Do Threats Galvanize Authoritarians or Mobilize Non-Authoritarians? Experimental Tests from 19 European Societies

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Abstract

Authoritarian predispositions and contextual threats are both thought to result in intolerance and prejudice towards immigrants and other minorities. Yet there is considerable dispute as to how authoritarianism and threat interact to produce an "authoritarian dynamic." Some scholars argue that threats increase intolerance by "galvanizing" authoritarians. Others claim that authoritarians are always intolerant toward outgroups, with threat in-stead "mobilizing" non-authoritarians. Using experimental manipulations of immigrant cultural threat embedded in nationally-representative samples from 19 European societies, this study offers a test of these competing hypotheses. While we find some evidence for the "galvanizing" hypothesis, we find no evidence for the "mobilizing" hypothesis. The effects vary considerably across national samples however, with immigrants from Muslim societies being particularly likely to activate authoritarian predispositions. These findings show how the migration of culturally distinctive groups has the potential to activate authoritarian dispositions, thereby pushing the issue of immigration to the center of political debates.

Keywords: authoritarianism, cultural threat, public opinion, immigration, Europe

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Abstract

Authoritarian predispositions and contextual threats are both thought to result in intolerance and prejudice towards immigrants and other minorities. Yet there is considerable dispute as to how authoritarianism and threat interact to produce an "authoritarian dynamic." Some scholars argue that threats increase intolerance by "galvanizing" authoritarians. Others claim that authoritarians are always intolerant toward outgroups, with threat instead "mobilizing" non-authoritarians. Using experimental manipulations of immigrant cultural threat embedded in nationally-representative samples from 19 European societies, this study offers a test of these competing hypotheses. While we find some evidence for the "galvanizing" hypothesis, we find no evidence for the "mobilizing" hypothesis. The effects vary considerably across national samples however, with immigrants from Muslim societies being particularly likely to activate authoritarian predispositions. These findings show how the migration of culturally distinctive groups has the potential to activate authoritarian dispositions, thereby pushing the issue of immigration to the center of political debates.

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At times, immigrants and refugees are tolerated, accepted, and possibly even welcomed. Yet at other times, they are disliked and vilified. As little as a year or so may separate periods of tolerance from periods of hostility, suggesting – as Sniderman, Hagendoorn & Prior (2004, 35) put it – the "flash potential" of the issue of immigration (e.g., Dennison & Geddes, 2018; Ipsos MORI, 2017).

A theory that is particularly well-suited to explain the flash potential of anti-immigrant politics is the notion of the "authoritarian dynamic" (Stenner, 2005). Long associated with support for aggressive leadership, a valorization of the ingroup, and an intolerance of difference (Altemeyer, 1981; Feldman, 2003), authoritarianism has also been linked with anti-immigration sentiment (Cohrs & Stelzl, 2010; Dinesen, Klemmensen & Nørgaard, 2016; Ford, 2011; Newman, Hartman, Lown & Feldman, 2015; Pettigrew & Christ, 2007). Although it was originally conceived as a stable personality trait (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson & Sanford, 1950; Altemeyer, 1981), subsequent research contends that authoritarianism can be activated by threats to the social fabric (Feldman, 2003; Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Stenner, 2005). The combination of authoritarian dispositions – which are stable – and threats to cultural norms – which may arrive suddenly – allows this theory of the authoritarian dynamic to account for unexpected eruptions of intolerance.

There is, however, considerable controversy about how this dynamic works. Initial research argued that threats galvanize hostility and intolerance among those already predisposed towards authoritarianism (Feldman, 2003; Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Stenner, 2005; see also Lavine, Lodge, Polichak & Taber, 2002; Merolla & Zechmeister, 2009). More recent research contends, however, that threats instead mobilize intolerance among those who are not very authoritarian to begin with (Hetherington & Suhay, 2011; see also Hetherington & Weiler, 2009; Vasilopoulos, Marcus & Foucault, 2018). These theories suggest very different patterns of public

opinion change following rising threat perceptions: according to the "galvanizing" theory, flare-ups of prejudice are largely due to increased hostilities among a modestly-sized core group of authoritarians; according to the mobilizing theory it is the widening pool of intolerant individuals that is responsible (Sniderman et al., 2004). Determining whether the dynamic is a galvanizing or mobilizing one thus speaks to important questions about whether individuals who are not predisposed towards prejudice can be triggered into intolerance by particular threats.

Existing tests of these theories have been limited in several respects. They have relied almost exclusively on observational research designs despite the difficulties of testing interactive, causal theories without experimental manipulations (Hetherington & Suhay, 2011; Sniderman et al., 2004). Threat has furthermore been conceptualized and measured in ways that depart from the threats to social cohesion envisaged by Feldman and Stenner. Finally, despite the apparent universality of the theory of the authoritarian dynamic (Stenner, 2005), it has seldom been tested outside a single society – the United States.

This paper aims to provide a clearer test of the theory of the authoritarian dynamic by addressing these shortcomings. In particular, we examine how authoritarian values interact with cultural threat in shaping immigration attitudes in 19 European societies. Cultural threat is, moreover, experimentally manipulated by varying whether respondents were exposed to a more culturally familiar immigrant group or a more culturally distant one.

We find some support for the galvanizing theory, but no support for the mobilizing theory. To the extent that threat interacts with authoritarian values, it galvanizes authoritarians rather than mobilizes non-authoritarians. Yet we also find considerable variation across the 19 samples in the extent to which threat and authoritarianism interact. We show that this variation is associated with differences in outgroup characteristics, with immigrants from Muslim-majority societies being

particularly likely to provoke authoritarians.

The Authoritarian Dynamic

Scholars have long sought explanations for prejudice and intolerance in the stable bedrock of personality. Perhaps the most prominent example is the classic theory of the "authoritarian personality," which was originally described by Adorno et al. (1950) and later updated by Altemeyer (1981), who refined the concept, trimmed it of its psychodynamic interpretation, and renamed it "Right-Wing Authoritarianism" (RWA). Altemeyer (1981) also narrowed its focus, reducing Adorno et al's original nine components down to three: conventionalism, submission to strong leaders, and aggression toward outsiders.

Moreover, the three core components of RWA map neatly on to the attitudinal and behavioral consequences of the authoritarian personality. Authoritarians are more likely to prefer order and social control (Huddy, Feldman, Taber & Lahav, 2005), support dominant and aggressive leaders (McCann, 1997), and react with prejudice and intolerance toward outgroups (Altemeyer, 1981; Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Stenner, 2005). As such, Altemeyer's streamlined and updated concept of RWA has proved enormously popular with scholars of prejudice and intolerance.

Authoritarianism has, however, also long been associated with threat. The classic study of Sales (1973) demonstrated that behavioral expressions of authoritarianism become increasingly prevalent as contexts become more threatening (see also Doty, Peterson & Winter, 1991). Yet this finding sits uneasily alongside the conceptualization of authoritarianism as a dimension of personality. It is not clear how such a deeply-rooted disposition can be so easily shaped by variations in context.

A solution to this paradox was proposed by Feldman and Stenner (Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Feldman, 2003; Stenner, 2005). They distinguished authoritarianism from personality,

recasting the former as a core value that captures a tension between the conflicting desires of personal autonomy and social conformity (see also Duckitt & Sibley, 2009). The authoritarian end of this continuum is concerned with group order and stability, and therefore favors conformity to the rules and norms which allow order to emerge. The opposing end of the continuum – sometimes referred to as libertarianism – is concerned instead with individual freedoms, which are likely constricted by rules and social norms.

