Pieces of the Whole: Exploring Facets of the Big Five Personality Traits and Political Behavior[[1]](#footnote-1)

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| Rolfe Daus Peterson  Mercyhurst University  rpeterson@mercyhurst.edu | Carl L. Palmer  Illinois State University  clpalme@ilstu.edu |

**Abstract**

Recent research on the “Big Five” traits has led to a resurgence of interest in the influence of personality on political behavior. We believe that that some limited findings are not indicative of a non-existent relationship between personality and behavior, but rather are because the Big Five has been measured with limited batteries, which may obscure variation in personal characteristics. Using an innovative, online survey, we implement improved measures for the Big Five that incorporate personality facets. Using these improved measures, we find similar effects to previous research for Extraversion and Openness, as well as novel effects for Agreeableness on individuals’ partisanship, ideology, and evaluations of political figures. By measuring personality more deeply than existing work, we uncover underlying traits that seem to drive observed personality effects on political views. The findings have implications for how we understand and measure personality in political behavior, suggesting scholars should consider using more detailed measures to better capture the effects of personality.

**Keywords:** Big Five; Personality and Politics; Political Behavior; Personality Traits; Political Psychology; Ideology; Affect

What motivates citizens’ perceptions and evaluations of the world around them? In political science, crystallized, long-standing orientations such as partisan identification and ideology are thought to be the ‘unmoved movers’ of reasoning for citizens about political objects. Only recently has work in political science turned inward, demonstrating deeper motivations for citizens’ actions. Using brief measures originally developed in psychology (see Gosling et al. 2003), Mondak and collaborators have studied personality’s influence on a number of political beliefs and behaviors such as partisanship and participation ([Mondak 2010](#_ENREF_35); [Mondak and Halperin 2008](#_ENREF_36); [Mondak et al. 2010](#_ENREF_37)). We seek to extend this line of work on both theoretical and methodological fronts.

Existing research has used the Five Factor personality model (hereafter the Big Five) to bring personality into the political realm. While informative, such work is also limited by a narrow scope of measurement, with researchers using reduced batteries to measure the Big Five personality traits. In work spearheaded by Gosling and colleagues in psychology, and followed by Mondak in political science, a 10-question battery is used to capture the five traits. We build upon this work by testing the efficacy of an enhanced personality battery that incorporates facets, which comprise specific aspects of the separate Big Five dimensions (McCrae and Costa 2003) to measure the Big Five.

Moving measurement and theory to the level of facets provides us the opportunity to unpack previously unobserved effects of personality on political behavior. Using facets to build the Big Five dimensions should create better measures of the Big Five, with greater variation on the traits, with the ability to look deeper, at temperamental and attitudinal dispositions which lie below each of the Big Five dimensions. While previous research has found effects for some traits (such as Openness and Extraversion), the influence of the other traits (Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Emotional Stability) on political behavior is much less clear. This, in part, may be due to measurement. We believe our more nuanced measurement of the Big Five will allow us to uncover effects that have been missed by the truncated batteries used previously.

A Personality Revival and the Logic of the Big Five

The recent resurgence of personality in political science research rests on the shoulders of the Big Five framework. In this setting, personality can be conceived as “a multi-faceted and enduring internal, or psychological, structure that influences behavior,” and personality traits can be used as the basic units of personality ([Hibbing et al. 2011](#_ENREF_23)). As outlined by Goldberg ([1990](#_ENREF_18)), the Big Five traits are: Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism ([Barondes 2011](#_ENREF_4); [Gerber et al. 2011](#_ENREF_17)). In a parallel research paradigm, McCrae and Costa have also endeavored to describe personality in their five-factor theory (e.g. McCrae and Costa 2004), albeit with an approach which looks not only at the larger Big Five characteristics, but also lower-level characteristics which together comprise the Big Five dimensions.

Research on the Big Five can be distilled to four basic assumptions: that traits exist and are measureable, vary across individuals, shape behavior, and traits can be expressed by people describing themselves or others (Gerber et al. 2011, 266). This approach has been replicated across a variety of languages and subpopulations, as well as being stable through the life cycle, with potential biological and genetic determinants (267). While robust and predictive, a practical consideration is whether the Big Five is being measured appropriately, given the limited findings for some of the Big Five characteristics.

The growth of Big Five studies has been bolstered by the ability of researchers to ostensibly capture the characteristics in a parsimonious way with each being measured by a few items, spearheaded by Gosling and colleagues ([2003](#_ENREF_21)). While primarily of interest to scholars of psychology, a research program using reduced measures has extended the reach of the Big Five to political science ([Hibbing et al. 2011](#_ENREF_23); [Mondak 2010](#_ENREF_35); [Mondak and Halperin 2008](#_ENREF_36); [Mondak et al. 2010](#_ENREF_37)). Central to this research has been the use of a reduced instrument to measure the Big Five in telephone surveys.

In emphasizing the validity of the ten-item approach, Mondak makes the argument that:

“Research that explores the properties of the Big Five factors often makes use of very large personality batteries … In applied research, resource limitations often preclude administration of such lengthy personality batteries. This is particularly true with telephone surveys. Telephone interviews rarely last as long as thirty-five or forty minutes, yet the full NEO-PI takes this long to complete. Hence, if a survey is to include anything else in addition to personality inventories, then abbreviated personality batteries must be devised, as in the case of the 2006 CCES” (Mondak 2010, pp 74-5).

There are no obvious flaws with the reduced survey items, and it is certainly important to be sensitive to the finite resources available in research reliant on the compliance of respondents. However, as Gerber et al. argue, “with only two items per trait domain, TIPI scales cannot achieve the same level of internal reliability as longer batteries” (Gerber et al. 2011, 268). In this vein, an important contribution of this paper is to examine the benefits of using more in-depth batteries to measure the Big Five.

The proposed approach uses measures from the International Personality Item Pool (henceforth IPIP) ([Goldberg et al. 2006](#_ENREF_19)) which uses phrases similar to the commercial NEO-PI-R designed by Costa and McCrae ([1992](#_ENREF_11)).[[2]](#footnote-2) This approach breaks each of the broader Big Five dimensions into six distinct sub-dimensions, or facets, each measured with several items. Arguably, this approach improves upon the constraints of the simplified measures employed by Mondak. First, said Big Five traits should be better captured by utilizing the facet measures, resulting in improved trait scales. Further, given that variation should exist within each trait, incorporating facets provides an opportunity to capture the sub-components of the Big Five traits. Not all extraverts are the same, nor is everyone extraverted in every situation. To understand why and the implications for political behavior necessitates digging deeper than simply looking at the Big Five. Moreover, even if the results largely corroborate the previous findings by Mondak and colleagues, there is surely added value in replicating the results with more comprehensive measurement when not precluded by the constraints of the inquiry.

