Predicting Radical Progressive Ideology (RPI): Preliminary Findings from an Exploratory Study

Charles Negy, University of Central Florida, USA. E-mail: charlesnegy@gmail.com

Christopher J. Ferguson, Stetson University, USA.

Abstract

Many critics of higher education contend it has become infused with a radical progressive ideology (RPI). Critics of this ideology often focus on "Critical Race Theory" (CRT) and "diversity, equity, and inclusion" (DEI). Broadly defined, CRT/DEI are a set of beliefs espousing that U.S. and Western societies are based on "white supremacy" and that social inequalities are due to racially-designed barriers to oppress non-Whites. These views are often accompanied by a deemphasis on classically liberal values such as free speech and due process. Advocates of CRT/DEI demand that society become more egalitarian, just, and inclusive. However, many ideas and tenets of CRT/DEI are debatable and are contested by critics due to the ideas' questionable empirical support. The purpose of this study was to examine select personality and attitudinal variables that may predict endorsement of CRT/DEI ideas that we call "radical progressive ideology" (RPI). Based on a sample of university students, three variables emerged significantly correlating with RPI: left-wing authoritarianism, anti-White attitudes, and anti-U.S. attitudes. Findings suggest that those embracing RPI may hold prejudicial views of Whites and of the U.S. as a country and may be desirous of punishing those not sharing their radical progressive ideology. Additional implications are discussed.

Keywords: DEI, Radical Progressive Ideology, Left-Wing Authoritarianism, Anti-White Attitudes, Wokism

In recent years, critics of higher education have contended that many U.S. institutions have become infused with far-left views such as "Critical Race Theory" (CRT; Zurcher, 2021). Despite having roots in European thought (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020), in the U.S., CRT initially gained footing in legal studies (Delgado & Stefancic, 2023). Since the death of George Floyd in 2020, however, many U.S. universities ostensibly began promoting a practical derivative of CRT commonly referred to as "diversity, equity, and inclusion" (DEI). Advocates of CRT argue that CRT provides insight into the underlying causes of observed social disparities within the U.S. and parts of the Western world (Crenshaw et al., 1996). CRT demands that society become more egalitarian, just, and inclusive and that to achieve such goals we must confront social barriers (Ocen as reported by Lang, 2020).

CRT and by extension, DEI, bear some similarities to Marxist ideology[1] wherein all group relations are viewed through a lens of oppression (Lindsey, 2023; Wheeler, 2021). Specifically, individuals are either "oppressors" or are "oppressed." As CRT and DEI manifest themselves within U.S. institutions, their tenets have been tailored to correspond to specific aspects of U.S. history and contemporary culture. They include: the U.S. was founded for the explicit purpose of establishing and maintaining a slave-based society. "White supremacy" permeates U.S. culture. And all observed inequalities or disparities in society derive from "systemic discrimination" (Butcher & Gonzales, 2020). Moreover, many CRT proponents argue that CRT is a way not only to confront the U.S.'s history of white supremacy but how the entire U.S. legal and educational systems are based on that history (e.g., Bell et al., 2023; Cole, 2009; Ray, 2022; Taylor et al., 2015).

Nevertheless, many of these claims are debatable and are contested by critics (Butcher & Gonzalez, 2020; Pluckrose & Linsday, 2020). Myriad points of data seem to refute some of CRT's tenets. For example, U.S. census data reveal significant complexities in earning success with, in particular, many Asian groups outperforming Whites (U.S. Census, 2021). Furthermore, evidence has not supported that the U.S. criminal justice system is broadly discriminatory toward non-Whites, with meta-analyses generally finding small to negligible differences between race categories in criminal sentencing (e.g., Ferguson & Smith, 2024; Pratt, 1998).[2]

CRT/DEI extend beyond the constructs of race and ethnicity. Their tenets also underly ideas related to two other identity-based constructs: gender and sexual orientation. As with CRT/DEI beliefs, many ideas related to gender and sexual orientation arguably are open to debate. For example, the notion that individuals can select their gender identity and even change the identity as often as desired is a prominent notion related to CRT/DEI (AAUW, 2024; Andrews, 2024; SAMHSA, 2024). The recent conflation of sexual orientation with transgender identity, along with the increasing addition of new variants of sexual orientation identities (e.g., LGTQQIP2SAA [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, queer, intersex, pansexual, two-spirit (2S), androgynous and asexual]) also are linked to CRT/DEI (AAUW, 2024; Minkin, 2023). These ideas have both passionate defenders and critics but appear part of a larger progressive framework.

