

PERSONALITY AND THE POLITICAL SYSTEM:  
AN EXPLORATION OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ROOTS OF POLITICAL SUPPORT

BY

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DISSERTATION

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## ABSTRACT

The quality of democracy depends on mass participation in political life, for engaged citizens can represent their interests, hold elected officials accountable, and collaborate to solve societal problems. In spite of the benefits to participation, many individuals do not engage in public affairs. Scholars have sought to explain citizen participation for decades, and one factor that has received attention is public attitudes toward the political system. But what causes an individual to support or oppose political institutions, democratic principles, and other aspects of the political world? Researchers have offered several answers to this question, but I contend that the literature has not adequately explored the connection between personality and political support. Unlike some factors, the causal relationship between personality and support attitudes is fairly clear, as a substantial amount of the variation in personality traits is attributable to genetic variation across individuals. The roots of personality, in other words, predate a person's initiation into the political world in late adolescence and early adulthood.

In this dissertation, I build a two-step model that links personality traits to political support and support attitudes to citizen behavior. The first half of my theory applies a model from occupational psychology to understand how personality interacts with the environment to influence political support outcomes. This model, known as trait activation theory, expects personality effects to occur only when traits are activated by relevant cues in one's surroundings. As I argue in my theory, the model has implications for the direct and conditional effects of personality on a variety of attitudes and behaviors, including views about the political system. My theory also contributes to the literature on the mediation hypothesis by emphasizing political support as a mediator for the relationship between personality and citizen behavior. The second

half of my model thus points to the relevance of the personality–support relationship for behavioral outcomes such as political participation.

For the empirical part of this dissertation, I explore three aspects of the model while incorporating public opinion surveys from as many as 24 countries. First, I provide a comprehensive account for the direct effects of personality on support for five objects of the political system: the political community, regime principles, regime performance, regime institutions, and political actors. Then, I investigate how the relationship between personality and support depends on contextual factors related to threat levels in one’s environment, such as the degree of political corruption. Finally, I explore how personality works through political support to influence citizen behavior. The findings in this dissertation emphasize the impact of personality on support attitudes and the downstream effect of this relationship on political participation. Based on the results of my dissertation, politicians and nongovernmental organizations could target their communications to groups based on the personality traits of those groups, encouraging political support and thereby promoting one of the hallmarks of citizen competence: engagement in public affairs.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The term “personal accomplishment” obscures an important fact: Individual efforts often constitute a necessary condition for success, but not a sufficient one. Other people and organizations enable and facilitate a person’s achievements.

The same has been true for my dissertation project. Without supportive organizations and my network of colleagues, family, and friends, I would not have identified a dissertation topic, defended my prospectus, or written the dissertation chapters—regardless of my best efforts to do so.

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CHAPTER 1  
PERSONALITY AND POLITICAL SUPPORT:  
AN INTRODUCTION

The contemporary political landscape in Venezuela hardly resembles the scene from 27 years ago. In 1990, the Democratic Action Party (AD) and Social Christian Party (COPEI) claimed the dominant position in Venezuelan politics, with 164 of the 201 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, 42 of the 46 seats in the Senate, and seven straight presidential victories. The streak in presidential contests ended with the election of Rafael Caldera of the National Convergence Party in 1993. Neither the AD nor the COPEI has captured the presidency since, and the general elections in 1993 also marked the last time the two parties received a collective majority of seats in parliament. In fact, just 15 percent and 0 percent of legislative seats currently belong to the AD and COPEI.<sup>1</sup>

Along with change in the party system, Venezuela has experienced a noticeable decline in the level of democracy in recent years. Between 1990 and 2016, the country's average Freedom House scores for political and civil rights rose from 2 ("free") to 5.5 ("not free") on a 1-to-7 scale. According to Freedom House (2017a), much of the transformation occurred after the election of Hugo Chávez in 1998, and his successor, Nicolás Maduro, has continued such policies as limiting the influence of opposition political leaders and critical media outlets (Freedom House 2017b). Venezuela now constitutes one of the least democratic countries in the Western Hemisphere, with only Cuba receiving a worse score from Freedom House for 2016.

Two interrelated factors explain the transformation of the party system and political regime in Venezuela (Canache 2002). First, the petroleum-rich country experienced economic

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<sup>1</sup> The low percentage for COPEI is partly the result of a court case that prompted the opposition coalition to replace candidates from the Social Christian Party with politicians from other parties for the 2015 parliamentary election (Neuman 2015). In the previous election, COPEI had earned just 5 seats in the 165-seat National Assembly. The current legislature in Venezuela is unicameral due to the 1999 national constitution.

hardship during the 1980s as the price of oil declined and government debt rose, resulting in less revenue available for redistribution to the population. Second, the public grew frustrated with the country's economic situation and subsequently turned against the political system. Such sentiments were apparent not only in the election results mentioned above, but also in a 1995 survey of residents in two urban areas in Venezuela (Canache 2002). Trust in government was anemic, averaging 1.48 on a four-item index ranging from 0 to 8. Likewise, citizens expressed only moderate levels of institutional support, with a mean response of 12.04 on a five-item index ranging from 0 to 30. These low levels of support for political actors and institutions facilitated the demise of the AD–COPEI system and the rise of Chávez.

The recent history of Venezuela illustrates the aggregate importance of political support. When public opinion turns against the status quo, the party system may experience transformation (Canache 2002; López Maya 2011), individual leaders are less likely to remain in office (Hochstetler 2006; Pérez-Liñán 2007), and the quality of democracy may decline (Dalton 1999; Norris 1999a).

The consequences of political support extend to individual behavior, including political participation.<sup>2</sup> In particular, past research has connected political support to conventional political activities such as turnout (Birch 2010; Klesner 2009; Norris 1999b; Pattie and Johnston 2009; Remmer 2010; Valentino et al. 2011) and unconventional political activities such as protest participation (Anderson and Mendes 2006; Dalton 2004; Muller et al. 1982; Norris 1999b, 2011). This line of research generally shows that citizens who support democracy are more likely to hold the government accountable through conventional and protest participation,

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<sup>2</sup> Other outcomes of political support include compliance with the law (Dalton 2004; Norris 1999b; Sunshine and Tyler 2003; Tankebe 2009; Tyler 1990, 2005), participation in civil society (Norris 1999b), and policy attitudes (Hetherington and Globetti 2002; Rudolph and Evans 2005).

and favorable (unfavorable) attitudes toward status quo institutions and government performance encourage higher rates of traditional (untraditional) activity.<sup>3</sup>

Mass participation in public life is vital to a well-functioning democracy. Through political involvement, citizens can cooperate to address collective problems at the local and national levels, such as struggling education systems and ineffective economic policies (Putnam 2000). Isolated individuals cannot effect societal change. Moreover, engaged citizens represent their interests to elected officials, monitor the operation of government, and reward or punish politicians at the ballot box based on their performance, thus promoting democratic accountability (Norris 2011; Schedler 1999; Tocqueville 2013). The quality of democracy thus depends on the proportion of participative citizens in the population.

The benefits of citizen engagement contrast with empirical reality, for participation rates are often low. For example, an eight-country study of Latin America reports that citizens rarely engage in party politics or contact public officials (Booth and Seligson 2009).<sup>4</sup> Electoral participation in the Latin American sample was much higher, with a mean of 82.28 on a measure of registration and turnout that ranged from 0 to 100. Nevertheless, many citizens in other countries, such as the United States, do not even cast a ballot. Only 48.8 percent of the voting age population came to the polls in the 1996 U.S. presidential election (Norris 1999b).

Anemic rates of participation may motivate us to ask why some citizens are more likely than others to participate in community life. Researchers have considered this issue by studying the impact of political support on political behavior, but their work raises another question: If

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<sup>3</sup> Booth and Seligson (2009), meanwhile, find that individuals at the extremes of political support are more participative.

<sup>4</sup> The means for party and campaign activism, contact with public officials, communal activism, and protest participation all fell at 22.03 or below on a range from 0 to 100.

political support exerts meaningful effects on citizens and societies, what explains differences in support attitudes across individuals?

Scholars have offered numerous answers to this second question. At the contextual level, extant research has linked political support to antecedents such as economic development (Anderson and Tverdova 2003; Jamal and Nooruddin 2010), economic growth (Anderson and Tverdova 2003; Booth and Seligson 2009) and political institutions (Anderson and Guillory 1997; Rahn and Rudolph 2005). With regard to individual-level variables, scholars have shown that political support varies with such factors as sociodemographics (e.g., Anderson 2010a, 2010b; Hetherington and Husser 2012; Jamal and Nooruddin 2010), political knowledge and political interest (e.g., Anderson and Tverdova 2003; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2001; Mondak et al. 2007), partisanship (e.g., Huddy et al. 2005; MacKuen and Brown 1987; Rudolph 2003a), ideology and policy attitudes (e.g., Carlin and Singer 2011; Davis and Silver 2004; Krosnick and Kinder 1990), economic perceptions (e.g., Criado and Herreros 2007; Hetherington and Globetti 2002; Rahn and Rudolph 2005), perceived threat and negative experiences with crime and bribery (e.g., Booth and Seligson 2009; Gibson 1998; Gibson and Gouws 2000, 2001), previous political participation (e.g., Anderson and Tverdova 2003; Escobar-Lemmon and Ross 2014; Peffley and Rohrschneider 2003), and other forms of political support (e.g., Bratton et al. 2005; Hutchison and Gibler 2007; Rahn and Rudolph 2005).

This dissertation focuses on personality, a factor that has received an inadequate level of attention in the political support literature. Two considerations, in my view, merit a thorough examination of personality traits. First, many of the factors listed in the previous paragraph could have an endogenous relationship with political support. Consider political interest as an example. Do people support the political system because they are interested in public affairs, or are

citizens more attracted to politics when they already support the status quo? In contrast to a chicken-and-egg argument, the relationship between personality traits and political support should be fairly clear, for personality is highly heritable and manifests itself before individuals become engaged in politics as adults.<sup>5,6</sup> Personality traits thus may exert a causal influence on political support. Second, traits could constitute an important and persistent antecedent of political support due to the longitudinal stability of psychological factors. Rantanen et al. (2007), for example, report nine-year test–retest correlations as high as 0.81 for the Big Five trait dimensions of openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability, and Bloeser and his colleagues (2015) have identified high levels of longitudinal stability in the effects of personality on political attitudes and behavior. In sum, the exogenous and long-term influences of psychological characteristics indicate the utility of a comprehensive examination of personality, support attitudes, and citizen behavior.

Such an overview, however, does not exist. To be sure, scholars have investigated the impact of personality on political support (e.g., Freitag and Ackermann 2016; Marcus et al. 1995; Mondak and Halperin 2008) and the impact of support attitudes on participation (e.g., Birch 2010; Klesner 2009; Norris 1999b). Nevertheless, more work remains to be done to link traits to political support and to demonstrate that the personality–support relationship matters for political engagement and, as a result, citizen competence.

To achieve theoretical progress, researchers must develop a general model of the link between personality and attitudes toward the political system. Such a broad theoretical

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<sup>5</sup> By “heritable,” I mean that a substantial amount of the variation in traits is attributable to genetic variation across individuals. In a twin study, for instance, Riemann and his colleagues (1997) find heritability estimates for the Big Five traits of openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability that range from 0.57 to 0.81 for calculations based on peer reports alone and from 0.66 to 0.79 for calculations based on self- and peer reports. For other studies of personality and heritability, see Heath et al. (1992) and Pilia et al. (2006).

<sup>6</sup> Ehrler and his colleagues (1999), for example, report significant relationships between personality traits and the behavior of children.

framework would account for existing and novel findings in the personality and support literature (Lave and March 1975) and thereby achieve integrative and additive cumulation (Zinnes 1976). With this model, we would be able to explain whether the effect of personality differs across (e.g., views about political actors versus views about democracy) or within (e.g., views about the trustworthiness versus responsiveness of political actors) levels of political support. Existing studies, by contrast, tend to consider one or two support attitudes and therefore gravitate toward more focused hypothesis development and empirical testing.<sup>7</sup>

The benefits of a general model extend to resolving disputes in the personality and support literature. By incorporating contextual factors, such the level of threat from political corruption, a broad framework could explain why the direct effect of personality differs from one survey to another. Perhaps different surveys were administered in divergent political, economic, or social environments.

With these goals in mind, I turn to trait activation theory (TAT) as a general model of the relationship between personality and political support. Originally developed in the field of occupational psychology, trait activation theory (Tett and Burnett 2003; Tett and Guterman 2000) expects personality to influence outcomes only when traits are activated by relevant cues in the environment. These cues indicate the utility of individual differences in personality for the political support opportunity at hand. For example, news about a strong national economy might activate a person's level of conscientiousness because of this trait dimension's connection to achievement-striving. Given their attraction to success, highly conscientious citizens may be

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<sup>7</sup> An exception is the study by Mondak and Halperin (2008), who examine the impact of personality on four support attitudes in the United States: presidential job approval, trust in local political actors, external political efficacy, and support for democratic values. Following Mondak and Halperin's example, this dissertation will seek to add to our knowledge of the antecedents of political support through a comprehensive account of the relationship between personality and attitudes toward the political system. I also will build on their study by incorporating cross-national public opinion data.

more likely to support incumbent politicians who preside over robust economic growth. Formal interactions are not the only application of TAT, as various objects of political support may send trait-relevant cues and thereby produce direct effects of personality. Opportunities to trust political actors, for instance, pertain directly to the trust facet of agreeableness (John et al. 2008) and are likely to yield a positive trait effect on this form of political support.

The utility of trait activation theory extends beyond the study of personality and attitudes about the political system. To my knowledge, no political scientist has associated his or her research directly with trait activation theory.<sup>8</sup> This scenario fails to tap the full potential of the model, as its basic logic encompasses not just political support, but also other political attitudes, political behaviors, health behaviors, and workplace outcomes, such as the ones in the occupational psychology literature (e.g., Colbert and Witt 2009; Lievens et al. 2006). Moreover, the theory provides a broad explanation about how personality interacts with contextual factors to influence attitudes and behaviors. In addition to formal statistical interactions, scholars can draw on TAT to understand how the direct effects of personality depend on characteristics of the dependent variable. Researchers have been calling for the personality literature to incorporate environmental factors (e.g., Funder 2008; Mondak et al. 2010), and some studies have investigated person–situation interactions in an ad hoc fashion (e.g., Freitag and Ackermann 2016; Mondak 2010). But TAT has the potential to ground research on conditional personality effects in a general theoretical framework that guides the development and specification of hypotheses and accounts for observations across numerous fields of research.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> This does not mean that all TAT research has been inapplicable to the world of politics, as studies have reported on results from government workers (e.g., Haaland and Christiansen 2002; Hirst et al. 2011). The point, however, is that (1) none of these researchers are political scientists and (2) extant work has not extended to political attitudes and behavior in the mass public.

<sup>9</sup> For example, the mechanism by which conscientiousness affects workplace outcomes (e.g., Colbert and Witt 2009) could resemble the mechanism by which the same trait dimension influences political support.

In addition to the link between personality and political support, I investigate the entire chain from traits to support attitudes to citizen behavior. Following extant work on political interest and other non-support attitudes (e.g., Blais and St-Vincent 2011; Gallego and Oberski 2012), I examine whether views about the political system mediate the relationship between personality and citizen participation. I incorporate behavioral outcomes in order to demonstrate the practical utility of the personality–support relationship. Had I omitted participation from my analysis, I could not directly address concerns about citizen competence and the low rates of political engagement mentioned above. Studying participation thus allows me to explore behavioral differences across individuals.

A study connecting personality, political support, and behavior also may suggest practical ways to encourage citizens to participate in public life. The findings could indicate that political elites are able to influence citizen levels of political support and promote political engagement through messages tailored to the personality traits of their audience. Due to higher participation rates, citizens may be more likely to use collective action to address social problems, represent their interests, and hold politicians accountable, thus contributing to the quality of democracy.

To explore the impact of personality on political support and citizen behavior, this dissertation offers a theoretical account that integrates all three factors. I develop this model in the next chapter and test its implications in subsequent chapters. In the rest of the introduction, I review extant research on personality and political support in order to clarify terminology and identify limitations in the literature addressed by my theory and research design. Finally, I preview the ensuing chapters in the dissertation.



## **Background: Personality and Political Support**

Personality and political support constitute two of the key factors in this dissertation, but scholars have defined these terms in different ways over the years. Therefore, I clarify my own conceptualizations before turning to the limitations in previous work on the relationship between individual differences and attitudes toward the political system.

### *Conceptualizing Personality*

Personality represents a psychological source of individual differences. Just as people vary in such physical attributes as height and eye color, individuals also differ in their psychological characteristics. Some people are extraverted while others are introverted, and some embrace new experiences while others prefer to follow a routine. More generally, I define personality as a relatively stable and internal psychological structure that encourages observable patterns in behaviors and attitudes (Mondak 2010).

Four points about this definition deserve comment. First, scholars have disputed the malleability of personality, with some reporting change over time (e.g., Bühler 1935; Constantinople 1969; Whitbourne and Waterman 1979) and others emphasizing consistency (e.g., Digman 1989; McCrae and Costa 2003; Rantanen et al. 2007).<sup>10</sup> Recent trends in scholarship, however, tend to favor the stability of personality (McCrae and Costa 2008). Second, personality is an internal psychological structure and therefore cannot be directly observed (McCrae and Costa 2008; Tett and Burnett 2003). To measure personality, scholars typically administer survey batteries that tap basic psychological orientations, such as the traits of openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability assessed by the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (Gosling et al. 2003). Third, personality researchers

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<sup>10</sup> In their research, Roberts and his colleagues (Caspi and Roberts 2001; Roberts et al. 2001; Roberts et al. 2008; Robins et al. 2001a) highlight both continuity and change in personality, with an emphasis on the former.

sometimes understand the term “psychological structure” as referring to mood (Voortman 2009), temperament (Tost et al. 2010), and values (Caprara et al. 2006; Caprara and Vecchione 2013), but most would include traits as basic aspects of personality (e.g., John et al. 1988; Kreitler and Kreitler 1990; Mondak et al. 2010). Traits refer to such general behavioral tendencies as extraverts being inclined to converse with strangers and introverts being hesitant to engage in public speaking. Due to the prominence of the Big Five trait dimensions in current personality research (John et al. 2008),<sup>11</sup> this dissertation focuses on traits. Fourth, although traits and other personality characteristics promote tendencies in actions and expressed attitudes, this relationship is certainly not perfect (Mischel 1968; Mondak 2010).<sup>12</sup> Random and situational factors can cause individuals to act out of character, as would occur if an unexpected physical ailment prevented an extravert from engaging in conversation or a public speaking class forced introverts to talk for the same amount of time as extraverts. The point, however, is that personality influences *general* patterns in observable behaviors and attitudes.

As implied above, this dissertation utilizes the Big Five personality traits of openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability.<sup>13</sup> Tupes and Christal (1958, 1961) first employed the five-factor framework in the 1950s and 1960s with their research on U.S. Air Force Officer Candidate School subjects, but the Big Five did not gain prominence in the personality literature until the 1980s and 1990s through the research of such scholars as Digman (1989), Goldberg (1990, 1992), and McCrae and Costa (1987, 1997).

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<sup>11</sup> As noted by John et al. (2008), in recent years psychology publications utilizing the five-factor framework have vastly outnumbered publications using alternative models of personality.

<sup>12</sup> The realization that personality and behavior are imperfectly correlated hindered the progress of personality research in the 1960s and 1970s as scholars questioned the utility of personality traits for psychological research (Digman 1990; Mondak 2010).

<sup>13</sup> With emotional stability referring to its opposite, neuroticism, the order of personality traits spells the acronym OCEAN. I utilize this order for the presentation of my findings because other scholars have done the same (e.g., Mondak et al. 2011; Oskarsson and Widmalm 2016).

Due to the importance of the Big Five to this dissertation, a brief description of each trait dimension is in order.<sup>14</sup> Openness to experience refers to an individual's receptivity to innovation, new activities, and novel ideas; individuals scoring high in this trait dimension tend to be intellectual in demeanor and value adventure and aesthetics. Meanwhile, conscientiousness pertains to a person's inclination toward order, achievement-striving, and dutifulness, and high levels of extraversion capture not only gregariousness and social confidence but also assertiveness and positive emotions. Similarly, agreeable people tend to exhibit prosocial attributes such as warmth, affection, trust, generosity, and compliance. The final trait dimension, emotional stability, is rooted in an individual's avoidance of such negative attributes as anxiety, impulsiveness, and irritability.

### *Conceptualizing Political Support*

At its simplest, political support refers to an individual's views of the political system. Some citizens trust politicians to act in the public interest while others automatically assume that the government's actions are intended to benefit societal elites. Support for democratic principles also varies from individual to individual, with some embracing free elections and political rights and others adopting a more skeptical attitude toward such matters. These examples assume an attitudinal conceptualization of political support, rather than a behavioral one characterized by voter turnout and other actions that perpetuate status quo institutions (Booth and Seligson 2009). Canache (2002) notes that most of the political support literature adopts the opinion-based approach, and I do the same in this dissertation.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The account in this paragraph is based on the facets listed by John and his colleagues (2008, 126).

<sup>15</sup> For examples of attitudinal studies, see Birch (2010), Booth and Seligson (2009), and Norris (1999b). In spite of the consensus in the literature, it is important to note that not all conceptualizations of political support are unidimensional. In his classic study on political support, Easton (1965, 159) incorporates both attitudes and behavior in the following definition: "We can say that A supports B when A acts favorably on behalf of B or when he orients himself favorably toward B." Yet Easton (1975) recognizes that researchers often associate political support with the attitudinal half of that definition.

In addition to the basic definition, researchers have considered alternative classification schemes for political support. One option is to distinguish between specific and diffuse support (Easton 1965). The former pertains to public opinion about policy outputs, whereas the latter refers to the public's "reservoir of favorable attitudes or good will that helps members to accept or tolerate outputs to which they are opposed or the effect of which they see as damaging to their wants" (Easton 1965, 273). Diffuse support, in other words, denotes an individual's basic views about the trustworthiness and legitimacy of the political object at hand (Canache 2002; Easton 1975), such as the national legislature, whereas specific support pertains to such short-range evaluations as an individual's reaction to the economic impact of government policy. The consequences of diffuse and specific support could be profound, as high levels of support in one domain may facilitate political stability by compensating for low levels in the other domain (Easton 1975). For example, strong diffuse support for political institutions may ensure the persistence of the system even if citizens oppose incumbent politicians due to an economic recession.

Although separating diffuse and specific support may be possible in theory, scholars have questioned whether survey batteries enable citizens to make such a distinction in practice (e.g., Easton 1975; Muller et al. 1982). Items about trust in the executive and legislature, for instance, may not clarify whether respondents should provide their long-run evaluations of these institutions or their short-run assessments of the job performance of political actors within these institutions. Therefore, it should be no surprise that different researchers have classified the same questions as examples of diffuse support (Miller 1974) and specific support (Citrin 1974).

As an alternative to the diffuse-specific framework, scholars have suggested that research be organized around the targets of political support, such as political actors and institutions (e.g.,

Booth and Seligson 2009; Canache 2002; Easton 1965; Norris 1999a, 2011). Easton did not intend for his original identification of support for political actors, the regime, and the political community to transcend research on diffuse and specific attitudes, but he later acknowledged the relevance of the target of support for long-run and short-run evaluations (Easton 1975). Indeed, Canache (2002) notes that recent studies have turned to the object-oriented framework in order to avoid the empirical ambiguity associated with the diffuse–specific approach (Kornberg and Clarke 1992) and take advantage of the multiple types of support indicated by such diverse objects as political actors and the political community (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 1995).<sup>16</sup>

The particular targets analyzed by researchers have differed from study to study, but Easton’s (1965) initial identification of political actors, the regime, and the political community remains foundational to the object-oriented framework. In his classification, political actors refer to the current occupants of political offices, whereas the regime constitutes a broad category that includes political offices or institutions as well as the basic principles and procedures of the regime. These principles range from democratic values such as free elections and political rights to nondemocratic values such as government control of the political sphere, and procedures denote the de facto protection of free speech and other processes by which demands are translated into political outputs. Finally, a political community in Easton’s framework refers to the overall collectivity aimed at conducting political affairs, rather than the particular actors, institutions, procedures, or principles within that society. Support for the political community could be measured with items for national identification and patriotism.

Responding to Easton’s (1965) classification scheme, Norris (1999a, 2011) has proposed a five-tier framework of political support that ranges in generality from the political community at the top to political actors at the bottom. In the middle, Norris divides the regime into regime

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<sup>16</sup> An even more current study of political support, Booth and Seligson (2009), utilizes the target-oriented approach.

**Table 1.1**  
**Five Objects of Political Support**

Most General	Political Community
	Regime Principles
	Regime Performance
	Regime Institutions
Least General	Political Actors

Source: Norris (1999a, 10)

institutions, regime performance (i.e., procedures), and regime principles. According to Norris, researchers should account for the fact that citizens may possess a high level of support for one of these regime objects but low levels of support for the others. An individual, for instance, might identify strongly with democratic principles but disapprove of the procedures or institutions designed to implement those principles. Of the three regime objects, Norris ranks regime principles as the most general, followed by regime performance and regime institutions. The order recommended by Norris accounts for the fact that institutions engage in the real-world implementation of procedures, and procedures are designed to implement broader ideals, or principles. The five levels of Norris’ framework are depicted in Table 1.1.

Like Norris (1999a, 2011), other studies have focused on support for particular aspects of the regime. Booth and Seligson (2009) also consider regime principles and institutions, as well as the political community and political actors. Canache (2002), meanwhile, studies attitudes toward democracy and regime institutions, along with support for political actors.

Following these studies, I utilize Norris’ (1999a, 2011) object-oriented framework for my dissertation. In addition to avoiding the empirical challenges of the diffuse–specific approach, the five-level classification scheme captures a broad range of political support and therefore allows me to offer a comprehensive account of the personality–support relationship. As I detail below, scholars have not adequately examined the extent to which the effects of personality on support vary within or across the levels of Norris’ framework. Additional research could improve

our understanding of how personality effects depend on the situation encountered by individuals (Funder 2008; McCrae and Costa 2008; Mondak et al. 2010; Tett and Burnett 2003).

### *Connecting Personality and Political Support*

Having clarified the concepts of personality and political support, I now review previous research on the relationship between these factors in order to highlight current limitations in the literature. I start with scholarship on support for the political community and then move toward support for political actors, the least general level in Norris' (1999a, 2011) classification scheme.

Research on attitudes toward the political community typically examines strength of national identity (Jenkins et al. 2012; Sagiv et al. 2012) and patriotism (Dalton 1999; Norris 1999a, 2011), but scholars rarely connect the five-factor personality framework and these two measures of political support. Altogether, I have identified only two such studies on national identification (Jenkins et al. 2012; Sagiv et al. 2012), each of which has its own limitations.<sup>17</sup> In particular, Sagiv et al. (2012) collect data from only 77 high school students in Israel, and Jenkins et al. (2012) rely on an unrepresentative college sample from the United States. Therefore, the generalizability of the results beyond students (Gordon et al. 1986; Reynolds 2010; Sears 1986) or populations outside of the United States (Jenkins et al. 2012) or Israel (Sagiv et al. 2012) is unclear.<sup>18</sup> The lack of empirical studies on patriotism also suggests that personality researchers have not investigated all domains of community support in order to determine whether trait effects are consistent for patriotism and national identification.

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<sup>17</sup> In addition to the articles by Jenkins et al. (2012) and Sagiv et al. (2012), Curtis (2016) utilizes a 2012 British survey to investigate the impact of the Big Five on identification with Europe, a supranational political community. Given my attention to domestic political support, I do not discuss Curtis' findings here. (The United Kingdom has been a member of the European Union and its predecessor organizations since 1973, although a June 2016 referendum began the process of UK withdrawal from the EU.)

<sup>18</sup> Cooper et al. (2011) also recognize concerns associated with using student samples and find with data from the United States that students and non-students differ on their scores for the Big Five, but these authors also report that the effects of personality traits on two policy attitudes are similar for these groups. Neither of the policy items refers to political support, so it is an open question whether the impact of personality on attitudes toward the political system is similar in student and non-student samples.

Support for regime principles constitutes the next most general tier in Norris' (1999a, 2011) classification system. Norris notes that researchers typically measure democratic support by asking whether democracy represents the best political system, but such an approach represents only a first step.<sup>19</sup> Democracy is a multifaceted concept encompassing mass participation, political tolerance, checks and balances, and limitations on governmental authority (Carlin and Singer 2011; Norris 1999a, 2011).<sup>20</sup> A comprehensive analysis of personality and support for democracy would tap as many regime principles as possible while also including abstract preferences for democracy over dictatorship.

The reality, however, is that the literature on the five-factor personality framework has touched only on two closely related democratic attitudes: tolerance of political minorities and support for criminal rights (Marcus et al. 1995; Mondak and Halperin 2008; Mondak and Hurwitz 2012; Oskarsson and Widmalm 2016; Swami et al. 2012).<sup>21</sup> Although this literature has greatly advanced our understanding of how personality shapes attitudes toward criminals and disliked political groups, we do not know whether the Big Five exert similar effects on other democratic attitudes, such as support for checks and balances. Most of the tolerance and criminal rights studies analyze U.S. data,<sup>22</sup> so we also are unsure whether findings generalize to other

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<sup>19</sup> One concern with abstract measures of democratic support is that citizens can support democracy in the abstract (e.g., Bratton and Mattes 2001; Dalton 1999; Klingemann 1999) but fail to adhere to specific democratic principles such as political tolerance (e.g., Oskarsson and Widmalm 2016; Peffley and Rohrschneider 2003). Furthermore, abstract measures of democratic support could be invalid because they allow respondents to answer based on their personal definition of democracy or their society's definition of democracy, which may differ across individuals and contexts (Bratton et al. 2005; Carlin and Singer 2011; Elkins and Sides 2010). In spite of these issues, I utilize abstract measures of democratic support since they are common in the literature (e.g., Bratton and Mattes 2001).

<sup>20</sup> I should note that scholars have offered different conceptualizations of democracy. Some focus on elections (e.g., Cheibub et al. 2010) and others on a greater array of principles, such as political tolerance and checks and balances (e.g., Carlin and Singer 2011). I follow the latter approach in light of my goal to offer a comprehensive account of personality and support.

<sup>21</sup> It is important to note that other studies have explored the impact of alternative personality characteristics, such as self-esteem (Peffley et al. 2001; Sniderman 1975), on democratic support. I compare my Big Five results to some of this other research in Chapter 3.

<sup>22</sup> The one exception is a study by Oskarsson and Widmalm (2016), who examine political tolerance in a city in India and a city in Pakistan.



countries. I address both concerns by analyzing other democratic attitudes and by using data from Latin America and the Caribbean.

In addition to the political community and regime principles, Norris (1999a, 2011) recognizes a third target of support: the performance of the regime. As indicated above, support for regime performance refers to the procedures utilized by political actors and institutions to implement democratic principles. Broad items for this level of support might focus on a citizen's satisfaction with the performance of democracy (Anderson and Guillory 1997; Anderson and Tverdova 2003), and more fine-grained assessments could pertain to the trustworthiness of elections or the extent to which citizen rights are protected.

