

## Studying the Place of Personality and Psychological Identity in Political Participation

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**Abstract:** The world today issue of the human psyche and personality plays an important role in social and political activities. Character and mental stability is an important point in setting goals and making decisions, those characters are realistic and stable comfort can decide either to participate in social and political activities. Several factors have an influence in shaping personality and psychological identity such as family, school, community and communication devices, etc., so how to get people in these circumstances and socialization of individuals makes personality and psychological identity and formed according to the identity, participate in political activities. Accordingly, the question examined in this study is: How personality and psychological identity influence in political activities? Recent analyses have demonstrated that personality affects political behavior. According to the mediation hypothesis, the effect of personality on political participation is mediated by classical predictors, such as political interest, internal efficacy, political discussion or the sense that voting is a civic duty. The purpose of this research is examine how the formation personality and psychological identity and type the characters influence in political activities.

**Key words:** Personality, psychological identity, political participation, education, realism

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### INTRODUCTION

Why do some people vote while others choose to stay home on election day? Why do some individuals contact public officials or volunteer to work on political campaigns while others do not? And why do some people do all of these things while others do none? The question of why some people participate in political activities more intensely than others is one of the classic questions in political science. Many normative theories of democracy suggest that an active and engaged citizenry is a key component of democratic governance, so understanding why people participate with more intensity than others is an important endeavor (Dahl, 1998). Over 60 years ago, Key (1949) observed that the blunt truth is that politicians and officials are under no compulsion to pay much heed to classes and groups of citizens that do not vote. Indeed, a great deal of empirical research has shown that patterns of political participation can have important consequences for democratic processes (Bartels, 2009; Hajnal, 2010). In some instances, the lack of citizen involvement in public affairs leads to biases in representation (Hajnal and Trounstein, 2005; Hajnal, 2010). Related to political participation is the question of why some people choose to engage in civic activities while others do not. Although, civic and political

participation are correlated, political participation entails interactions with political institutions while civic engagement refers to people's connections with the life of their community not merely with politics (Putnam, 2000).

Involvement in civic activities helps foster a sense of trust among enables them to act more effectively in the pursuit of common interests. Despite their differences, it is clear that both political participation and civic engagement are important elements of democratic governance. It should not come as a surprise then that scholars have spent a great deal of time trying to understand why it is that some people are more participatory than others. Personality is 1 significant source of individual differences in the way individuals interact with their environments and it affects numerous life outcomes, among which one might suspect is political behavior. In fact, considerable attention was devoted to the influence of personality on politics in early political science research (McClosky, 1958; Sniderman, 1975; Lane, 2000; Milbrath, 1965). Recently various studies have revealed important impacts of personality traits, as measured by the Big Five Model on various aspects of political behavior (Mondak and Halperin, 2008; Mondak *et al.*, 2010, 2011; Mondak, 2010) and on political ideology, attitudes and discussion (Gerber *et al.*, 2010;

Hibbing *et al.*, 2011). Other studies have shown that lower level psychological characteristics such as shyness, aggressivity or conflict avoidance influence voter turnout (Denny and Doyle, 2008; Blais and St-Vincent, 2011). Altogether, these recent studies suggest that psychological variables are as important as sociological, economic or political ones to understand participation in politics. Broadly speaking, my research seeks to answer the question of what motivated personality and psychological influences on political participation?

**Psychological theories of personal identity:** John Locke singled out memory, as central to personal identity. If I remember doing something then I am the same person that did that thing. He identifies the self, as that conscious thinking thing which is capable of happiness or misery and so is concerned for itself, as far as that consciousness extends. Person is the name for this self. This personality extends it self beyond present existence to what is past only by consciousness. According to Goleman (1955), the emotion guides the moment-to-moment decisions, working hand-in-hand with the rational mind, enabling thought itself. Damasio proves that feelings are typically indispensable for rational decisions. He describes a collection of brain areas and their roles in the reasoning process and decision-making. In addition, Simon (1983) discusses how reason can be employed effectively in human affairs. He proposes the Intuitive Model that recognizes that human thought is often affected by emotion.

Therefore based in these studies, we can say that humans use their emotional intelligence, personality traits and soft skills effectively during their decision-making process (Thagard, 2006). These most desirable traits presented, as psychological identity are required by the professionals. Some of these competences distinguish the most successful professionals from those who were merely good enough to keep their jobs (Goleman, 1955).

The psychological identity can be described, also as human features developed differently in each human. Individual differences that emerged from the psychological identity make a professional unique and a potential candidate to be a contributor in a specific work team.