The Current Study

Because most premises of CRT/DEI are controversial, in this study, we refer to its tenets or beliefs

---

[1] Albeit Marxists often oppose CRT given the latter's disinterest in class issues.
[2] It is not uncommon to hear statistics suggesting that Black and Latino defendants receive longer sentences than do Whites or Asians, albeit these appear to be based on misuse of Odds Ratios, such that tiny odds ratios from massive sample studies were highlighted as definitive, when such effects are better explained as noise, particularly given high between-study inconsistency (Ferguson & Heene, 2021).

as "radical progressive ideology" (RPI). RPI has been referred to colloquially as "wokism" by some, although wokism has both positive and negative meanings to different people (Brooks, 2020). The purpose of this study was to explore variables that may predict endorsement of RPI. Our intent was to better understand personality and attitudinal variables that may be associated with the proclivity to espouse or embrace RPI. A review on PsychINFO revealed that no study of this nature has been published thus far. Given that RPI has had significant influence on most major institutions and entities in the U.S. (Karpov, 2024; Minkin, 2023), more studies are warranted subjecting RPI to empirical scrutiny. Moreover, given the novelty and exploratory nature of this study, no formal hypotheses were made.

Some of the predictor variables that we selected for inclusion in this study have been discussed in literature regarding CRT/DEI. For example, casting oneself as a victim of specific- or broad-based grievance(s) has been suspected as a contributing characteristic of those embracing RPI (Harmon, 2023). Also, the desire of some who espouse RPI to "cancel" those challenging or not embracing RPI reflects such individuals having both a punitive and an aggressive nature. Stated differently, one might expect those willing to make a non-ideologically conforming person unemployed and possibly permanently unemployable (i.e., "cancelled") to be authoritarian and even potentially possessive of sadistic tendencies. Thus, we included measures of victimhood identity, left-wing authoritarianism, and sadistic tendencies in this study.

Other predictor variables were chosen based on theoretical considerations. Embracing ideological movements often, though not always, reflect human qualities that may or may not be adaptive. One personality trait found within most people is having a psychological need to feel a sense of belonging to either a social group or to part of a social movement. Further, given RPI's arguably negative views of entire classes of people (e.g., Whites, men, cisgender people, etc.), we speculated that the trait of cynicism may contribute to the adoption of RPI. Moreover, it is reasonable to speculate that some individuals may embrace RPI without having truly considered the pros and cons of the ideology. Consequently, scales measuring the constructs of needing to belong, social cynicism, and (non)-autonomous thinking were included in the study.

Finally, two predictor variables—attitudes towards Whites and attitudes toward the U.S.—were included based on literature and casual observations linking such attitudes to RPI. For example, Negy (2020) and others have pointed out RPI proponents' hyper-criticism of Whites and of the U.S. in general for their histories of conquest, slavery, and racial discrimination while seemingly unfazed by non-European peoples' own past and on-going commission of similar atrocities. Moreover, one readily encounters a plethora of comments and criticisms against Whites and the U.S. on social media platforms (e.g., "X") for myriad race-based transgressions.

Methods

Participants

Participants (n = 182) were undergraduate students at a large, public university in the southeastern section of the United States enrolled in upper-division psychology courses. They varied on basic demographic variables. Most (n = 136) self-identified as female, followed by 42 males, 2 transgenders, and 2 as "other." Regarding ethnicity, 76 self-identified as White, 66 as Hispanic/Latino, 21 as Black/African American, 16 as Asian American, and 6 as "other." The majority identified as heterosexual (70%), followed by 5.5% as gay/lesbian, 18.1% as bisexual, and

6% as "other." The majority were either juniors or seniors (45.6 and 21.4%, respectively).

Prior to data collection, this study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at the university from where data were collected. All participants read and agreed to an Informed Consent form prior to participation and were treated in accordance with APA ethical guidelines for research with human participants. Participation was anonymous and voluntary in exchange for extra credit in their respective courses.

Materials

All participants completed the following:

1. *General demographic sheet*. On this form, participants reported their age, race/ethnic identity, gender identity and sexual orientation.

2. Need to Belong. The *Need to Belong Scale* (Leary et al., 2013) contains ten statements to which participants indicate their level of agreement using a 5-point Likert-type scale. Response options range from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Scores are averaged and can range from 1 to 5, with higher scores reflecting a higher need to belong. A sample item, is, "I want other people to accept me." Based on the present sample of participants, this scale demonstrated inadequate reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .62). By deleting the first item, the alpha index became marginally acceptable (.76); thus, we scored this scale based on the remaining 9 items.

3. Social cynicism. The *Social Cynicism Scale* (Leung & Bond, 2004) contains 18 statements to which participants indicate their level of agreement using a 5-point Likert-type scale. Response options range from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Scores are averaged and can range from 1 to 5, with higher scores reflecting a cynical outlook on life. A sample item, is, "Powerful people tend to exploit others." Based on the present sample of participants, the scale demonstrated inadequate reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .44). Thus, this scale was discarded for analytical purposes.

4. Left-Wing Authoritarianism. The *Left-Wing Authoritarianism Index* (Costello et al., 2022) contains 39 statements to which participants indicate their level of agreement using a 7-point Likert-type scale. Response options range from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). Scores are averaged and can range from 1 to 7, with higher scores reflective of more left-wing authoritarianism. A sample item is: "Political violence can be constructive when it serves the cause of social justice." This scale can be divided into three subscales: anti-hierarchical aggression (aggressive attitudes toward high-status/wealthy people), anti-conventionalism (negative attitudes toward "conventional" norms), and top-down censorship (attitudes supportive of authority figures silencing others with dissimilar opinions/values). Unless indicated otherwise, we used the total score for analyses. Based on the present sample of participants, this scale demonstrated acceptable reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .93).