Researchers have debated the utility of measures of support for regime performance. On one hand, scholars acknowledge the potential of such items to tap an attitude that is more general than support for regime institutions but more specific than support for regime principles (Anderson and Guillory 1997; Norris 1999a, 2011). In theory, people should be able to assess the extent to which government institutions (e.g., courts) implement democratic principles (e.g., fair trials) without allowing their opinions about these organizations and values to cloud their judgment (Norris 1999a, 2011). On the other hand, citizens may find it difficult to be objective because the items tapping these evaluations may directly refer to regime principles and institutions (Canache et al. 2001; Norris 1999a, 2011). Different interpretations of "satisfaction with democracy" across nations and individuals also could diminish the validity of items measuring support at the regime performance level (Canache et al. 2001).

My response to the debate is practical. I readily understand the concerns associated with items tapping assessments of regime performance, but I proceed with an examination of the impact of personality on procedural support. In the end, it is an empirical question whether the

impact of personality on regime performance attitudes resembles the effects for the regime principle level or the regime institution level. If the procedural results are similar to one level but distinct from another, we might conclude that individuals viewed support for regime performance just as they viewed assessments of regime institutions or principles. Meanwhile, if the results for regime performance are a combination of the findings at the other two levels, then we might think that individuals acknowledged the intermediate position of this level of political support, or perhaps some responded as they did for institutional support and others as they did for democratic support. It is also possible for the regime performance results to resemble the findings for neither regime values nor regime institutions.

The regime performance level represents a new field of empirical research, as no published studies, to my knowledge, have investigated the connections between personality and support for regime performance. Therefore, this dissertation offers new insights about the impact of personality on political support by considering this level in Norris' (1999a, 2011) framework. I examine overall evaluations of regime performance as well as assessments about the application of particular democratic principles in society.

Regime institutions constitute the next object of political support. Rather than the rules of political interaction (Helmke and Levitsky 2004; North 1990), institutions in Norris' (1999a, 2011) framework refer to political parties and government agencies. The list of public institutions is quite extensive and includes the national legislature, the justice system, the military, and local government. Support for these institutions encompasses the domains of political trust, job evaluations, political affect, and external efficacy. Each dimension captures a different mode of assessment, with trust items focused on institutional fairness (Miller and Listhaug 1990), job evaluations referring to institutional effectiveness, items on political affect

measuring a person's emotional reactions to political institutions, and external efficacy questions pertaining to the perceived level of institutional responsiveness to public opinion and activism (Miller and Listhaug 1990).<sup>23</sup>

Using data mostly from economically affluent democracies, several scholars have explored the impact of the Big Five personality dimensions on institutional trust (Freitag and Ackermann 2016; Swami et al. 2012; Sweetser 2014; Voortman 2009) and external efficacy toward institutions (Mondak and Halperin 2008; Rasmussen and Nørgaard n.d.; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013).<sup>24</sup> No study of which I am aware has examined institutional affect or job evaluations. This dissertation utilizes data from North America, Latin America, and the Caribbean to explore all four domains of institutional support and determine whether personality influences trust, external efficacy, affect, and effectiveness evaluations in the same way.

The final objects of support in Norris' (1999a, 2011) framework are the party officials, politicians, and government employees who interact with the public and make decisions that influence societal well-being. In contrast to such targets as the political community and regime principles, political actors are hardly abstract and instead constitute the human face of the political system (Easton 1975). Political actors also differ from regime institutions in that the

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<sup>23</sup> External efficacy is a distinct concept from internal efficacy, the latter of which refers to people's evaluation of their own understanding of politics. Internal efficacy does not constitute a form of political support since individuals are appraising the extent to which they comprehend the political system, rather than their approval of the status quo. In my view, however, external efficacy does constitute a form of political support because individuals are evaluating the political system in terms of governmental responsiveness to public opinion and mobilization. Likewise, Norris (2011, 30) explicitly refers to external efficacy toward political actors as a form of political support. Such a classification easily could apply to political institutions as well. In addition, Miller and Listhaug (1990) consider political efficacy and political trust as the two primary aspects of political support, with the former focused on political inputs (i.e., an individual's impact on the political process) and the latter focused on the fairness of officials and other political outputs. Studies also have identified low external efficacy and low trust as components of political alienation (Finifter 1970; Mason et al. 1985). Based on my argument and the supporting evidence in the literature, this dissertation considers external efficacy to be a form of political support. I must acknowledge, however, that other scholars have omitted external efficacy from the concept of support (e.g., Anderson and Tverdova 2001; Easton 1975).

<sup>24</sup> An exception to this pattern is a study by Mondak and his colleagues (2017), who investigate the impact of personality on trust in 24 countries in the Western Hemisphere.

latter refer to government agencies and political parties and the former to the individuals who fill roles within those organizations (Easton 1965). Although the two levels are conceptually distinct, citizens may conflate their attitudes toward actors and institutions in their responses to survey items (Norris 1999a, 2011). It is an empirical question, however, whether personality influences both levels in the same way. The comprehensive approach pursued in this dissertation enables me to address the consistency of personality effects across levels of support.

One similarity between institutional and actor support is a common set of domains across levels. These particular domains refer to political affect, political trust, job evaluations, and external efficacy. Citizens can view political actors and regime institutions as likeable or unlikeable in character, fair or unfair to citizens, effective or ineffective in their handling of the economy or their overall job performance, and responsive or unresponsive to public opinion and mobilization. In theory, these domains of support are distinct from one another. Citizens, for example, could view local political actors as unkind and unlikeable people who nevertheless perform their duties effectively.

The extant personality literature has engaged with many of the four domains of actor support, but not all. Anderson (2010a, 2010b), Cawvey et al. (n.d.), Mondak (2010), Mondak and Halperin (2008), and Wang (2016) have considered the effects of the Big Five on efficacy, trust, and job approval in the United States, and Voortman (2009) has considered the relationship between personality and perceptions of job performance in the Netherlands. I extend this research by including affect toward political actors as well as issue-specific evaluations of job effectiveness (e.g., approval of the executive's handling of the economy).<sup>25</sup> This dissertation also broadens the geographic scope of inquiry to economically developing democracies.

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<sup>25</sup> Wang (2016) also examines the impact of personality on the difference between 2012 U.S. presidential candidate feeling thermometers. The latter measure closely resembles the concept of political affect but fails to qualify as such

Two general points emerge from the preceding discussion. First, we could characterize the personality and political support literature as disconnected and incomplete. We know that personality influences various views about the political system, but we are unsure whether the results apply consistently within or across the levels of political support. Because we lack a general theoretical framework for understanding personality and attitudes toward the political system, studies rarely consider multiple levels simultaneously, nor have scholars investigated all domains within a single level. A comprehensive approach, therefore, could promote additive cumulation by identifying new personality effects on political support and integrative cumulation by accounting for previous findings and explaining in general terms how personality traits influence attitudes toward the political system (Zinnes 1976).<sup>26</sup> It is one thing, for example, to propose a theory that accounts for the empirical relationship between extraversion and job evaluations of political actors, but it is another thing to explain how extraversion influences trust, affect, and external efficacy for politicians and bureaucrats or even how this trait dimension affects attitudes at other levels of political support, such as regime principles. The same could be said for the other trait dimensions of the Big Five. Of the explanations mentioned thus far, Lave and March (1975) would prefer the more general ones because they account for more observations and enable researchers to understand how personality influences similar classes of dependent variables, such as the various domains of actor support as well as attitudes at other levels. A general approach calls us to move beyond studying personality and trust separately from personality and external efficacy and instead favors the development of explanations and the testing of hypotheses about personality and actor support or personality and support at all

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since the focus is not on positive emotions toward political actors but instead on the difference in emotions between two political candidates.

<sup>26</sup> The matter of integrative cumulation is relevant to all subfields in political science. For example, 41 years ago Zinnes (1976) viewed the quantitative international politics literature as overly focused on data analysis and sounded a call for integrative cumulation.

five levels. In sum, two primary goals of this dissertation are to accumulate new empirical evidence about personality and political support and to offer a general theory that explains the observed relationships between these two factors.

The fulfillment of these objectives would facilitate understanding about when personality traits encourage, discourage, or exert no effect on political support. At present, the disconnected state of the literature prevents scholars from knowing how personality traits (e.g., extraversion) interact with the characteristics of particular modes of support (e.g., attitudes toward political actors versus the political community) to influence opinions about the political system. The status quo in prior support research conflicts with the consensus in the broader personality literature that psychological traits work in conjunction with features of the situation to influence attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Funder 2008; McCrae and Costa 2008; Mondak et al. 2010; Tett and Burnett 2003). To integrate the latter point, I theorize and test hypotheses about the differential effects of personality on various attitudes toward the political system. The effect of some personality traits may be uniformly favorable toward political support within a particular level and even across levels, but it is more likely that the effects will vary in meaningful ways for different attitudes toward the political system. Extraversion, for instance, may have a different effect on support for political actors than it has on support for the political community. In the next chapter, I outline a theory that accounts for such heterogeneous effects.

A second limitation noted thus far concerns the geographic scope of previous research. Much of the literature has concentrated on personality effects in economically developed democracies,<sup>27</sup> so existing findings are of limited generalizability. Data from other countries would enable scholars to evaluate the applicability of the existing literature on personality and

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<sup>27</sup> Of the studies mentioned above, the only exceptions are Mondak et al. (2017), who study political trust in the Caribbean, Latin America, and North America, and Oskarsson and Widmalm (2016), who examine political tolerance in India and Pakistan.

political support. Therefore, I analyze survey data from the 2010 AmericasBarometer, which includes more than 20 low-income and middle-income countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>28</sup> All of these countries also hold elections, but their levels of democracy in recent years vary according to Freedom House from free (e.g., Chile and Costa Rica) to not free (i.e., Venezuela).

This review also points to two additional gaps in the literature on personality and attitudes toward the political system. One limitation pertains to the fact that scholars rarely employ formal interactions between psychological traits and aspects of a person's environment.<sup>29</sup> Individuals evaluate the political world in vastly different contexts. Some citizens live in robust economies marked by high levels of democracy and low levels of corruption while others encounter anemic financial conditions, autocratic governments, and rampant corruption. Threat levels such as these may influence political support directly as well as indirectly through their interaction with personality traits and other individual characteristics. The general theory I propose in the next chapter incorporates context in order to understand when environmental factors will and will not produce personality effects on political support. Through my model on person–situation interactions, I address some of the puzzles in the personality and support literature by arguing that inconsistent results in past work on direct trait effects are due to surveys being administered in divergent contexts.<sup>30</sup> The data utilized in this dissertation are especially suited to testing hypotheses on conditional personality effects because one survey

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<sup>28</sup> Among these 22 countries, the 2010 gross domestic products per capita in constant 2005 U.S. dollars range from \$1,169 in Guyana to \$14,204 in Trinidad and Tobago (World Bank 2015).

<sup>29</sup> I am aware of only two exceptions in the literature on political support: Freitag and Ackermann (2016) and Oskarsson and Widmalm (2016).

<sup>30</sup> For example, Rasmussen and Nørgaard (n.d.) find a positive, direct relationship between openness to experience and external efficacy, but Anderson (2010a, 2010b) reports the opposite effect. Perhaps the different results are due to contextual differences between Rasmussen and Nørgaard's national Danish sample and Anderson's local sample from the Tallahassee, Florida, area.

includes respondents from more than 20 countries. Most of the studies in the political support literature, by contrast, analyze data from only one country.<sup>31</sup>

Incorporating context not only expands our theoretical knowledge of personality's impact on political support, but it also avoids a problematic assumption in the study of psychological traits. Without integrating the political, economic, or social context, personality researchers imply that the relationship between personality and support is the same for all citizens in every context. Scholars from outside the political support literature have questioned this assumption. Mondak and his colleagues (2010), for instance, find that the effects of extraversion and agreeableness on exposure to political disagreement depend on the size of an individual's discussion network. As one might expect given their assertiveness and conflictive demeanors, individuals high in extraversion and low in agreeableness tend to experience dissent in their discussion networks, but only when they communicate with a sufficiently high number of people.

Another omission in the literature refers to the connections between personality, political support, and citizen behavior. Although some scholars have explored the impact of the Big Five on political support and others have examined the effect of support on outcomes such as political participation, I am aware of only two studies that have investigated the extent to which political support mediates the relationship between personality and behavior (Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013; Wang 2016).<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> The only exceptions are the studies by Mondak et al. (2017) and Oskarsson and Widmalm (2016).

<sup>32</sup> At least four other studies have incorporated political efficacy mediating variables, but none of these have solely measured evaluations of governmental responsiveness. In two studies, governmental responsiveness evaluations are combined with internal efficacy items (Ribeiro and Borba 2016; Vecchione and Caprara 2009), and two other studies draw on items about perceived effectiveness in performing a set of political activities (Russo and Amnå 2016, n.d.).



The paucity of mediation analyses involving political support is somewhat surprising. First, several studies have utilized non-support attitudes to test the mediation hypothesis (e.g., Gallego and Oberski 2012; Mondak et al. 2010; Vecchione and Caprara 2009), which states that personality influences behavior through its effect on attitudes. Second, the path from personality to support appears to be reasonable, for traits are highly heritable (e.g., Heath et al. 1992; Riemann et al. 1997) and apparent prior to a person's first involvement with the political world in late adolescence or early adulthood (e.g., Ehrler et al. 1999; Mervielde et al. 1995). Third, the path from political support to political behavior is sensible: Prior studies have reported significant links between support attitudes and political behavior (e.g., Norris 1999b; Remmer 2010), and attitudes (e.g., support for current actors and institutions) may be necessary for people to overcome the temptation to stay home because of the low probability of being the decisive participant (Muller and Opp 1986; Riker and Ordeshook 1968).

Based on the aforementioned considerations, I incorporate the mediation hypothesis into the theoretical argument in the next chapter and then empirically examine the extent to which support attitudes mediate the impact of personality on known consequences of political support, namely political participation. My work thus addresses the low rates of citizen involvement that hinder political accountability, the expression of interests, and collective efforts to resolve societal problems. By tracing the path from personality to support to behavior, I examine why some individuals are more likely than others to participate in public life.

### **Organization of Chapters**

As indicated above, Chapter 2 offers an integrated model that accounts for the impact of personality on political support and the relevance of the personality–support relationship for citizen behavior. My goal with this model is to address the theoretical and empirical gaps in the

literature mentioned earlier in this introduction. To understand the relationship between personality and political support, I turn to trait activation theory, a model that originated in the occupational psychology literature and is relevant for personality research in general. After explaining the general logic of TAT, I apply the model to political support and offer testable hypotheses about the direct and conditional effects of personality. I then introduce citizen behavior to the model by considering the general logic of the mediation hypothesis and its applicability to attitudes toward the political system. In sum, my model examines the psychological roots of political support attitudes, which in turn are expected to influence political participation and therefore have implications for citizen competence.

The next four chapters test implications of the model. In Chapter 3, I explore the direct effects of personality on political support. Using trait activation theory as a guide, I offer specific hypotheses regarding the impact of the Big Five on each of the levels of Norris' (1999a, 2011) framework. The chapter tests my expectations with multiple data sources from the United States and with cross-national survey data from the Western Hemisphere. I find that personality traits influence attitudes toward political actors, regime institutions, regime performance, regime principles, and the political community. Furthermore, discernible patterns emerge within and across the levels of Norris' framework. Personality effects are generally similar for political actors, regime institutions, and regime performance, and the complexity of democratic support is reflected in the heterogeneous impact of personality at the regime principle level. Personality traits also influence support for the political community in predictable ways. My findings suggest how politicians and nongovernmental organizations could tailor messages to the personality traits of their audience in order to influence support attitudes and, as a result, raise levels of political participation.

I build on the study of personality and political support by incorporating contextual factors in the fourth and fifth chapters. Consistent with TAT, I expect personality to influence support only when traits are activated by relevant cues in the environment. The specific cues I consider pertain to the political, economic, and social environment, with Chapter 4 focused on subjective measures of context and Chapter 5 on objective measures of context. Previous research has considered the direct impact of personality on political support, but I harness trait activation theory to examine conditional trait effects. Once again, I utilize survey data from the United States and elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere and find support for my hypotheses. Moreover, my results indicate additional ways for political elites and nongovernmental organizations to promote political support and thereby to encourage citizens to be engaged in public life.

The sixth chapter considers the relevance of the personality–support relationship for citizen behavior. Drawing on the results from Chapter 3 as well as past research on traits, attitudes, and behavior, I use the mediation hypothesis to develop specific expectations about the path from personality to political support to political participation. Chapter 6 then employs cross-national survey data to test these hypotheses through mediation analysis. I find that personality influences individual participation partially through its effect on political support, and my results complement and challenge previous findings about the impact of personality on political behavior. Furthermore, the mediation analyses in Chapter 6 reveal the potential utility of elite communications tailored to the dominant personality traits of an audience; such messages could raise political support levels and the probability of participation, thus influencing a key indicator of citizen competence, namely engagement in community life.

I conclude the dissertation in Chapter 7. After summarizing the discussion, I consider the policy implications of this study and discuss directions for future research.

## CHAPTER 2 CONNECTING PERSONALITY, SUPPORT, AND BEHAVIOR: AN INTEGRATED MODEL

This chapter outlines a general theory explaining how personality influences political support and how these factors in turn affect citizen behavior. Such a model is necessary due to the incomplete and disconnected state of the literature on personality, support, and the consequences of support. As the previous chapter emphasized, researchers have not offered a general theoretical framework that accounts for existing and new findings on the relationship between personality and political support, nor has existing scholarship explored whether contextual factors moderate the influence of psychological traits on support attitudes. By ignoring contextual factors, scholars implicitly assume that trait effects are homogeneous in all environments and ignore the possibility that inconsistent findings are due to surveys being administered in different settings. Moreover, the real-world importance of the personality–support relationship remains uncertain, for few studies have explored the path from traits to support to behavioral outcomes such as political participation.<sup>33</sup> The theoretical model offered in this chapter addresses each of the aforementioned limitations in the literature.

In my model, I employ two arguments from the personality literature to explain how psychological traits, political support, and citizen behavior connect. The first is trait activation theory (TAT) (Tett and Burnett 2003; Tett and Guterman 2000), which investigates the interaction between personality and situational characteristics, and the second perspective, known as the mediation hypothesis (Blais and St-Vincent 2011; Gallego and Oberski 2012),

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<sup>33</sup> Current research on personality and democratic support illustrates each of these issues. Thus far, scholars have examined the direct impact of personality on political tolerance and support for criminal rights (e.g., Marcus et al. 1995; Swami et al. 2012), to the neglect of other domains of democratic support. Without such evidence, we cannot be sure whether personality traits influence attitudes toward checks and balances or other forms of democratic support in the same way as they affect political tolerance and support for criminal rights. Likewise, I am aware of only one study that has incorporated context in order to examine the conditional effect of personality on democratic support (Oskarsson and Widmalm 2016). Finally, no studies, to my knowledge, have explored whether democratic support mediates the relationship between personality and citizen behavior.

contends that personality influences citizen behavior through its effect on attitudes. In other words, TAT explains how personality affects political support while the mediation hypothesis reveals the practical relevance of the personality–support relationship for behavioral outcomes such as political participation. My model thus pertains to citizen competence and reveals some of the psychological and attitudinal roots of the low participation rates observed in modern societies. Due to the broad scope of TAT and the mediation hypothesis, I discuss each in general terms before moving to its application to political support. I start with trait activation theory and then turn to the mediation hypothesis.

### **Overview of Trait Activation Theory**

Developed by Tett and his colleagues in the early 2000s (Tett and Burnett 2003; Tett and Guterman 2000),<sup>34</sup> trait activation theory and its extensions seek to understand how personality interacts with the environment to influence attitudes and behaviors.<sup>35</sup> In particular, the TAT literature focuses on two basic characteristics of the environment: situational strength and trait-relevant cues. I consider each in turn.

Individuals encounter a variety of situations in their daily lives. Under some conditions, people are free to select from at least two choices, but other environments eliminate all viable options except one. The amount of available time in one’s schedule, for example, influences the extent to which an individual may consider socializing with others during a trip to the gym. Unconstrained patrons are free to chat with others before, during, and after their exercise routine, but busy patrons may feel compelled to complete their workout and continue with the day’s

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<sup>34</sup> Tett and Burnett (2003) and Tett and Guterman (2000) constructed their theory by building on previous observations about the connections between personality, the situation, and individual outcomes (e.g., Allport 1966; Bem and Funder 1978; Murray 1938).

<sup>35</sup> As noted by Tett and his colleagues (2013) in a recent review, TAT was originally intended to apply to behavioral outcomes, but additional research (e.g., Fletcher et al. 2008; Ilies et al. 2011; Yang and Diefendorff 2009) has applied the model to attitudinal dependent variables. I follow the latter approach by using trait activation theory to explain attitudes toward the political system.

agenda without engaging in unnecessary conversations. Psychologists would classify the former scenario as a weak situation and the latter as a strong situation due to the range of choice available to the decision-maker (e.g., Mischel 1973; Monson et al. 1982; Tett and Burnett 2003). Weak situations allow for personality effects because individuals are free to select the option that best enables them to fulfill their psychological needs through trait-consistent behavior (Murray 1938; Tett and Burnett 2003), but strong situations minimize the impact of personality by obliging people low and high in a particular trait to hold the same attitude or engage in a similar behavior. Sources of strong situations include legislation, the presence or threat of pain, and monetary incentives (Mischel 1973; Tett and Burnett 2003). We thus would expect a busy schedule to produce a much weaker relationship between personality and socializing at the gym as individuals low and high in a trait dimension confront financial considerations associated with their job or the threat of emotional pain associated with the failure to spend time at home with their family. In sum, TAT expects *the impact of personality on attitudes and behaviors to be minimal in relatively strong situations and possible in relatively weak situations.*

Evidence for this hypothesis is surprisingly limited. Cooper and Withey (2009) claim that researchers have not adequately tested or found supportive results for the situational strength hypothesis, and some studies identify insignificant trait–situation interactions (Mischel et al. 1973; Schutte et al. 1985). Other scholarship, however, finds more favorable evidence (Beatty et al. 2001; Monson et al. 1982; Withey et al. 2005). For example, Monson and his colleagues (1982) randomly assigned subjects to receive highly extraverted, highly introverted, or neutral treatment by a confederate. The expectations were that the neutral situation would allow personality effects to occur while the other situations could be so strong as to eliminate effects of subject-rated extraversion on perceived talkativeness and the perceived level of extraversion

during the exchange. As expected, subject-rated extraversion exerts a significantly more positive effect on both dependent variables in the neutral condition than the other conditions.

Weak situations may allow personality effects to occur, but trait activation theory views such information as insufficient. According to Hochwarter and his colleagues (2006), the presence of agency does not guarantee that personality will influence an outcome, nor does it specify which trait(s) will be important. TAT responds to the inadequacy of situational strength by turning to another aspect of the environment: situational cues.

Situational cues refer to features of a weak environment that signal the relevance of particular traits for the dependent variable at hand (Tett and Burnett 2003; Tett and Guterman 2000). If weak situations provide individuals with the freedom to express their personality traits, trait-relevant cues make the expression of certain traits particularly attractive. Suppose we were interested in signals for the trait dimension of extraversion in our gym example. Given their sociable tendencies, a trait-relevant cue for unconstrained extraverts could be the presence of a smoothie bar or other place at the gym where people could meet and engage in conversation. The expected relationship between extraversion and speaking with others at the gym would be positive when individual schedules are free (i.e., a weak situation) and when the gym offers a hub for socializing (i.e., a trait-relevant cue). By contrast, incentives for extraverts to express their personality would be absent in gyms without central meeting places (i.e., no trait-relevant cue), *ceteris paribus*, and unconstrained extraverts would be no more likely than unconstrained introverts to converse with other patrons.

Trait activation theory therefore expects *personality to influence behavioral and attitudinal outcomes but only in the presence of trait-relevant cues received in weak situations*. This hypothesis generally receives support in the TAT literature. For example, Colbert and Witt



(2009) examine how conscientiousness and trait-relevant signals interact to influence job performance. One of the cues in their analysis is perceived goal-focused leadership,<sup>36</sup> which refers to the extent to which supervisors specify objectives and enable workers to achieve these objectives. According to Colbert and Witt, a high level of goal-focused leadership should activate conscientiousness because it facilitates the effective expression of such trait-relevant attributes as efficiency, responsibility, and discipline. Highly conscientious employees in this situation understand the requirements for success and are able and motivated to exert the requisite effort to achieve organizational objectives. The relationship between conscientiousness and job performance, therefore, should be quite strong when leaders clarify the firm's goals. When leaders do not, employees have no objectives toward which to strive, and attributes useful to achieving goals, such as reliability and discipline, lose their utility in determining job performance. Colbert and Witt thus expect a weaker relationship between conscientiousness and job evaluations in the latter scenario. The results are consistent with their hypothesis. When perceived goal-focused leadership is high, shifting from low to high in conscientiousness increases an employee's job performance evaluation by nearly one point on a five-point scale, but the effect of conscientiousness is essentially zero when goal-focused leadership is low.<sup>37</sup>

Thus far, I have considered the utility of trait activation theory for understanding formal interactions between personality traits and situational features, but the model is also helpful for the study of direct personality effects. In their original TAT article, Tett and Guterman (2000) argue that *personality effects will be consistent (inconsistent) across various life domains when behaviors contain trait-relevant (trait-irrelevant) cues*. For example, the authors expect sociable

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<sup>36</sup> Empirical applications of TAT have considered situations perceived and not perceived by the respondent. For examples of the former, see Botero and Van Dyne (2009) and Sung and Choi (2009); for examples of the latter, see Tett and Guterman (2000) and Tett and Murphy (2002).

<sup>37</sup> For other applications of TAT using trait-relevant cues, see De Hoogh et al. (2005), Hirst et al. (2009), and Hochwarter et al. (2006).

people to prefer participating in sociable behaviors at the store and in the workplace but to be no more likely than unsociable people to prefer empathetic behaviors in either setting. The argument thus anticipates that personality will influence the outcome only when trait-relevant cues of the dependent variable activate the personality trait. This constitutes the basic expectation of TAT as discussed above. In their results, Tett and Guterman find evidence for cross-situational consistency in trait expression, with the trait relevance of the situation measured by 26 judges. Meanwhile, a similar study (Haaland and Christiansen 2002) finds the Big Five to be more strongly related to activity ratings for behaviors deemed by judges to be associated with the particular personality trait.<sup>38,39</sup>

In my view, trait activation theory holds great promise for psychological research in occupational psychology, political psychology, and beyond due to the model's general ability to explain how personality effects depend on situational factors. Such assistance is clearly needed due to the predominant empirical focus of personality research on direct effects, as noted by Mondak and his colleagues (2010). The literature review in Chapter 1 of this dissertation concludes that the state of research on personality and political support is no different. If scholars are going to move beyond direct effects, what will be required? One key innovation, according to Funder (2008, 577), will be to identify "*which* aspects of situations (specifically) affect which behaviors" (emphasis in original). In my view, TAT's attention to trait-relevant cues can assist researchers in determining which environmental signals would be salient for particular traits and useful for translating personality characteristics into specific attitudes and actions. TAT therefore builds on McCrae and Costa's (2008) five-factor theory (FFT), which posits that personality

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<sup>38</sup> More specifically, the experts were asked if the behavior provided a good opportunity for inferring about a person's level of a given trait.

<sup>39</sup> For other studies on cross-situational consistency in the TAT literature and beyond, see Bem and Allen (1974), Kenrick et al. (1990), Lance et al. (2007), Lievens et al. (2006), and Shoda et al. (1993). As the list of studies indicates, the concept of cross-situational consistency predates and helped to shape the development of TAT.

interacts with the environment to influence attitudes and other characteristic adaptations. FFT does not specify how such interactions occur, but trait activation theory provides a mechanism.

Furthermore, the mark of a high-quality general theory is its ability to account for a variety of observations (Lave and March 1975), and I would suggest that trait activation theory can explain past findings on workplace, political, and other outcomes. Let us consider two examples, one applying to direct effects and one to conditional effects. In the first example, Mondak and his colleagues (2010) find that extraversion does not automatically increase the probability of political behavior, for the personality effect depends on the opportunity for social interaction inherent in the particular form of participation. When political engagement entails interpersonal interaction (e.g., attending a campaign rally), extraversion exerts a positive and significant effect, but the relationship between this trait dimension and behavior is insignificant for individualistic forms of political activity (e.g., donating to a candidate). Interpreted in the language of TAT, both modes of participation constitute weak situations because citizens in electoral regimes are generally free to be engaged or unengaged with the political process, but only social activities contain trait-relevant cues for extraversion.

The second example pertains to a study on U.S. voter turnout by Gerber and his colleagues (2013). Given the absence of compulsory voting in the United States, Americans operate under a weak situation in deciding whether to come to the polls. In their study, Gerber et al. examine the interactions between personality traits and randomly assigned get-out-the-vote (GOTV) appeals. Previous research in the American context (Gerber et al. 2011a; Mondak 2010) had found little evidence that openness increases or decreases the probability of casting a ballot,<sup>40</sup> perhaps because voter turnout does not require the exchange of ideas between individuals (Gerber et al. 2011a) and therefore fails to activate this personality trait dimension.

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<sup>40</sup> For an exception, see Mondak et al. (2010).

Gerber and his colleagues (2013), however, report that citizens high in openness are more likely to vote when presented with persuasive appeals.<sup>41</sup> To explain their finding, the authors do not cite trait activation theory but nonetheless indicate that GOTV appeals constitute trait-relevant cues associated with the attraction of people high in openness to new ideas and information. Furthermore, voting may become a trait-consistent behavior as individuals high in openness seek to express their political ideas at the ballot box. Trait activation, however, fails to occur for subjects who do not receive persuasive appeals, as openness exerts an insignificant effect for the control groups.<sup>42</sup> The insignificant finding is consistent with previous results reported by Gerber et al. (2011a) and Mondak (2010).

### **TAT Applied to Political Support**

In addition to workplace outcomes and political participation, trait activation theory provides insight into the relationship between personality and political support. Key TAT concepts include situational strength and trait-relevant cues, but I focus on the latter because respondents generally operate under weak situations during survey questions about views on the political system.<sup>43</sup> Although societal norms may encourage positive or negative attitudes toward particular objects of support (Citrin 1974; Klingemann 1999), individuals remain free to report any of the response options for a question. A survey administrator does not coerce or even persuade a respondent but instead records his or her answers to political support items.