Personality is never general, it is always particular. Human personality must be viewed as an organic unity, accessible to study through its acts, its verbal reports and even its reflex and physiological functioning. Personality may be versatile and variable but it is not capable of dissipation into *n* roles or *n* social selves. In other words, people produce or to others is not necessarily the same,

as their internal perception of self (Boyd, 2002). Boyd, considers a duality of identity where he collapses competing notions of the self into 2 categories one's internal identity and one's social identity. Internal refers to an individual's self-perception in relation to his/her experiences in the world. Social identity appears when she interacts in a society. Considering the fact that the criterion of personality is found in social interaction, an important view point to remember is the measure of the individuals true personality, as opposed to the individual's self-rating (Barkhuus and Csank, 1999). The personality traits individual self-rating, generally does not represent the true personality because the many aspects of personality do not surface before the person interacts with others. Therefore, researchers propose to define the internal identity by extracting the user psychological identity stored on the user psychological profile (Nunes and Cerri, 2007).

#### **PSYCHOLOGICAL RESOURCES: POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND ORIENTATIONS**

In addition to education and income, scholars have been interested in the extent to which psychological resources translate into political action. Here, the primary variables of interest have been political knowledge, internal and external efficacy, interest, the sense of civic duty and strength of partisanship (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; Carpini and Keeter, 1993; Blais and St-Vincent, 2011). Political scientists have repeatedly shown that people with high levels of interest in politics and knowledge, strong feelings of efficacy and a strong sense of civic duty are more inclined to participate in public life than their counterparts (Blais, 2000; Blais and St-Vincent, 2011). In addition, people who proclaim strong allegiances to political parties tend to participate in politics with more intensity than those who have weak connections (Conway, 1981). About 1 potential concern with research on the psychological antecedents of participation is endogeneity. The idea here is that while attitudes and orientations may influence participatory habits, they may also be shaped by participation. For instance when one participates in politics he or she may feel a stronger sense of civic duty, interest or efficacy, as a consequence. A number of studies have found evidence of a reciprocal relationship between participation and political attitudes and orientations (Finkel, 1985).

Thus far, the research outlined earlier has focused on things about people that influence their decisions to get involved in politics and civic affairs. Researchers have also been interested in examining how the things that happen to people influence their political behaviors over

the life cycle. The most notable line of research in this area centers on the impact of parental socialization on individuals. Research by Niemi and Jennings (1991), exemplifies the exploration of how early interactions between parents and children can have an enduring impact on political behavior. Using data from the Niemi and Jennings Youth-Parent Socialization Study (YPSS), scholars have shown that children whose parents voted when they were young are more likely than their counterparts to vote over the life cycle (Plutzer, 2002). In addition, empirical research has demonstrated that kids who come from families where politics was a frequent topic of discussion around the house are much more likely to get involved in public life than those whose families rarely talked about politics. The implication of these studies is very clear: Experiences that people have early on in life can matter a great deal to political behavior as life progresses.

While the experiences that people have growing up can certainly have an impact on political engagement over time, there are a number of other things that can happen to people that encourage (or discourage) them to get involved in (or stay away from) political life. Political scientists have spent a great deal of time examining how contact from parties and candidates can mobilize people to vote or to engage in other political acts. Perhaps, the most well known research in this area is the research done by Green and Gerber (2004). These scholars have used a number of field experiments to show that contacting people and providing them with information about voting (e.g., reminders of when election day is campaign ads, ads that prime the sense of civic duty) can boost their likelihood of turning out, sometimes by a substantial amount. A great deal of follow up research (Gerber *et al.*, 2008, 2010; Panagopoulos, 2011) has illustrated how different mobilization messages can impact voter turnout.

In addition to the effects exerted by mobilization efforts, other elements of the political context in which one is situated can have important effects on participation. For instance, living in a competitive political environment can encourage people to participate in elections, presumably because competition is a signal to voters that their votes will have a greater chance of influencing the outcome (Jackson, 1996; Jacobson and Kernell, 1983; Cox and Munger, 1989; Blais, 2000).

#### **IS PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTINUITY NECESSARY OR SUFFICIENT FOR PERSONAL IDENTITY?**

In the 1960's TV science-fiction series *Star Trek*, people teleport from the spaceship *USS enterprise*

onto the surface of a planet and back again. The teletransporter reads all the information of a person's body every cell, every neural connection destroys that body and then creates a body in a different location with exactly the same information.