5. Victimhood identity. The *Tendency for Interpersonal Victimhood* scale (Gabay et al., 2020) contains 22 statements to which participants indicate their level of agreement using a 7-point Likert-type scale. Response options range from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7

(Strongly Agree). This scale consists of four subscales: Need for recognition (the desire for others to acknowledge that one is a "victim"), Moral elitism (feelings of superiority), Lack of empathy (little concern with others and a sense of entitlement), and Rumination (tendency to focus on one's presumed suffering instead of solutions to one's problems). A total score can be obtained by averaging responses to all items, and can range from 1 to 7, with higher scores reflective of a greater propensity to self-identify as a victim. A sample item is, "It is important to me that the person who offended me admits that his or her behavior was wrong." We used the total score for analyses. Based on the present sample of participants, this scale demonstrated acceptable reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .88).

6. Independent thinking. The *Autonomy* subscale of the *Psychological Well-Being* Scale (Ryff, 1989) consists of 14 statements to which participants indicate their level of agreement using a 6-point Likert-type scale. Response options range from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree). Scores are averaged and can range from 1 to 6, with higher scores reflective of the ability to resist social pressures to think and act in certain ways (lower scores reflect the tendency to conform to social pressures to think and act in certain ways). Based on the present sample of participants, this scale demonstrated acceptable reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .83).

7. Sadistic Tendencies. The *Sadistic Personality scale—short form* (ASP—sf; Plouffe et al., 2017) consists of 9 statements to which participants indicate their level of agreement using a 5-point Likert-type scale. Response options range from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Scores are averaged and can range from 1 to 5, with higher scores reflective of sadistic tendencies. Based on the present sample of participants, this scale demonstrated acceptable reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .87).

8. Attitude Toward Whites. The *Johnson-Lecci Scale—modified* (Johnson & Lecci, 2003) originally contained 20 statements to which participants indicate their level of agreement using a 5-point Likert-type scale. Response options range from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Scores are averaged and can range from 1 to 5, with higher scores reflecting more negative attitudes towards Whites. Johnson and Lecci developed the scale to assess African Americans' attitudes toward Whites. Because the scale was deemed excessively long (i.e., containing too many items) and many of the items were outdated or inappropriate for a broader audience, some items were excluded in this modified version and other items were altered. This modified Johnson-Lecci Index contains 10 statements. A sample item is, "I believe that most Whites would love to return to a time in which Blacks had no civil rights." Based on the present sample of participants, this scale demonstrated acceptable reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .90).

9. Attitudes Toward the United States. The *Attitudes Toward the United States* scale (Velezmoro & Negy, 2017) contains ten statements to which participants indicate their level of agreement using a 5-point Likert-type scale. Response options range from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Scores are averaged and can range from 1 to 5, with higher scores reflecting more positive attitudes toward the U.S. A sample item, is, "Life in the United States is generally good." Based on the present sample of

participants, this scale demonstrated acceptable reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .89).

10. Radical Progressive Ideology. The *Radical Progressive Ideology* (RPI) scale was created by the first author and was guided by some items reported in a similar study by Ferguson (2024). These items were intuitively designed to represent statements and views which had become common in political discourse during the past decade (though the origin of many such views predates the current time frame). The RPI scale contains 22 statements to which participants indicate their level of agreement using a 5-point Likert-type scale. Response options range from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Scores are averaged and can range from 1 to 5, with higher scores reflective of greater endorsement of views consistent with RPI. A sample item is: "People opposed to transwomen competing in women's sports are simply transphobic" (Appendix A contains the entire scale). Based on the present sample of participants, this scale demonstrated acceptable reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .92).

We were interested as well in examining whether the RPI fit well as a single factor structure, given this is a new scale. We examined this using exploratory factor analysis in jamovi. We note upfront heavy emphasis on exploratory as we had no preconceived beliefs about how the factor structure should look theoretically other than our interest in examining a single construct. Given that we were most concerned about the possibility of uncorrelated factors, a maximum likelihood varimax rotation exploratory factor analysis was performed. This suggested a two-factor solution, although most items that loaded on factor 2 (10 of 13) also loaded on factor 1. The goodness of fit was modest (RMSEA = .0615, but TLI = .897 with χ^2 = 318, p < .001). As such we felt that a two-factor solution was not the best conceptualization for this scale.

Results

Post-hoc Power Analysis

Using G*Power, we calculated that our sample was enough to detect a correlation coefficient of about r = .2, or a standardized regression coefficient of approximately .184. Given Ferguson's (2009) recommendations of r = .20 as a reasonable cutoff for practical significance, we are comfortable with these numbers. It is possible some weaker effects may be missed, but such weaker effects may also not be reliable enough for (prospective) hypothesis support.

