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CESifo *Working Paper No. 11490*

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Abstract

The increasing popularity of strongman rule in democratic societies underscores the need to explore how authoritarian regime preferences might spread socially. We assess the role of social influence on support for leaders with authoritarian inclinations through pre-registered field and survey experiments in the Norwegian Armed Forces. The field experiment randomly assigned soldiers to different rooms during boot camp, so soldiers lived among peers with varying levels of openness to authoritarian rule. We found that many individuals adjusted their privately reported support for authoritarian rule to align more closely with their peers. Further survey-experimental evidence among soldiers and the general Norwegian population confirms that learning about others' level of support for authoritarian rule changes both perceptions about the preferences of others' and own attitudes. Our results suggest that support for authoritarian rule can have a social basis and could potentially spread through social contagion in established democracies.

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This study was reviewed and approved by the IRB officer at the Frisch Centre. Informed consent for storing and combining the data is given by the participants. A publicly available pre-analysis plan was archived at the registry for randomized controlled trials in economics held by The American Economic Association at https://doi.org/10.1257/rct.10394-1.0 on November 11 2022, before any endline data was collected. Funding from the Norwegian Research Council is acknowledged. We thank Tim Allinger, Donald P. Green, Salma Mousa, Kristian Vrede Skaaning Frederiksen and participants at various seminars and conferences for useful comments. Authorship is listed alphabetically.

1 Introduction

The recent surge in authoritarian leaders and parties demonstrates that many citizens in contemporary democracies tolerate or even support authoritarian "strongman rule" (e.g., Coppedge et al., 2021; Norris and Inglehart, 2019; Lührmann and Lindberg, 2019; Graham and Svolik, 2020; Carey et al., 2020; Grossman et al., 2022; Krishnarajan, 2023). Evidence from the World Values Survey (Inglehart et al., 2022) shows an increase over the past quarter-century in support for strong leaders even when they break democratic rules, suggesting that authoritarian sentiments are on the rise (see Appendix Figure A.1). What underlies citizens' support for authoritarian rule?

We propose and demonstrate that support for authoritarian rule is, in part, shaped through social transmission and can shift relatively quickly in response to changes in a person's social environment or exposure to information about others' support for such rule. When individuals perceive their peers' preference for strongman leadership, they may adjust their own attitudes accordingly, even when such a regime is overtly anti-democratic.

While the role of social influence is widely documented in social and political psychology as well as in other political science research areas such as voter turnout, it has been under-appreciated as a factor driving support for "strongman rule" and anti-democratic politics. Existing literature explaining support for democracy and its alternatives has tended to focus on structural factors such as economic conditions, education or geographic and cultural traits (e.g., Acemoglu and Robinson, 2005; Glaeser, Ponzetto and Shleifer, 2007; Norris and Inglehart, 2019), while the literature on authoritarianism as a psychological dimension has often highlighted stable individual characteristics such as personality or upbringing (Adorno et al., 1950; Altemeyer, 1988; Ballard-Rosa et al., 2021; Oesterreich, 2005). In demonstrating the social nature of openness to authoritarian rule we offer insights that can help to account for the prevalence and spread of support for strong leaders with anti-democratic sentiments

in contemporary democracies, and why it can often appear quite sudden and unexpected, once people learn about other citizens openness to strongman rule.

Social influence, although pervasive, is notoriously difficult to study due to individuals self-selecting into networks and social environments, making it hard to disentangle whether prevalent preferences within a community are due to social transmission or due to self-selection. We draw on a combination of field and survey experiments to show how awareness of other people's attitudes influences a person's own support for strongman rule.

To randomize exposure to varying levels of support for authoritarian leaders among peers we collaborated with the Norwegian Armed Forces for a pre-registerd field experiment.[1] Upon arrival at a military camp, we surveyed newly enlisted recruits before they were randomly assigned to different dorm rooms for the duration of an eight-week boot camp. Throughout their stay, recruits share living quarters and cooperate on duties such as cleaning the room for inspection each day. The random assignment to rooms exposes recruits to varying levels of support for authoritarian rule within their assigned rooms through their peers. At the end of the eight weeks, we returned to the camp to conduct a follow-up survey. Using this experimental design, we can examine the impact of exposure to roommates with stronger or weaker support for authoritarian rule, measured as a preference for strong leaders even if they bypass parliament or elections, on individual support for authoritarian rule.

We find that recruits recognize the prevailing opinion climate in their rooms and that they adapt their own attitudes to the levels of support for authoritarian rule of their peers. We further find that even recruits who initially possessed low or moderate levels of openness to authoritarian rule noticeably open up for strong leader governance when exposed to peers with preferences for authoritarian rule.

To be sure, the context of military dorms in the Norwegian Armed Forces differs signif-

[1] An anonymous version of the pre-analysis plan is found here: https://osf.io/qv3hb?view_only=0dfc46d7015d434daa6daf84b89e6ae0. Deviations from the plan are highlighted in the text.

icantly from other social contexts and the respondents are in early adulthood which may make them exceptionally impressionable. The estimate of peer effects should therefore not be considered a measure of how peers affect authoritarianism across all social settings. Still, it provides evidence that peer effects on support for authoritarian rule exist, by showing that authoritarian sentiments can be (partly) triggered by social environments and interaction with peers. In addition, studying the spread of support for authoritarian rule in the military is highly important in itself.

While the field experiment allows us to document the social transmission of support through real-life social interactions, it is hard to identify the pathways through which individuals update their preferences in this setup. There are several mechanisms through which support for authoritarian rule may transmit, including through persuasion, transmission of relevant information, or social conformity effects. Moreover, the field experiment cannot fully isolate the effect of peers' level of support for authoritarian rule from other correlated peer traits or preferences, such as personality, persuasiveness or other political opinions. To gain deeper insights into causal pathways and ensure generalizability beyond the context of the Norwegian Armed Forces, we corroborate our findings using survey-experimental data in which the treatment is more tightly controlled. This includes data from the camp setting, the general Norwegian population, and a cross-country sample.

The survey experiment among recruits is designed to isolate the effect of learning about peers' support for authoritarian rule on individual support. Respondents were divided into two experimental groups to receive accurate yet distinct information about their peers' support, suggesting that support for authoritarian rule was either popular or unpopular among the recruits in their cohort. This information altered not only their beliefs about others' opinions about authoritarian rule, but also their own preferences. While we can not pin down exactly how the information leads to changes in respondents' preferences, this tells us that learning about peers' openness to authoritarian rule has effects even when we rule out

factors such as other correlated peer characteristics, direct information about politics, and active persuasion, that may lead recruits to become more open to authoritarian rule.

We replicate the survey experiment among the Norwegian general population. We again find that individuals aligned their own attitude on authoritarian rule with the perceived views of others, showing that even the population of one of the world's most robust and high-quality democracies (e.g. Coppedge et al., 2021) is susceptible to the social lure of authoritarian rule. We find similar effects when replicating the survey experiment in a diverse, cross-national sample of over 25,000 respondents from more than 29 countries, suggesting that the observed social transmission of preferences in the survey-experiments holds beyond the Norwegian context.

The combination of field- and survey-experimental methods delivers compelling evidence that support for authoritarian rule is transmitted socially. We show that this transmission can occur relatively quickly, and affect even populations that are initially anti-authoritarian.

Our findings have implications for the study of democratic erosion by illuminating the social malleability of openness to authoritarian rule - and how it can be socially transmitted relatively rapidly. The (partially) social nature of this authoritarian tendency implies that we can not rule out that potential anti-democratic cascade effects could occur in existing democracies: when citizens discover that openness to authoritarian governance is more prevalent among others than previously assumed, individuals may adopt these views and then pass it on to others. Likewise, the described social mechanisms could amplify the effects of exogenous shocks on openness to authoritarian rule in society. All in all, the social malleability of support for authoritarian rule may be one piece of the puzzle helping to understand possible breakdowns of democratic societies.

2 Social influence and support for authoritarian rule

Recent episodes of autocratization and the resurgence of authoritarian leaders and political parties in many democracies have underscored concerns about the resilience of modern democratic systems – and raised questions about whether citizens are more susceptible to authoritarian rule than previously believed. In the wake of these developments, a substantial body of literature explores the nature and determinants of citizens' regime preferences - to understand the sources of their commitments to democracy and openness to more authoritarian alternatives.

Drawing on large-scale comparative surveys such as the World Values Survey and the European Social Survey, a considerable literature has shown that preferences for regime type vary significantly across populations (e.g., Inglehart, 2005; Norris and Inglehart, 2019; Dalton, 2004; Welzel, 2013). Some of these studies consider preferences for democratic vs authoritarian rule more specifically (Inglehart, 2003; Mauk, 2020), while others consider sets of attitudes consistent with preferences for democracy and autocracy, such as liberal or authoritarian attitudes more generally (Inglehart, 2005; Welzel, 2013). For instance, building on modernization theory, there is evidence that economic prosperity and security is linked to long-term changes in broader sets of attitudes consistent with preferences for democracy, while economic scarcity may foster attitudes consistent with preferences for authoritarian rule (Inglehart, 2005; Welzel, 2013; Stenner, 2005; Norris and Inglehart, 2019). Other contributions argue that in the wake of economic crisis and insecurity citizens may become more receptive to authoritarian alternatives promising economic revival, stability and decisive solution (e.g., Przeworski, 2000; Mounk, 2018). Other factors that have been pointed to as correlates of preferences for democratic and authoritarian rule are economic inequality (e.g., Acemoglu and Robinson, 2005), education (e.g., Glaeser, Ponzetto and Shleifer, 2007), religion (e.g., Inglehart, 2003; Bloom and Arikan, 2013) and authoritarian legacy (e.g., Linz

and Stepan, 1996)). More recently, a prominent literature drawing on survey experimental evidence has explored various factors that can account for citizens' (revealed) willingness to tolerate leaders that violate democratic principles (Graham and Svolik, 2020). This stream of literature points to key factors such as political polarization and partisan identity (Grossman et al., 2022; Graham and Svolik, 2020; Krishnarajan, 2023), policy preferences (Graham and Svolik, 2020; Wunsch and Gessler, 2023) and desire for competent leadership (Frederiksen, 2022).

While yielding important insights into the factors shaping citizens' preferences for democratic and autocratic rule – including political, economic, historical, and cultural factors – the bulk of existing literature studies regime preferences as *independent preferences*, (Bicchieri, 2016), e.g., determined by external factors (such as the economy) but shaped *independently from other people's beliefs and preferences*. However, we argue that there is reason to consider preferences for strong leaders with authoritarian tendencies as *interdependent*, i.e., shaped by and updated in response to the preferences of (and behavior of) other people (Bicchieri, 2016).

It is widely established that social influence can matter for political and social behavior, as demonstrated in early lab experiments (Asch, 1955) and (Milgram, 1961). Outside of the lab, there is evidence that social influence shapes outcomes such as voter turnout (Gerber, Green and Larimer, 2008), participation in revolutionary protest (Kuran, 1991), schooling efforts and achievements (Bursztyn and Jensen, 2017; Bursztyn, Fujiwara and Pallais, 2017) and donations to charitable causes (e.g., DellaVigna, List and Malmendier, 2012). Yet, the potential interdependence or social nature of regime preferences are poorly understood. Goldstein (2022) presents a theoretical model linking social norms to support for democracy and democratic violations, and supports this drawing on survey evidence from the United States. While Goldstein studies social norms and updating of political preferences due to information about strangers in a survey, we study the role of peer effects in the field.

In seeking to explain openness to authoritarian rule we also build on the study of authoritarianism as a broader psychological trait, which goes back to early contributions such as Adorno et al. (1950), arguing that support for Fascism in inter-war Europe could be linked to an "authoritarian personality". Insights from decades of social science research corroborate the notion that some form of divide between "liberal" and "authoritarian" dispositions exist, although scholars disagree on the proper conceptualisation and operationalization of these constructs (Welzel, 2013; Inglehart, 2005; Norris and Inglehart, 2019; Evans, Heath and Lalljee, 1996).

One influential contribution to the study of authoritarianism has been the concept of right-wing authoritarianism, usually understood as an emphasis on submission to strong authorities, conventionalism, and aggression, particularly towards outgroups (Altemeyer, 1988; Altemeyer and Altemeyer, 1996; Norris and Inglehart, 2019). Although widely used, this conceptualization has received criticism for its inability to distinguish authoritarianism from potential political outcomes of authoritarianism – such as right-wing populism and social conservative policy positions, as well as its exclusive emphasis on right-wing authoritarianism spectrum (e.g. Engelhardt, Feldman and Hetherington, 2023). In response to these criticisms, authoritarianism has been operationalized using measures such as individual child-rearing styles, that tap into authoritarianism as a psychological predisposition and are deliberately remote from the political domain (Engelhardt, Feldman and Hetherington, 2023). Another approach is to directly measure political outcomes of or manifestations of psychological authoritarianism. For instance, individuals with a more general authoritarian predisposition should be inclined to endorse a tightly ordered political system that concentrates power in the hand of one strong leader, which scholars call a authoritarian governance or regime preference (Malka et al., 2022).

Our approach is consistent with this latter approach, as we seek to explain citizens' openness to authoritarian governance. Hence, we diverge from the literature studying au-

thoritarianism more broadly and as a psychological predisposition. Instead, our focus is on one of its most prominent political manifestations, specifically one that is associated with the recent rise of anti-democratic forces in various countries.

The literature on authoritarianism more broadly has often regarded authoritarianism as an outcome of fundamental individual characteristics, such as genetic dispositions or brain features such as prefrontal cortex damage (e.g. Asp, Ramchandran and Tranel, 2012). They have also been explained by "Big Five" personality traits such as lower levels of openness to experience and higher levels of conscientiousness (Akrami and Ekehammar, 2006; Stenner, 2005; Perry and Sibley, 2013; Hotchin and West, 2018). Others show that the authoritarian personality is formed by deep-rooted experiences such as one's upbringing and family environment (Adorno et al., 1950; Oesterreich, 2005; Altemeyer, 1988). This focus on more stable factors is plausible, particularly when considering authoritarianism as a broader set of values, pertaining to different aspects of life and society. However, we argue that especially the more politically relevant manifestations of authoritarianism such as authoritarian regime preferences could also be updated due to immediate changes in the social environment.

Exploring the potential social transmission of preferences for authoritarian rule is crucial for several reasons. First, the study of how preferences for authoritarian leaders spread socially is vital to understanding the robustness of democracy in the face of rising autocratic tendencies. If preferences for authoritarian rule really are "interdependent" and transmitted through peers and social interactions, structural explanations for why citizens develop these preferences will fall short in accounting for why they emerge and spread. In particular, these explanations may be insufficient to explain sudden jumps in the popularity of authoritarian leaders, that may happen due to social transmission.

Second, the potential rapid spread of authoritarian preferences through social networks can lead to cascade effects, where initial shifts in attitudes trigger widespread changes across a society (Kuran, 1991). As more individuals adopt pro-authoritarian views, this can create a

bandwagon effect, further legitimizing these preferences and eroding democratic norms (Granovetter, 1978). Understanding these cascade effects is vital, as it highlights the potential for small, initial changes to snowball into significant political transformations.

In sum, while existing literature has provided valuable insights into the factors shaping individuals' independent preferences for authoritarian rule, we lack insights into the interdependence or social origin of these preferences. In exploring the social transmission of preferences for authoritarian rule in field and survey experiments we contribute to the understanding of how such preferences are formed and spread, and thereby also how strongman rule may rise to prominence in contemporary democracies.

3 Peer effects and support for authoritarian rule

Peer effects refer to the influence of peers on individuals. According to the classic definition by Manski (1993), these effects can reflect either the influence of peers' behaviors or preferences, or the influence of peers' characteristics. We test whether there are peer effects in support for authoritarian rule. There are several mechanisms through which political attitudes may travel across members of peer groups.

One important mechanism pertains to the role of *information transmission*. An individual may be exposed to new information about politics or society from talking to and/or overhearing discussions between peers. This information may lead to changes in policy positions and attitudes. Another mechanism is *persuasion*: When engaging with and talking to peers about political and social issues, an individual may become convinced by the positions or views of others. This could be due to the contents of the arguments presented, or due to cues that make certain arguments (presented by certain individuals) seem more plausible. People may also engage in *social conformity*, a term that encompasses both social imitation and social norms. Like social persuasion, social imitation also involves changing preferences

and attitudes so that they become more in line with those of other peers, but need not involve deliberate consideration about how plausible the views of others are. Rather, this involves a more automatic updating, as the preferences or views of peers serve as a cognitive heuristic for forming preferences. Social conformity may also be at play if attitudes are transmitted between peers due to social norms. When exposed to peers' political views, an individual may start thinking that those views are more socially desirable, as they express a social norm that will come with certain costs if it is violated (or rewards if it is followed). All these mechanisms may apply to the context of the Norwegian military and the transmission of support for authoritarian rule.

We first investigate the potential social updating of support for authoritarian rule using close and consistent interaction with peers in military dorms. Through the 8-week training camp individuals live with and interact closely with their roommates – during all times of the day, and become closely acquainted. Preferences for strong leaders may be transmitted to roommates during conversations about politics and society, involving those that speak directly to questions about democracy, authoritarianism and strong leaders. But such inclinations may also spread due to everyday discussions, including about situations that may come up during the training, such as questions related to chain-of-command and discipline.

Positions on the legitimacy of a strong leader that potentially depart from democratic principles may be influenced by the transmission of information from peers, including on the potential benefits of strong leaders, such as more efficient decision-making and the ability of strong leaders to implement necessary but unpopular policies. It may also be influenced by information about social problems that need to be addressed, and that may require a strong leader. Interaction with peers may also lead to changes in support due to persuasion, as recruits become convinced by others who present their views about the appropriateness of strong leaders. Finally, support for authoritarian rule may be transmitted between peers due to social conformity. Norwegian recruits may have pre-existing views before entering

the camp about how socially appropriate it is to be supportive of strong and potentially anti-democratic leaders. After interacting with peers in their dorms, recruits may update their views of what is socially appropriate, and that again may shape their own expressed views. Recruits may also imitate others and simply adopt their views.