Meanwhile, I expect personality to exert direct and conditional effects on political support in response to trait-relevant cues. To study direct effects, I begin with the observation

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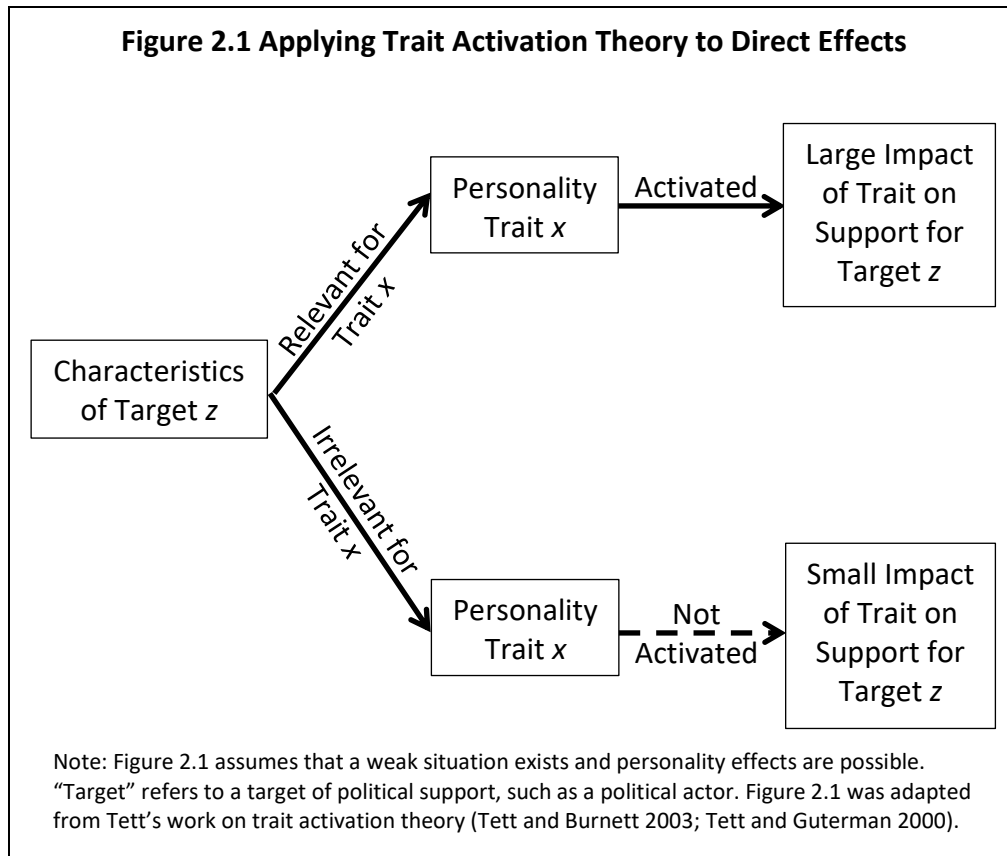
<sup>41</sup> The significant finding applies to two of the three treatments in a survey experiment, as well as to some of the results from a field experiment.

<sup>42</sup> For other instances of person–situation interactions in political science, see Ackermann (2017), Gerber et al. (2010), Hibbing et al. (2011), Mondak (2010), and Mondak et al. (2010).

<sup>43</sup> The limited number of responses on survey items does constrain individual choice, but questions are designed to offer a reasonable range of options. Respondents on the 2010 AmericasBarometer, for example, could answer that they trusted a political institution on a 1-to-7 scale that ranged from “[n]ot at all” to “[a] lot.”

that political support is multifaceted. When citizens think about the political system during a survey or during their day-to-day lives, they are considering more than whether they feel positively or negatively about government in general. They also are paying attention to the particular objects of support, such as political actors, regime institutions, regime performance, regime principles, and the political community (Norris 1999a, 2011). The characteristics of support objects differ both across (e.g., legislative institutions versus democratic principles) and within (e.g., support for checks and balances versus political tolerance) the levels of Norris' (1999a, 2011) framework, and citizens will likely take these differences into account in forming their attitudes about the political system. In other words, each object of support creates a unique situation to which individuals respond, and trait-relevant cues in the target could activate personality traits and produce personality effects. Figure 2.1 depicts trait activation via object-specific signals.

Every support opportunity may be unique, but each connects in some way to a person's approval of the political system. Moreover, some political support items within or across the levels of Norris' (1999a, 2011) framework bear strong resemblances to one another, such as actor trust and institutional trust or overall and issue-specific evaluations of executive job effectiveness. Items such as these send similar trait-relevant cues, and the result should be consistent personality effects. Put more generally, TAT's emphasis on cross-situational consistency (e.g., Haaland and Christiansen 2002; Lance et al. 2007; Tett and Guterman 2000) implies that *personality effects will be more stable for comparable forms of political support that send similar trait-relevant cues than for less comparable forms of political support that send*



*different cues.*<sup>44</sup> In particular, I anticipate that many individuals will evaluate political actors, regime institutions, and regime performance in similar ways due to the fact that these levels of support all pertain to instrumental evaluations of the status quo (Klingemann 1999). Citizens prefer leaders and institutions that meet their expectations for governmental trustworthiness, effectiveness, likeability, and responsiveness,<sup>45</sup> and poor evaluations by the public could influence elections or provoke institutional reform.<sup>46</sup> Although the domains of political trust, job

<sup>44</sup> As discussed in the next chapter, I test the hypothesis of cross-situational consistency by examining the patterns of trait effects for comparable forms of political support and contrasting these results with the patterns for other, less comparable forms of political support.

<sup>45</sup> Regime performance relates most directly to the domain of effectiveness since citizens assess the extent to which political actors and regime institutions put democratic principles into practice.

<sup>46</sup> The opening anecdote in Chapter 1 illustrates the possibility of low levels of support producing anti-incumbent electoral results and institutional reform, as Venezuela abandoned the Democratic Action Party and Social Christian Party and switched from a bicameral legislature to a unicameral one in the aftermath of negative attitudes toward the political system in the 1990s (Canache 2002). For additional studies on the link between political support and

effectiveness, political affect, and external efficacy may send unique signals to citizens, all pertain to instrumental evaluations and contain broadly similar trait-relevant cues. I thus expect to observe fairly consistent personality effects within and across the first three levels of support. Meanwhile, the impact of personality may be different for attitudes toward regime principles and the political community because of alternative trait-relevant cues. In particular, I expect signals for democratic support to relate to personal ideals and national norms about abstract democratic preferences and about specific principles such as political tolerance and checks and balances, whereas relevant messages for community support may center on norms for patriotism and national identification as well as the act of self-expression inherent in answering questions about national affection and affiliation (Klingemann 1999). The unique trait-relevant cues for democratic and community support may activate different personality traits or produce trait effects in the opposite direction from the results for actor, institutional, and procedural attitudes.

My application of TAT to direct effects thus pursues two of the goals discussed earlier for a general theory. First, I promote integrative cumulation (Zinnes 1976) by providing an explanation that accounts for previous and new observations in the study of personality and political support (Lave and March 1975). In particular, I examine the influence of personality within and across the levels of Norris' (1999a, 2011) framework. Second, I investigate how personality interacts with specific aspects of the support decision to influence attitudes toward the political system. I do not assume, for example, that extraversion affects support for political actors in the same way that it influences attitudes toward democratic principles.

Moreover, I previously noted that political support researchers rarely consider formal interactions between traits and the environment. Such an approach encourages the assumption of

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election results, see Anderson et al. (2005), Craig et al. (2006), Hetherington (1999), and Wang (2016). See Southwell (2012) for contrary evidence on the relationship between external efficacy and pro-incumbent voting.

homogenous personality effects, but trait activation theory recognizes that trait effects can be minimal due to the presence of strong situations or the absence of trait-relevant cues in weak situations (Hochwarter et al. 2006), or heterogenous due to divergent trait-relevant cues across different weak situations (Tett and Burnett 2003). Because conditional trait effects are possible, I also apply TAT to formal person–situation interactions in the study of political support.

To study the role of context, I turn to political, economic, and social threat. The justification for this theme is threefold. First, the political support literature often considers the direct effects of such factors as levels of political corruption (e.g., Anderson and Tverdova 2003; Booth and Seligson 2009) and economic growth (e.g., Anderson and Tverdova 2003; Criado and Herreros 2007; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2001), and I build on prior research by investigating whether threats influence attitudes toward the political system indirectly by activating personality traits. Second, workplace applications of trait activation theory often examine environmental factors pertaining to threat. Hochwarter and his colleagues (2006), for instance, discuss the interaction between perceived supervisor support and an individual’s social skills, a concept that combines aspects of personality and learning.<sup>47</sup> As one might expect, high levels of social skills assist individuals in achieving strong job evaluations; however, the strength of this relationship depends on the level of perceived managerial support. Strong social skills enable individuals in threatening situations to compensate for the low level of employer support and achieve high job ratings, but the influence of this trait is more muted in more supportive—or less threatening—workplaces that facilitate success for employees regardless of their level of social

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<sup>47</sup> As this example indicates, the TAT literature uses contextual measures as perceived by the respondent, but other, more objective measures are employed as well. Tett and Guterman (2000), for instance, consider consistency in personality effects across situations rated by experts, rather than the respondents. I consider both perceived and objective contextual variables in my research on personality and political support.



skills.<sup>48</sup> Third, we should expect threat levels in the social, economic, and political environments to activate personality traits due to the salience of such emotions and feelings as fear and pain or relief and pleasure. Individuals are likely to notice these signals, which in turn may trigger personality and produce trait effects.

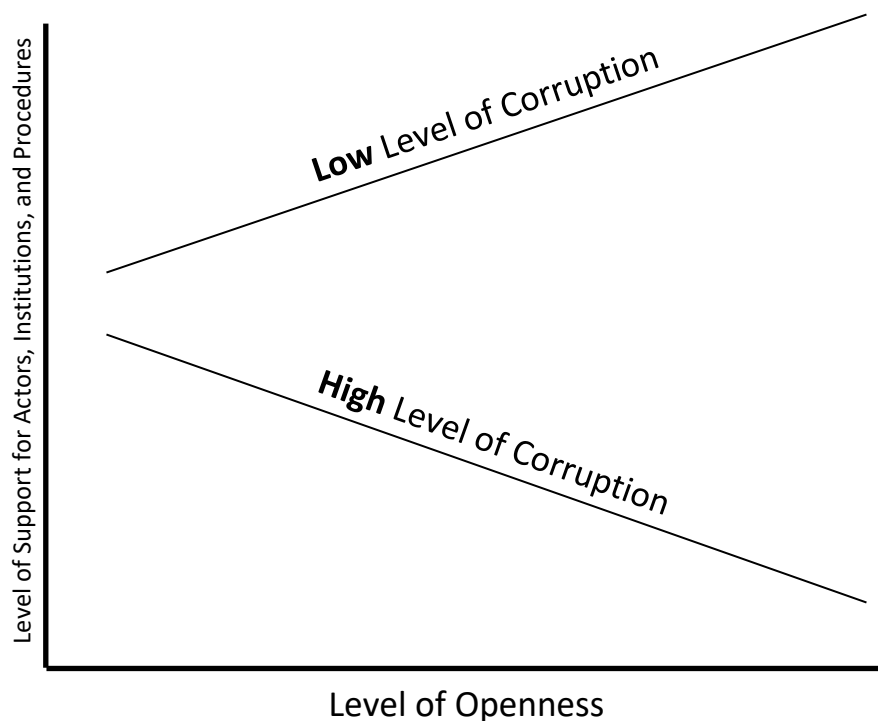
This dissertation tests several hypotheses pertaining to trait-relevant cues in the environment, but let me provide one example in order to make the discussion more concrete. I turn to the interaction between openness and corruption. As noted by Anderson and Tverdova (2003), high levels of malfeasance violate democratic norms of governmental openness, procedural fairness, and political accountability. Such violations hinder the free expression of ideas between citizens and their elected representatives and therefore should raise concerns from individuals high in openness, who value ideas and idealism (John et al. 2008). As a result, high levels of corruption could activate openness and produce a negative relationship between this trait dimension and political support. The reverse process could occur in low-corruption environments, as highly open citizens may be more supportive of the political system in response to compliance with democratic norms. The interaction effect, therefore, will be negative: Openness will exert an increasingly negative effect on political support as the level of malfeasance rises. This interaction is depicted in Figure 2.2.

Heterogeneous trait effects such as the one in Figure 2.2 raise the possibility that TAT could enable researchers to solve puzzles in the personality and support literature. For example, past studies have observed positive (Rasmussen and Nørgaard n.d.) and negative (Anderson 2010a, 2010b) effects of openness on external efficacy. Such divergent results could be due to contextual differences across samples. The positive direct effect originates from Denmark, one of

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<sup>48</sup> For other workplace TAT applications that refer to threat levels in the environment, see Botero and Van Dyne (2009), Fletcher et al. (2008), Hirst et al. (2011), Ilies et al. (2011), and Yang and Diefendorff (2009).

**Figure 2.2 Possible Interaction between Openness and Corruption**



Note: This figure expects low and high levels of corruption to activate openness and result in positive and negative trait effects, respectively. Because the impact of openness becomes more negative as the level of corruption rises, the interaction effect is expected to be negative. This figure is based on trait activation theory (Tett and Burnett 2003; Tett and Guterman 2000).

the least malfeasant countries according to the World Bank.<sup>49</sup> Meanwhile, the negative effects come from a local survey in Florida, which ranked as the tenth worst state in a recent index of illegal corruption as perceived by journalists (Dincer and Johnston 2014).<sup>50,51</sup>

I use TAT to explore this puzzle on openness as well as other puzzles in the personality and political support literature, such as divergent findings for the relationship between

<sup>49</sup> For example, Denmark received a 2015 percentile ranking of 98.08 for control of corruption (World Bank 2016).

<sup>50</sup> According to Dincer and Johnston (2014), illegal corruption refers to public officials benefitting private groups or individuals in exchange for private gains for themselves.

<sup>51</sup> Meanwhile, Florida ranks in the middle of the pack in a more objective measure of state-level corruption based on public corruption convictions in federal court (United States Department of Justice 2013). According to either measure, however, Florida likely possesses a higher level of corruption than Denmark. For more details on the conviction-based measure, see Chapter 5.

conscientiousness and attitudes toward political actors and regime institutions (e.g., Freitag and Ackermann 2016; Mondak and Halperin 2008; Mondak et al. 2017).

### **Overview of the Mediation Hypothesis**

The second half of my model is the mediation hypothesis. According to the mediation hypothesis, *personality influences attitudes, which in turn affect citizen behavior*. For example, Blais and St-Vincent (2011) show that civic duty and political interest mediate the relationship between altruism and expected voter turnout. The causal order promoted by the mediation hypothesis deserves further comment. First, personality is heritable (e.g., Heath et al. 1992; Pilia et al. 2006; Riemann et al. 1997) and manifests itself long before individuals first engage with the political world in late adolescence and early adulthood (e.g., Asendorpf and van Aken 2003; Ehrler et al. 1999; Mervielde et al. 1995). Likewise, empirical evidence indicates that personality mediates the relationship between biology and attitudes, both in the political (Dawes et al. 2010) and nonpolitical (Hiraishi et al. 2008; Oskarsson et al. 2012) domains. It is sensible, in other words, for personality to precede and cause political support. Second, attitudes tend to influence behavior because citizens may have few other reasons to engage in public affairs.<sup>52,53</sup> Because of the time and monetary costs of participation as well as the infinitesimal probability of being the decisive contributor to a collective action effort (Muller and Opp 1986; Riker and Ordeshook 1968), people may choose to participate only when they are motivated to invest in the political system through such attitudes as political interest and civic duty (Blais and St-Vincent 2011; Gallego and Oberski 2012; Riker and Ordeshook 1968; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013).

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<sup>52</sup> Easton (1975) makes this point with respect to political support attitudes.

<sup>53</sup> This is not to say that behaviors never influence attitudes. Researchers, for example, have found some evidence that participation affects political support (Anderson and Tverdova 2003; Escobar-Lemmon and Ross 2014; Hutchison and Gibler 2007; Peffley and Rohrschneider 2003).

To apply the mediation hypothesis, researchers must understand two relationships: the connection between personality and attitudes and the connection between attitudes and behavior. As an example, consider the causal chain from agreeableness to civic duty to electoral turnout analyzed by Schoen and Steinbrecher (2013). The authors expect a positive relationship between agreeableness and civic duty in Germany because individuals high in this trait dimension are sociable and would be especially attentive to their country's emphasis on good citizenship. Civic duty, in turn, is anticipated to predict turnout because previous research has shown that high levels of the attitude are associated with a high probability of going to the polls. The causal chain indicates that agreeableness will be positively associated with turnout via the attitude of civic duty, and Schoen and Steinbrecher find that this attitude partially mediates the relationship between agreeableness and voting.

### **The Mediation Hypothesis Applied to Political Support**

As with trait activation theory, the mediation hypothesis constitutes a general model that political support scholars can utilize in their work. Applied research has considered several potential mediating attitudes, including civic duty (Blais and St-Vincent 2011; Gallego and Oberski 2012; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013), political interest (Blais and St-Vincent 2011; Gallego and Oberski 2012; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013), internal efficacy (Gallego and Oberski 2012; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013; Vecchione and Caprara 2009), and identification with Europe (Gallego and Oberski 2012). I propose that research on the mediation hypothesis add political support to the list.

My recommendation is based on three observations. First, the support literature has begun to explore the relationship between personality and attitudes toward the political system (e.g., Marcus et al. 1995; Mondak and Halperin 2008; Sagiv et al. 2012), and I build on prior

research by examining the effects of traits on objects of support at all levels of Norris' (1999a, 2011) framework. Second, scholars have found that political support influences behavior (e.g., Klesner 2009; Norris 1999b, 2011; Remmer 2010). The logic for a positive connection between political support and behavior is fairly simple: Positive evaluations of the political system indicate favorable views of the current system's legitimacy and encourage citizens to consider engagement in public life as a worthwhile opportunity to promote and invest in the status quo (Booth and Seligson 2009; Norris 1999b, 2011). Third, the political behavior literature has already accumulated an impressive array of findings on personality effects from several countries, including Denmark (Dinesen et al. 2014), Germany (Schoen and Schumann 2007; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013), Italy (Caprara et al. 2006; Vecchione and Caprara 2009), Mexico (Moreno and Wals 2014), Spain (Gallego and Oberski 2012), the United States (Gerber et al. 2011a, 2013; Hibbing et al. 2011; Mondak 2010; Mondak and Halperin 2008; Mondak et al. 2010), Uruguay (Mondak et al. 2010, 2011), and Venezuela (Mondak et al. 2010, 2011). My mediation analyses can build on past research about the effects of personality traits on political participation.

I discuss my specific expectations in Chapter 6, but for now I outline my general approach to crafting hypotheses. One key is to consider multiple consequences of political support, including turnout, campaigning, and contact with public officials between elections. Furthermore, as indicated above, I develop expectations by drawing on extant research and my own work on personality and support as well as previous studies on the connections between support and behavior. Past research, for example, has identified positive effects of openness on democratic support (e.g., Marcus et al. 1995; Oskarsson and Widmalm 2016), and democratic support on political behavior (e.g., Karp and Milazzo 2015; Norris 2011). Based on such

evidence, I expect attitudes toward regime principles to mediate the relationship between openness and political participation.<sup>54</sup>

My application of the mediation hypothesis builds on the extant literature in three ways.<sup>55</sup> One contribution is to identify unconventional paths from personality to political participation via political support. Past studies, for example, have reported positive total and indirect effects of openness and extraversion on citizen engagement (e.g., Ha et al. 2013; Mondak 2010; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013), but I expect both trait dimensions to exert negative effects on behavior through political trust. This expectation derives from prior research on the personality–trust link (e.g., Cawvey et al. n.d.; Mondak et al. 2017), prior research on the support–participation link (e.g., Hooghe and Marien 2013; Karp and Milazzo 2015), and my own work on the personality–trust link. In addition, I build on extant research by examining the mediational role of democratic support. Past work on the mediation hypothesis and political support has been confined to the actor and institutional levels (Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013; Wang 2016).<sup>56</sup> Thirdly, I consider a wider array of behavioral outcomes than previous mediation studies in the political support literature. Wang has investigated candidate vote choice, a behavior closely related to political support attitudes, and Schoen and Steinbrecher’s study focuses on turnout. By contrast, I incorporate multiple forms of conventional political participation, such as voting and contacting

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<sup>54</sup> Of course, the connection between democratic support—or any other measure of political support—and behavior could be reciprocal or reversed, but attitudes such as political support and civic duty may constitute the only motivations for citizens to participate in politics due to the time and monetary costs of involvement and the low probability of playing the decisive role in an outcome. Another concern would be that the relationship between political support and behavior is spurious. Appendix I accounts for such a possibility by controlling for known correlates of participation—including sociodemographic information and political interest (e.g., Brady et al. 1995; Valentino et al. 2013)—in models that focus on the relationship between political support and political participation.

<sup>55</sup> I should note that scholars have emphasized the difficulty of conducting mediation analyses on experimental and nonexperimental data (e.g., Bullock et al. 2010). Such concerns are less pertinent for personality traits given their high levels of heritability (e.g., Riemann et al. 1997) and early manifestation in life (e.g., Ehrler et al. 1999), which indicate that psychological characteristics precede and influence attitudes such as political support.

<sup>56</sup> The particular forms of support in these two studies are executive job approval (Wang 2016) and external efficacy toward political institutions (Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013). As mentioned in a previous footnote, other studies have incorporated external efficacy mediators but have not exclusively measured evaluations of governmental responsiveness (Ribeiro and Borba 2016; Russo and Amnå 2016, n.d.; Vecchione and Caprara 2009).

public officials.<sup>57</sup> Non-support research on the mediation hypothesis also has included conventional actions such as turnout, working for a party, and donating money (e.g., Blais and St-Vincent 2011; Gallego and Oberski 2012; Vecchione and Caprara 2009). I examine a wide range of behavioral outcomes in order to address the general psychological and attitudinal roots of the low rates of participation (e.g., Booth and Seligson 2009; Gerber et al. 2011) that threaten the ability of citizens to address societal problems, represent their interests, and hold elected officials accountable (Norris 2011; Putnam 2000; Schedler 1999; Tocqueville 2013).

### **The Integrated Model**

In response to empirical gaps in the personality and support literature, this chapter has offered a theoretical framework connecting traits and support attitudes and highlighting the practical relevance of this relationship for participation in public life. Figure 2.3 depicts the model, which combines trait activation theory and the mediation hypothesis. Consistent with TAT, weak situations may send trait-relevant cues and thereby activate personality traits, which then influence political support. In turn, attitudes toward the political system affect behavior and mediate the relationship between personality and outcomes such as citizen participation.<sup>58,59</sup>

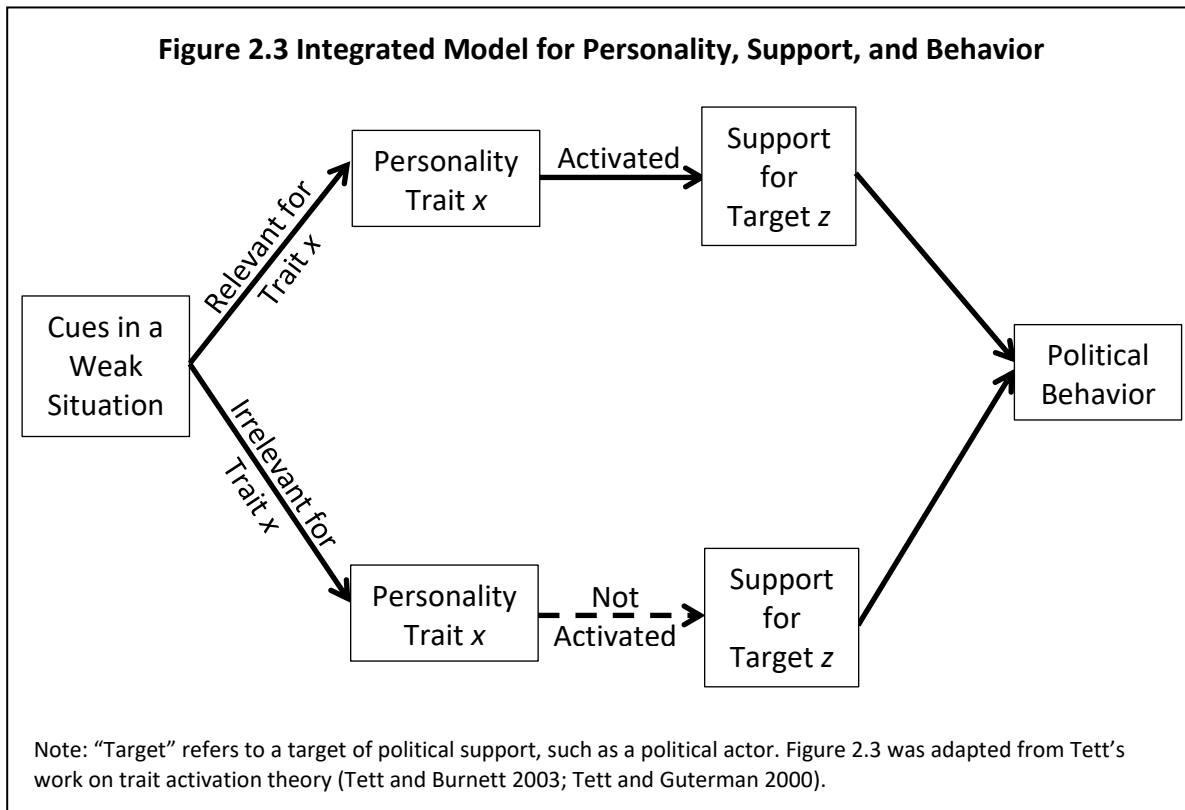
The model in Figure 2.3 suggests several implications, which I address in the next four chapters. Chapter 3 examines the direct effects of personality on attitudes toward the political system. The goal of that chapter is to demonstrate the utility of TAT for understanding the

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<sup>57</sup> Other mediation studies related to political support have examined various conventional and unconventional behaviors (Ribeiro and Borba 2016; Russo and Amnå 2016, n.d.; Vecchione and Caprara 2009), but none uses a mediating variable that solely measures political support. I limit my attention to conventional activities in order to test all of the hypotheses in Chapter 6.

<sup>58</sup> I concentrate on political participation in the interest of simplicity and due to the political focus of the mediation hypothesis (Blais and St-Vincent 2011; Gallego and Oberski 2012). Nevertheless, future research could consider alternative behavioral outcomes, for studies have investigated the relationship between political support and compliance with the law (Dalton 2004; Norris 1999b; Sunshine and Tyler 2003; Tankebe 2009; Tyler 1990, 2005) and the relationship between political support and participation in civil society (Norris 1999b).

<sup>59</sup> It is also possible for political support to mediate the relationship between a trait–situation interaction and citizen behavior. For an example of such mediational analysis in the occupational psychology literature, see Colbert and Witt (2009).



impact of personality within and across the levels of political support. Therefore, I offer and test hypotheses about the effects of the Big Five on attitudes toward political actors, regime institutions, regime performance, regime principles, and the political community.

Meanwhile, the next two chapters investigate how personality interacts with political, economic, and social threat to affect political support. Much of the TAT literature relies on perceptual measures of one's context,<sup>60</sup> so Chapter 4 examines how subjective contextual factors moderate the influence of personality on support. Then, in Chapter 5, I show that the Big Five also interact with objective contextual variables to influence attitudes toward the political system.<sup>61</sup> Both chapters specify and empirically examine hypotheses derived from trait activation

<sup>60</sup> Examples include Botero and Van Dyne (2009), Colbert and Witt (2009), and Premeaux and Bedeian (2003).

<sup>61</sup> There are reasons to consider both the objective and subjective contexts. As I note below, objective contextual factors avoid the possibility of contextual measures simply being a function of one's personality traits; such a scenario would violate the causal order proposed by trait activation theory, with environmental cues activating



theory about political support at multiple levels of Norris' (1999a, 2011) framework. My results suggest that inconsistent direct effects of personality on support in previous studies are attributable to samples being drawn from distinct contexts. I thus demonstrate the utility of trait activation theory for studying formal interactions between personality characteristics and aspects of an individual's environment.

Finally, Chapter 6 considers the relevance of the personality–support relationship for citizen behavior. Building on current applications of the mediation hypothesis, I show that personality influences support attitudes, which in turn affect various modes of conventional political participation. I thus document some of the mechanisms by which personality promotes citizen competence. My results also indicate the potential of political elites and political organizations to raise support levels and increase participation rates by targeting messages to the personality traits of their audience.

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personality traits and personality traits influencing behaviors and attitudes. Citizens, however, may not obtain objective information, but perceptual, or subjective, contextual factors eliminate concerns about reception.

### CHAPTER 3 THE DIRECT LINK FROM PERSONALITY TO POLITICAL SUPPORT

As noted in previous chapters, the personality literature has not offered a comprehensive account of the psychological roots of political support. Researchers typically hypothesize about specific attitudes, such as political tolerance (Oskarsson and Widmalm 2016) and external efficacy (Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013). Although such studies provide meaningful answers to particular questions about political support, the best theories explain a variety of observations about the social world (Lave and March 1975).<sup>62</sup> Research exclusively on personality and political tolerance, for example, would miss the opportunity to determine whether results generalize to other democratic attitudes or attitudes at other levels of support, such as regime institutions. Without a general theory, scholars cannot achieve integrative cumulation by incorporating existing findings into a coherent framework that identifies when trait effects will be consistent and inconsistent within as well as across levels of political support (Zinnes 1976).

Interesting questions also go unanswered in the absence of a comprehensive model encompassing multiple attitudes toward the political system. More than 15 years ago, Norris (1999a) identified a group of citizens who embrace democratic principles but remain skeptical of regime institutions and performance. Who exactly are these “disenchanted democrats” or “critical citizens”? Which personality characteristics do these individuals tend to have? Conversely, why would some citizens trust democratic institutions but nevertheless be open to transitions to authoritarianism?<sup>63</sup> Could the same personality trait be linked to both attitudes?

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<sup>62</sup> I should note that some of the work on personality and support is not primarily interested in attitudes toward the political system, so pursuing a general theory of political support is not always appropriate for particular studies. Schoen and Steinbrecher (2013), for instance, focus on the impact of personality, external efficacy, and other political attitudes on electoral turnout.

<sup>63</sup> Individuals with such seemingly contradictory attitudes constitute a sizeable portion of the public. For example, of all respondents in the 24 countries under analysis in the 2010 AmericasBarometer, 22.27 percent expressed a positive level of presidential trust but felt that a military coup would be permissible in at least one of three scenarios: a high level of unemployment, crime, or corruption.

Answers to these questions are more than academic, for they carry important implications for the communication strategies of political elites. Armed with knowledge of the personality–support relationship, politicians and nongovernmental organizations could tailor messages to voters with particular personality characteristics in order to counteract the tendencies of the traditionally disaffected or reinforce the views of individuals who are inclined to support political actors, regime institutions, regime performance, regime principles, and the political community. By influencing support levels, targeted communications could facilitate political participation and enable more citizens to work together to address societal problems, represent their interests, and hold elected officials accountable.

In this chapter I begin to answer these questions and fill this theoretical gap by applying trait activation theory (TAT) (Tett and Burnett 2003; Tett and Guterman 2000) to the study of personality and political support. As Chapter 2 emphasized, TAT provides a general model for understanding personality effects on a variety of outcomes,<sup>64</sup> including attitudes toward the political system. The model claims that traits influence attitudes and actions only in the presence of trait-relevant cues in weak situations.<sup>65</sup> Such signals originate from numerous sources, including the political and economic context as well as the political support opportunity itself. Examples in the former category include the level of corruption and national economic performance, and I will explore formal interactions between traits and the environment in Chapters 4 and 5. For now I concentrate on trait-relevant cues contained within the support opportunity in order to study the direct effects of personality on attitudes toward the political

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<sup>64</sup> Personality constitutes an important antecedent of political support and other outcomes because of the high levels of heritability (e.g., Heath et al. 1992; Riemann et al. 1997) and longitudinal stability (e.g., Costa and McCrae 1988; Rantanen et al. 2007) associated with psychological traits.

<sup>65</sup> As noted in the previous chapter, most survey items present individuals with weak situations due to the range of choice in the survey question and the absence of coercion by the survey administrator. I thus focus on trait-relevant cues in the present chapter.

system. Targets within the same level of support (e.g., commitment to the democratic principles of political tolerance and checks and balances) and across levels of support (e.g., regime principles and regime performance) differ from one another in meaningful ways and may send alternative signals to individuals. At other times, objects may communicate similar trait-relevant cues (e.g., actor trust and actor job approval), and cross-situational consistency (Tett and Guterman 2000) would predict homogenous direct effects for personality. The goal of this chapter, then, is to utilize TAT in order to understand when personality effects will be consistent and inconsistent across different targets of support.