*Why Facets?*

The appropriate level to measure personality has been a point of contention in the psychological literature. While some argue for parsimony ([Ones and Viswesvaran 1996](#_ENREF_38)), a line of research has shown that increasing the number of factors in models of personality (moving from the Five-Factor, OCEAN model to a more developed 16-factor model) significantly improves predictions of behavior ([Mershon and Gorsuch 1998](#_ENREF_34)). Other refinements, of the Five-Factor convention have compared the efficacy of Big Five traits with the facets that comprise those traits. While both measures are highly effective in predicting general behavior, the facets demonstrate substantial improvement in prediction ([Paunonen and Ashton 2001](#_ENREF_39)) as well as specific beliefs, such as levels of prejudice ([Ekehammar and Akrami 2007](#_ENREF_14)).

Facets offer an important refinement on the standard Big Five measures due to their ability to characterize variation in personality that is not captured, or at best only partially captured by brief measures of the Big Five. Personality is a complex animal, requiring detail to fully capture the underlying variation in characteristics. Within each of the Big Five domains are sub-dimensions, which may reflect interpersonal or temperamental dispositions ([McCrae and Costa 2003](#_ENREF_32)). Thus, measuring personality using facets will improve our ability to attribute political behavior to personality characteristics.

Incorporating facets into measurement may also shed light on an empirical puzzle of personality and politics. While some of the Big Five traits, particularly Extraversion and Openness to Experience have been shown to consistently predict political behavior, other components (Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Emotional Stability) appear far less influential. Analyzing facets may lend insight into how other parts of personality influence behavior. In short, this research seeks to test the underpinnings of the Big Five effects found in the Mondak studies, while also providing a new perspective on the less understood traits in the Big Five.

Research Design

One of the primary goals of this paper is to extend our understanding of personality’s role in political behavior. By measuring personality with greater specificity, we seek to not only elucidate why particular personality characteristics, such as Extraversion and Openness to Experiences appear to be particularly potent predictors of political behavior ([De Neve 2010](#_ENREF_13); [Gerber et al. 2011](#_ENREF_17); [Mondak et al. 2010](#_ENREF_37); [Vecchione and Caprara 2009](#_ENREF_43)) and engagement ([De Neve 2010](#_ENREF_13); [Gerber et al. 2010](#_ENREF_16)), while the other aspects of the Big Five appear far less effective at explaining the relationship between individual and politics.

A concern we and other researchers have faced in capturing personality is the tradeoff between capturing the full facets while still being able to measure additional variables of interest. To this end, we fielded a pilot study on Amazon Mechanical Turk (henceforth MTurk)[[3]](#footnote-3) to measure the 300 personality items specified by the IPIP developed by Goldberg and colleagues ([2006](#_ENREF_19)). Using these measures, we created a reduced subset of 60 items (2 per facet) using factor analysis, selecting the top two items that loaded in the primary facet. These scales, we argue, provide a more precise measure of personality than those used previously at a fraction of respondent-minutes the full IPIP requires. The scales from the pilot were assessed for construct validity, and were then used as the basis for the present study.

*Survey Instrument and Sample*

The current study was also fielded on MTurk in two waves[[4]](#footnote-4) over a period of three weeks. Combined, the waves obtained 446 completions (a 94% completion rate). Of these, 28 observations were repeat completions, and are excluded from all analyses. On average respondents took a little over 11 minutes to complete the entire survey.

The survey proceeded as follows: participants were initially asked to complete two different personality batteries, one based upon the ten-item battery used by Mondak and colleagues, and a 60-item reduced version of the IPIP. To diminish concerns of response biases, items within the Mondak and IPIP batteries were randomized, and the batteries were themselves presented in random order. Participants were then asked to complete a series of political batteries, including rating parties and candidates using feeling thermometers[[5]](#footnote-5) before completing a brief demographic battery and being debriefed.

*Sample Viability of MTurk*

MTurk has recently risen to prominence as an inexpensive tool for academic researchers, where workers receive small payments for short tasks via the Amazon Marketplace. Researchers upload their tasks to MTurk, specifying the duration of the Human Intelligence Task (HIT) and the pay rate, and MTurk workers (who have self-selected into the pool), choose which tasks they want to complete. The self-selected nature of the MTurk population raises concerns regarding the generalizability of findings obtained from analysis of data collected from MTurkers. With the growth of work using data from MTurk, a new line of research has taken steps to assess the validity of data obtained from MTurk workers. In a comparison of MTurk workers to data collected from student and adult convenience samples (see Kam et al. 2007), and a randomized national sample (the 2008-9 ANES Panel Survey), Berinsky and colleagues ([forthcoming](#_ENREF_6)) find that MTurk respondents not only compare favorably to both student and adult convenience samples, but high-quality, nationally representative samples as well. Overall, our sample is roughly comparable to that obtained by Berinsky and colleagues.[[6]](#footnote-6)

Analysis and Results

The results we present here are part replication, part measurement exploration, and part new analysis of the influence of personality on political behavior. We first compare the refined measures of personality with the ten-item Big Five measures before moving to multivariate analyses of the influence of personality on political orientations and affect toward political figures at the aggregate level. We then extend these results by digging deeper and examining the effects of personality when measured at the facet level.

[Table 1 here]

*Comparing Personality Measures*

As a first step toward evaluating the efficacy of the revised personality scales, we compare them with the ten-item measures utilized in previous research. To create comparable scales, we average the items by Big Five dimension and then rescale each measure to run from 0 to 1.[[7]](#footnote-7) Perhaps unsurprisingly, comparing Chronbach’s alpha statistics for the each of the distinct measures we see that fit is superior for the facet items.[[8]](#footnote-8) More importantly, the reduced measurement of the IPIP (based upon the NEO-PI) presented here compares favorably to the full NEO-PI scales measured previously, providing further validity to the reduced battery.[[9]](#footnote-9) It should also be noted that both the Mondak measures and Revised IPIP measures collected online via MTurk show marked improvements over those collected via phone interviews, suggesting that this may be a viable form of data collection for future research in personality.

[Table 2 here]

*Big Five Traits and Political Orientations*

Having validated the reliability of the refined personality measures compared to existing measures, we turn next to how personality affects individuals’ political worldview and perceptions of political figures.

Despite a more recent focus on the behavioral implications of personality, research on the influence of personality traits has not ignored how these characteristics link to more foundational components of political interaction (i.e. partisanship and ideology). While connections between personality and ideological identification have not appeared to cut across all traits, there has been sufficient evidence of connections for us to derive testable expectations for each of the Big Five.

We begin with Emotional Stability, also referred to as Neuroticism. This trait “contrasts … even-temperedness with negative emotionality” (Gerber et al. 2011, 267). Those lower in this trait are thought to be anxious, disposed to feeling sad, and have poor coping mechanisms in times of stress ([John et al. 2008](#_ENREF_25); [Piedmont 1998](#_ENREF_40)). While these characteristics affect levels of impulsive behavior ([Costa and McCrae 2008](#_ENREF_12)), and can affect social status in groups ([Anderson et al. 2001](#_ENREF_2)). Yet politically, Emotional Stability is an inconsistent predictor. There have been demonstrated to be modest relationships between stability and conservatism (and preferences for Bush over Kerry in 2004) ([Barbaranelli et al. 2007](#_ENREF_3)), but this appears to be the exception rather than the rule. In turn, we remain somewhat agnostic as to the relationship between Emotional Stability and political position.