The mechanisms discussed above pertain to how people update their preferences *due to* peers preferences for authoritarian rule per se – because peers' preferences persuade them, give them relevant information or because they change their views of what is socially appropriate. However, peer effects on preferences for authoritarian rule can also be driven by other characteristics of peers that *correlate* with their preferences for authoritarian rule. For instance, peers which are highly supportive of authoritarian rule may have particular political opinions, such as social conservatism or lack of trust in politicians, and if these attitudes are socially transmitted they may indirectly trigger preferences for authoritarian rule. Peers supportive of authoritarian rule may also have particular personality traits, such as assertiveness or dominance, which may again increase the level of support for authoritarian rule among those exposed to these peers. Such potential channels still involve individuals updating their own preferences for authoritarian rule to the preferences of their peers - consistent with the standard definition of peer effects - although the mechanisms are somewhat different than the ones we discussed above.

Based on these discussions, we test the following pre-registered hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1. *Recruits change their support for authoritarian rule in response to peers' support*

Second, we study a potentially more immediate updating of support for authoritarian rule, happening in response to new information (and perhaps changes in perceptions) about the orientations of peers. Individuals may update their preferences after learning about the preferences of others due to perceived social norms on authoritarianism and support for democracy. This information may influence people's perception about what is socially

appropriate, which may again trigger norm-driven changes in attitudes. Information about the views of others may also trigger social imitation, as individuals who do not hold strong views about democratic and authoritarian rule may simply use the information about others' preferences as a guide to their own response to the questions. Rather than changing preferences in order to conform to a norm, this may involve updating preferences because the information about the preferences of others is considered a guide to what is correct. These considerations yield the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2. *Recruits change their support for authoritarian rule after receiving updated information about peers' support for authoritarian rule.*

We also pre-registered a third hypothesis on whether the experience of military boot camp as such affects support for authoritarian rule. We had no directional expectation as plausible effects could go in both direction or could cancel each other out.[2]

4 Context

Norway has compulsory universal conscription for both men and women. A two-step screening process usually takes place in the last year of upper secondary high school. In the first step, all individuals in each cohort fill in a self-declaration form from the Armed Forces. Based on this information, approximately 17,500 of these individuals go on to conduct physical, medical, and cognitive tests across the country. At the end, the conscripts are interviewed about their interest and what type of service they wish to pursue. About half of those who are screened are then recruited for service based on ability and motivation. Most conscripts who serve in the Armed Forces declare that they serve voluntarily (Køber, 2020).

[2]For instance, Johnsen et al. (2022) find that competitive preferences become stronger during bootcamp but without peer effects at the room level seeming to be important. We discuss this hypothesis more in Appendix Section A.11.

The duration of military service is normally one year, and it starts with an eight-week basic training (bootcamp). During bootcamp, individuals are assigned to a troop, and then to a room within the barrack of that troop. The individuals conduct most of their training together as a troop but there are also many tasks they need to solve as a team at the room level, such as room cleaning. Data from the same camp show that individuals are more likely to spend time with people in their room than with other people in the camp (Hellum, 2020). After bootcamp, the soldiers apply for different positions and are spread to different camps around Norway.

This is a useful setting for testing peer effects because from one day to the next recruits are put into a social setting that differs tremendously from what they know from their past everyday lives. Importantly, they are made to interact and live with peers that are new to them. At the beginning, they have to get accustomed to their roommates' expectations, habits, and world views. Many will likely try to fit in and adapt to their new environment. One consequence of this integration process is that they learn about their peers' attitudes, including on questions of hierarchy, obedience and individual self-expression. Previous studies have found strong peer effects in the bootcamp of the Norwegian Armed Forces (NAF) on gender attitudes (Dahl, Kotsadam and Rooth, 2021; Finseraas et al., 2016) and attitudes towards immigrants (Finseraas and Kotsadam, 2017; Finseraas et al., 2019).

5 Data, randomization and coding of main variables

We collected baseline data on the first day of military service, in September 2022. When recruits arrived at the camp they went through various posts, such as drug checks by the military police, dental control, and a post where we administered a baseline survey in a designated room. Groups of around 45 recruits entered the room at the time. The survey is voluntary but everyone was asked to sit in the room in silence until everyone (who wants to)

had completed the survey, which took between 15-25 minutes. Over 99 percent of the recruits consented and filled out the survey at baseline. The survey questions are broad and relate to attitudes and behaviors on a range of issues. Importantly, we measure baseline values of our main outcome variables, which we discuss below. This is used to estimate whether recruits change their answers during military service, and to estimate any peer effects.

We collected follow-up data on November 13, 2022. As expected, we did not manage to reach all respondents initially sampled since some people quit during bootcamp. We show in Appendix Table A.1, however, that there is no selective attrition and attrition is not correlated with baseline support for authoritarian rule. The follow-up survey included many of the same measures as the baseline survey and in addition, we conducted the survey experiment (see below). We describe the coding of each variable in Appendix Section A.3 and descriptive statistics for all our variables are shown in Appendix Table A.14.

Field-experiment: Design and measures

Our field experimental intervention consists of randomizing individuals to live in different rooms for the duration of the recruit period, rather than letting officers or soldiers choose their roommates, which is the usual procedure at the camp. This generates exogenous peer effects as recruits are assigned to roommates with varying levels of support for authoritarian rule. In other words, by chance, some recruits will live with highly authoritarian peers while others will have very anti-authoritarian roommates and most will live with peers who exhibit moderate authoritarian views. This random variation in roommates' support for authoritarian rule allows us to analyze the causal effects of assignment to rooms with higher or lower baseline levels of support for authoritarian rule on attitudes. It is important to note, also with respect to ethical considerations, that in the field-experiment we did not intervene in any other way other than randomly assigning rooms. For instance, we did not actively stimulate discussions on a certain topic or actively trigger support for authoritarian rule.

To measure support for authoritarian rule we employ a survey measure that clearly highlights anti-democratic implications: "For each of the following statements below, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each. Do you strongly agree (1), agree (2), neither agree or disagree (3) disagree (4), strongly disagree (5)?" - "*It is important to have a strong leader who gets things done, even if this sometimes means bypassing parliament and elections.*" Similar measures are commonly used in the study of support for authoritarian rule. The measure directly taps into support for the kind of "strongman" leader that has emerged in many contemporary societies, characterized by willingness and ability to concentrate power in own hands while overriding democratic checks and balances. We reverse code the variable such that agreement get higher values and refer to the variable as *Support for authoritarian rule*. In Appendix Section A.10 we present evidence from original survey data that we collected to validate this measure.

We measure *beliefs about support for authoritarian rule of others'* with the following survey item: "If you were to guess, what do you think is the most common response to the former question (about strong leaders) among other respondents in the room where you lived during the recruit period?"[3] The answer categories are the same as in the question for support for authoritarian rule and this variable is also reverse coded.

Both of these variables are measured at baseline and in the endline survey. Figure 1 shows the distribution of support for authoritarian rule from the baseline survey, overlaid with beliefs about the support for authoritarian rule of others. There is substantial variation in support for authoritarian rule: 22 percent of the sample agree or strongly agree that it is important to have a strong leader while 48 percent disagree or strongly disagree. The most popular response option is to "neither agree nor disagree" that "[i]t is important to have a strong leader who gets things done, even if this sometimes means bypassing parliament and election". As for other attitude scales, it is unclear whether choosing the mid-point reflects

[3]At baseline, the belief question was about all other respondents taking the survey at the same time.

a moderate opinion, ambivalence, or indifference.

Moreover, Figure 1 shows that recruits' beliefs about their peers' support for authoritarian rule do not perfectly match their actual orientations.

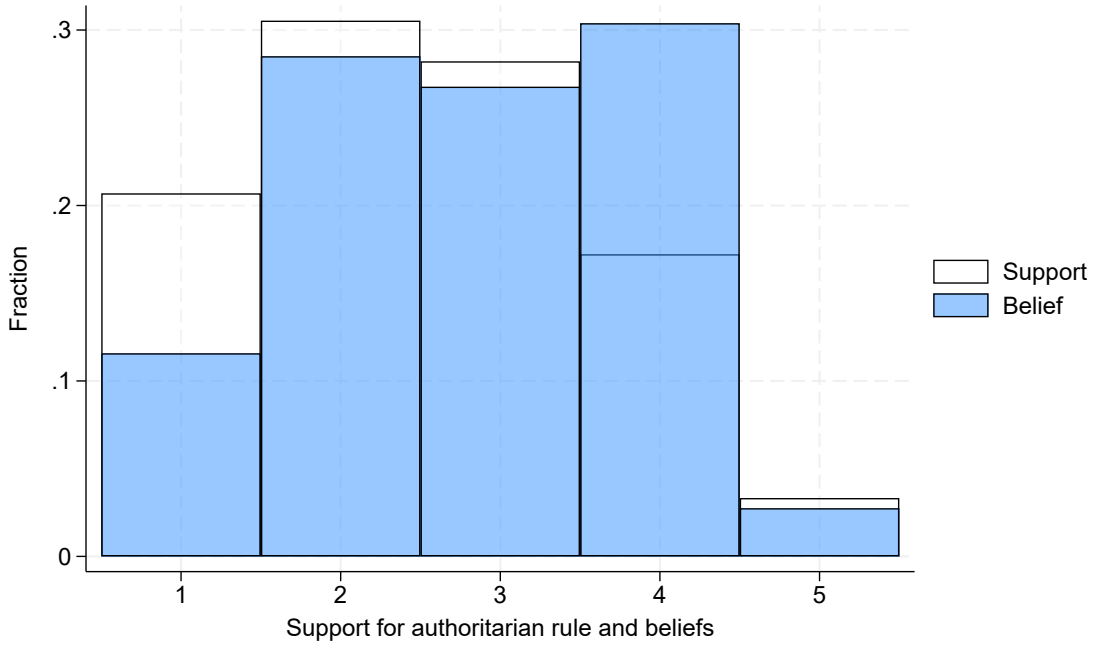

Figure 1: Support for authoritarian rule and beliefs.
Notes: The sample consists of all recruits that answered the survey at baseline. "Orientation" refers to recruits' own answers to the question on strong leaders, while "belief" refers to their beliefs about the answers of other recruits (1 strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neither agree nor disagree, 4 agree, 5 strongly agree).

We also measure other aspects of authoritarianism at endline. These were pre-registered as secondary outcomes, partly because we think they measure more stable personality traits or more extreme versions of authoritarianism and partly since they were only measured at endline so we do not have peer measures for these variables (see Appendix Section A.6 for details on these variables). We measure *Support for military rule* as agreement with the statement "It is OK that the military takes over when the government is incompetent". *Authoritarian values* more generally are captured drawing on a battery of questions on

principles for child-rearing that has been shown to tap authoritarian personality very well by Engelhardt, Feldman and Hetherington (2023). Finally, we measure *Preferences for political order* as thinking that "Maintaining order in the nation" is an important national priority. Table 1 shows that support for authoritarian rule correlate with these measures of authoritarianism.

In Appendix Section A.5 we further show that support for authoritarian rule is higher for men than for women, that it is negatively correlated with self-reported grades from high school (GPA), political interest, and voter turnout intentions, and that it is correlated with party choice. We also note that support for authoritarian rule at baseline do not correlate with wanting to continue in the military after the conscription year.

Table 1: Correlation between our measure of support for authoritarian rule and other measures of authoritarianism

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Military rule	Authoritarian preferences	Political order
Support for authoritarian rule at baseline	0.31***	0.35***	0.040***
	(0.038)	(0.063)	(0.015)
Mean in sample	2.80	3.92	0.70
N	688	685	691
Controls	No	No	No

Notes: Standard errors, clustered at the room level, are in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

The main independent variable for measuring peer effects is *support for authoritarian rule in the room* which, as pre-registered, is the average score on support for authoritarian rule for all others in the room (excluding the person herself) as measured in the baseline survey.

In combination with the random room assignment, the variation in an almost normally distributed attitude ensures that different recruits will experience different preference climates depending on the room they are assigned to (see Figure A.6).

Survey-experiment: Design and measures

Our survey experiment conducted towards the end of the bootcamp consists of varying information about the answers of all recruits to the question on support for authoritarian rule at baseline. As we have seen, the modal answer at baseline was "neither agree nor disagree" which allows us to frame the findings in two different but equally true ways that either emphasize the support or the lack of support for authoritarian rule:

Also at the first day of the recruit period you were all asked whether you agreed or disagreed with the statement "It is important to have a strong leader who gets things done, even if this sometimes means bypassing parliament and elections." [Treatment 1 or 2]

1. Authoritarian treatment: "This statement was somewhat popular among the recruits, as only a minority disagreed or strongly disagreed with it."
2. Anti-authoritarian treatment: "This statement was somewhat unpopular among the recruits, as more respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed than agreed or strongly agreed with it."

This information was given at the end of the survey in order not to dilute our main outcome variable for the peer effects treatment which was surveyed earlier in the survey. After the information was given we again asked respondents about their orientation and beliefs about others. The belief question at the end of the follow-up survey is no longer about the people they shared room with, but rather about the beliefs about all other respondents taking the survey at the same time.[4] Using these outcomes, we can analyse the effect of information about others' support for authoritarian rule on a person's own support for authoritarian rule.

To minimize the risk of any harm, we provided additional information to individuals who received the authoritarian treatment at the end of the survey. We informed them that,

[4]Querying responses to the same question twice in one survey wave runs the risk of demand or anchoring effects but experimental evidence suggest that repeated measures designs tend to yield the same results as designs that split responses across survey waves (Clifford, Sheagley and Piston, 2021).

actually, the most common answer was neither disagree nor agree and that there were in fact more people that disagreed than agreed with the statement. We did this to reduce the possibility of any updated beliefs about strong support for authoritarian rule in the longer term.

6 Empirical strategy and hypotheses

There are two main challenges in identifying causal peer effects. Firstly, people often choose who they associate with, so any similarities observed might be because they were already alike before they met, rather than one person influencing the other. To address this, we randomly decided who would be living and working together in rooms. Secondly, when we study the soldiers' answers at the end of boot-camp, it's unclear whether soldier A influenced soldier B or soldier B influenced soldier A (the reflection problem). To avoid this, we use the soldiers' answers measured at baseline to define fellow roommate's authoritarian rule preferences (the 'characteristics of the peers').

To test our first hypothesis about peer effects in support for authoritarian rule we run the following regression:

(1) $Y_{i,t1,r} = \beta Support\ for\ authoritarian\ rule\ in\ room_{i,t0,r-i} + \gamma X_{i,t0} + \delta Troop_{itr} + \epsilon_{itr}$,

where i is individual, t is time (t=0 is baseline and t=1 is endline), and r is room. The main outcome variable in this regression is *Support for authoritarian rule* and we study effects on beliefs as a secondary outcome. The *Support for authoritarian rule in the room* are measured as the support for authoritarian rule of the other people, i.e. excluding the individual herself (r-i).

A noteworthy issue is that there will be an artificial negative correlation between *Support for authoritarian rule in the room* and the individual's own baseline attitudes. Since peers cannot be assigned to themselves, individuals with below-average values will by construc-

tion face peers with higher values (Farrar et al., 2009; Feld and Zölitz, 2017; Guryan, Kroft and Notowidigdo, 2009). It is therefore necessary to control for individuals' own baseline values. The vector $\mathbf{X}$ contains the baseline values of the outcome variables and the other pre-treatment control variables in Table A.14. Troop fixed effects are strata variables as individuals are randomly assigned within troops. We cluster the standard errors at the room level in these analyses (we have 135 rooms). Since the randomization structure as well as the clustering is somewhat complex we also present results based on randomization inference (not pre-registered). Randomization inference evaluates causal effects by juxtaposing observed outcomes against the distribution from other potential random assignments of the intervention (we use 1000 perturbations), assessing the likelihood of seeing the observed result, or more extreme ones, if the intervention had no effect.

To evaluate our second hypothesis concerning peer effects, which posits that providing information about the baseline answers of others affects support for authoritarian rule, we estimate the following regression:

(2) $Y_{i,t2} = \beta Authoritarian\ Treatment_{i,t2} + \gamma X_{i,t0} + \delta Troop_{itr} + \epsilon_{it}$,

where Y is either attitudes or beliefs, but this time from the second time we measure the variable in the endline survey (t2). The vector $\mathbf{X}$ includes the same variable as in equation (1). We use robust standard errors in these regressions.

As pre-registered, our main estimation is one with optimal controls being chosen from the total list of controls using a post-double LASSO selection approach of Belloni, Chernozhukov and Hansen (2014). The LASSO selection approach selects those variables that are correlated with both treatment and the outcomes and variables that are highly correlated with the outcome. This may improve precision in the estimates and it also helps to correct for potential imbalances across groups.

In the appendix, we report balance tests (see Table A.15) where we regress the two treatment variables on a long list of 17 baseline variables. Most importantly, the balance tests

show that recruits did not cluster in rooms depending on their baseline levels of support for authoritarian rule. For both balance tests, only one of the 17 variables correlates significantly with treatment status at the 5 percent level, and the F-tests, testing whether all variables jointly predict treatment, are not statistically significant. See Appendix Section A.3 for a fuller discussion of the balance tests.

7 Results

In this section, we present the results for the peer effects treatment and the survey experiment in the military in turn. We then report on replications in other populations.

Peer effects

Table 2 reports our main results from the field experiment. Column one shows statistically significant effects of being randomly placed with peers of different levels of support for authoritarian rule on a person's own support for authoritarian rule, also when adjusting for testing three main hypotheses. The p-value from the randomization inference is also very low and shows that we only get as extreme values as in our actual randomization in 8 out of 1000 permutations of the treatment assignment. In Appendix Figure A.2 we show a binned scatterplot of the effects of *Support for authoritarian rule in the room* on individual *Support for authoritarian rule* from the LASSO specification. All dots include approximately equally many observations and we superimpose a line based on the full individual level data.