Feldman and Stenner then proposed an interactive relationship between authoritarianism and threat, on the one hand, and expressions of authoritarianism, on the other. In conditions of material abundance and social stability, the divide between authoritarians and non-authoritarians is not particularly large or salient. In times of adversity and conflict, however, the authoritarian desire for order is challenged. These threats "activate" authoritarian predispositions, with the result that authoritarians begin to diverge from non-authoritarians in their desire for order, conformity, and aggressive leadership.

There are two main advantages to this theory of the "authoritarian dynamic." First, it provides a more compelling theoretical foundation for the concept of authoritarianism, distinguishing it from related constructs such as conservatism (Feldman, 2003). Second, the specification of a fairly stable cluster of values acting in concert with contextual triggers allows the theory to account for the political potency – or "flash potential" (Sniderman et al., 2004, 35) – of prejudice and intolerance toward outgroups.

However, although the theory of the authoritarian dynamic has spurred a significant literature, scholars disagree regarding the details of how authoritarianism and threat interact. Some studies find similar results to Feldman and Stenner: threats increase prejudice and intolerance but especially for those subscribing to authoritarian values (Lavine et al., 2002; Merolla &

Zechmeister, 2009). Threats therefore "galvanize" authoritarians, to use the terminology of Sniderman et al. (2004). Others find instead that it is non-authoritarians (Hetherington & Suhay, 2011; Hetherington & Weiler, 2009) who are most susceptible to threat.[2] Threats therefore "mobilize" hostility among non-authoritarians, reducing the gap between them and authoritarians.

These conflicting conclusions may, however, be a result of limitations in measurement and design in existing studies. First, much of this literature is based on observational research designs (e.g., Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Feldman, 2003; Hetherington & Suhay, 2011; Hetherington & Weiler, 2009; Vasilopoulos et al., 2018), which can be problematical when testing causal propositions. Some scholars have instead used experimental methods (e.g., Lavine et al., 2002; Merolla & Zechmeister, 2009), but – with one exception (Stenner, 2005) – most use small convenience samples, which suffer from a higher likelihood of finding significant effects in the "wrong" direction (Gelman & Carlin, 2014). By contrast, our study makes use of an experiment fielded in the large-sample European Social Survey to provide a robust test of the authoritarian dynamic.

Second, varying conceptualizations and measures of threat have been used in existing research. Hetherington & Suhay (2011) focus on the physical threats posed by terrorism, as do Merolla & Zechmeister (2009). Vasilopoulos et al. (2018) use the emotions of anger and fear in place of threat (and liberal vs. conservative ideology as a proxy for authoritarianism). These appear to be fairly distinct from the threats to social cohesion and cultural norms proposed as activators of authoritarianism by Feldman (2003) and Stenner (2005).

[2] Relatedly, ideological liberals appear to be more sensitive to threats than conservatives (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski & Sulloway, 2003; Nail, McGregor, Drinkwater, Steele & Thompson, 2009; Vasilopoulos et al., 2018).

Finally, existing tests focus largely on the context of the United States (Vasilopoulos et al. (2018) use a French sample, and one of Merolla & Zechmeister (2009) samples are drawn from Mexico). Although the United States is not necessarily an unusual case, the effects of perceived threats to cultural norms are likely to vary substantially as cultures – and threats – vary. In addition, the concept of authoritarianism (Feldman, 2003) and the theory of the authoritarian dynamic (Stenner, 2005) are described by their protagonists in universal terms. Therefore, tests fielded in wider variety of contexts will provide significant insight into the generalizability of the authoritarian dynamic.

Opposition to Immigration

Opinions towards immigrants and immigration provide a useful testing ground for the theory of the authoritarian dynamic. Immigration has long been argued to be threatening to natives and it regularly features among the most salient political issues in many Western democracies (de Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2005; Dennison & Geddes, 2018; Ford, Jennings & Somerville, 2015; Newport, 2018). Perceived cultural threats posed by immigrants are particularly powerful in shaping native opposition to immigration (e.g., McLaren, 2003; Brader, Valentino & Suhay 2008; Ford, 2011; Sides & Citrin, 2007; Sniderman et al., 2004). Thus, immigrants are likely to be seen as alien and "different," threatening the social conformity authoritarians crave. Not surprisingly, authoritarianism has repeatedly been linked with anti-immigrant attitudes (e.g., Cohrs & Stelzl, 2010; Dinesen et al., 2016; Ford, 2011; Newman et al., 2015; Pettigrew & Christ, 2007).

Though the concept of "cultural threat" as used in existing research on the topic of attitudes to immigration may be somewhat vague (Kentmen-Cin & Erisen, 2017), immigrant origin is thought to be relevant, with immigrants from some parts of the world seen as "fitting in" to the host society better than others (Ford, 2011; Sniderman et al., 2004). In the European context, for

instance, European migrants are perceived as being less threatening than non-European migrants (Ford, 2011; Ford & Mellon, 2019; Hainmueller & Hangartner, 2013), and more generally, immigrants from Muslim countries are perceived as especially threatening to cultural norms (Adida, Laitin & Valfort, 2016; Azrout & Wojcieszak, 2017; Erisen & Kentmen-Cin, 2017; Kalkan, Layman, & Uslaner, 2009; Kentmen-Cin & Erisen, 2017; Noll, Poppe, & Verkuyten, 2010; Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2009; Strabac & Listhaug, 2008; cf., Strabac, Aalberg & Valenta, 2014; Helbing & Traunmüller, 2018).

The "galvanizing" and "mobilizing" versions of the authoritarian dynamic theory predict that authoritarians and non-authoritarians would react in different ways when they perceive a group of immigrants to be threatening to a society's cultural identity. The galvanizing theory, espoused by Feldman and Stenner, argues that it will be those individuals with the strongest needs for order and social conformity – i.e., the authoritarians – who react negatively to culturally distinctive migrants. Threats to cultural identity and norms trigger a larger anti-immigration backlash among authoritarians than for everyone else. The galvanizing theory would predict, therefore, that authoritarianism and cultural threat will show a positive interaction effect on opposition to immigration.

In contrast, the mobilizing theory claims that it is the individuals with the lowest levels of authoritarian values who would react most strongly to culturally distinctive migrants. As Hetherington & Suhay (2011) argue, authoritarians experience near-constant states of heightened threat and anxiety and thus would be expected to express consistent levels of intolerance regardless of threat level. Threats to cultural identity and norms therefore mobilize non-authoritarians more than they galvanize authoritarians, leading to an anti-immigrant backlash among the former. The galvanizing argument would, therefore, predict that authoritarianism and cultural threat will show a negative interaction effect on opposition to immigration.

These differing predictions have important implications for the periodic advance of anti-immigration sentiment. If the galvanizing theory is correct, intolerance would generally be limited to authoritarians. Although the strength of their intolerance – and perhaps the salience with which they view the issue of immigration – grows, the pool of intolerant individuals does not expand by much. The mobilizing theory, in contrast, presents the possibility that this pool might expand as threat increases, perhaps ultimately becoming large enough to form a significant electoral constituency.