Contrasting with Emotional Stability, Extraversion is an “energetic approach toward the social and material world (Gerber et al. 2011, 267). Extraverted individuals, unsurprisingly, are described as outgoing, energetic, and sociable ([John et al. 2008](#_ENREF_25)). Moreover, they enjoy the company of others, crave stimulation, and prefer leadership roles ([Costa and McCrae 2008](#_ENREF_12)). While Extraversion has been related to particular social behaviors, including risk-taking ([Markey et al. 2006](#_ENREF_28)) and higher levels of membership in groups ([Bekkers 2005](#_ENREF_5)). Yet there appears to be no consistent relationship between Extraversion and ideological position. As noted by Mondak, “Democrats and Republicans both can be introverts. Conservatives and liberals both can be extroverts” (Mondak 2010, p. 57). As a consequence, we have no clear-cut expectations for Extraversion on partisanship or candidate evaluations.

Openness to Experience, as noted above is, “the breadth, depth, originality, and complexity of an individuals’ mental and experiential life.” (Gerber et al. 2011, 267). This characteristic relates to one’s open-mindedness to the world around them; how open they are to learning, as well as their general cognitive orientations. Those higher in Openness are predisposed to creativity ([George and Zhou 2001](#_ENREF_15)), curiosity, and imagination ([McCrae and Costa 1985](#_ENREF_30)), valuing experiences and exploration of the unfamiliar ([Piedmont 1998](#_ENREF_40)). Politically, lower levels of this characteristic has been connected to conservatism ([McCrae 1996](#_ENREF_29)), while higher levels predict a tendency toward liberalism ([Alford and Hibbing 2007](#_ENREF_1)). Subsequently, we expect that higher levels of openness should increase the likelihood of one identifying as a Democrat, having liberal ideology, and supporting liberal Democratic candidates.

Agreeableness is seen as one of the least understood traits ([Graziano and Tobin 2002](#_ENREF_22)). It has been described as a contrast between “…a prosocial and communal orientation toward others with antagonism.” (Gerber et al. 2011, 267) Broadly, it is thought to cover how one manages interpersonal relationships, particularly the degree of trust placed in others ([McCrae and Costa 1990](#_ENREF_31)) and conflict avoidance ([Jensen-Campbell and Graziano 2000](#_ENREF_24)), as well as pro-social orientations generally ([John et al. 2008](#_ENREF_25)). Politically, it is thought to be relevant for evaluations of candidates, particularly those who emphasize social welfare policies given its emphasis on thoughts of others ([Caprara et al. 2002](#_ENREF_8)), and was shown to increase preferences for John Kerry over George W. Bush ([Barbaranelli et al. 2007](#_ENREF_3)). As such, we expect that individuals higher in Agreeableness should be more likely to identify themselves as liberal and support Democrats.

Lastly, Conscientiousness is “socially prescribed impulse control that facilitates task- and goal-directed behavior” (Gerber et al. 2011, 267). Conscientious individuals are said to be efficient, rational, and well-organized ([Piedmont 1998](#_ENREF_40)), with higher levels of performance in school and jobs ([John et al. 2008](#_ENREF_25)). Those higher in Conscientiousness also tend to be risk averse ([Kowert and Hermann 1997](#_ENREF_27)). Politically, Conscientiousness is thought to act in the inverse manner as openness to experience: higher levels lead to beliefs in personal responsibility, tradition, virtue, and thus conservatism (Mondak 2010). Individuals higher in Conscientiousness provides support for this view ([Stenner 2005](#_ENREF_41)); additionally, those higher in Conscientiousness preferred Bush to Kerry in the 2004 election ([Barbaranelli et al. 2007](#_ENREF_3)). Subsequently, we would expect Conscientiousness to predict an increased likelihood of identifying as a Republican, or conservative, and as well as increased support for Republican candidates.

As an initial test, we estimate ordered probit models regressing partisanship and ideology on the personality measures described above. Partisanship is measured using a simplified three-category scale (1= Democrat to 3= Republican), as is Ideology (1=Liberal to 3=Conservative). We estimate separate models for the ten-item battery used by Mondak and our Reduced IPIP measures to compare performance of the measures in addition to model fit. Following the example of Mondak and Halperin (2008), we also include controls for education, age, race, and gender.

[Table 3 Here]

Looking first at the Mondak personality models in Table 3, Agreeableness is the most consistent predictor of partisanship and ideology; it has a significant influence on both partisanship and ideology in the expected Democratic/liberal direction. Additionally, Extraversion predicts identification with the Republican Party, while Conscientiousness significantly increases the likelihood of identifying as a conservative. Two final effects are significant are significant at the .10 level and in the expected direction. Emotional Stability has a positive effect on partisanship, leading individual high in this trait to be more likely to identify as a Republican, while Openness has a significant influence on ideology, with more open individuals more likely to identify as liberal.

The results from the facet measure models parallel the ten-item results. Agreeableness is again significant in both partisanship and ideology models and in the expected Democratic/liberal direction. Openness to Experience is a more consistent predictor in the facet models; higher scores on Openness correspond to being more likely to be Democratic and liberal. The facet measures also show an effect for Extraversion on partisanship and ideology, increasing the likelihood of identifying as a Republican/Conservative (although the ideology effect is significant at the 0.10 level). The difference in the facet models is that Emotional Stability and Conscientiousness do not influence partisanship and ideology. The general conformity of the two models with expectations is reassuring, given concerns as to the generalizability of our sample.

*Personality and Affect*

We extend these findings by using the personality measures to predict affect toward the Democratic and Republican parties, in addition to a series of figures from each party.[[10]](#footnote-10) Respondents were asked to rate each group or individual using a 101-point feeling thermometer, where 0 indicates they feel coldly toward the group or individual, and 100 indicates they feel particularly warmly toward them. Again, we estimate separate sets of models for the Mondak and facet personality measures to compare their performance, in addition to the control variables included in the previous models.[[11]](#footnote-11)

[Table 4 here]

Here we begin to see differentiation between the personality batteries. While both Mondak and facet personality measures of Openness to Experience consistently decrease support for the Republican Party and Republican candidates, the similarities end there. Among the Mondak items, none of the other Big Five measures consistently influence opinion across the board. Agreeableness increases support for Democrats and Democratic candidates, but has no effect on views toward Republicans. The only other measure to obtain significance is Extraversion, which increases support for the Republican Party, but in no other instance.