So, if my psychological properties depend on my brain, say when a brain with exactly the same neurological properties is created, it has all my memories, emotions, beliefs and so on. So, according to the psychological theory that new person is me.

Suppose, however the teletransporter malfunctioned. Instead of erasing the captain, Kirk on board the ship, it did not erase him but it also recreated him on the planet's surface. Which one of these 2 identical Kirk's would be the real one? If psychological continuity is all that personal identity consists in are they both Kirk?

This is logically impossible 1 person cannot become 2 persons, even if the 2 persons are qualitatively identical with the 1 person. This is because identity consists in numerical identity and one thing is never 2 things! So, we should say that the 2 people are duplicates of Kirk but not Kirk himself.

This is meant to show that psychological continuity is not sufficient for personal identity. If something (a duplicate of me) can have complete psychological continuity with me but without being me then psychological continuity is not enough for personal identity. Personal identity must involve something else.

Researchers can summarize the objection like this: Identity does not logically allow for duplication; psychological continuity does logically allow for duplication; therefore psychological continuity can not be identity. If we think Kirk after teletransportation is the same person as Kirk before hand, we are confusing qualitative identity with numerical identity.

This is not only a problem, if the teletransporter duplicates Kirk. Even, if it works fine, so there is just one Kirk, now standing on the planet's surface, this person can not be the same person, as the one that was on board ship before teletransporting. Why? Well, researchers have argued that he would not be that person if another Kirk was created by the teletransporter malfunctioning. But, whether the person on the planet is the same person, as the person who was onboard ship cannot depend on someone else existing or not. We can not say he is Kirk, if the teletransporter did not malfunction but he is not Kirk, if the teletransporter did malfunction. Either, he is or he is not Kirk whatever else exists.

This is the idea that identity is intrinsic, i.e. whether something at a time (a person, an animal, a rock) is identical (over time) with something previous to it

depends only on the relations between the 2 things. It does not depend on anything else. Psychological properties alone are not enough (teletransportation) but also that brain continuity alone is not enough (brain erasing). If we combine both conditions, researchers solve the objections raised. Perhaps, personal identity requires both psychological and physical continuity.

However, there is a problem facing any theory that invokes brain continuity. Suppose members of an alien race exhibited all the characteristics associated with personhood (the handout on this). However, they do not have brains. In fact, they do not have any single bodily organ that performs the functions of brains. Surely, this does not matter to whether they are persons. Yet, according to our theory, they are not persons.

There is also a problem facing any theory that invokes psychological continuity. If psychological continuity is necessary for personal identity then I am not identical with the new-born baby whose body became my body because that baby did not have a mind that is psychologically continuous with me. Once the baby has memories, forms belief, desires and emotions that last over time then psychological continuity can slowly get going. But before it has psychological properties, there is no psychological continuity, so there is no person.

The animal theory solves both these problems. I am obviously, the same animal as that baby. And the aliens are persons since they are animals, even if they do not have brains. However, researchers objected to the animal theory that if my brain was transplanted to another body, I would continue to exist in the new body, even though I would be a different animal.

#### **APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY? WHY CARE ABOUT PERSONALITY?**

The first sentence of The Oxford Handbook of Political psychology one of the new edited volumes, defines political psychology, as an application of what is known about human psychology to the study of politics (Sears *et al.*, 2003). The editors who penned this definition make no apologies for characterizing the subfield, as an application of another discipline's theories to political science, yet the question of whether political psychology is merely applied psychology is one that political psychologists have debated for some time. Defenders of the subfield tend to offer 2 responses to the applied psychology critique. First, a significant amount of political psychology research addresses topics that truly require us to blend insights from psychology and political science. Second, even when the characterizations apt, merely applying psychological theories to political

contexts is still a valuable endeavor or political science (Rahn *et al.*, 2002). The validity of both responses is evident when surveying the scholarship and topics covered in the syllabi.

The suggestion that personality influences people's behaviors may seem self-evident. Indeed most of us can probably think of people we know who have vastly different personalities and prefer vastly different things. For instance, extraverts tend to enjoy social activities like going to parties while introverts tend to prefer spending time alone or with a close friend or 2. People who are very conscientious keep their desks organized and clean while people who are less conscientious may have disheveled desks (Weinschenk, 2013).

