Parenting, Politics, and a Pandemic: The Link Between Authoritarian Parenting Style and COVID-19 Beliefs

Presenter: Julia Mohanty

Julia Mohanty, Lisseth Cruz, Vivien Ionescu, Carter Pacis, Laurel Guffey, Ashley Ware, Victoria Colvin, & Dr. Colin Smith

Introduction

- Past research has found that authoritarians are particularly sensitive to threat (Stevens & Vaughan-Williams, 2014), and in the presence of national threats (e.g., 9/11) people are more likely to support Republican candidates and authoritarian leadership (Cohen et al., 2005; McCann, 2010).

- Deason and Dunn (2022) found that those high in authoritarianism were more likely to perceive COVID-19 as a symbolic threat (i.e., a threat to values and identities) rather than a physical threat.

- The current work investigated the relationship between authoritarian parenting styles, support for the way Donald Trump handled the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, and COVID-19 misinformation.
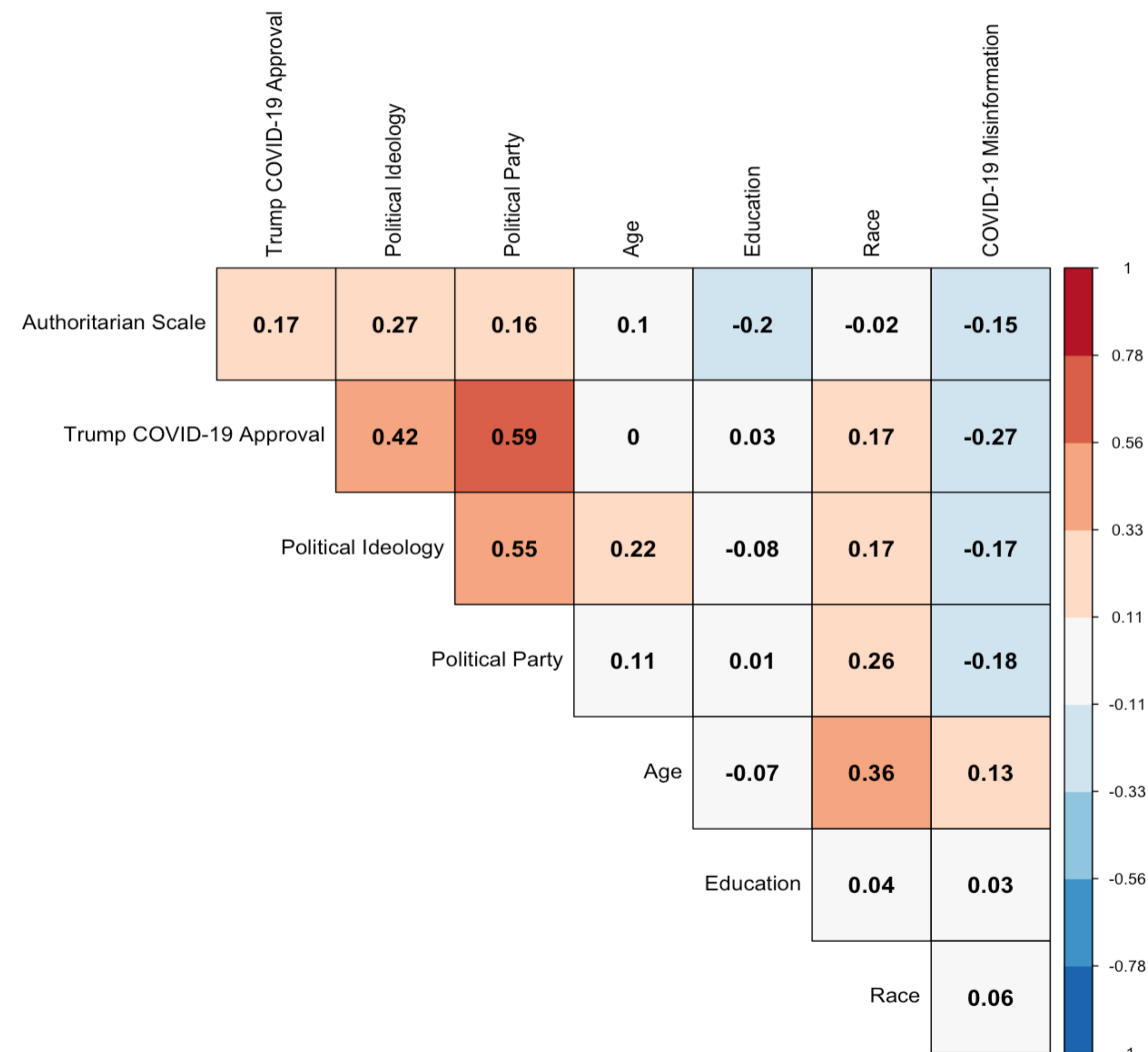
Method

- We used publicly available data from the ANES 2020 Exploratory Testing Survey (N=3080): 52.2% Female, 81.9% White, *M* age = 48.87, *SD* = 16.79

***Measures*:**

- **Authoritarian Parenting Style** (1 = authoritarian characteristic, 0 = egalitarian characteristic)

- **Political Ideology** (1 = *Very Liberal*, 7= *Very Conservative*)

- **COVID-19 Misinformation** (0 = COVID-19 was developed in a lab 1 = COVID-19 was not developed in a lab)

- **Support for Donald Trump handling of COVID-19** (1 = *Disapprove extremely strongly*, 7 = *Approve extremely strongly*)

Conservatives and those who endorse authoritarian parenting styles are more likely to support Donald Trump's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to believe misinformation about the development of COVID-19.

Thus, results replicate past work that authoritarians are more likely to support a Republican president during times of threat. Additionally, we extended this work by examining authoritarian parenting and threat misinformation.

Regression results using Donald Trump COVID-19 approval as the criterion

Predictor	B	SE	β	95% CI_B
Authoritarian Parenting	**.63**	.18	.09	[.267, .976]
Political Ideology	**.50**	.03	.40	[.431, .561]
Race	**.78**	.13	.15	[.524, 1.045]
Age	**-.02**	.003	-.13	[-.025, -.011]
Education	**.22**	.08	.07	[.060, .361]
Sex	.06	.11	.01	[-.160, .279]

Note. Bolded B-weights are significant at p < .05

Regression results using COVID-19 misinformation as the criterion

Predictor	B	SE	β	95% CI_B
Authoritarian Parenting	**.17**	.03	.12	[.116, .230]
Political Ideology	**.05**	.01	.18	[.037, .056]
Race	-.03	.02	-.03	[-.069, .013]
Age	**-.01**	.001	-.17	[-.006, -.004]
Education	-.01	.01	-.01	[-.028, .017]
Sex	.004	.02	.004	[-.031, .038]

Note. Bolded B-weights are significant at p < .05