Main Analysis

Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations for study variables. Scores on the RPI were slightly higher for women (*M* = 2.74, *SD* = .69) than for men (M = 2.40, *SD* = .64), *t* (176) = 2.88, *p* = .004; *d* = .51). Regarding race, a one-way ANOVA was non-significant (*p* = .114). However, when restricted to the top three ethnic categories (White, Hispanic, Black), the analysis did just pass the significance threshold (Welch's *F* [2, 58.5] = 3.38, *p* = .041, *r* = .023) with black respondents demonstrating a slightly higher mean score (*M* = 2.99, *SD* = .65) than white respondents (*M* = 2.56, *SD* = .74) or Hispanics (*M* = 2.66, *SD* = .67).

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Study Variables

Variable	M	SD
RPI	2.68	.69
NB	3.28	.65
LWA	3.38	.85
TIV	3.78	.87
SS	1.68	.72
ATW	2.32	.80
ATUS	3.71	.71

NOTES: RPI = Radical Progressive Ideology scale; NB = Need to Belong scale; LWA = Left-Wing Authoritarianism scale; TIV = Tendency for Interpersonal Victimhood scale; SS = Social Sadism scale; ATW = Attitudes Toward Whites scale; ATUS = Attitudes Toward the U.S. scale. N = 182 for all descriptives, except for one missing data point each for ATW and AUT scales.

To determine if study variables would predict beliefs consistent with RPI, a standard multiple regression was performed on the data. The predictor variables were: need to belong, left-wing authoritarianism, tendency for interpersonal victimhood, autonomous thinking, sadism, attitudes toward Whites, and attitudes toward the U.S. The criterion variable was scores on the RPI scale. As shown in Table 2, when taken together, the study variables significantly predicted RPI (R^2 = .76 [F (7, 127) = 78.24, p < .001]). The variables that significantly contributed to the prediction of RPI were: left-wing authoritarianism (t = 9.81, p <.001), attitudes toward Whites (t = 4.46, p < .001), and attitudes toward the U.S. (t = -3.51, p < .001). Specifically, higher left-wing authoritarianism, negative views of Whites, and negative views of the U.S. conjointly and individually predicted higher endorsement of RPI.

To distill these findings further, we conducted an additional set of analyses. First, given the prominence of left-wing authoritarianism's contribution to the prediction of RPI, a standard multiple regression analysis was performed to examine how the three subscales of left-wing authoritarianism would predict RPI. Predictor variables were anti-hierarchical aggression, anti-conventionalism, and top-down censorship. The criterion variable was RPI scores. Together, the left-wing authoritarian subscales significantly predicted RPI (R^2 = .72 [F (2, 178) = 149.88 (p < .001]). All three left-wing authoritarian subscales contributed significantly to the prediction of RPI (anti-hierarchical aggression [t = 3.13, p < .01], anti-conventionalism [t = 8.98, p < .001], and top-down censorship [t = 3.56, p < .001]). Specifically, opposition to hierarchical social structures, contempt for conventional values, and the desire to have authorities censor disfavored views conjointly and individually predicted higher endorsement of RPI.

Table 2

Standard Multiple Regression of Study Variables on Radical Progressive Ideology (RPI) (N = 182)

Dependent Variable: RPI	B	ß	t	Significance	95% Confidence Interval of ß
NTB	.040	.037	.812	.418	-.05, .13
LWA	.461	.561	9.81	<.001	.45, .67
TIV	-.009	-.011	-.256	.799	-.10, .08
AUT	.069	.068	1.54	.125	-02, .16
SS	-.008	-.009	-.231	.818	-.09, .07
ATW	.209	.241	4.46	<.001	.13, .35
ATUS	-.177	-.180	-3.51	<.001	-.28, -.08

NOTES: *Multiple R = .87, Multiple R^2 = .76, Adjusted Multiple R^2 = .75. F (1, 172) = 78.24, p < .001.*

RPI = Radical Progressive Ideology scale; NB = Need to Belong scale; LWA = Left-Wing Authoritarianism scale; TIV = Tendency for Interpersonal Victimhood scale; AUT: Autonomous Thinking; SS = Social Sadism scale; ATW = Attitudes Toward Whites scale; ATUS = Attitudes Toward the U.S. scale. Collinearity diagnostics were acceptable with highest VIF at 2.35.

Table 3
Intercorrelation Matrix for Study Variables

	RPI	NB	LWA	TIV	AUT	SS	ATW	ATUS
RPI	--							
NB	.04	--						
LWA	.84***	.06	--					
TIV	.32***	.31***	.37***	--				
AUT	.01	-.53***	-.03	-.22***	--			
SS	.02	-.04	.03	.14	-.04	--		
ATW	.71***	.01	.67***	.40***	-.06	.05	--	
ATUS	-.67***	-.04	-.65***	-.18**	.07	-.06	-.57***	--

NOTES: **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$. RPI = Radical Progressive Ideology scale; NB = Need to Belong scale; LWA = Left-Wing Authoritarianism scale; TIV = Tendency for Interpersonal Victimhood scale; AUT: Autonomous Thinking; SS = Social Sadism scale; ATW = Attitudes Toward Whites scale; ATUS = Attitudes Toward the U.S. scale. N = 182 for all correlations, except for one missing data point each for ATW and AUT scales.