Though it is expected that the theory of the authoritarian dynamic is generalizable to a wide variety of contexts, it is nevertheless important to acknowledge the varying immigration contexts across Europe that may affect how the dynamic operates in specific countries. In the past four decades, almost all European countries have experienced increased levels of migration, including economic migration and asylum seeking (see the migration data available at https://www.oecd.org/els/mig/keystat.htm). Historically, this experience has been extremely varied, with Southern Europe, Ireland, and Central and Eastern Europe (CEE; e.g., Poland, Hungary, and Czechia) initially not being prime destinations for migrants in the early post-war era. This began to change in the 1980s and 1990s, with Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Greece receiving large numbers of migrants from North Africa and CEE (Hollifield, 1997). In more recent years, Ireland and CEE have become important destinations for immigrants (Castles, Haas, & Miller, 2014). This varying experience with immigration could mean that the authoritarian dynamic could be expected to be weaker in these latter contexts, as the threat posed by immigrants is far newer and may have less resonance for most people (authoritarian or not) living in these countries; alternatively, this varying experience may mean that the authoritarian dynamic is stronger in the latter countries precisely because the threat of immigration is so new. That is, in older countries of immigration

(e.g., the UK, France, and Germany), immigrant-origin diversity may be such an accepted part of national social and political life that culturally distinct migrants simply no longer trigger the authoritarian dynamic.

However, at the time of the fielding of the experiment used in this paper's analyses, all of the European countries in the analysis shared the experience of mass immigration from outside of Europe, with the issue of immigration having become divisive in most countries, e.g., as evidenced by public opinion data on migration (e.g., Transatlantic Trends, 2013) and increased support for nativist political parties (Golder, 2016). We, therefore, expect the authoritarian dynamic to operate in all of the countries being analyzed.

We further expect this dynamic to be relevant everywhere because authoritarianism has typically been proposed to be a universal human psychological tendency which cuts across different societies and therefore different contexts. For example, Nunn, Crocket, and Williams (1978, 7) state that "every society inevitably confronts the problem of how much individual freedom is possible and how much social control is needed," while Feldman (2003, 47) posits that "the tension between the values of autonomy and social conformity may well be a universal aspect of living with other people." We therefore expect the authoritarian dynamic to operate in a similar fashion across national contexts.

Data and Methods

We investigate the theory of the authoritarian dynamic using nationally-representative survey samples from 19 European countries. These surveys were fielded in 2014 as part of the seventh round of the European Social Survey (ESS). Our interest in this survey stems from the inclusion of a survey experiment in the national samples. The experiment was designed to "test the relative contributions of economic threat and cultural/identity threat to opposition to migrants comparatively

and within individual nations" (European Social Survey, 2014). Economic threat was manipulated using an immigrant skill manipulation (professional vs. unskilled) while cultural threat was manipulated using an immigrant national origin manipulation (European vs. non-European origin). Respondents received both an immigrant skill and immigrant national origin treatment, in a 2 × 2 factorial design.

The experiment was fielded in 21 countries. However, in this paper we do not include the sample from Israel because its distinct immigration regime (which involves ethno-religious identity) means that the immigrant origin experiment is unlikely to manipulate cultural threat. We also exclude the Portuguese sample because initial findings indicate that its experimental manipulation did not manipulate cultural threat due to the specific choice of countries used in the manipulation: in particular, the use of Brazil as the culturally distinct non-European source of immigrants (Ford & Mellon, 2019). We analyze the remaining 19 national samples in this study.

Measuring Cultural Threat and Opposition to Immigration

We make use of the national origin (European vs. non-European country) manipulation to measure cultural threat. Respondents from each ESS sample country were randomly assigned to be asked about migrants from either (a) "a poor European country providing [the] largest number of migrants" to that sample country, or (b) "a poor country outside Europe providing [the] largest number of migrants" (European Social Survey, 2014, 1). The particular European and non-European countries employed in each national experiment (see Figure 1) were selected using three criteria: (1) stock – the size of the foreign-born population from this country; (2) flow – the size of recent inflows into the receiving country; and (3) United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) – immigrant sending countries have a substantially lower HDI than the receiving country (European Social Survey, 2014). The designers of the experiment defend this approach as follows: "The

origin countries were chosen to provide examples of culturally-similar European migrants and culturally dissimilar non-European migrants. … Allowing the reference group to vary between countries but selecting countries according to a consistent underlying logic/definition was done to ensure both the relevance of the item in each country and provide a basis for meaningful cross-country comparisons in attitudes" (European Social Survey, 2014, 1). Although the choice of European and non-European immigrant-sending countries varies in each national sample of the ESS, the designers of the experiment believe that their approach allows for an approximate "functional" equivalence of the immigrant origin treatments across the 19 countries (Ford & Mellon, 2018). The experimental vignette is worded as follows:

> Please tell me to what extent you think [country] should allow [professionals / unskilled labourers] from [poor European country providing largest number of migrants / poor country outside Europe providing largest number of migrants] to come to live in [country] – Allow many to come and live here; Allow some; Allow a few; Allow none.

For instance, respondents in Germany would have been asked about one of the following groups: professionals from Poland, unskilled laborers from Poland, professionals from Turkey or unskilled laborers from Turkey. Respondents in Poland would have been asked about professionals from Belarus, unskilled laborers from Belarus, professionals from Vietnam or unskilled laborers from Vietnam.[3]

[3] We have analyzed the effectiveness of randomization across all 19 national samples by testing whether the non-European and European immigrant origin treatment groups differ on seven variables, six being demographic factors (age, whether born in country, higher educated, female, an urban resident and religious) and one, an attitudinal variable (authoritarian values). The latter are

Our hypotheses focus on the impact of the national origin treatment on authoritarian attitudes to immigrant exclusion (see also Kentmen-Cin & Erisen (2017) and Azrout & Wojcieszak (2017)). By design the experiment pits immigrants from a more proximate cultural background to those from a more distal background. If more culturally distal immigrants share fewer cultural norms with natives than more culturally proximate immigrants – as seems likely – then the experiment provides a treatment of higher vs. lower cultural threat. It is precisely this kind of threat that is thought to play a galvanizing or mobilizing role in the various theories of the authoritarian dynamic.

Figure 1 here

The main effects of authoritarianism and the immigrant origin treatment on respondents' opposition to immigration are displayed in Figure 1. The figure reveals that the immigration origin experiment significantly increases opposition to immigration in 13 out of the 19 national samples. The average effect, pooled across national samples, is also positive and significant. European respondents, in other words, are usually more opposed to immigration when the immigrants in question are framed as non-European rather than European. The immigrant origin experiment does not

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of additional concern because the Portrait Values questions used for our measure of authoritarianism (see below) are fielded after the experimental manipulation. As Table A.4 in the online appendix shows, only 7 of the $19 \times 7 = 133$ comparisons show statistically significant differences between the immigrant origin treatment groups. This 5% rate of significance is exactly what we would expect with a 5% alpha level applied to data with random variation. Thus it appears that the experiment was effectively randomly assigned to respondents. We are grateful to an anonymous reviewer for pointing out this feature of the experimental design.

universally harden attitudes to immigration, suggesting variations in either the receiving country contexts or in the threat posed by particular immigrant-origin countries. Note that based on a visual inspection, the varying national experiences with immigration described above does not seem to be connected to whether the experiment "works" or not.[4]

Measuring Authoritarianism

The ESS includes the Portrait Value Questionnaire (PVQ), a 21-item battery designed to measure Schwartz's (1992) human values dimensions. Feldman (2003) demonstrates that several of these