I pursue this goal for a comprehensive number of targets. To date, published research has not examined the impact of personality on regime performance, nor has the personality literature investigated the full range of the other levels of support. I examine all levels of support and multiple domains within each level.

My case selection also contributes to scholarship on personality and political support. Most researchers in the literature concentrate on economically affluent countries (e.g., Marcus et al. 1995; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013; Voortman 2009), but I employ a cross-national dataset of developing and developed countries to assess the generalizability of previous findings as well as my own findings from three U.S. surveys.

The rest of this chapter is structured as follows. First, I utilize trait activation theory to specify my expectations for each of the Big Five both within and across the levels of Norris' (1999a, 2011) framework. Second, I introduce the various data sources and discuss the operationalization of key concepts. Third, I report my empirical results connecting personality and political support. Fourth, I conclude by summarizing the discussion and highlighting the implications of my findings for elite political communication.

## **The Big Five and Political Support: Expectations**

Trait activation theory recognizes that personality traits are tendencies that operate within contextual environments. Two aspects of the situation are especially vital for TAT: the strength of the situation and the presence of trait-relevant cues. When the situation is strong due to legislative restrictions and other limitations in the environment (Mischel 1973; Tett and Burnett 2003), individuals high and low in a trait generally will respond in similar ways. Political support opportunities, however, tend to generate weak situations because respondents are offered a range of choices and because survey administrators rarely coerce individuals to select a particular response option. At the same time, characteristics of the political support opportunity may or may not contain relevant cues for a particular trait dimension, and trait-relevant cues—and trait effects—can differ from one political support opportunity to another due to fundamental dissimilarities in the characteristics of a level of support or domain of support.

Consider two examples of the unique characteristics of political support opportunities. First, democratic support differs from procedural support because the former refers to the endorsement of ideals and the latter to the effectiveness with which those ideals are implemented (Klingemann 1999). Secondly, the democratic creed promotes political tolerance as well as checks and balances, but the former deals with unpopular groups in society and the latter with branches of government. Consequences associated with the two democratic principles also could differ. Supporting checks and balances can preserve order among political elites, but the results of political tolerance are more indeterminate. Many citizens may be concerned about political dissidents becoming violent, but the peaceful exercise of democratic rights also could stifle efforts for more aggressive forms of protest behavior.

At the same time, not all political support opportunities are different from one another. Some support attitudes share similar characteristics, such as the same target (e.g., actor trust and actor affect) or domain (e.g., actor trust and institutional trust).

Given such differences and similarities, we should expect divergent situations to emit divergent trait-relevant cues and produce heterogeneous trait effects, and analogous situations to send analogous signals and result in homogeneous trait effects. In other words, we should observe cross-situational consistency (Tett and Guterman 2000). For political support, I expect personality effects to be similar both within and across the actor, institutional, and performance levels because of the connection between these levels and instrumental evaluations of the status quo (Klingemann 1999). Political actors and institutions can be fair or unfair in the administration of the law, kind or unkind to the public, receptive or unreceptive to citizen input, and effective or ineffective in performing such duties as implementing democratic principles or promoting economic growth.<sup>66</sup> Members of the public observe the level of trustworthiness, likeability, responsiveness, and effectiveness of the political status quo for the instrumental purpose of deciding how to vote or whether to support changes to the country's institutions and procedures.<sup>67</sup> The common connection to instrumental evaluations indicates that individuals may receive the same trait-relevant cues from actor, institutional, and procedural support opportunities. Consistent trait effects *across* levels, therefore, should be the norm. Meanwhile,

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<sup>66</sup> Examples of job effectiveness were apparent in a recent Freedom House (2015) report on Brazil. On the issue of economic performance, the report noted that Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff won re-election in 2014 in spite of poor economic conditions. Regarding democratic performance, Freedom House praised the passage of a law protecting Internet rights but criticized Brazilian officials for abusing citizens and journalists during protests connected with the 2014 World Cup.

<sup>67</sup> For example, Venezuela switched from a bicameral to unicameral legislature in the aftermath of low levels of political support in the 1990s. In addition, studies have reported lower levels of pro-incumbent voting when citizens have low levels of political trust (Anderson et al. 2005; Craig et al. 2006; Hetherington 1999), less affect for the incumbent than the challenger (Wang 2016), negative views about the incumbent's job effectiveness (Wang 2016), and negative views about external efficacy (Craig et al. 2006). See Southwell (2012) for opposing evidence on the relationship between external efficacy and vote choice.

the domains for each level of support all revolve around instrumental evaluations of the target and thus should produce consistent trait effects *within* each level of support. Citizens can assess actors and institutions in terms of their trustworthiness, effectiveness, likeability, and responsiveness, and regime performance attitudes consist of overall and principle-specific evaluations of democratic effectiveness.<sup>68</sup>

Meanwhile, regime principles and the political community contrast with political actors, regime institutions, and regime performance in fundamental ways. The purpose of support at the more general levels is not instrumental but idealistic and expressive. Attitudes toward democracy entail a moral endorsement or rejection of regime principles, and patriotism and national identification require citizens to express their level of national affection and affiliation (Klingemann 1999). An individual also encounters different societal norms for democratic and community support than for attitudes toward the status quo, with the public strongly favoring the political community and democracy in the abstract (e.g., Jenkins et al. 2012; Klingemann 1999); inconsistently endorsing specific democratic principles (e.g., Kuklinski et al. 1991; Oskarsson and Widmalm 2016); and anemically approving of actors, institutions, and procedures (e.g., Citrin 1974; Dalton 1999).<sup>69</sup>

The distinct norms and purposes of democratic and community support indicate that these levels contain unique trait-relevant cues that could activate different personality traits or produce results in the opposite direction from the findings for actors, institutions, or procedures. A potential case in point is conscientiousness: This trait dimension is sensitive to issues of order

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<sup>68</sup> Procedural support thus relates most strongly to the actor and institutional domain of job effectiveness.

<sup>69</sup> Many of these norms are documented by Klingemann (1999), who reports in a cross-national study of mid-1990s survey data that (1) community support ranged from a national average of 62 percent in Asia to a national average of 73 percent in Africa and Oceania, (2) abstract support for democracy ranged from a national average of 81 percent in Eastern Europe to a national average of 90 percent in Western Europe, and (3) support for regime performance ranged from a national average of 20 percent in Eastern Europe to a national average of 38 percent in Asia.

and duty (John et al. 2008) and may be activated in response to community support opportunities due to societal norms in favor of patriotism and national identification. I would expect a positive relationship between conscientiousness and community support. Meanwhile, order and duty may be less important for actor, institutional, and procedural support because of the sustainability of democracy amid socially approved criticism of the status quo (Citrin 1974; Dalton 1999; Klingemann 1999).

Finally, I apply the hypothesis of cross-situational consistency within the regime principle level and within the community level. The democratic creed consists of political tolerance, checks and balances, and other ideals (Carlin and Singer 2001; Norris 1999a, 2011), which could convey heterogeneous trait-relevant cues and produce heterogeneous trait effects for democratic support. For example, facets of conscientiousness include orderliness, so this trait dimension could be negatively related to political tolerance because of the possibility of violent demonstrations by political dissidents and positively related to support for checks and balances because of the orderly decision-making associated with inter-branch accountability.

In contrast to heterogeneous trait effects within the regime principle level, I expect to observe consistent results for national identification and patriotism because of commonalities between these two community attitudes. Both domains involve self-expression (Klingemann 1999) regarding a person's national affiliation or love for country. In addition, patriotism is an emotion-laden concept by definition, and national identification requires affective commitment to one's country (Roccas et al. 2008). The affective and expressive character of patriotism and national identification imply that the two domains will send comparable trait-relevant cues, which will result in consistent personality effects within the level of community support.



**Table 3.1****Hypotheses on Cross-Situational Consistency**

<i>Level</i>	<i>Trait Effects within Level</i>	<i>Trait Effects across Levels</i>
Political Actors	Broadly Homogeneous Trait Effects	Trait Effects Broadly Similar for
Regime Institutions	Broadly Homogeneous Trait Effects	Actor, Institutional, and
Regime Performance	Broadly Homogeneous Trait Effects	Performance Levels of Support
Regime Principles	Heterogeneous Trait Effects	Different Trait Effects Than Other Levels of Support
Political Community	Homogeneous Trait Effects	Different Trait Effects Than Other Levels of Support

Table 3.1 summarizes my expectations for cross-situational consistency. Having reviewed the impact of personality in general terms, I now discuss specific hypotheses for the Big Five by taking into account the trait-relevant cues associated with the level of support and domain of support under consideration. I begin with attitudes toward actors, institutions, and procedures and then examine democratic support and community support.

*Connecting the Big Five with Actor, Institutional, and Procedural Support*

Citizens evaluate the political status quo on the basis of trustworthiness, effectiveness, affect, and responsiveness. Each of these domains could communicate distinctive trait-relevant cues to the public, but they all involve instrumental assessments (Klingemann 1999) that influence whether citizens vote for incumbent political actors or endorse changes to regime institutions or procedures. I thus expect a large—but not universal—degree of homogeneity in trait effects across and within these levels of support. The rest of this subsection reviews my hypotheses for the Big Five in general terms and notes when a domain might convey unique trait-relevant cues and produce divergent personality effects on support at the three most concrete levels in Norris' (1999a, 2011) framework. I anticipate the most consistent signals and results for agreeableness and emotional stability, so I start with these two trait dimensions.

For agreeableness, the opportunity to support the political status quo should activate facets such as trust, warmth, sympathy, and generosity and produce positive trait effects. Political trust items are especially relevant for the first facet on this list, and extant research has identified a positive link between agreeableness and confidence in political actors and institutions (Anderson 2010a, 2010b; Cawvey et al. n.d.; Mondak and Halperin 2008; Mondak et al. 2017; Sweetser 2014). Given the results on political trust and facets such as sympathy and generosity (John et al. 2008), we might expect highly agreeable citizens to interpret news about political actors, regime institutions, and regime performance in the best possible light and to express high levels of support in the domains of job effectiveness, external efficacy, and likeability. The agreeableness facet of warmth further suggests a positive relationship between this trait dimension and political affect. Consistent with my argument about non-trust domains, researchers have found that citizens high in agreeableness tend to express greater levels of external efficacy (Anderson 2010a, 2010b; Mondak and Halperin 2008) and presidential approval (Mondak and Halperin 2008; Wang 2016). I extend this research by examining the impact of agreeableness on regime performance, affect toward political actors and institutions, and perceived job effectiveness on particular issues.

Likewise, I expect homogeneous effects for emotional stability on actor, institutional, and procedural attitudes. These support opportunities should activate emotional stability facets pertaining to a person's level of insecurity and anxiety due to the basic uncertainty of the political status quo. Politicians may present themselves as trustworthy, effective, likeable, and responsive during a political campaign, but citizens do not know how challengers will govern until they take office or how incumbents will behave if they are re-elected.<sup>70</sup> And between

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<sup>70</sup> Scholars have examined several questions pertaining to voter uncertainty, such as whether incumbents are more corrupt in their final term in office (Ferraz and Finan 2010) and whether incumbents eligible for re-election preside

elections, questions will arise about the fairness of bureaucrats, the amiability of the executive during press conferences, the sensitivity of legislators to their constituents, and the competence of incumbents to manage the economy or implement democratic principles. Uncertainties such as these constitute trait-relevant cues for emotional stability and should facilitate a positive relationship between this trait dimension and actor, institutional, and procedural support as individuals low in this trait worry about ongoing and potential problems and individuals high in this trait express their positive, relaxed outlook about the political status quo. Extant research, mostly on trust, generally supports my hypothesis of a positive effect for emotional stability (e.g., Cawvey et al. n.d.; Freitag and Ackermann 2016; Mondak et al. 2017).<sup>71,72</sup>

In contrast to agreeableness and emotional stability, I expect heterogeneity in the impact of openness and extraversion on actor, institutional, and procedural support. For openness, trait-relevant cues could center on the tension between the status quo and ideal preferences. Idealism and imagination constitute facets of openness (John et al. 2008), and people high in this trait dimension seek to improve the status quo in their personal life by, for example, changing jobs (Timmerman 2006) and emigrating to another country (Canache et al. 2013). Based on such tendencies, we might expect the highly open to be disappointed with the extent to which governmental trustworthiness, likeability, and effectiveness often fall short of ideal preferences (Mondak et al. 2017). Citizens high in openness also value ideas and therefore may be disappointed when regime performance falls short of democratic principles such as the free

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over stronger economies (Alt et al. 2011). The answer to both questions is yes, but that does not mean the relationship between term limits and trustworthiness or the relationship between term limits and job effectiveness is perfect.

<sup>71</sup> Two exceptions are Schoen and Steinbrecher (2013), who study external efficacy, and Mondak and Halperin (2008), who study political trust, external efficacy, and overall job evaluations. No study of which I am aware has examined the impact of emotional stability on political affect or issue-specific evaluations of job effectiveness.

<sup>72</sup> The personality literature also supports my expectation for emotional stability and likeability evaluations of political actors and institutions, as studies outside of political science have found that individuals low in emotional stability are less likely to exhibit positive affect and more likely to exhibit negative affect (Costa and McCrae 1980; David et al. 1997; Schimmack et al. 2002a, 2002b).

exchange of information. Consistent with my argument, several studies have reported a negative relationship between openness and political trust (Anderson 2010a, 2010b; Cawvey et al. n.d.; Mondak and Halperin 2008; Mondak et al. 2017; Sweetser 2014). Research on other forms of support is fairly minimal, although Mondak and Halperin (2008) find negative openness effects for presidential approval. I thus expect a negative relationship between openness on one hand and political trust, perceived job effectiveness, and political affect on the other.

The main exception for the relationship between openness and support pertains to perceived governmental responsiveness to public opinion and activism. We know that highly open citizens tend to participate in politics (e.g., Ha et al. 2013; Mondak 2010), so external efficacy opportunities may activate not only the idealism, innovation, and ideas facets, but the adventurousness and action facets as well. With the latter characteristics at work, individuals high in openness may hold that democratic progress is possible not with elite actors and institutions alone but instead with the involvement of concerned citizens. A positive relationship between openness and external efficacy, therefore, may occur.

Meanwhile, I expect opportunities to support actors, institutions, and procedures to activate extraversion because of trait-relevant cues pertaining to a citizen's relationship with the political status quo. In many cases, this connection will seem distant, impersonal, and therefore undesirable for the highly extraverted, who value warmth and social interaction (John et al. 2008; Mondak et al. 2017). Citizens rarely socialize with political elites, and the public's relationship with institutions and procedures is even more remote. In the absence of a strong, personal link to the political status quo, extraverts could express less political trust and lower evaluations of job effectiveness. Consistent with my argument, studies have reported negative effects for extraversion on political trust (Cawvey et al. n.d.; Freitag and Ackermann 2016; Mondak et al.

2017; Sweetser 2014) and perceived job effectiveness (Wang 2016). I also expect a negative relationship between extraversion and issue-specific job approval ratings.

As with political trust and job effectiveness attitudes, survey items on external efficacy could prompt citizens to consider their connections with political actors and institutions. The unique aspect of external efficacy, however, is the role of citizen input in evaluations of the status quo. Questions on governmental responsiveness thus could activate the extraversion facets of energy and activity, each of which may be required to change the political status quo. Indeed, political behavior research reveals that extraverts are more likely to engage in such activities as contacting officials and attending rallies (e.g., Mondak 2010; Mondak et al. 2010). The involvement of citizens inherent in external efficacy thus could override any negative attitudes harbored by extraverts toward political actors and institutions. In sum, I expect a positive relationship between extraversion and external efficacy, as reported in studies with U.S. and European data (Anderson 2010a; Rasmussen and Nørgaard n.d.; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013). I build on prior work by examining a cross-national sample as well as three U.S. samples.

In addition to external efficacy, unique trait-relevant cues could influence the impact of extraversion on political affect. Previous studies have reported a positive relationship between extraversion and non-political affect (Costa and McCrae 1980; David et al. 1997; Schimmack et al. 2002a, 2002b). Costa and McCrae (1980) explain this connection by emphasizing the warmth associated with the extraversion facet of sociability and the elation associated with the extraversion facet of activity, and John and his colleagues (2008) identify positive emotions and warmth as two of the facets of extraversion. If results travel to the political realm, extraverts may be able to overlook their distrust and low job evaluations of actors and institutions and instead express their tendencies toward positive emotions, elation, and warmth by focusing on the

affective aspect of pertinent survey questions. A positive relationship between extraversion and political affect, therefore, is possible.

At this point, a brief discussion about extraversion and procedural support is in order. Survey questions about regime performance refer to overall evaluations and principle-specific assessments about the implementation of democratic principles (e.g., checks and balances). If respondents receive principle-specific questions, then I expect a negative effect for extraversion as citizens attend to the effectiveness with which distant political actors and institutions implement regime ideals. However, questions about overall regime performance allow individuals to utilize their own criteria to define democracy (Canache 2012) and decide how democratic their country is. This evaluation could be based on the implementation of particular regime principles, but citizens also could assess other aspects of the status quo if they expect political actors and institutions to be more trustworthy, competent, likeable, and responsive in a democracy (Bratton and Mattes 2001; Canache et al. 2001). If citizens concentrate on political trust, the implementation of regime principles, and job effectiveness on the economy and other nondemocratic issues, then I anticipate a negative relationship between extraversion and overall democratic satisfaction based on the reasons discussed above. But extraversion could exert a positive impact on global support for regime performance if citizens attend to political affect or external efficacy. The logic underpinning the latter possibility also is mentioned above. Because of these contrary expectations, I am uncertain about the relationship between extraversion and overall democratic satisfaction.

Finally, I offer no expectations for the impact of conscientiousness on attitudes toward political actors, regime institutions, and regime performance. Extant results are mixed, with a combination of positive, negative, and insignificant results (Anderson 2010a, 2010b; Cawvey et

al. n.d.; Freitag and Ackermann 2016; Mondak and Halperin 2008; Mondak et al. 2017; Rasmussen and Nørgaard n.d.; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013; Swami et al. 2012; Sweetser 2014; Voortman 2009). In addition, there are few theoretical reasons to expect trait activation in a direct effects model. Although individuals high in conscientiousness value dutifulness and order (John et al. 2008; Mondak et al. 2017), facets such as these may be irrelevant for actor, institutional, and procedural attitudes since modern democracies have persisted in spite of societal norms critical of the status quo (Citrin 1974; Dalton 1999; Klingemann 1999). Weak or inconsistent conscientiousness effects would be a natural result.

#### *Connecting the Big Five with Democratic Support*

The next step is to consider the impact of personality on attitudes toward regime principles. Because democracy is a multifaceted concept and because some individuals embrace all aspects of democracy while others are more selective (Carlin and Singer 2011; Norris 1999a), we should not be surprised to find heterogeneous trait effects within this level of support, which encompasses one's basic preference for democracy as well as specific opinions on governmental authority, checks and balances, mass participation, and political tolerance (Carlin and Singer 2011; Norris 1999a). In addition, the direction of personality effects for democratic support may differ substantially from results for the actor, institutional, and procedural levels since attitudes toward regime principles focus on ideals instead of instrumental evaluations (Klingemann 1999) and since individuals encounter different societal norms for democratic attitudes than status quo attitudes. In other words, trait-relevant cues for democratic support may diverge substantially from the signals conveyed at more concrete levels.

I begin with openness and emotional stability because I anticipate homogeneous effects for these traits on democratic support. Individuals high in openness are attracted to ideas,

idealism, and intellectual pursuits and therefore should consistently value the unfettered exchange of political ideas in a democracy. Unchecked executive power, military coups during turbulent societal circumstances, and suppression of minority rights and mass participation all undermine the free-expression goals of highly open citizens. I thus expect democratic support opportunities to convey trait-relevant cues that activate openness and thereby produce a positive and consistent personality effect on all domains of support at the regime principle level. Existing evidence is limited to political tolerance and support for criminal rights, but results clearly support my hypothesis about openness and democratic support (Marcus et al. 1995; Mondak and Halperin 2008; Mondak and Hurwitz 2012; Oskarsson and Widmalm 2016; Swami et al. 2012).

Like openness, I anticipate a consistently positive relationship between emotional stability and democratic support. Individuals high in this trait dimension tend to be calm and exhibit low levels of anxiety and generally positive affect (Costa and McCrae 1980; David et al. 1997; Schimmack et al. 2002a, 2002b)—attributes that should encourage receptiveness to democracy even during a crisis. The emotionally stable should not worry about minority groups becoming violent or mass participation leading to societal chaos, nor should they be susceptible to elite arguments about the need for authoritarian “solutions” to societal problems. In other words, the positive anticipated relationship between emotional stability and pro-democracy attitudes should apply to all domains within the regime principle level of support. Empirical evidence remains focused on attitudes toward criminals and political minority groups, with mixed results (Marcus et al. 1995; Mondak and Halperin 2008; Mondak and Hurwitz 2012; Oskarsson and Widmalm 2016; Swami et al. 2012).

In contrast to openness and emotional stability, I expect the other trait dimensions to exert heterogeneous effects on attitudes toward democracy. For conscientiousness, trait-relevant



cues for democratic support are likely to appeal to a citizen's sense of duty or order. Highly conscientious citizens value group norms (e.g., Bakker et al. 2016; Gallego and Oberski 2012; Moreno and Wals 2014; Weinschenk 2014) and therefore could support democracy in the abstract and embrace mass participation as well as checks and balances if such attitudes are popular with the public.<sup>73</sup> The latter two regime principles on this list also should promote social cohesion and order as citizens convey their preferences to elected officials and as checks and balances offer political elites with peaceful outlets to settle disagreements and make decisions. Conscientiousness, therefore, should be positively related to some forms of democratic support.

Meanwhile, conscientiousness may be negatively related to democratic support under three conditions. First, regime ideals could be unpopular with the majority of citizens, leading highly conscientious individuals to oppose democracy on normative grounds. One such principle is political tolerance. In theory, a majority of citizens could support the right of political minorities to express their views, but such attitudes do not always prevail in the real world (e.g., Oskarsson and Widmalm 2016; Peffley and Rohrschneider 2003). Second, the highly conscientious are likely to reject democratic principles in response to threats to social stability, as would occur if peaceful demonstrations by dissident groups become disruptive or if dissidents challenge status quo public policies. Concerns such as these are consistent with the tendency of individuals to perceive their least-liked political organization as belligerent and untrustworthy (Marcus et al. 1995). Such perceptions could be fueled by a negativity bias that prioritizes negative group characteristics over positive group characteristics (Lau 1982, 1985). A similar argument could be offered with regard to the rights of another minority group: criminals. Third,

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<sup>73</sup> A majority of respondents in the 2010 AmericasBarometer endorsed democracy in the abstract, approved of mass participation, and supported checks and balances. In particular, the mean scores for democracy as the best system, a mass participation index, and a checks-and-balances index are 5.31 on a scale from 1 to 7, 22.10 on a scale from 3 to 30, and 15.00 on a scale from 3 to 21, respectively.

additional information conveyed in the support opportunity could indicate a conflict between democratic principles and social cohesion, and highly conscientious citizens may opt for the latter due to their sensitivity to orderliness. Antidemocratic arguments, for example, could promise stable military rule as a solution to turbulent political times. Extant research on conscientiousness and democratic support remains focused on political tolerance and support for criminal rights, and results suggest a negative relationship, as expected (Mondak and Hurwitz 2012; Swami et al. 2012).<sup>74</sup> I build on prior work by examining the impact of conscientiousness on attitudes toward military coups, checks and balances, mass participation, and abstract preferences for democracy.

Similarly, trait-relevant cues for extraversion could vary across the domains of democratic support. On one hand, extraverts may be more likely to endorse popularly held attitudes toward regime principles, such as abstract preferences for democracy and specific attitudes about checks and balances and mass participation.<sup>75</sup> The normative component of these attitudes should activate the sociability facet of extraversion and produce positive trait effects on democratic support as extraverts seek to avoid social sanctions and maintain good relationships with their network of family and friends. On the other hand, extraverts are assertive and therefore may support military coups during difficult circumstances and forceful, authoritarian responses to political dissidents and criminals. Consistent with my argument, studies have identified negative effects of extraversion on political tolerance (Marcus et al. 1995; Oskarsson and

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<sup>74</sup> But see the insignificant effects of conscientiousness on political tolerance reported by Mondak and Halperin (2008) and Oskarsson and Widmalm (2016).

<sup>75</sup> A majority of respondents in the 2010 AmericasBarometer supported democracy in the abstract; mass participation; and checks and balances between the executive on one hand and opposition parties, the legislature, and the Supreme Court on the other.

Widmalm 2016).<sup>76</sup> I expand on past research by examining abstract democratic support and other specific regime principles, such as mass participation and checks and balances.

Lastly, I anticipate that agreeableness will exert heterogeneous effects on democratic support. Individuals high in this trait dimension tend to be sociable, compliant, and trusting and thus may be receptive to popular democratic principles as well as democratic ideals that promote problem-solving and public order. Meanwhile, an agreeable person's penchants for compliance and consensus could increase susceptibility to elite arguments that subvert democratic principles in order to avoid crisis and preserve societal unity. The key question, then, is whether the support opportunity touches on cohesion and popular democratic ideals or whether the item refers to compliance in order to avoid societal chaos. The first option should facilitate a positive relationship between agreeableness and democratic support while the second option likely would have the opposite effect if individuals are asked to exchange nondemocratic measures for public tranquility. For example, agreeable individuals may oppose the rights of potentially violent political dissidents but endorse civil rights for the majority as well as abstract (and popular) measures of democratic support. Past work on agreeableness and democratic support focuses on political tolerance and criminal rights (Oskarsson and Widmalm 2016; Swami et al. 2012) but uncovers a positive relationship that contradicts my hypothesis. I revisit this relationship with data from two surveys and add to the literature by examining the other domains of democratic support.

#### *Connecting the Big Five with Support for the Political Community*

The most general level in Norris' (1999a) framework is the political community. Trait-relevant cues for this level of support likely center on societal norms in favor of patriotism and

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<sup>76</sup> The correlation between extraversion and an index of political tolerance and support for criminal rights, however, is positive in a study by Swami et al. (2012), although the result for extraversion is not significant in a multivariate regression.

national identification as well as the opportunity for citizens to express their affection and affiliation with their country (Jenkins et al. 2012; Klingemann 1999). Such signals diverge from the inconsistent norms and idealistic purpose for democratic attitudes and the anti-status quo norms and instrumental purpose for actor, institutional, and procedural attitudes (Klingemann 1999; Peffley and Rohrschneider 2003). Unique trait-relevant cues for community support would indicate that the impact of the Big Five on patriotism and national identification will differ in meaningful ways from the patterns discussed for the other levels. Moreover, I expect consistent within-level effects for community support since patriotism and national identification refer to a citizen's emotional attachment to his or her country (Roccas et al. 2008).

I anticipate effects for each of the Big Five on community support. First, I expect openness to exert a negative impact on patriotism and national identification. The emotional and expressive character of community support may appeal to the feelings facet of openness, but a negative trait effect should occur because highly open individuals are also imaginative, innovative, and adventurous and therefore may be hesitant to express traditional, popular attitudes on love for country and national affiliation. Instead, people high in openness might develop an interest in supranational or global identification (Jenkins et al. 2012) due to their greater acceptance of risk (Booth-Kewley and Vickers 1994; Schmitt et al. 2004) and more favorable intercultural attitudes (Dinesen et al. 2016; Gallego and Pardos-Prado 2014; Stürmer et al. 2013).<sup>77</sup> Extant results in favor of this argument, however, are minimal: Although openness increases the probability of identifying as a global citizen, studies with student samples have found an insignificant relationship between this trait and national identification (Jenkins et al. 2012; Sagiv et al. 2012). I utilize nationally representative samples to examine the impact of openness on both national identification and patriotism.

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<sup>77</sup> See Dahlen and White (2006) for contrary evidence on the impact of openness on risk-taking.

Meanwhile, high levels of conscientiousness should promote favorable attitudes toward the political community because of societal norms in support of patriotism and national identification. Trait activation is highly probable given that community support entails submission to political norms (Roccas et al. 2008) and given that highly conscientious individuals value duty and are sensitive to group expectations (e.g., Bakker et al. 2016; Gallego and Oberski 2012; Moreno and Wals 2014; Weinschenk 2014). In addition, national identification constitutes a traditional form of political identity and therefore may appeal to the conscientiousness facet of order in the current age of globalization (Norris 2011). In line with my argument, researchers have shown that conscientiousness is positively related to national identification (Jenkins et al. 2012; Sagiv et al. 2012), and I would expect the same result for patriotism.

The next trait is extraversion, which I expect to be positively related to community support. This hypothesis is based on social norms, opportunities for expression, and political affect. Public opinion polls have documented high levels of community support throughout the world (Jenkins et al. 2012; Klingemann 1999), and everyday conversations as well as elite rhetoric reinforce the values of patriotism and national identification.<sup>78</sup> Signals about norms may be especially relevant for the extraversion facet of gregariousness as individuals high in this trait dimension seek to avoid interpersonal sanctions by articulating high levels of community support. In addition, opportunities to express one's level of national identification and patriotism could appeal to the gregariousness facet if extraverts enjoy communicating their pro-community

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<sup>78</sup> An example of elite rhetoric on community support would be the expressed commitment of both major American parties to patriotism in the 2004 presidential election. Future President Barack Obama emphasized political unity in a speech at the Democratic National Convention that year, and Republicans questioned the patriotism of Democratic challenger John F. Kerry. For a transcript of Obama's speech, see <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A19751-2004Jul27.html>. For a news article about Republican criticism of Kerry, see <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/09/02/1093939076665.html?from=storylhs>.

attitudes in conversations with family and friends. Finally, community support involves an affective component (Roccas et al. 2008), which could appeal to the positive emotions facet of extraversion and contribute to extraverts reporting greater levels of patriotism and national identification than introverts. Consistent with this explanation, Jenkins et al. (2012) find extraversion to be positively correlated with national identification.<sup>79</sup> I may obtain a similar result for patriotism.

For agreeableness, I again anticipate a positive relationship between this trait dimension and community support. Two characteristics of patriotism and national identification could activate agreeableness and produce the positive expected effect. First, the affective component of community support (Roccas et al. 2008) could appeal to an individual's sense of warmth and thereby signal the relevance of agreeableness for national identification and patriotism. Second, community support entails submission to group norms, including the expectation to love and affiliate strongly with one's country (Roccas et al. 2008), and the agreeableness facet of compliance could encourage a positive relationship between this trait dimension and attitudes toward the national community (Sagiv et al. 2012). Evidence from Jenkins et al. (2012) and Sagiv et al. (2012) supports this hypothesis.<sup>80</sup>

Lastly, emotionally stable individuals are likely to embrace the political community. I expect the affective component of patriotism and national identification (Roccas et al. 2008) to signal the relevance of emotional stability for community support, and individuals high in this trait dimension will express their low level of anxiety by embracing the national community, of which they know only a part. The foregoing argument is consistent with previous findings on

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<sup>79</sup> The result, however, is not significant in a multivariate analysis (Jenkins et al. 2012).

