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Attitudes toward immigrants: The interactive role of the authoritarian predisposition, social norms, and humanitarian values[☆]

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ABSTRACT

This investigation tested whether social norms and endorsement of humanitarian values interact to influence authoritarians' attitudes toward immigrants. Oyamoto, Borgida, and Fisher (2006) found correlational evidence for a model in which: (1) clear social norms for attitudes toward an outgroup (favorable or unfavorable) influence the authoritarianism–attitude relationship in the direction of the norm, and (2) in the absence of clear social norms, endorsement of humanitarian–egalitarian values attenuate the intolerant tendencies of authoritarians. The current investigation tested the model in a survey experiment conducted in a diverse adult sample ($N = 388$). We measured participants' levels of authoritarian predisposition and endorsement of humanitarian values. Participants were then randomly told that Americans in general had either negative, positive, or mixed opinions about immigrants and immigration (social norm condition), and then asked about their attitude toward immigrants. Consistent with the model, authoritarianism was negatively related to attitudes toward immigrants in the negative norm condition. However, authoritarians' tendency toward intolerance was attenuated when they thought that Americans in general had positive opinions about immigrants. Also as predicted, when societal norms were depicted as mixed, authoritarians' attitudes depended upon endorsement of humanitarian values: humanitarian authoritarians held positive attitudes and non-humanitarian authoritarians held the most negative attitudes toward immigrants. Implications for understanding the effects of authoritarian predispositions in varying social contexts are discussed.

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Introduction

Background

In April 2010, the Arizona state legislature passed a law (SB1070) that called for state and local law enforcement, if given reasonable suspicion, to verify an individual's citizenship status. Although controversial, in the months that followed public opinion polls show that Americans have largely supported the measure – particularly Republicans and Independents, but also a fair percentage of Democrats (PollingReport.com, 2010).

The easy conclusion to draw is that there is currently anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States, but this conclusion would be oversimplifying the matter. The issue of immigration and American attitudes toward it has long been one of ambivalence (Jones, 2000; Simon & Lynch, 1999). That pattern is currently apparent if one goes beyond public opinion about the Arizona law to broader questions about immigrants and immigration (Pew Research Center, 2006; PollingReport.com, 2010).

For example, although many Americans see illegal immigration as a problem, there is no clear consensus about the solution. To illustrate, following SB1070, and despite moderately strong support of the law, a CBS News/New York Times Poll (April 28–May 2, 2010) found that many Americans also favored policies that enabled illegal immigrants a path to citizenship (43%), or to stay as guest workers (21%), as opposed to simply deporting all illegal immigrants (32%). Support of the first two options, which allow for illegal immigrants to stay in the country in some capacity, was particularly strong among Democrats (75%) and Independents (61%), but even among Republicans (54%) there was a fair level of support for these kinds of policies. These and other opinion polls (e.g., Pew Research Center, 2006) reveal the complexity of Americans' thoughts and feeling regarding immigrants – legal and illegal.

Given the American societal ambivalence surrounding immigrants and immigration, how would one expect a person with an authoritarian predisposition, who has grown up in the U.S., to feel about immigrants? On the one hand, authoritarians¹ might be hostile towards immigrants

[☆] The order of the second and third authors' names was determined by flipping a coin.

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¹ Authoritarianism is a continuous variable. However, for ease of exposition, we use the terms "authoritarian" and "non-authoritarian" in place of terms such as "those high in authoritarianism" and "those low in authoritarianism," respectively.

due to their status as an outgroup and authoritarians' tendency toward intolerance against groups perceived as deviant. Because recent immigrants to the U.S. have different, unfamiliar cultural norms and practices and possibly distinct dress and appearance, authoritarians may be especially likely to perceive immigrants as a threat to the social order and move to defend the status quo (Duckitt & Sibley, 2009). On the other hand, immigration has a long history in America, and one could argue that it is a cultural tradition that authoritarians would be particularly likely to respect. The cultural lore of the U.S. dictates that we are a country that welcomes immigrants with open arms, as our own ancestors were received; thus, authoritarians may uphold the social convention of accepting immigrants. Within this framework, one might predict that under the right circumstances authoritarians' tendency toward intolerance may be attenuated when it comes to attitudes about immigrants.

The uncertainty concerning how authoritarians will act toward immigrants stems in part from the status of immigrants to the U.S. as a group that is neither wholeheartedly accepted nor outright rejected by the majority of the public (Jones, 2000; Pratto & Lemieux, 2001; Simon & Lynch, 1999), and it also relies upon the idea that authoritarians are responsive to social norms and consensus, as well as traditional values within a society (Oyamoto, Borgida, & Fisher, 2006). Thus, while one might expect authoritarians to be intolerant towards outgroups in most situations, these negative attitudes could be attenuated given the right circumstances. In the current investigation we tested a model in which authoritarians' attitude toward immigrants are contingent upon perceived social consensus about legal immigrants in American society, or personal endorsement of traditional American humanitarian–egalitarian values.² First, we review evidence that social norms can generally influence attitudes toward outgroups. Then, we review recent research which suggests that social norms can interact with authoritarianism to influence attitudes. Finally, we discuss how authoritarianism, social norms, and endorsement of humanitarian values may interact with one another to influence attitudes toward immigrants.

Social norms and attitudes toward outgroups

Manipulating perceived social norms and documenting their effect on individuals' attitudes and behavior has deep roots in social psychology, with origins in Sherif and Sherif's (1953) group norm theory of attitudes. Group norm theory posits that attitudes are formed by adopting the attitudes of a valued ingroup. When joining a new group, one learns the prevailing attitudes of group members and often adjusts one's own attitudes so that they are more in line with this norm. Thus, prejudice against an outgroup may sometimes be a result of conforming to an ingroup's perceived consensus attitude, rather than due to a personality system or cognitive dynamic (Crandall, Eshleman, & O'Brien, 2002; Pettigrew, 1991). People report a great deal of variability in their beliefs about the acceptability of prejudice towards different groups: target groups range from those that are clearly not acceptable targets of prejudice (e.g., blind people, Black Americans) to those toward which prejudice is generally condoned (e.g., rapists, child abusers), and those toward which no clear norm for or against prejudice exists (e.g., gamblers, immigrants; Crandall et al., 2002). Perceptions of the acceptability of prejudice against a group predict outcomes such as individuals' personal levels of reported prejudice against the group and the degree to which they find jokes about

that group to be humorous (Crandall et al., 2002). Thus, when people identify with an ingroup, they may consciously or unconsciously adjust their attitudes to match their beliefs about the group's attitudes.