Conversely, among the aggregated facet measures, we observe relatively consistent effects for Extraversion on evaluations of Republicans, where the more extraverted are more supportive of both the party and Republican political figures. We also see similar effects for Agreeableness to those found in the Mondak models – the effects are less consistent for Democrats (increasing support for the Democratic party and Hillary Clinton, and to some extent Obama), but also crop up in evaluations of the Republican Party, with those higher in Agreeableness less supportive. Overall, the traits constructed from the facet measures seem to uncover more of the effect of personality on affect than models from the reduced Mondak instrument, while also raising additional questions as to why these findings differ.

*Pieces of the Whole*

Up to this point, we have shown how our expanded instrument compares to recent measurement of the Big Five in replicated analysis. We now turn our focus to the facet measures themselves as the final contribution of this paper. Our approach is to replicate the above analyses with disaggregated facet measures. This strategy, we assert, will shed light on the underlying characteristics driving the previously observed relationships between political objects and personality, as well as potentially uncover relationships that have gone unobserved previously due to the simplified measurement of personality.

Our general analytic approach for teasing out facet effects is to re-estimate the above models, replacing the aggregated personality scales with the underlying facet measures. In worldview and affect, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Openness to Experience are consistent predictors in our models, as well as in the replicated 10-item measures. Where we see significant effects for these traits, we re-estimate the models substituting the six facet measures for the trait while also controlling for the remaining Big Five characteristics using the aggregated measures from the previous analyses. This provides insight into whether the variation on worldview or affect may be driven by sub-components of the Big Five. For example, Agreeableness is comprised of the following six facets: Trust, Morality, Altruism, Compliance, Modesty, and Sympathy.[[12]](#footnote-12) On the other hand, the notoriously difficult to capture Openness to Experience is created using the facets of Imagination, Aesthetics (Artistic Interests), Feelings (Emotionality), Actions (Adventurousness), Ideas (Intellect), and Values (Liberalism).

The facet analyses allow us to investigate the roots of personality and political worldview. Previous research examining the role of facets in explaining individual worldview have uncovered relationships that allow us to develop the following expectations: Openness (and each of the facets individually) have been shown to be positively related to liberalism ([Carney et al. 2008](#_ENREF_9)), while fantasy and feelings are negatively related to conservatism ([Van Hiel and Mervielde 2004](#_ENREF_42)). Additionally, under the domain of Agreeableness, tender-mindedness also positively predicts liberalism ([Carney et al. 2008](#_ENREF_9)). We expect to observe these relationships among the facets and ideological worldview, and subsequently, on the political affect measures as well. There are not well-defined findings for any of the Extraversion facets and partisan worldview, and we cannot derive any theoretical expectations for these measures. Our tests of the effects appear in Table 5 below.

[Table 5 here]

We begin with our models of partisanship and ideology, focusing on the effects of Extraversion, Openness to Experience, and Agreeableness. Results are shown in Table 5, with predicted probabilities derived from the models plotted in Figure 1.[[13]](#footnote-13) The analytical task is to identify the facets that underlie the significant effects for the Big Five traits of Extraversion, Openness, and Agreeableness on Partisanship and Ideology, respectively.

The facets for Extraversion that have a significant effect on partisanship are Gregariousness and Excitement Seeking. Gregariousness has a negative influence on the likelihood of being Republican, while Excitement Seeking has a positive effect. Further, Gregariousness also has a significant negative effect on the likelihood of identifying as conservative. Or, put differently, individuals scoring higher on Gregariousness are more likely to be Democratic and liberal.

Openness to Experience is often found to correspond with liberalism. When shifting the level of measurement to facets, the Openness facets of Aesthetics and Values (Liberalism) both have a significant and negative influence on identifying as Republican and Conservative; individuals who scored higher on the appreciation of art and adherence to Values are more likely to be Democratic and liberal. The survey items that tap Values/liberalism were reverse coded to capture its inverse by asking whether respondents “believe laws should be strictly enforced” and whether the respondents “like standing during the national anthem.” After recoding so higher scores correspond to more liberal values, we find strong effects for the Values facet in predicting partisanship and ideology. The survey items that capture Aesthetics asked respondents about views toward art and visiting art museums. Individuals who scored higher in the interest in art were significantly more likely to be Democrats and Liberal.

Though only significant in the ideology model, the Openness facet of Ideas/Intellect is significant and in the positive direction in the ideology model which corresponds to individuals who feel no difficulty understanding abstract ideas being more likely to be conservative.[[14]](#footnote-14) These findings imply that the Openness effects found in previous studies derive from the artistic interest and liberal values embedded in the Openness to Experience trait.

Agreeableness is one of the less understood Big Five traits. However, in our models, we find that Agreeableness significantly influences partisanship and ideology by making individuals more likely to be Democrats and liberal. By isolating the facets of Agreeableness, we see that predispositions toward Compliance (Cooperation) seems to be partly driving the Big Five effect; Compliance is significant and negative, which corresponds to more compliant/cooperative individuals being more likely to be Democratic and liberal.[[15]](#footnote-15) Further, the Trust facet is significant and negative in the ideology model, implying that individuals who are more trusting are more likely to be liberal.

Inspecting the predicted probability provides us with a better understanding of the substantive effects of the facets. Facet effects over the range of the personality scales are relatively modest, changing the likelihood of identifying in a particular partisan category around 20 points, on average (see Figure 1). Most notably, we see the traits most consistent effect is to increase the likelihood of identifying as a Democrat, or as liberal, and decreasing the likelihood of identifying as a moderate/Independent or as a Conservative/Republican.

[Table 6 here]

Having delved into the aspects of personality that influence individual worldviews, we seek to do the same for the relationship between personality and affect toward political figures. To this end, we conduct a parallel analysis to replicate the models from Table 4, iteratively examining the effects of personality facets.[[16]](#footnote-16)

As with the models considering the relationship between personality and political affect, Extraversion appears to matter only for views toward the Republican Party and Republican candidates. More specifically, under the broader umbrella of Extraversion, we see that individuals who are predisposed toward excitement (those who like being part of large, boisterous crowds) are more likely to support Republicans. The substantive effect of the Excitement facet is a boost of more than 20 points on a feeling thermometer. None of the other facets consistently approach significance.

Openness and Agreeableness are more consistently predictive when we consider their facets. For Openness, people who are interested in Aesthetics and art are more supportive of Obama and Hillary Clinton, while also being less likely to support Mitt Romney, as well as the Republican Party generally. These effects are modest, averaging slightly more than 15 points on the 100-point thermometer scale. More interesting is the consistent negative effect on levels of affect for Democrats for those higher in Ideas and Intellectualism. Those who are more disposed toward abstract thinking are far less supportive of Democratic figures and the Democratic Party. Less surprising is the relationship between those who favor liberal values, which modestly increases support for Democrats, and consistently decreases support for Republicans, by more than 25 points on average. Similar to the effects on partisanship and ideology, Agreeableness continues to link closely to evaluations of Democrats when examined at the facet level. Those who are more disposed to be trusting are far more likely to support Democrats, by more than 25 points on average, while those who are more straight-forward and less equivocating are less supportive of Democrats.