We also re-ran the original regression, removing RPI as the outcome, and considering each subscale of the LWA in turn. We found that anti-hierarchical aggression was predicted by TIV (β = .15, *p* = .037), ATW (β = .31, *p* < .001) and ATUS (β = -.33, *p* = .003). Anti-conventionalism was predicted by AUT (β = .13, *p* = .039), ATW (β = .33, *p* < .001) and ATUS (β = -.45, *p* = .003). Top-down censorship was predicted by TIV (β = .20, *p* = .003), SS (β = -.15, *p* = .018), ATW (β = .32, *p* < .001) and ATUS (β = -.26, *p* = .003).

Then, distinct from the regression analyses, a series of partial correlations were performed to assess the correlations between each of the three primary predictors of RPI separately (i.e., left-wing authoritarianism, attitudes toward Whites, and attitudes toward the U.S.) while partialing out the other two predictors. Each predictor variable continued correlating significantly with RPI after controlling for the other two predictors (*r*s = .61, .32, and -.25, respectively [all *p*s < .001]).

As can be observed in Table 3, the zero-order correlation between tendency for interpersonal victimhood (i.e., viewing oneself as a "victim") and RPI achieved statistical significance (*r* = .32, *p* < .001). However, when left-wing authoritarianism was controlled for via partial analysis, the correlation between tendency for interpersonal victimhood and RPI no longer was statistically significant (*r* = .02, ns).

It was worth considering the degree to which different constructs were unique as opposed to related to a single underlying construct. We observed that intercorrelations between the RPI and ATUS, ATW and LWA were very high (ranging from *r*s = .57 through .84).[3] To examine this in an exploratory analysis, we used a basic confirmatory factor analysis with the 4 variables loading onto a single factor. Factor loadings for each variable were high (ranging from .51 to .75), and the model indicated a near perfect fit (χ^2 = .601, df = 2, *p* = .740, RMSEA = 0.0, CFI = 1.0). It is possible these numbers may indicate overfit, but nonetheless it appears likely that these constructs are tapping into a single, overarching variable, despite conceptual differences in their development.

Discussion

This study represented an effort to better understand personality and attitudinal variables that possibly correlate with the endorsement of RPI. Among the selected array of variables that we speculated might be linked to RPI, three emerged significantly. They were left-wing authoritarianism, attitudes toward Whites, and attitudes toward the U.S. Specifically, the more individuals manifested left-wing authoritarianism, the more prejudiced they were against white people, and the more negative views they held toward the U.S., the more likely they endorsed attitudes and beliefs consistent with RPI. Additional analyses revealed that components of left-wing authoritarianism contributed significantly to the prediction of RPI. More specifically, those who would support a forceful overthrow and punishment of those in power (anti-hierarchical aggression), who reject traditional or conservative values and customs (anti-conventionalism), and who would like to have authority clamp down on the expression of views of which they disapprove (top-down censorship) were more likely to endorse RPI.

Left-wing authoritarianism is a relatively new construct in the literature for which empirical support has been growing. Left-wing authoritarianism has been linked to narcissism (Krispenz & Bertrams, 2024; Zacker, 2024), negative emotionality (Costello et al., 2022), anxiety and anger (Lane et al., 2023), and moral certitude (Costello & Patrick, 2023). The current findings somewhat

---

[3] Note, we report absolute values here, with the ATUS coefficients being negative.

parallel the findings of Fasce and Avendaño (2022) who found that left-wing authoritarianism correlated with radical and cultural feminism, suggesting that radical ideologies across domains may be undergirded by left-wing authoritarianism.

The current findings also indicated that two variables related to prejudice correlated significantly with RPI. They were negative attitudes toward Whites and toward the U.S. Negatively biased attitudes toward Whites and the U.S. were associated significantly with RPI even after controlling for left-wing authoritarianism. With so much emphasis among CRT/DEI advocates to "de-center whiteness," "abolish 'white supremacy,'" and "de-colonize (European-based) curricula," these findings suggest that the basis for such goals may reflect anti-White prejudice. They may also reflect generalized hostility toward the U.S. Negy (2020) has pointed out that contemporary Americans who are anti-White tend to hold inaccurate beliefs about myriad transgressions related to racism, conquest, and slavery. Specifically, world history is replete with non-Europeans holding racist views toward dissimilar others and committing rather extensively acts of conquest and the practice of slavery (see Negy for a fuller review of such examples). This observation is consistent with other data such as that by the Skeptic Research Center (McCaffree & Saide, 2021), that misinformed views of police violence toward black Americans is associated with left-wing political views (though no political group was immune). Greenberg and Jonas (2023) noted that far-left political movements are as inclined to embrace authoritarian and cruel practices as are those on the far-right, which may help explain the embrace of terrorist organizations such as Hamas or brutal Communist governments such as that in Cuba by Western activists on the far-left.