Spending bootcamp in a room where peers scored on average 1 point higher on the 5-point support for authoritarian rule scale at baseline increases the recruit's support for authoritarian rule by 0.16. Is this a meaningful change? The effect corresponds to 6 percent of the mean (and 15 percent of a standard deviation) in support for authoritarian rule in the sample. An effect of 0.16 scale points corresponds to 76 percent of the gender difference in

support for authoritarian rule (see column 3 of Table A.15). Another way to interpret the size of the effect is to compare the magnitude with differences across countries in the World Values Survey data. A one-unit increase in support for authoritarian rule among peers corresponds to replacing Norwegian (the 4th lowest ranked country out of 101) with Chinese (the 58th lowest ranked country) peers. If such a change in social context increases Norwegians' support for authoritarian rule by 0.16 it would imply moving them from Norwegian values to French values (the 37th lowest ranked country).

In column two we show the effects of actual support for authoritarian rule in the room on individual *beliefs about the support for authoritarian rule* of the other people in the room and we see that the effect here is also positive, albeit only statistically significant at the 10 percent level using standard inference (and at the 5 percent level using randomization inference). This shows that the respondents seem somewhat aware of the fact that their room mates are more or less authoritarian.

Table 2: Peer effects on support for authoritarian rule and beliefs

	(1)	(2)
	Support for authoritarian rule	Beliefs about support for authoritarian rule
Support for authoritarian rule in the room	0.16***	0.12*
	(0.057)	(0.067)
Mean in sample	2.50	2.72
N	678	677
Randomization inference p-value	0.008	0.038
Controls	Lasso	Lasso

Notes: All regressions control for troop fixed effects and optimally selected controls out of the list of baseline controls. Standard p-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$. The p-values for the randomization inference are based on 1000 perturbations of the treatment assignment. Standard errors are clustered at the room level and shown in parentheses.

In Appendix Tables A.2 to A.4 we present the results with change scores and with different sets of control variables and we note that the results are very similar. For the three secondary

outcomes, for which we expected higher inertia, we show in Appendix Table A.16 that the treatment effects are indistinguishable from zero (*Military rule*, p=.19; *Authoritarian preferences*, p=.71; *Political order*, p=.0.37). Note that these variables were not in the baseline survey so the test is less direct as we do not have peer measures for the same constructs. Due to lack of baseline data, the test for these variables is also less well powered.[5]

So far, we have demonstrated that when individuals are paired with peers who have either stronger or weaker support for authoritarian rule, there is a causal change in their own orientations. However, this does not necessarily imply that it is solely the support for authoritarian rule of their peers that is driving this effect. Given that authoritarian peers can differ in various ways—not just in their support for authoritarian rule — it is not guaranteed that manipulating peer's authoritarian tendencies would produce the same result. In real-world contexts, people exhibit a wide array of traits and characteristics. The task of isolating and adjusting a single trait, while keeping all others unchanged, is not just practically difficult but also does not mirror realistic scenarios. Nevertheless, as displayed in column 1 of Table A.5, when we create peer measures for all 17 baseline characteristics of the peers included in our control set and control for them as well, we still observe very similar effects on support for authoritarian rule (not pre-registered). These measures include GPA, political interest, parental education, and what the peers would vote for. In column 2 we additionally add 11 more traits of of the peers, including attitudes towards immigrants and refugees, attitudes toward redistribution, share with immigrant background, and attitudes toward gender equality. The results are similar with these controls and, if anything, even stronger. Hence, the observed effect on support is not influenced by any of our other measured peer

[5]In Appendix Section A.7 we explore heterogeneous treatment effects and conduct some auxiliary analyses of the data with respect to both peer effects and the information treatment. These results show limited heterogeneity in the treatment effects with respect to baseline characteristics (i.e., the effect does not differ depending on gender, previous grades, or even baseline beliefs).

characteristics - including the various measures of political attitudes. There could of course still be unmeasured peer characteristics explaining why individuals update their support for authoritarian rule in line with their roommates' support for authoritarian rule. Hence, we can not conclude that peers' support for authoritarian rule *in it self* is the driving force for this change. But we can conclude that support for authoritarian rule is socially transmitted in the sense that peers in the same room become more closely aligned on their preferences for authoritarian rule.

Notably, social influence as theorized and demonstrated in Table 2 can go in both directions. Recruits align with their peers and can become more or less authoritarian, depending on the climate in the room. We pre-registered to conduct exploratory analyses of non-linear effects both by using the different degrees of the main exposure variable and by testing whether the number of peers with more extreme support in the room had effects. We discuss these results extensively in Appendix Section A.2 and we note that the results seem somewhat model dependent. On the one hand, when splitting the *Preferences for authoritarian rule in the room* measure into three equally sized groups we find that random assignment to relatively high levels of average authoritarian peers seem more important than being assigned to rooms with lower levels. Similarly, the results are more robust in stress tests when we remove less authoritarian rooms than when we remove more authoritarian rooms. On the other hand, the effects go in both directions when we explore the effects of being assigned to different numbers of authoritarian or anti-authoritarian peers. The fact that we do not find changed attitudes overall during bootcamp (see Table A.26) also supports the notion of effects in both directions.

In investigating who is affected, it is noteworthy that not only those who were initially indifferent or somewhat receptive to authoritarian rule are impacted. Figure 2 presents a Sankey diagram illustrating the shifts in support for authoritarian rule from baseline to endline, depending on the type of room individuals were assigned to. The left side displays

the evolution for individuals assigned to rooms with the one third highest levels of support for authoritarian rule, while the right side shows the evolution of all other recruits. The width of the lines is proportional to the share of individuals transitioning from one response to another.

Focusing first on the left-hand side of the figure, which represents the evolution for those assigned to highly authoritarian rooms, we observe that the widest lines generally connect the same categories, indicating that many individuals provide consistent responses at both baseline and endline. However, there is also substantial movement, suggesting that changes do occur. Particularly, we find that individuals who were initially opposed to or strongly opposed to strong leaders are also affected by the authoritarian climate in these rooms, as a significant share of them become more accepting of strong leaders after living in a highly "authoritarian dorm" for eight weeks. On the right side of the figure, which shows the evolution in all other rooms, we observe that the shifts are less skewed toward more support for authoritarian rule at endline.

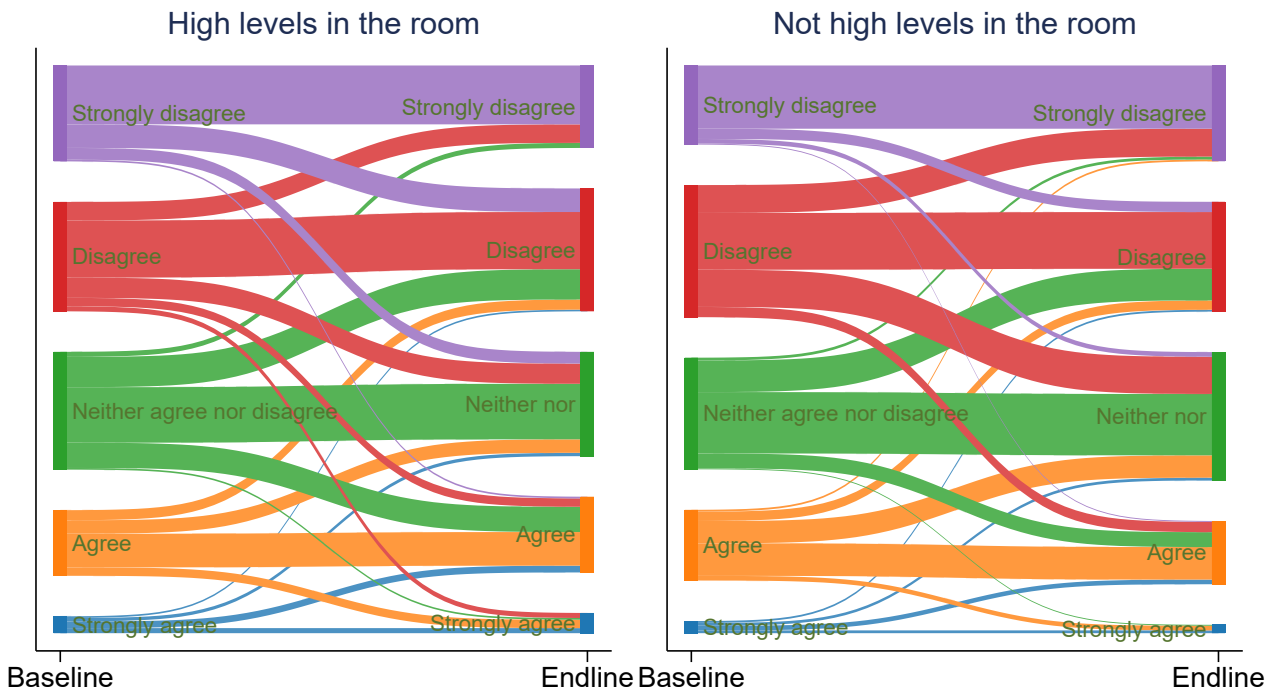

Figure 2: Movements in support for authoritarian rule during bootcamp.

Notes: The Sankey diagram shows the movements in support for authoritarian rule during bootcamp from baseline responses, distinguishing between assignment to a dorm with high levels (top 33 percent) and not high levels (the other 67 percent) of support for authoritarian rule.

In sum, we find peer effects in support for authoritarian rule: individuals update their own preferences in line with the support for authoritarian rule of randomly assigned room mates.

Information experiment

Below, we test whether learning about the attitudes of others in itself can be a mechanism for changes in attitudes. Alternatively, peers may have an effect by transmitting information about society or by persuasion or recruits may update their support for authoritarian rule not due to the support for authoritarian rule of peers' per se, but because authoritarian peers

tend to have other traits that should also make recruits more favorable towards authoritarian rule.

We test whether information about other soldiers' attitudes has a causal effect on support for authoritarian rule by conducting the information experiment described in Section 5. We embedded this survey experiment at the end of the questionnaire that recruits received at the very end of boot camp in order not to confound the field experiment. We see in column 1 of Table 3 that the *Authoritarian treatment* changes the recruits' own support for authoritarian rule. When informed that authoritarian rule is popular among their fellow recruits, the recruits' own reported support for authoritarian rule is 0.42 points higher on a 5-point scale (16 percent of the mean). This effect is highly statistically significant, also if we were to adjust for testing three main hypotheses. In column 2 we see that the effect on beliefs is also highly statistically significant and substantial in size. Figure 3 shows that the shift in beliefs and orientation are both systematic and clear.[6]

Table 3: Effects of the authoritarian treatment on support for authoritarian rule and beliefs

	(1)	(2)
	Support for authoritarian rule	Beliefs about support for authoritarian rule
Authoritarian treatment	0.42***	0.92***
	(0.057)	(0.057)
Mean in sample	2.63	2.79
N	684	684
Controls	Lasso	Lasso

Notes: Robust standard errors in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

[6]In Appendix Tables A.6 and A.7 we show that the results are stable with different sets of control variables and in Appendix Tables A.8 and A.9 we show that there are no effects of the information experiment on beliefs and orientations asked earlier in the survey, i.e. there are no effects on these placebo outcomes.

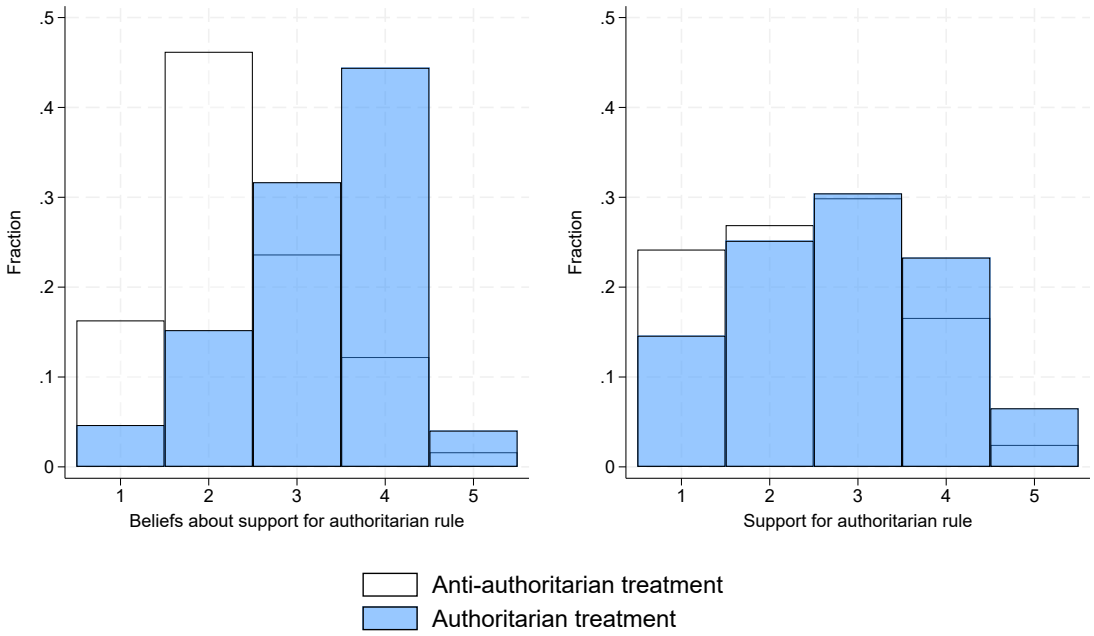

Figure 3: Effects of the authoritarian treatment on the distribution of support for authoritarian rule and beliefs.

Hence, information indicating that support for authoritarian rule is relatively popular among other recruits changes both beliefs about others' attitudes as well as attitudes themselves. Yet, while the results from Table 3 show the aggregate effects of the information treatment, there could still be heterogeneous effects depending on a person's initial level of support for authoritarian rule. More specifically, perhaps the authoritarian treatment only increases support for strong leaders among those who already were relatively open to strong leaders in the first place, while not shifting the views of those who were strongly opposed.

We find no evidence that the authoritarian information treatment exclusively influences those already predisposed to authoritarian rule. As illustrated on the left side of Figure 4, a substantial portion of participants who initially expressed strong opposition to strong leadership ("strongly disagreed" with the statement) became more accepting when exposed to the authoritarian treatment. A similar pattern emerges for those who initially "disagreed"

with the statement, indicating that even those least inclined toward authoritarian rule are responsive to social cues in its favor. The right side of the figure shows the movements in support for authoritarian rule when individuals get the anti-authoritarian treatment. Here we see that the direction of the change is in the other direction. Hence, the effects of the information treatment are clearly symmetric and it is possible to move people in both directions.

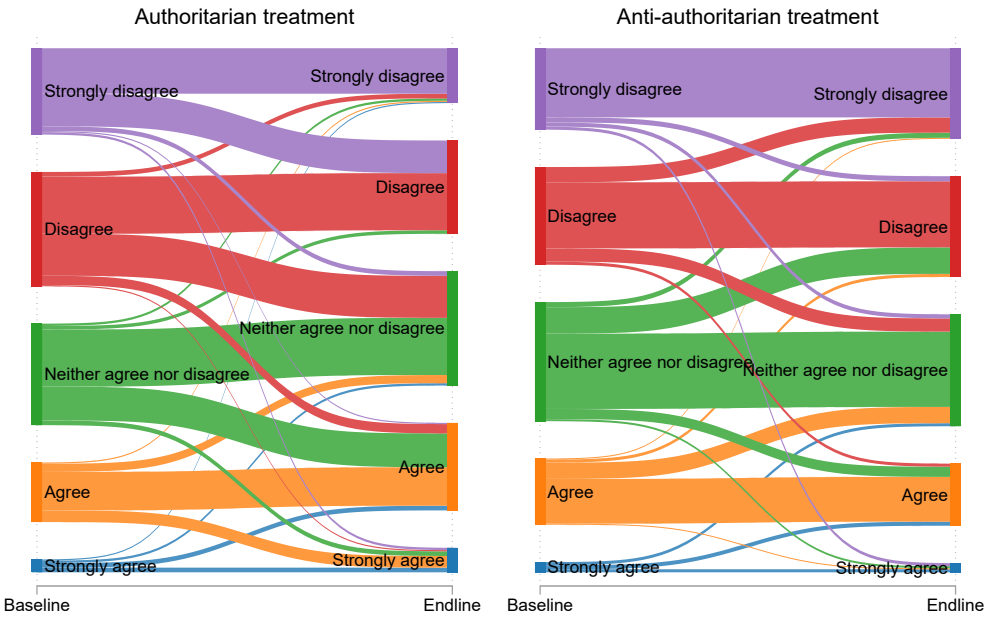

Figure 4: Movements in support for authoritarian rule in the endline survey by treatment.

Notes: The Sankey diagram shows the movements in support for authoritarian rule from responses early in the survey ("Before") to responses after the Authoritarian treatment ("After").

In summary, our survey experiment suggests that support for authoritarian rule can shift when individuals learn about the preferences of others. Although we can not know if the same thing is happening in the field experiment, this finding may give us some insights into the mechanisms driving social transmission of preferences for authoritarian rule. In particular, it shows that social transmission can happen due to *information about other*

people's preferences for authoritarian rule per se - rather than it being only driven by other correlated characteristics of peers, or due to the transmission of other types of information about the world happening in the dorms. We can not, however, identify exactly what it is about the information about other people's preferences for authoritarian rule that drives the transmission. For instance, it could be due to social conformity or because the information about others' preferences serves as a signal of what is true about the world.

Replications in other surveys

Despite universal conscription for men and women in Norway, not all young Norwegians serve in the military. Due to various processes of selection and self-selection, those who serve in the military are not a random draw even from the younger Norwegian population. To assess the generalizability of our findings, we replicated the survey experiment on a YouGov sample of 1,500 Norwegian citizens that mirrors the general Norwegian population on age, gender, and education. We included the exact same question on support for authoritarian rule. The survey treatments were similar and we used the same data from the military camp to create them. However, instead of telling respondents that recruits had answered the survey before we wrote: a. "This statement was somewhat popular among respondents in a recent survey, as only a minority disagreed or strongly disagreed with it." or b. "This statement was somewhat unpopular among respondents in a recent survey, as more respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed than agreed or strongly agreed with it." Additionally, one-third of the respondents comprised a pure control group that received the question without any treatment. The survey did not measure beliefs.

