

Political Psychology Research, Inc.
www.politicalpsychologyresearch.com

William A. McConochie, Ph.D.

71 E. 15th Avenue

Eugene, Or. 97401

Ph. 541-686-9934 Fax 541-485-5702 Bill@Testmasterinc.com

Manual

McConochie Authoritarianism Endorsement Scale (McAUT)

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Introduction: The McConochie Authoritarianism scale was developed to measure the concept of authoritarianism as a psychological trait. A related trait "Right Wing Authoritarianism" has been measured by a 20-item scale by Bob Altemeyer of the University of Manitoba. His scale and research findings are nicely described and summarized in his currently on-line book *The Authoritarians* (Altemeyer, 2007). A summary of this theory is also available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right_Wing_Authoritarianism. He defines authoritarianism as consisting of three facets: Authoritarian submission (submission to authorities), authoritarian aggression (against those who don't follow rules, and as directed and sanctioned by authoritarian leaders), and conventionalism (adherence to traditions and conventions endorsed by authorities). As measured by Altemeyer, this trait has been demonstrated to correlate positively with religious fundamentalism (also as measured by Altemeyer) and various measures of antisocial attitudes, including prejudice against out-groups and a belligerent foreign policy.

The present scale was developed because the author wanted a measure of authoritarianism to include in an Internet questionnaire product. Dr. Altemeyer's scale is copyrighted by Dr. Altemeyer and was not available for the present author's commercial use.

Rationale: Authoritarianism is defined by Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (Webster's, 1956) as advocating the principle of obedience to authority as opposed to individual liberty. The fact that this concept is an accepted part of language, at least in English, suggests that it may be describing a real psychological trait of humans. If it does, it should be possible to measure this trait reliably. Altemeyer's work has demonstrated that his related trait can be reliably measured

Hypothetical Scientific Definition: Authoritarianism as a psychological trait is defined by the present author as a morality-based preference for a relatively simple, clear authority, versus personal judgment, to explain the world and one's place in it.

Corollary attitudes and beliefs are assumed to include the following:

Authority is to be respected down the entire chain of command and pecking order, with subservience to those above and dominance of those beneath.

Authority that is simple, as based on claims to divine authority or superior military might, is preferred to authority based on complex origins, such as intellectual authority based on academic and scientific study and knowledge or political authority based on democratic decision-making processes.

Authority is to be trusted rather blindly, without question, and in place of one's own independent thinking and judgment.

Rules are to be accepted and obeyed.

Subservience and obedience to authority is appropriate.

Sworn statements of loyalty to authority are appropriate.

Punishment for those who break rules is appropriate, specifically to keep them compliant rather than to build character or strength as individuals.

Rewards for those who obey rules are appropriate, primarily to assure compliance rather than to build character or strength as individuals.

Preservation of leader strength, power and honor is more important than preserving or promoting the welfare of followers.

Regular, periodic rituals such as parades, ceremonies, speeches, conventions and services to honor authority and reassure oneself of his/her power and protection of followers are appropriate.

Comfort is provided for followers by the authority in the form of clear guidelines, explanations and roles for followers.

Clear guidelines of what is right and what is wrong thinking and behavior are expected from the authority.

Clear guidelines from the authority are expected as to who are good and who are bad individuals or groups, both within one's own nation and among other nations (the possible basis for xenophobia).

Followers accept orders to discriminate and aggress against people thus labeled "bad".

Personal and national problems are displaced onto "bad" people (which may be an additional explanation for xenophobia).

Persons who have higher levels of this trait will be more anxious than other persons.

Note: Subsequent studies support all aspects of the above conceptualization except the last item about anxiety levels and the item about sworn statements of loyalty.

Initial Hypotheses Generated by the present theory:

1. Operational scientific definition of Authoritarianism. A scale made up of items reflecting the above beliefs and attitudes will form a reliable measure. Well-written items reflecting the above theory will correlate significantly and substantially with the total score based on the items. The Alpha reliability coefficient will be .88 or above.