<sup>80</sup> The result for Jenkins et al. (2012) is not significant in a multivariate regression, however.

emotional stability and national identification (Jenkins et al. 2012; Sagiv et al. 2012),<sup>81</sup> as well as studies on this trait dimension and non-political affect (Costa and McCrae 1980; David et al. 1997; Schimmack et al. 2002a, 2002b).

### *The Overall Picture*

My hypotheses and the empirical evidence documented above point to interesting patterns in the impact of personality on political support. First, citizens high in openness are expected to be more critical of political actors, regime institutions, and regime performance but more respectful of democratic principles. Highly open individuals correspond with Norris' (1999a, 2011) "critical citizens," as they are loyal to democracy but disappointed about the current state of political affairs. Their hope is for the democratic performance of actors and institutions to improve. Second, conscientiousness may not influence actor, institutional, and procedural attitudes, but the more scrupulous are more likely to support the political community and—in some cases—democratic principles. Third, extraverts should be responsive to group norms due to their sociability. As a result, they will be more supportive of the political community and popularly held democratic principles, but they are free to criticize impersonal and controversial actors, institutions, and procedures unless political affect or perceived responsiveness were to add unique trait-relevant cues to the equation. Extraverts also may oppose democratic principles when provided with opportunities to express their tendency toward assertiveness. Fourth, highly agreeable citizens are trusting, generous, and compliant and will support the current political system except when democratic principles threaten social order and consensus. Individuals high in agreeableness, conscientiousness, and extraversion thus may be susceptible to arguments that promise societal tranquility or assertive leadership at the expense of democratic principles. Fifth, I expect the most consistently supportive citizens to be the

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<sup>81</sup> The result in Jenkins et al. (2012), however, is not significant in a multivariate regression.

**Table 3.2**  
Hypotheses for the Big Five

	<i>Actor, Institutional, and Procedural Attitudes</i>	<i>Regime Principle Attitudes</i>	<i>Community Attitudes</i>
Openness	Negative if trust, job effectiveness, or affect Positive if external efficacy	Positive for all domains	Negative for both domains
Conscientiousness	No expectations	Positive (negative) if domain promotes (opposes) order or dutifulness	Positive for both domains
Extraversion	Negative if trust or job effectiveness Positive if affect or external efficacy  No expectations if overall procedural support	Positive (negative) if popular (unpopular) democratic ideal Negative if domain allows for assertive, nondemocratic behavior	Positive for both domains
Agreeableness	Positive for all domains	Positive (negative) if domain promotes (opposes) popular ideals and societal consensus/order	Positive for both domains
Emotional Stability	Positive for all domains	Positive for all domains	Positive for both domains

Note: Domains for actors and institutions consist of political trust, perceived job effectiveness, political affect, and external efficacy. Regime performance domains refer to overall and principle-specific evaluations of democratic performance. For regime principles, domains include abstract democratic support as well as attitudes toward specific ideals, such as political tolerance and civilian governance of the military. Finally, community support refers to the domains of patriotism and national identification.

emotionally stable, for high levels of this trait dimension should minimize anxiety about political actors, institutions, and procedures; promote perseverance with democracy even during troubled times; and facilitate high levels of affect toward the political community.

Table 3.2 summarizes the hypotheses for the Big Five discussed above.

### **Investigating the Direct Link: Data and Research Design**

The argument in the previous section is general in scope and therefore should apply to surveys conducted in multiple countries as well as surveys from the same country that utilize



different interview formats and question wordings or are conducted at different points in time. Consistent results from diverse data sources would indicate the ability of trait activation theory to offer a comprehensive account of the direct relationship between personality and political support, so I turn to four surveys containing Big Five items and questions about attitudes toward the political system. First, I incorporate the 2012 American National Election Study (ANES) into my empirical analysis. Items in the ANES include a Big Five personality battery and questions about support for political actors, regime institutions, regime performance, and the political community. The dataset consists of individuals interviewed before and after the November 2012 elections in the United States. A total of 5,510 individuals from all 50 states and the District of Columbia completed pre-election and post-election interviews, with 3,581 submitting their answers online and 1,929 receiving the survey in a face-to-face format. The face-to-face data collection effort divided the population into strata and primary sampling units (PSUs), whereas the entire online sample constituted its own strata and each web respondent his or her own PSU. To account for its complex design, the ANES recommends that analysts employ the Taylor series method for calculating significance tests for the full sample (DeBell 2010). I follow this method by specifying the full-sample variables for weight, statum, and PSU. Along with the number of strata and PSUs for each regression, the Taylor series method in Stata reports explained variance statistics for ordinary least squares regression models. Pseudo R-squared statistics are not reported, however.

Second, I turn to the 2012 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES). This survey was fielded completely online before and after the 2012 U.S. elections. A total of 54,535 individuals from all 50 states and the District of Columbia answered a core set of questions while subsets of individuals responded to items supplied by various researchers. The full sample

received items on actor and institutional support, but democratic support and personality questions were fielded to a subgroup of 1,000 individuals.<sup>82</sup> My empirical analyses thus concentrate on the subsample of the CCES. The CCES does not specifically recommend the Taylor series method, so I employ a weight variable to estimate a nationally representative sample, cluster the standard errors by state, and use state fixed effects to account for state-level similarities and influences in respondents' answers.<sup>83</sup> State-level contextual influences may have been especially relevant when CCES respondents evaluated their local member of the House of Representatives, as opposed to more national objects of support, namely the president and Congress.

Third, I employ data from the fall 2015 Department of Political Science Subject Pool at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). Subject pool respondents were UIUC undergraduate students enrolled in political science courses, and instructors offered extra credit to incentivize participation. Subjects responded online to a series of surveys, which began with a background questionnaire on demographics, personality, and political attitudes and later included projects submitted by UIUC researchers. I submitted my own survey and have access to data from my questionnaire and the background questionnaire. A total of 206 students responded to questions on both waves about personality and political support. The empirical analyses for the subject pool data do not include a weight variable or cluster standard errors around a geographic contextual variable because neither of these variables is available.

Although the subject pool is not representative of the U.S. population, I utilize the data for three reasons. First, I can compare results from a student sample to results from national

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<sup>82</sup> I thank Matthew V. Hibbing from the University of California, Merced, for permitting me to utilize the CCES data from his project.

<sup>83</sup> I also have run the same models without state fixed effects. Differences from the reported findings are noted below.

samples in order to estimate the generalizability of non-representative findings for the study of personality and support. Second, the youthfulness of my student sample does not eliminate the potentially causal influence of psychological traits on political attitudes, as the high recorded levels of heritability (e.g., Heath et al. 1992; Riemann et al. 1997) and longitudinal stability (e.g., Costa and McCrae 1988; Rantanen et al. 2007) for personality would suggest. The Big Five thus could exert a meaningful influence on political support among college students. Third, the subject pool contained questions on all five levels of support and thus constitutes an excellent data source for testing my hypotheses.

Fourth, I examine the 2010 AmericasBarometer, a cross-national survey fielded in Latin America, the Caribbean, Canada, and the United States as part of the Latin American Public Opinion Project at Vanderbilt University.<sup>84</sup> The survey included a total of 43,990 respondents in 26 countries, but the Haitian and Honduran questionnaires did not ask about the Big Five. I thus have data on personality and all five levels of political support from 40,642 individuals in 24 countries.<sup>85</sup> Most of the national surveys include approximately 1,500 respondents per country, but oversamples occurred in Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, and Ecuador.<sup>86</sup> I address the differences in sample size by weighting the data so that each nation's sample contributes a value of 1,500 individuals. I also include country fixed effects and cluster the standard errors by country in order to account for contextual influences and similarities in responses.

Incorporating the AmericasBarometer enables me to assess the generalizability of my argument and compare my results from the United States to a more diverse set of countries. The nations in the AmericasBarometer differ from each other in numerous respects, such as their

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<sup>84</sup> Surveys were conducted face-to-face except for the web-based studies in Canada and the United States.

<sup>85</sup> These countries are Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

<sup>86</sup> These surveys featured 3,018, 2,482, 1,965, and 3,000 respondents, respectively.

level of economic development and experience with democracy. Some are affluent (e.g., Canada) while others possess middle-income (e.g., Brazil) or low-income (e.g., Guyana) economies.<sup>87</sup> Some emerged from dictatorship in the latter half of the twentieth century (e.g., Chile), others constitute longstanding democracies (e.g., the United States), and still others have adopted nondemocratic practices in recent years (e.g., Venezuela).<sup>88</sup>

### *Operationalizing Personality*

Each of the four surveys included questions about the Big Five. The shortest batteries occurred on the ANES and AmericasBarometer, which used the original Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) (Gosling et al. 2003) and a revised version of the TIPI, respectively. Each survey asked respondents a series of 10 questions about the extent to which a pair of words described their personality.<sup>89</sup> The adjectives for one item focused on the socially desirable pole of a trait (e.g., “dependable” and “self-disciplined” for conscientiousness) while the other question pertained to the socially undesirable pole (e.g., “disorganized” and “careless” for conscientiousness).<sup>90</sup> All questions utilized seven-point scales.

The CCES, meanwhile, measured the Big Five with four questions per trait.<sup>91</sup> Depending on the trait, one or two of these items referred to the socially undesirable pole while the others focused on the socially desirable pole. Individuals rated their personality on seven-point scales.

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<sup>87</sup> In particular, the 2010 gross domestic products per capita in constant 2005 U.S. dollars for these countries were \$36,466, \$5,678, and \$1,169, respectively (World Bank 2015).

<sup>88</sup> According to the Polity IV dataset (Marshall et al. 2016), the United States has maintained the top democracy score of 10 since 1871, Chile has received a score of 8 or better since 1989, and Venezuela’s score declined from 9 in 1991 to -3 between 2009 and 2012.

<sup>89</sup> Psychologists measure the Big Five with as many as 240 items in order to maximize validity and reliability, but lengthy batteries are not economical on surveys focused on politics (Gosling et al. 2003; Canache et al. 2013).

<sup>90</sup> Alternation from one pole to the other is intended to minimize the influence of acquiescence bias (Gosling et al. 2003), which refers to the tendency to agree with a statement regardless of the substantive content.

<sup>91</sup> The CCES items were selected from the Big Five Inventory (John and Srivastava 1999) by Matthew V. Hibbing of the University of California, Merced.

Finally, the subject pool measured personality in the background and project waves. I decided to combine data from both waves due to the longitudinal stability of personality (e.g., Digman 1989; Rantanen et al. 2007) and the noticeable increases in reliability for three of the five traits in the subject pool data. In particular, shifting from three items per trait in the background wave to five items per trait between both waves raised the Cronbach's alphas from 0.44 to 0.62 for conscientiousness, 0.55 to 0.65 for openness, and 0.56 to 0.64 for agreeableness. The other traits experienced relatively minor reductions in reliability: 0.79 to 0.74 for extraversion and 0.68 to 0.67 for emotional stability.<sup>92</sup>

With regard to measurement, the subject pool presented respondents with an 11-point scale anchored on one end with a socially desirable adjective and on the other end with a socially undesirable adjective. The pole with the socially desirable adjective differed from question to question.

Question wordings for the personality items in this study are located in Appendix A.

The four datasets reveal a tendency toward socially desirable responding. Individuals prefer to portray themselves as open to new experiences, conscientious, sociable, agreeable, and emotionally stable, and a majority of respondents placed themselves on the socially desirable side of the scale for 52 of the 65 total personality questions in the ANES, CCES, subject pool, and AmericasBarometer. The evidence indicates that simple, additive personality scales would not place adequate weight on shifts away from the most preferred response (Mondak 2010).

Given social pressures, the willingness to answer "6" instead of "7" on an item about sympathy

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<sup>92</sup> These reliabilities were calculated after coding all variables to run in the same direction (i.e., low in openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability) and logging these variables to minimize the potential impact of socially desirable responding. I describe the process of variable construction in more depth below.

and warmth, for example, probably indicates a much greater reduction in agreeableness than moving from “2” to “1” on a seven-point scale.

I followed a multistep procedure to address socially desirable responding. I first reverse-coded the personality items referring to high levels of openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability. Secondly, I logged all of the personality items for a particular trait. These two steps increased the importance of shifts at the socially desirable extreme (i.e., a difference of 0.69 in all surveys) and minimized the magnitude of changes at the socially undesirable extreme (i.e., a difference of 0.15 on a seven-point scale and 0.10 on an eleven-point scale). After logging the variables, I added the items for each trait, reversed the coding, and finally rescaled the variables to run from approximately 0 to approximately 1.<sup>93</sup> Higher values for the personality indices refer to greater levels of openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability.

The aforementioned procedure resulted in moderately reliable personality indices. As noted above, the Cronbach’s alphas for the five-item subject pool variables range from 0.62 to 0.74. For the CCES, the Cronbach’s alphas for the logged Big Five items all exceed 0.69. The reliability estimates are noticeably lower for the logged items in the ANES and AmericasBarometer, with Cronbach’s alphas of 0.57 or below, but the correlations between the logged items for each trait dimension range from 0.16 to 0.37 and are all significant at the 0.001 level.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> I use the word “approximately” in part because the minimum observed score is actually 0.0000000197. In addition, two personality scales in the CCES and all personality scales in the subject pool failed to range from the minimum possible score to 1. The greater number of personality items in the CCES and subject pool may have contributed to the narrower range of the personality variables: People may be less likely to place themselves at the lowest or highest level of a trait dimension on all items if the number of items per trait is four or five, as opposed to just two.

<sup>94</sup> Low reliability levels for the ANES and AmericasBarometer personality indices are not ideal, and work by Credé et al. (2012) indicates that brief personality scales such as these could cause scholars to underestimate the impact of personality on the outcome of interest. However, Credé and his colleagues identify one-item personality measures as

Overall, descriptive statistics show that most individuals in my data saw themselves as conscientious and agreeable people, with a mean above 0.50 in all surveys except the subject pool. In addition, the mean surpassed 0.50 for openness on the CCES and AmericasBarometer, extraversion on the AmericasBarometer, and emotional stability on the ANES and AmericasBarometer. Additional descriptive statistics for personality are located in Appendix B.

### *Operationalizing Political Support*

The four surveys contain dozens of questions about political actors, regime institutions, regime performance, regime principles, and the political community. Past research, however, has explored the direct link between personality and only some support attitudes. To date, scholars have not examined the impact of personality on issue-specific evaluations of actor job effectiveness, actor affect, institutional job evaluations, institutional affect, regime performance, non-tolerance and non-criminal rights forms of democratic support, and patriotism. Certainly, more work on personality and political support remains to be done.

As noted previously, the best theories are consistent with a broad array of phenomena (Lave and March 1975), and I pursue such a standard by testing my hypotheses derived from trait activation theory with dependent variables from all levels of support and multiple domains within each level of support. For political actors and regime institutions, I examine the domains of political trust, perceptions of job effectiveness, political affect, and external efficacy. For regime performance, I study overall democratic satisfaction as well as assessments about the implementation of specific democratic ideals. For regime principles, I investigate abstract views about democracy and attitudes toward specific ideals, namely political tolerance, support for criminal rights, support for mass participation, support for checks and balances, and opposition

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the least desirable, whereas all of my personality measures incorporate at least two items. See Mondak (2010) for more information on the reliability and validity of brief personality scales.

to military coups. And for the political community, I include both national identification and patriotism. If the results from my comprehensive approach are consistent with my hypotheses, I will be able to achieve integrative and additive cumulation (Zinnes 1976) by using TAT to account for past findings as well as previously unexplored relationships between personality and political support.

A secondary goal of my empirical approach is replication. Since similar measures of political support appeared in multiple surveys, I have the opportunity to examine whether results from one U.S. survey apply to other U.S. surveys or to a cross-national survey. Consistent results across samples would bolster our confidence in TAT as a general framework for understanding the impact of personality on attitudes toward the political system.

I organize my discussion of variable operationalization based on the level and domain of support, beginning with actor and institutional trust. The ANES and subject pool both asked a series of questions about the trustworthiness of political actors, with items pertaining to the extent to which politicians and bureaucrats are corrupt and wasteful and the extent to which they seek the public good, do the right thing,<sup>95</sup> and care about citizens.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> This particular trust item on the ANES was asked in different ways to different people, with some respondents allowed to answer 1 (“Just about always”), 2 (“Most of the time”), 3 (“Only some of the time”), or 4 (“Never”) and others allowed to answer 1 (“Always”), 2 (“Most of the time”), 3 (“About half the time”), 4 (“Some of the time”), or 5 (“Never”). Most of these response options are similar across questions, so I combined these into a single item so that higher scores referred to more trust. Therefore, scores of 5 corresponded to responses of “Always” or “Just about always,” scores of 4 corresponded to responses of “Most of the time,” scores of 3 corresponded to responses of “About half the time” on the five-option version, scores of 2 corresponded to responses of “Some of the time” or “Only some of the time,” and scores of 1 corresponded to responses of “Never.”

<sup>96</sup> All of these questions were asked in both surveys, except for the final item on the extent to which political elites care about the public. The subject pool included the final item, whereas the ANES did not.



I used factor analysis to construct an actor trust index for each survey because the number of response options varied across questions. A single factor emerged from the factor analysis in both surveys.<sup>97</sup>

For institutional trust, I utilize data from the subject pool and AmericasBarometer. Both surveys included a battery of questions on citizen confidence in political institutions. Each asked about the national legislature, the Supreme Court, and political parties, and additional items in the AmericasBarometer referred to local government, the national police, the justice system, the national government, and the presidency. The Cronbach's alphas for these indices are 0.69 for the subject pool and 0.88 for the AmericasBarometer.

Next, I examine measures of perceived job effectiveness for political actors and institutions. Such attitudes include overall job approval ratings as well as evaluations on the economy and other specific issues. I have data on overall actor approval from the ANES, CCES, and AmericasBarometer. All three surveys asked about global executive evaluations,<sup>98</sup> and the ANES and CCES both fielded a question on approval of a respondent's congressperson in the House of Representatives. The ANES, CCES, and AmericasBarometer also included questions on overall institutional job effectiveness, and I focus on approval of the national legislature in order to examine the extent to which personality results are consistent for approval of particular representatives and parliaments as a whole.

For issue-specific job evaluations, I utilize data from the ANES, subject pool, and AmericasBarometer. All three surveys asked about actor approval on a range of issues, such as

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<sup>97</sup> I should note that many of the trust questions do not directly refer to politicians, but Norris (1999a) considers these questions to refer to political actors. I follow her approach in this dissertation.

<sup>98</sup> The ANES included two global executive approval items, one fielded to all respondents and another to web-only respondents. I focus on the former question in order to apply my findings to as many respondents as possible. Results with the web-only item are noted below. For web-only ANES analyses, I do not use the Taylor series method because all respondents are in the same stratum and the number of PSUs is the same as the number of individuals. Instead, I simply use the web-only weight variable in order to estimate a nationally representative sample.

the economy, foreign policy, and public safety.<sup>99</sup> I created additive indices for each dependent variable; the Cronbach's alphas are 0.92 for the ANES, 0.59 for the subject pool, and 0.91 for the AmericasBarometer.<sup>100</sup>

The AmericasBarometer also included two items on issue-specific evaluations of institutional effectiveness. One pertained to the ability of the justice system to punish individuals who are guilty of crimes, and the other focused on the quality of local government services. Both items were recoded so that higher values refer to greater levels of political support.

I now turn to actor and institutional political affect. The ANES and subject pool both used feeling thermometers that allowed respondents to convey their emotional reactions to incumbent political actors, opposition political actors, and government institutions. For the ANES, I employ post-election feeling thermometers because the personality battery was fielded during the same time period. Incumbent Democratic actors consist of the president, first lady, and vice president, and opposition actors are the Republican presidential candidate, the Republican candidate's spouse, the Republican vice presidential candidate, and the chief justice of the Supreme Court, who had been nominated by a Republican president. The ANES institutions consist of the federal government, Congress, the Supreme Court, and the military. Cronbach's alphas for the ANES are 0.94 for incumbent actors, 0.82 for opposition actors, and 0.69 for institutions.

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<sup>99</sup> More specifically, the ANES items covered attitudes on the economy, health care, foreign relations, and the war in Afghanistan. For the subject pool, items referred to health care, public safety, corruption, the economy, and foreign relations, and the AmericasBarometer questions covered corruption, safety, poverty, unemployment, and the management of the economy. An AmericasBarometer item on the democratic performance of the current administration was omitted in order to avoid conflation with regime performance attitudes. An additional battery of 13 issue-specific questions was fielded only to web respondents on the ANES; results for this battery are noted below.

<sup>100</sup> It may seem superfluous to measure global job evaluations and multi-item indices of job evaluations on specific issues since the latter may resemble the former from a conceptual standpoint. However, it is an open question whether the impact of personality on support will be empirically consistent for global and issue-specific dependent variables. In addition, politicians may care strongly about public evaluations on particular issues (e.g., economic approval during an economic crisis).

Meanwhile, the subject pool included an institutional feeling thermometer for the state legislature and multiple thermometers for incumbent Democratic actors and opposition Republican actors.<sup>101</sup> Items in the former category include President Barack Obama and Democrats in Congress, and the Republican actors consist of Republicans in Congress, the Illinois Republican governor, and the respondent's federal representative. Congressmen Rodney Davis and John Shimkus, both Republicans, represented parts of Champaign County in 2015. Exploratory analysis also showed that items on bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., and local officials belong in the Democratic category, so the additive incumbent index includes these actors as well. Cronbach's alphas are 0.62 for the Democrats and 0.64 for the Republicans.

Feeling thermometers are not the only way to measure political affect. The ANES also asked a series of questions on the likeability of the two major political parties in 2012.<sup>102</sup> Since the actor thermometer indices incorporate people from both parties, I use both the Democratic and Republican likeability items.

The final domain of support for actors and institutions is external efficacy. The ANES, subject pool, and AmericasBarometer all inquired about the responsiveness of political actors, and I present the ANES results for the post-election measurement of external efficacy because the personality battery was fielded during the same time period.<sup>103</sup> In addition, the ANES asked respondents two basic questions about institutional responsiveness, one on the extent to which citizens can influence governmental action and another on whether elections encourage

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<sup>101</sup> Here, I use the word "incumbent" to refer to the party in control of the White House because non-presidential elected Republicans technically are incumbents in their current positions.

<sup>102</sup> Respondents also answered likeability questions about the major party presidential candidates, but these have been omitted in the interest of space. A second reason to exclude the presidential likeability questions is the broader range of public figures in the ANES actor feeling thermometer indices.

<sup>103</sup> The actor efficacy item for the ANES actually combines two versions of the same question about whether public officials care about citizen opinion. Both versions have the same number of response options, but one needed to be reverse-coded so that higher values refer to more external efficacy.

government to pay attention to the public.<sup>104</sup> Factor analysis of the two institutional efficacy items did not produce a sufficiently large eigenvalue, so I consider each measure separately.

Turning to regime performance, I examine both overall democratic satisfaction and evaluations about the effectiveness with which specific democratic principles are implemented. Data for global attitudes come from the ANES, subject pool, and AmericasBarometer. The ANES included one question on the topic, whereas two such items appeared on the subject pool and AmericasBarometer. Cronbach's alphas for these indices are 0.64 for the subject pool and 0.65 for the AmericasBarometer. With regard to specific evaluations, all three surveys asked about the extent to which citizen rights are protected, and the ANES and AmericasBarometer included items on the trustworthiness of the electoral process. I thus have the opportunity to examine cross-situational consistency for global and specific evaluations of regime performance.

For democratic support, I incorporate both abstract attitudes and specific ideals. Items for the first category come from the subject pool and AmericasBarometer. Both surveys asked about the extent to which respondents agreed that democracy represents the best political system even with its problems, and another item in the AmericasBarometer allowed individuals to express indifference toward democracy, a solid preference for democracy, or openness to an authoritarian system. Responses to the second item were recoded to range from the least democratic to the most democratic option.<sup>105</sup>

The subject pool and AmericasBarometer, along with the CCES, also asked questions about particular regime principles. Political tolerance questions come from the CCES and the

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<sup>104</sup> As with actor efficacy, the first institutional item was asked before and after the election. I focus on the post-election variable because the personality battery was fielded during the same time period. In addition, the first institutional efficacy item combines two versions of the same question. Both versions have the same number of response options, but one needed to be reverse-coded so that higher values refer to more external efficacy.

<sup>105</sup> As needed, items for other outcome variables were reversed so that higher scores denote more political support. However, no other items were reordered so that a middle response option was moved to the minimum or maximum.

AmericasBarometer. Each survey measured political tolerance in a different way. In the CCES, respondents answered yes or no whether they would outlaw a self-selected disliked group, whether they would allow the group to make a speech, and whether they would ban a member of the group from being president of the United States. Most respondents expressed intolerance for the presidential question and tolerance for the other two questions. I coded these items so that higher scores refer to more tolerance and then generated an additive index. The Cronbach's alpha for the scale is 0.80. The AmericasBarometer, meanwhile, asked respondents whether citizens who are only critical of their country should be permitted to vote, protest peacefully, run for political office, and make speeches on television. The average score for the 24 countries under analysis is slightly above the midpoint, at 24.32 on a scale from 4 to 40. The Cronbach's alpha is 0.85.<sup>106</sup>

A related, but distinct concept to political tolerance is opposition to extralegal policing in the fight against crime. Criminals represent a minority, and AmericasBarometer respondents had the opportunity to support or oppose criminal rights by stating whether they think legal authorities always should follow the law or can cross the line on occasion.

Democratic principles pertain not just to minority groups but to the masses as well. In particular, the health of democracy hinges on the extent to which citizens engage in such activities as voting, campaigning, and organizing to solve problems. The right to participate belongs to all citizens but may be especially effective for the majority given the re-election incentives of politicians (Mayhew 2004). To measure the concept of support for mass participation, I generated an additive index that includes items from the AmericasBarometer

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<sup>106</sup> The AmericasBarometer measurement of political tolerance could evoke concern because the dissident group was not selected on the basis of the respondent's personal affinity for that group (Sullivan et al. 1979). Therefore, I limited the analysis only to individuals with positive levels of institutional trust who are likely to disagree with political dissidents; the personality coefficients adhered to the same pattern as the main results reported below.

about approval of campaigning, organizing, and peaceful protesting.<sup>107</sup> The Cronbach's alpha is 0.74.

The next set of dependent variables measures the principle of checks and balances. The first constitutes a three-item index from a battery in the AmericasBarometer in which respondents stated whether they believe executives should be able to ignore obstinate legislatures and courts and overpower opposition parties in order to benefit the country. Responses are coded so that higher scores refer to more support for checks and balances. The Cronbach's alpha for the AmericasBarometer index is 0.79. Subject pool respondents also received three items on checks and balances, but these are examined separately because factor analysis revealed an eigenvalue well below 1. One question largely copied the wording for the Supreme Court item, whereas the others include information that may contain unique trait-relevant cues. An item on presidential-legislative relations allowed respondents to consent to a relatively benign and easy response to inter-branch disagreement: executive orders. Such information may encourage individuals high in conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness to comply with assertive leadership in order to promote societal order. Similarly, another question asked whether the president should ignore other government branches in the event of a foreign invasion. Responses for the subject pool items are coded so that higher scores refer to greater support for checks and balances.

Civilian versus military control of government constitutes another regime principle that pertains to the interaction of political elites. Unlike the relatively equal status of government branches under checks and balances, the democratic ideal of elected, civilian control clearly signifies the superiority of some elites over others. Data for the concept of civilian control come from the AmericasBarometer, which asked a series of three questions about whether a military

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<sup>107</sup> The last item may appear to measure political tolerance, but the question refers to the general right to demonstrate and does not ask respondents whether they agree with a particular protest's political goals.

coup could be justified in the event of high levels of unemployment, crime, and corruption.

Scores were recoded so that 1 refers to support for civilian rule and 0 to support for a proposed military coup.<sup>108</sup> I combined the three items into an additive index. The Cronbach's alpha is 0.78.

Finally, I have items on national identification and patriotism, the two domains of community support. Two of my surveys asked about national identification, with one item in the subject pool and two in the ANES. I combined the ANES items into a single index, which has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.77. Meanwhile, the ANES and subject pool included the same two items to measure patriotism: one on love for country and another on one's emotions at seeing his or her national flag. Items were combined into additive indices; the Cronbach's alphas are 0.66 for the ANES and 0.73 for the subject pool. In addition, the AmericasBarometer measured patriotism by asking about the extent to which individuals were proud to be citizens of their country.<sup>109</sup>

Many of the political support dependent variables range between three and seven response options. I utilize ordinal logistic regression for those outcome variables. Logistic regression is reserved for dichotomous measures of political support, and I employ ordinary least squares regression for dependent variables with more than seven response options.

Descriptive statistics for the political support dependent variables are available in Appendix B.

### *Operationalizing the Controls*

Numerous factors may be related to personality and political support, but it would be a mistake to control for all of them. In some cases, controls can minimize trait effects by mediating the relationship between personality and attitudes in a manner consistent with my theory. Extant

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<sup>108</sup> The original variables were coded in the same order, but a score of 2 referred to the more democratic response and a score of 1 to the less democratic response.

<sup>109</sup> One might consider the AmericasBarometer question an example of national identification because of the use of the verb "to be," but Klingemann (1999) classifies the item as a measurement of patriotism.

research has shown, for example, that openness encourages high levels of political interest (Mondak 2010; Mondak and Halperin 2008), which in turn could promote democratic support due to a desire to protect one's rights and achieve political progress. Including political interest thus could reduce the observed effect of openness on attitudes toward regime principles.

Instead, I control for factors that are largely unrelated to my theory. The preceding argument pays no attention to demographics, but gender, age, race, and education are standard fare in studies of political support (e.g., Anderson and Tverdova 2003; Criado and Herreros 2007; Hetherington and Husser 2012; Jamal and Nooruddin 2010; Rahn and Rudolph 2005). Omitting demographics also could produce illusory personality effects. Without education, for example, we would not know whether openness influences political tolerance and support for criminal rights because of a person's inherent attraction to ideas or because of the greater levels of schooling pursued by individuals high in this trait dimension.<sup>110</sup> I thus account for demographic factors in all of my regression models.

I also considered whether I should control for political ideology. On one hand, this variable could attenuate observed personality effects by minimizing the relationship between personality and support in a way that is consistent with my arguments. For example, studies have shown that individuals high in openness are more likely to be ideologically leftist or liberal and therefore are more interested in political innovation (e.g., Carney et al. 2008; Gerber et al. 2010; Mondak 2010; Sibley et al. 2012). The connection to ideology could help explain why people high in openness may be disappointed with the stalled democratic performance of political actors and regime institutions or why open individuals are less likely to embrace a traditional political identity such as national identification.

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<sup>110</sup> Mondak and Hurwitz (2012), for example, show that both factors influence attitudes toward civil liberties, and Mondak (2010) finds that openness is positively associated with a person's level of education.



On the other hand, political ideology could mediate the relationship between personality and support in a manner unexpected by my arguments. In particular, the observed connection between personality traits such as openness and attitudes toward the political system could simply be a function of the ideological orientation of the incumbent government. For example, openness could be negatively related to political support because a country is governed by a conservative party and not, as I expect, because individuals high in this trait dimension are generally frustrated with the democratic performance of political actors and regime institutions. Studies also have found that the other Big Five traits can be related to political ideology (e.g., Carney et al. 2008; Gerber et al. 2010; Mondak 2010; Sibley et al. 2012), so results for conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability could be problematic if ideology is omitted from the regression models.

