

The research question addressed in this study is important and the authors use an impressive pair of samples and useful methods to address the topic. I believe they are correct in identifying a problematic conceptualization of personality traits among researchers in political psychology and political science, and that this study will do a service to the field in causing researchers to rethink their ideas on the topic. In addition, the study was generally well-written, though as I note below some areas are in need of further attention. That said, I have some significant concerns about this study:

(1) The study appears to significantly overstate what conclusions can be drawn based on this study and previous work. Importantly, a more modest set of conclusions is still worthy of publication in this outlet. But the authors are a bit eager to suggest that the pattern they observe in adolescence and adulthood should be assumed to operate in childhood. In this, some of their discussion appears to be a bit misleading – for example, they refer to Toney-Purta (2004) and Toney –Purta Amadeo (2003) as concerning “children.” If I recall correctly, these studies relied on 14 year-old samples; readers might assume that the samples were younger based on the authors’ terminology. Another reference of concern is Abendschön (2010): I could not find the paper itself, but if it covers the same material covered as Van Deth, Abendschön, & Vollmar (2011), I would strongly object to the interpretation offered in the present paper. The Van Deth paper found an “attitude factor” based on stated familiarity with an issue, and I believe this falls far short of the kind of demonstration needed to show that children have meaningful attitudes. Most importantly, this line of argument goes far beyond what the present paper aims to demonstrate. It would be best if the authors simply limited their claims to saying that they have shown that changes in personality cannot account for much, if any, of the changes in early- and late-adulthood political beliefs. I do not think this paper or any paper cited by the authors can serve to close off the possibility that personality influences the adoption of political beliefs during adolescence.

(2) The authors’ results regarding the P- and L-scale (with high-P conservatives and high-L liberals) were extremely counterintuitive. I see that several papers have been published using the same samples from this paper showing this same pattern, but after reading them I am still concerned that they appear to be finding results that are sharply inconsistent with, for example, the P-Scale representing disinhibition (Markon, Krueger, & Watson, 2005), which is generally negatively

associated with right wing beliefs. I attempted to address the question myself by looking for the data from Verhulst, Eaves, & Hatemi (2012), which appeared to use one of the samples from the present paper and was published by AJPS, and thus (according to journal policy) must have the data publicly available. The link provided in that paper was broken, however. If the authors of the present paper are the same as of the previous paper, they presumably need to fulfill their previous obligations to AJPS before the present paper could be considered for publication in this outlet. I would also be very interested in seeing a more thorough integration by the authors of their results with the broader personality literature: I find their results showing conservatives as disinhibited and liberals as high in moralistic bias (see Paulhus, 1984) to be so surprising as to be unbelievable, and this pattern of results appears to be more or less unique to these samples.

(3) I am a bit unclear on how the authors would explain the association between personality and political attitudes. In particular, I'm interested in how their account would lead to predictions that diverge from what they say on page 22: "*[I]f personality traits cause political preferences, changes in personality should correspond with changes in political attitudes.* Alternatively, if a causal structure does not exist, personality traits and attitudes should remain fairly stable or fluctuate independently across time and adult personality traits should have little influence over adult attitudes after controlling for previously measured personality and attitudinal measures." A correspondence between changes in personality and changes in political attitudes strikes me as an expected outcome of most potential explanations of the interrelationships between those domains; if the authors don't have an account for why these two domains would correlate but not change together, how would they interpret their results? My concern is that their results are potentially equally challenging to all meaningful accounts of how these domains would come to interrelate, rather than being particularly challenging to the account that posits personality as a causal factor for political attitudes.

Minor notes

-p.2 The last half of the first paragraph could be cleaned up; also, is the association cited with tough/tendermindedness and Conscientiousness supported in the broader literature?

-p. 5 Are McGue, Bacon & Lykken (1993) appropriately cited here? They demonstrate a high level of stability and a role for genetics, but I don't think they can be tarred with this brush.

- p. 7 "similar to personality." It's one thing to suggest that personality changes and does so in response to meaningful life events, but here the authors seem to suggest personality change has been observed for similar manipulations that have been observed to produce attitude change. That would require citation and discussion.

- p. 10 "being" should be "begin"

- p. 23 "to **the** second" ?

Citations from this review not present in the paper:

Markon, K. E., Krueger, R. F., & Watson, D. (2005). Delineating the structure of normal and abnormal personality: an integrative hierarchical approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 88(1), 139–57.

Paulhus, D. L. (1984). Two-component models of socially desirable responding. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 46, 598- 609.

van Deth, J. W., Abendschön, S., & Vollmar, M. (2011). Children and politics: An empirical reassessment of early political socialization. *Political Psychology*, 32(1), 147-174.