[4] It is important to note that the experimental manipulation is subtle, which may mean the treatment is somewhat weak. In addition, the experiment comes after other questions about immigration. This may have primed "otherness," which may have dampened the overall experimental estimate by raising opposition to immigration in both treatment groups, i.e., a ceiling effect. However, as shown in Figure A1 in the online appendix, there does not appear to be such a ceiling effect: the proportions of the pooled sample who selected the response most opposed to immigration are modest (15% and 20%). Moreover, we compare responses to these experimental items with the closest non-experimental equivalent – a pair of questions that appear in all other ESSs asking whether respondents would allow people from the same race/ethnic group as the majority and whether respondents would allow people from different races/ethnic groups from the majority. The percentages selecting the responses most opposed to immigration in rounds 6 and 8 of the ESS are fairly similar to those shown in Figure A1: approximately 8-9% are most opposed to migrants from the same race or ethnic group and approximately 15-16% are most opposed to migrants from a different race or ethnic group. Importantly, this set of questions does not follow other questions about immigration (though four further immigration questions follow these).

items can be combined to form a valid and reliable measure of authoritarianism (see also Duckitt & Sibley, 2009; Norris & Inglehart, 2019). In particular, Feldman (2003) recommends combining the "conformity" and "tradition" value scales to measure "support for social conformity" and combining the "self-direction" and "stimulation" value scales to measure "support for personal autonomy." Because authoritarianism captures the trade-off between social conformity and personal autonomy, Feldman recommends subtracting the latter from the former. Doing so has the additional benefit of adjusting for respondent acquiescence bias, which is a noted issue with the PWQ (Cohrs, Moschner, Maes & Kielmann, 2005; Schwartz, 1992). Feldman then shows that the resulting authoritarian values scale correlates at 0.68 with Altemeyer's right-wing authoritarianism scale, which demonstrates its validity. Indeed, Feldman (2003) was sufficiently impressed by the PVQ measure of authoritarianism to add those items to the authoritarianism battery he had developed.

We follow Feldman's recommendations, but also include a fifth Schwartz value, security, in the social conformity scale because subsequent research has demonstrated its empirical linkages with authoritarianism (Cohrs et al., 2005; Feather & McKee, 2012; Norris & Inglehart, 2019). In sum, we use an additive scale of the six PVQ items corresponding to conformity, tradition, and security values to measure support for social conformity (Cronbach's alpha = 0.71), and an additive scale of the four items corresponding to self-direction and stimulation values to measure support for personal autonomy (Cronbach's alpha = 0.65). Finally, as per Feldman, we subtract the latter from the former to obtain our measure of authoritarian values.

Figure 1 shows the relationship between authoritarianism and opposition to immigration (as measured by the experimental question above). This figure reveals that authoritarian values are always associated with more restrictive attitudes towards immigrants (the underlying ordered

probit models include control variables which are described in the next sub-section). This is hardly surprising given extant research on the authoritarian hostility toward difference and diversity (Altemeyer, 1981; Cohrs & Stelzl, 2010; Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Newman et al., 2015; Pettigrew & Christ, 2007). It is also consistent with Davidov, Meuleman, Billiet & Schmidt (2008), who find a positive association between Schwartz's tradition and conformity values (which form the core of our authoritarianism scale) and opposition to immigration.[5]

Other Variables

Cultural threat, one of our independent variables, is experimentally manipulated and is therefore exogenous within country. In contrast, the other independent variable, authoritarianism, is measured observationally. Because the main and interaction effects of authoritarianism may be confounded by other factors, we include several control variables in our analyses.

The first control variable is another major dimension of values, which we call dominance values due to their conceptual overlap with Sidanius and Pratto's (1999) social dominance orientation (SDO). SDO has been shown to be strongly connected to prejudice (e.g., Esses, Dovidio,

[5] The Schwartz Portrait Value Questionnaire (PVQ) comes at the end of the ESS survey, raising the possibility that responses to the values items were influenced by the experiment. We, therefore, examined whether values vary across the two immigrant origin treatment groups (see Table A4 in the online appendix). In only one of the 19 samples (Norway) is there a significant difference, which is consistent with random variation and an alpha level of 0.05. Moreover, the estimated differences cluster around zero, with 10 of these being negative and nine being positive. We conclude that there is no evidence that the immigrant origin experiment exerted any influence on the authoritarianism values scale.

Jackson & Armstrong, 2001). Dominance values are measured using four of Schwartz's values from the ESS PVQ. As suggested by Schwartz (1996), to measure "self-transcendence," we combine the PVQ "universalism" and "benevolence" scales (five items; Cronbach's alpha = 0.73), and to measure "self-enhancement," we combine the "achievement" and "power scales" (four items; Cronbach's alpha = 0.73). Other scholars have demonstrated that self-transcendence is negatively correlated, and self-enhancement, positively correlated, with SDO (Feather & McKee, 2012; Cohrs et al., 2005). As such, we calculate dominance values by subtracting the former from the latter, as per the logic of Feldman (2003). Dominance values therefore measure the relative preference for personal status, power, and wealth versus solidarity, equality, and caring for others and the environment. Like SDO, dominance values are largely independent of authoritarianism (the correlation in the pooled dataset is −0.10)

We also include several demographic variables. These are: respondents' perceived financial comfort (a 4-point Likert scale), age (coded to a 4-category nominal variable), education (a 3-category nominal variable), employment status (a 3-category nominal variable), and dummy variables for gender, whether the respondent is born in country, speaks an official language (e.g., Dutch, French, or German in Belgium), is non-religious (i.e., identifies religion as "none"), and lives in an urban area. Descriptive statistics for all variables are provided in the Online Appendix.

Empirical Strategy

The ESS immigrant origin experiment randomly allocates respondents to experimental treatments, but non-randomly chooses which countries feature in those treatments. Indeed, as noted, the pair of immigrant origin countries are selected based on existing migration flows in the destination country. The design of the ESS immigrant origin experiment therefore introduces endogeneity at the level of country (although retaining an exogenous measure of threat within countries). We use

two methods in this paper to account for possible cross-national variation in the effects of the independent variables. First, we conduct our analyses separately by country, in effect treating the 19 country samples as separate experiments. Second, we apply multilevel models to the pooled sample, allowing the effects of the key variables to vary across countries. Since the dependent variable is an ordered factor, we furthermore use ordered probit regression models. Finally, all analyses are weighted using the design weights provided by the ESS.

Results

We present our results in three stages. First, we analyze the interaction effects (and marginal effects) of authoritarianism and cultural threat to verify whether the evidence supports either the galvanizing or mobilizing theories. Next, as robustness tests, we test whether other measures of values (dominance values and left-right ideology) and threat (economic threat) also produce a galvanizing effect. Finally, we examine the cross-country variance in the authoritarianism-threat marginal effects in an effort to understand the moderators of these relationships.

Interaction Effects of Authoritarianism and Cultural Threat

The theory of the authoritarian dynamic focuses on the interplay between authoritarian values and threat. This hypothesis is usually tested using an interaction between these variables (e.g., Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Hetherington & Suhay, 2011). We use the same specification, adding an interaction term between cultural threat (immigrant origin) and authoritarian values to a model which includes the main effects of these variables and the full set of control variables. Results are shown in Figure 2, with the first panel displaying the interaction effects.