Researchers have successfully manipulated information about descriptive social norms to influence attitudes and behavior. For instance, Gerber and Rogers (2009) framed messages about voting in terms of low or high expected turnout and found that people were less willing to vote when reminded that fewer of their fellow citizens were likely to vote in a given election. Researchers have also manipulated descriptive social norms to change stereotypes and discriminatory behavior. Sechrist and Stangor (2001) provided participants with feedback indicating that a majority (or minority) of fellow White students share their attitudes about Black people. When high-prejudiced people believed that they were in the majority, they endorsed more negative stereotypes and kept further away from a Black person than when they thought they were in the minority. Similarly, low-prejudiced people endorsed fewer stereotypes and increased their proximity to a Black person when they believed themselves to be the majority. Similar processes of conformity occur when participants watch a confederate express positive or negative racial attitudes (Blanchard, Crandall, Brigham, & Vaughn, 1994). Consensus information about predominant social norms can be a powerful influence on the attitudes that individuals will express. Because they have a greater need for order and preference for conformity, authoritarians are likely to be especially responsive to normative cues (Altemeyer, 1996; Hetherington & Weiler, 2009).

The interactive role of social norms, personal values, and the authoritarian predisposition

Early work on authoritarian attitudes focused on the straightforward and direct relation between authoritarian predispositions and sociopolitical opinion (Oyamoto et al., 2006), and this large body of research has documented the myriad social and political attitudes associated with authoritarianism. A major finding is that authoritarians are intolerant of groups that they perceive as deviating from the norm in some significant way or as different from themselves in crucial respects (i.e., ethnic background, religious beliefs, social values; Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Altemeyer, 1981; 1988; 1996).

Explanations as to the origins of authoritarians' intolerance, and more fundamentally the essential nature of authoritarianism, have varied over the history of this area of research, but one constant seems to be that authoritarians' habitual intolerance is connected to social norms and values that are perceived to be legitimate and traditional (Altemeyer, 1988, 1996). In recent years, the emphasis has been on authoritarianism as a generalized motive for the maintenance of conformity, order, and social uniformity (Stenner, 2005). Thus, political attitudes are thought to be an outcome of a pre-political predisposition that is characterized by a need for order and a tendency to rely on established authorities to provide that order (Hetherington & Weiler, 2009).

Current conceptualizations of authoritarianism emphasize the possibility of dynamic processes in which authoritarian predispositions interact with social influences, both enduring (e.g., endorsement of traditional societal value systems) or transitory (e.g., perceived social norms, feelings of threat), to influence authoritarian attitudes. Individuals high in authoritarianism are predisposed to intolerance and are more likely than non-authoritarians to aggress against members of outgroups who are seen as challenging the status quo (Feldman, 2003; Hetherington & Weiler, 2009; Stenner, 2005).

However, there is ample reason to believe that authoritarians will also be responsive to social norms. For example, Altemeyer (1988; 1996) reports that when participants in one of his studies were told how their peers responded on a questionnaire, authoritarian participants tended to adjust their response to match the perceived norm. Hetherington and Weiler (2009) argue that a *need for order* is the central motivation for authoritarian attitudes and behavior. While all people have a desire to perceive their world clearly in the face of confusion and inconsistency,

² We focused on attitudes toward legal immigrants because it allowed us to examine more directly authoritarian intolerance and ways to reduce it. An emphasis on illegal immigration conflates two different issues: attitudes about people who break the law, and intolerance of cultural and ethnic differences. From a symbolic racism perspective (Kinder & Sears, 1981), one could argue that intolerance is the root issue and concerns about legality are primarily a socially acceptable means for expressing intolerance. Explicitly focusing on attitudes toward legal immigrants, however, is one way to narrow the focus to intolerance (or tolerance) of cultural and ethnic differences, and to avoid confounding immigration attitudes with attitudes about criminality, and partially circumvent potential social desirability effects in responding.

the way in which order is achieved has implications for social and political relations. According to Hetherington and Weiler, authoritarians, more than non-authoritarians, rely on established authorities to provide order and reduce the anxiety associated with ambiguity. Established authorities include religious and political leaders, foundational texts, or predominant social or cultural norms and conventions — all of which impose order on society and promote social conformity.

In our prior work, we reasoned that authoritarians' need for order and conventional tendencies would lead to (a) adherence to social norms, if and when these norms were clear, or (b) if social norms were unclear, a reliance on endorsement of traditional societal values (Oyamoto et al., 2006). We tested this model by assessing the descriptive social norms for attitudes toward various target groups and their potential effects on authoritarians' attitudes. Using archival evidence, we determined that attitudes in American society in the early 2000s were clearly and predominantly favorable towards equal treatment of African Americans and unfavorable towards the moral implications of homosexuality. Although these norms were descriptive, someone high in authoritarianism may interpret a descriptive norm as also implying a prescriptive component that such groups *should* be treated positively or negatively (Altemeyer, 1996).

