects smaller, then having greater discomfort for LWA participants' target category means the effect for that condition is *underestimated* (and not overestimated) relative to RWA participants.

More importantly, however, removing the variance associated with communication discomfort did not alter the effect size in either condition, as both the LWA-prejudice (partial $r = .73, p < .001$) and the RWA-prejudice (partial $r = .73, p < .001$) effects remained identical when controlling for the communication-discomfort measure relevant to their target group.

These additional findings make an explanation based on communication discomfort unlikely and increase the likelihood that this evidence provides support for the symmetry hypothesis.

Dogmatism. RWA was positively correlated with the religious-dogmatism scale ($r[148] = .79, p < .001$). LWA was positively (and overwhelmingly significantly) correlated with the environmental-dogmatism scale, although the effect size was smaller than that for RWA ($r[149] = .41, p < .001$). Consistent with Study 1, statistical tests comparing the size of these correlations revealed a significant effect for comparing LWA-environmental dogmatism with RWA-religious dogmatism (Fisher's $Z = 5.43, p < .001$).

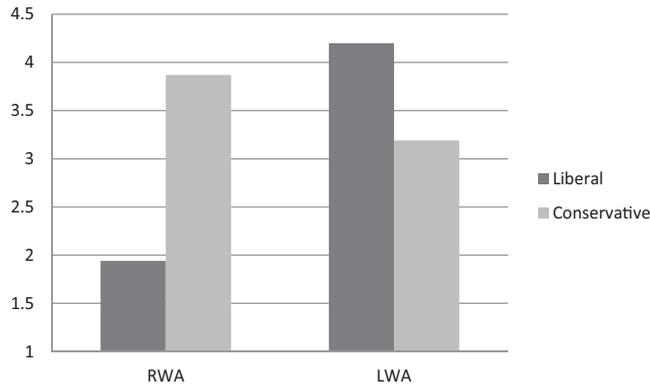


Figure 2. RWA and LWA in liberals and conservatives (study 2).

For the two domain-specific dogmatism scales, we further compared correlations of RWA/LWA with both the 14 domain-specific items and the four that were kept from the original scale. The relative difference for RWA and LWA that existed in Study 1 remained in Study 2, but the difference was weaker in Study 2. Specifically, RWA showed somewhat similar correlations for domain-specific ($r[148] = .80, p < .001$) and domain-general items ($r[148] = .69, p < .001$), while LWA showed a somewhat stronger correlation for domain-specific items ($r[149] = .44, p < .001$) than for domain-general items ($r[149] = .21, p < .05$).¹²

Attitude strength. RWA was positively correlated with participants' attitude strength about Christianity, but the correlation only approached statistical significance ($r[148] = .14, p = .099$). LWA, however, was again significantly positively correlated with participants' attitude strength about climate change ($r[150] = .32, p < .001$). The difference between the RWA-conservatism and LWA-liberalism effect sizes approached, but did not attain, statistical significance (Fisher's $Z = 1.63, p < .15$).

Overall effect-size measurements. We computed a summary effect-size measurement in a manner identical to Study 1. Using this overall measurement, the effect size for LWA ($r[150] = .73, p < .001$) and RWA ($r[148] = .82, p < .001$) were both overwhelmingly significant. While RWA was larger descriptively than LWA, the difference between these two correlations (also like Study 1) did not attain statistical significance (although it did approach it; Fisher's Z comparing the two correlations = $1.91, p < .10$).

Absolute Values for Conservatives and Liberals on LWA and RWA

We also looked at the mean pattern for liberals and conservatives on LWA by dividing participants up categorically in a manner identical to Study 1. As revealed in Figure 2, the highest score for

¹² This evidence could be interpreted as opposed to the authoritarian symmetry hypothesis. While this does not suggest that LWA does not exist in the present sample, it is noteworthy that LWA showed stronger effects across some variables, and the main cumulative measurement from the present work shows roughly equal effect sizes for RWA and LWA averaged across all variables; it suggests that it may perhaps be associated with less dogmatism at some general level than RWA is (and indeed, that is consistent with the overall dogmatism effect-size measurements). If that is the case, it would provide an important qualifier to the present work and suggest that while LWA is a real phenomenon in U.S. college samples, it may nonetheless be less dogmatic (as Jost et al.'s (2003) analysis suggests would be the case, if it exists at all). On the other hand, it is possible that such reportedly domain-general items as those in the dogmatism scale are actually leaning towards conservative content. It is noteworthy that the dogmatism scale, which is supposed to be domain-general, has been judged by some to have more conservative content (Ray, 1970)—a problem considered to be so severe by some researchers that they used it as a measurement of conservatism and not dogmatism (e.g., Van Hiel et al., 2010). As a result, it is possible that this finding does *not* mean that LWA is less dogmatic in a domain-general way, but rather that the items in question themselves pull more towards conservative content, and this fact drives the correlations towards the conservative side both for RWA and LWA. Both possibilities are legitimate, and there is no way to parse out which is correct from these data. It is a task for future research to fully investigate these issues.

authoritarianism was for *liberals* on LWA. Thus, as in Study 1, these results suggest that there is at least as much evidence of LWA in this ordinary sample of Americans as there is of RWA.