Figure 2 here

Recall that Feldman and Stenner proposed a positive interaction, with threat galvanizing

authoritarians, while Hetherington and Suhay predicted a negative interaction as threat "mobilizes" non-authoritarians. Analyzing the effect separately by country, we find a positive and significant effect in seven of the 19 samples, a positive but insignificant effect in eight, and a negative but insignificant effect in four. In most of the 19 national experiments, there is no significant interaction between authoritarianism and cultural threat. However, to the extent that threat moderates the effect of authoritarianism, it galvanizes it. In none of our 19 samples does threat mobilize nonauthoritarians. Overall, averaging results across the 19 experiments while allowing the effects of the independent variables to vary across national contexts, we see a positive, galvanizing interaction between cultural threat and authoritarianism. We therefore find some support for Feldman and Stenner's galvanizing hypothesis but no support for Hetherington and Suhay's mobilizing theory.[6]

Further insight into the authoritarian dynamic can be gained by examining the marginal effects plots (second panel in Figure 2). Here we show the marginal effects of immigrant origin when authoritarianism is low (one standard deviation below the mean; hollow circles) or high (one standard deviation above the mean; filled circles). The cases are ordered by the magnitude of their interaction effect; as they descend on the y-axis, the effect of immigrant origin on immigration opposition gets larger among authoritarians compared to non-authoritarians. Indeed, the effects of the immigrant origin treatment are significantly positive among authoritarians in 14 of the 19 national samples, as well as in the pooled sample. In the remaining five national samples, the

[6] We have also fit a simplified multilevel model including only the main covariates of immigrant origin, authoritarianism, and their interaction. The average threat-authoritarianism interaction effect is 0.079 (S.E.: 0.016) in this simplified model, which is virtually identical to that (0.080; S.E.: 0.018) produced by the full model. See Table A.2 (Model 3) in the online appendix.

marginal effects are insignificant. The effects are usually also positive (albeit not always significantly so) among non-authoritarians, which indicates the strength of the immigrant origin treatment.

Robustness tests

Feldman and Stenner's theory of the authoritarian dynamic holds that it is threats to *cultural norms* that activate *authoritarian values*. To further test this hypothesis, we examine whether galvanizing effects can be found using other measures of threat and other measures of values. Evidence of either type would undermine the case for the galvanizing theory. Contrariwise, if no such results obtain, the evidence for the theory of the authoritarian dynamic is strengthened. These analyses therefore function as placebo tests.

Figure 3 here

Our first placebo test examines whether economic threats – in the guise of immigrants presented as unskilled laborers vs. professionals – might also galvanize authoritarians. Figure 3 presents the results of ordered probit models that include interactions between immigrant skill and authoritarianism. As before, the interaction effects are presented in the first panel, with the marginal effects of immigrant skill in the second. It is clear that there is no overall interaction between immigrant skill and authoritarianism. The average effect is virtually zero. Only two of the national-sample effects are significantly different from zero, with one negative (Slovenia) and the other positive (the UK). There is therefore little evidence – aside from the UK sample – that threats posed by unskilled immigrants activate authoritarian predispositions.

For our second placebo test, we interact the immigrant origin treatment with two alternative measures of respondent dispositions: dominance values and left-right ideological positions (e.g., Vasilopoulos et al., 2018). In results presented in the online supplementary materials, we show

that both the dominance-threat and ideology-threat interaction effects are, on average, very small and entirely insignificant. These results confirm that it is authoritarian values in particular that are activated by cultural threats, consistent with Feldman and Stenner's theory of the authoritarian dynamic.

Both placebo tests therefore confirm that the galvanizing effects we have observed are largely confined to individuals with authoritarian values who are presented with threats to cultural norms. It does not appear to be the case that other kinds of threats interact with socio-political values besides authoritarianism. Therefore, the evidence we find appears to be a manifestation of the authoritarian-dynamic theory rather than a more general tendency for values to interact with threats. Moreover, the fact that other threats and values do not interact indicates that studies that use these alternative measures as proxies for cultural threat (e.g., Hetherington & Weiler, 2009) or authoritarian values (e.g., Vasilopoulos et al., 2018) may not be adequately testing the theory of the authoritarian dynamic.

The Conditioning Effect of Immigrant Origin Country Factors

The evidence is not wholly in favor of the galvanizing theory, however. There is considerable variance in the authoritarianism-threat interaction effects, with many of these insignificant. In this section, we explore why there might be such variation. Our focus is on variation induced by the country dyads produced by the ESS immigrant origin experiment, with different national samples receiving different immigrant origin country treatments. To examine country dyad sources of variation in the authoritarianism-threat interactions, we calculate the marginal effects of authoritarian values when immigrants are presented either as European or non-European. Note that these marginal effects differ from those reported in Figure 2. There, we examined the effects of immigrant origin when authoritarianism was either high or low; now we examine the effects of

authoritarianism when immigrant origin is either European or non-European. We then model these 38 marginal effects as the dependent variable in an OLS regression. This allows us to investigate the sources of the link between authoritarianism and opposition to immigration in all 38 sample-immigrant origin country dyads (presented in Figure 1).

As independent variables in this OLS regression, we include measures of several features of the immigrant origin countries. In particular, we include two indicators of potential cultural threat: (1) whether the origin country population is Muslim majority and (2) linguistic distance. We also include a measure of potential economic threat posed by each migrant group.

Our Muslim majority country variable captures the likelihood of an immigrant from a particular country being Muslim, a group that many Europeans find particularly threatening, as mentioned above. The underlying data on the sizes of national religious communities come from the "Global Religious Futures" project run by the Pew Research Center (http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/). We dichotomize these data because almost all country-dyads had either very low (approaching 0) or very high (approaching 1) Muslim population proportions.

Linguistic distance, our second variable, may capture cultural difference relevant to the activation of authoritarian values; it measures the number of changes in pronunciation required between a pair of languages, across a list of basic words – a method known as "lexicostatistics". Under the assumption that linguistic differences mirror historical population divisions, linguistic distance measures the cultural drift between two societies (see Fearon, 2003; Spolaore & Wacziarg, 2016). Specifically, we use data on squared linguistic distances between all world languages provided by the Automated Similarity Judgment Program (ASJP; https://asjp.clld.org/).

Finally, potential economic threat is measured using the log of GDP per capita for each migrant sending country (GDP per capita estimated in 2014 by the International Monetary Fund

using purchasing power parity adjustments). This allows us to examine whether the varying levels of development evident in the list of immigrant origin countries influences the threat felt by respondents.

The results are presented in Table 1. The Muslim majority dummy variable alone accounts for a substantial proportion of the variance (30%) in the marginal effects of immigrant origin. The coefficient is significant and positive, indicating that authoritarians become more opposed to immigration (compared with non-authoritarians) to the extent that immigrants are perceived as originating in a Muslim majority country. Muslim migrants therefore appear to be particularly likely to activate authoritarian dispositions. This is consistent with existing research highlighting the significant threat to the values, norms and worldview of natives presented by Muslims in many European countries (Adida et al., 2016; Azrout & Wojcieszak, 2017; Kentmen-Cin & Erisen, 2017; Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2009; Strabac & Listhaug, 2008; cf., Strabac et al., 2014; Helbing & Traunmüller, 2018). Neither linguistic distance nor GDP per capita has a significant effect. Adding country fixed effects to control for sample country characteristics (Model 1.2) does not greatly alter the relationship between authoritarian marginal effects and Muslim population share. Country fixed effects do add considerably to model fit however, suggesting that idiosyncrasies in each sample country underpin a fair proportion of variance in authoritarian-threat interactions.