2. The measure will be valid, in that it will correlate positively with antisocial traits such as warmongering, Right Wing Authoritarianism (Altemeyer), religious fundamentalism, Social Dominance Orientation (Sidanius and Pratto), and violence-proneness (e.g. McConochie ARFV test) and negatively with pro-social traits such as human rights endorsement, kindly religious beliefs, endorsement of sustainability, endorsement of positive foreign policy, and endorsement of public democracy (e.g. McConochie scales).

3. The scale will correlate positively and significantly with measures of clinical anxiety.

4. About 5 to 8% of a random sample of adults will have mean item scores of 3.5 or higher on a 5-option Likert scale of this trait.

5. The mean of the mean item scores for random samples of adults will be between 2.5 and 2.8.

Pilot Study #1

A scale of 37 items was written by the author to reflect the content in the above definition and theory.

An initial pilot study was conducted using 65 persons, most of whom were adults from local community groups (singing and service groups). The subjects ranged in age from 8 to 88, mean 52.6, s.d. 20. 71 percent were males. They ranged in years of education from 7 to 22, mean 16.3, s.d. 3.2.

30 of the 37 items in the initial batch of 37 items correlated significantly with a total score made up of the items. The mean correlation was .53.

Of the 14 con-trait items (those reverse-scored), 12 correlated significantly with the total score. Their mean correlation with the 18 retained pro-trait item total score was .36. As a group, the 12 con-trait items correlated .67 with the 18 pro-trait items as a group. The correlation between the total score for the first 9 pro-trait items with the second 9 pro-trait items was higher than .67. It was .75, suggesting that the pro-trait items form a more cohesive measure of the trait than the con-trait items do, as would be expected.

As examples of the mean inter-item correlations, the mean inter-item correlation for 3 pro-trait and 3 reverse-scored items was computed for two clusters of items, 5-11 (item 7 omitted as poorly written) and 17-23 (20 omitted as poorly written). The mean was .26 for the first sample of 15 correlations and .35 for the second.

These various item correlations are considered desirable, reflecting unique contributions from each of the items in the scale of 30 items and substantial contributions of each of the items to the total score.

The 30 items retained formed a reliable measure of the trait, with an Alpha coefficient of .91, thus supporting hypothesis #1.

Two of the items in the scale measure clinical anxiety. Neither item singly nor in combination with the other correlated significantly with the total score, not supporting hypothesis #3.

Two persons (3.8 percent of the sample) had mean item scores of 3.5 or higher, roughly in support of hypothesis #4. Two of 65 persons were "authoritarian".

The mean item score for this sample was 2.57, in support of hypothesis #5. People in this sample, as a group, were basically not "authoritarian".

Basic statistics for Study #1:

Total sample N = 70 (65 + 5 added later)	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	Coefficient Alpha reliability
	40-115	73.2	17.43	.91

Factor analysis.

A factor analysis with Varimax rotation calling for a single factor was performed on the 30 items retained. 9 items correlated .60 or higher with this factor. 6 correlated .50-.59; 9 correlated .40-.49. The 9 items correlating highest provide an empirical definition of the essence of this trait as measured.

Highest Loading Items; Single Factor

#	<u>Item content essence</u>
1	Feel reassured by soldier parades and Presidential inductions.
2	Comforted by thoughts of trusted authorities.
5	Respect and honor for authorities.
15	Preference for a simple, clear explanation of the world & one's place in it.
21	Trust top leaders more than self on foreign policy
23	Preference for rules and doctrine vs. personal opinions.
34	Most world problems caused by bad strangers & foreigners.
19R	Trust in top government and military leaders vs. intellectuals and scientists.
24R	Trust in religious doctrine vs. self on moral and ethical matters.

When factor analysis was run calling for factors with Eigenvalues of 1.0 or higher, 9 factors emerged, accounting for 72 percent of the variance. All of the retained items except one correlated .50 or higher with either the above unitary factor or one of the 9 factors below. The remaining item correlated moderately with factors 1 and 6.

