



## Short Communication

# Personality profiles of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump: Fooled by your own politics<sup>☆</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

We had 354 Americans rate the personalities of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. We compared ratings of Trump voters, Clinton voters, and a politically moderate subsample to the left-wing experts' ratings reported in Nai and Maier (2018). We examined the association between raters' reported political orientation and personality ratings of both candidates. We found strong correlations between political orientation of the rater and ratings of the personalities of both Trump and Clinton. We also found that the sample of experts reported in Nai and Maier (2018) rated Trump lower in conscientiousness and agreeableness than our Clinton voters did. These experts also rated Trump lower in conscientiousness, agreeableness, and emotional stability than our politically moderate raters. Our findings show that political preference is strongly associated with the personality ratings of candidates among both expert and non-expert raters.

## 1. Introduction

There is a long history of profiling the personality of political candidates (Rubenzer, Faschingbauer, & Ones, 2000; Weintraub, 1986) to determine how their personality traits relate to voter support (Bhattacharya, Yang, Srinivasan, & Boynton, 2016; Koppensteiner & Stephan, 2014; Rubenzer et al., 2000). Recently released personality profiles of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton by expert raters have concluded that Trump is high in extraversion, average in openness to experience, and low in conscientiousness, agreeableness, and emotional stability. Clinton is high in conscientiousness and emotional stability, but average in openness to experience, agreeableness, and extraversion (Nai & Maier, 2018). Visser, Book, and Volk (2017) also profiled these candidates using the HEXACO with the only discrepancy being that Trump was low and Clinton was high in openness. Of note, the HEXACO-100 does provide a more nuanced overview of the personality facets compared to the TIPI, and may have influenced the differing findings related to openness to experience.

Given the ideological uniformity of researchers in social and personality psychology (i.e., left of center; Duarte et al., 2015) and in academia more generally (Rothman, Lichter, & Nevitte, 2005), we wondered whether political preferences of raters substantially bias their perceptions of political candidates' personalities. In Visser et al. (2017), no raters identified as being right of center. The supplementary materials of Nai and Maier (2018) reveal that no raters reported being higher

than 8 on a 10-point scale of liberalism-conservatism and that the mean was far below the midpoint of 5.5 ( $M = 3.6$ ,  $SD = 1.6$ ). Furthermore, statistically significant drops in ratings for Clinton and increases in ratings for Trump were found once estimated mean ratings were adjusted for raters' political orientation.

Because the Big-5 traits are socially desirable (Digman, 1997), we suspect that individuals who favor Clinton will also rate her as more open to experience, more conscientious, more agreeable, and more emotionally stable relative to Trump and relative to politically moderate raters. We hypothesize that those who favor Trump will rate him as more open to experience, more conscientious, more agreeable, and more emotionally stable relative to Clinton and relative to politically moderate raters. Consistent with previous research, we expect participants to rate Trump as higher in extraversion than Clinton (Nai & Maier, 2018; Visser et al., 2017). We further expect that the experts' ratings from Nai and Maier (2018) will mirror Clinton voters' ratings, since they share the same political orientation.

## 2. Method

Between November 9th and November 12th 2016 we collected data from 360 Americans through the crowdsourcing platform Mechanical Turk. Participants received \$0.50 for completing a 5-minute survey.

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**Table 1**  
Perceived personality ratings of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton.