In line with this theorizing, authoritarianism was unrelated to individuals' attitudes about African Americans; that is both non-authoritarian and authoritarian participants held neutral attitudes toward this group. Furthermore, authoritarianism was associated with negative attitudes toward homosexuals, a group for whom social norms were negative at the time. Thus, when consensus information suggested a negative attitude was socially acceptable, authoritarians held negative attitudes, but when a majority held a positive attitude about an outgroup, authoritarians' tendency toward outgroup intolerance was blunted (Fisher et al., 2006; Oyamoto et al., 2006). It is important to note that these trends also suggest a potential limit to the ability of a positive norm to move authoritarian attitudes in a more positive direction. Positive norms regarding African Americans were associated with neutral attitudes toward that group rather than simple intolerance, but this is not the same as embracing the outgroup. It may be that because authoritarians are more attuned to threat (Feldman & Stenner, 1997), positive norms have less of an impact on authoritarians' attitudes than negative norms.

When there is no clear positive or negative norm to which authoritarians may conform, they may then turn to their personal beliefs or traditional values to inform their attitudes. Because authoritarians prefer convention and tradition, it follows that they may be particularly swayed by those values that are core to their culture or society. For Americans, one core traditional value system is humanitarianism–egalitarianism, in which “adherence to the democratic ideals of equality, social justice, and concern for the others' well-being” is emphasized (Katz & Hass, 1988, p. 894). Endorsement of humanitarian–egalitarian values has been found to be related to positive attitudes and greater acceptance about a variety of perceived outgroups (e.g., African Americans, Katz & Hass, 1988; and homosexuals, Biernat, Vescio, & Theno, 1996) including immigrants (Oyamoto et al., 2006). We reasoned that because humanitarianism–egalitarianism is a core, traditional American value system, some American authoritarians may embrace this orientation, and that in turn this endorsement might temper their tendency toward intolerance.

In this study, we were particularly interested in the humanitarianism aspect of the humanitarian–egalitarian ethic for three main reasons. One is that though related, the two aspects have different implications for attitudes toward immigrants. Conceptually, humanitarianism and egalitarianism are related but distinct constructs. Humanitarianism emphasizes a benevolence and relatedness extended to humanity as a whole; it crosses ingroup and outgroup boundaries and endorses a view that all people share an intrinsic connection. Egalitarianism emphasizes the idea that all people should be given an equal opportunity in life, but does not imply that there is a fundamental connection among all people. Humanitarianism appears to have a broader scope and deeper implications for intergroup tolerance. For example, one can be egalitarian and

believe that all people should have equal opportunities, but this does not imply that one should see any commonalities with or obligations toward those outside one's ingroup. In contrast, humanitarianism implies seeing some common connection and obligation with those outside one's ingroup. Consistent with the conceptual distinction between humanitarianism and egalitarianism, Katz and Hass (1988) factor-analyzed the items of their humanitarianism–egalitarianism scale and found that the items measuring each dimension loaded on distinct factors. A second reason to focus on humanitarianism is that authoritarians are more likely to embrace this value system than they are to embrace egalitarianism: authoritarianism is weakly to modestly associated with humanitarianism (Altemeyer, 1996; Oyamoto et al., 2006) but negatively related to egalitarianism (Altemeyer, 1996).

A third reason to focus on humanitarianism is that it would help to clarify previous findings on the moderating effects of humanitarianism–egalitarianism on authoritarians' attitudes. Given that some authoritarians embrace humanitarian principles, we hypothesize that under certain circumstances, humanitarian principles of inclusion may rein in authoritarian intolerance. Our previous research found that when norms are mixed or unclear, authoritarians who endorsed humanitarianism–egalitarianism as a personal value had neutral to positive, as opposed to negative, attitudes about immigrants. In contrast, for those who did not endorse a humanitarian–egalitarian ethic, authoritarianism was negatively related to attitudes about immigrants (Oyamoto et al., 2006). In that study we did not distinguish between humanitarianism and egalitarianism. In this investigation, focusing on the former would enable us to determine if endorsement of humanitarianism alone can drive change in authoritarians' attitudes when norms are ambiguous or unclear.

Overview of the current investigation

Building on our previous work (Oyamoto et al., 2006), the current investigation experimentally tests a model in which (1) social norms influence authoritarians' attitudes toward immigrants in the direction of the norm, and (2) when norms are mixed or unclear, endorsement of humanitarianism moderates the relationship between authoritarianism and attitudes about immigrants. In the present investigation, we manipulate authoritarians' perceptions of the social norms regarding immigrants. Another extension on our previous work was that we used a proxy variable for authoritarian tendencies — child-rearing values — as opposed to the right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) scale. Researchers have noted measurement problems with the RWA scale; for example, a recent factor analysis suggests that a three factor solution fits better than does a single factor solution (separately assessing aggression, submission, and conventionalism; Funke, 2005). Also, Stenner (2005) finds that the RWA scale functions as a measure of prejudice and intolerance, the constructs that it is intended to predict. In addition to being a valid and reliable proxy measure of authoritarianism, the child-rearing scale provides a nonreactive way to measure pre-political authoritarian predispositions, particularly in non-student samples (Federico et al., in press; Stenner, 2005). Another change was to focus on humanitarian values rather than the broader humanitarian–egalitarian value spectrum. Finally, the current investigation tests our model in a broader, more representative population. We surveyed a diverse group of California residents about their attitudes toward immigrants.

Our model yielded the following predictions:

Hypothesis 1. When social norms are thought to be negative toward immigrants, authoritarianism will be negatively related to attitudes about immigrants, regardless of humanitarianism. In this condition, authoritarians' tendencies toward both aggression and conformity are in line with a negative attitude about immigrants.

Hypothesis 2. When social norms are thought to be positive toward immigrants, authoritarianism will be unrelated to attitudes about

immigrants. In this condition, the tendency toward conformity is expected to attenuate the tendency towards outgroup intolerance by encouraging authoritarians to align their attitudes with the favorable norm. However, the psychological tension between intolerance and sensitivity to threat in opposition to positive social norms is expected to limit authoritarians' conformity to those positive norms.

Hypothesis 3. Our model's central prediction is that when social norms are mixed toward immigrants, authoritarianism and endorsement of humanitarian values should interact to predict attitudes toward immigrants. Because there is no clear norm to which authoritarians can conform, they must turn to something else to determine attitudes. Because humanitarianism is a traditional value in our society, people who endorse that value may consider it and think positively about immigrants, regardless of authoritarianism levels. Among those who do not endorse humanitarianism, authoritarianism should be negatively related to attitudes about immigrants.