Taken together, the results from the facet models yield positive evidence for the influence of personality facets on political worldview and evaluation of political figures. Moving from the Big Five to the facet level brings added value to understanding the sub-components of personality that affect political behavior. In the case of Openness to Experience, the models show that Aesthetics and artistic interest and liberal values may be bring about the effects observed on ideology when looking solely at the Big Five. Moreover, when analyzing Agreeableness, the facet of Compliance (cooperation) and Trust seems to trigger the effect captured by the broader personality trait on ideology. The results lend credence to the notion that there is merit to looking beyond the Big Five.

Furthermore, the facet-level analysis shows an interesting complementary relationship among the amalgamation of facets that make up the Big Five. While there are contrasting facets inside a given trait that push personality types to hold different worldviews, facets can often work in concert to shape and influence an individual’s political worldview. For example, the Agreeability facets of Trust and Cooperation seem to work in tandem to influence ideological leanings. Examining the relationships at this level thus paints a clearer picture of the influence of personality and the Big Five traits.

Conclusions

Personality is an important part of who we are, and shapes the way we see the world. Yet, despite the prominent role that politics plays in the lives of many, its influence has been relatively understudied. In this paper, our goal is to advance thinking about the Big Five both theoretically and methodologically. The main contribution is in using a more refined measure of the Big Five that is built from facets. These measures capture additional variation in personality that simpler measures cannot, while also painting a clearer picture of the traits underpinning the relationships between personality and politics. Our measures compare favorably to reduced Mondak instrument and, in some circumstances, even surpass the reduced measures in direct comparisons of fit. Thus, the analysis serves to extend and scrutinize the reduced-item instrument results, uncovering effects for traits like Agreeableness, which had previously been found to be inconsistent predictors of political behavior.

Now, this does not mean that we should eschew the reduced instrument; the Mondak battery results are consistent and hold up well to our more refined scales. The Mondak ten-item instrument captures significant variation in our models and is ideal for administration under time constraints and over the phone. It does mean, however, that building personality scales from more detailed, descriptive batteries, adds richness to our picture of personality and its applicability to politics with a fractional increase in survey time.

The proper level to measure personality in the Big Five is an open question in political behavior, and our analysis yields evidence that there is added value in analyzing personality subcomponents of the Big Five. Clearly, more research needs to done to evaluate whether the Big Five traits should be the reference point for explaining political behavior or whether some aspects of political behavior are better analyzed at the level of facets. Using a more nuanced measure of personality than common in recent prominent research, we find marked improvement in how different measures of personality fare in predicting political orientations and political judgments. Our analyses suggest that, in addition to Extraversion and Openness to Experience, there are roles for other aspects of the Big Five traits, including Agreeableness, which influence how citizens view and evaluate politics.

Lastly, we show that political beliefs are influenced by very simple and subtle predispositions that have gone unnoticed by analyses using the simpler measures. Considering the relationship between Agreeableness and views of the Republican Party and Hillary Clinton, looking at the level of the facet, we see that these effects are driven by predilections for abstract thinking and beliefs about traditional values such as the rule of law and even desire to stand during the National Anthem.

These findings only tap the surface of the potential in studies of personality. The individual facets that comprise the broader Big Five traits offer a much richer picture of personality, and are particularly telling for political behavior. Yet despite taking steps forward, there is still much room to push forward. In this paper, we have endeavored to examine the independent effects of personality traits. Yet it could be said that this is only scratching the surface of how personality operates. While personality characteristics may predispose us to interact with our environment in particular ways, we are not simply a collection of traits. Rather, we are more than the sum of our parts. Further work in personality should go beyond the notion of traits, to considering personality *types.* How traits combine additively and interact with one another, both at the level of the Big Five and at the deeper, facet level can tell us much about how we see and interact with the political world. It strikes us that this is fertile ground for research, and we will continue to gather data and expand our analyses in this direction.

We must acknowledge that these findings may not be perfectly representative of the general public. While MTurk has been demonstrated to be a good representation of the population at large, comparing favorably to nationally representative samples, there are particular differences germane to this study that requires that we add caveats to the take-home message. While the sample compares favorably to other samples from MTurk studies *demographically*, meaning it should then be representative of the public, important *personality* differences have been observed among MTurk participants. In a study using the TIPI personality scale, Goodman and colleagues ([forthcoming](#_ENREF_20)) found MTurk participants to be less extraverted, lower in emotional stability, and openness to experience than convenience sample respondents. However, they also found them to have no distinguishable differences on agreeableness and conscientiousness.

Taken as a whole, we feel that we have taken an important step forward in considering the role that personality plays in individuals’ political lives. By demonstrating that a reduced battery of the IPIP facets can be administered briefly and improving upon the measurement of personality above the commonly used ten-item batteries, the findings suggest further growth potential in our understanding of the role personality plays. Further research is needed to replicate and extend these findings to add robustness to new measures and analysis, using MTurk workers and other samples as well. We need to push forward on both theoretical and methodological fronts, if we endeavor to fully uncover the role of personality in political behavior. **Table 1. Chronbach’s Alpha – Mondak and IPIP Measures[[17]](#footnote-17)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2006 CCES Mondak Measures** | **MTurk Mondak Measures** | **MTurk IPIP Measures** |
| Emotional Stability | 0.59 | 0.82 | 0.90 |
| Extraversion | 0.61 | 0.80 | 0.87 |
| Openness to Experience | 0.21 | 0.46 | 0.74 |
| Agreeableness | 0.47 | 0.75 | 0.80 |
| Conscientiousness | 0.36 | 0.55 | 0.86 |
| N |  | 386 | 386 |

**Table 2. Chronbach’s Alpha – NEO-PI and Reduced NEO-PI Measures**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **NEO-PI[[18]](#footnote-18)** | **MTurk Reduced[[19]](#footnote-19) IPIP** |
| *Emotional Stability* | 0.92 | 0.90 |
| Anxiety | 0.78 | 0.83 |
| Hostility | 0.75 | 0.87 |
| Depression | 0.81 | 0.85 |
| Self-Consciousness | 0.68 | 0.68 |
| Impulsiveness | 0.70 | 0.46 |
| Vulnerability | 0.77 | 0.87 |
|  |  |  |
| *Extraversion* | 0.89 | 0.87 |
| Warmth | 0.73 | 0.63 |
| Gregariousness | 0.72 | 0.68 |
| Assertiveness | 0.77 | 0.79 |
| Activity | 0.63 | 0.44 |
| Excitement seeking | 0.65 | 0.71 |
| Positive emotions | 0.73 | 0.75 |
|  |  |  |
| *Openness to Experience* | 0.87 | 0.74 |
| Fantasy | 0.76 | 0.79 |
| Aesthetics | 0.76 | 0.82 |
| Feelings | 0.66 | 0.66 |
| Actions | 0.58 | 0.68 |
| Ideas | 0.80 | 0.76 |
| Values | 0.67 | 0.63 |
|  |  |  |
| *Agreeableness* | 0.86 | 0.80 |
| Trust | 0.79 | 0.73 |
| Straightforwardness | 0.71 | 0.81 |
| Altruism | 0.75 | 0.78 |
| Compliance | 0.59 | 0.66 |
| Modesty | 0.67 | 0.93 |
| Tender-mindedness | 0.56 | 0.70 |
|  |  |  |
| *Conscientiousness* | 0.90 | 0.86 |
| Competence | 0.67 | 0.70 |
| Order | 0.66 | 0.79 |
| Dutifulness | 0.62 | 0.57 |
| Achievement | 0.67 | 0.66 |
| Self-discipline | 0.75 | 0.75 |
| Deliberation | 0.71 | 0.87 |