In Figure 5, we demonstrate that support for authoritarian rule in the military sample at baseline and in the general population are similar without any treatment, and they are not statistically significantly different (p=0.43).[7]

[7]We also show the that the distributions are similar, albeit somewhat more extreme in the general

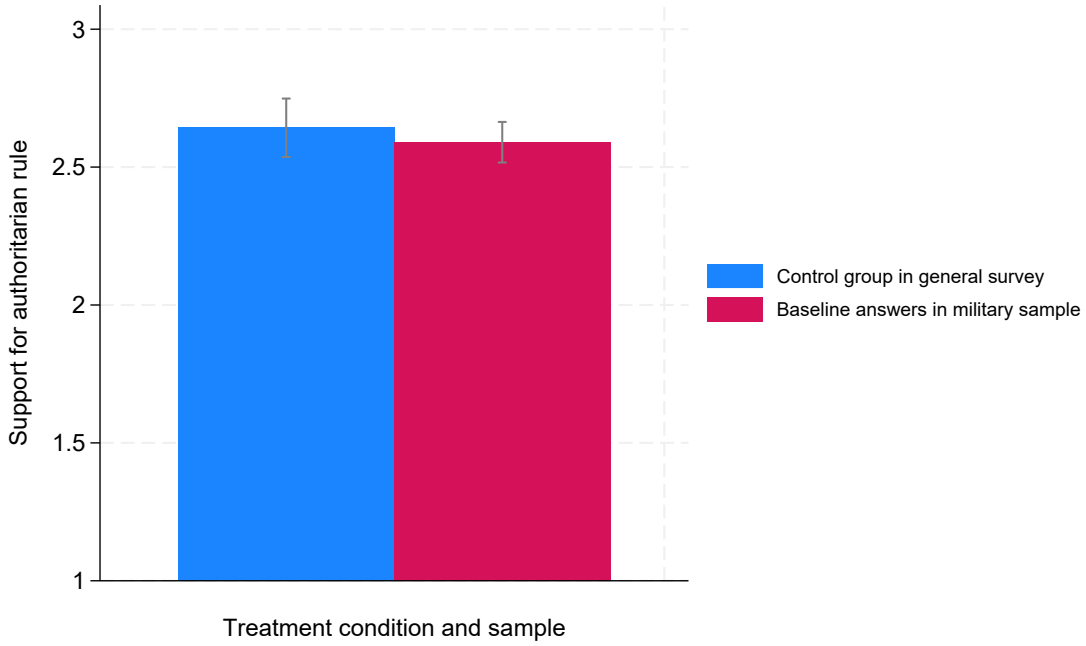

Figure 5: Difference across samples in support for authoritarian rule.
Notes: The figure shows histograms with 95 percent confidence intervals. The sample includes the pure control group in the general population and the baseline responses for all individuals in the military survey. (N=1357)

Moreover, we obtain the same substantive findings when replicating the survey-experiment. Information about other peoples' support for authoritarian rule affects the respondents' self-reported level of support for authoritarian rule. On the left of Figure 6, we show support for authoritarian rule among respondents who received information suggesting that such support was widespread. The results for the control group that received no information are shown on the right. In the middle, we see the results for the second experimental group that received information suggesting that support for authoritarian rule was not widespread. As in the survey experiment among military recruits, learning about other people's support for authoritarian rule leads individuals to adjust their reported level of support to align more closely with the perceived opinions of others (see Appendix Section A.8 for details and mod-

population, in Appendix Figure A.3.

els that more closely follow the same analytic strategy as in the military sample). Having a pure control group also enables us to show that the effect of the authoritarian treatment is similar in strength to that of the anti-authoritarian treatment.

Although we cannot replicate the field experiment in the general population, these findings suggest that similar processes might be at play in the general population as those that have likely led recruits to change their support for authoritarian rule in accordance with their peers' orientations. The analysis of the general population survey was not pre-specified.

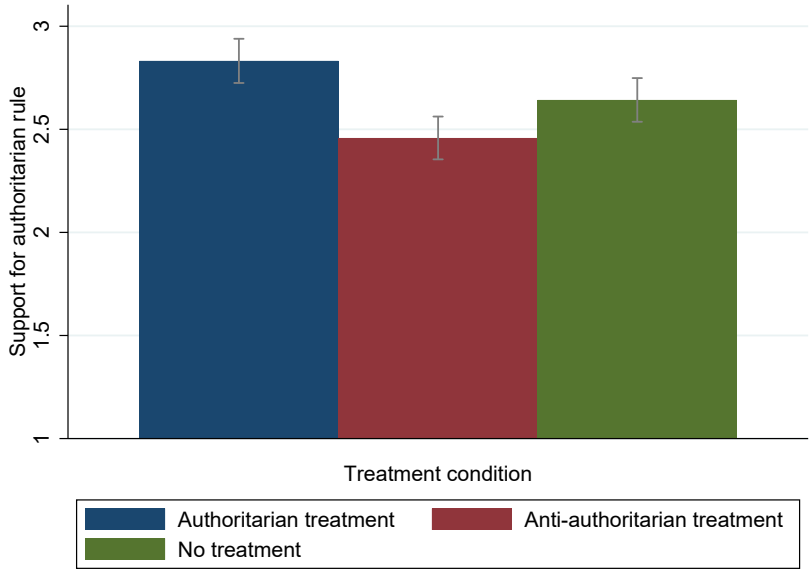

Figure 6: Comparison of *support for authoritarian rule* by treatment in the general population.

Notes: The sample includes the whole general population sample (N=1500)

Finally, to provide some evidence on whether the results travel outside of Norway, we also draw on evidence from a diverse, cross-national sample of over 25,000 respondents from more than 29 countries, that was presented with the same survey experiment as the Norwegian population (see Appendix Section A.9 for details). Again we find a statistically significant effect of the authoritarian treatment in this cross-country sample, suggesting a broader applicability of our findings across different national contexts.

8 Conclusion

We investigate the impact of social influence on support for authoritarian rule through a field experiment involving Norwegian military recruits. Our findings indicate that recruits adjust their support for strongman rule in line with the views of their randomly assigned roommates. Additionally, a survey experiment, in which recruits were selectively informed about the peer support for authoritarian rule, revealed strong effects on both beliefs and stated preferences.

Hence, our study provides evidence that preferences for authoritarian rule are (partly) shaped by social influence, in that people update their preferences for authoritarian rule in line with their peers and with information about other people's preferences. It is difficult to exactly pin down the mechanisms driving this social transmission, however. For instance, peer effects within the military setting could stem directly from exposure to authoritarian preferences themselves, from unmeasured correlated characteristics of peers with these preferences, from argument-based persuasion, or the exchange of political and societal information within the dorms. The survey experiment helps us isolate the effect of learning about others' preferences for authoritarian rule from other correlated characteristics or processes within the dorms, but we still can't know exactly what it is about this information that drives the change. We leave these questions about the specific mechanisms behind social influence for future research.

Our findings raise questions about the resilience of democratic cultures and the spread of authoritarian tendencies. The social basis of regime preferences that we have identified could imply that support for authoritarian rule could quickly spread in a society when citizens realize that these attitudes are more widespread than previously thought. It also points to the potential for cascade effects, where initial shifts in attitudes—through exogeneous shocks—can spread rapidly through social networks, potentially leading to widespread changes in political

norms. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for identifying how authoritarian sentiments might proliferate even in seemingly stable democracies and for developing effective strategies to reinforce and sustain democratic values.

Our field experiment, conducted within the context of military dorms in the Norwegian Armed Forces, was unusual and extreme in certain aspects. The respondents are young adults, which may make them more malleable to change. The particular setting, while highly relevant in its own right, may have rendered new recruits particularly susceptible to social influence with respect to authoritarianism. Results may vary in other social contexts. We do note, however, that since recruits do not become more positive to authoritarian rule during bootcamp, the setting may be less extreme than many would have expected. In any case, our findings provide valuable evidence of clear peer effects on support for authoritarian rule, illustrating that authoritarian sentiments can be partially triggered by social environments and interactions with peers. We also note that the recruits' orientations closely resemble those of the general population, and that we find similar effects of the survey experiment when conducted on other populations. We hope that future studies will be able to conduct similar field experiments in other settings to assess the broader applicability of our results.

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Online Appendix

A.1 Tables and Figures Discussed in the Paper

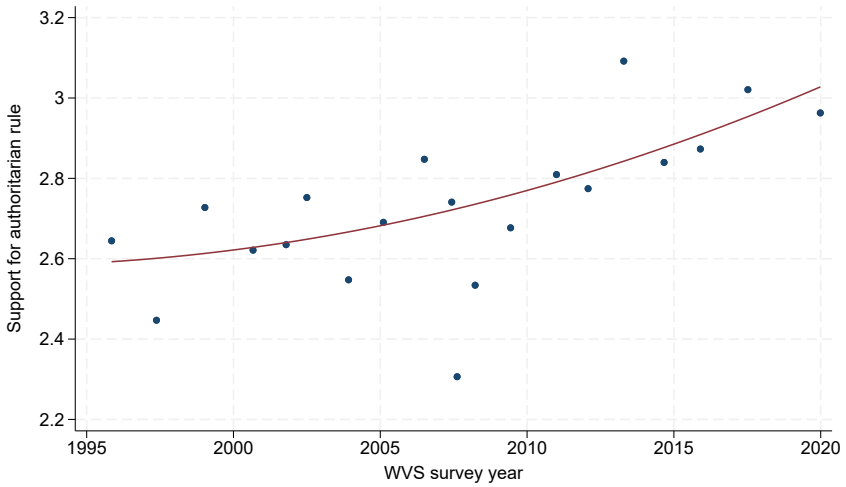

Figure A.1: *Support for authoritarian rule* in the World Values Survey over time.
Notes: The figure shows a binned scatterplot where each dot contains equally many observations. Country fixed effects (101) are controlled out. N=429,674

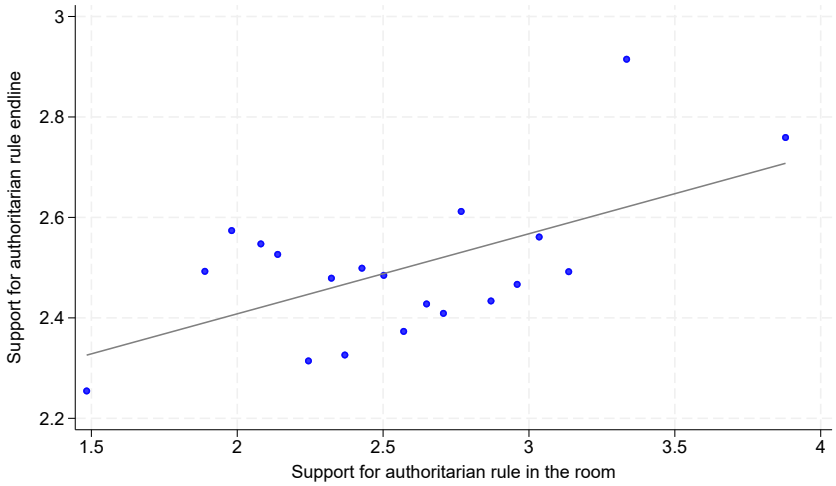

Figure A.2: Support for authoritarian rule and preferences in the room.
Notes: The figure shows binned scatterplots where each dot contains equally many observations. The fitted line is estimated on all the underlying data and controls for the optimal controls chosen by the post double LASSO procedure.

Table A.1: Attrition

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Support for authoritarian rule in the room	-0.0030	0.00030	-0.0068
	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.017)
Mean in sample	0.09	0.09	0.09
N	745	745	745
Controls	Lasso	Necessary	Full

Notes: The sample includes all individuals answering at baseline. Attrition is defined as the individuals that answered at baseline but not at endline. The necessary controls include troop fixed effects and baseline attitudes. Standard errors, clustered at the room level, are in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

Table A.2: Peer effects on support for authoritarian rule with different specifications of the dependent variable.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Main specification	Change scores	Change scores
Support for authoritarian rule in the room	0.16***	0.14**	0.17**
	(0.057)	(0.059)	(0.078)
Mean in sample	1.00	1.00	1.00
N	678	677	677
Controls	Lasso	Lasso	Troop

Notes: Column 1 shows the results from our main specification. Columns 2 and 3 instead present results where the dependent variable is the change score of endline minus baseline values. Standard errors, clustered at the room level, are in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

Table A.3: Peer effects on support for authoritarian rule with different sets of controls

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Support for authoritarian rule in the room	0.16***	0.15**	0.12**
	(0.057)	(0.059)	(0.058)
Mean in sample	2.50	2.50	2.50
N	678	677	678
Randomization inference p-value	0.008	0.008	0.036
Controls	Lasso	Necessary	Full

Notes: The necessary controls include troop fixed effects and baseline attitudes. Standard errors, clustered at the room level, are in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

Table A.4: Peer effects on beliefs about support for authoritarian rule with different sets of controls

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Support for authoritarian rule in the room	0.12*	0.15**	0.10
	(0.067)	(0.069)	(0.072)
Mean in sample	2.72	2.71	2.72
N	677	676	677
Randomization inference p-value	0.038	0.018	0.097
Controls	Lasso	Necessary	Full

Notes: The necessary controls include troop fixed effects and baseline attitudes. Standard errors, clustered at the room level, are in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

Table A.5: Peer effects while controlling for other peer characteristics

	(1) Attitudes	(2) Attitudes
Support for authoritarian rule in the room	0.16**	0.19***
	(0.07)	(0.07)
Beliefs about support in the room	-0.02	-0.00
	(0.08)	(0.08)
Share Female	0.01	0.03
	(0.04)	(0.04)
Share High political interest	-0.04	-0.03
	(0.04)	(0.04)
Share High GPA	0.03	0.01
	(0.04)	(0.04)
Share Mother with high education	-0.01	-0.00
	(0.04)	(0.04)
Share Father with high education	0.02	0.01
	(0.04)	(0.04)
Share Plan higher education	0.02	0.02
	(0.04)	(0.04)
Share High risk	-0.00	-0.01
	(0.04)	(0.04)
Share High trust	0.02	0.01
	(0.04)	(0.04)
Share Vote	-0.00	0.01
	(0.03)	(0.03)
Share: Labour	0.00	0.01
	(0.05)	(0.05)
Share: Progress	-0.03	-0.04
	(0.03)	(0.03)
Share: Liberal	0.05	0.03
	(0.05)	(0.05)
Share: Socialist Left	0.05	0.04
	(0.03)	(0.03)
Share: Other	0.05*	0.05*
	(0.03)	(0.03)
Share: Unknown	0.04	0.04
	(0.04)	(0.04)
Share gender eq. defense		-0.00
		(0.04)
Share gender eq. hh		0.01
		(0.04)
Share positive refugee		-0.05
		(0.03)
Share egalitarian tax		0.01
		(0.04)
Share egalitarian proportional		0.02
		(0.03)
Share positive school exposure		0.10**
		(0.05)
Share positive conscript exposure		-0.04
		(0.04)
Share positive mixed personality		-0.01
		(0.04)
Share positive mixed gender		-0.04
		(0.04)
Share egalitarian unempl.		-0.01
		(0.04)
Share immigrant background		-0.01
		(0.03)
Mean in sample	2.48	2.48
N	652	651
Controls	Lasso	Lasso

Notes: All variables are the mean levels of all other people in the room. With the dummy variables we standardize the shares to have mean zero and standard deviation 1. The variables included in column 2 are described in section A.3. Standard errors, clustered at the room level, are in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

Table A.6: Effects of the authoritarian treatment on support for authoritarian rule after the experiment

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Authoritarian treatment	0.42***	0.39***	0.42***
	(0.057)	(0.086)	(0.060)
Mean in sample	2.63	2.63	2.63
N	684	684	684
Controls	Lasso	Necessary	Full

Notes: The necessary controls include troop fixed effects. Robust standard errors in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

Table A.7: Effects of the authoritarian treatment on beliefs about support for authoritarian rule after the experiment

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Authoritarian treatment	0.92***	0.93***	0.93***
	(0.057)	(0.072)	(0.059)
Mean in sample	2.79	2.79	2.79
N	684	684	684
Controls	Lasso	Necessary	Full

Notes: The necessary controls include troop fixed effects. Robust standard errors in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

Table A.8: Placebo effects of the authoritarian treatment on support for authoritarian rule before the experiment

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Authoritarian treatment	-0.0018	-0.051	-0.017
	(0.063)	(0.085)	(0.067)
Mean in sample	2.50	2.50	2.50
N	684	684	684
Controls	Lasso	Necessary	Full

Notes: The necessary controls include troop fixed effects. Robust standard errors in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

Table A.9: Placebo effects of the authoritarian treatment on beliefs about support for authoritarian rule before the experiment

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Authoritarian treatment	0.018	-0.022	0.0022
	(0.067)	(0.081)	(0.069)
Mean in sample	2.71	2.71	2.71
N	683	683	683
Controls	Lasso	Necessary	Full

Notes: The necessary controls include troop fixed effects. Robust standard errors in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

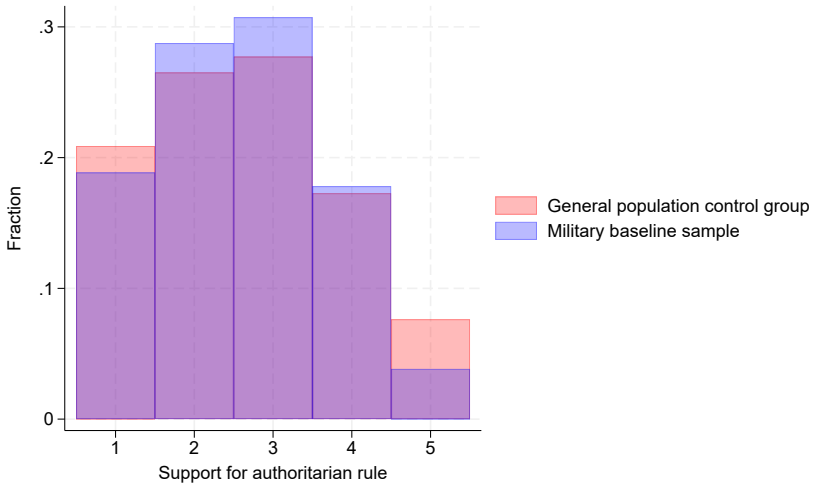

Figure A.3: Distribution of support for authoritarian rule across samples.
Notes: The figure shows histograms for the general population sample and the military sample. The sample includes the pure control group in the general population and the baseline responses for all individuals in the military survey. (N=1357)

A.2 Further exploration of non-linear exposure

In Appendix Figure A.4 we show the binned scatterplot with a superimposed quadratic line instead of a linear line and there is a tendency for non-linear effects whereby the effects seem to be driven more by the more authoritarian rooms. Very similar results are seen in Figure A.5 where we instead use the changes in attitudes from baseline to endline. In columns two and four of Appendix Table A.10 we present results where the *Attitudes in the room* measure is divided into three equally sized groups ranging from Low levels (with mean attitudes in the room below 2.3) to High levels (mean attitudes 2.75 or above). The middle group serves as the omitted category with which we compare the other groups. We see that the effects

seem to be non-linear and that it is especially random assignment to relatively high levels of average authoritarian peers that have an effect. Being assigned to rooms with the least support for authoritarian rule does not significantly reduce support for authoritarian rule as compared to being in rooms with middle levels. In fact, the point estimate is even in the other direction. In column two we see this for *Support for authoritarian rule* and in column four for *Beliefs*. Being assigned to the rooms with the highest levels of support for authoritarian rule has an effect of 0.22 on these outcomes as compared to being assigned to the rooms with medium levels of support for authoritarian rule.