Method

Participants

Participants for this investigation were drawn from an omnibus telephone survey conducted by San José State University's Survey Policy and Research Institute (SPRI). Three hundred ninety-seven respondents of this random sample telephone survey of California adults completed all required measures for this study. Of these, 51% were women and 49% were men. As expected with a statewide random sample, participants were quite diverse. There was a great deal of variation in the age ($M = 52$, $SD = 17$; range = 18–96), ethnicity (69% White, 10% Hispanic, 9% Asian/Pacific Islander, 4% African American, 6% other, and 2% unspecified), education level (4% less than high school degree, 11% high school graduates, 54% some college or completed college, 31% some graduate school or completed graduate school) and socioeconomic status (24% less than \$50,000 income, 28% \$50,000–100,000 income, 30% greater than \$100,000, 18% unspecified) of our sample. Of this sample, 18% ($n = 70$) indicated that they had been born in a country other than the United States. Of the 70 non-U.S. born participants, 69% had lived in the U.S. for more than 16 years. We included all participants in our analyses, along with a dummy code indicating whether each participant was born in the U.S.³

Procedure

The measures for this study were embedded in an omnibus phone survey conducted by SPRI. The phone survey of randomly selected respondents, who were contacted during the evening hours, was completed over the two week period from March 30 to April 9, 2009. Appearing about a third of the way through the survey, respondents answered questions about endorsement of humanitarian values, followed by the proxy measure of the authoritarian predisposition (child-rearing values). After an interval of 17 questions unrelated to this investigation, the participants received the social norm manipulation. Respondents were randomly assigned to 1 of 3 conditions: positive norm ($n = 126$), mixed norm ($n = 127$), or negative norm ($n = 135$). Participants in the positive norm condition were told that, "According to recent opinion polls, Americans are generally positive in their feelings about immigrants and immigration. How would you describe your feelings about recent immigrants? That is, people who are in the U.S. legally, and have come here to live." Participants in the mixed and negative norm conditions were told exactly the same thing, except that the word "positive" was replaced by the word "mixed" or "negative," respectively. The

social norm manipulation was immediately followed by an assessment of the participant's attitude toward recent, legal immigrants to the U.S.

Measures

Child-rearing values (authoritarianism predispositions)

Authoritarian predispositions were measured by asking participants about their child-rearing values (1992 National Election Studies; also see Stenner, 2005). Respondents were given a series of 4 paired qualities (e.g., independence or respect for elders; obedience or self reliance) and asked to indicate which, in their opinion, was more important to instill in a child. Responses to each item were coded as 1 (consistent with authoritarian predispositions), 0 (inconsistent with authoritarian predispositions) or 0.5 (if the participant volunteered that both qualities were important), then summed to create a scale ($\alpha = .64$, $M = 1.74$, $SD = 17$).⁴

Humanitarianism

Three items from the humanitarianism–egalitarianism scale (HE; Katz & Hass, 1988) measured endorsement of humanitarian values ("Those who are unable to provide for their basic needs should be helped by others," "One should find ways to help others less fortunate than oneself," and "A good society is one in which people feel responsible for each other."). Items selected were the 3 which loaded most highly on a factor analysis of responses to HE scale items in a previous data collection of ours. Participants indicated their endorsement of each item on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*) and responses were averaged to form a humanitarianism scale ($\alpha = .67$, $M = 4.37$, $SD = .73$).

Attitude toward immigrants

Participants rated their feelings about legal immigrants to the United States using a 5-point scale (1 = *very favorable* to 5 = *very unfavorable*). Responses were reverse-scored so that higher scores indicated more favorable feelings toward immigrants ($M = 3.98$, $SD = .99$).

Results

Preliminary inspection of the means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations among these variables provide a backdrop upon which the subsequent regression analyses can be understood. First, attitudes toward immigrants were favorable in this sample ($M = 3.98$ on a 5-point scale). The sample also overwhelmingly endorsed humanitarian values ($M = 4.37$ on a 5-point scale). In terms of authoritarian tendencies, although there was some over-representation of those very low in authoritarianism (19% score less than 1 on the scale), our sample otherwise showed a generally normal distribution of scores ($M = 1.74$ on a 4-point scale). Despite the possibility of ceiling effects on some key variables, we did find significant predictive power in our regression analyses. Second, although one may reasonably expect that authoritarian tendencies would be inversely related to endorsement of humanitarian values, in the current investigation the two tendencies were unrelated ($r = -.09$, $p = .09$). In other words, some authoritarians embraced a humanitarian value system, a counter-intuitive pattern, but one which has

³ We also ran all analyses excluding foreign-born participants ($N = 70$) from the sample. The pattern of results was the same.

⁴ Although the α statistic for the authoritarian predisposition scale is somewhat low in our sample (.64), it is consistent with the scale's reliability in other research. For example, Feldman and Stenner (1997) reported an α of .66 in a much larger sample of National Election Study (NES) phone survey respondents. Low α may be the result of the scale's brevity and forced-choice format, but there may also be theoretical reasons for low α when it comes to measures of authoritarianism: Stenner (2005) presents evidence that α ranges from .19 to .67, depending on the level of normative threat in the environment (p. 285). The moderate level of internal consistency for the authoritarianism scale in our sample suggests that the results we report here may underestimate the effects of our independent variables.

been found by other researchers (e.g., Altemeyer, 1996; Duriez & Van Hiel, 2002; Oyamoto et al., 2006).