Item Loadings on 9 Factors

Factor Label & % of variance	Item loading	Item content essence
1. 26% Depend on authority and simple moral rules.	.81 .65 .65 .64 .60 .57 .54	23. Preference for rules and doctrine vs. personal opinions. 5. Respect and honor for authorities. 31. Divine authority sanctions wars against the unjust. 19R. Trust in top government and military leaders vs. intellectuals and scientists. 15. Preference for a simple, clear explanation of the world & one's place in it. 34. Most world problems caused by bad strangers & foreigners. 10. Depend on rules from authorities vs. own judgment.
2. 8.6% Depend on authority for safety and comfort.	.78 .74 .73 .67	1. Feel reassured by soldier parades and Presidential inductions. 2. Feel comforted thinking about trusted authorities. 17. Look to persons in authority for reassurance and guidance. 29. Teenagers should respect and obey parents totally.
3. 7.2% Simple good guy/bad guy social worldview	.84 .77	13. I and my group are good and righteous. 12. People are good and righteous or bad and unrighteous.
4. 6.6% Loyal to authority	.84 .71 .63	8R. Loyal and devoted to powerful authority. 6R. Don't criticize authority (politicians, leaders). 4R. Enjoyment of religious sermons.
5. 5.8% Blind obedience.	.68 .68 .68	22R. Don't question authority. Take them at their word. 27R. Soldiers should obey even illegal orders. 33R. My fears are caused by strangers (xenophobic).
6. 5.1% Reinforce/punish to control.	.85 .77 .64	11. Everyone should obey society laws and regulations. 26. Rewards are only for those who do right. 25. Punishment better than forgiveness.
7. 4.7%	.93	36R. Trust divine authority over own judgment.
8. 4.2%	.72	18R. Trust elected officials more than civilians.

9. 4.0%	.72	3R. Reassured by political leader speeches.
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Thus, in this initial study, the results of the factor analyses, along with the fact that 30 of the initial 37 items correlate significantly with the total score for the 37 items, support the hypothesis that there is a measurable human trait that may be termed “authoritarianism” or “authoritarianism endorsement”.

The fact that this trait does not correlate significantly with age, gender or education suggests that it may be a fundamental characteristic of humans and that this trait is not likely to be greatly influenced by education. It is expected that this trait will correlate positively and substantially with anti-social traits such as warmongering, social dominance and endorsement of military dictatorship. If it does, then protecting nations from the negative influences of this trait may hinge less on education than on simply empowering non-authoritarian, peace-loving citizens to dominate national politics.

In summary, Pilot Study #1 yielded encouraging data. A reliable measure of 30 items appears to be present.

Pilot Study #2:

A revised version of the scale was created with 37 items. The two items about anxiety were retained. The other 5 weak items were re-written. The revised scale was administered to 42 community college students as part of a larger study involving other traits. 64% were females. They ranged in age from 18 to 40, mean 24.4, standard deviation 5.88. They ranged in education from 12 to 16 years.

29 of the revised 37 items correlated significantly with the total score for all 37 items. The two items measuring anxiety again did not. They and six other weak items were dropped from the scale.

Basic statistics for 29-item version of scale. N= 42:

Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	Coefficient alpha reliability
43-101	76.14	15.91	.90

Validity Data:

Correlations between the trait and related traits are presented below.

Trait	Correlation with Authoritarianism Endorsement
Warmongering	.56**
Violence-proneness	.36*
Terrorism endorsement	.03
Religious Fundamentalism	.57**
Kindly Religious Beliefs	-.18
Personal Valuing of Religion	.24
Endorsement of a Positive Foreign Policy	-.38*

Thus, in this study, we see authoritarianism endorsement as a reliable measure that is related strongly with warmongering, and Religious Fundamentalism, somewhat with violence-proneness and rejection of a Positive Foreign Policy but not with terrorism endorsement. Authoritarianism endorsement again was not related to age, gender or years of education.