This non-linear result is, however, somewhat model dependent. If we instead count the number of (other) people in the room answering different categories and use that as our exposure variable we see that there seems to be effects of exposure to both authoritarian and anti-authoritarian peers in opposite directions. Appendix Table A.11 shows these results. In column one we test the effects of the number of other people in the room strongly disagreeing with the statement about strong leaders. The sample still includes everyone but we see that the exposure variable is made out of the 142 individuals answering strongly disagree (as seen in the "N in X group" row at the bottom of the table). We see that the coefficient is negative but not statistically significant. If we instead count the number of peers that answer either disagree or strongly disagree, we see in column two that the effect is negative. That is, being exposed to more anti-authoritarians make people less authoritarian. In column three we instead count the number of peers agreeing or strongly agreeing and we see that the effect is positive. Column four shows that the effect is positive also of we only count the number of peers strongly agreeing. That measure is only based on 23 individuals, however. In column 5 we include the strongest measures of both authoritarian and anti-authoritarian exposure and we note that only the authoritarian exposure is statistically significant. This is more in line with the heterogeneity based on the shares in the different rooms. We have stress-tested our results by progressively excluding rooms from the distribution's extremes (see Tables A.12 and A.13). The findings remain robust when the 11 and 19 rooms with the highest baseline authoritarian attitudes are removed. However, when excluding the 32 most authoritarian rooms (144 individuals), robustness is lost, as there is minimal exposure to rooms with high authoritarian attitudes (baseline average <3). Results are generally robust when less authoritarian rooms are excluded, with effects maintained at a 10 percent significance level even when up to 65 rooms are removed. However, restricting the sample to the 32 rooms with an average baseline value of at least 3 does not yield significant results. In all, we do not want to draw strong conclusions from this exploratory analysis and we note that the results are model dependent. If we allow ourselves to speculate we think that the results go in both directions, which is also supported by the overall zero change over time during bootcamp reported in Table A.26, but that exposure to authoritarians is perhaps a bit stronger.

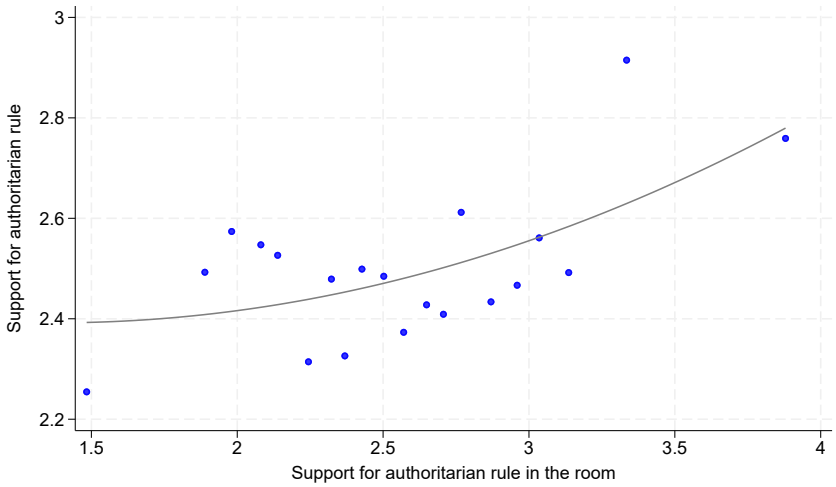

Figure A.4: Support for authoritarian rule and preferences in the room.

Notes: The figure shows binned scatterplots where each dot contains equally many observations. The fitted quadratic line is estimated on all the underlying data and controls for the optimal controls chosen by the post double LASSO procedure.

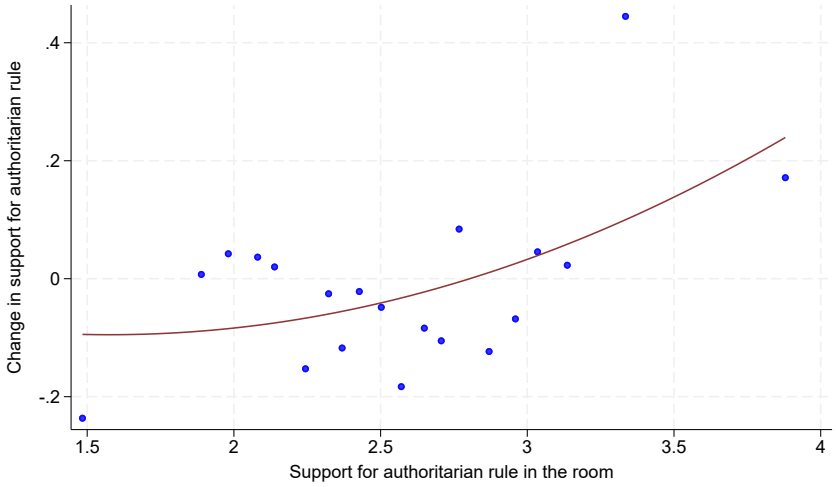

Figure A.5: Support for authoritarian rule and changes of attitudes in the room.

Notes: The figure shows binned scatterplots where each dot contains equally many observations. The fitted quadratic line is estimated on all the underlying data and controls for the optimal controls chosen by the post double LASSO procedure.

Table A.10: Peer effects on support for authoritarian rule and beliefs

	(1) Support for authoritarian rule	(2) Support for authoritarian rule	(3) Beliefs about support	(4) Beliefs about support
Support for authoritarian rule in the room	0.16***		0.12*	
	(0.057)		(0.067)	
Low levels in the room		0.091		0.021
		(0.073)		(0.079)
High levels in the room		0.22***		0.22**
		(0.072)		(0.088)
Mean in sample	2.50	2.50	2.72	2.72
N	678	678	677	677
Randomization inference p-value	0.008	0.0010	0.038	0.0010
Difference high and low (p-value)	NA	0.08	NA	0.02
Controls	Lasso	Lasso	Lasso	Lasso

Notes: In columns 2 and 4 the *Support for authoritarian rule in the room* measure is divided into three indicator variables (groups), with the middle group (with mean attitudes in the room between 2.3 and 2.74) serving as the omitted category. Low levels are below 2.3 and High levels are 2.75 or above. Standard errors, clustered at the room level, are in parentheses. Standard p-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$. The p-values for the randomization inference are based on 1000 perturbations of the treatment assignment. The randomization inference is for the high levels coefficient in columns 2 and 4. The p-values for the difference between the coefficients for low and high levels are based chi-squared tests of the coefficients in the regressions.

Table A.11: Effects of more extreme peers on support for authoritarian rule

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Number of people strongly disagreeing	-0.033				
	(0.032)				
Number of people disagreeing or strongly disagreeing		-0.052**			-0.028
		(0.024)			(0.026)
Number of people agreeing or strongly agreeing			0.094***		0.077**
			(0.028)		(0.031)
Number of people strongly agreeing				0.10*	
				(0.058)	
Mean Y in sample	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50
N	677	677	677	677	677
N in X group	142	349	138	23	
Controls	Lasso	Lasso	Lasso	Lasso	Lasso

Notes: All variables count the number of other people in the room answering specific values. The set of control variables also include fixed effects for the number of people in the room. Standard errors, clustered at the room level, are in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

Table A.12: Stress-test by removing more authoritarian rooms

	(1) Main	(2) S1	(3) S2	(4) S3
Support for authoritarian rule in the room	0.16***	0.16**	0.14*	0.09
	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.08)
N	678	632	584	534
Number of rooms	135	124	116	103
Max. value in room	4.33	3.22	3.00	2.83

Notes: All models control for optimal controls as chosen by the LASSO procedure. Standard errors, clustered at the room level, are in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

Table A.13: Stress-test by removing less authoritarian rooms

	(1) S5	(2) S6	(3) S7	(4) S8	(5) S9	(6) S10	(7) S11	(8) S12
Support for authoritarian rule in the room	0.17***	0.19***	0.19**	0.19**	0.17*	0.21*	0.19	0.04
	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.11)	(0.12)	(0.13)
N	642	605	543	474	408	329	251	144
Number of rooms	128	123	110	98	87	65	52	32
Min. value in room	1.83	2.00	2.20	2.33	2.50	2.56	2.62	3.00

Notes: All models control for optimal controls as chosen by the LASSO procedure. Standard errors, clustered at the room level, are in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

A.3 Coding of control variables and balance

When we have missing values on explanatory variables, we code the variables as zero and include dummy variables controlling for missing status so that we do not lose observations. To make the models fully saturated, we partition the covariate space and add control variables as indicator variables rather than using their multi-valued codings (Athey and Imbens, 2017). When cells are too small, with less than 5 percent of the observations, adjacent cells are combined. When using interaction terms and in tests of balance we retain the continuous coding of the variables. Here is a more detailed description of the pre-specified coding choices of all variables:

Support for authoritarian rule and ***Beliefs about others' support for authoritarian rule*** of others, measured at baseline (same coding as for endline, see Section 5, except that the belief question was not about the people they shared room with, but rather about the beliefs about all other respondents taking the survey at the same time).

High trust: Answer to the question "Generally, would you say that most people can be trusted or that one cannot be careful enough?". 1= Cannot be careful enough to 10=Most people can be trusted. High trust are those answering high on this variable. We transform this into a binary variable by splitting it in a way that retains the ordering while it minimizes the difference in number of observations between the two categories.

Vote: Answer to the question "If there was a municipal election today, would you have voted?", where we code vote=1 if the respondents answer yes and zero otherwise.

Party choice: Dummy variables for party choice based on the answer to the question "If there was an election today, which party would you have voted for?". Parties with less than 5 percent of the answers are coded as "other".

High political interest: A dummy variable for answering high on the question: "How interested are you in politics". Answer categories range from 1=very little interest to 7=Very interested. We transform this into a binary variable by splitting it in a way that retains the ordering while it minimizes the difference in number of observations between the two categories.

Female: A dummy variable equal to one if the respondent is female.

High GPA: Self reported grades from high school at baseline, equal to 1 if grades are high and zero otherwise. We transform this into a binary variable by splitting it in a way that retains the ordering while it minimizes the difference in number of observations between the two categories.

High risk aversion: Answer to the question "In general, how willing are you to take risks?" The answer categories are from 1 to 10 where 1 is labeled "not willing to take risk at all", and 10 is labeled "very willing to take risk". We transform this into a binary variable by splitting it in a way that retains the ordering while it minimizes the difference in number of observations between the two categories. The ones with higher risk aversion are coded as one.

Mother and Father with high education (2 variables): Based on the question: "Do your parents have higher education (university/college)?". Original: 1= Yes, both have higher education, 2=My mother has higher education, my father has not, 3= My father has higher education, my mother has not, 4=No, neither of them have higher education. We recode the answers into two variables: Mother with high education (1/2=1, 3/4= 0) and Father with high education (1 and 3=1, 2 and 4=0)

Plan higher education: Based on the question: "Do you plan to take higher education?" Original: 1=Yes, 2=Don't know, 3=No. We recode the answers such that 2 and 3 equal 0.

Descriptive statistics for all variables are shown in Table A.14.

To test for balance, we regress treatment on the main independent variables described in section A.3 together, while controlling for the troop fixed effects. The balance test for the *preferences in room* further controls for the average peer levels of baseline orientation in the troops to account for the artificial negative correlation between the outcome and individual baseline orientation otherwise induced (Guryan, Kroft and Notowidigdo, 2009).

In Table A.15 we show the balance for the two treatment variables and we also show how the same control variables are correlated with *support for authoritarian rule* at endline. For none of the treatment variables in columns 1 and 2 we find that the baseline values of the main outcome variable is statistically significant, which is comforting.

With many variables tested, some of them are likely to be different and in column 1 we see that two of the variables are statistically significantly correlated with the room treatment variable (High trust and voting for the Liberal party). The bias from this is likely minor since these variables are not correlated with support for authoritarian rule at endline (column 3). Voting for the progress party significantly correlates both with treatment status in the

Table A.14: Descriptive statistics

	(1)	
	Mean	SD
Treatment variables		
Support for authoritarian rule in the room	2.56	(0.57)
Authoritarian information treatment	0.47	(0.50)
Baseline values of outcome variables		
Support for authoritarian rule	2.52	(1.10)
Beliefs about support in the room	2.84	(1.07)
Other control variables		
Female	0.39	(0.49)
High political interest	0.52	(0.50)
High GPA	0.53	(0.50)
Mother with high education	0.72	(0.45)
Father with high education	0.62	(0.49)
Plan higher education	0.72	(0.45)
High risk	0.51	(0.50)
High trust	0.61	(0.49)
Vote	0.86	(0.35)
Party: Labour	0.14	(0.35)
Party: Conservative	0.29	(0.45)
Party: Progress	0.09	(0.29)
Party: Liberal	0.06	(0.24)
Party: Socialist Left	0.07	(0.25)
Party: Other	0.08	(0.28)
Party: Unknown	0.26	(0.44)
Endline outcomes		
Support for authoritarian rule	2.50	(1.10)
Beliefs about support in the room	2.72	(1.05)
Military rule	2.80	(1.03)
Authoritarian preferences	3.92	(1.86)
Political order	0.70	(0.46)
Endline outcomes after information treatments		
Support for authoritarian rule	2.63	(1.13)
Beliefs about support in the room	2.79	(1.05)
N	692	

Notes: The sample includes everyone answering at baseline where we also have information about rooms.

survey experiment (column 2) and support for authoritarian rule at endline (column 3).

Most importantly, the F-tests of whether all the control variables jointly predict treatment are not statistically significant. In contrast. in column three we see from the F-test that the variables included are highly correlated with endline *support for authoritarian rule* which shows that they are relevant.

The additional variables in A.5 are coded as follows:

Share gender eq. defense ("Share of respondents agreeing that increased female representation in the armed forces weakens defense capabilities"): Coded as 0 if respondents strongly agree, agree, or neither agree nor disagree; coded as 1 if they disagree or strongly disagree.

Share gender eq. hh ("Share supporting equal sharing of household chores between men and women"): Coded as 0 if respondents strongly agree or agree; coded as 1 if they neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

Share positive refugee ("Share supporting increased residency for refugees and asylum seekers"): Coded as 1 if respondents strongly agree or agree; coded as 0 if they neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

Share egalitarian tax ("Share supporting increased taxes to reduce income disparities"): Coded as 1 if respondents strongly agree, agree, or neither agree nor disagree; coded as 0 if they disagree or strongly disagree.

Share egalitarian proportional ("Share supporting higher tax rates for higher income earners"): Coded as 1 if respondents strongly agree or agree; coded as 0 if they neither agree

nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

Share positive school exposure ("Share supporting public, free schooling as a means of social integration"): Coded as 1 if respondents strongly agree or agree; coded as 0 if they neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

Share positive conscript exposure ("Share supporting mandatory military service for social integration"): Coded as 1 if respondents strongly agree or agree; coded as 0 if they neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

Share positive mixed personality ("Share believing teams perform better with diverse personalities"): Coded as 0 if respondents strongly agree, agree, or neither agree nor disagree; coded as 1 if they disagree or strongly disagree.

Share positive mixed gender ("Share believing teams perform better with members of mixed gender"): Coded as 0 if respondents strongly agree, agree, or neither agree nor disagree; coded as 1 if they disagree or strongly disagree.

Share egalitarian unempl. ("Share supporting an increase in unemployment benefits"): Coded as 1 if respondents strongly agree, agree, or neither agree nor disagree; coded as 0 if they disagree or strongly disagree.

Share immigrant background ("Share of respondents with an immigrant background"): Coded as 1 for respondents having an immigrant background.