Figure 4 here

We then confirm these results using a simpler method (e.g., Sides & Citrin, 2007): plotting the 38 marginal effects of authoritarianism by the two measures of cultural threat, Muslim majority and linguistic distance. Figure 4 confirms the findings of Table 1. The Muslim share of the immigrant origin country population is positively correlated with the effect of authoritarianism on immigrant opposition. The correlation between linguistic distance and immigrant opposition is much

weaker (and is not significantly greater than 0).

In sum, this analysis shows that variability in the effects of the authoritarian dynamic are partly due to features of both immigrant origin countries and the sample countries. In particular, if immigrants originate in Muslim majority countries, authoritarianism becomes more charged, exerting a more powerful influence on immigration preferences. However, cultural difference per se – as measured by linguistic distances – plays little to no role in enhancing or dampening the effects of authoritarianism.

Conclusion

Existing research emphasizes the significant consequences of authoritarianism for prejudice and intolerance of minorities (Altemeyer, 1981; Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Stenner, 2005), including prejudice against immigrant-origin minorities (e.g., Cohrs & Stelzl, 2010; Newman et al., 2015; Ford, 2011; Pettigrew & Christ, 2007). Our findings similarly show that authoritarians are more likely than non-authoritarians to reject new immigrants in all 19 European societies we examine. However, our results also demonstrate that the extent of negative reaction to new migrants varies significantly depending on the specific threat presented, with authoritarian opposition to new migrants actually increasing – in some but not all of our national samples – when the immigrants are culturally distinct. Culturally distinct immigrants thus have the potential to activate authoritarian values, galvanizing hostility and resistance to immigration. Although it might have been expected that authoritarians would be consistently negative about all forms of migration and that the response of non-authoritarians would vary depending on the level of threat (e.g., building on the arguments developed by Hetherington & Suhay (2011)), we find no evidence to support this proposition. Thus, for scholars and policymakers concerned about intolerance against target groups being activated among wider populations, our results indicate that this is unlikely to be the case.

Rather, if anything, it is individuals with authoritarian predispositions who become more intolerant in the face of threats to social conformity.

Indeed, our findings suggest very different policies to ameliorate immigration-related tension than those being pursued in some European countries. Namely, policies that focus on reducing the normative threat felt by authoritarians may be more effective at reducing hostility than more blanket-approach immigration policies such as a wholesale reduction in immigration. Not only may these be unnecessary for non-authoritarian individuals, but such policies are also damaging to wider societal needs (e.g., filling labor shortages in health care services).

These results also provide some insight into how cultural threats and authoritarianism together shape the politics of immigration. While research on attitudes to immigrants suggests that "situational triggers" may prompt an increase in anti-immigrant prejudice and that the trigger of cultural threat is particularly powerful (Sniderman et al., 2004), our study indicates that such triggers may, in fact, have variable effects. The strong need for conformity on the part of those with authoritarian predispositions (Feldman, 2003; Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Stenner, 2005) makes these individuals more likely to react negatively when presented with potential threats to conformity. Culturally distinct migrants present precisely such a threat.

Our study may also shed light on how migration can lead to substantial increases in support for far-right anti-immigration parties. Our analysis of the variation in the authoritarianism-immigrant origin interactions suggests that migrants from Muslim countries are particularly likely to galvanize authoritarians. Increases in the numbers of such migrants – or even the potential threat of increases (for instance during the Syrian refugee crisis) – may suddenly activate authoritarian predispositions, prompting a surge in the salience of the issue of immigration, and increased voting for the far-right (e.g. Dennison & Geddes, 2018). These findings rest, however, on observational

analysis of a small sample of 38 country dyads, and therefore require further investigation.

We also emphasize that our main finding, that threat galvanizes authoritarians, does not hold in all societies. In twelve of the national samples, there is no significant authoritarianism-threat interaction. This suggests that the link between authoritarianism and cultural threat requires greater investigation. Perhaps the galvanizing effect of threat would be more noticeable if one were to examine behavioral rather than attitudinal hostility to immigration. Alternatively, future research might further consider which contextual factors are likely to produce the threats to social conformity which activate the authoritarian dispositions of native citizens. The broader question of how the authoritarian-threat dynamic plays out in the realm of immigration politics – particularly in terms of individual behavior – is another avenue for further research. For instance, how does this dynamic impact voting behavior and the rise of anti-immigration parties? Moreover, does the rhetoric of these parties create the threat that is necessary for the authoritarian dynamic? And to what extent does education – known to be important in producing a "sober second thought" in the realm of tolerance (e.g. Bobo & Licari, 1989) – moderate the strength of the authoritarian dynamic?