The other correlations in this study were .69** between Warmongering and Violence-proneness, .41** between Warmongering and Religious Fundamentalism, .68** between Violence-proneness and Terrorism Endorsement, and .54** between Warmongering and Terrorism Endorsement.

In this study, no persons had mean item scores of 3.5 or higher. One had a score of 3.48. Thus, none of these 42 persons were "authoritarian" in the strict sense of the term.

Summary: Authoritarianism endorsement as defined appears to be measured in a reliable and valid manner with a 29-item scale. The scale appears to measure an antisocial trait, as it correlates positively with other antisocial traits, violence-proneness and warmongering, and with religious fundamentalism, which itself correlates strongly with warmongering, as it has in many other studies by the author.

Blind respect for and obedience to authority is a classic expectation of warriors vis-a-vis their commanders in combat. Thus, the trait of authoritarianism

endorsement may have evolved in the human species, along with religious fundamentalism, as a psychological component of warmongering.

References:

Altemeyer, Bob, *The Authoritarians*, <http://home.cc.umanitoba.ca/~altemey/>.

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, C & G Merriam Co, Springfield, Ma, 1956.

Appendix: Scale items, 30-item version (29 items discussed above and one item reworded to be a pro-trait versus con-trait item). Reverse-scored items are 3,4,6,9,16 and 19.

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|-----------|---|
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. I feel reassured by parades of soldiers and induction ceremonies of Presidents or other national leaders. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 2. I often feel comforted by thinking about persons in authority whom I trust. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 3. I usually feel disappointed by major public speeches by top government leaders, such as Presidents. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 4. Most religious sermons I hear are boring and uninspiring. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 5. Persons in positions of authority should be respected and honored more than doubted and challenged. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 6. Journalists should be free to criticize and make fun of politicians and other leaders. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 7. Military personnel should obey their officers under all circumstances. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 8. I find comfort in frequent reminders of what is right and wrong. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 9. Persons should learn to trust their own judgment more than depend on rules given by authorities. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 10. Society will completely fall apart if everyone does not know and obey laws and regulations. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 11. Some groups of people are almost all good and righteous while other groups are almost all bad and unrighteous. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 12. I am a member of a group that is almost all good and righteous. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 13. Citizens should obey leaders who tell them to reject or wage war against a bad group. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 14. I prefer a simple, clear explanation of the world and my place in it rather than a complex, incomplete explanation. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 15. I often look to persons in authority for reassurance and guidance. |

- 1 2 3 4 5 16. I trust intellectuals and scientists more than top government and military leaders.
- 1 2 3 4 5 17. I trust elected state representatives and Governors for whom I vote to always do the right thing.
- 1 2 3 4 5 18. On foreign policy, I trust the top political leader of my country (e.g. the President) more than my own opinions.
- 1 2 3 4 5 19. We should carefully question persons in positions of authority rather than take them at their word.
- 1 2 3 4 5 20. In conversations with others, I prefer the clear guidelines of rules and doctrine to the uncertainties of personal opinions.
- 1 2 3 4 5 21. Punishment is a more appropriate response to rule-breaking than forgiveness is.
- 1 2 3 4 5 22. Rewards should only be given to persons who do what is right.
- 1 2 3 4 5 23. High school and college students should respect and trust their teachers without question.
- 1 2 3 4 5 24. Teenage children should respect and obey their parents without question.
- 1 2 3 4 5 25. I get comfort and reassurance from religious rituals and ceremonies.
- 1 2 3 4 5 26. Divine authority sanctions wars against the unjust.
- 1 2 3 4 5 27. The world would be a safer place if some bad people did not exist.
- 1 2 3 4 5 28. Most world problems are caused by bad people in far away lands.
- 1 2 3 4 5 29. For handling everyday problems I trust religious authority more than I trust my own judgments.
- 1 2 3 4 5 30. Top leaders in government, the military and religion are more important to a nation than are their followers.

End.