Table A.15: Balance tests

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Support for authoritarian rule in room	Authoritarian treatment	Support for authoritarian rule
Support for authoritarian rule	0.013	-0.021	0.55***
	(0.096)	(0.021)	(0.040)
Beliefs about support in the room	0.015	-0.0096	0.093**
	(0.023)	(0.019)	(0.044)
Female	-0.049	0.026	-0.21**
	(0.040)	(0.042)	(0.085)
High political interest	-0.060	0.000017	-0.13*
	(0.040)	(0.043)	(0.077)
High GPA	-0.022	-0.029	-0.065
	(0.049)	(0.038)	(0.069)
Mother with high education	-0.078	-0.013	-0.037
	(0.050)	(0.046)	(0.077)
Father with high education	0.028	0.065	-0.0010
	(0.038)	(0.045)	(0.069)
Plan higher education	0.016	0.036	-0.069
	(0.058)	(0.046)	(0.088)
High risk	0.056	0.061	0.059
	(0.036)	(0.041)	(0.076)
High trust	-0.076*	-0.013	-0.047
	(0.042)	(0.041)	(0.074)
Vote	-0.059	0.028	-0.12
	(0.058)	(0.059)	(0.096)
Party: Labour	0.13	0.054	0.055
	(0.082)	(0.062)	(0.11)
Party: Conservative	0.011	0.081	0.11
	(0.074)	(0.053)	(0.088)
Party: Progress	-0.026	0.18***	0.25**
	(0.089)	(0.068)	(0.13)
Party: Liberal	0.25**	0.046	0.056
	(0.096)	(0.088)	(0.16)
Party: Socialist Left	-0.077	-0.019	-0.19
	(0.10)	(0.082)	(0.13)
Party: Other	0.11	-0.057	0.22**
	(0.087)	(0.069)	(0.11)
N	678	684	686
F-value	1.44	1.52	35.42
P-value F-test	0.13	0.10	0.00

Notes: All independent variables are measured at baseline. The sample includes everyone answering at baseline where we also have information about rooms. Standard errors, clustered at the room level, are in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$. The F-tests are tests of all variables jointly being zero.

A.4 Support for authoritarian rule in the rooms

We randomly assign recruits to different room, independent of their prior attitudes. Because recruits hold quite diverse baseline attitudes before bootcamp, some rooms consists of recruits with high support for authoritarian rule or low support while most rooms shows, on average, moderate attitude levels.

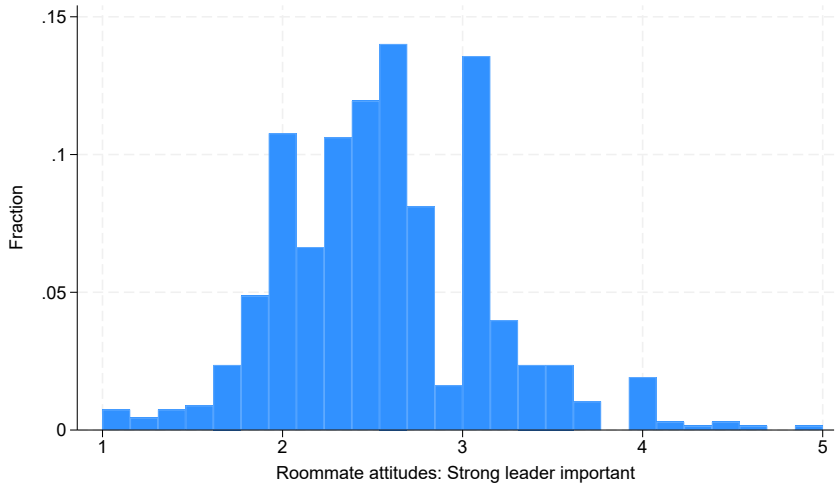

Figure A.6: Distribution of the main peer treatment variable

Notes: The sample includes everyone answering at baseline where we also have information about roomss. The measure is based on all other people in the room excluding the individual.

A.5 Correlations between orientation and background variables

We show the correlation between support for authoritarian rule and background characteristics in Figures A.7 to A.11.

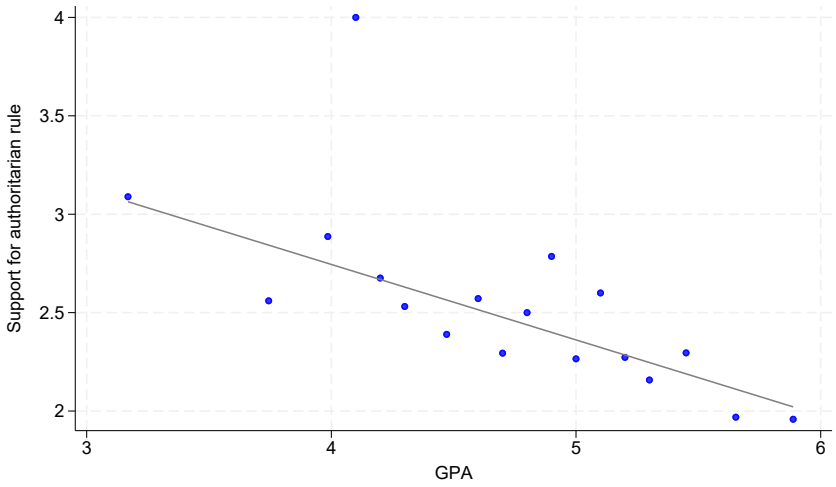

Figure A.7: Support for authoritarian rule and GPA.

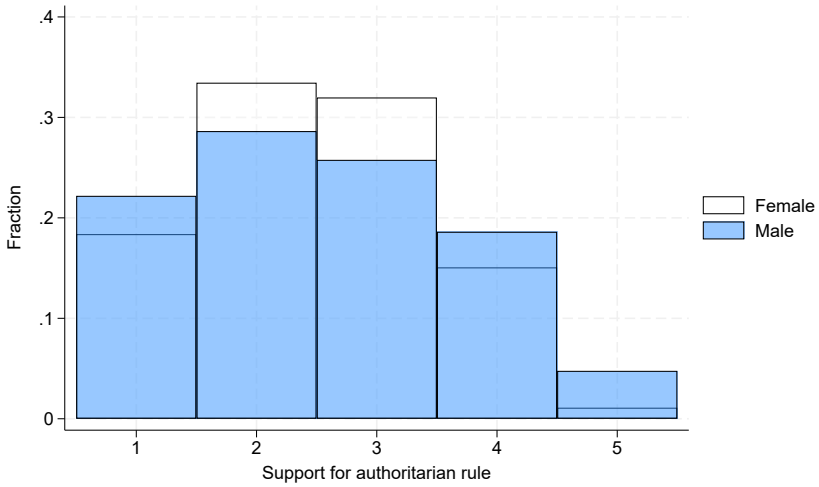

Figure A.8: Support for authoritarian rule and gender.

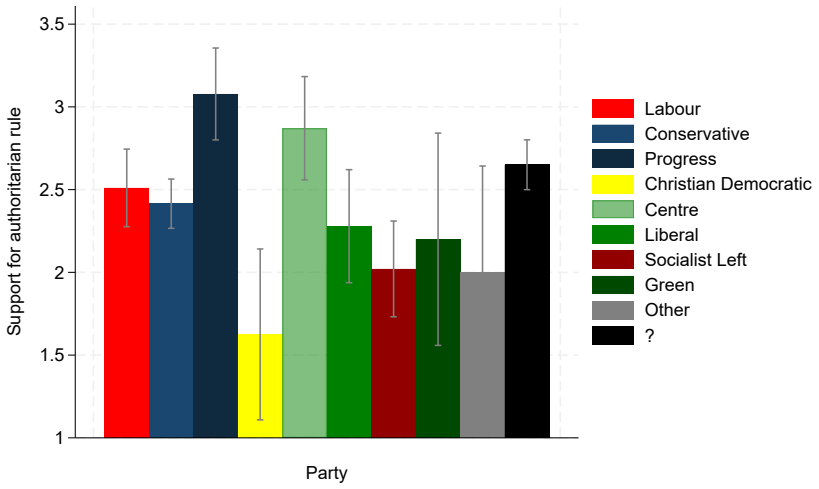

Figure A.9: Support for authoritarian rule and party choice.

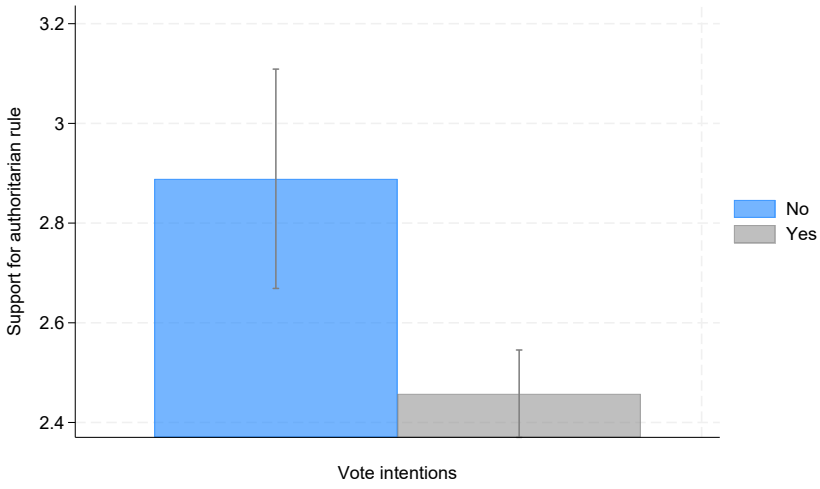

Figure A.10: Support for authoritarian rule and vote intentions.

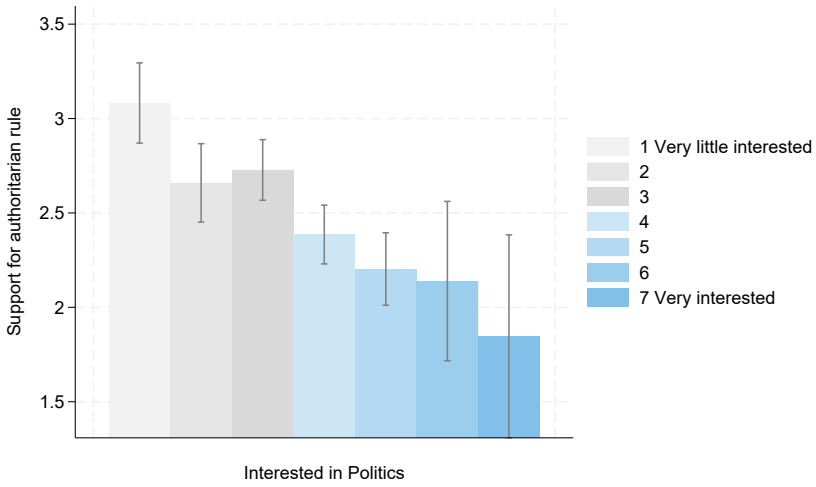

Figure A.11: Support for authoritarian rule and political interest.

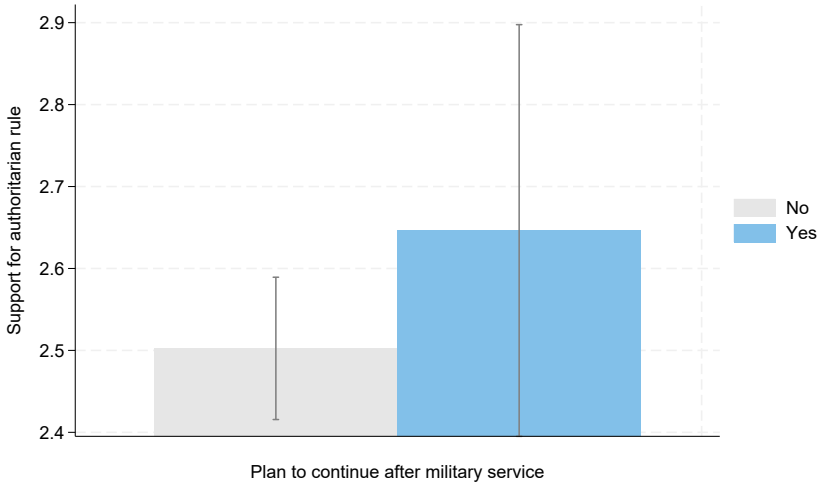

Figure A.12: Support for authoritarian rule and plan to continue in the military.

A.6 Other outcome variables for the peer effects analysis

There are many different ways of operationalizing authoritarianism, understood as an emphasis on obedience and authority. We also include other survey questions, that may tap into our concept in different ways, to explore whether effects differ across various measures.

Political order: An essential aspect of authoritarianism is a desire for social and political order, as opposed to disruption. To measure preferences for political and social order we draw on the following question: "If you had to choose, which two of the things on this list would you say are most important as national priorities? Please choose two. Maintaining

order in the nation; Giving people more say in important government decisions; Fighting rising prices; Protecting freedom of speech." The order of the priorities is randomized. We create a dummy variable equal to 1 if "Maintaining order in the nation" is chosen.

Child-rearing values: Recent literature has suggested that authoritarianism can be understood as a personality trait, that can be captured drawing on a battery of questions on principles for child-rearing (e.g., Engelhardt, Feldman and Hetherington, 2023). We use an extended list of pair matched child rearing questions that has been shown to tap authoritarianism very well by Engelhardt, Feldman and Hetherington (2023). We code each of the authoritarian leaning items within each pair to be one and then we create a measure summing all components together into a a measure of ***Authoritarian preferences*** running from zero to eight. The questions are as follows:

"Although there are a number of qualities that people think children should have, every person thinks that some are *more important* than others. You will now be presented with a list of choices between qualities, and asked to choose which of the qualities you think are most important. For children it is most important to be..."

1. (A) INDEPENDENT or (B) RESPECTFUL OF THEIR ELDERS?
2. (A) OBEDIENT or (B) SELF-RELIANT?
3. (A) WELL-BEHAVED or (B) CONSIDERATE?
4. (A) CURIOUS or (B) GOOD MANNERED?
5. (A) FREE-SPIRITED or (B) POLITE?
6. (A) ORDERLY or (B) IMAGINATIVE?
7. (A) ADAPTABLE or (B) DISCIPLINED?
8. (A) LOYAL or (B) OPEN-MINDED?

Military rule: Finally, we also use a measure that taps into preferences for strong institutions that promise to enforce social order, with a focus on the military. We measure this based on a statement that it is added to the list of statements that the respondent can disagree or agree with (1-5) and the statement reads: "It is OK that the military takes over when the government is incompetent".

Table A.16 shows that there are no strong peer effects on these other variables.

Table A.16: Peer effects on secondary outcomes

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Military rule	Authoritarian preferences	Political order
Support for authoritarian rule in the room	0.094	0.054	-0.028
	(0.072)	(0.14)	(0.032)
Mean in sample	2.79	3.92	0.70
N	675	672	678
Controls	Lasso	Lasso	Lasso

Notes: Standard errors, clustered at the room level, are in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

A.7 Exploratory analyses and heterogeneous treatment effects

Our main peer effect hypothesis is about the average attitudes in the room. It is not obvious, however, that it is the average that matters most. One can make the case for individuals with strong opinions likely being more influential. We therefore also explored the effects of the share and number of people in the room answering 1 and 5 as well and the effects of the distribution of attitudes. Dimant et al. (2022) argue that several aspects of the distribution may be important: Whether the distribution is tight or loose (the variance); and whether it is polarized. We found no indication of other aspects of the distribution being more important than the average room attitudes.

One can clearly hypothesize various heterogeneous treatment effects based on the baseline attitudes, beliefs, and risk aversion. We refrained from doing so in our plan since the number of tests would be too many but we laid out strategies for analyzing such effects exploratively. The baseline beliefs may play an important role in the information treatment analysis since there could be heterogeneous effects depending on the direction of updating. This is important as we would expect different effects based on whether the prior overestimated, correctly estimated, or underestimated authoritarian support as compared to the posterior signal received. We therefore also interact treatment with the two dummies for baseline overestimation (1 and 2) and underestimation (4 and 5), with 3 being the reference category leading to the following regression:

(4) $Y_{i,t2} = \beta Authoritarian\ Treatment_{i,t2} + \gamma X_{i,t0} + \delta overestimation_{i,t0} + \theta overestimation_{i,t0} * Authoritarian\ Treatment_{i,t2} + \eta underestimation_{i,t0} + \psi underestimation_{i,t0} * Authoritarian\ Treatment_{i,t2} + \epsilon_{it}$

As seen in Tables A.17 and A.18, there is no evidence for baseline over- or underestimation being very important moderators for the effects.

We also conduct heterogeneity analyses by interacting the treatments with the various baseline covariates. We find little heterogeneity, except for with respect to baseline values of the outcomes. We show the results based on baseline values of the outcomes in Tables A.19 and A.20. We see no moderating effect in the peer effects on orientation and we see that the peer effects on beliefs are smaller for individuals with higher levels of support for authoritarian rule at baseline. With respect to the Authoritarian treatment we see that it had a stronger effect on the orientation for those with higher levels of baseline beliefs.