**Table 3. Personality and Political Predispositions**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Partisanship** | **Ideology** |
| *Mondak Personality* |  |  |
| Emotional Stability | 0.51+  (0.26) | 0.35  (0.28) |
|  |  |  |
| Extraversion | **0.52\***  **(0.25)** | 0.39  (0.26) |
|  |  |  |
| Openness | -0.29  (0.37) | -0.65+  (0.37) |
|  |  |  |
| Agreeableness | **-1.01\*\***  **(0.31)** | **-0.87\***  **(0.37)** |
|  |  |  |
| Conscientiousness | 0.23  (0.31) | **0.85\***  **(0.34)** |
|  |  |  |
| N | 386 | 386 |
|  |  |  |
| *Facet Personality* |  |  |
| Emotional Stability | 0.60  (0.41) | 0.04  (0.43) |
|  |  |  |
| Extraversion | **0.87\***  **(0.40)** | 0.77+  (0.40) |
|  |  |  |
| Openness | **-1.26\*\***  **(0.42)** | **-1.83\*\***  **(0.44)** |
|  |  |  |
| Agreeableness | **-1.21\***  **(0.47)** | **-1.44\*\***  **(0.46)** |
|  |  |  |
| Conscientiousness | -0.04  (0.44) | 0.80  (0.50) |
|  |  |  |
| N | 386 | 386 |
| DV: 1 (Democrat/Liberal) to 3 (Republican/Conservative). Models include controls for Education, Age, Race, and Gender. + p<0.10; \* p<0.05; \*\* p<0.01. | | |

**Table 4. Personality and Political Affect**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Democrats** | **Obama** | **Clinton** | **Republicans** | **Romney** | **Santorum** |
| *Mondak Personality* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Emotional Stability | -3.09  (6.99) | -11.20  (7.87) | 10.97  (7.49) | -2.13  (6.96) | 2.35  (6.62) | 3.16  (6.18) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Extraversion | -0.99  (6.26) | 2.29  (7.16) | 3.20  (7.00) | **14.34\***  **(6.47)** | 6.96  (5.77) | 6.23  (5.86) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Openness | -1.71  (9.20) | -4.21  (10.56) | -11.37  (11.12) | **-33.88\*\***  **(9.03)** | **-36.79\*\***  **(8.40)** | **-38.71\*\***  **(9.15)** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Agreeableness | **33.32\*\***  **(9.54)** | **21.50\***  **(9.97)** | **36.82\*\***  **(10.07)** | -5.46  (7.90) | -6.86  (7.47) | 2.00  (6.89) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Conscientiousness | -6.80  (8.36) | -10.08  (9.18) | -9.82  (9.33) | 4.90  (7.94) | 13.10+  (6.80) | 5.08  (7.27) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Constant | **39.52\*\***  **(11.06)** | **47.91\*\***  **(12.36)** | 18.49  (13.14) | **58.37\*\***  **(10.80)** | **48.11\*\***  **(10.76)** | **36.90\*\***  **(11.43)** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| N | 382 | 382 | 380 | 382 | 374 | 365 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Facet Personality* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Emotional Stability | 9.05  (10.71) | -0.59  (12.27) | 24.27+  (12.54) | 1.08  (10.58) | 11.80  (10.14) | **19.01\***  **(9.64)** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Extraversion | 11.25  (10.61) | 10.40  (12.06) | 23.31+  (12.20) | **23.95\*\***  **(9.40)** | **29.53\*\***  **(9.03)** | **30.38\*\***  **(8.86)** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Openness | 7.68  (11.16) | 16.43  (12.40) | -10.23  (11.68) | **-58.21\*\***  **(9.59)** | **-55.64\*\***  **(9.34)** | **-53.97\*\***  **(9.33)** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Agreeableness | **45.24\*\***  **(11.51)** | 23.26+  (13.49) | **41.26\*\***  **(12.36)** | **-38.32\*\***  **(11.08)** | -16.65  (10.40) | -15.75  (10.18) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Conscientiousness | -13.13  (11.94) | -20.59  (13.83) | -18.03  (13.96) | -15.24  (11.96) | -10.61  (11.28) | -3.96  (11.11) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Constant | 16.68  (18.00) | 28.27  (20.39) | -1.46  (20.09) | **88.52\*\***  **(16.72)** | **58.09\*\***  **(15.98)** | **37.58\***  **(15.37)** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| N | 382 | 382 | 380 | 382 | 374 | 365 |
| DV: 0 (very cold) to 100 (very warm). Cell Values are Regression coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. Models include controls for Education, Age, Race, and Gender. + p<0.10; \* p<0.05; \*\* p<0.01. | | | | | | |

**Table 5. Personality Facets and Political Predispositions**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Partisanship** | | **Ideology** | |
|  | **Estimate** | **S.E.** | **Estimate** | **S.E.** |
| *Extraversion* | | | | |
| Warmth | 0.19 | (0.37) | 0.46 | (0.36) |
| Gregariousness | **-0.60\*** | **(0.31)** | **-0.67\*** | **(0.32)** |
| Assertiveness | 0.02 | (0.30) | 0.45 | (0.31) |
| Activity | 0.27 | (0.37) | 0.25 | (0.40) |
| Excitement seeking | **0.99\*** | **(0.43)** | 0.18 | (0.42) |
| Positive emotions | -0.21 | (0.37) | 0.05 | (0.36) |
| N | 386 | | 386 | |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| *Openness* | | | | |
| Fantasy | -0.02 | (0.28) | -0.40 | (0.28) |
| Aesthetics | **-0.83\*\*** | **(0.27)** | **-0.94\*\*** | **(0.26)** |
| Feelings | 0.09 | (0.33) | -0.17 | (0.37) |
| Actions | 0.05 | (0.43) | 0.21 | (0.46) |
| Ideas | 0.16 | (0.30) | **0.97\*\*** | **(0.32)** |
| Values | **-0.53\*\*** | **(0.25)** | **-1.73\*\*** | **(0.28)** |
| N | 386 | | 386 | |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| *Agreeableness* | | | | |
| Trust | -0.44 | (0.29) | **-0.68\*** | **(0.30)** |
| Straightforwardness | 0.49 | (0.42) | 0.61 | (0.45) |
| Altruism | 0.17 | (0.39) | 0.19 | (0.38) |
| Compliance | **-0.80\*** | **(0.36)** | **-0.82\*** | **(0.38)** |
| Modesty | -0.17 | (0.29) | -0.56+ | (0.29) |
| Tender-mindedness | -0.41 | (0.34) | -0.27 | (0.34) |
| N | 386 | | 386 | |
| DV: 1 (Democrat/Liberal) to 3 (Republican/Conservative). Models include controls for aggregated personality measures excepting the requisite facets, as well as Education, Age, Race, and Gender. + p<0.10; \* p<0.05; \*\* p<0.01. | | | | |