It is worth noting that good intentions may underlie the motives of those who embrace CRT/DEI. The reduction of racism and other types of prejudices (e.g., sexism, homophobia, etc.) along with confronting social inequality and poverty are unambiguously laudable goals for a democratic, multicultural, and just society. In an ideal world, individuals of diverse identities and political leanings would join forces and collaborate to build better communities for themselves and for the broader society. Moreover, it is possible that many individuals can desire more social justice yet reject what arguably are extreme and erroneous beliefs about the causes of inequality— extreme beliefs captured by the RPI scale. Yet, those worthwhile aims appear to have been coopted by individuals who have personality disturbances and who may have prejudicial views toward Whites and European and American culture.

We note that trait victimhood had a statistically significant bivariate correlation with RPI but was no longer significant once left-wing authoritarianism was controlled. This is not surprising given that other studies have found that trait victimhood and left-wing authoritarianism tend to strongly correlate (e.g., Ferguson, 2024). Indeed, a constellation of mental health issues were explored in the study by Ferguson, suggesting a cluster of borderline personality traits, trait victimhood and left-wing authoritarianism correlated with aggressive behavior on-line. Further exploration of the mental health aspects of left-wing authoritarianism in relation to RPI may be warranted.

It also bears noting that we are sensitive to the issue of concept Balkanization such that a single overarching construct (as one example, mood disorders) is broken down into highly correlated sub-components (e.g., depression, anxiety, self-esteem, life satisfaction, state happiness, loneliness, etc.) that are all very highly correlated yet treated as conceptually distinct. We recognize that issues such as attitudes toward Whites, toward the U.S., in support of

authoritarianism and in support of RPI appear conceptually distinct. Yet, high correlations between these suggest that a single overarching psychological construct underlies all of them. Understanding better how this construct operates would be highly beneficial to the political landscape (as, of course, would understanding the psychology of the far right).

Limitations

As with most research, this study has limitations. First, all data are correlational, and no causal attributions can be made. Indeed, as noted above, other research has suggested a link between mental health and outcomes related to left-wing authoritarianism and longitudinal models, particularly of youth, would be valuable. Also, we did not include other variables likely capable of further illuminating correlates of RPI. Those would include the desire for social dominance, narcissism, and envy of others' success to name a few. Even feelings of inadequacy or inferiority related to one's group identity may be involved in the embrace of RPI. Future research should investigate these variables in order to provide a fuller picture of persons attracted to RPI. Further, the wording of some individual items may be sub-optimal (e.g., doubled barreled questions), and refinement of the wording could improve responses. The current sample was predominantly female. Given that women tend to endorse RPI more than men, this may limit the generalizability of our study, particularly for men on the political far-left. The sample was modest in size and our reliance on undergraduates which further limits generalization. Although a test of moderation based on gender and ethnicity proved non-significant in our analyses, this is based on a small sample and further studies could test more conclusively for moderator effects. Moreover, the research described here is a preliminary, exploratory proof-of-concept. We welcome preregistered future research to examine whether these results replicate, particularly across samples outside of university students.

Finally, we note that Lahtinen (2024) has also proposed a Critical Social Justice Attitude Scale. It would be interesting to see how well the two scales work with each other. We were unaware of this other scale when we developed this project. It also would be interesting to examine (presumably inverse) relationships between LWA and right-wing authoritarianism (RWA). It remains unclear the degree to which these are polar opposites of each other, or bear certain similarities related to the embrace of authoritarianism vis-à-vis horseshoe theory (the theory that LWA and RWA are more similar to each other than either are to democratic/republican ideals).

Conclusion

The current data suggest that a confluence of variables appear to contribute to RPI. They are left-wing authoritarianism, anti-White attitudes, and anti-U.S. attitudes. Need to belong, sadism, victim identity, and autonomous thinking did not significantly predict with RPI. This study provides some warning that adopting policy to fit the demands of RPI, whether at the institutional or governmental level, may give influence to problematic and destructive ideologies that may do more harm than good, including to the minority populations for whom advocates often claim to speak. More research is needed, and we express the concern that more institutions may need to pause policies that appear to cater to CRT/DEI until these phenomena are better understood.

References

AAUW. (2024a). *DEI toolkit: Gender and gender identity*.
      https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/governance-tools/dei-toolkit/dimensions-of-
      diversity/gender-identity.

AAUW. (2024b). *DEI toolkit: Sexual orientation*.
      https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/governance-tools/dei-toolkit/dimensions-of-
      diversity/sexual-orientation.

Andrews, A. (2024). Gender inclusion in the workplace matters: How to ask the right questions.
      Forbes Human Resource Council.
      https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbeshumanresourcescouncil/2023/06/21/gender-
      inclusion-in-the-workplace-matters-how-to-ask-the-right-questions.