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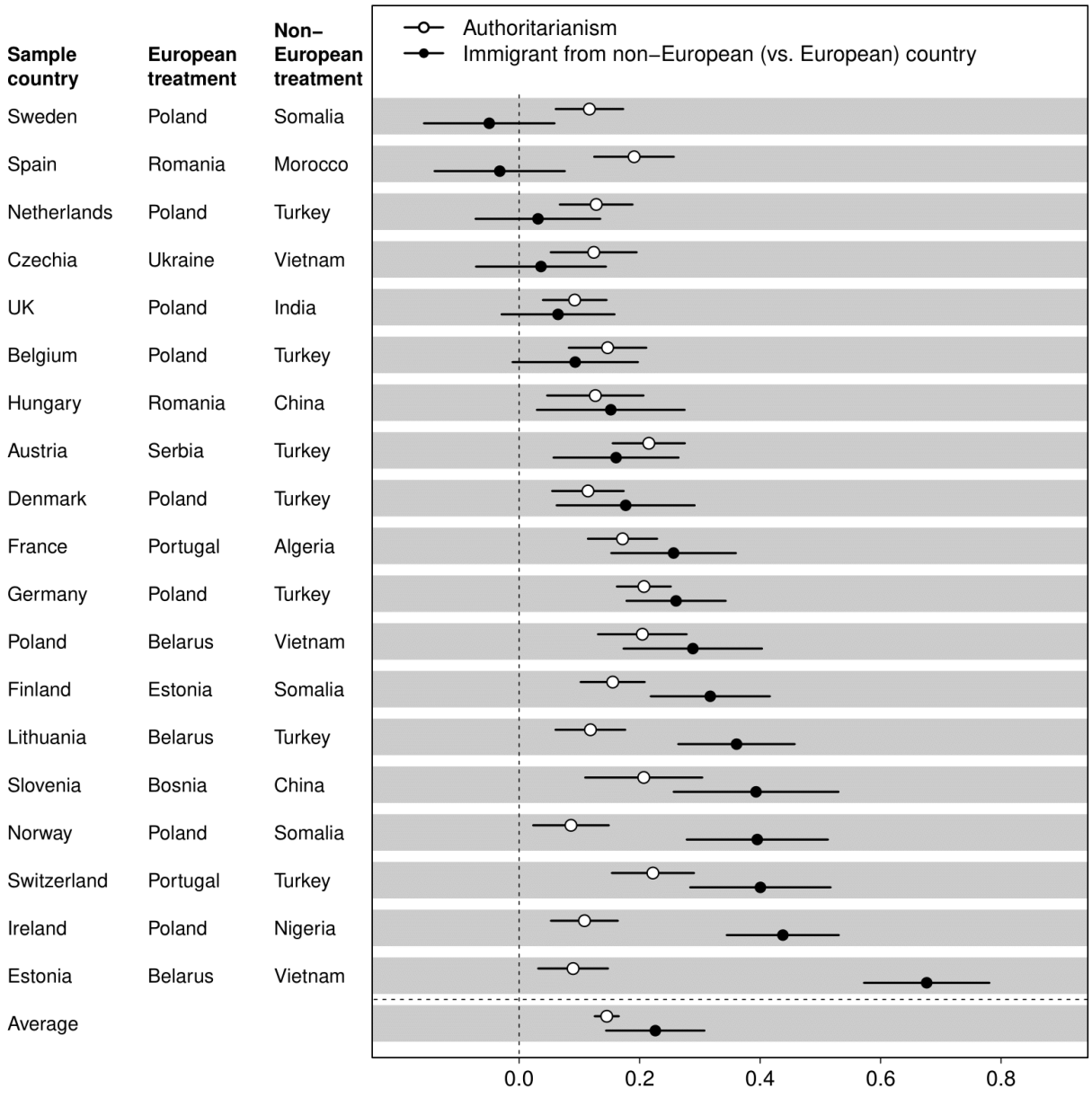
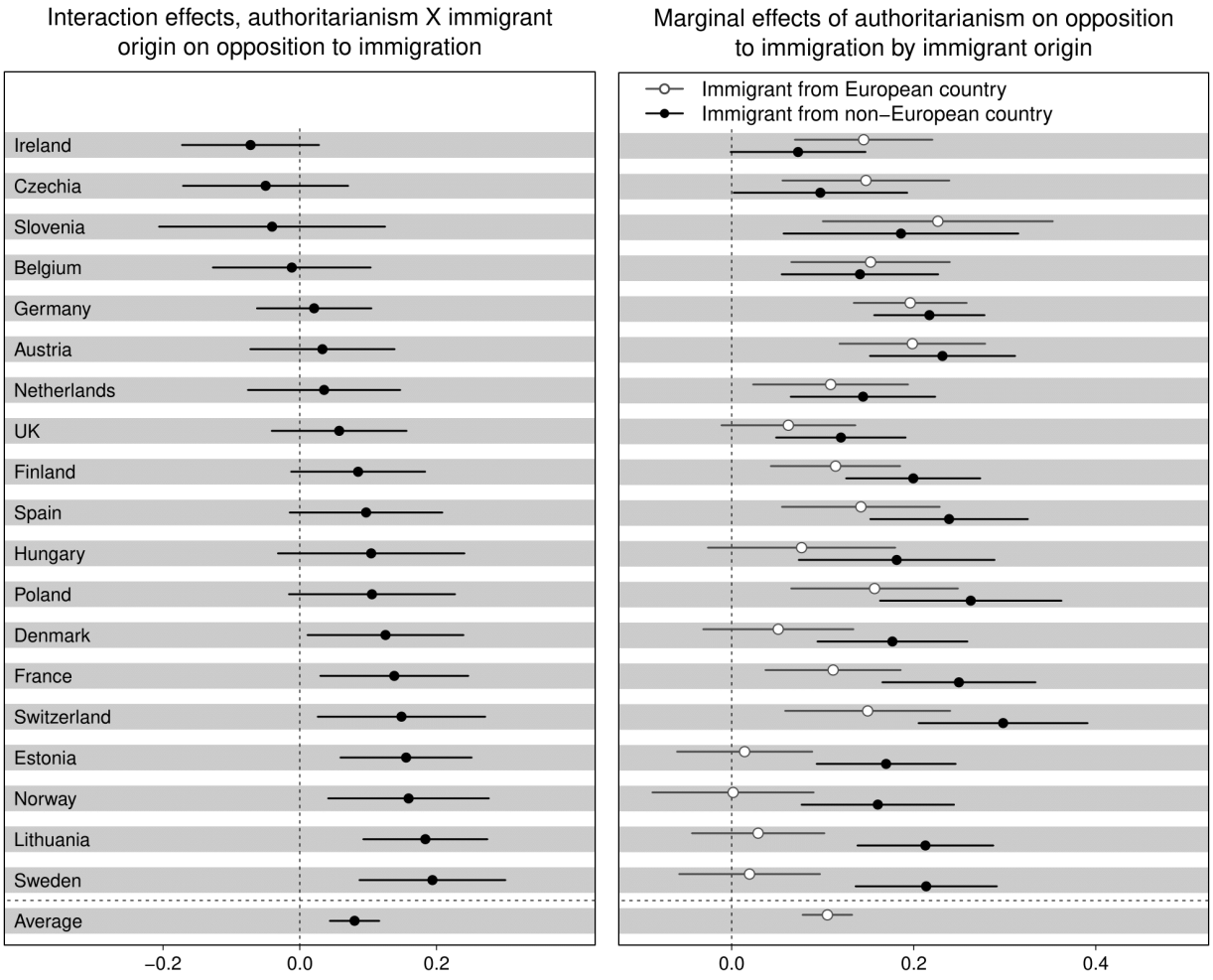
Figure 1. Effects of Authoritarianism and Immigrant Origin on Opposition to Immigration by Sample