Although, these examples demonstrate obvious connections between personality attributes and behaviors or habits, political scientists have spent very little time thinking about how personality might influence political behaviors or habits. In the 1950's and 1960's, a number of scholars argued for the inclusion of personality in models of political behavior and attitudes but little research materialized on this topic. Many social scientists have been, so impressed with the influence of the sociocultural matrix on human behavior that they have tended to see political and other participation, as almost entirely determined by the social, economic and cultural variables. Political behavior cannot adequately be explained without some understanding of the interplay among the intra psychic influence the sociocultural opportunities and demands and the political behavior itself.

In addition, Froman (1961) pointed out that very little attempt has been made to suggest relationships between various personality syndromes and political behavior. Most of the literature has made the direct jump from environmental factors to political behavior, skipping the little black box (346-47). Given that personality influences behaviors at home in the work place and in social settings, it seems appropriate to begin to think more seriously about how personality might influence behaviors in the political realm.

About 1 reason why research on personality and political behavior did not take off (despite the calls by a number of political scientists) is because the psychology literature on personality and the measurement of individual differences was not well developed in the 1950's and 1960's (John and Srivastava, 1999).

#### **PERSONALITY AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

Might political activity enhance citizens psychological health? Contemporary theories percolating

in many disciplines suggest that it should. Recently, public health researchers have taken up the rendition of social capital theory articulated by Robert Putnam, focusing on its implication that communal involvement might improve citizens well being. Among public health researchers, medical sociologists and community psychologists, there is a long-standing claim that empowerment, including political activity is good for health. Last but not least, psychological health is an enduring concern for political psychologists.

Personality psychologists have now reached a widespread consensus that personality can be summarized by the Big Five personality traits. Extraversion is linked to positive emotionality. Agreeableness describes a prosaically and communal orientation.

Conscientiousness implies a high control over impulses and task-and-goal oriented behaviors. Neuroticism, as contrasted with emotional stability is associated with negative emotionality. Openness to experience or intellect is related to having a complex mental and experiential life (John *et al.*, 2008). The same factors can be roughly identified in very different cultures and languages, Allik and McCrae (2004), McCrae and Costa (1997), McCrae and Terracciano (2005), Schmitt *et al.* (2008) and Heine and Buchtel (2009) suggesting that they capture a human universal.

Traits are motivational reaction norms, i.e., endogenous dispositions for specific cognitive processes and behavior, contingent on the environmental situation (Denissen and Penke, 2008). For example, neuroticism makes people more sensitive to threats of social exclusion and openness affects differences in the reward value of engaging in cognitive ability. It is widely accepted that at least half of the individual variance in personality traits is heritable and some studies have reported heritability levels in excess of 0.60 (Loehlin, 1992; Yamagata *et al.*, 2006; Krueger and Johnson, 2008; Medland and Hatemi, 2009). Personality is important beyond personality theory because it influences a wide range of attitudes and behaviors across an impressive variety of domains (Ozer and Benet-Martinez, 2006).

Recently political scientists have begun to look at their impact on political behavior. The Big Five are related to a wide array of political activities, such as voting, participating in local and national politics, contacting politicians or participating in protest activities both in Anglo-Saxon and Latin-American countries (Mondak and Halperin, 2008; Mondak *et al.*, 2010, 2011; Mondak, 2010) and in some cases their effect is just, as large as that of classical predictors such as education and income.

These studies have assessed the effect of personality in multivariate models controlling for socio-economic and demographic predictors but rarely for attitudinal predictors. The theoretical framework proposed by Mondak *et al.* (2010), states that the effects of personality on political behavior are likely to be mediated and moderated by other individual and environmental factors. Recently, Blais and St-Vincent (2011) have claimed that 4 lower order personality traits (altruism, shyness, efficacy and conflict avoidance) affect the acquisition of political preferences and the belief that voting is a civic duty. In turn, these attitudes are proximate causes of voter turnout. After controlling for the effect of duty and preferences there is no direct effect of personality on participation suggesting that the effect is indirect. This is the mediation hypothesis.

If true, the hypothesis that personality effects are indirect widens the understanding of the process that brings some people to participate in politics. It suggests that there is a funnel of causality in which more distant factors, such as sex, age or personality influence political attitudes which are the more proximate causes of behavior. The general intuition is that personality shapes cognitive, emotional and behavioral responses to a range of daily situations which influence the acquisition of politically relevant attitudes. For example when taught about politics or given the choice of reading a newspaper, a person may be excited and interested in the opportunity of learning about a new issue or conversely may fail to feel interest. In the long run, individual differences in the reaction to exposure to new information should help to develop the habit of reading newspapers and political interest which are important predictors of participation. This view is consistent with findings of previous research and with the general framework proposed by Mondak (2010) and Mondak *et al.* (2010).