Bell, D. A., Harris, C. I., Hansford, J., Akbar, A. A., Ellis, A., & McFarlane, A. G. (2023). *Race,
      racism, and American law: Leading cases and materials, 2023*. Aspen Publishing,
      Waltham, MA.

Brooks, M. (2020). The promise and problems with being woke. *Psychology Today*.
      https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/tech-happy-life/202006/the-promise-and-
      problems-being-woke.

Butcher, J., & Gonzales, M. (2020, December 7). Critical race theory, the new intolerance, and its
      grip on America. *The Heritage Foundation*. https://www.heritage.org/civil-
      rights/report/critical-race-theory-the-new-intolerance-and-its-grip-america.

Cole, M. (2009). *Critical race theory and education: A Marxist response*. Palgrave MacMillan:
      London.

Costello, T. H., & Patrick, C. J., (2023). Development and initial validation of two brief measures
      of left-wing authoritarianism: A machine learning approach. *Journal of Personality
      Assessment, 105*, 187-202.

Costello, T. H., Bowes, S. M., Stevens, S. T., Waldman, I. D., Tasimi, A., & Lilienfeld, S. O. (2022).
      Clarifying the structure and nature of left-wing authoritarianism. *Journal of Personality
      and Social Psychology, 122*, 135-170.

Crenshaw, K., Gotanda, N., Peller, G., & Thomas, K. (Eds.). (1996). *Critical race theory: The
      writings that formed the movement.* The New Press: New York.

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2023). *Critical race theory* (4th ed.). New York University Press: New
      York.

Fasce, A. & Avendaño, D. (2022). Attitudes toward civil liberties and rights among politically
      charged online groups. *Social Psychology, 53*, 233-243.

Ferguson, C. J. (2024). Cyberbullying and its relation to right and left authoritarianism, trait
      victimhood, and mental illness. *Psychology of Popular Media, 13*(3), 472–480.
      https://doi-org.stetson.idm.oclc.org/10.1037/ppm0000473

Ferguson, C. J. (2009). An effect size primer: A guide for clinicians and researchers. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 40*(5), 532-538.

Ferguson, C. J., & Heene, M. (2021). Providing a lower-bound estimate for psychology's "crud factor": The case of aggression. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 52*, 620-626.

Ferguson, C. J., & Smith, S. (2024). Race, class, and criminal adjudication: Is the US criminal justice system as biased as is often assumed? A meta-analytic review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 75*, 101905.

Gabay, R., Hameiri, B., Rubel-Lifschitz, T., & Nadler, A. (2020). The tendency for interpersonal victimhood: The personality construct and its consequences. *Personality and Individual Differences, 165*, 110-134.

Greenberg, J., & Jonas, E. (2003). Psychological motives and political orientation—The left, the right, and the rigid: Comment on Jost et al. (2003). *Psychological Bulletin, 129*(3), 376–382. https://doi-org.stetson.idm.oclc.org/10.1037/0033-2909.129.3.376

Harmon, J. (2023, December 17). DEI is simply an algorithm for victimhood. *Greensboro News and Records*. Retrieved from https://greensboro.com/opinion/column/justin-harmon-dei-is-simply-an-algorithm-for-victimhood/article_00c66bae-9841-11ee-8010-5f7233280f1b.html on August 18, 2024.

Johnson, J. D., & Lecci, L. (2003). Assessing anti-White attitudes and predicting perceived racism: The Johnson-Lecci Scale. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 29*, 299-312.

Karpov, Y. V. (2024). Elite universities: Incubators of leftist ideology. *AQ: A Journal from the National Association of Scholars, 37*(2), 28-36.

Krispenz, A., & Bertrams, A. (2024). Understanding left-wing authoritarianism: Relations to the dark personality traits, altruism, and social justice commitment. *Current Psychology, 43*, 2714-2730.

Lahtinen, O. (2024). Construction and validation of a scale for assessing critical social justice attitudes. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology, 65*(4), 693–705. https://doi-org.stetson.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/sjop.13018

Lane, J. E., McCaffree, K., & Shultz, F. L. (2023). The moral foundations of left-wing authoritarianism: On the character, cohesion, and clout of tribal equalitarian discourse. *Journal of Cognition and Culture, 23*, 65-97.

Leary, M. R., Kelly, K. M., Cottrell, C. A., & Lisa S. Schreindorfer, L. S. (2013). Construct validity of the Need to Belong Scale: Mapping the nomological network. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 95, 610-624.

Leung, K., & Bond, M. H. (2004). Social axioms: A model for social beliefs in multicultural perspective. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology, 36*, pp. 119–197. San Diego, CA: Elsevier Academic Press.

Lindsey, J. (2023, March 10). The Marxist roots of DEI - Session 1: Equity. *New Discourses*.

https://newdiscourses.substack.com/p/the-marxist-roots-of-dei-session.