To address both concerns, I ran the regressions with and without a control for political ideology. Most of the significant results from the personality-and-demographics models remain significant when conservative ideology is included in the regressions,<sup>111</sup> so I opted for the simpler models for my main findings. The next section also discusses some of the rare, but notable, changes in personality coefficients when political ideology is added to the model.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> To be specific, the personality-and-demographics models resulted in a total of 121 personality coefficients that are significant at the 0.10 level or better across all four datasets and all five levels of political support, and only 21 of these become insignificant when conservative ideology is added to the model. Of these 21 changes in personality coefficients, just 14 occur when the personality trait in question is significantly related to political ideology and when political ideology is significantly related to political support. I determined the significance of the ideology–trait connection by regressing conservatism on the Big Five and the demographic controls. (The totals in this note do not include the conscientiousness coefficients for actor, institutional, and procedural support, nor do they include the extraversion coefficient in Model I of Table 3.8. I omitted these coefficients because I offered no hypothesis for the impact of conscientiousness on status quo support and no hypothesis for the impact of extraversion on overall democratic satisfaction.)

<sup>112</sup> In the results section I refer to instances in which personality coefficients cease to be significant or become significant with the inclusion of political ideology. As mentioned in the previous footnote, few coefficients become insignificant when I control for conservative ideology, and changes in the opposite direction are also rare. Across all datasets, just 13 coefficients become significant with the addition of political ideology. (The total of 13 does not include the conscientiousness coefficients for the actor, institutional, and procedural levels for the same reason mentioned in the previous footnote.)

With regard to operationalization, all four surveys include measures of gender, age, race or ethnicity, education, and ideology. Female is coded so that scores of 1 correspond to women and 0 to men, age is measured in years,<sup>113</sup> white is an indicator for race and ethnicity with scores of 1 for self-identified white respondents and scores of 0 for other individuals,<sup>114</sup> education is a variable ranging from 0 (lowest possible response in the survey) to 1 (highest possible response in the survey),<sup>115</sup> and conservative ideology ranges from 0 (highly left-wing) to 1 (highly right-wing).<sup>116,117</sup> All controls are coded in the same manner for each survey. For descriptive statistics of the controls, see Appendix B.

### **Evidence for a Direct Link: Results**

I now present my findings for personality and political support. I start with actors, institutions, and performance and then turn to regime principles and the political community. The final step is to tie together the results across levels by testing my hypotheses on cross-situational consistency. In particular, I assess cross-situational consistency by comparing the effects of a trait dimension on comparable political support opportunities and contrasting the patterns with trait effects for less comparable political support opportunities.

#### *Findings for Actor, Institutional, and Procedural Support*

For actor and institutional support, citizens evaluate the status quo in terms of trustworthiness, job effectiveness, likeability, and responsiveness. Regime performance,

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<sup>113</sup> For the CCES, age is an approximate variable because I subtracted the respondent's birth year from 2012.

<sup>114</sup> The white respondents classified by the race-ethnicity variable do not identify as Hispanic in the U.S. surveys, nor do they describe themselves as mestizo or from another non-white racial or ethnic background in the AmericasBarometer.

<sup>115</sup> The lowest and highest responses for education referred to different levels of schooling across surveys. For example, the range in the subject pool was freshmen to seniors, whereas the variable in the ANES ran from less than a high school degree to a graduate degree.

<sup>116</sup> The ANES asked about political ideology before and after the election, but I use the pre-election measure for the sake of causal order since some of my dependent variables consist of post-election questions.

<sup>117</sup> The CCES fielded two pre-election political ideology items, one of which used a seven-point scale and another of which used a five-point scale. I opted for the seven-point scale in order to be consistent with the ideology variables for the other U.S. surveys.

meanwhile, is primarily concerned about the effectiveness with which politicians, bureaucrats, and institutions implement democratic principles. Within the procedural level, voters can provide overall assessments of regime performance as well as assessments about the implementation of specific democratic ideals. I use the domains of support to organize my findings for actor, institutional, and procedural attitudes. First, I cover each of the four domains of actor and institutional attitudes. Cross-situational consistency would lead us to expect similar trait-relevant cues and similar trait effects for the same domain across levels (e.g., actor trust and institutional trust). I account for possible cross-situational consistency by placing the results for actor support side-by-side with the results for institutional support for a particular domain. Second, I compare overall evaluations of regime performance with perceptions of the implementation of specific democratic principles. I expect the intra-level results for regime performance to be similar because of cross-situational consistency.<sup>118</sup>

Table 3.3 presents the results for actor and institutional trust. Consistent with expectations, we observe positive and significant effects for agreeableness and emotional stability on political trust. The positive results for actor *and* institutional support also comport with the hypothesis of cross-situational consistency. I thus obtain evidence that political trust opportunities activate agreeableness facets such as trust and generosity and emotional stability facets such as low anxiety and low insecurity and produce positive trait effects.

In addition, Table 3.3 shows that openness and extraversion are negatively related to institutional trust, as expected given the emphases of these trait dimensions on innovation and sociability, respectively. Of the hypothesized relationships, the most significant personality effect in Table 3.3 is the openness coefficient in Model IV. In terms of substantive impact,

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<sup>118</sup> The only exception to this statement would be for extraversion, for I offer no hypothesis for the impact of extraversion on overall democratic satisfaction.

**Table 3.3**  
Personality and Political Trust

	Actors		Institutions	
	<i>ANES</i> Model I: Index of Actor Trust	<i>Subject Pool</i> Model II: Index of Actor Trust	<i>Subject Pool</i> Model III: Index of Institutional Trust	<i>AB</i> Model IV: Index of Institutional Trust
Openness	-0.11 (0.07)	-0.28 (0.49)	-2.17+ (1.11)	-2.72*** (0.44)
Conscientiousness	-0.24*** (0.06)	0.33 (0.37)	1.42 (0.86)	0.20 (0.33)
Extraversion	0.05 (0.07)	-0.53 (0.40)	0.88 (0.91)	-2.02** (0.57)
Agreeableness	0.18** (0.07)	0.17 (0.45)	1.83+ (1.04)	1.72** (0.46)
Emotional Stability	0.12+ (0.07)	0.63 (0.45)	-0.68 (1.08)	1.46** (0.50)
Female	0.04 (0.03)	0.10 (0.13)	0.17 (0.30)	0.07 (0.20)
Age	-0.00* (0.00)	0.02 (0.04)	0.08 (0.09)	0.01 (0.01)
White	-0.30*** (0.03)	0.24+ (0.13)	0.46 (0.29)	0.67+ (0.39)
Education	0.14** (0.05)	-0.65** (0.23)	-1.14* (0.52)	-2.31* (0.87)
Pseudo/Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.05	0.06	0.05	0.11
Number of Cases	5,150	171	205	34,261
Number of Countries	1	1	1	24
Method of Estimation	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS

Note: Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Constants and/or threshold parameters are omitted due to variation in the number of thresholds for some dependent variables in this chapter. See the main text for details on the methodology specific to each survey and for an explanation about any "N/A" entries in the row for explained variance. "AB" stands for "AmericasBarometer." \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

moving from 0 to 1 in openness reduces a respondent's institutional trust score by 2.72 points on a scale from 8 to 56 (i.e., 5.66 percent of the range).

The results for openness also are more consistent across levels than Table 3.3 would indicate. If political ideology is added to Model I, the openness coefficient increases in absolute magnitude to -0.19 and becomes significant at the 0.05 level. The changes for openness are sensible given the leftist ideology of highly open citizens in the ANES and the left-leaning

orientation of the Obama administration in 2012.<sup>119</sup> Accounting for the role of ideology “frees” highly open individuals to be distrustful of the political system.

One final point on Table 3.3 concerns replication across datasets. The similar results for openness and agreeableness in Models III and IV suggest that findings from the United States travel to a cross-national sample.

Next, I examine overall evaluations of job effectiveness in Table 3.4. I again find that agreeableness exerts a positive impact on political support, but this time on executive approval and approval of the national legislature.<sup>120</sup> I thus observe evidence of cross-situational consistency given the different levels of support and the different branches of government. With regard to executive approval, Table 3.4 indicates that the agreeableness results from the United States generalize to 24 countries included in the AmericasBarometer. The impact of agreeableness is especially strong in the AmericasBarometer, as moving from 0 to 1 in this trait dimension increases the probability of maximum executive approval from 0.06 to 0.07 (i.e., an increase of 26.12 percent).<sup>121</sup> Overall, the agreeableness results are consistent with my argument that individuals high in agreeableness interpret information about actor and institutional job effectiveness in a positive light.

Table 3.4 also provides some support for my expectation about positive effects for emotional stability. Individuals high in this trait dimension appear to be unconcerned about their legislative representative and about the national legislature as a whole.<sup>122</sup> Meanwhile, emotional

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<sup>119</sup> The correlation between openness and conservative ideology is -0.16 ( $p < 0.001$ ).

<sup>120</sup> The CCES result for agreeableness is not significant if state fixed effects are omitted from Model II.

<sup>121</sup> All other variables were held at their mean (non-dichotomous variables and country fixed effects) or modal (dichotomous variables) values. I used a similar approach for all other predicted probabilities in this chapter, although I include fixed effects only if they are part of the main model.

<sup>122</sup> The emotional stability coefficient in Model V becomes insignificant if state fixed effects are omitted, but state fixed effects may be preferable for this model because of potential state-level influences on different groups of respondents as they evaluate their particular member of the House of Representatives. By contrast, state-level influences may be less relevant for presidential approval because all respondents are considering the same actor.

**Table 3.4**  
Personality and Overall Job Evaluations

	Actors					Institutions		
	ANES Model I: Executive Approval	CCES Model II: Executive Approval	AB Model III: Executive Approval	ANES Model IV: House Incumbent Approval	CCES Model V: House Incumbent Approval	ANES Model VI: Approval of National Legislature	CCES Model VII: Approval of National Legislature	AB Model VIII: Approval of National Legislature
Openness	1.28*** (0.20)	1.46* (0.73)	-0.12 (0.10)	0.08 (0.21)	-0.65 (0.74)	-0.70*** (0.21)	-0.42 (1.01)	-0.47*** (0.09)
Conscientiousness	-0.71*** (0.17)	-0.61 (0.69)	0.00 (0.08)	0.54** (0.18)	-0.66 (0.62)	0.06 (0.18)	0.48 (0.61)	-0.02 (0.07)
Extraversion	-0.23 (0.18)	-0.11 (0.54)	-0.18* (0.08)	-0.18 (0.20)	0.24 (0.44)	0.31+ (0.18)	-1.10+ (0.56)	-0.34*** (0.09)
Agreeableness	0.35* (0.18)	1.04+ (0.57)	0.25*** (0.06)	0.08 (0.19)	0.84 (0.71)	0.24 (0.20)	1.08 (0.86)	0.28*** (0.08)
Emotional Stability	-0.34+ (0.17)	-1.62* (0.72)	0.07 (0.09)	0.19 (0.19)	1.77* (0.90)	0.02 (0.18)	0.19 (0.64)	0.17*** (0.05)
Female	0.25*** (0.07)	0.37 (0.25)	0.03 (0.05)	0.15+ (0.08)	0.00 (0.21)	0.34*** (0.08)	-0.08 (0.19)	0.14*** (0.04)
Age	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)	0.01 (0.01)	-0.03*** (0.00)	-0.03*** (0.01)	-0.01** (0.00)
White	-1.43*** (0.08)	-1.06** (0.33)	-0.04 (0.11)	0.04 (0.09)	-0.20 (0.34)	-0.51*** (0.09)	-0.80*** (0.23)	0.06 (0.06)
Education	0.00 (0.13)	-0.38 (0.40)	-0.06 (0.13)	-0.04 (0.13)	-0.67 (0.41)	-1.22*** (0.14)	-1.14* (0.57)	-0.30* (0.12)
Pseudo/Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	N/A	0.10	0.06	N/A	0.08	N/A	0.13	0.04
Number of Cases	5,247	913	36,887	4,323	738	4,998	867	32,786
Number of Countries	1	1	24	1	1	1	1	22
Method of Estimation	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal

Note: Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Constants and/or threshold parameters are omitted due to variation in the number of thresholds for some dependent variables in this chapter. See the main text for details on the methodology specific to each survey and for an explanation about any "N/A" entries in the row for explained variance. "AB" stands for "AmericasBarometer." \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

stability exerts a negative effect in Models I and II, but both results become insignificant once conservative ideology is added to the model.<sup>123</sup> Individuals high in emotional stability tended to be more conservative in the ANES and CCES, which may have contributed to the negative trait effects on President Obama's job approval in Models I and II.

<sup>123</sup> This statement also applies if state fixed effects are removed from Model II and if the dependent variable in Model I is replaced with an executive approval item asked to web-only ANES respondents.

For extraversion, the results in Table 3.4 largely reveal a negative impact of this trait dimension on job effectiveness ratings for executives and legislatures.<sup>124</sup> Coefficients are negative and significant, as expected, for executive approval in Model III and legislature approval in Models VII and VIII.<sup>125</sup> The sole exception is the positive and marginally significant extraversion coefficient in Model VI, but that coefficient becomes insignificant if conservative ideology is added to the regression. The similar findings across levels of support constitute evidence of cross-situational consistency and support my argument that job effectiveness opportunities activate the sociability facet of extraversion and produce negative trait effects because of the more impersonal character of political actors and institutions, compared with an extravert's network of friends and family. In addition, Table 3.4 suggests that findings on extraversion and legislature approval from the United States apply to a cross-national sample.

Lastly, I observe positive effects for openness on actor approval and negative effects for openness on institutional approval. The first set of findings is contrary to expectations, but adding ideology reduces the significance of openness in Model I and eliminates all significance for openness in Model II.<sup>126</sup> The openness coefficient also becomes insignificant in Model II with the omission of state fixed effects. Meanwhile, the negative impact of openness on institutional approval is consistent with my argument about individuals high in this trait dimension being disappointed about the lack of innovation in the political status quo. I also find in Models VI and VIII that openness results from the United States travel to other countries in the Western Hemisphere.

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<sup>124</sup> The negative extraversion coefficient in Model VII becomes even more significant (i.e., at the 0.05 level) if state fixed effects are excluded from the regression.

<sup>125</sup> Extraversion is also negatively and significantly related to the ANES web-only item on executive approval.

<sup>126</sup> To be precise, the p-value for openness in Model I increases from well below 0.001 to 0.005 when ideology is included.

**Table 3.5**  
Personality and Issue-Specific Job Evaluations

	Actors			Institutions	
	<i>ANES</i> Model I: Executive Approval on 4 Issues	<i>Subject Pool</i> Model II: Politician Approval on 5 Issues	<i>AB</i> Model III: Executive Approval on 5 Issues	<i>AB</i> Model IV: Perceived Justice System Effectiveness	<i>AB</i> Model V: Perceived Effectiveness of Local Gov't
Openness	2.81*** (0.44)	-0.60 (1.51)	-1.86*** (0.34)	-0.49*** (0.07)	-0.15* (0.07)
Conscientiousness	-1.57*** (0.37)	0.39 (1.17)	-0.16 (0.30)	0.01 (0.06)	-0.05 (0.07)
Extraversion	-0.88* (0.40)	-1.11 (1.24)	-1.27** (0.39)	-0.33*** (0.06)	-0.17** (0.06)
Agreeableness	0.60 (0.42)	1.19 (1.41)	0.91** (0.29)	0.22** (0.08)	0.08 (0.06)
Emotional Stability	-0.19 (0.40)	1.18 (1.47)	0.27 (0.29)	0.17* (0.09)	0.13+ (0.07)
Female	0.49** (0.17)	0.10 (0.41)	-0.10 (0.17)	-0.03 (0.03)	0.07** (0.02)
Age	-0.01 (0.01)	0.25* (0.13)	-0.01+ (0.01)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00*** (0.00)
White	-3.36*** (0.18)	-0.78* (0.39)	0.16 (0.28)	0.13** (0.04)	0.13*** (0.04)
Education	0.86** (0.29)	-1.40* (0.70)	-2.03** (0.55)	-0.43** (0.15)	0.21* (0.10)
Pseudo/Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.15	0.01	0.18	0.03	0.02
Number of Cases	4,954	205	34,390	35,553	33,906
Number of Countries	1	1	24	24	24
Method of Estimation	OLS	OLS	OLS	Ordinal	Ordinal

Note: Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Constants and/or threshold parameters are omitted due to variation in the number of thresholds for some dependent variables in this chapter. See the main text for details on the methodology specific to each survey and for an explanation about any "N/A" entries in the row for explained variance. "AB" stands for "AmericasBarometer." \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

Table 3.5 transitions to issue-specific evaluations of actor and institutional job effectiveness. The pattern of agreeableness being positively related to job approval continues, with significant results in Model III for political actors and in Model IV for political institutions.<sup>127</sup> Executive approval is similar but not identical to perceptions of justice system effectiveness, so the agreeableness results in Table 3.5 provide evidence of cross-situational consistency.

<sup>127</sup> Agreeableness is also positively and significantly related to an ANES web-only index of executive approval on 13 issues.



For emotional stability, I find positive trait effects for both evaluations of institutional job effectiveness. Again, the results reveal cross-situational consistency, given the fact that municipal services include but are not limited to the prosecution of crime. These results are also consistent with my findings in Table 3.4 for emotional stability and global legislature approval ratings.

Extraversion exerts the most consistent effect on issue-related job evaluations in Table 3.5, with negative and significant results in four of five models. These results are consistent with the impact of extraversion on global job approval. The substantive impact of this trait dimension is especially meaningful in Model V, with an effect larger in absolute magnitude than the other personality variables, gender, and race.<sup>128</sup> Only 2.68 percent of AmericasBarometer respondents expressed maximum support for local government services, but moving from 0 to 1 in extraversion reduces the probability of a “very good” evaluation from 0.03 to 0.02 (i.e., a decrease of 15.47 percent).

With regard to openness, the results in Table 3.5 indicate that this trait dimension exerts a negative impact on actor support as well as institutional support. For actor approval in Model III, moving from 0 to 1 in openness reduces support by 1.86 points on a scale from 5 to 35 (i.e., 6.20 percent of the range). The other significant openness result for actor approval runs in the unexpected positive direction, but the coefficient becomes less significant when ideology is added to the model.<sup>129</sup> Meanwhile, I observe that openness reduces perceptions of institutional job effectiveness on crime evaluations and local government services. These results are consistent with the negative impact of this trait dimension on global job evaluations.

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<sup>128</sup> The education coefficient is larger in absolute magnitude than extraversion, and the same would be true for age if it were coded to range from 0 to 1. With that coding, the coefficient for age would be -0.32.

<sup>129</sup> More specifically, the p-value increases from well below 0.001 to 0.007.

**Table 3.6**  
Personality and Affective Support

	Actors				Institutions			
	<i>ANES</i> Model I: Thermometer Index for Democrats	<i>Subject Pool</i> Model II: Thermometer Index for Democrats	<i>ANES</i> Model III: Thermometer Index for Republicans	<i>Subject Pool</i> Model IV: Thermometer Index for Republicans	<i>ANES</i> Model V: Likeability of Democratic Party	<i>ANES</i> Model VI: Likeability of Republican Party	<i>ANES</i> Model VII: Thermometer Index for Gov't Agencies	<i>Subject Pool</i> Model VIII: Thermometer Index for State Legislature
Openness	63.89*** (8.94)	42.65 (31.94)	-59.87*** (8.67)	-60.63* (26.81)	2.32*** (0.32)	-2.07*** (0.29)	3.68 (6.09)	-12.79 (8.85)
Conscientiousness	-28.02*** (7.67)	-50.58* (24.23)	28.20*** (7.38)	53.16* (20.75)	-0.33 (0.27)	0.65** (0.25)	-3.80 (5.06)	-0.21 (6.85)
Extraversion	-10.56 (8.02)	-76.10** (25.84)	32.00*** (7.69)	61.68** (22.07)	-0.13 (0.29)	1.50*** (0.26)	24.10*** (5.52)	-4.54 (7.29)
Agreeableness	22.66** (8.28)	50.70+ (29.21)	11.33 (7.82)	1.28 (24.95)	0.88** (0.29)	0.22 (0.26)	22.59*** (5.81)	9.75 (8.24)
Emotional Stability	-10.18 (8.03)	29.30 (29.39)	18.86* (7.57)	-11.10 (25.97)	-0.36 (0.26)	0.55* (0.24)	12.63* (5.35)	6.42 (8.58)
Female	16.35*** (3.34)	20.74* (8.42)	-2.16 (3.27)	-6.61 (7.24)	0.36** (0.12)	-0.11 (0.10)	8.51*** (2.42)	4.62+ (2.39)
Age	-0.04 (0.09)	2.88 (2.51)	0.60*** (0.10)	2.01 (2.23)	0.01 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.13+ (0.07)	2.04** (0.74)
White	-66.65*** (3.69)	-24.48** (8.09)	32.99*** (3.64)	9.73 (6.95)	-1.94*** (0.14)	1.29*** (0.11)	-23.73*** (3.16)	-2.59 (2.29)
Education	13.95* (6.01)	-43.03** (14.42)	4.08 (6.05)	-1.74 (12.42)	-0.24 (0.22)	-0.46* (0.19)	-21.95*** (4.01)	-6.84+ (4.10)
Pseudo/Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.15	0.14	0.09	0.05	0.11	0.07	0.07	0.04
Number of Cases	5,203	189	4,636	204	5,294	5,295	5,259	204
Number of Countries	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Method of Estimation	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS

Note: Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Constants and/or threshold parameters are omitted due to variation in the number of thresholds for some dependent variables in this chapter. See the main text for details on the methodology specific to each survey and for an explanation about any "N/A" entries in the row for explained variance. "AB" stands for "AmericasBarometer." \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

An additional point about Table 3.5 is the similar results across datasets for extraversion.

These results indicate that the extraversion hypothesis derived from trait activation theory is applicable in the United States and in other countries in the Western Hemisphere.

I shift to political affect in Table 3.6. Again, I observe positive agreeableness and emotional stability results both for actor and institutional attitudes. The results in Models I through VI indicate that the positive impact of agreeableness is limited to Democratic actors and institutions and the positive impact of emotional stability is limited to Republican actors and institutions. However, such a concern is minimized by the positive impact of both trait dimensions on affect toward government organizations that are less associated with one particular political party, namely the federal government, the Supreme Court, the military, and

Congress.<sup>130</sup> My results indicate that affect opportunities activate agreeableness facets such as sympathy and emotional stability facets such as low anxiety and produce positive effects on political support, regardless of the partisan background of the political actor or regime institution. The similar results for political actors, parties, and government institutions also indicate a high level of cross-situational consistency.

Meanwhile, Table 3.6 offers some evidence that high levels of openness reduce levels of political affect, as anticipated. Of the five significant results for openness, three are in the negative direction and are thus consistent with the findings for political trust and job evaluations.

Not all of the openness results in Table 3.6 are consistent with expectations, for I observe positive and significant openness coefficients for Models I and V. The openness coefficient in each model, however, becomes less significant with the inclusion of ideology.<sup>131,132</sup>

In contrast to political trust and job evaluations, I expected a positive relationship between extraversion and political affect because support opportunities for affect may activate the trait facet of positive emotions. The bulk of the evidence supports my hypothesis. Although extraversion exerts a negative effect on affect toward Democrats in the subject pool, the impact of this trait dimension is positive for Republican actors on two surveys and for the Republican

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<sup>130</sup> Other results also indicate that significant agreeableness and emotional stability results are not limited to partisan actors and institutions from one party. In particular, the agreeableness coefficient becomes significant in Model III when ideology is added to the model and in Model VI when a measure for partisanship is added to the model; at the same time, however, emotional stability becomes insignificant in Models III and VI with the inclusion of ideology or partisanship. On the more positive side, the coefficient for emotional stability becomes significant when ideology and partisanship are added to Model II. Partisanship in both surveys is a seven-point item coded to range from 0 (highly Democratic) to 1 (highly Republican). Descriptive statistics for the partisanship variables are located in Appendix B.

<sup>131</sup> The coefficients remain significant at the 0.001 level, but adding ideology reduces the t-value from 7.15 to 3.32 in Model I and from 7.31 to 3.75 in Model V.

<sup>132</sup> One could critique the openness findings in Table 3.6 by noting the ideological slant of the significant findings. In particular, coefficients are negative for right-leaning actors and institutions and positive for left-leaning actors and institutions. One coefficient that breaks the mold in Table 3.6 is the openness effect on affect toward the Illinois state legislature. If ideology and a seven-point measure of partisanship are added to Model VIII, openness becomes negative and significant at the 0.10 level. Such a result is unlikely to be due to the ideological composition of the state legislature because the body was controlled by the Democratic Party in 2015.

Party likeability item and the government agencies thermometer index on the ANES. In fact, the coefficient for extraversion is larger than any other coefficient in the government agency model. Moving from 0 to 1 in this trait dimension raises a person's rating of government institutions by 24.10 points on a scale from 0 to 400 (i.e., 6.03 percent of the range). The similar results for extraversion across levels of support also constitute evidence of cross-situational consistency.

The extraversion and agreeableness results in Table 3.6 indicate that personality influences political affect in a similar way for college students and a nationally representative sample. I would expect to obtain similar results from a cross-national sample if such data on political affect were available.

Table 3.7 reports the impact of personality on external efficacy, the fourth domain of actor and institutional support. As with the previous domains, I find that agreeableness and emotional stability exert a positive impact on external efficacy. Although the results are weak in Models I through III, both the agreeableness and emotional stability coefficients become significant in Model I if I switch the dependent variable to an identical variable fielded before the election.<sup>133</sup> The emotional stability coefficients in Model I and III are also significant if ideology is added to each regression.

For extraversion and openness, I expected positive trait effects. My hypotheses are based on the following argument and evidence: Individuals high in these traits may not believe that political actors and institutions are trustworthy or effective on their own, but the perceived quality of the status quo improves once highly extraverted and open citizens consider their own role in spurring progress. External efficacy refers to governmental responsiveness to public opinion and activism, and the idea of political engagement may trigger the extraversion facets of energy and activity and the openness facets of adventurousness and action. The activation of

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<sup>133</sup> I used the post-election variable because the personality battery was administered during the same time period.

**Table 3.7**  
Personality and External Efficacy

	Actors			Institutions	
	ANES Model I: Officials Care What People Think	Subject Pool Model II: Officials Care What People Think	AB Model III: Officials Care What People Think	ANES Model IV: People Have Say in What Government Does	ANES Model V: Elections Make Government Pay Attention
Openness	0.34+ (0.18)	-0.33 (1.10)	-0.43*** (0.07)	0.55** (0.19)	0.50* (0.20)
Conscientiousness	-0.69*** (0.16)	0.47 (0.81)	-0.10+ (0.06)	-0.40** (0.15)	-0.10 (0.17)
Extraversion	0.63*** (0.18)	-0.44 (0.85)	-0.38*** (0.07)	0.59*** (0.17)	0.14 (0.19)
Agreeableness	0.28 (0.18)	0.31 (0.98)	0.09 (0.08)	0.24 (0.19)	0.44* (0.21)
Emotional Stability	0.27 (0.17)	0.22 (1.02)	0.04 (0.08)	0.55** (0.19)	0.25 (0.20)
Female	0.01 (0.08)	0.31 (0.28)	-0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.07)	0.01 (0.08)
Age	0.00 (0.00)	-0.05 (0.08)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.01* (0.00)
White	-0.24** (0.08)	-0.37 (0.27)	0.03 (0.08)	-0.46*** (0.08)	-0.43*** (0.08)
Education	0.77*** (0.12)	-0.49 (0.47)	-0.10 (0.11)	0.83*** (0.11)	0.49*** (0.13)
Pseudo/Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	N/A	0.01	0.02	N/A	N/A
Number of Cases	5,345	205	35,114	5,344	5,339
Number of Countries	1	1	24	1	1
Method of Estimation	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal

Note: Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Constants and/or threshold parameters are omitted due to variation in the number of thresholds for some dependent variables in this chapter. See the main text for details on the methodology specific to each survey and for an explanation about any "N/A" entries in the row for explained variance. "AB" stands for "AmericasBarometer." \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

these trait dimensions and the positive anticipated effects are especially likely since extraversion and openness have been shown to be positively related to political participation (e.g., Ha et al. 2013; Mondak 2010; Mondak et al. 2010).

These hypotheses receive support in the ANES, with consistent results in Table 3.7 across levels of support. The substantive effects of both openness and extraversion are especially meaningful in Model IV. If the scores for both traits simultaneously increase from 0 to 1 in that

model, the probability of maximum external efficacy rises from 0.03 to 0.09 (i.e., an increase of 191.48 percent).<sup>134</sup>

Meanwhile, I observe opposite trends in the AmericasBarometer results in Table 3.7. Openness and extraversion are negatively related to external efficacy. This result from a cross-national survey suggests that contextual factors may be affecting the activation of openness and extraversion. I explore conditional effects of both trait dimensions on external efficacy in Chapters 4 and 5.

Having covered the domains of actor and institutional support, I consider the impact of personality on attitudes toward regime performance. At its core, regime performance pertains to the effectiveness with which political actors and regime institutions implement democratic principles, so the hypotheses for perceived job effectiveness are especially relevant for procedural support. I thus expect positive effects for agreeableness and emotional stability and negative effects for openness and extraversion, although I expressed uncertainty about the impact of extraversion on global attitudes toward regime performance.<sup>135</sup>

Results for regime performance are reported in Table 3.8. The first three models focus on global measures of procedural support and the next five on principle-specific evaluations. Consistent with expectations, I find support across multiple datasets for the positive anticipated effect of agreeableness on overall evaluations of regime performance. These findings indicate that results from a student sample apply to a representative U.S. sample, which in turn generalizes to a cross-national sample. I also show that agreeable citizens are more likely to

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<sup>134</sup> The ANES results for openness and emotional stability also address a potential concern about cross-situational consistency. The efficacy items in Models I and IV were asked in the same series of questions, so we might be worried about personality effects being consistent across levels due to a battery effect instead of similar trait-relevant cues. If a battery effect were in play, we might expect identical personality results for all of the Big Five, but the openness and emotional stability coefficients are clearly stronger in Model IV than Model I.

<sup>135</sup> As I stated above, extraverts could expect democracies to be marked by higher levels of responsiveness and likeability (trustworthiness and job effectiveness), leading to a positive (negative) trait effect on overall democratic satisfaction.