General Discussion

Taken as a whole, these results suggest that left-wing authoritarianism may prove to be a viable construct in ordinary U.S. samples. Not only did LWA show a significant correlation with liberalism in both a sample of U.S. college students and a separate nationwide sample of U.S. citizens, it also showed overwhelmingly significant correlations with dogmatism, prejudice, and attitude strength. In each case, these relationships paralleled similar relationships between RWA and those constructs—and the overall average effect sizes in both studies were very similar for LWA and RWA. Further, the present results demonstrate that the presence of LWA cannot be attributed to a correlational sleight of hand: Analyses of mean patterns in both studies for liberals and conservatives clearly indicate as much (and indeed, slightly more) LWA on the left than RWA on the right. In short, these results suggest that LWA may in fact be alive and well in ordinary U.S. samples.

Interpretational Obstacles

Not all of the evidence presented in the present article is favorable to this interpretation, and there are multiple limitations that need to be considered. Below, we discuss these interpretational obstacles.

Content preferences versus true authoritarianism. It might be easy to dismiss these effects as reflecting the content preferences of liberals and conservatives (and thus as not reflecting anything about *authoritarianism per se*). There are two reasons why we think such a dismissal would be misleading.

First, the dismissal is a double-edged sword. If the question is “do prior results suggest that conservatives are more prone to authoritarianism than liberals?” then simply dismissing our results as only having to do with content only raises the possibility that *all* prior results with RWA are picking up on *content* primarily (and not authoritarianism *per se*). We must apply the same standard on both sides of any debate (see, e.g., Tetlock, 1994). In this case, if the RWA scale can be reasonably used to infer the presence of authoritarianism in conservatives, then it is also safe to assume that the LWA scale (which uses identical parallel wording in each case) can be reasonably used to infer the presence of authoritarianism in liberals. And if LWA cannot be reasonably used for that purpose, then we need to be more cautious in using RWA to infer the presence of authoritarianism in conservatives.

Second, equally as important, a quick dismissal of these findings reflects a failure to recognize the subjective nature of the items themselves. For example, consider that on the LWA scale, liberals agree that: *Our country needs a mighty and liberal leader*,¹³ that the leader should *destroy the radical traditional ways*, that people should *trust the judgment of the proper authorities*, should avoid listening to *noisy rabble rousers in our society who are trying to create doubts in people’s minds*, should *put some tough leaders in power who oppose those values and silence the troublemakers*, should *smash the traditional beliefs*, that *what our country really needs is a strong, determined leader who will crush the evil*, that society should *strongly punish those who try to uphold what they claim are God’s laws*, deny that *a Christian’s place should be wherever he or she wants to be*, and support the statement that *this country would work a lot better if certain groups of Christian troublemakers would just shut up and accept their group’s proper place in society*.

These are not merely statements of liberal ideology; they are definitive and absolute statements that unequivocally support the necessity of an extremely strong authority to guide them, rule society with an iron hand, and viciously punish societal offenders. They are statements opposing those who

¹³ Italicized words are direct quotes from the LWA scale.

doubt and disavowing the equality of all people. In other words, these results suggest that U.S. liberals, too, can be overwhelmingly authoritarian.

Differences between target domains. For our prejudice, dogmatism, and attitude-strength measurements, the operations differed in their target group/domain by LWA or RWA condition. This leaves open the possibility that general differences in the target domains might influence LWA and RWA effect sizes in different ways (thus altering the correlations in ways not relevant to the fundamental relationships between RWA/LWA and each construct).

Clearly, it is likely that factors relevant to the content domains themselves will influence the nature of each relationship and—while we controlled for one such factor in Study 2—we did not control for all possibilities here. However, four things are worth noting in this regard. First, in each case, we were careful to keep identical wording in all respects *except* for the target domain. Thus, it is hard to argue that participants who got (say) a dogmatism questionnaire in the LWA condition got something *conceptually* different than the dogmatism questionnaire in the RWA condition.

