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postmodernism, and chaos: thinking styles and political preferences.

Prior research has shown a negative correlation between degree of “early” postmodernist thinking from the 1960s and 70s, which emphasized concern for individual rights and the environment, with political conservatism, including support for President Trump, and a lack of support for scientific, data-driven research. On the other hand, “current” postmodernism, emphasizing nationalism and deemphasizing target group rights, is positively correlated with political conservatism and support for Trump. Recently, other research has suggested that a desire to foster chaos – “chaos incitement” – among one’s political opponents may be a more important factor than current postmodern thinking in explaining these relationships. In our study, undergraduate participants provided demographic information, then responded to a number of items designed to assess early postmodern thinking – for example, “People should be able to marry whom they love, regardless of gender,” current postmodern thinking – for example, “I believe that America is the greatest nation on earth and we should keep it that way,” and “chaos” thinking – for example, “I think society should be burned to the ground.” As expected, our results show strong, significant negative correlations of early postmodernism with political and social conservatism, and with current postmodernism – but unexpectedly, chaos thinking was significantly positively correlated with political and social liberalism. We will discuss these results in the context of the present political situation in the U.S., nuanced in light of participant demographic data.