

Q 10

Theoretical considerations presented in The Authoritarian Personality¹ would lead to the inference that persons higher in authoritarianism would more readily aggress against lower status persons than higher status persons, whereas persons lower in authoritarianism would make no such status differentiations. A study by Thibaut and Riecken² suggests that the differential aggressive response to status on the part of high authoritarians can be observed only after frustration is introduced. Other research using test-response indexes of aggression^{3, 4} indicates that persons high in authoritarianism show greater hostility toward frustrators low in status than those high in status. No differential response is found for persons low in authoritarianism.

1. Adorno, T.W., Frenkel-Brunswik, E., Levinson, D.J., & Sanford, R.N. The authoritarian personality. New York: Harper, 1950.
2. Thibaut, J.W. & Riecken, H.W. Authoritarianism, Status, and the communication of aggression. Human Relations, 1955, 8, 95-120.
3. Roberts, A.H. & Jessor, R. Authoritarianism, punitiveness, and perceived social status. Jour. Abn. and Soc. Psychol. 1958, 56, 311-314.
4. Wright, J.M. & Harvey, O.J. Attitude change as a function of authoritarianism and punitiveness. Jour. Pers. and Soc. Psychol. 1965, 1, 177-181.

M.E. Lipetz and P.G. Ossorio. Authoritarianism, Aggression, and Status. Jn. of Pers. and Soc. Psychol. 1967, 5 (4) 468-472. p.471.

The second unexpected finding, and quantitatively the most dramatic one, is that low-F subjects did react differentially to equal-status and high-status experimenters. Epstein¹ reports a similar finding and suggests that "... some low scores on the F Scale may be indicative of an 'authoritarianism of the left' which is characterized by hostility and rejection of groups that appear economically privileged or powerful...." A less venturesome explanation may be derived from the proposition that the standard ideology for American college students, if not for the population generally, is one of equalitarianism.

1. Epstein, R. Authoritarianism, displaced aggression and social status of the target. Jour. of Pers. and Soc. Psychol. 1965, 2, 585-589.