**Table 3.8**  
Personality and Regime Performance Attitudes

	Overall Support			Principle-Specific Support				
	ANES Model I: Democratic Satisfaction Item	Subject Pool Model II: Democratic Satisfaction Index	AB Model III: Democratic Satisfaction Index	ANES Model IV: Government Not a Threat to Rights and Freedoms	Subject Pool Model V: Citizen Rights Protected	AB Model VI: Citizen Rights Protected	ANES Model VII: Votes Counted Fairly	AB Model VIII: Trust in Elections
Openness	0.12 (0.19)	-1.71 (1.05)	-0.14+ (0.08)	-0.07 (0.19)	-0.87 (1.09)	-0.34*** (0.07)	-0.06 (0.20)	-0.13* (0.06)
Conscientiousness	-0.28 (0.19)	-0.13 (0.83)	0.06 (0.04)	-0.16 (0.16)	1.01 (0.85)	-0.05 (0.05)	0.39* (0.18)	0.07 (0.07)
Extraversion	0.41* (0.19)	1.19 (0.90)	0.01 (0.08)	0.11 (0.19)	0.03 (0.92)	-0.34*** (0.07)	0.09 (0.18)	-0.11 (0.08)
Agreeableness	0.47* (0.21)	1.76+ (1.04)	0.26*** (0.07)	0.21 (0.18)	0.61 (0.98)	0.16+ (0.09)	0.60** (0.19)	0.10 (0.09)
Emotional Stability	0.46* (0.19)	-1.03 (1.07)	0.16 (0.10)	0.01 (0.17)	1.53 (1.06)	0.13 (0.09)	0.35+ (0.19)	0.17+ (0.09)
Female	0.01 (0.08)	0.05 (0.28)	-0.05 (0.04)	0.21** (0.07)	-0.48 (0.30)	0.04 (0.03)	-0.34*** (0.08)	-0.09*** (0.03)
Age	0.01*** (0.00)	0.01 (0.08)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.07 (0.09)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.01*** (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)
White	-0.57*** (0.08)	0.52+ (0.28)	0.07 (0.06)	-0.71*** (0.08)	0.81** (0.28)	0.11+ (0.06)	0.19* (0.08)	0.08* (0.04)
Education	0.23+ (0.13)	0.07 (0.48)	-0.06 (0.12)	0.58*** (0.12)	-0.03 (0.50)	-0.20 (0.13)	1.19*** (0.13)	0.11 (0.13)
Pseudo/Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	N/A	0.02	0.03	N/A	0.04	0.01	N/A	0.03
Number of Cases	5,304	205	34,430	5,190	205	36,532	5,303	34,092
Number of Countries	1	1	24	1	1	24	1	1
Method of Estimation	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal

Note: Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Constants and/or threshold parameters are omitted due to variation in the number of thresholds for some dependent variables in this chapter. See the main text for details on the methodology specific to each survey and for an explanation about any "N/A" entries in the row for explained variance. "AB" stands for "AmericasBarometer." \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

believe that citizen rights are protected and that votes are counted fairly during elections. In addition, the agreeableness coefficient in Model VIII becomes significant if political ideology is added to the model. Collectively, the agreeableness results for global and principle-specific support offer evidence of within-level cross-situational consistency.

Likewise, I find that emotional stability exerts a positive and consistent effect on overall evaluations in the ANES and evaluations of electoral integrity in the ANES and AmericasBarometer. These findings indicate the cross-national applicability of U.S. results and support my argument that regime performance opportunities activate a person's level of anxiety and produce positive effects for emotional stability.

The results in Table 3.8 for extraversion, meanwhile, are a combination of insignificant, negative, and positive effects. The one positive effect suggests that ANES respondents focused on political efficacy and affect in evaluating overall regime performance, rather than the implementation of democratic principles, such as citizen rights and electoral integrity. When the questions shift to specific regime principles, however, Model VI suggests that AmericasBarometer respondents consider the effectiveness with which distant political actors and institutions protect citizen rights, resulting in a negative effect for extraversion. In fact, extraversion exerts the largest substantive effect in the model in absolute magnitude. Moving from 0 to 1 in this trait dimension decreases the probability of maximum support from 0.07 to 0.05 (i.e., a reduction of 27.58 percent).

Consistent with expectations, I also find in the AmericasBarometer that respondents high in openness tend to express less overall and principle-specific support for regime performance. In addition, the ANES openness coefficient in Model IV becomes significant with the inclusion of political ideology, so Models IV and VI offer some evidence that trait effects for the United States generalize to other countries.

Overall, the results for regime performance resemble the personality effects for perceptions of job effectiveness at the actor and institutional levels. Agreeableness and emotional stability continue to exert positive effects, and the impacts of openness and extraversion are often negative. In addition, I observed similar patterns for the trait effects at other domains of actor and institutional support, with some exceptions for openness and extraversion. I thus obtain evidence of cross-situational consistency for different levels of support and different domains within the same level.



For conscientiousness, however, Tables 3.3 through 3.8 indicate that I had little need to offer a hypothesis for the direct impact of this trait dimension on actor, institutional, and procedural support. In the 22 CCEs, subject pool, and AmericasBarometer models in Tables 3.3 through 3.8, the conscientiousness coefficient is statistically significant on only three occasions, which barely surpasses what would be expected by chance. In the same tables, the conscientiousness coefficients for the ANES are significant in 10 of 16 models, but the results tend to follow an ideological and partisan pattern, with negative coefficients for evaluations of left-leaning incumbent actors and institutions and positive coefficients for evaluations of right-leaning opposition actors and institutions. I also find that 6 of these 10 coefficients drop at least one significance level or become entirely insignificant when conservative ideology is added to the model. Such results contrast with the ideology- and partisan-free theoretical arguments offered in this chapter.

#### *Findings for Democratic Support*

Following the empirical analyses for actors, institutions, and procedures, I examine the two major domains of democratic support: abstract preferences for democracy and attitudes toward specific regime principles, such as political tolerance and checks and balances. Table 3.9 reports my results for abstract democratic support. I find, as expected, that individuals high in openness and emotional stability tend to endorse democracy over dictatorship. These are the two trait dimensions anticipated to exert consistently positive effects on democratic support because of the relevance of ideals and the free exchange of ideas to openness and the relevance of persistent support for democracy—even during uncertain social circumstances—to emotional stability.

**Table 3.9**  
Personality and Abstract Democratic Support

	<i>Subject Pool</i>	<i>AB</i>	<i>AB</i>
	Model I: Democracy Best System	Model II: Democracy Best System	Model III: Democracy Preferred to Authoritarian Government
Openness	-0.84 (1.03)	0.77*** (0.08)	0.41*** (0.07)
Conscientiousness	0.16 (0.84)	0.47*** (0.07)	-0.10 (0.09)
Extraversion	1.00 (0.86)	0.40*** (0.08)	0.11 (0.08)
Agreeableness	2.17* (1.01)	0.12 (0.11)	-0.00 (0.09)
Emotional Stability	-1.67 (1.06)	0.54*** (0.10)	0.25** (0.08)
Female	-0.75** (0.29)	-0.15*** (0.03)	-0.03 (0.04)
Age	-0.07 (0.08)	0.02*** (0.00)	0.02*** (0.00)
White	0.53+ (0.27)	0.08 (0.06)	0.10 (0.08)
Education	-0.10 (0.47)	0.75*** (0.10)	0.71*** (0.14)
Pseudo/Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.03	0.04	0.03
Number of Cases	205	36,323	35,675
Number of Countries	1	24	24
Method of Estimation	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal

Note: Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Constants and/or threshold parameters are omitted due to variation in the number of thresholds for some dependent variables in this chapter. See the main text for details on the methodology specific to each survey and for an explanation about any "N/A" entries in the row for explained variance. "AB" stands for "AmericasBarometer." \*\*\* p < .001  
\*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

I also expected to observe positive effects for conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness on abstract democratic support given societal norms in favor of elections and the relevance of duty, sociability, and compliance to these three trait dimensions, respectively. Previous studies of public opinion have reported high levels of abstract democratic support (e.g., Bratton and Mattes 2001; Klingemann 1999), and subject pool and AmericasBarometer respondents followed suit. For democracy as the best system, the average scores are 3.86 on a scale from 1 to 5 for the subject pool and 5.31 on a scale from 1 to 7 for the AmericasBarometer,

and AmericasBarometer respondents averaged 2.65 on a scale from 1 to 3 for the item on democracy over authoritarianism. The positive results for conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness in Table 3.9 thus conform to my hypotheses for abstract democratic support.

Table 3.10 transitions to support for specific regime principles, beginning with attitudes toward political dissidents and criminal rights. Consistent with the openness facets of ideas and idealism, empirical studies from the United States have reported positive effects of openness on a person's willingness to extend rights to political minorities and criminals (Marcus et al. 1995; Mondak and Halperin 2008; Mondak and Hurwitz 2012; Swami et al. 2012), and the openness coefficients in Models I and II replicate those findings in a different U.S. sample and extend the results to countries throughout the Western Hemisphere. Aside from education, openness exerts the largest effect in both political tolerance models. Switching from 0 to 1 in this trait dimension raises the probability of maximum tolerance in the CCES from 0.18 to 0.49 (i.e., an increase of 170.79 percent), and the same change in openness increases an AmericasBarometer respondent's political tolerance score by 3.11 points on a scale from 4 to 40 (i.e., 8.64 percent of the range). Openness does not exert a significant effect on support for criminal rights, however.

Meanwhile, the results for emotional stability are mildly consistent with the expectation of positive trait effects on attitudes toward political dissidents and criminals. Although the trait dimension is insignificantly related to political tolerance,<sup>136</sup> I do observe a positive and significant effect of emotional stability on support for criminal rights.

Next, I anticipated that highly conscientious and agreeable citizens would express less democratic support in response to perceived threats to societal order and cohesion from political dissidents and criminals. Only the political tolerance models are consistent with my hypotheses;

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<sup>136</sup> The insignificant results in Models I and II of Table 3.10 are reflective of the inconsistent findings in previous studies on emotional stability and political tolerance (Marcus et al. 1995; Oskarsson and Widmalm 2016).

**Table 3.10**

**Personality and Support for Democratic Principles**

	Extending Rights to Political Dissidents and Criminals		Mass Participation		Checks and Balances				Civilian Control		
	CCES	AB	AB	AB	AB	Subject Pool	Subject Pool	Subject Pool	Subject Pool	AB	AB
	Model I:	Model II:	Model III:	Model IV:	Model V:	Model VI:	Model VII:	Model VIII:	Model IX:		
	Political	Political	Support for	Approval of	Prefer Balance	Prefer Balance	Oppose	Prefer Balance	Oppose Coups		
	Tolerance	Tolerance	Criminal	Campaigning,	between	between	Executive	between	in Response to		
	Index	Index	Rights	Organizing, and	Executive and	Executive and	Orders in	Branches	Corruption,		
				Protesting	Other Political	Supreme	Response to	during Foreign	Crime, and		
					Institutions	Court	Congress	Invasion	Unemployment		
Openness	1.47** (0.53)	3.11*** (0.39)	-0.01 (0.09)	2.61*** (0.20)	2.02*** (0.23)	0.08 (1.07)	-1.01 (1.04)	2.57* (1.26)	0.34*** (0.10)		
Conscientiousness	-1.17+ (0.70)	0.33 (0.33)	0.21** (0.07)	1.50*** (0.23)	0.51* (0.21)	0.32 (0.84)	0.98 (0.79)	-0.45 (0.95)	-0.22* (0.10)		
Extraversion	0.28 (0.74)	1.42*** (0.34)	-0.20*** (0.05)	1.43*** (0.22)	1.03*** (0.14)	-0.68 (0.87)	-0.52 (0.83)	-1.68 (1.02)	-0.01 (0.10)		
Agreeableness	-0.61 (0.80)	-2.17*** (0.45)	0.32*** (0.09)	0.55+ (0.27)	0.01 (0.27)	0.68 (1.02)	-1.89+ (1.01)	0.03 (1.15)	-0.18* (0.08)		
Emotional Stability	-0.30 (0.66)	0.74 (0.50)	0.22* (0.09)	0.65* (0.27)	0.97*** (0.21)	-0.59 (1.06)	0.23 (1.02)	-0.41 (1.20)	0.21* (0.09)		
Female	-0.11 (0.27)	-1.17*** (0.18)	0.10*** (0.03)	-0.45*** (0.09)	-0.11 (0.08)	-0.30 (0.29)	0.35 (0.28)	1.55*** (0.35)	-0.04 (0.03)		
Age	0.01+ (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.01*** (0.00)	0.00 (0.01)	0.03*** (0.00)	-0.04 (0.08)	0.02 (0.09)	-0.42* (0.20)	0.02*** (0.00)		
White	0.58+ (0.35)	0.31 (0.34)	-0.00 (0.05)	-0.20 (0.18)	0.08 (0.22)	0.54+ (0.28)	0.31 (0.26)	0.57+ (0.33)	-0.02 (0.04)		
Education	2.53*** (0.34)	3.91*** (0.68)	-0.01 (0.14)	1.98*** (0.35)	2.83*** (0.42)	-0.14 (0.48)	0.31 (0.48)	2.36** (0.83)	0.77*** (0.18)		
Pseudo/Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.13	0.10	0.03	0.12	0.13	0.02	0.02	0.12	0.03		
Number of Cases	767	35,469	35,448	35,431	32,927	205	205	205	33,531		
Number of Countries	1	24	24	24	24	1	1	1	24		
Method of Estimation	Ordinal	OLS	Logit	OLS	OLS	Ordinal	Ordinal	Logit	Ordinal		

Note: Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Constants and/or threshold parameters are omitted due to variation in the number of thresholds for some dependent variables in this chapter. See the main text for details on the methodology specific to each survey and for an explanation about any "N/A" entries in the row for explained variance. "AB" stands for "America's Barometer." \*\*\* p < .001 \* p < .05 + p < .10

conscientiousness in Model I and agreeableness in Model II are negatively associated with extending rights to political minorities.<sup>137</sup> The direction of the relationship is reversed in Model III. Rather than being concerned about criminals, individuals high in conscientiousness and agreeableness appear to be afraid of the violation of legal norms and the disruption of societal cohesion by unchecked legal authorities.<sup>138</sup>

Finally, Table 3.10 reports the impact of extraversion on political tolerance and support for criminal rights. I expected negative effects due to the possible attraction of extraverts to assertive and authoritarian leadership, but the results are mixed. On one hand, extraversion exerts a negative effect on adherence to rights for criminals in Model III. On the other hand, extraverts in the AmericasBarometer are significantly more likely than their introverted counterparts to extend rights to political dissidents. Perhaps extraverts are simply responding to societal norms, as we might expect them to do. Citizens do not always endorse political tolerance (Oskarsson and Widmalm 2016; Peffley and Rohrschneider 2003), but the average score in the AmericasBarometer was 24.32 on a scale from 4 to 40. Extraverts, therefore, may support political tolerance as a means to avoid sanctions from people in their social network.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> The negative effect of agreeableness on political tolerance contradicts the findings of previous research (Oskarsson and Widmalm 2016) but comports with my hypothesis. More research, therefore, is needed to determine the exact nature of the relationship between agreeableness and political tolerance. Caution is especially warranted because my results in Model II of Table 3.10 could be attributable to the unique measurement of political tolerance in the AmericasBarometer. Instead of asking respondents to name their own disliked political group (e.g., Oskarsson and Widmalm 2016), the survey asked everyone to consider extending rights to the same group of political dissidents. Replication studies are needed to determine whether the impact of agreeableness on political tolerance is positive or negative and whether the trait effect is dependent on the measurement of political tolerance.

<sup>138</sup> The positive effect of conscientiousness on criminal rights attitudes may be surprising given the high concerns about crime in my 24-country sample for the AmericasBarometer. (On a scale from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating more perceived threat of crime to the nation, the mean was 0.83.) However, the positive impact could be due to the low level of support for the justice system in the Americas: Only about 40 percent of respondents held a positive view of the judicial system being able to punish someone who was guilty of a crime. Such a dim perspective of law enforcement could reduce the perceived ability of extralegal policing to achieve order.

<sup>139</sup> Apparently, however, extraverts are willing to contradict the majority of their fellow citizens on the issue of support for criminal rights. The average score for that dependent variable is 0.61 on a dichotomous scale from 0 to 1. Perhaps the disconnect between political tolerance and support for criminal rights is based on the rise in crime and concerns about crime in recent years in Latin America (Cruz 2009; Krause 2013). In the 16 Latin American

Future work should investigate the relationship between extraversion and political tolerance given the inconsistency between my results and previous findings (Marcus et al. 1995; Oskarsson and Widmalm 2016). Yet even prior studies offer support for my normative explanation. Marcus et al. report that extraversion is negatively associated with political tolerance, but their results are not robust to the inclusion of additional controls (Marcus et al. 1995). In addition, average levels of political tolerance are above the midpoint in the Marcus et al. study. Meanwhile, average political tolerance levels fall well below the midpoint in Oskarsson and Widmalm's research,<sup>140</sup> and extraversion exerts a strong and negative effect on democratic support.<sup>141</sup>

In addition to political minorities and criminals, I consider attitudes toward majority rights and mass participation in Table 3.10. I expect positive effects from all of the Big Five for approval of mass participation. For openness, mass participation constitutes one means by which citizens express their ideas to government officials. Individuals high in emotional stability also should be unconcerned about the impact of citizens utilizing their rights to protest, campaign, or organize. For their part, conscientious and agreeable citizens may feel a duty to comply with societal norms in favor of mass participation, and extraverts may approve of such behavior since they are more likely to participate in politics and since they prefer to avoid social sanctions. Scores from AmericasBarometer respondents indicate a normative climate in favor of mass participation in the Western Hemisphere, as the average score for the dependent variable in Model IV is 22.10 on a scale from 3 to 30.

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countries included in my study of the AmericasBarometer, 28.78 percent of citizens identified crime and delinquency, security, violence, drug trafficking, gangs, or terrorism as the most important national problem.

<sup>140</sup> Respondents in Oskarsson and Widmalm's (2016) study had the opportunity to tolerate two actions by a disliked group, but less than 25 percent were willing to permit at least one activity.

<sup>141</sup> In their study of personality and democratic support, Swami et al. (2012) report low means on an index of political intolerance and opposition to criminal rights. These means would indicate that extraversion would be negatively related to antidemocratic attitudes, and this is what Swami et al. find, although the significant correlation is not robust in a multivariate regression.

The results in Table 3.10 comport with expectations. Higher levels of openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability all facilitate greater approval of mass participation. Simultaneously moving from 0 to 1 on all five trait dimensions would increase one's mass participation score by 6.75 points on a scale from 3 to 30 (i.e., 24.99 percent of the range).

Support for democracy encompasses not just the relationship between citizens and government but also the connections between political institutions. The next four dependent variables in Table 3.10 focus on checks and balances between the executive and other government branches. As expected, high levels of openness and emotional stability are positively related to support for inter-branch balance. The emotional stability result in Model V likely stems from individuals high in that trait dimension being relatively unconcerned about minor inter-branch disagreements, and the openness results in Models V and VIII are consistent with the preference of highly open individuals for the free exchange of ideas among political elites and government institutions.

Table 3.10 also shows that individuals high in conscientiousness and extraversion are more supportive of checks and balances in the AmericasBarometer. Social norms in favor of orderly elite decision-making could have influenced the results, as the average score for the dependent variable in Model V is 15.00 on a scale from 3 to 21.

Meanwhile, in Model VII highly extraverted and agreeable citizens express less opposition to executive orders. The coefficient for extraversion is not significant in Table 3.10 but gains significance if ideology is added to the model.<sup>142</sup> The results for extraversion and agreeableness could be attributable to three factors at work in subject pool respondents. First, highly extraverted and agreeable individuals may be less opposed to executive orders because

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<sup>142</sup> Extraversion also becomes negative and significant in Model VIII if ideology is added to the regression.

they understand that issuing executive orders is more socially acceptable than ignoring the Supreme Court. The mean levels of democratic support are 3.92 for the Supreme Court item and 3.24 for the executive order item on a possible 1-to-5 scale with higher scores indicating more positive attitudes toward checks and balances. Second, highly agreeable respondents may have perceived executive orders as a fairly benign solution to bring order to inter-branch disagreement and unity to government decision-making. Third, the mention of executive orders could have triggered the extraversion facet of assertiveness because issuing these orders would be more aggressive for the president than policy inertia or acquiescence to Congress.

The final regime principle in Table 3.10 continues to focus on political institutions. In Model IX, the dependent variable is opposition to military coups during difficult times in society. Consistent with the findings for other regime principles, individuals high in openness and emotional stability express more support for civilian government. After education and age,<sup>143</sup> openness and emotional stability exert the greatest positive substantive impact on opposition to military coups.<sup>144</sup> Moving from 0 to 1 in both trait dimensions collectively raises the probability of maximum democratic support from 0.43 to 0.57 (i.e., an increase of 32.08 percent). The proposed mechanism for the openness result again pertains to the activation of the ideas and idealism facets, for the military option undercuts freedom of expression in the selection of rulers and therefore would be unappealing to individuals high in this trait dimension. For emotional stability, individuals high in this trait will be less likely to worry about the ultimate ability of elected officials to address problems like corruption, crime, and unemployment. Suspending democracy would be unnecessary in response to such issues.

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<sup>143</sup> The coefficient for age in Model IX exceeds the coefficient for education if age is coded from 0 to 1.

<sup>144</sup> In terms of absolute magnitude, though, the impact of conscientiousness slightly exceeds the impact of emotional stability.



Meanwhile, conscientiousness and agreeableness are negatively associated with opposition to military coups in response to unsettling societal conditions. The results are consistent with expectations because both trait dimensions are sensitive to violations of order. Individuals high in conscientiousness and agreeableness appear willing to sacrifice democratic governance in order to achieve social stability and temporary consensus.

Three general findings emerge from my results for democratic support. First, the openness coefficient is positive and significant in 8 of the 12 democratic support regressions in Tables 3.9 and 3.10. These results suggest consistency in trait-relevant cues for openness for abstract attitudes and multiple regime principles. Moreover, the evidence for democratic support—coupled with the results for actors, institutions, and procedures—indicates that high levels of openness encourage people to be “critical citizens” who endorse democracy but express dissatisfaction with the political status quo (Norris 1999a, 2011).

Second, high levels of emotional stability facilitate abstract democratic support and positive views toward most regime principles. Again, I obtain evidence of similar trait-relevant cues and cross-situational consistency for the various domains of democratic support. Furthermore, my results for emotional stability speak to Sniderman’s (1975) research on the related concept of self-esteem.<sup>145</sup> Sniderman observes that high levels of self-esteem promote political tolerance and support for procedural rights in the fight against crime. Although my findings for political tolerance are insignificant, I do show that emotionally stable citizens express significantly greater support for criminal rights and for other democratic attitudes. I thus apply Sniderman’s work to the predominant personality framework in contemporary psychology research: the Big Five. In addition, the AmericasBarometer results generalize Sniderman’s findings from the United States to a cross-national sample.

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<sup>145</sup> Robins et al. (2001b) find a positive and significant relationship between emotional stability and self-esteem.

Third, trait effects are more heterogeneous for conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness. When social norms favor democracy, individuals high in these trait dimensions exhibit greater endorsement of regime principles than individuals low in these trait dimensions. But when norms begin to turn against democracy (i.e., executive order attitudes in the subject pool) or when support opportunities emphasize assertive leadership and threats to order, highly conscientious, extraverted, and agreeable citizens retreat from regime principles. Individuals high in these trait dimensions thus appear to be susceptible to antidemocratic arguments that appeal to preferences for strong leadership and political stability.

#### *Findings for Community Support*

The final level in Norris' (1999a, 2011) framework is the political community. Extant research has utilized student samples to examine the impact of personality on national identification (Jenkins et al. 2012; Sagiv et al. 2012). I build on prior work by incorporating nationally representative samples and by studying patriotism, the other domain of community support. Furthermore, I expect similar trait-relevant cues and consistent trait effects for both domains of community support since patriotism and national identification involve self-expression (Klingemann 1999), relate to a person's emotions (Roccas et al. 2008), and receive high normative endorsement by the public (Jenkins et al. 2012; Klingemann 1999).<sup>146</sup> Indeed, mean responses for all national identification and patriotism items in my surveys are well above the midpoint.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> I also would expect consistent trait-relevant cues across domains because all of the community support questions are asked at the same point in the subject pool and because three of the four questions are asked at the same point in the ANES. At the same time, I should note that the patriotism items in the subject pool are more strongly correlated with each other than either is with the national identification item, and the correlation between the patriotism items in the ANES is stronger than the correlation between either of the patriotism items and the national identification item asked at a different point in the survey. (The correlations between each of the ANES patriotism items and the contemporaneously asked national identification item, however, are higher than the correlation between the two patriotism items.)

<sup>147</sup> For more details, see Table B.2 in Appendix B.

**Table 3.11**

## Personality and Political Community Support

	National Identification		Patriotism		
	<i>ANES</i>	<i>Subject Pool</i>	<i>ANES</i>	<i>Subject Pool</i>	<i>AB</i>
	Model I:	Model II:	Model III:	Model IV:	Model V:
	National	National	Patriotism	Patriotism	Patriotism
	Identification	Identification	Index	Index	Item
	Index	Item			
Openness	-0.38*	-1.40	-0.31*	-2.98**	0.27*
	(0.18)	(1.06)	(0.16)	(0.93)	(0.12)
Conscientiousness	1.08***	-0.12	0.54***	1.11	0.83***
	(0.15)	(0.82)	(0.13)	(0.72)	(0.09)
Extraversion	1.09***	0.20	0.94***	1.44+	0.66***
	(0.19)	(0.85)	(0.16)	(0.76)	(0.11)
Agreeableness	0.86***	2.58**	0.66***	1.21	1.08***
	(0.18)	(0.99)	(0.15)	(0.87)	(0.09)
Emotional Stability	0.11	0.21	0.27*	0.24	0.19
	(0.16)	(1.02)	(0.13)	(0.91)	(0.17)
Female	-0.01	-0.67*	0.02	-0.57*	-0.12***
	(0.06)	(0.28)	(0.06)	(0.25)	(0.03)
Age	0.03***	0.09	0.02***	0.02	0.01***
	(0.00)	(0.09)	(0.00)	(0.08)	(0.00)
White	0.12	0.77**	0.32***	0.71**	-0.03
	(0.08)	(0.26)	(0.07)	(0.24)	(0.05)
Education	-0.28*	-0.32	-0.27**	0.49	-0.69***
	(0.11)	(0.48)	(0.10)	(0.43)	(0.13)
Pseudo/Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.15	0.04	0.14	0.09	0.07
Number of Cases	5,339	205	5,318	205	37,588
Number of Countries	1	1	1	1	24
Method of Estimation	OLS	Ordinal	OLS	OLS	Ordinal

Note: Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Constants and/or threshold parameters are omitted due to variation in the number of thresholds for some dependent variables in this chapter. See the main text for details on the methodology specific to each survey and for an explanation about any "N/A" entries in the row for explained variance. "AB" stands for "AmericasBarometer." \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

Table 3.11 reports my findings for both domains of community support. I expected negative effects for openness as individuals high in this trait dimension hesitate to endorse traditional attitudes such as patriotism and national identification. As anticipated, openness exerts a negative and significant effect in three of five models.<sup>148</sup> The results apply across

<sup>148</sup> The main contrary result is the positive and significant openness coefficient in Model V, but this coefficient ceases to be significant if I control for a person's general tendency to provide extreme responses to opinion questions on the AmericasBarometer. Openness tends to promote extreme responding to survey questions (Hibbing

domains of community support and for the subject pool and ANES in Models III and IV, implying that similar psychological processes are at work in college students and in the U.S. population as a whole. The impact of this trait dimension is especially strong in Model IV, where the coefficient for openness exceeds all others in absolute magnitude by nearly 1.54 points on a scale from 2 to 10. Moving from 0 to 1 in openness would reduce a person's level of reported patriotism by 2.98 points, which amounts to 37.19 percent of the range of the scale.

The other results in Table 3.11 are also consistent with my hypotheses. Social norms in favor of community support played a major role in my theoretical arguments for conscientiousness due to the facet of dutifulness, extraversion due to the facet of sociability, and agreeableness due to the facet of compliance. In addition, highly conscientious individuals may find order in attaching themselves to traditional political attitudes such as national identification and patriotism, highly extraverted individuals may express their tendency toward positive emotions by communicating positive feelings about the political community, and highly agreeable individuals may love and identify with their country because of the activation of the warmth facet of this trait dimension. Consistent with these arguments, I observe positive and significant effects for conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness for both domains of community support and for at least two different surveys.

Likewise, Table 3.11 offers some evidence for the positive expected relationship between emotional stability and community support. In particular, Model III shows that individuals high in emotional stability tended to express more patriotism in the ANES. This finding is consistent with my argument that community support opportunities would activate a person's level of anxiety and produce a positive effect for emotional stability as individuals high in this trait

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et al. n.d.), and perhaps social norms in favor of patriotism led to more extreme positive answers than extreme negative answers. Indeed, the coefficient for extreme response style is positive and highly significant. For more on the implications of the personality–response style relationship for this chapter, see Appendix C.

dimension choose not to worry about a national community about which they know only a part. The muted results for the other models, however, suggest that additional research is needed to clarify the relationship between emotional stability and community support.

The results in Table 3.11 reveal the following points. First, the findings mostly comport with my expectations for all five dimensions of the Big Five. Second, I observe evidence of within-level cross-situational consistency in the effects of personality on national identification and patriotism. Except for emotional stability, results are generally similar across the domains of community support.

### *Combining the Evidence across Levels*

Table 3.12 summarizes the evidence across levels for cross-situational consistency. I expected broadly homogeneous trait effects within and across the actor, institutional, and procedural levels of support. Results from the ANES, CCES, subject pool, and AmericasBarometer generally comport with my hypotheses, as the effects for openness and extraversion tend to be negative and the effects for agreeableness and emotional stability tend to be positive. Patterns generally hold for each level of political support. The most consistent results both within and across levels are for agreeableness and emotional stability: In the 38 actor, institutional, and procedural models, the agreeableness coefficient was positive and significant 19 times but negative and significant 0 times, and the emotional stability coefficient was positive and significant 13 times but negative and significant only 2 times. Meanwhile, the openness coefficient was negative and significant in 14 of 38 models and positive and significant in just 8 of 38 models, and the extraversion coefficient was negative and significant in 11 of 35 models and positive and significant in only 7 of 35 models.<sup>149</sup> Using the 0.10 level of statistical

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<sup>149</sup> The lower number of models is due to my uncertainty about the impact of extraversion on overall support for regime performance.

**Table 3.12**

Evidence of Cross-Situational Consistency: Significant Coefficients across Levels of Political Support

	A. Political Actors			B. Regime Institutions			C. Regime Performance			D. Regime Principles			E. Political Community		
	+ /Sig	- /Sig	# of DVs	+ /Sig	- /Sig	# of DVs	+ /Sig	- /Sig	# of DVs	+ /Sig	- /Sig	# of DVs	+ /Sig	- /Sig	# of DVs
Openness	5	4	17	3	7	13	0	3	8	8	0	12	1	3	5
Conscientiousness	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	4	2	12	3	0	5
Extraversion	3	5	17	4	5	13	0*	1*	5*	4	1	12	4	0	5
Agreeableness	7	0	17	7	0	13	5	0	8	3	3	12	4	0	5
Emotional Stability	3	2	17	7	0	13	3	0	8	6	0	12	1	0	5

Note: Entries are based on Tables 3.3 through 3.11. The first two columns in each panel are the number of coefficients for a particular level of political support that are positive/significant and negative/significant, respectively. The third column is the total number of dependent variables for a level of support. Conscientiousness results are omitted for actor, institutional, and performance levels because no hypotheses for this trait dimension were offered for those three dependent variables. \* Does not include extraversion results for overall regime performance attitudes because this hypothesis was indeterminate.

significance as a guide, we might only expect 10 percent of the coefficients (i.e., about 4 coefficients) to be statistically significant by chance in either the positive or negative direction, so the number of significant coefficients in the expected direction is fairly substantial.

Compared with the results for actor, institutional, and procedural support, some of the trait effects for democratic support are noticeably different. The fourth panel of Table 3.12 shows that openness is positively and consistently associated with support for regime principles in 8 of 12 models, whereas the trait effect tends to be negative in the first three panels. Likewise, the modal effects for extraversion (agreeableness) shift from negative (positive) in the status quo models to positive (neutral) in the democratic support models. The significant results for conscientiousness and democratic attitudes in the AmericasBarometer and CCES also contrast with the largely insignificant trait effects on actor, institutional, and procedural support in the same two surveys.