McCaffree, K. & Saide, A. (2021). Why are people misinformed about fatal police shootings? Skeptic Research Center, CUPES008. https://research.skeptic.com/content/files/2025/02/Research-Report-CUPES-008.pdf

Minkin, R. (2023, May 23). Diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace. *Pew Research Center.* https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2023/05/17/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-in-the-workplace/ https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2023/05/17/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-in-the-workplace/.

Moslimani, M., Tamir, C., Budiman, A., Noe-Bustamente, L., & Mora, L. (March 2, 2023). Facts about the U.S. black population. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/fact-sheet/facts-about-the-us-black-population/ on June 14, 2023.

Lang, C. (2020, September 29). President Trump has attacked Critical Race Theory. Here's what to know about the intellectual movement. *Time*. https://time.com/5891138/critical-race-theory-explained/.

Mitchell, O. (2005). A meta-analysis of race and sentencing research: Explaining the Inconsistencies. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology, 21*(4), 439–466. doi:10.1007/s10940-005-7362-7

Negy, C., (2020). *White shaming: Bullying based on prejudice, virtue-signaling, and ignorance.* Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt.

Plouffe, R. A., Saklofske, D. H., & Smith, M. M. (2017). The assessment of sadistic personality: Preliminary psychometric evidence for a new measure. *Personality and Individual Differences, 104*, 166-171.

Pluckrose, H., & Linsday, J. (2020). *Cynical theories: How activist scholarship made everything about race, gender, and Identity—and how this harms everybody.* Pitchstone Publishing: Durham, NC.

Pratt, T. C. (1998). Race and sentencing: A meta-analysis of conflicting empirical research results. *Journal of Criminal Justice, 26*(6), 513–523. doi:10.1016/S0047-2352(98)00028-2

Ray, V. (2022). *On Critical Race Theory: Why it matters & why you should care*. Random House: New York.

Ryff, C. D. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 57*, 1069-1081.

SAMHSA. (2024). Disaster technical assistance center (DTAC): Key DEI terms. https://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/disaster-planners/diversity-equity-inclusion/key-dei-terms.

Taylor, E., Gillborn, D., & Ladson-Billings, G. (Eds.). (2015). *Foundations of critical race theory in education (the critical educator)* (2nd ed.). Routledge: London.

U.S. Census. (2021). American Community Survey: S0201: Selected population profile in the United States. https://data.census.gov/table?t=001:002:003:004:005:006:009:012:031:050:060:070:071:Income+and+Poverty&g=010XX00US&tid=ACSSPP1Y2021.S0201&moe=true.

U.S. Census. (2023, May 11). Census Bureau releases non-employer business data by demographic characteristics of owners. https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2023/nonemployer-owner-characteristics.html.

Velezmoro, R., & Negy, C. (2017). Latino immigrant youths' attitudes toward the United States and cultural diversity: Do parents play a role? *Psychology and Education, 54*, 1-16.

Wheeler, L. (2021). Critical race theory is repackaged Marxism. *Newsweek*. https://www.newsweek.com/critical-race-theory-repackaged-marxism-opinion-1599557.

Williams, H. (2019, March 6). "I was assaulted at Berkeley because I'm conservative. Free speech is under attack." *USA Today.* https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/voices/2019/03/06/berkeley-conservative-students-campus-college-bias-punch-column/3065895002/.

Zacher, H. (2024). The dark side of environmental activism. *Personality and Individual Differences, 219*, 1-7.

Zurcher, A. (2021). Critical Race Theory: The concept dividing the U.S. *BBC News.* https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-57908808.

RPI Scale

1. All U.S. systems and structures are set up to benefit Whites.
2. Social and economic disparities between Whites and non-Whites are due to "white racism."
3. Educational curricula must be de-colonized.
4. If you want to be an ally, you need to do the work.
5. People opposed to transwomen competing in women's sports are simply transphobic.
6. Silence about discrimination is violence.
7. Only reparations will make U.S. Blacks "whole" again.
8. I feel a lot of anger toward cis-heterosexual white men more than I feel toward other groups.
9. Most police departments are racist and should be de-funded.
10. The United States is irredeemably racist.
11. The legacies of slavery and Jim Crow still affect black Americans today.
12. Transwomen are women and transmen are men.
13. You're either a racist or an anti-racist.
14. Gender is a social construct, has no basis in biology, and exists on a spectrum.
15. Standardized tests (e.g., the SAT, GRE) were invented to keep minorities out of universities and should be eliminated.
16. Toxic masculinity must be confronted and abolished.
17. The U.S. Government ought to create a "Department of Anti-Racism" to combat racism.
18. Racism in the U.S. is as bad today as it always has been.
19. It is important to "de-center whiteness" in all of our activities and institutions.
20. Race is not real, has no basis in biology, and was invented to oppress non-Whites.
21. BIPOC (black and indigenous people of color) ought to be given preference in hiring and university admissions.
22. Men can have periods (menstruate) and give birth.

Notes: Response options are: 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree).