

THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN PERSONALITY AND SOCIAL ATTITUDES IN A BRITISH CONTEXT

NOTES ON RATIONALE, METHODOLOGY,
QUESTIONNAIRE AND SPSS DATA FILE

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS CONDUCTED AT THE DEPARTMENT
OF PSYCHOLOGY, SOCIAL WORK & COUNSELLING OF THE
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RATIONALE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of the research was to analyse the association between:

- i. personality as measured at the decontextualized trait level using the Five Factor Model (also known as the Big Five personality traits), and
- ii. social and political attitudes beyond the conventional “left and right” making particular use of established batteries of items used in (e.g.) the British Social Attitudes Survey along with other items such as voting intention and issue saliency, in
- iii. contemporary Britain.

SAMPLING AND METHODOLOGY

The sampling employed a mixture of convenience, opportunity and snowball techniques with email addresses of prospects harvested from directories and online sources. Only those 18 or over and eligible to vote in England, Scotland or Wales were actively targeted. There was also some use of social media such as the British Psychological Society’s Facebook page.

Prospects included: politicians representing all major parties; a variety of political activists; business and commerce organisations; psychologists, psychotherapists and psychometric testers; religious and spiritual leaders and clergy from Christian and non-Christian backgrounds; academics especially from psychology, economics, theology, human resources and business studies; university students; think tanks, pressure groups and campaigns; and members of the public. Prospects were asked to forward the invitation email to anyone who might be interested if they were also 18 or over and eligible to vote in England, Scotland or Wales.

The fieldwork – (i) the despatch of invitation emails describing the background and nature of the research and which included a link to the online Qualtrics survey and (ii) some social media promotion – took place between November 2015 and March 2016 inclusive.

Final valid N = 1388. The sample was not representative of UK adults. It was demographically a WEIRD sample (western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic) with anticipated attitudinal consequences (Henrich, Heine & Norenzayan, 2010). However, given the large N there was sufficient variance in personality, attitudes and voting intention to allow internal comparisons and to look for patterns of relationships which were defensibly suggestive of those found in the wider population.

QUALTRICS QUESTIONNAIRE

See document **Meek_PoIPsy_UKDS_Qualtrics**. This is a near-facsimile “paper copy” of the online Qualtrics questionnaire (www.qualtrics.com). It shows the whole survey along with additional information about the research project.

There are minor differences between this document and the online survey. Some graphics such as logos have been omitted and anachronistic contact details have been redacted. Dashed lines have been inserted to represent divisions between the original onscreen pages.

A passage in the questionnaire reads: “All data kept in electronic format will be stored on a password-protected computer.” This was a standard note recommended at an early stage by the University Of Greenwich’s Department of Psychology, Social Work & Counselling particularly given its work with children and other potentially vulnerable groups. However, by the time of the fieldwork it was decided that no meaningfully identifying data would be collected let alone disseminated. It was agreed that this passage was obsolete and did not present a barrier to publication of the data.

SPSS DATA FILE: ORIGINAL AND DERIVED VARIABLES

See SPSS data file **Meek_PoIPsy_UKDS_SPSS** and Table 1 below.

Consent items have been removed from the data file. For their responses to be have been recorded respondents necessarily agreed to these items.

Some batteries of items forming the multi-item derived variables are balanced and some are unbalanced. It is necessary to reverse code some of the items from the batteries to create the derived variables.

RespID is a unique code generated by Qualtrics for each respondent when they took the survey. **RespType** distinguishes between the majority of respondents who were members of the public who responded to survey invitations and a tiny proportion who were undergraduate psychology students who participated in exchange for credits as part of the University’s Research Participation Scheme.

There is an array of psychological or psychometric variables representing the traits from the Five Factor Model (FFM) of personality (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2015, pp. 53-55; Costa & McCrae, 1992). These traits are: **Openness** (“the tendency to engage in intellectual activities and experience new sensations and ideas”); **Conscientiousness** (“associated with proactivity, responsibility, and self-discipline”); **Extraversion** (“refers to high activity, the experience of positive emotions, impulsiveness, assertiveness, and a tendency towards social behaviour”); **Agreeableness** (“refers to

friendly, considerate, and modest behaviour”); and **Neuroticism** (“the tendency to experience negative emotions, notably anxiety, depression, and anger”).

The instrument used to measure the FFM was the Mini-IPIP (Donnellan, Oswald, Baird & Lucas, 2006) with 20 items, four per trait. Note that as a short measure of the FFM the Mini-IPIP cannot fully explore the “aspects” and “facets” held to be below the five apex traits.

- **O1** thru **O4** form the derived **Openness** variable.
- **C1** thru **C4** form the derived **Conscientiousness** variable.
- **E1** thru **E4** form the derived **Extraversion** variable.
- **A1** thru **A4** form the derived **Agreeableness** variable.
- **N1** thru **N4** form the derived **Neuroticism** variable.

There is an array of attitudinal or rhetometric (Meek, 2012) variables. The primary batteries of items were drawn from the British Social Attitudes Survey and related studies (NatCen Social Research, 2014, July; 2015). **Libertarianism** (formally Libertarian-Authoritarian) looks at issues such as law and order, social traditionalism, and morality; **Left_Right** looks at issues such as economic equality and relations between socioeconomic classes; **Welfarism** looks at issues such as attitudes towards government provision of welfare; and **Immigration** looks at issues such as attitudes towards the perceived impact of immigrants.

- **TradVals**, **StifSent**, **DeathApp**, **Obey**, **WrongLaw** and **Censor** form the derived **Libertarianism** variable.
- **Redistrb**, **BigBusnN**, **Wealth**, **RichLaw** and **Indust4** form the derived **Left_Right** variable.
- **WelfHelp**, **MoreWelf**, **UnempJob**, **SocHelp**, **DoleFidl**, **WelfFeet**, **DamLives** and **ProudWlf** form the derived **Welfarism** variable.
- **Immigrt1**, **Immigrt2**, **Immigrt3**, **Immigrt4** and **Immigrt6** (there is no ‘Immigrt5’) form the derived **Immigration** variable.

The other attitudinal items are more ad hoc.

- **RelLife** and **GodExist** form the derived variable **Religiosity**, a measure of personal belief in god or spirituality.
- **RelGov** forms the single-item variable **Theocratism**, a measure of attitudes towards religion in public life. The original **RelGov** item has been retained in the data file because it formed part of a battery of related items.
- **PoundEuro** forms the single-item variable **Currency£€**, a measure of attitudes towards the pound (£) versus the euro (€). The original **PoundEuro** item has been retained in the data file because it formed part of a battery of related items.
- **EUBenefit** and **EULvRm** form the derived variable **EuropeanUnion**, a measure of general attitudes towards the European Union.
- One item (omitted since it did not form part of a battery of related items) has been transformed into the single-item variable **NuclearWeapons**, a measure of attitudes towards the UK’s retention of nuclear weapons.

The **PtyFavXYZ** variables (where XYZ represents a named political party) measure favourable/unfavourable attitudes towards each of the parties.

Vote2015 and **VoteNow** ask respondents how they voted at the 2015 general election and how they might vote at a hypothetical general election at the time of the winter 2015-2016 fieldwork.

Q28_1 thru **Q28_17** are a battery of non-exclusive items asking respondents to select up to three issues which they considered to be of particular importance facing Britain.

There is an array of demographic items. **Sex**, **Age** and **Ethnicity** have conventional meanings. **Residence** asks in which country of the UK respondents live. **RelDenom** asks about religious or denominational background. **Education** asks about respondents' highest level of education. **PsychStudy** and **PolStudy** ask whether respondents studied psychology or politics respectively.

Table 1: Variables in accompanying SPSS data file	
Variable	Description
RespID	Qualtrics-generated random ID
RespType	Public or University student
O1 thru O4	Openness items
C1 thru C4	Conscientiousness items
E1 thru E4	Extraversion items
A1 thru A4	Agreeableness items
N1 thru N4	Neuroticism items
TradVals	Libertarianism item
StifSent	Libertarianism item
DeathApp	Libertarianism item
Obey	Libertarianism item
WrongLaw	Libertarianism item
Censor	Libertarianism item
Redistrb	Left_Right item
BigBusnN	Left_Right item
Wealth	Left_Right item
RichLaw	Left_Right item
Indust4	Left_Right item
WelfHelp	Welfarism item
MoreWelf	Welfarism item
UnempJob	Welfarism item
SocHelp	Welfarism item
DoleFidl	Welfarism item
WelfFeet	Welfarism item
DamLives	Welfarism item
ProudWlf	Welfarism item
Immigrt1 thru Immigrt6	Immigration items
GodExist	Religiosity item
RelLife	Religiosity item
RelGov	Theocratism item
PoundEuro	Currency£€ item
EUBenefit	EuropeanUnion item

EULvRm	EuropeanUnion item
Vote2015	Vote at 2015 general election
VoteNow	Vote at hypothetical general election at time of survey
PtyFavConservative	Attitude towards Conservative Party
PtyFavGreen	Attitude towards Green Party
PtyFavLabour	Attitude towards Labour Party
PtyFavLibDem	Attitude towards Liberal Democrats
PtyFavPlaid	Attitude towards Plaid Cymru
PtyFavSNP	Attitude towards Scottish National Party (SNP)
PtyFavUKIP	Attitude towards UK Independence Party (UKIP)
Q28_1	Crime/law & order/violence/vandalism/anti-social behaviour
Q28_2	Defence/foreign affairs/international terrorism
Q28_3	Economy/economic situation
Q28_4	Education/schools
Q28_5	EU/Common Market/Europe/Euro
Q28_6	Housing
Q28_7	Immigration/immigrants/race relations
Q28_8	Inflation/prices
Q28_9	Low pay/fair wages
Q28_10	National/government debt
Q28_11	NHS/hospitals/healthcare
Q28_12	Pensions/social security/benefits/welfare
Q28_13	Pollution/environment
Q28_14	Poverty/inequality
Q28_15	Taxation
Q28_16	Transport/public transport
Q28_17	Unemployment/ factory closure/lack of industry
Sex	R's sex
Age	R's age in whole years
Residence	R's geographical residence in UK
Ethnicity	R's ethnicity
RelDenom	R's religious or denominational background
Education	R's highest educational/professional qualification
PsychStudy	R studied psychology
PolStudy	R studied politics
Openness	Derived variable: $\alpha = .73$
Conscientiousness	Derived variable: $\alpha = .67$
Extraversion	Derived variable: $\alpha = .77$
Agreeableness	Derived variable: $\alpha = .73$
Neuroticism	Derived variable: $\alpha = .76$
Libertarianism	Derived variable: $\alpha = .80$
Left_Right	Derived variable: $\alpha = .85$
Welfarism	Derived variable: $\alpha = .90$
Immigration	Derived variable: $\alpha = .86$
Religiosity	Derived variable: $\alpha = .90$
Theocratism	Derived variable: $\alpha = n/a$
EuropeanUnion	Derived variable: $\alpha = .83$
Currency£€	Derived variable: $\alpha = n/a$
NuclearWeapons	Derived variable: $\alpha = n/a$

Note: The Cronbach's alpha (α) values of internal consistency for the multi-item derived variables all meet conventional levels of acceptability of at least .65 (Goforth, 2016). There are no α values for Theocratism, Currency£€ or NuclearWeapons since these are single-item variables.

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