	Trump		Clinton		Differences	
	Mean (CI)	SD	Mean (CI)	SD	Difference	Cohens <i>d</i>
Trump voters ( <i>N</i> = 113)						
Extraversion	6.43 (6.30, 6.56)	0.73	4.85 (4.61, 5.09)	1.32	+ 1.58	1.48
Agreeableness	3.74 (3.46, 4.02)	1.50	2.55 (2.29, 2.81)	1.40	+ 1.19	0.82
Conscientiousness	5.66 (5.43, 5.89)	1.26	3.98 (3.65, 4.31)	1.81	+ 1.68	1.07
Emotional stability	4.22 (3.93, 4.51)	1.56	3.47 (3.18, 3.76)	1.55	+ 0.75	0.48
Openness to experience	5.70 (5.51, 5.89)	1.03	3.41 (3.15, 3.67)	1.39	+ 2.29	1.87
Political orientation	4.98	1.34				
Clinton voters ( <i>N</i> = 178)						
Extraversion	5.99 (5.93, 6.05)	1.13	4.94 (4.74, 5.14)	1.33	+ 1.05	0.85
Agreeableness	1.71 (1.54, 1.88)	1.15	5.19 (4.99, 5.39)	1.37	− 3.48	2.75
Conscientiousness	2.75 (2.51, 2.99)	1.64	6.17 (6.02, 6.32)	0.99	− 3.42	2.52
Emotional stability	2.03 (1.85, 2.21)	1.23	5.89 (5.74, 6.04)	1.03	− 3.86	3.40
Openness to experience	3.66 (3.46, 3.86)	1.35	5.00 (4.83, 5.17)	1.15	− 1.34	1.07
Political orientation	2.67	1.48				
Moderate sample ( <i>N</i> = 19)						
Extraversion	6.47 (5.83, 6.59)	0.85	5.37 (4.90, 5.84)	1.05	+ 1.10	1.15
Agreeableness	2.05 (1.62, 2.48)	0.96	3.21 (2.63, 3.79)	1.30	− 1.16	1.02
Conscientiousness	4.11 (3.41, 4.81)	1.55	5.24 (4.72, 5.76)	1.16	− 1.13	0.83
Emotional stability	2.84 (2.12, 3.56)	1.61	4.16 (3.58, 4.74)	1.29	− 1.32	0.90
Openness to experience	4.50 (3.97, 5.03)	1.17	4.03 (3.53, 4.53)	1.12	+ 0.47	0.41
Political orientation	4.00	–				
Expert raters (Nai & Maier, 2018; <i>N</i> = 28/33)						
Extraversion	6.42 (6.17, 6.66)	–	4.00 (3.46, 4.54)	–	+ 2.42	1.94
Agreeableness	1.27 (1.05, 1.48)	–	4.05 (3.51, 4.58)	–	− 2.78	2.26
Conscientiousness	2.02 (1.57, 2.47)	–	6.22 (5.83, 6.61)	–	− 4.20	3.57
Emotional stability	1.65 (1.26, 2.03)	–	5.68 (5.19, 6.17)	–	− 4.03	3.18
Openness to experience	3.81 (3.37, 4.24)	–	4.33 (3.9, 4.75)	–	− 0.52	0.45
Political orientation	2.63 <sup>a</sup>	–				

Fig. 1 presents the variability in personality ratings of Donald Trump as a function of political group.

<sup>a</sup> Political orientation was transformed from its original scale (1 – 10) for comparability using the following transformation:  $X_2 = 0.67 * (X_1 + 0.33)$ .

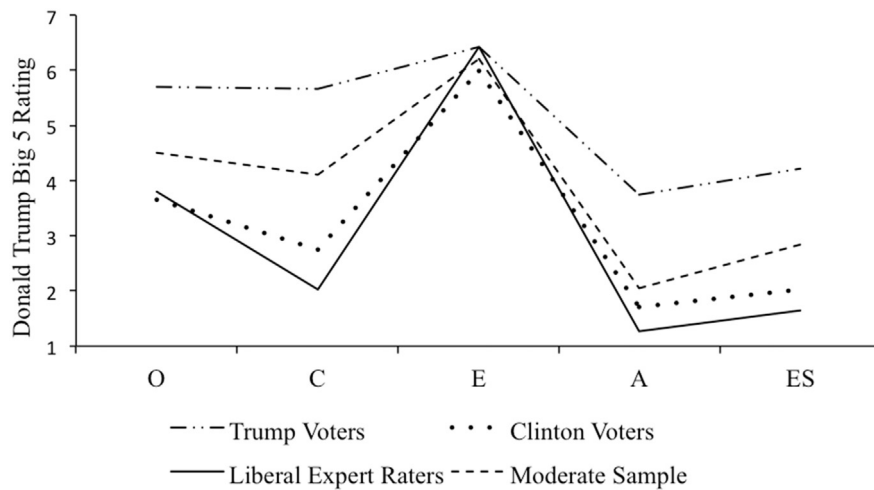


Fig. 1. Perceptions of Donald Trump's personality across groups.

## 2.1. Vote and support for candidates

Participants reported the candidate for whom they voted, from the following list of options: Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, Gary Johnson, Jill Stein, Other, or “I did not vote in the election”. Subsequently, participants reported their support for both Clinton and Trump (in counter balanced order) by rating the degree to which they favorably view each candidate, admire each candidate, and have confidence in each candidate as a leader (Cohen, Solomon, & Kaplin, 2017). Internal consistency of these scales was high ( $\alpha_{\text{Trump}} = 0.94$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{Clinton}} = 0.93$ ).

## 2.2. Five-factor model of personality

Using the ten-item personality inventory (TIPI; Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003) participants rated both Trump and Clinton (in counter-balanced order) on extraversion ( $\rho_{\text{Trump}} = 0.22$ ,  $\rho_{\text{Clinton}} = 0.19$ ), agreeableness ( $\rho_{\text{Trump}} = 0.75$ ,  $\rho_{\text{Clinton}} = 0.83$ ), conscientiousness ( $\rho_{\text{Trump}} = 0.83$ ,  $\rho_{\text{Clinton}} = 0.76$ ), emotional stability ( $\rho_{\text{Trump}} = 0.74$ ,  $\rho_{\text{Clinton}} = 0.82$ ), and openness to experience ( $\rho_{\text{Trump}} = 0.43$ ,  $\rho_{\text{Clinton}} = 0.54$ ).

## 2.3. Political orientation

Participants reported their political orientation on a 7-point scale

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