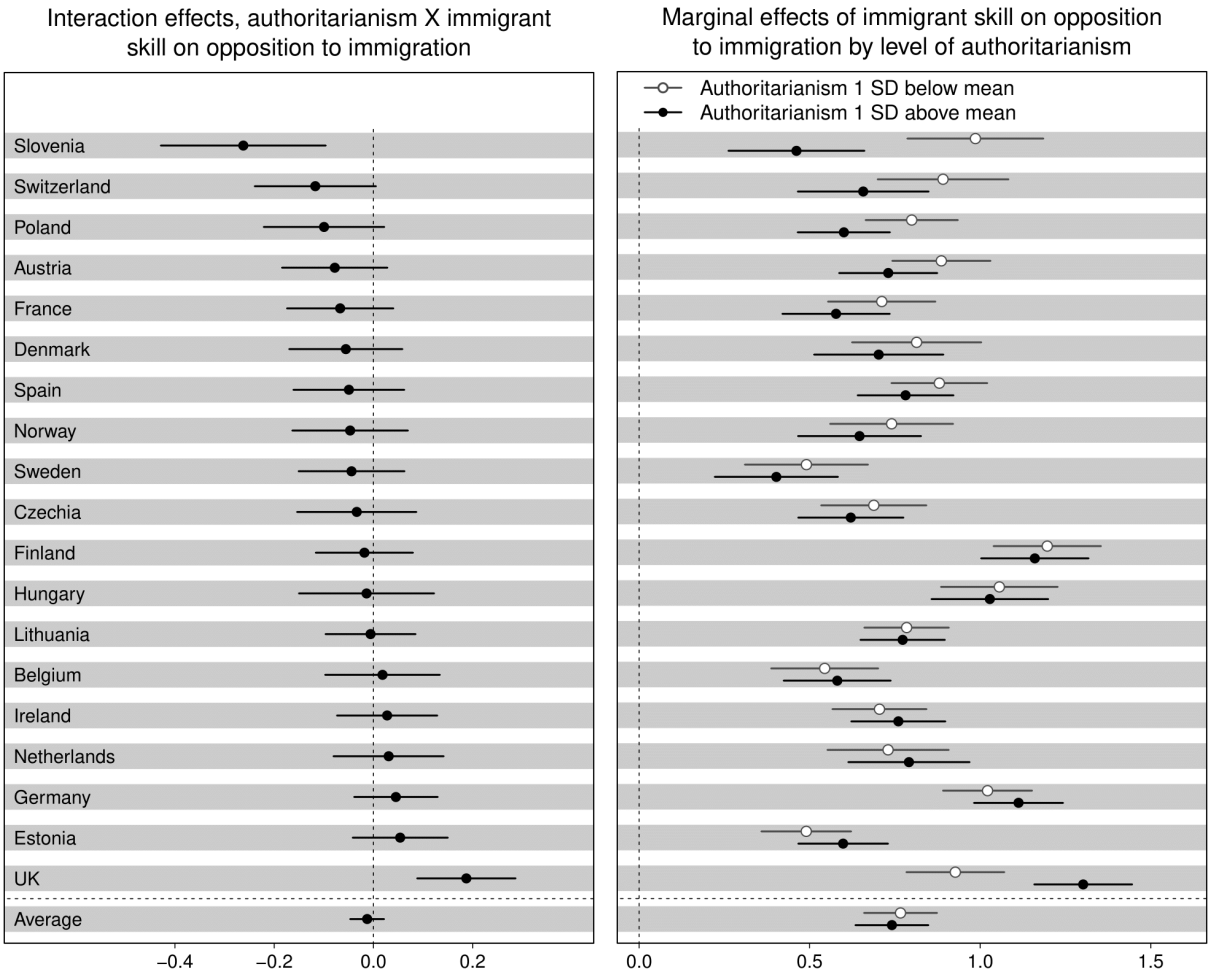
The plot displays the regression effects of authoritarianism (hollow circles) and the immigrant origin treatment (i.e., non-European vs. European; filled circles). Separate ordered probit models were fit for each country, with the following covariates included: dominance values, perceived financial comfort, gender, age, education, employment status, whether born in country, speaks a national language, is religious, and lives in an urban area. The "average" estimate is obtained from a multilevel ordered probit model applied to the pooled sample, with the slopes for authoritarianism, immigrant origin, and immigrant skill allowed to vary by country. Authoritarianism is a z-score while the experimental treatment is dichotomous. The sample countries and manipulated immigrant origin countries are shown on the left.

Figure 2. Authoritarianism and Immigrant Origin: Interaction and Marginal Effects



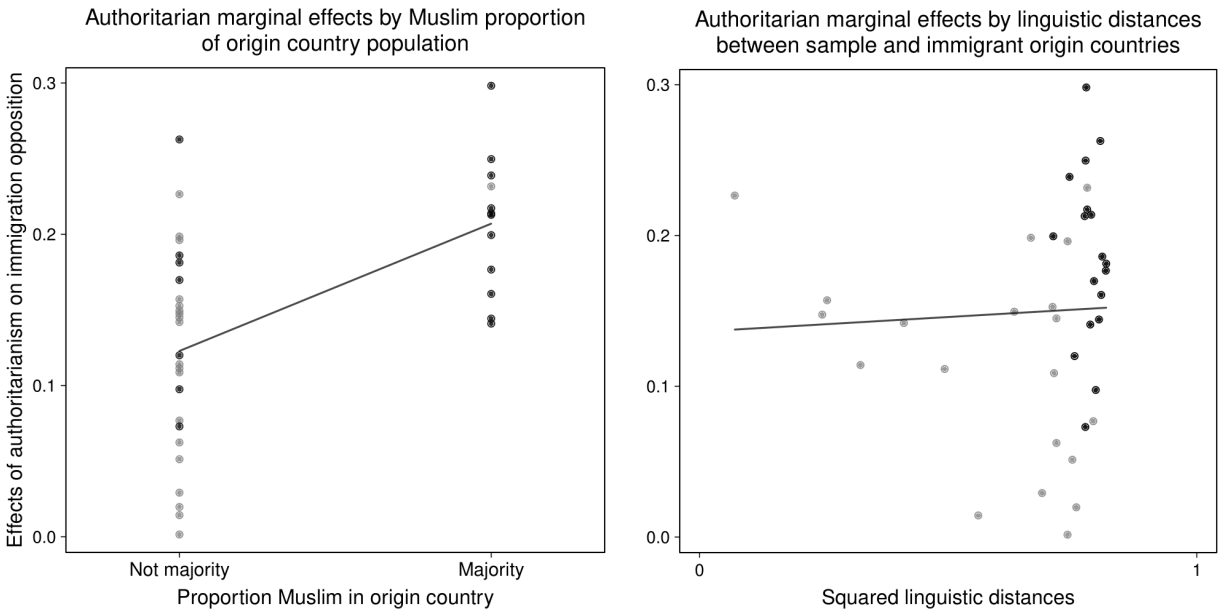
The first panel displays the interaction effects of authoritarianism and immigrant origin. The second panel displays the marginal effects of immigrant origin when authoritarianism is either low (hollow circles) or high (filled circles). Separate ordered probit models were fit for each country, with controls for respondents' dominance values, perceived financial comfort, gender, age, education, employment status, whether born in country, speaks a national language, is religious, and lives in an urban area. The "average" estimate is obtained from a multilevel ordered probit model applied to the pooled sample, with the slopes for authoritarianism, immigrant origin, and their interaction allowed to vary by country.

Figure 3. Authoritarianism and Immigrant Skill: Interaction and Marginal Effects



The first panel displays the interaction effects of authoritarianism and immigrant skill. The second panel displays the marginal effects of immigrant skill when authoritarianism is either low (hollow circles) or high (filled circles). Separate ordered probit models were fit for each country, with controls for respondents' dominance values, perceived financial comfort, gender, age, education, employment status, whether born in country, speaks a national language, is religious, and lives in an urban area. The "average" estimate is obtained from a multilevel ordered probit model with the slopes for authoritarianism, immigrant skill, and their interaction allowed to vary by country.

Figure 4. The Effects of Authoritarianism on Immigrant Opposition Varying by Contextual Measures of Cultural Threat



These scatterplots indicate how the marginal effects of authoritarianism on immigrant opposition vary with two contextual measures of cultural threat: whether the origin country population is Muslim majority (first plot); and the (squared) linguistic distances between the sample and immigrant origin countries (second plot). Points are indicated either in grey, when the manipulated immigrant origin country is European, or black, when the manipulated immigrant origin country is non-European. The lines show the bivariate least-squares fit. The authoritarianism marginal effects are extracted from the 19 country-specific ordered probit models described above.

Table 1. The Conditioning Effect of Immigrant Origin Country Factors

	Model 1.1	Model 1.2
Intercept	.229 (.107)*	.389 (.148)*
Squared linguistic distance	−.070 (.060)	.001 (.066)
Muslim majority country	.090 (.024)***	.077 (.026)**
log GDP per capita	−.006 (.010)	−.022 (.012)
Country fixed effects		✓
N	38	38
R^2	.329	.769
Adjusted R^2	.270	.465
Regression standard error	.062	.053

* p < .05, ** p < .01, ***p < .001. OLS models with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the 38 marginal effects of authoritarianism on immigration opposition when immigrants are presented as either European or non-European.