Analytic strategy

This investigation tested three general propositions: (1) When social norms are thought to be negative toward immigrants, authoritarianism will be negatively related to attitudes about immigrants, regardless of humanitarianism, (2) When social norms are thought to be positive toward immigrants, authoritarianism will be unrelated to attitudes about immigrants, reflecting an attenuation of authoritarians' typical intolerance, regardless of humanitarianism and (3) When social norms are mixed toward immigrants, authoritarianism and endorsement of humanitarian values should interact to predict attitudes toward immigrants in ways that moderate authoritarians' tendency to derogate outgroups. We tested these hypotheses in an omnibus regression model, regressing our measure of attitudes toward immigrants on authoritarian predisposition (i.e., child-rearing values), humanitarianism, our manipulation of social norms, and all the 2-way and 3-way interactions among these variables. Following the omnibus regression model, we explored the pattern of interactions by testing, and graphing (a) separately for each norm condition, a 2-way interaction model restricted to the main effects, control variable, and the interaction of authoritarianism and humanitarian values, and (b) the simple slopes based on the omnibus 3-way interaction model to help interpret the pattern of results.

Following the guidelines of Aiken and West (1991), we designated authoritarian predisposition as the primary predictor variable, humanitarianism and social norm condition as moderator variables, and attitude toward immigrants as the dependent variable. The continuous predictor variables were centered prior to the analysis in order to reduce multicollinearity among the predictors. The three manipulated social norm conditions were indicated by two dummy codes such that the mixed norm condition served as the referent for the positive and negative norm conditions (positive norm = 1, mixed norm = 0 and negative norm = 1, mixed norm = 0). In addition, we included whether the participant was born in the U.S. as a control variable (0 = born in the U.S., 1 = born outside of U.S.). The centered scores and dummy codes representing norm condition were then used to compute the two-way and three-way interaction terms. A preliminary model was run to identify participants who were outliers on Cook's *D* (see McClelland, 2000). Participants whose Cook's *D* score was greater than two standard deviations from the mean were excluded from subsequent analyses ($n = 9$, 2% of total sample, reduced sample $n = 388$).

Predictor variables were entered into the regression equation in three steps. In the first step, main effects were entered into the model along with the dummy variable indicating whether a participant was born in the U. S. In the second step, all two-way interactions were added, and in the final step, the variables representing the three-way interaction between social norm condition, humanitarianism, and the authoritarian predisposition were added to test our key hypotheses. Results from the omnibus test of the regression model appear in Table 1. Results from the simple slope analyses based on the omnibus 3-way regression model appear in Fig. 1.

Omnibus regression

The overall model accounted for a significant amount of variance in attitudes toward immigrants, $R^2 = .11$, $F(12, 375) = 3.94$, $p < .01$. The main effects accounted for a significant amount of the variance in the model, $R^2 \Delta = .07$, $F \Delta(5, 382) = 5.68$, $p < .01$. Among the main effects, the authoritarian predisposition was a significant predictor of attitudes, such that more authoritarian tendencies were related to less positive attitudes toward immigrants. The two-way interactions did not account for a significant amount of additional variance in the model ($R^2 \Delta = .02$, *ns*), but the addition of the three-way interaction terms

Table 1

Omnibus regression analyses of authoritarianism, humanitarianism, and perceived social norms predicting attitudes toward immigrants.

Step	Immigrants	
	β (SE)	$R^2 \Delta$
Step 1		.07**
Child-rearing values (CRV; authoritarianism-proxy)	-.23 (.05)**	
Humanitarianism (H)	.08 (.07)	
Positive norm condition (PN)	.10 (.12)	
Negative norm condition (NN)	.06 (.12)	
U.S. born?	.03 (.13)	
Step 2		.02
CRV	-.20 (.08)*	
H	.11 (.12)	
PN	.10 (.12)	
NN	.07 (.12)	
U.S. born?	.02 (.13)	
CRV \times H	-.01 (.07)	
CRV \times PN	.00 (.11)	
CRV \times NN	-.03 (.11)	
H \times PN	.08 (.17)	
H \times NN	-.13 (.17)	
Step 3		.02**
CRV	-.20 (.08)*	
H	.04 (.12)	
PN	.08 (.12)	
NN	.07 (.12)	
U.S. born?	.02 (.13)	
CRV \times H	.16 (.10)*	
CRV \times PN	.01 (.11)	
CRV \times NN	-.03 (.11)	
H \times PN	.12 (.17)	
H \times NN	-.09 (.17)	
CRV \times H \times PN	-.20 (.16)**	
CRV \times H \times NN	-.12 (.16)^	
Total R^2		.11**

^a $p = .06$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Notes. $N = 388$; born in U.S. = 0, not born in U.S. = 1; positive norm condition (PN) = 1; negative norm condition (NN) = 1; mixed norm condition PN = 0 and NN = 0; continuous variables centered.

resulted in a significant increase in the model's predictive power, $R^2 \Delta = .02$, $F \Delta(2, 375) = 4.69$, $p < .01$. Both of the three-way interaction terms were significant or nearly significant, child-rearing values (CRV; authoritarianism proxy) \times Humanitarianism (H) \times Positive norm, $\beta = -.20$, $p < .01$; CRV \times H \times Negative norm, $\beta = -.12$, $p = .06$. Thus, as predicted, attitudes toward immigrants varied as a function of authoritarian predisposition, perceived norms, and humanitarian values endorsement.

Exploring the 3-way interaction

We probed the nature of the 3-way interactions by exploring whether authoritarianism and humanitarianism interacted to predict attitudes within each norm condition. For each norm condition, we ran a restricted regression model in which the same main effects from the omnibus regression were entered in Step 1 and the CRV \times H interaction term was entered in Step 2 to predict attitudes. These restricted 2-way interaction models allowed us to determine whether the pattern of results within each condition supported our hypotheses. Then, simple slope analyses based on the omnibus regression results estimated the strength of the relation between authoritarianism and attitudes toward immigrants among those who endorsed (1 SD above the mean) and did not endorse (1 SD below the mean) humanitarian values. These simple slopes were calculated for each of the norm conditions and are shown in Fig. 1.