In order to test this idea, the specific pathways that link personality to specific attitudes have to be specified. The starting point is that people participate in politics mostly because of one of the following reasons: They want to express their views on political issues: They are interested in politics have the resources to participate are mobilized by others, think that they are able to influence political outcomes or feel that they have a moral duty (Blais, 2000; Verba *et al.*, 1995).

The first personality trait considered is conscientiousness. Denny and Doyle (2008) found with data of a British longitudinal panel that hardworking people vote more often but in the US the trait of conscientiousness has been found to have no effect (Mondak *et al.*, 2010) or a negative effect on turnout. Theoretically, the most plausible mechanism linking

conscientiousness to turnout is the norm of civic duty (Mondak *et al.*, 2010). Social norms are socially enforced rules of conduct that operate in 3 steps. People need to be aware that they exist. Second, norms may or may not be internalized and accepted. Finally, norms are enforced (Gerber *et al.*, 2008). Conscientiousness should play a role in the second step. Conscientious people should be more ready to internalize the norm that voting is a duty and to act accordingly. The link between conscientiousness and norm-abiding behavior is firmly established. In a meta-analysis of the lower-order conscientiousness-related traits that predict health outcomes it was found that conventionality defined, as a propensity to adhere to society's norms was most strongly related to a healthy life style. According to another review of the literature, conscientiousness was strongly correlated with the propensity to adhere to normative adult social roles, such as creating a family, investing in a career or volunteering (Lodi-Smith and Roberts, 2007).

However, not all participatory acts are equally perceived, as a civic duty. Arguably, most people do not consider participating in protest activities a civic duty. Conscientiousness has a negative effect on protest in Venezuela and Uruguay (Mondak *et al.*, 2011), presumably because conscientious people are reluctant to engage in activities considered illegitimate. Protest activities are widely accepted and used in Spain. For example in the 2004-2008 period, the right-wing party and the catholic church organized large demonstrations to protest against some of the socialist party's policies and demonstrations are routinely held to protest killings by the terrorist group ETA. Therefore, the negative effect of conscientiousness may be limited to illegal protest activities.

The 1st hypotheses are that conscientiousness positively affects voter turnout indirectly by making it more likely to adhere to the idea that voting is a duty but it should be unrelated or negatively related to protest behavior.

The 2nd personality trait which may affect political behavior is openness to experience. Following politics is certainly not essential for survival in modern democratic societies. As being interested in astronomy, art or history it can reflect a general interest in learning and be a sign of the breadth and depth of a person's mental life. There is abundant evidence that openness to experience is related to interest in political issues. Interest in current events, engagement in news-seeking activities and current events knowledge are all predicted by intellectual openness (Hambrick *et al.*, 2008) and openness to experience (Beier and Ackerman, 2001).

In an experimental study, Wolak and Marcus (2007) found that moves from minimum to maximum values of openness to experience increased the reported desire of learning more about political issues by 30%. Mondak and Halperin (2008) report that openness is strongly associated with political discussion, knowledge, opinionation and internal efficacy. Openness is one of the main predictors of political efficacy which entirely mediates the relationship between openness and a composite scale of 5 political activities (Vecchione and Caprara, 2009). In another study, the effect of openness on 6 out of 10 political activities (including turnout) disappears when introducing controls for political knowledge and internal efficacy (Mondak *et al.*, 2010), suggesting that these are mediation mechanisms. It is hypothesized that the positive effect of openness on voter turnout and protest participation is mediated by interest in politics ( $H_3$ ) and political efficacy. In the case of participation in European elections, openness to experience may affect turnout by another intermediary mechanism: Identification with Europe.

People who are more open to experience should be more likely to identify not just with their narrow political community but also with the wider community of Europeans. Conversely, those who are low in openness may be more inclined to identify with their village or their country. Researchers hypothesize that openness to experience increases turnout in European elections through the mediating mechanism of identification with Europe.

Extraversion is positively related to participation in group-oriented political activities but while some researchers have found that it is unrelated to acts that do not require interaction such as voting or wearing stickers (Mondak and Halperin, 2008), other researchers report a strong positive effect of extraversion on voting. Thus, it is unclear if extraversion is linked to turnout but if so, the exact mechanisms should be outlined. On the other hand, extraversion is a strong predictor of protest participation in Venezuela but not in Uruguay, suggesting that this effect may be context specific (Mondak *et al.*, 2011).

