

Political Authoritarianism and Support for Populism in Europe, the United States and Latin America



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Populist political parties are attracting an ever-growing share of support worldwide. This project seeks to enhance our understanding of the values and beliefs that drive ordinary citizens to back left-wing and right-wing populists by investigating the role of political authoritarianism and anti-democratic views. Some scholars propose that populist ideology inherently contains divisive and intolerant tenets that conflict with principles necessary to maintaining democracy. Focusing on three separate political contexts, Western Europe, the United States, and Latin America, the project reveals that political authoritarianism is associated with support for populists depending on the ideology of the populist in question. Citizens that support right-wing populists consistently display disproportionately high levels of political authoritarianism and disregard for democratic norms, while the left-wing populist support base does not. The findings ultimately challenge monolithic portrayals of populism as antidemocratic.

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