Table A.17: Heterogeneous peer effects based on baseline over- or under estimation of beliefs

	(1) Support	(2) Beliefs
Support for authoritarian rule in the room	0.18***	0.15**
	(0.067)	(0.070)
Underestimation	-0.21	-0.85***
	(0.13)	(0.16)
Overestimation	0.021	0.17*
	(0.083)	(0.094)
Support*underestimation	-0.13	-0.060
	(0.086)	(0.089)
Support*overestimation	-0.12	-0.15*
	(0.095)	(0.089)
Mean in sample	2.50	2.71
N	677	676
Controls	Lasso	Lasso

Notes: The outcome variables are measured early in the endline survey and he Attitudes in the room variable is standardized to have mean zero and standard deviation 1. Robust standard errors in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

Table A.18: Heterogeneous effects of the authoritarian treatment based on baseline over- or under estimation of beliefs

	(1) Support	(2) Beliefs
Authoritarian information treatment	0.37***	0.86***
	(0.13)	(0.13)
Underestimation	0.018	-0.42***
	(0.12)	(0.12)
Overestimation	0	0
	(.)	(.)
Treatment*underestimation	-0.049	0.087
	(0.17)	(0.16)
Treatment*overestimation	0.25	0.14
	(0.18)	(0.17)
Mean in sample	2.50	2.71
N	683	683
Controls	Lasso	Lasso

Notes: The outcome variables are measured after the information treatment in the endline survey and he Attitudes in the room variable is standardized to have mean zero and standard deviation 1. Robust standard errors in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

Table A.19: Heterogeneous peer effects with respect to baseline orientation and beliefs

	(1) Support	(2) Support	(3) Beliefs	(4) Beliefs
Support for authoritarian rule in the room	0.079**	0.083***	0.077**	0.071*
	(0.033)	(0.031)	(0.037)	(0.037)
Baseline support for authoritarian rule	0.73***		0.39***	
	(0.032)		(0.040)	
Baseline beliefs		0.085*		0.33***
		(0.045)		(0.047)
Room attitudes*Baseline support	-0.016		-0.083***	
	(0.034)		(0.026)	
Room attitudes*Baseline beliefs		-0.0078		-0.046
		(0.034)		(0.036)
Mean in sample	2.50	2.50	2.71	2.71
N	677	677	676	676
Controls	Lasso	Lasso	Lasso	Lasso

Notes: The outcome variables are measured early in the endline survey and he Attitudes in the room variable is standardized to have mean zero and standard deviation 1. Robust standard errors in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

Table A.20: Heterogeneous effects of the authoritarian treatment with respect to baseline orientation and beliefs

	(1) Support	(2) Support	(3) Beliefs	(4) Beliefs
Authoritarian information treatment	0.44***	0.41***	0.96***	0.95***
	(0.071)	(0.071)	(0.064)	(0.064)
Baseline support for authoritarian rule	0.41***		0.31***	
	(0.062)		(0.047)	
Baseline beliefs		0.035		0.27***
		(0.052)		(0.049)
Treatment*Baseline support	0.099		-0.072	
	(0.068)		(0.066)	
Treatment*Baseline beliefs		0.15**		0.036
		(0.073)		(0.070)
Mean in sample	2.63	2.63	2.79	2.79
N	683	683	683	683
Controls	Lasso	Lasso	Lasso	Lasso

Notes: The outcome variables are measured after the information treatment in the endline survey and the Attitudes in the room variable is standardized to have mean zero and standard deviation 1. Robust standard errors in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

A.8 More results from the replication in the general population survey

Analyzing the survey-experiment on the general population, in Table A.21 we show the effects of the Authoritarian treatment on *support for authoritarian rule* when the treatment groups are defined as in the military. In particular, we do not include the one third of the sample that did not get any treatment. In Figure A.13 we see that the Authoritarian treatment clearly shifted respondents to the left.

Table A.21: Effects of the Authoritarian treatment on support for authoritarian rule in the general Norwegian population

	(1)	(2)
Authoritarian treatment	0.37***	0.38***
	(0.076)	(0.075)
No treatment	0.18**	0.19**
	(0.076)	(0.075)
Mean in sample	2.64	2.64
N	1500	1500
Controls	No	Yes

Notes: The dependent variable in the regressions is *support for authoritarian rule*. The sample includes everyone in the general population survey. The controls in column 2 are fixed effects for age groups and a fixed effect for sex. Robust standard errors in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

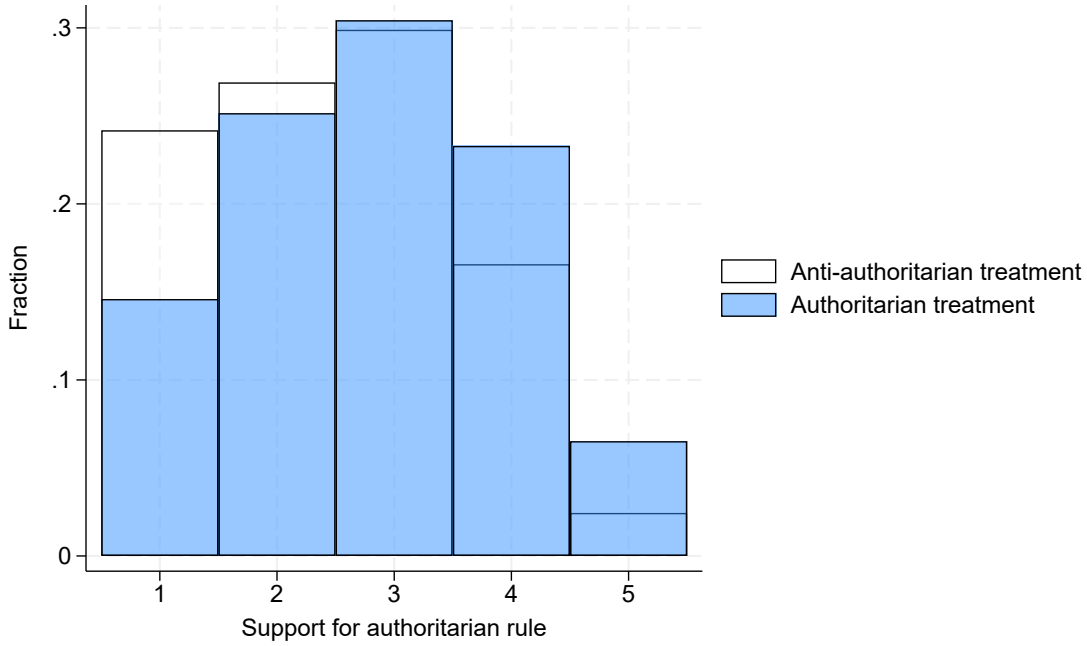

Figure A.13: Distribution of *support for authoritarian rule* by Authoritarian treatment in the general population.

Notes: The sample excludes the individuals that did not get any treatment (N=1002).

In Figure A.14 we show the distribution of the answers in the pure control group of the general Norwegian population and we note that also here the modal response in "Neither agree nor disagree".

In Table A.22 We also run regressions in the control sample of the Norwegian general population and we note that there are not many differences across age groups, except the oldest having lower values of *support for authoritarian rule*.

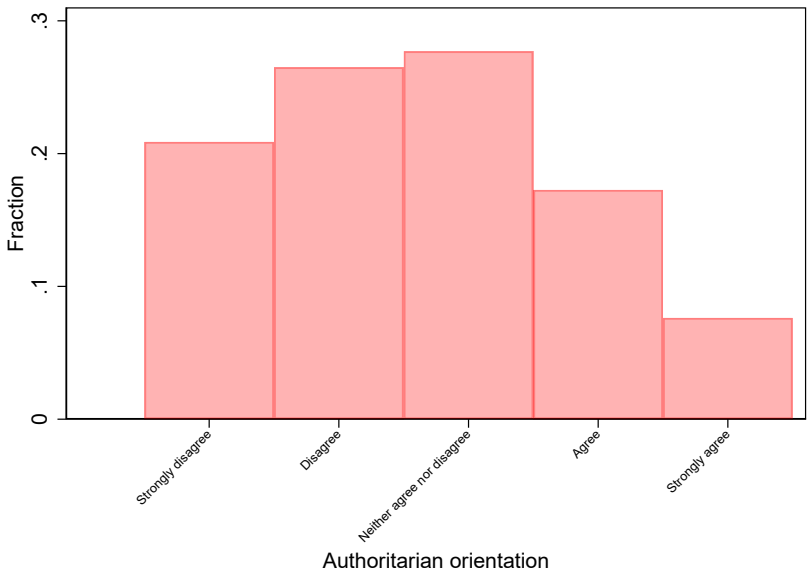

Figure A.14: Distributions of answers to the *support for authoritarian rule* question in the general population.

Notes: The sample only includes individuals that did not get any treatment (N=489).

Table A.22: Correlations with support for authoritarian rule in the general Norwegian population

	(1)
Age 30-39	-0.021
	(0.18)
Age 40-49	-0.10
	(0.18)
Age 50-59	-0.24
	(0.19)
Age 60+	-0.34**
	(0.16)
Mean in sample	2.64
N	498
Controls	No

Notes: The dependent variable in the regressions is *support for authoritarian rule*. The sample includes those not getting any treatment, i.e. the pure control group is excluded. The excluded age category is 18-29 year olds. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

Finally, in Table A.23 we test whether the information treatment works differently for the youngest age group and the others and we note that there is no statistically significant difference in treatment effects (as seen by the interaction terms).

Table A.23: Effects of the treatments on support for authoritarian rule in the general Norwegian population, by age groups

	(1)	(2)
Authoritarian treatment	0.37***	0.35***
	(0.076)	(0.084)
Authoritarian treatment * Young (18-29)		0.20
		(0.19)
No treatment	0.18**	0.22***
	(0.076)	(0.083)
No treatment * Young (18-29)		-0.16
		(0.19)
Mean in sample	2.64	2.64
N	1500	1500
Controls	No	Young (18-29)

Notes: The dependent variable in the regressions is *support for authoritarian rule*. The samples include everyone in the general population survey. Robust standard errors in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

A.9 Replication in a Multi-Country Dataset

In order to test whether there are effects of the authoritarian treatment in a wide sample of countries we draw on evidence from a cross-country survey in a sample of 25,664 individuals. These individuals were living mostly in 29 countries and there were also 4,454 respondents living in "other" countries.

We recruited participants using paid advertisements on Facebook and Instagram between December 16, 2022, and May 21, 2023. We used Facebook's targeting options, based on age, gender, and education, to increase the likelihood that our advertisements were delivered equally across sub-groups of these demographic categories.

The results are seen in Table A.24, and it is clear that there are effects of the treatments also in this broader sample. In Figure A.15, we show the effects on support for authoritarian rule of the authoritarian treatment versus the anti-authoritarian treatment in different samples. We see (in green) that the overall effect in the comparative sample is positive and highly statistically significant. We further see that the effects in the Norwegian samples (in red) are not extreme as compared to in the other countries (in blue), but that they are in the upper quartile of effect sizes.

Table A.24: Effects of the Authoritarian Treatment on Support for Authoritarian Rule Across Multiple Countries

	(1)
Authoritarian treatment	0.21***
	(0.019)
No treatment	0.13***
	(0.019)
Mean in sample	3.20
N	25664
Controls	No
Sample	All

Notes: The dependent variable in the regressions is *support for authoritarian rule*. The sample includes all respondents from the multi-country dataset. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

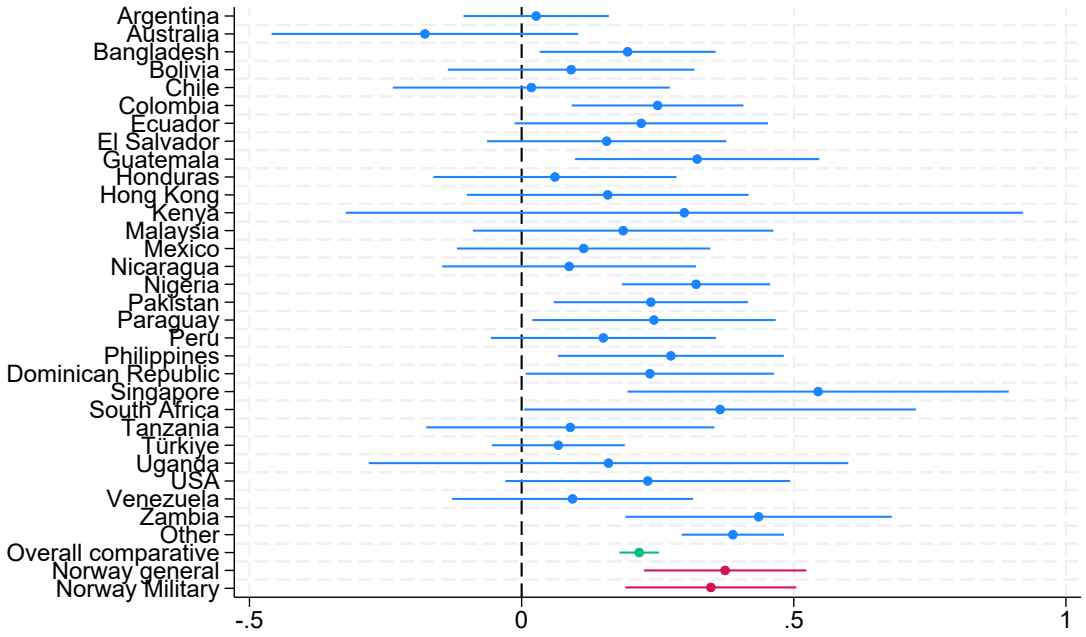

Figure A.15: Effects of the Authoritarian Treatment on Support for Authoritarian Rule Across Different Samples

Notes:The blue dots represent the effects in individual countries, including the "Other" category, from the cross-national survey. The red dots indicate effects in the two Norwegian samples for comparison. The green dot shows the effect size in the overall cross-national sample (0.21, $p = 0.000$).

A.10 Discussion and validation of the measure of support for authoritarian rule

In this section we discuss and validate the measurement of our main outcome variable.

The statement we use to measure support for authoritarian rule consists of two parts. The first part of the statement describes that the system in question has an efficient authoritarian leader ("*It is important to have a strong leader who gets things done, [...]*"). The second part describes that this efficiency comes with democratic costs ("*even if this sometimes means bypassing parliament and elections*").

One potential concern potentially threatening the informational value of this measure is that participants might place more weight on the first part of the statement when responding while paying less attention to the latter, and that this may account for why many respondents are supportive of the statement. Support for the statement would then not be surprising or necessarily problematic because agreement with the statement would merely indicate people's support for an efficient leader rather than opposition to democracy.

We here first discuss the advantages of using a question with an explicit trade-off. Then we present data from original survey data, validating that respondents are aware of and care about the second part of the question. We also present evidence to elucidate what kind of political system they have in mind when confronted with our main outcome measure. Finally, we investigate whether people's understanding of this measure changes when they receive social signals about that statement's popularity.

A.10.1 Advantages of using a question with an explicit trade-off

Scholars continue to discuss how to best measure authoritarian regime preferences. With respect to measures of support for democracy a long-standing critique posits that most available measures merely assess "lip service" (Inglehart, 2003) to democracy but would not capture people's deep-seated, meaningful opinions and real-world behavior. Indeed, in global surveys nine out of ten respondents report a preference for a democratic system (Anderson, Bol and Ananda, 2021) and only few respondents openly declare a preference for anti-democratic political systems. Yet, these survey self-reports stand in stark contrast to revealed preferences as measured in conjoint experiments on hypothetical candidate choices or actual voting behavior where substantial shares of the population in various countries do express support for authoritarian leaders and policies.

One important reason why there seems to be a mismatch between citizens overwhelming support for democratic institutions when asked directly and revealed preferences for anti-democratic political actors is that real-life attacks on democracy are usually presented as ways of solving political issues perceived as important by many (such as restoring order, preserving political culture, solving economic crisis etc.). Hence, supporting an undemocratic political leader rarely involves an unconditional rejection of democracy– or endorsement of an authoritarian form of government. Rather, it involves being willing to trade off certain democratic principles to gain something else (Graham and Svolik, 2020). This seems to be a

key driver behind contemporary democratic erosion: Anti-democratic behavior by political actors is accepted precisely because it comes with a certain reward - be it partisan victory or other desired policy outcomes. Hence, trade-offs are crucial for understanding people's regime preferences.

One quality of our measure is that it specifically incorporates the underlying trade-offs that characterizes the political reality of support for strong leaders with anti-democratic tendencies. Respondents are well known not to think through all the implications of political statements in surveys (Krishnarajan, 2023; Wuttke, Schimpf and Schoen, 2023). For instance, framing research has shown that, when asked in isolated single items, respondents tend to support increasing social benefits, tax cuts, and fiscal consolidation — although it may be impossible to realize all of these goals at the same time (Jacoby, 2000). One widely used strategy in survey research has therefore been to make these trade-offs explicit so that respondents need to make conscious choices when trading one valued goal against another (GLES, 2023). The measure we chose is an example of this proven strategy to make relevant trade-offs explicit: On the one hand, a strong leader may get things done while on the other hand this may come at the costs of bypassing democratic institutions. As a consequence, such nuanced measures succeeds in achieving much more varied response patterns (e.g., Claassen and Magalhães (2023)) than measures asking directly about regime preferences, which tend to reveal a close to universal support for democracy.

A.10.2 Validation of the support measure

While there are important benefits of using a double-barrelled statement to capture potential variation in people's willingness to tolerate strongman rule, it is unclear whether respondents are aware that agreement with this statement implies anti-democratic connotations.

In our YouGov survey of 1,500 respondents in the general Norwegian population we included a follow up question on how people assess how people interpreted the original question. The question refers to the statement about strong leader and is: "Does the statement contradict democratic principles?". Affirmative answers would indicate that respondents consciously prioritize a strong leader over democratic institutions.

We show the results in Figure A.16. The sample consists of the 489 individuals that had not gotten any information about what others think of the question. Nearly 70 percent of respondents either strongly or somewhat agree that the authoritarian statements contradicts democratic principles, while only about 8 percent disagree. This indicates that a substantial portion of the sample recognizes the statement's negative implications for democracy.

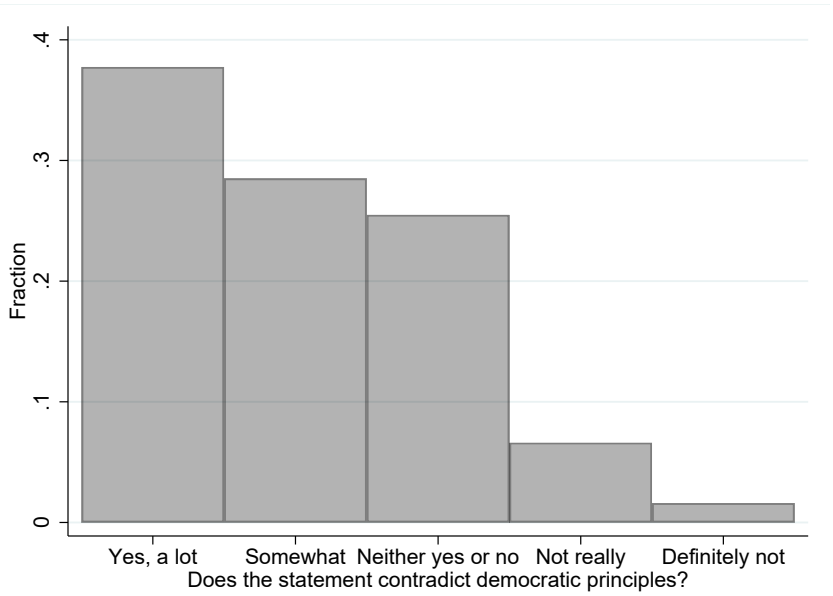

Figure A.16: Distributions of answers to the question in the control group of the general Norwegian population.