**Table 6. Personality Facets and Political Affect**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Democrats** | **Obama** | **Clinton** | **Republicans** | **Romney** | **Santorum** |
| *Extraversion* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Warmth | -0.74  (9.30) | -0.64  (11.20) | 11.56  (10.59) | -3.33  (9.62) | 2.51  (9.91) | -3.16  (8.89) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Gregariousness | 6.70  (7.49) | -1.89  (8.66) | 3.01  (8.81) | -10.23  (7.64) | -8.99  (7.50) | -9.17  (7.25) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Assertiveness | 0.15  (8.82) | 1.10  (9.92) | -13.14  (9.04) | 4.20  (7.62) | -5.29  (7.59) | -0.10  (7.46) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Activity | 5.01  (9.91) | -0.65  (11.32) | 9.45  (11.28) | 13.64  (9.65) | 1.30  (9.74) | -0.02  (8.32) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Excitement seeking | -3.46  (9.79) | 7.27  (11.34) | 2.67  (11.36) | **25.16\*\***  **(9.19)** | **28.82\*\***  **(9.42)** | **26.71\*\***  **(8.66)** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Positive emotions | 5.57  (9.03) | 3.29  (10.09) | 12.80  (10.19) | 3.45  (8.15) | 5.01  (8.32) | 9.59  (7.50) |
| N | 386 | 386 | 386 | 386 | 386 | 386 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Openness* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Fantasy | -4.95  (7.52) | -1.45  (8.30) | -2.79  (8.31) | -2.92  (6.64) | -1.01  (6.68) | -7.49  (6.63) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Aesthetics | 12.04+  (6.23) | **24.77\*\***  **(6.38)** | **17.43\***  **(7.03)** | **-16.04\***  **(6.31)** | **-20.09\*\***  **(6.57)** | -8.93  (5.87) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Feelings | -0.90  (7.98) | 8.66  (9.81) | 1.19  (10.11) | 1.78  (7.74) | 2.74  (7.86) | **15.60\***  **(7.36)** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Actions | 11.37  (10.68) | 5.69  (11.48) | 1.99  (12.19) | -6.72  (9.98) | -2.59  (10.21) | -16.54+  (9.57) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ideas | **-21.90\*\***  **(7.18)** | **-37.20\*\***  **(7.90)** | **-29.21\*\***  **(8.17)** | -4.08  (6.30) | -5.45  (6.69) | -9.98  (6.40) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Values | **18.36\*\***  **(6.44)** | **19.17\***  **(7.51)** | 0.71  (7.82) | **-30.63\*\***  **(5.76)** | **-26.32\*\***  **(5.46)** | **-28.63\*\***  **(5.44)** |
| N | 386 | 386 | 386 | 386 | 386 | 386 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Agreeableness* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Trust | **25.57\*\***  **(7.51)** | **27.96\*\***  **(8.21)** | **35.00\*\***  **(8.23)** | -7.98  (7.20) | **14.73\***  **(7.18)** | 7.32  (6.96) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Straightforwardness | **-29.51\*\***  **(10.15)** | **-40.55\*\***  **(11.57)** | -19.75+  (12.57) | -10.96  (10.66) | -7.79  (11.18) | -4.97  (10.36) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Altruism | 15.56+  (9.48) | 12.83  (11.07) | 2.74  (11.15) | 2.75  (9.44) | -5.77  (7.74) | -0.79  (8.98) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Compliance | **25.31\*\***  **(8.38)** | **24.68\*\***  **(9.34)** | 17.34+  (10.18) | -8.95  (8.69) | 0.60  (8.85) | -2.93  (8.56) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Modesty | 1.47  (7.48) | -3.65  (8.64) | 11.35  (8.59) | -5.44  (6.70) | 2.62  (6.76) | 2.50  (6.34) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Tender-mindedness | 7.09  (8.42) | 3.42  (9.45) | 2.68  (9.79) | -8.76  (8.35) | -13.06  (8.79) | -11.85  (8.45) |
| N | 386 | 386 | 386 | 386 | 386 | 386 |
| DV: 0 (very cold) to 100 (very warm). Cell Values are Regression coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. Models include controls for Education, Age, Race, and Gender. + p<0.10; \* p<0.05; \*\* p<0.01. | | | | | | |

**Figure 1. Personality and Likelihood of Political Identification**

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**Appendix**

**Ten-Item Personality Index**

*Emotional Stability*

* Relaxed-tense
* Nervous-calm (reverse-coded)

*Extraversion*

* Outgoing-shy (reverse-coded)
* Introverted-extraverted

*Openness to Experiences*

* Philosophical-unreflective (reverse-coded)
* Not intellectual-intellectual

*Agreeableness*

* Sympathetic-unsympathetic (reverse-coded)
* Unkind-kind

*Conscientiousness*

* Hardworking-lazy (reverse-coded)
* Sloppy-neat

**Reduced IPIP Facets**

*Emotional Stability*

* Anxiety
* I worry about things
* I fear for the worst
* Hostility (Anger)
* I get angry easily
* I get irritated easily
* Depression
* I dislike myself
* I am often down in the dumps
* Self-Consciousness
* I am afraid that I will do the wrong thing
* I find it difficult to approach others
* Impulsiveness (Immoderation)
* I often eat too much
* I do things I later quietly regret
* Vulnerability
* I remain calm under pressure (reverse-coded)
* I am calm even in tense situations (reverse-coded)

*Extraversion*

* Warmth (Friendliness)
* I make friends easily
* I often feel uncomfortable around others (reverse-coded)
* Gregariousness
* I prefer to be alone (reverse-coded)
* I avoid crowds (reverse-coded)
* Assertiveness
* I try to lead others
* I seek to influence others
* Activity (Activity Level)
* I am always on the go
* I can manage many things at the same time
* Excitement-Seeking
* I love action
* I enjoy being part of a loud crowd
* Positive emotions (Cheerfulness)
* I radiate joy
* I have a lot of fun