In general, one expects authoritarians to exhibit negative attitudes toward outgroups, and this classic pattern was found in the negative norm condition. In the restricted regression model, the main effects accounted for a significant amount of the variance in the model, $R^2 \Delta = .08$, $F \Delta(3, 131) = 3.58$, $p < .05$, but the addition of the CRV \times H

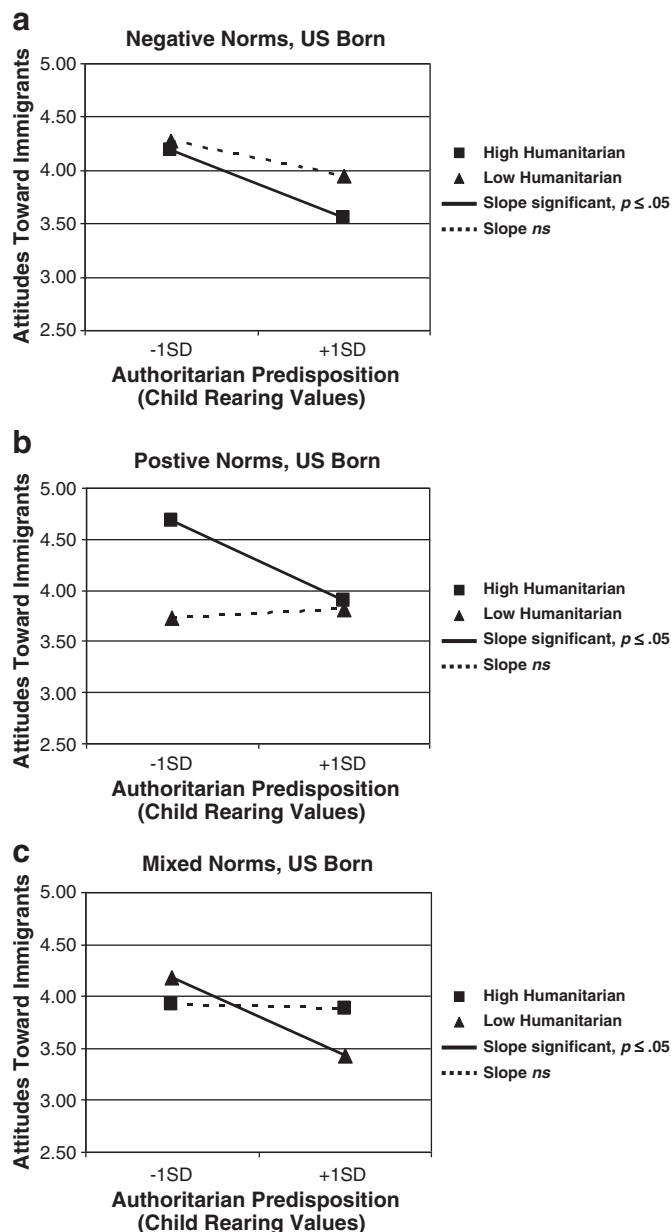


Fig. 1. Estimated regression lines between non-authoritarian (–1 SD) and authoritarian (+1 SD) predisposition and attitude toward immigrants at low (–1 SD) and high (+1 SD) levels of humanitarianism endorsement in the (a) negative norm, (b) positive norm, and (c) mixed norm conditions. Higher attitude scores = more favorable attitudes toward legal immigrants.

interaction did not. Of the main effects, only CRV was a significant predictor of attitudes, $\beta = -.24$, $p < .01$. These findings were consistent with the prediction that clear unfavorable social norms toward an outgroup allow authoritarians' tendency toward outgroup derogation to be freely expressed. Simple slope analyses illustrate this finding. In the negative norm condition, authoritarianism was negatively related to attitudes for those high in humanitarian endorsement, $\beta = -.25$, $p < .05$. Authoritarianism was unrelated to attitudes for those lower in humanitarian endorsement, $\beta = -.14$, ns , but the trend was in the predicted direction. Consistent with Hypothesis 1, regardless of their endorsement of humanitarianism, authoritarians in the negative norm condition held less favorable views of immigrants, $M_{estimated} = 3.75$, compared to non-authoritarians, $M_{estimated} = 4.23$.

We also found qualified support for Hypothesis 2: the prediction that positive social norms can attenuate authoritarians' tendency to derogate outgroups. In the restricted regression model, the main effects accounted for a significant amount of the variance in the model, $R^2 \Delta = .12$, $F \Delta (3, 122) = 5.67$, $p < .01$, as did the addition of the $CRV \times H$ interaction term, $R^2 \Delta = .03$, $F \Delta (1, 121) = 4.49$, $p < .05$. The significant main effects of CRV and H were qualified by the significant $CRV \times H$ interaction, $\beta = -.18$, $p < .05$. Examination of the simple slope analyses clarifies the nature of this unpredicted interaction (see Fig. 1). The simple slope analyses showed the hypothesized authoritarianism–attitude relationship for those who did not endorse humanitarianism: authoritarianism was unrelated to attitudes, $\beta = .00$, ns . In other words, there was evidence for the attenuation of outgroup derogation among authoritarians who did not endorse humanitarianism.

Contrary to our expectations, however, authoritarianism was negatively related to attitudes among participants who endorsed humanitarianism, $\beta = -.30$, $p < .01$. Inspection of the simple slopes in Fig. 1 suggest that the negative relationship is largely driven by humanitarian non-authoritarians' extremely positive intergroup attitudes ($M_{estimated} = 4.68$), rather than by a lack of the predicted attenuation among authoritarians. Authoritarians who did and did not endorse humanitarian values and non-authoritarians who did not endorse humanitarian values were essentially equivalent in their attitudes toward immigrants after exposure to positive norms ($M_{estimated} = 3.90$, 3.81 , and 3.73 , respectively). The effect of positive norms on the authoritarianism–humanitarianism dynamic is not as straightforward as we expected, but there was some qualified support for Hypothesis 2 in that positive norms can attenuate intolerance for non-humanitarian authoritarians.