The 1st likely link between extraversion and participation is through internal political efficacy. The optimistic and confident character of extraverts produces higher levels of general personal efficacy, i.e., the belief that a person can produce desired results by her actions and internal political efficacy in particular. Indeed Vecchione and Caprara (2009), find in 2 studies that political efficacy mediates the relationship between extraversion and political participation.

The 2nd link is through social networks. Mobilization requests that circulate in social networks are particularly

important to explain participation in protest activities. Mobilization efforts are targeted at potential protesters and they are crucial to turn them into actual protesters. It is mostly through social networks that people receive information and encouragement to participate in protest activities (Klandermans and Oegema, 1987; Kitts, 2000; Diani, 2004). Extraverts are more likely to be embedded in large social networks and by virtue of their more frequent contact with others they should be more likely to receive information and suggestions to participate in protest activities that flow in networks.

Researchers expect that the positive effect of extraversion on protest participation and voter turnout is mediated by internal efficacy and in the case of protest by political discussion.

The personality trait of agreeableness has also been related to political behavior in various ways, though there are competing contradictory expectations on its impact on political engagement, participation and voter turnout. Agreeable people participate more in local politics and in such activities, as attending meetings, signing petitions or contacting officials (Mondak and Halperin, 2008). However, Bekkers (2005) finds that in spite of the fact that people who report having more empathetic concerns are more likely to volunteer in political and non-political organizations, agreeableness does not have an independent effect on volunteering. On the other hand, aggressive people vote more frequently in Britain (Denny and Doyle, 2008). The relationship vanishes when controlling for political interest which suggests that any effects are mediated by a negative relationship between agreeableness and interest in politics.

Finally, there are contradictory or weak expectations when considering the link between the last of the Big Five factors and voter turnout. Neuroticism is mostly related to variables such as ideology, economic evaluation, opinionating and dogmatism which could have both positive and negative effects on ideology but not necessarily on turnout or participation itself (Mondak and Halperin, 2008).

Gerber report a positive effect of emotional stability on turnout but it is unclear why this occurs. Mondak *et al.* (2011), find that neuroticism does not affect protest. Theoretically, there are no obvious links between neuroticism and predictors of participation, such as political interest. Thus, researchers do not have specific expectations on how neuroticism affects turnout or protest.

## CONCLUSION

This study has contributed towards advancing in the understanding of how personality affects political

behavior, it has been proposed that the effects of personality are fully mediated by the core predictors of participation identified by previous research, such as political interest, internal efficacy and the like. Indeed, this is clearly the case. Researchers have shown that the effect of conscientiousness on voter turnout is fully mediated by duty; the effect of extraversion on voter turnout is mediated by internal efficacy and by political discussion in the case of protest and the effect of openness on participation is mediated by political interest and internal efficacy while in the case of turnout it is also mediated by identification with Europe. In short, all the predicted indirect relationships were supported. In addition, agreeableness only has a negative effect on participation in activities that imply confrontation, such as illegal protest.

In spite of being indirect, the effects of personality traits on political participation are not negligible in magnitude. The total effects of the examined traits have at least half the size of some of the stronger and better established predictors of political participation, such as internal political efficacy or age. Personality is thus, important to understand why some people participate in politics while others do not. The idea that personality affects participation indirectly, makes it particularly necessary to carefully outline theoretically grounded expectations on what is the exact link between each personality trait, each predictor of participation and each participation activity. Using appropriate models and sensible specifications is crucial to estimate the effect of personality on political behavior. If as researchers argue, the relationships are mostly indirect in a typical regression framework the results are susceptible to change dramatically depending on the exact model specification: If no intermediary mechanisms are controlled the effects of personality traits will be visible (but underestimated) if the intermediary mechanisms are included, the effects will disappear. Any of these situations can lead researchers to erroneously conclude that personality is unrelated to political participation.

Social fragmentation and the decline of group loyalties have given rise to an era of personalized politics in which individual expression displaces collective action frames in the embrace of political causes. The rise of personalized forms of political participation is perhaps the defining change in the political culture of the era. This trend can be spotted in the rise of large-scale, rapidly forming political participation aimed at a variety of targets, ranging from parties and candidates to corporations, brands and transnational organizations. The group-based identity politics of the new social movements that arose after the 1960's still exist but the recent period has seen more diverse mobilizations in which individuals are

mobilized around personal life style values to engage with multiple causes, such as economic justice (fair trade, inequality and development policies), environmental protection and worker and human rights. This large-scale individualized collective action is often coordinated through digital media technologies, sometimes with political organizations playing an enabling role and sometimes with crowds using layers of social media to coordinate action.

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