*Openness to Experiences*

* Fantasy (Imagination)
* I enjoy wild flights of fantasy
* I indulge in my fantasies
* Aesthetics (Artistic Interests)
* I do not like art (reverse-coded)
* I do not enjoy going to art museums (reverse-coded)
* Feelings (Emotionality)
* I enjoy examining myself and my life
* I try to understand myself
* Actions (Adventurousness)
* I am interested in many things
* I like to begin new things
* Ideas (Intellect)
* I am not interested in abstract ideas (reverse-coded)
* I have difficulty understanding abstract ideas (reverse-coded)
* Values (Liberalism)
* I believe laws should be strictly enforced (reverse-coded)
* I like to stand during the national anthem (reverse-coded)

*Agreeableness*

* Trust
* I trust others
* I believe that people are basically moral
* Straightforwardness (Morality)
* I take advantage of others (reverse-coded)
* I obstruct others' plans (reverse-coded)
* Altruism
* I turn my back on others (reverse-coded)
* I take no time for others (reverse-coded)
* Compliance (Cooperation)
* I contradict others (reverse-coded)
* I hold a grudge (reverse-coded)
* Modesty
* I think highly of myself (reverse-coded)
* I have a high opinion of myself (reverse-coded)
* Tender-mindedness (Sympathy)
* I tend to dislike soft-hearted people (reverse-coded)
* I try not to think about the needy (reverse-coded)

*Conscientiousness*

* Competence (Self-Efficacy)
* I handle tasks smoothly
* I know how to get things done
* Order (Orderliness)
* I often forget to put things back in their proper place (reverse-coded)
* I leave a mess in my room (reverse-coded)
* Dutifulness
* I break rules (reverse-coded)
* I break my promises (reverse-coded)
* Achievement (Achievement-Striving)
* I turn plans into actions
* I demand quality
* Self-Discipline
* I waste my time (reverse-coded)
* I postpone decisions (reverse-coded)
* Deliberation (Cautiousness)
* I jump into things without thinking (reverse-coded)
* I rush into things (reverse-coded)

**Figure 2. Distribution of Personality Traits**



**Figure 3. Distribution of Personality Traits**



**Figure 4. Distribution of Personality Characteristics**



1. The authors would like to thank the Mercyhurst Center for Applied Politics at Mercyhurst University under the direction of Joseph M. Morris for providing financial support for this project, to Melissa Surawski-Heerboth for advice in research design, and Matthew Hibbing for thoughtful comments. All errors remain our own. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The IPIP batteries are designed to tap identical constructs to the NEO-PI personality battery and correlate highly with these measures ([Goldberg et al. 2006](#_ENREF_19)). However, unlike the NEO-PI, the IPIP batteries are freely available for non-commercial research. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The pilot study yielded a sample of 200 respondents who were paid $0.25 in exchange for taking the 25-minute survey. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Workers were initially offered $0.35 for a ten-minute survey; subsequently, pay was increased to $0.50 in an effort to increase the response rate. Research on incentives for MTurk workers has shown that pay rate has no effect on data quality, but does increase response rates ([Buhmeister et al. 2011](#_ENREF_7)). Results are comparable across waves and thus we pool all respondents together. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The study was in the field from 2/12 to 3/7, overlapping with the later phases of the Republican primary race. Tests for temporal effects reveal no difference, and all subjects are pooled together. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Our sample has fewer female respondents (44% versus 61%), but is more ethnically diverse than Berinsky et al.’s (80% white versus 95%). However, age, income, and education levels were comparable. Politically, the MTurk sample obtained is comparable on proportions of Republicans and Independents, but is somewhat less Democratic (36 versus 42%), and slightly higher in non-affiliated respondents (17% versus 10%). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. In publications using the ten-item batteries measured over the phone (as opposed to pen-and-paper, or online, as in the MTurk surveys), Mondak and colleagues note a particular skewness for many of the Big Five measures and recommend using a logarithmic transformation to diminish the skew, a curious strategy given the implications of such a change for the empirical findings. As Mondak notes, “[a]lthough I believe Big Five scales should be constructed using logged data, the empirical consequences of this decision are minimal, presumably because the actual distributions exhibited notable skews only on a handful of items. Overall, inter-item correlations within each trait dimension were modestly higher using logged rather than unlogged variables, but the same pattern of effects reported… emerged when scales were constructed using data in their raw form” (Mondak 2010, pp. 73-4). Given the lack of pronounced skew in the data obtained via MTurk, we choose not to log the data. Distributions for the Big Five measures (unlogged) are presented along with the measures collected via MTurk in the Appendix. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Fit is also improved between the ten-item scales measured online in the MTurk survey as compared to those collected over the phone in the 2006 CCES, suggesting an advantage to measuring personality using web surveys rather than traditional phone interviews. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Costa and McCrae ([1988](#_ENREF_10)) report alpha statistics for Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness which compare favorably to those obtained using the reduced scales; only our measure of Openness to Experience is well below those obtained by the full inventory, giving us good confidence in the reliability of our scales. Additionally, the individual facets generally perform as well or better than the full-NEO-PI measures, with few exceptions. This gives us further confidence that the scales are valid. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. In addition to the parties, respondents were asked to evaluate Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, Mitt Romney, and Rick Santorum. If they did not recognize the candidate, or were unwilling to rate them, respondents were given a ‘don’t know’ option. Those who responded with don’t know are not included in the analyses. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Having demonstrated that personality traits shape partisanship and ideological orientations, we do not control for either partisan identification or ideology in the affect models, for fear that collinearity between terms will obscure the influence of personality on political evaluations. This necessitates the assumption that personality is completely exogenous, a decision which is grounded in prior theoretical work on personality. Results including controls for partisanship are similar. These analyses are not shown. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Each facet was captured using two survey items in our 60-questions personality battery. Wording for each facet is given in the Appendix. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. The probabilities presented in Figure 1 are the change in likelihood of identifying with a partisan or ideological category from the lowest to highest level of the personality facet, all else held at their means. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The Ideas facet was captured by survey items with the phrases “I am not interested in abstract ideas” (reverse-coded) and “I have difficulty understanding abstract ideas” (reverse-coded). As such, the respondents who disagreed with these statements were more likely to be conservative. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The survey items used to capture Compliance ask respondents whether they “contradict others” (reverse-coded) and whether they “hold a grudge” (reverse-coded). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. As with the facet analyses predicting partisanship and worldview, models containing facets for a given Big Five characteristic also include controls for the other Big Five characteristics, in addition to the standard control variables. Given the results obtained in Table 5, we focus exclusively on the effects of Extraversion, Openness, and Agreeableness. Facet models looking at the effects of Neuroticism and Conscientiousness found no consistent effects. These models are not shown. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Analyses omit all respondents who failed to finish the survey, were repeat takers, or had completion times less than 5 minutes (25 respondents) or greater than 60 minutes (3 respondents). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Results are taken from Costa and McCrae ([1988](#_ENREF_10)) and re-presented in Table 2-2 of Piedmont ([1998](#_ENREF_40)) [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. As noted, the IPIP are a freely available version of the commercial NEO-PI scales. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)