Hypothesis 3, which concerned the mixed norm situation in which authoritarians are unable to use clear social norms to guide their evaluations, received strong support in the simple slope analyses. We predicted that in the case of ambiguous social norms, endorsement of humanitarian attitudes would attenuate authoritarians' tendencies toward outgroup derogation. In the restricted regression model, the main effects accounted for a significant amount of the variance in the model, $R^2 \Delta = .07$, $F \Delta (3, 123) = 3.16$, $p < .05$, and the addition of the $CRV \times H$ interaction term resulted in a marginal increase in predictive power, $R^2 \Delta = .02$, $F \Delta (1, 122) = 3.17$, $p = .08$. The significant main effect of CRV was qualified by the marginally significant $CRV \times H$ interaction, $\beta = .17$, $p = .08$. In the mixed norm condition, authoritarianism was unrelated to attitudes for those high in humanitarian endorsement, $\beta = -.13$, ns , and the estimated attitudes for authoritarian and non-authoritarians who endorsed humanitarianism were in the “favorable” range ($M_{estimated} = 3.88$ – 3.92 , respectively), which is consistent with the attenuation prediction. In contrast, authoritarianism was negatively related to attitudes for those low in humanitarian endorsement, $\beta = -.33$, $p < .01$. Attitudes of authoritarians who did not endorse humanitarian values and had no countervailing clear social norm displayed the most negative attitudes toward immigrants ($M_{estimated} = 3.43$) in these analyses.

Discussion

Using an experimental method in which we manipulated perceived social norms, and operationalizing authoritarianism as childrearing beliefs, we tested 3 hypotheses derived from our model integrating authoritarianism, social norms, and values. We found clear support for Hypothesis 1: when social norms are thought to be negative toward immigrants, authoritarianism is negatively related to attitudes about immigrants, at all levels of humanitarianism endorsement. We also found clear support for Hypothesis 3: when social norms are mixed toward immigrants, authoritarianism and endorsement of humanitarian values interact to predict attitudes toward immigrants in ways that can attenuate authoritarians' tendency to derogate outgroups. Our results partially supported Hypothesis 2. We found that when participants were told

that social norms toward immigrants were positive, non-humanitarian authoritarians' intolerance toward immigrants was attenuated as our model predicted. However, among participants high in humanitarianism, the extremely positive attitudes of non-authoritarians produced an unanticipated negative relationship between authoritarianism and attitudes. Our confidence in this model is bolstered by the current investigation and by its having been tested using multiple methodologies (archival, correlational, experimental), multiple samples (Minnesota undergraduates, nationally representative sample, California representative sample), and multiple target groups (immigrants, African Americans, homosexuals) (Fisher et al., 2006; Oyamoto et al., 2006). Moreover, the unexpected finding that positive norms produced especially positive attitudes among humanitarian non-authoritarians suggests some interesting avenues for future research.

The present investigation has several significant strengths. First, we went a step beyond our prior correlational work to experimentally manipulate participants' perceptions of normative attitudes toward one group: recent immigrants to the United States. This method allowed us to determine whether differences in perceptions of norms can *cause* changes in the ways that authoritarians evaluate outgroups. Second, this experiment was conducted on a large, representative sample of adults from the state of California. Going beyond the typical college student population enhances our confidence that the dynamics articulated in our model apply to authoritarians in general. Third, the relatively brief manipulation we used in this telephone survey highlights the possible malleability of authoritarian attitudes, at least when it comes to groups for which social norms may in fact be fluid and uncertain. Furthermore, our results suggest a more nuanced version of Altemeyer's (1996) idea that authoritarians tend to interpret descriptive norms as implying a prescriptive guide for thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Perceived negative norms produced the expected negative authoritarian attitude toward immigrants. However the effects of perceived positive norms on authoritarian attitudes were not as straightforward. It may be that authoritarians as a whole are more attentive to, and influenced by, information they perceive to be threatening. Fourth, we used a measure of authoritarian predisposition that is less conflated with the types of attitudes and behaviors that authoritarianism is thought to predict (Federico et al., *in press*; Hetherington & Weiler, 2009; Stenner, 2005).

One particularly interesting feature of this study was the examination of "humanitarian authoritarian" attitudes. The combination might be counter-intuitive, but because authoritarians gravitate to traditional values and humanitarianism is one dominant traditional value system in the U.S., it was at least theoretically possible that the two orientations could coexist. Our previous work examined the broader humanitarian–egalitarian value spectrum. The current study suggests that endorsement of humanitarian principles may be sufficient in reining in authoritarian intolerance, under certain circumstances; embracing egalitarianism or a combination of the two orientations is not necessary to see an attenuation of authoritarians' inclination toward intolerance. As in our previous research, endorsement of humanitarian values and the authoritarian predisposition was unrelated, indicating that humanitarian authoritarians can and do exist. Further, we found that in the absence of clear, strong social norms, endorsement of this value system attenuated authoritarians' propensity toward outgroup derogation. In contrast, authoritarians who did not endorse humanitarian values and who were led to believe that no clear societal consensus about immigrants existed showed the most negative attitudes in our sample. Importantly, this pattern of interaction was observed *only among participants who were provided with an unclear social norm*. When faced with the ambivalence inherent in the mixed social norm condition, people turn to other sources of information such as their personal values in order to determine their attitude, and it is in this condition that humanitarianism has the predicted moderating effect on authoritarian intolerance. Because in this study we directly manipulated norms, we can have confidence that changes in the pattern of relationship

between authoritarian predisposition, humanitarian values, and attitudes toward the outgroup were the result of unclear norms, rather than pre-existing differences in attitude. It seems that norms and humanitarian values can serve as a countervailing force against authoritarian tendencies toward outgroup derogation, and in their absence these tendencies become unchecked.