Notes: The sample only includes individuals that did not get any treatment (N=489).

While these findings provide some suggestive evidence on how respondents receive the statement, we wanted to more systematically investigate what is on people's minds when engaging with this statement in a survey. In particular, we wanted to test to what extent the second clause referencing democratic institutions influences how respondents process, understand and evaluate the statement. To do this, we fielded a new small survey experiment on Prolific. Prolific is a non-probability-based opt-in sample which is why we should be cautious to draw inferences to the general population. Yet, it was a good fit for our purposes because Prolific is known for its high data quality (Douglas, Ewell and Brauer, 2023) compared to other convenience samples and because because fielding a survey on prolific is possible in a timely fashion. We collected 189 responses among Norwegian citizens in October 2024.

Responses were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: a full-statement group, where participants were presented with and responded to the complete statement used in the main study ("It is important to have a strong leader who gets things done, even if this sometimes means bypassing parliament and elections"), and a partial-statement group, where we deliberately removed the democratic qualifier ("It is important to have a strong leader who gets things done"). We used the same response scale as in our main study.

We first present results from models investigating how the type of statement influences respondents' support for the statement. The results are shown in Figure A.17. We see that respondents are considerably more likely to agree with this statement when the qualifying anti-democratic clause is omitted and, conversely, disagreement is considerably higher when the anti-democratic condition is included. This could indicate that many respondents take the anti-democratic implications into account when evaluating the statement.

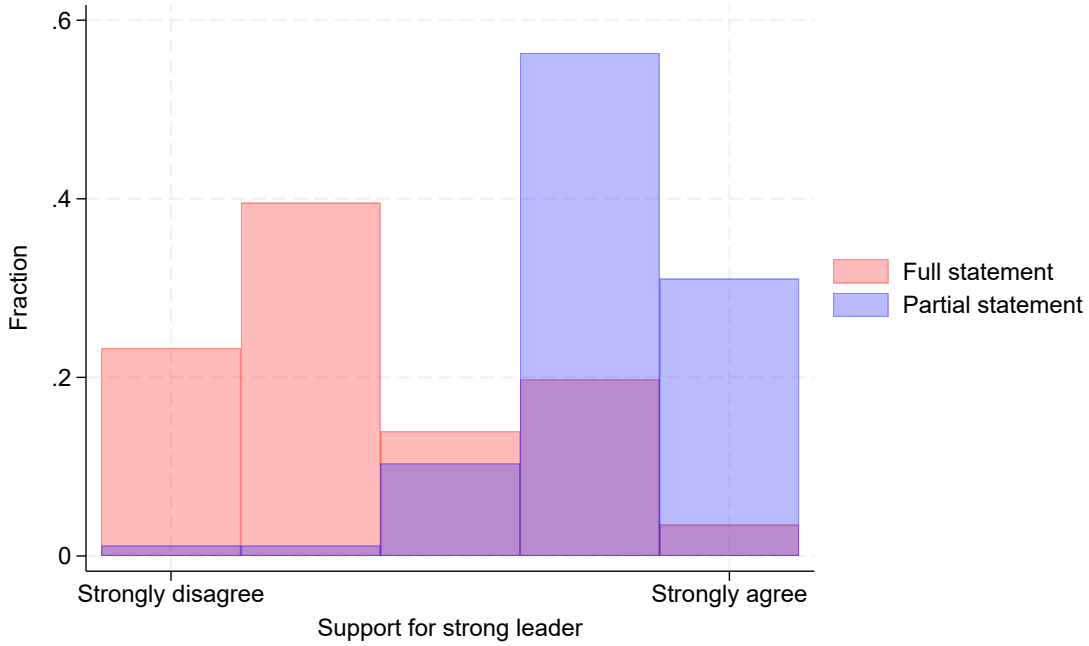

Figure A.17: Effects of the authoritarian condition versus only a statement about a strong leader.

Notes: The sample size is 189. The difference in means between the two conditions is statistically significant (p=000).

Yet, to more directly assess whether respondents consider the statement to be anti-democratic, we also ask them after either the full or partial statement how democratic they think such a system is. We see in Figure A.18 that respondents with the full condition think such a system is substantially less democratic.

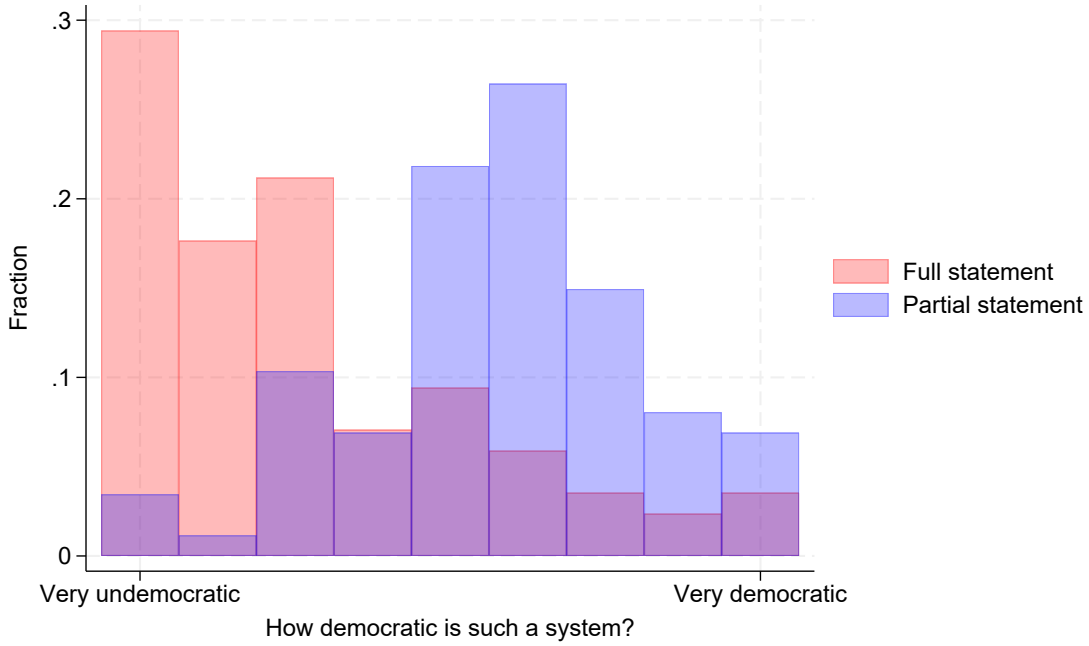

Figure A.18: Effects of the authoritarian condition versus only a statement about a strong leader.

Notes: Data from the validation survey with 188 Norwegian respondents on Prolific. The difference in means across the two groups is statistically significant (p=0.000).

We further present respondents with various characteristics, and ask them whether they think these characteristics are likely present or not present "in a political system that is ruled by a strong leader who gets things done [even if this sometimes means bypassing parliament and elections.]". Respondents were presented with the following characteristics:

- Decisive reactions to crises
- A democratically elected parliament with a say in politics

Our findings show that respondents perceived the system in the partial statement as more responsive to crises (Figure A.19), and more likely to have a democratic parliament with a say in politics (Figure A.20). These results suggest that when the democratic qualifier is removed, respondents view the system as more effective and democratic, providing clear evidence that many respondents do, in fact, take the democratic qualifier into account when forming their evaluations.

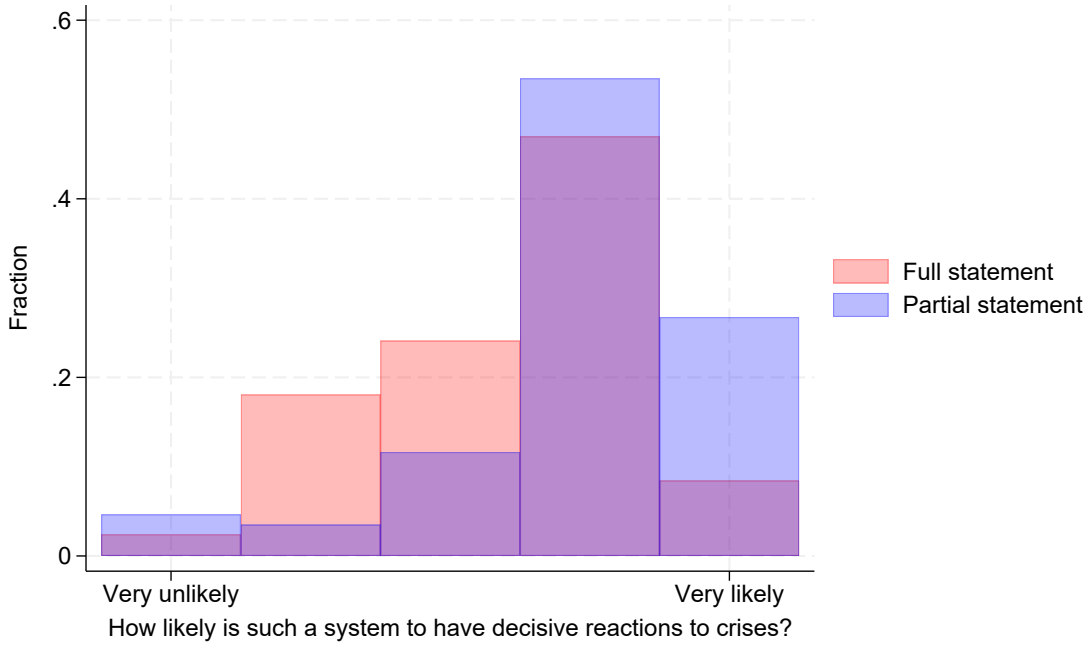

Figure A.19: Effects of the authoritarian condition versus only a statement about a strong leader.

Notes: Data from the validation survey with 185 Norwegian respondents on Prolific. The difference in means across the two groups is statistically significant (p=0.000).

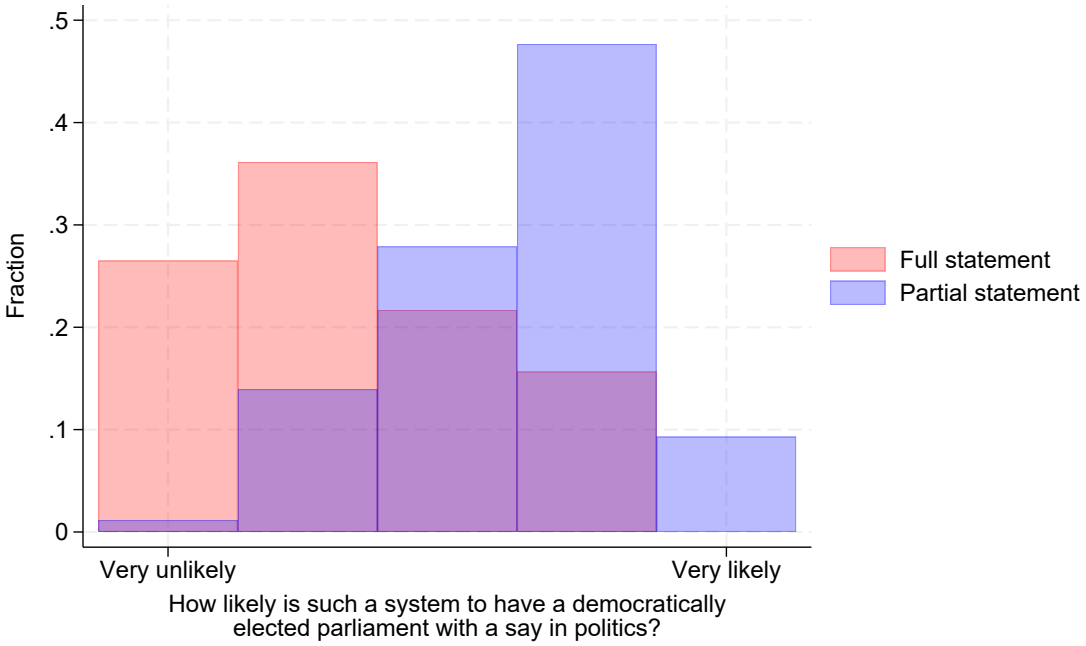

Figure A.20: Effects of the authoritarian condition versus only a statement about a strong leader.

Notes: Data from the validation survey with 185 Norwegian respondents on Prolific. The difference in means across the two groups is statistically significant (p=0.000).

A.10.3 Potential implications of the trade-off question for the information experiment

The double-barreled nature of the strong leader statement may have implications for how people react to receiving information that other people are endorsing the statement.

For instance, it could be the case that when people learn that others' are supporting the statement they alter their interpretation of the statement toward the "get things done" side and away from the anti-democratic side. Hence, this would imply that when people learn that others are in favor of the statement they start thinking that the statement is actually not so undemocratic, and that it is mainly about preference for strong and efficient leadership. This could again make them more supportive of the statement - but only because they start thinking that the statement is less undemocratic.

Again, we wanted to provide some more insight into whether this or related mechanisms are playing out. To do so, we draw on a survey question that we included in the YouGov survey experiment in the general Norwegian population, measuring to what extent respondents consider the statement on strong leaders (that we use to measure our outcome variable) to be in violation of democratic principles. The question "Does the statement contradict democratic principles?" described in Figure A.16 was also asked to the two thirds of the respondents after they had gotten their authoritarian or anti-authoritarian treatments.

Our results in Table A.25 indicate that receiving information that others are supportive of more authoritarian rule does not influence people's perceptions of the statement: Those exposed to this treatment are not more inclined to think that the statement contradicts democratic principles. Hence, they are equally likely to think that the statement reflects anti-democratic sentiments, but still they are more willing to support it after learning that others are in favor of it. This result is consistent with the notion that people receiving the "authoritarian" information treatment do become aware that other people are willing to tolerate an anti-democratic statement.

Table A.25: Effects of the Authoritarian treatment on whether the statement on support for authoritarian rule contradicts democratic principles

	(1)
Authoritarian treatment	0.060
	(0.069)
No treatment	0.0084
	(0.067)
Mean in sample	2.07
N	1500
Controls	No

Notes: The dependent variable in the regressions is *The statement does not contradict democratic principles.* The sample includes everyone in the general population survey. Robust standard errors in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

A.11 Attitude change during boot camp

Questions of authoritarianism versus liberty are particularly pertinent in this military setting. In Norway and elsewhere, the military is characterized by strict rules and demands for obedience in a chain-of-command. The saliency of authority perhaps makes peer effects on support for authoritarian rule particularly likely in this case. But beyond peer effects, it is conceivable that experiencing such an unusually authoritarian environment may itself have effects on the recruits' attitudes on authoritarianism. As pre-registered, we have no firm expectation as effects are conceivable in both direction, either eliciting reactance or a deepening of authoritarian attitudes:

Hypothesis 3. *Recruits change their support for authoritarian rule after receiving updated information about peers' support for authoritarian rule.*

To formally test the hypothesis, we stack the data in long format (panel) and run the following regression:

(2) $Y_{i,t} = \delta Wave2_{i,t1} + \gamma X_{i,t0} + \epsilon_{it}$,

where Wave2 is a dummy variable for answering the survey at endline.

We see in column 1 of Table A.26 that there is no statistically significant change in *support for authoritarian rule* over time. Hence, we find no support for the hypothesis.

In column 2 of Table A.26 we see that the *Beliefs about the support for authoritarian rule of others* change over time. Individuals responding in Wave 2 think that their peers have 0.13 less support for authoritarian rule than they thought when entering boot camp. By looking at the means of the *support for authoritarian rule* in the different waves, shown at the bottom of column 1 we see that the recruits are more correct about their peers' attitudes after bootcamp than before. Column 1 also shows that dynamics in attitudes are much less stark. This may alleviate concerns that military service as such would foster support for authoritarian rule although caution is warranted here because the effect estimate is not strictly causally identified. In Tables A.27 and A.28 we show the results with different control sets and the results are very similar.

Table A.26: Changes in support for authoritarian rule and beliefs over time

	(1)	(2)
	Support for authoritarian rule	Beliefs about support
Wave 2	-0.019	-0.13***
	(0.034)	(0.037)
Mean in sample in Wave 1	2.52	2.84
Mean in sample in Wave 2	2.50	2.71
N	1371	1370
Controls	Lasso	Lasso

Notes: The data is in panel format so that each individual has two observations. Wave 2 refers to answering the survey at endline. Robust standard errors in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

Table A.27: Changes in support for authoritarian rule over time with different controls

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Wave 2	-0.019	-0.020	-0.019
	(0.034)	(0.059)	(0.034)
Mean in sample in Wave 1	2.52	2.52	2.52
Mean in sample in Wave 2	2.50	2.50	2.50
N	1371	1371	1371
Controls	Lasso	Necessary	Full

Notes: The data is in panel format so that each individual has two observations. Wave 2 refers to answering the survey at endline. The necessary controls include troop fixed effects. Robust standard errors in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.

Table A.28: Changes in beliefs about support for authoritarian rule over time with different controls

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Wave 2	-0.13***	-0.13**	-0.13***
	(0.037)	(0.057)	(0.037)
Mean in sample in Wave 1	2.84	2.84	2.84
Mean in sample in Wave 2	2.71	2.71	2.71
N	1370	1370	1370
Controls	Lasso	Necessary	Full

Notes: The data is in panel format so that each individual has two observations. Wave 2 refers to answering the survey at endline. The necessary controls include troop fixed effects. Robust standard errors in parentheses. P-values are $\leq 0.01^{***}$, $\leq 0.05^{**}$, and $\leq 0.1^{*}$.