



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on August 29, 2026

Belief in Gender Ideology Often Translates to Support for Political Violence: Study

Individuals who subscribe to gender ideology tend to be left-wing authoritarians with a strong propensity to endorse political violence, says a new Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [study](#).

Released Wednesday, the HHS-commissioned study by researchers from Rutgers University, the Manhattan Institute, and the Network Contagion Research Institute sought to rectify an oversight in academic literature. While opposition to “gender-affirming” norms such as social transitioning and sex-change treatments has been painted as “prejudice” emanating from right-wing authoritarianism, the authors observed, no one had previously studied “the other side of the equation: What predicts *support* for gender ideology?” (Emphasis in original.)



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Gender Gendarmes

The researchers’ theory was that gender ideology plays into left-wing authoritarianism (LWA),

a psychological profile characterized by aggression toward perceived oppressors, enthusiasm for top-down censorship and institutional enforcement, and hostility toward conventional social institutions — in short, an authoritarian disposition organized around left rather than right political content.

In the case of gender ideology, much of the political content has been generated by supposedly neutral organizations such as medical societies. According to the report, these groups’ clinical-guidance documents, while presented as science,

draw on minority stress theory including extensions of that framework specific to those who identify as transgender, which holds that such individuals face chronic psychological harm through stigma and discrimination, affecting their health and physical wellbeing through chronic identity-based stress. But rather than treating that framework as one explanation among several, the consensus documents embed it as clinical bedrock: failure to affirm becomes a source of physical harm, skepticism toward affirmation becomes a clinical risk factor, and the clinician’s professional duty extends to advocacy against the social conditions causing that stress. The ideological architecture is not incidental to the scholarship; it is thematic.... In this sense, the framework does not merely regulate belief; it



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can arm authoritarian psychology by activating threat, resentment, punitive certainty, and defensive group identification. [Citations deleted.]

The authors posited that gender ideology supplies content that appeals to those already predisposed to LWA:

Gender ideology identifies the type of oppressor and oppressed classes about which people high in LWA are particularly concerned; it seeks top-down censorship and control over those who do not conform to its dictates, something those high in LWA generally endorse when applied to “oppressors;” and third, it seeks to exercise that control in a project that aspires to overturn the status quo with respect to sex and family, and overturning the status quo is something those high in LWA generally endorse.

Survey Says

The researchers surveyed 1,208 Americans to determine their propensity toward LWA and gender ideology. For the latter, they developed the Clinical Gender Affirmation Scale (CGAS), which measures an individual’s endorsement of clinical guidance favoring “gender-affirming” practices such as using preferred pronouns and prodding parents to support their children’s gender transitions. Researchers also asked participants whether they supported political violence such as killing or attempting to kill Charlie Kirk, President Donald Trump, or former UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson; damaging wealthy people’s property; and setting fire to Immigration and Customs Enforcement buildings.

The results: CGAS predicts LWA, LWA predicts CGAS, and both predict support for political violence. Furthermore, one’s adherence to either gender ideology or LWA is not merely a function of one’s political orientation. That is, being politically liberal does not automatically make one a gender radical or left-wing authoritarian, nor does it predispose one to support political violence. One must also be moved by the moral components supplied by gender ideology and LWA to succumb to them and, in turn, to their encouragement of violence. “This distinction,” wrote the authors,

is central to the interpretation of the findings: support for coercion, punishment, and violence appears to be tied less to liberalism generally than to an authoritarian disposition organized around left-wing ideological content.

Still, knowing how acceptance of mainstream clinical guidance regarding transgender patients correlates with support for political violence, the researchers warned:

These findings raise a question of scientific responsibility. Clinical recommendations are expected to rest on evidence rather than ideology, yet the positions distilled in CGAS are disproportionately endorsed by individuals high in a form of political extremism that is corrosive to liberal democracy. At minimum, this suggests the institutions advancing these recommendations failed to test whether their guidance encodes ideology rather than medicine, a conflation of activism with clinical science.



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Radical Routes

The authors cautioned that their study cannot determine causality. While CGAS and LWA correlate strongly with each other, researchers do not know if one causes the other or if a third factor causes both.

The value in the study, they contended, lay in its examination of one of the pathways to LWA, a subject the literature has largely overlooked, instead concentrating on alleged right-wing threats. “Yet federal agencies and public safety officials are concerned not only with ideology in the abstract, but with radicalization pathways: the content that tells people who [sic] to fear, why the situation is urgent, and when force becomes acceptable.” They are likely to overlook radicalizing content disguised as clinical guidance.

In a [statement](#), HHS Assistant Secretary for Health Admiral Brian Christine said:

This study raises important questions about what happens when ideology is given the authority of medicine. The association between sex-rejecting clinical beliefs, authoritarian attitudes, and the justification of political violence warrant [sic] serious scientific scrutiny. HHS will continue to pursue rigorous research that examines these relationships and gives the American people the evidence they deserve.



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