Second, this issue is a necessary obstacle for this kind of research, but it does not directly undermine its value. Because the symmetry hypothesis predicts that LWA and RWA will have different domains as targets for authoritarianism, this necessitates that tests involve targets that could potentially differ in multiple other ways. Thus, the present results should not be taken as a perfect representation of the overall effect size for each conceptual area, but rather a sampling of possible domains within that area. Combined with the natural error inherent in any study, this means that we cannot make strong claims about the true effect sizes for either RWA or LWA in each domain.

However, to dismiss these results on that account would be premature. No research is fully comprehensive, but we believe the present research is a meaningful starting point as evidence for the symmetry hypothesis. In addition to the fact that we have minimized systematic variance by using nearly identical wording across conditions, it is worth noting that, while there may be a tendency to assume that error or systematic variance would *overestimate* the size of LWA effects compared to RWA, there is no reason it must be so. It is possible that some of the differences across conditions would lead to LWA's effect sizes being *underestimated* relative to RWA. As a result, while we acknowledge that the effects here may be unique to the specific domains measured—and indeed, to some degree it must be so—these domains are nonetheless a useful starting point.

Third, in making the case for the rigidity of the right, researchers have rarely made an effort to test parallel LWA effects of any kind (much less the kind rigorously used here). We must apply the same standard to both sides; as such, even excluding the RWA conditions from our studies *entirely*, this evidence would still be meaningful evidence of LWA. While this evidence would not argue as convincingly for the authoritarianism symmetry hypothesis without the RWA conditions, it would certainly still make a compelling argument for the consideration of LWA in ordinary samples (fully symmetrical or not)—evidence that, to this point, has been lacking.

Fourth, it is also worth noting that one of the questionnaires—the political ideology measure—was identical across conditions, and this questionnaire showed essentially identical effect sizes overall (LWA somewhat larger in Study 1, RWA somewhat larger in Study 2, neither difference statistically significant).

Concluding Thoughts

The present results suggest that the search for LWA might not be quite like the search for the Loch Ness Monster after all. By providing researchers with a validated LWA questionnaire moving forward, it offers multiple avenues for future testing of the similarities—and potential differences—between LWA and RWA across a wide array of attitudes and behaviors.

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Appendix

Left-Wing Authoritarianism (LWA) Scale

For the following questions, please answer on a 1–7 scale, where 1 = “I disagree completely,” 4 = “neutral/undecided,” and 7 = “I completely agree.”

- _____ 1. Our country desperately needs a mighty and liberal leader who will do what has to be done to destroy the radical traditional ways of doing things that are ruining us.
- _____ 2. Christian fundamentalists are just as healthy and moral as anybody else.

_____3. It's always better to trust the judgment of the proper authorities in science with respect to issues like global warming and evolution than to listen to the noisy rabble-rousers in our society who are trying to create doubts in people's minds.

_____4. Christian Fundamentalists and others who have rebelled against the established sciences are no doubt every bit as good and virtuous as those who agree with the best scientific minds.

_____5. The only way our country can get through the crisis ahead is to get rid of our "traditional" values, put some tough leaders in power who oppose those values, and silence the troublemakers spreading bad (and so-called "traditional") ideas.

_____6. There is absolutely nothing wrong with Christian Fundamentalist camps designed to create a new generation of Fundamentalists.

_____7. Our country needs traditional thinkers who will have the courage to defy modern progressive movements, even if this upsets many people.

_____8. Our country will be destroyed someday if we do not smash the traditional beliefs eating away at our national fiber and growing progressive beliefs.

_____9. With respect to environmental issues, everyone should have their own personality, even if it makes them different from everyone else.

_____10. Progressive ways and liberal values show the best way of life.

_____11. You have to admire those who challenged the law and the majority's view by protesting against abortion rights or in favor of reinstating school prayer.

_____12. What our country really needs is a strong, determined leader who will crush the evil of pushy Christian religious people, and take us forward to our true path.

_____13. Some of the best people in our country are those who are challenging our government, supporting religion, and ignoring the "normal way" things are supposed to be done.

_____14. We should strongly punish those who try to uphold what they claim are "God's laws" about abortion, pornography, and marriage, when they break the actual laws of the country in order to do so.

_____15. There are many radical, immoral Christian people in our country today, who are trying to ruin it for their religious purposes, whom the authorities should put out of action.

_____16. A Christian's place should be wherever he or she wants to be. The days when Christians are submissive to the conventions of this country belong strictly in the past.

_____17. Our country will be great if we honor the ways of progressive thinking, do what the best liberal authorities tell us to do, and get rid of the religious and conservative "rotten apples" who are ruining everything.

_____18. With respect to environmental issues, there is no "ONE right way" to live life; everybody has to create their own way.

_____19. Christian Fundamentalists should be praised for being brave enough to defy the current societal and legal norms.

_____20. This country would work a lot better if certain groups of Christian troublemakers would just shut up and accept their group's proper place in society.