Another finding of interest was that positive norms can attenuate non-humanitarian authoritarians' intolerance, but that there may be limits in their ability to promote actual embracement of outgroups. One aspect of authoritarians is that they are threat-sensitive (Feldman & Stenner, 1997), thus negative norm information is likely to be more influential than positive norm information. Contrary to our model's original predictions, we found that positive norms resulted in particularly positive attitudes for humanitarian non-authoritarians. This finding is consistent with recent authoritarianism theorizing and research that attends as much to attitude change among people *low* in authoritarianism as those high in the predisposition. Hetherington and Weiler (2009) argue that most attitude change will occur among non-authoritarians, because such individuals' responses to threat present in the environment are more varied. While authoritarians may perceive recent immigrants to the U.S. as inherently threatening to traditional American values and cultural practices, non-authoritarians may require more specific information about immigrants in order to conclude that a threat is present. Positive norm information may have had an especially strong impact on non-authoritarians' attitudes in our study because non-authoritarians do not automatically regard immigrants and immigration as a threat. These findings speak to the importance of considering *both* ends of the authoritarian spectrum as the product of motivated social cognition: authoritarians and non-authoritarians likely exhibit different patterns of attitudes and behavior as a result of differences in their core motivations. Because so much prior research (including our own) has focused predictions on the psychological dynamics of authoritarians, less is known about how non-authoritarians are affected by their predispositions. Our results suggest that further inquiry into the psychological dynamics of non-authoritarians could be a useful endeavor. Incorporating motivational considerations and additional situational features, such as threat, into our theoretical model would also be a fruitful direction for future theorizing and research.

Future directions

The model advanced in this paper suggests several other avenues for future research on authoritarianism, values, and prejudice. First, the findings of this study reinforce the importance of social norms in the perpetuation of negative attitudes toward outgroups and suggest applications for influencing authoritarians. Several intriguing implications and questions remain. For example, under certain circumstances or for some authoritarians, can tolerant attitudes be fostered? A clear unfavorable norm toward a group is likely to facilitate authoritarians' tendency toward intolerance. But our results also suggest that tolerant norms and values may disrupt the process of outgroup derogation among authoritarians. Furthermore, these norms may not need to be extremely positive to affect change in authoritarians' attitudes; ambiguous norms coupled with making salient personally held tolerant American values can also alter intolerant reactions, at least for a subset of authoritarians. Research should continue to address methods for changing norms at the institutional and individual perception levels in order to disrupt authoritarians' tendency toward outgroup aggression. A wonderful example of a persuasive argument that could appeal to authoritarians can be found in an op-ed article by Jeb Bush and Robert Putnam, in which they highlight the long-standing American tradition of initial intolerance of immigrants, followed by acceptance and transformation of what it means to be American (Bush & Putnam, 2010; also see Fisher, Deason, Borgida, & Oyamoto, 2011 for a discussion of how our model may apply to the debate surrounding Arizona's SB1070).

Future research should also examine the boundaries of our model. We have focused on immigrants as the target group because contemporary attitudes toward immigrants appear to be mixed and ambiguous (Jones, 2000; Pew Research Center, 2006; PollingReport.com, 2010; Simon & Lynch, 1999). As a result, we were able to make believable claims that attitudes were positive, negative, or mixed, and we found clear support for the model's predictions. It remains to be seen whether norms and personal values that promote tolerance would be sufficient to alter authoritarians' attitudes toward groups for whom there are pre-existing strong negative (or positive) social norms. Another aspect for further study is whether humanitarianism is unique in its ability to moderate authoritarians' intolerant disposition. We focused on humanitarianism because (a) its status as a core, traditional American values system would increase the likelihood that some authoritarians would embrace it, and (b) endorsing its tenets meant accepting a fundamental connection among all humans, which may be a particularly potent tonic for intolerance. It may be that other factors that encourage a similar orientation (e.g., empathy, universalism, benevolence) would have an ameliorating effect on authoritarian intolerance. Future studies should aim to draw the boundaries – wide or narrow – for the model we have articulated.

Another area of interest would be to examine one of the key groups in our study: authoritarians who also endorse humanitarianism. How do these authoritarians differ from those who do not subscribe to this conventional American value? How deeply held are their humanitarian beliefs? Do they experience ambivalence or dissonance when these opposing tendencies are activated? Research on this group may suggest other prejudice interventions that capitalize on the dynamics specified by our model to improve intergroup relations.

Finally, consistent with contemporary approaches in authoritarian research (e.g., Funke, 2005; Stenner, 2005), the findings we present here also point to the importance of considering the components of authoritarianism separately and examining the processes surrounding each as a way to reduce authoritarian aggression. One intriguing aspect of authoritarianism may be the potential for psychological tension or ambivalence amongst the predispositions: while authoritarians may tend to exhibit intolerance and aggression toward outgroups in many instances, our theoretical model suggests that they are also more likely than non-authoritarians to subscribe to social conventions, some of which encourage tolerance. Authoritarian conventionalism, therefore, may serve an important role in reducing authoritarians' prejudices. Further, pitting conventionalism against aggression may give insight into the dynamics of how authoritarians form new attitudes. Our findings indicate that authoritarians who also endorse conventional humanitarian values use those values to form attitudes when social norms are unclear. As described above, a fuller examination of attitude formation and the separate components of authoritarianism among authoritarians who also endorse humanitarian values would allow for a more nuanced and integrated understanding of authoritarianism and its effect on prejudice.

In conclusion, like others before it, this study provides evidence that prejudice is not inevitable – even for authoritarians. Elements of the situation in which authoritarians find themselves, like the normative attitudes that a society holds toward a group, can make a difference in whether authoritarians express prejudice (see Snyder & Ickes, 1985). These norms need not be overtly favorable toward all groups; ambiguity about the norms toward a group can set the stage for attenuating authoritarians' tendency toward outgroup aggression, but other countervailing forces may also need to be present. In our studies, the countervailing force was endorsement of humanitarianism, a core American value system. Authoritarians who also endorsed conventional humanitarian values used those values to guide their attitudes when social norms were unclear. This research suggests several fruitful avenues for prejudice reduction, and a need for greater research attention to the

individual components and situational moderators of authoritarianism. Further theorizing and research on authoritarianism will ensure that its crucial contributions to the social psychological study of prejudice continue for many years.

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