The unique findings for democratic support comport with expectations, as I hypothesized that opportunities to endorse regime principles convey different trait-relevant cues than opportunities to embrace current political leaders, government agencies, and regime performance. In particular, regime principles pertain to ideals as opposed to instrumental evaluations of contemporary public affairs (Klingemann 1999), and social norms differ for the two sets of attitudes. Citizens understand that criticism of actors, institutions, and procedures is

socially acceptable (e.g., Citrin 1974; Dalton 1999), but negative norms do not apply to all domains of democratic support (e.g., Dalton 1999; Kulinski et al. 1991).

In spite of these differences across levels, one common theme is the importance of personality as a predictor of political support. The first three panels of Table 3.12 reveal that traits are more significant than would be expected by chance in models of actor, institutional, and procedural attitudes. We could make the same observation for personality and democratic support in the fourth panel of Table 3.12. Of the five trait dimensions, openness and emotional stability are the most consistent for democratic support, with 75 percent and 50 percent of coefficients being positive and significant, respectively.

Within the democratic support level, I also find evidence of heterogeneous trait effects. The number of positive and significant agreeableness coefficients equals the number of negative and significant agreeableness coefficients, and results for conscientiousness and extraversion also are somewhat mixed.<sup>150</sup> Such diverse findings for personality correspond with recent observations that different attitudinal and demographic characteristics predict support for various attitudes toward democracy (Canache 2012; Carlin and Singer 2011). Democratic support, therefore, is a multifaceted concept, and distinct opportunities to endorse regime principles will convey unique trait-relevant cues.

Finally, Table 3.12 summarizes my results for the link between personality and attitudes toward the political community. Personality effects are generally consistent for national identification and patriotism, with the sole exception of openness in the AmericasBarometer. The number of significant coefficients for each trait dimension is also greater than would be expected by chance.

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<sup>150</sup> This point is truer for extraversion when we remember that the effects on opposition to executive orders are negative and significant when ideology is included in Models VII and VIII of Table 3.10. If we add these negative effects to Table 3.12, the ratio of positive-to-negative extraversion results would be 4–3.

Across levels, I expected trait effects for community support to differ from trait effects for other attitudes toward the political system. Again, I based my reasoning on the distinct purpose and norms associated with patriotism and national identification. In particular, trait-relevant cues could originate in the self-expressive nature of community support or the social expectation that people would love and identify with their country. The other levels of support, by contrast, are centered on instrumental or idealistic purposes (Klingemann 1999) and are subject to different norms (e.g., Dalton 1999; Mondak and Hurwitz 2012; Oskarsson and Widmalm 2016).

As anticipated, some of the trait effects for community support diverge sharply from results for the other levels. For openness (agreeableness), the negative (positive) coefficients in the patriotism and national identification models resemble the pattern for actor, institutional, and procedural support, rather than the positive (mixed) results in the nearby level of democratic support. The impact of conscientiousness on community attitudes, meanwhile, is no longer insignificant as was often observed at the actor, institutional, and performance levels, nor is it somewhat mixed as was observed for the regime principle level. Instead, conscientiousness exerts a consistently positive effect on patriotism and national identification. Consistently positive effects for extraversion are also unique in the political community models, for the coefficients are no longer negative in the first three panels of Table 3.12 or somewhat mixed in the fourth panel of Table 3.12. Only the positive coefficient for emotional stability resembles the positive results for all previous levels of support.

In sum, the evidence generally comports with the hypothesis of cross-situational consistency across levels. With the actor and institutional levels, however, openness and extraversion have similar numbers of positive and negative coefficients in Table 3.12. I expected



**Table 3.13**

Evidence of Cross-Situational Consistency: Significant Coefficients across Domains of Actor and Institutional Support

	A. Political Trust			B. Job Evaluations			C. Affective Support			D. External Efficacy		
	+/Sig	-/Sig	# of DVs	+/Sig	-/Sig	# of DVs	+/Sig	-/Sig	# of DVs	+/Sig	-/Sig	# of DVs
Openness	0	2	4	3	5	13	2	3	8	3	1	5
Conscientiousness	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Extraversion	0	1	4	1	7	13	4	1	8	2	1	5
Agreeableness	3	0	4	6	0	13	4	0	8	1	0	5
Emotional Stability	2	0	4	4	2	13	3	0	8	1	0	5

Note: Entries are based on Tables 3.3 through 3.7. The first two columns in each panel are the number of coefficients for a particular domain of actor and institutional support that are positive/significant and negative/significant, respectively. The third column is the total number of dependent variables for a domain of support. Conscientiousness results are omitted because no hypotheses for this trait dimension were offered for actor and institutional support.

as much due to unique trait-relevant cues associated with external efficacy and political affect.

Because of the citizen influence component of external efficacy, I anticipated that the effects of openness and extraversion might be positive, and extraversion could have a positive impact on political affect because of the connection between this trait dimension and positive emotions. In short, the domains of external efficacy and political affect could convey distinct trait-relevant cues for openness and extraversion.

To explore heterogeneous effects, I conducted separate examinations of cross-situational consistency for the four domains of actor and institutional support. Table 3.13 reports the results. As expected, openness tends to be positively related to external efficacy but negatively related to political trust, job evaluations, and affective support.<sup>151</sup> The number of significant and expected coefficients in each domain is greater than would be expected by chance. We also observe the expected pattern for extraversion. This trait dimension tends to exert a positive effect on affective support and external efficacy but a negative effect on political trust and job evaluations.

<sup>151</sup> In contrast to actor and institutional support, I expected to observe consistent openness effects for both domains of regime performance support. As noted in the discussion of Table 3.8 above, at least one openness coefficient is negative and significant for overall and principle-specific procedural attitudes. The same pattern emerges for emotional stability but with positive trait effects, and at least two of the agreeableness coefficients are positive and significant in both domains. By contrast, extraversion is positively related to overall support and negatively related to principle-specific support. Such inconsistency is not unexpected given the indeterminate nature of my hypothesis for extraversion and overall procedural attitudes. I should note that all of the within-level cross-situational consistency results for regime performance are more frequent than would be expected by chance.

**Table 3.14****Hypotheses on Cross-Situational Consistency: Summary of Evidence**

<i>Level</i>	<i>Trait Effects Within Level</i>	<i>Supported?</i>	<i>Trait Effects Across Levels</i>	<i>Supported?</i>
Political Actors	Broadly Homogeneous Trait Effects	Yes	Trait Effects Broadly Similar for	Yes
Regime Institutions	Broadly Homogeneous Trait Effects	Yes	Actor, Institutional, and	
Regime Performance	Broadly Homogeneous Trait Effects	Yes	Performance Levels of Support	
Regime Principles	Heterogeneous Trait Effects	Yes	Different Trait Effects Than Other Levels of Support	Yes
Political Community	Homogeneous Trait Effects	Yes	Different Trait Effects Than Other Levels of Support	Yes

Again, the number of significant and expected coefficients in each domain is greater than what we would expect by chance.

Meanwhile, the agreeableness and emotional stability results in Table 3.13 are much more consistent across the domains of actor and institutional support. In all domains, the positive and significant coefficients outnumber any negative and significant coefficients, and the number of significant and expected coefficients in each domain is always greater than what would be expected by chance. Trait-relevant cues for agreeableness and emotional stability thus appear to be similar for the various domains of actor and institutional attitudes.

Table 3.14 summarizes the evidence for my hypotheses on cross-situational consistency. Overall, I observe similar trait effects for comparable forms of political support and dissimilar trait effects for less comparable forms of political support. Results are generally consistent with expectations.

In addition, Table 3.15 reviews the evidence for my hypotheses on the Big Five. Results generally comport with expectations. Individuals high in openness tend to criticize the political status quo, support democracy, and express less patriotism and national identification. Highly open people are the quintessential “critical citizens” (Norris 1999a, 2011). Conscientiousness matters more for democratic and community attitudes than for attitudes toward actors, institutions, and procedures. For opinions on regime principles, the driving factor is the

**Table 3.15**

Hypotheses for the Big Five: Summary of Evidence

	<i>Actor, Institutional, and Procedural Attitudes</i>	<i>Supported?</i>	<i>Regime Principle Attitudes</i>	<i>Supported?</i>	<i>Community Attitudes</i>	<i>Supported?</i>
Openness	Negative if trust, job effectiveness, or affect	Yes	Positive for all domains	Yes	Negative for both domains	Yes
	Positive if external efficacy	Yes				
Conscientiousness	No expectations	N/A	Positive (negative) if domain promotes (opposes) order or dutifulness	Yes	Positive for both domains	Yes
	Negative if trust or job effectiveness	Yes	Positive (negative) if popular (unpopular) democratic ideal	Yes	Positive for both domains	Yes
Extraversion	Positive if affect or external efficacy	Yes	Negative if domain allows for assertive, nondemocratic behavior	Yes		
	No expectations if overall procedural support	N/A				
Agreeableness	Positive for all domains	Yes	Positive (negative) if domain promotes (opposes) popular ideals and societal consensus/order	Yes	Positive for both domains	Yes
Emotional Stability	Positive for all domains	Yes	Positive for all domains	Yes	Positive for both domains	Yes

Note: Domains for actors and institutions consist of political trust, perceived job effectiveness, political affect, and external efficacy. Regime performance domains refer to overall and principle-specific evaluations of democratic performance. For regime principles, domains include abstract democratic support as well as attitudes toward specific ideals, such as political tolerance and civilian governance of the military. Finally, community support refers to the domains of patriotism and national identification.

implications of the support opportunity for the conscientiousness facets of order and dutifulness, but this trait dimension is consistently and positively related to community support. Meanwhile, the impact of extraversion is somewhat heterogeneous for actor, institutional, procedural, and democratic attitudes, as expected, but the effect is more consistent for community support. The story is somewhat simpler for agreeableness. Consistent with my hypotheses, I show that agreeable individuals are more supportive of actors, institutions, procedures, and the political community, but the effect on regime principles depends on the support opportunity's connection to norms, societal consensus, and order. The account is even more straightforward for emotional stability. Although the effects of this trait dimension on community attitudes are fairly weak, I find that citizens high in emotional stability, compared with citizens low in emotional stability, express more support for the political system at each level.

A final point pertains to the generalizability of my findings across studies. As noted above, the surveys differ in terms of variable operationalization, interview format, timing, and geographic location. Consistent findings across studies would minimize concerns about survey-specific factors being responsible for my results. In addition, few studies on personality and political support expand beyond economically developed democracies,<sup>152</sup> so it is empirically important to demonstrate that my results from the United States travel to the diverse set of countries included in the 2010 AmericasBarometer.

Therefore, I have identified 12 AmericasBarometer dependent variables in this chapter with conceptual matches in at least one U.S. survey. An example would be the global executive approval items in the ANES, CCES, and AmericasBarometer.<sup>153</sup> In the 12 AmericasBarometer

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<sup>152</sup> The two exceptions of which I am aware are Mondak et al. (2017) and Oskarsson and Widmalm (2016).

<sup>153</sup> The other AmericasBarometer dependent variables with a conceptual match to my U.S. survey data are the institutional trust index (subject pool), approval of the national legislature (ANES and CCES), issue-specific executive approval (ANES and subject pool), actor external efficacy (ANES and subject pool), democratic

models, a total of 38 personality coefficients are statistically significant,<sup>154</sup> and 13 of these 38 coefficients have at least one match in the ANES, CCES, or subject pool that is significant and in the same direction. For instance, agreeableness is positively and significantly related to global executive approval in the AmericasBarometer, ANES, and CCES. I thus conclude that findings from the United States are applicable in a cross-national sample.

I adopted a similar approach with the subject pool in order to determine whether results from a student sample in the United States apply to the country as a whole. In total, I identified 10 subject pool dependent variables with a conceptual match in the ANES; an example would be the two indices of actor trust in Table 3.3.<sup>155,156</sup> A total of 10 personality coefficients in the 10 subject pool models are significant,<sup>157</sup> and 9 of these 10 coefficients correspond with their ANES coefficient in significance and direction. Results from a student sample thus appear to be generalizable to a broader national sample.<sup>158</sup>

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satisfaction (ANES and subject pool), citizen rights being protected (ANES and subject pool), trust in the electoral process (ANES), democracy as the best system (subject pool), the political tolerance index (CCES), support for checks and balances (Supreme Court and executive order items in subject pool), and patriotism (ANES and subject pool).

<sup>154</sup> The total of 38 refers to all personality coefficients, even if I have not offered a hypothesis for a particular trait–support relationship.

<sup>155</sup> The 10 matches are as follows: the index of actor trust, issue-specific executive approval, the feeling thermometer index for Democrats, the feeling thermometer index for Republicans, institutional affect, actor external efficacy, democratic satisfaction, citizen rights being protected, national identification, and the patriotism index.

<sup>156</sup> There were no conceptual matches between the dependent variables for the subject pool and those for the CCES.

<sup>157</sup> The total of 10 refers to all personality coefficients, even if I have not offered a hypothesis for a particular trait–support relationship.

<sup>158</sup> I reviewed the results in this chapter with two additional robustness checks. In one robustness check, I examined whether the personality results for actor support change when respondents affiliate with the incumbent party or voted for the current incumbent in the most recent election. I focused on actor support because the impact of partisan bias can change from election to election depending on which politicians from which parties obtain office, whereas other aspects of the political system are less related to the current party in power. Political institutions, regime principles, and the political community exist regardless of the party of the current government. Different parties may hold different priorities for regime performance, but even these differences may be limited in practice because of institutional constraints (e.g., a recalcitrant bureaucracy). Regarding the results of this robustness check, very few personality coefficients changed from significant to insignificant or vice versa with the addition of a political bias variable. In the second robustness check, I investigated whether the personality results could be due not to substantive considerations but instead to the relationship between personality traits and survey response styles, namely the tendencies to provide extreme responses to opinion questions and to acquiesce on agree–disagree or approve–disapprove items. I examined the issue by controlling for survey response styles in models in which the dependent variable could be subject to extreme response style or acquiescence response style. Few personality

## Conclusions and Implications

This chapter has addressed the disconnected state of the personality and support literature. Extant research normally concentrates on particular attitudes and thereby ignores questions about a broader theory that could explain trait effects within and across multiple forms of support. To fill the gap, I have emphasized trait activation theory as a comprehensive model of the impact of personality on attitudes toward the political system. I developed expectations for the influence of each trait dimension within as well as across the five levels of Norris' (1999a, 2011) framework, and then I tested these expectations with novel and traditional political support outcomes. Across four different surveys and multiple forms of political support, I found broadly consistent results in support of my model. Trait activation theory thus appears to function as a comprehensive framework capable of achieving integrative and additive cumulation by accounting for past and new observations (Lave and March 1975; Zinnes 1976). This chapter also makes an empirical contribution to the personality literature by studying political support in a cross-national setting and by generalizing my results from the United States to the diverse set of countries surveyed in the 2010 AmericasBarometer. Most studies on personality and support utilize data solely from economically developed countries (e.g., Freitag and Ackermann 2016; Swami et al. 2012).

The results from the ANES, CCES, subject pool, and AmericasBarometer provide evidence of cross-situational consistency. I expected citizens to receive similar trait-relevant cues from actor, institutional, and procedural support opportunities because of the association of these levels with instrumental evaluations of the status quo (Klingemann 1999), and I found broadly consistent personality effects across these three levels of political support. High levels of

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coefficients changed from significant to insignificant or vice versa. Details and results for both robustness checks are available in Appendix C.

agreeableness and emotional stability tend to promote more positive attitudes, whereas high levels of openness and, to some extent, extraversion encourage more pessimistic evaluations.

Meanwhile, conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness exert positive and negative effects on democratic support, as expected. In some cases, individuals high in these trait dimensions may be susceptible to antidemocratic arguments favoring assertive leadership and societal order and unity. The positive effects of openness and emotional stability, meanwhile, are more consistent across the domains of democratic support.

The final object of support is the political community. I find strong evidence for positive effects for conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness and some evidence for a negative openness effect and a positive emotional stability effect. These findings are generally consistent for both national identification and patriotism attitudes.

Collectively, my findings suggest ways in which political elites could tailor their communications to appeal to individuals with particular personality characteristics. Because messages that appeal to citizens at one pole of a trait dimension are likely to repel citizens at the other pole, politicians and nongovernmental organizations must target their communications based on the personality traits of their audience. Gerber and his colleagues (2011b) report, for example, that Americans high in openness are more likely to obtain their news online and watch political satire shows on television, and individuals low in openness tend to prefer local news. Therefore, to increase support for incumbent candidates, institutions, and procedures among individuals high (low) in openness, politicians could emphasize the administration's adherence to democratic principles (adherence to longstanding party policies) in interviews with online outlets and political satire hosts (local television networks). Messages such as these should appeal to citizens generally predisposed to oppose (support) current actors, institutions, and procedures.

Likewise, political elites could increase support for democratic principles among highly open citizens by stressing the free exchange of ideas in online and satire forums and among less open citizens by highlighting the country's democratic longevity on local news.

Communication strategies apply to more trait dimensions than openness. For example, Gerber et al. (2011b) find that high levels of conscientiousness increase the probability of watching political talk shows on television but decrease one's interest in political satire. To reinforce (counteract) the relatively strong (weak) levels of patriotism among individuals high (low) in conscientiousness,<sup>159</sup> political elites could appear on political talk (satire) shows, discussing the national loyalty of citizens in the political community (the diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds of citizens in the political community). Messages about loyalty (diversity) should resonate with the high (low) level of dutifulness (orderliness) that is characteristic of individuals who are high (low) in conscientiousness.

Such targeted messaging has implications for citizen competence. By communicating with audiences based on their personality traits, politicians and nongovernmental organizations can influence political support levels in the population and thereby increase rates of political participation, enhancing the ability of the public to address collective problems and hold elected officials accountable.

Elite messaging invokes the vital role of trait-relevant cues in one's media context. In this chapter, I largely have ignored the political environment in order to concentrate on the role of trait activation theory for understanding the direct impact of personality on political support, but

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<sup>159</sup> Mean levels of patriotism are high in the ANES, subject pool, and AmericasBarometer, but there is still room for growth among individuals low and high in conscientiousness. In the ANES, for example, more than 56 percent (67 percent) of respondents above (below) the mean in conscientiousness scored below the maximum level of patriotism.



my model also accounts for the interaction of personality and context. I turn to conditional personality effects in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER 4  
THE CONDITIONAL LINK FROM PERSONALITY TO POLITICAL SUPPORT—PART 1:  
INCORPORATING CONTEXTUAL PERCEPTIONS

Individuals receive trait-relevant cues from multiple sources. As Chapter 3 noted, one origin of such signals is the political support opportunity; I found, for example, that political trust and job approval items activate extraversion and produce negative trait effects. My results indicate that extraverts are responding to the impersonal aspects of the political status quo, for political actors, institutions, and procedures are more distant to citizens than their interpersonal networks of family, friends, and acquaintances.

But the political support opportunity is not the only originator of trait-relevant information. The broader political, economic, and social environment may facilitate personality effects by emphasizing the extraversion facet of sociability, the openness facet of ideas, or other facets of the Big Five trait dimensions. Social norms, for instance, may attract the attention of extraverts because of their interest in the opinions of other people.

Trait-relevant cues differ across time and space due to contextual differences from one sample to another. To continue with the previous example, cross-survey variation in the compliance of public officials with social norms could produce positive extraversion effects on actor support in one study, negative extraversion effects in a second study, and insignificant extraversion effects in a third study. Unique information across contexts, therefore, can yield inconsistent direct effects of personality.

Such divergent results can appear puzzling in the absence of a model on person–situation interactions. Trait activation theory (TAT) (Tett and Burnett 2003; Tett and Guterman 2000), however, promises to account for heterogeneous personality effects by emphasizing the trait-relevant cues emitted by low, medium, or high levels of a contextual variable. In this chapter, I

respond to four empirical puzzles in the extant literature on the direct effects of personality on attitudes toward the political system. The inconsistent trait effects pertain to multiple dimensions of the Big Five and to multiple levels of political support, and the environmental factors under consideration are based on actual contextual differences across surveys in previous research. For example, two studies have identified divergent effects of conscientiousness on status quo attitudes by drawing on U.S. survey data collected in two noticeably distinct economic contexts: 2005 during a period of reasonably strong economic growth (Mondak and Halperin 2008) and 2012 during the aftermath of the Great Recession (Cawvey et al. n.d.). Using TAT, I explain how levels of economic growth interact with conscientiousness to produce heterogeneous trait effects. I follow the same approach for the other three puzzles and formally test my hypotheses on conditional trait effects with U.S. and cross-national survey data.

The present chapter represents a first step in resolving empirical puzzles on the direct effects of personality on political support. I also explore inconsistent trait effects in the next chapter by examining person–situation interactions. The primary difference between chapters is that the current one relies on perceptual measures of a person’s context and the next one utilizes objective measures of a person’s context.

This dissertation incorporates both perceptual and objective measures in order to capitalize on their advantages and offset their disadvantages. Because of their external character, objective factors avoid the possibility that perceptions are simply a function of an individual’s personality traits. Such a scenario would violate the causal order proposed by TAT, with cues activating traits and traits influencing attitudes and behavior. Meanwhile, contextual perceptions avoid the possibility of individuals ignoring objective information. Extant applications of TAT in

occupational psychology also have utilized subjective contextual measures (e.g., Botero and Van Dyne 2009; Colbert and Witt 2009; Premeaux and Bedeian 2003).

My empirical tests in this chapter and the next one carry implications for citizen competence. By studying person–situation interactions, I can identify which individuals are most likely to respond to information from their political environment. Only some members of the public function as ideal democratic citizens who observe governmental performance and then reward and punish the political status quo accordingly in their level of political support. Democratic principles, meanwhile, encourage citizens to embrace regime norms such as political tolerance in spite of environmental conditions, but not everyone follows democratic ideals, perhaps due in part to trait–environment interactions.

Information about which individuals are most receptive to political information could have practical relevance for the messaging of elites. Political activists, for example, could tailor their communications about economic performance based on the personality traits of their audience, influencing levels of political support and, as a result, the frequency of citizen engagement and the ability of the public to express its interests, address societal problems, and hold government accountable.

The remainder of this chapter is organized as follows. I first articulate the value of a general theory of trait–situation interactions to the study of personality effects. Then, I identify four puzzles in the personality and support literature and demonstrate how trait activation theory can explain inconsistent trait effects; using TAT, I develop a series of expectations regarding person–situation interactions. Third, I review my measures of contextual perceptions. The fourth section reports the results, and I conclude by summarizing the discussion and the practical implications of my findings.

## Moving from Direct to Conditional Trait Effects

Few studies on personality and support investigate person–situation interactions; most are focused on direct trait effects. The only exceptions of which I am aware are Freitag and Ackermann’s (2016) study of institutional trust in Switzerland and Oskarsson and Widmalm’s (2016) study of political tolerance in India and Pakistan. I build on their work by using TAT as a general guide to develop hypotheses about conditional personality effects. Freitag and Ackermann, by contrast, generate their hypotheses in an ad hoc fashion suited for their study on personality, direct democracy, and political trust. Meanwhile, Oskarsson and Widmalm consider general theoretical arguments on situational strength, but TAT scholars would view such an approach as insufficient because the level of situational strength does not guarantee that personality effects will occur. Trait-relevant cues must be present in weak situations.

A general model of conditional effects can advance personality and support research in three key ways. First, scholars can draw on a broad theory for inspiration in developing their specific hypotheses on person–situation interactions, rather than starting from square one for each project.<sup>160</sup> Second, a common model can assist researchers in using the same terminology (e.g., “situational strength” and “trait-relevant cues” in TAT research) and avoiding speaking past one another across different studies.

Third, scholars can capitalize on the broad scope of a general theory by examining whether findings or specific theoretical mechanisms for one aspect of political support apply to other attitudes toward the political system. For instance, Freitag and Ackermann (2016) argue that high levels of direct democracy could denote the unresponsiveness of public officials in Switzerland, reducing levels of political trust among highly conscientious citizens who value

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<sup>160</sup> The process outlined here could allow a general theory to achieve integrative cumulation (Zinnes 1976) by offering a unifying explanation for a large number of observations. By contrast, ad hoc approaches would account for fewer observations and therefore would be less preferable according to Lave and March (1975).

success. Freitag and Ackermann's empirical results are consistent with their explanation. Building on their study via trait activation theory, I argue that other contextual factors pertaining to achievement-striving (e.g., economic performance) activate conscientiousness and produce trait effects not just on political trust, but also on job approval ratings and other evaluations of the political status quo. Results consistent with such a hypothesis would indicate the value of TAT as a general theory and also would enable me to account for heterogeneous direct effects of conscientiousness in the literature on actor and institutional attitudes.

In addition to benefitting research on political support, TAT could fill a gap in the personality literature more generally. Numerous personality researchers have acknowledged the importance of trait–situation interactions for explaining attitudes and behavior (e.g., Funder 2008; Mischel 1973; McCrae and Costa 2008; Mondak et al. 2010), but few general theories have specified exactly how traits and contextual factors interact.<sup>161</sup> Without a broad framework for guiding hypothesis development for conditional personality effects, many personality researchers have focused on the direct relationship between traits and the outcome of interest (Mondak et al. 2010).<sup>162</sup> Of the studies that do consider conditional trait effects, many develop their hypotheses in an ad hoc fashion based on the particular contextual factors and dependent variables under consideration (e.g., Gerber et al. 2013; Mondak et al. 2010).

If trait activation theory functions as a general model of person–situation interactions, the innovations listed above for the political support literature could apply to other domains of psychological research. Health psychologists, for example, could draw on the general insights

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<sup>161</sup> McCrae and Costa's (2008) Five-Factor Theory, for instance, presents a broad theory of personality concerned with person–situation interactions but also with the maintenance of self-concepts, the influence of individuals on the environment, and other concepts and relationships. The theory, therefore, does not explicate how traits and contextual factors interact.

<sup>162</sup> Examples of direct effects research in political science include studies on participation (e.g., Gerber et al. 2011a; Mondak et al. 2011) and support for the political system (e.g., Anderson 2010a; Mondak and Halperin 2008), and applied research in other fields also has examined direct trait effects (e.g., Booth-Kewley and Vickers 1994; Dohmen et al. 2008; Siddiqui 2012).

and terminology of TAT to develop and specify their hypotheses. The potential reach of TAT also should motivate scholars in one field to consider theoretical mechanisms developed in other applied fields of personality research. One such domain is occupational psychology, the home territory of trait activation theory. Consistent with my discussion of achievement-striving and political support, Colbert and Witt (2009) find that highly conscientious employees exhibit greater job performance when they work in an environment where management clarifies goals and responsibilities. Workplaces such as these may activate the achievement-striving facet of conscientiousness and enable individuals high in this trait dimension to be successful. Highly conscientious individuals also may respond to other contextual signals of achievement in their personal (e.g., the level of efficacy of a dieting program) and social (e.g., change over time in community life expectancy or economic conditions) lives.

In sum, there are several benefits to utilizing a general model to study conditional personality effects.

### **Empirical Puzzles: Theory and Hypotheses**

To explore trait–situation interactions in this chapter, I turn to four inconsistencies in past research on the direct relationship between personality and political support. Each empirical puzzle, in my view, can be attributable to samples being drawn from distinct contexts.<sup>163</sup> In this section, I recount each inconsistency; describe some of the diverse political, economic, and

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<sup>163</sup> To be sure, I could have examined conditional effects for all five trait dimensions for each dependent variable under examination. To narrow my focus, I limited the hypothesis testing to empirical puzzles that logically could be due to samples coming from different contexts. For democratic support, I focused on contexts highly related to the political tolerance and criminal rights dependent variables: perceived threats from political dissidents and crime, respectively. For status quo support, I concentrated on two contexts: corruption and economic performance, both of which are prominent in contemporary politics. Two examples corroborate my claim about the current importance of corruption and economic performance: the 2016 impeachment of South Korean President Park Geun-hye amid a corruption scandal (Kim and Grimson 2017) and the renewed emphasis of the U.S. Democratic Party on economic issues after the 2016 election (Burns and Martin 2016).

social environments in extant studies; and use trait activation theory to explain the interaction between a particular trait dimension and contextual factor.

### *Openness to Experience and External Efficacy*

In Chapter 3, I expected to observe a positive effect of openness on perceived governmental responsiveness to public opinion and activism. My explanation emphasized the links between citizen engagement and democratic progress, as well as the openness facets of adventurousness and action (John et al. 2008). Because highly open citizens tend to participate more in public affairs (e.g., Ha et al. 2013; Mondak et al. 2010), they would be more likely to have first-hand experience with encouraging a strong accountability relationship between citizens and elected officials.

Nevertheless, past research, as well as my own, reveals an inconsistent relationship between openness and external efficacy. Chapter 3 reported positive trait effects in the American National Election Study, which are consistent with Rasmussen and Nørgaard's (n.d.) results from Denmark. Meanwhile, my analysis of the AmericasBarometer revealed a negative relationship between openness and external efficacy, and Anderson (2010a, 2010b) obtained the same finding in a survey of residents in Tallahassee, Florida.

The discordant results could be attributable to the samples being drawn from divergent contexts. Undoubtedly, the four samples differ in numerous ways, but I focus on the extent of political corruption because of the salience of malfeasance to citizens and to the news media.<sup>164</sup> The two positive openness effects come from relatively clean political contexts—that is, representative samples from Denmark (Rasmussen and Nørgaard n.d.) and the United States (Chapter 3). Both countries rank among the top 15 percent of countries in terms of their control

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<sup>164</sup> Consider, for example, the anticorruption protests in South Korea against the administration of President Park Geun-hye, as well as the associated media coverage. A March 2017 Google News search of “Park Geun-hye” and “corruption” yielded approximately 105,000 results.



of corruption according to the World Bank (2016).<sup>165</sup> The negative results, meanwhile, are drawn from a local survey in Florida (Anderson 2010a, 2010b) and a cross-national survey mostly in Latin America and the Caribbean (Chapter 3). Within the United States, Florida had the tenth highest score in a recent index of illegal corruption (Dincer and Johnston 2014),<sup>166,167</sup> and many of the countries in the AmericasBarometer have received some of the worst corruption scores in the world from the World Bank.<sup>168</sup>

Levels of political malfeasance, therefore, could activate openness and produce positive trait effects in relatively clean contexts and negative trait effects in relatively corrupt contexts. Because of their interest in democratic values and political innovation,<sup>169</sup> I expect open individuals to value strong accountability relationships in which elected officials are responsive to the mass public.<sup>170</sup> Such relationships are possible in low-corruption environments and virtually impossible in high-corruption environments, where overbearing government officials engage in arbitrary bribery and eschew the rule of law.<sup>171</sup> Highly open citizens, then, are likely to criticize a corrupt political system and endorse a clean political system. Based on my argument, I expect high (low) levels of malfeasance to activate openness and produce negative (positive) trait effects. I thus anticipate a negative interaction effect: As the level of corruption rises, the effect of openness should become more and more negative.

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<sup>165</sup> In particular, the 2015 percentile rankings for Denmark and the United States were 98.08 and 89.90, respectively (World Bank 2016).

<sup>166</sup> Dincer and Johnston (2014) define illegal corruption as government officials receiving private gains for benefiting private individuals or groups.

<sup>167</sup> Another measure of corruption, discussed in more detail in the next chapter, places Florida in the middle in terms of public corruption convictions per million (United States Department of Justice 2013). Nevertheless, it is still the case that Florida does not rank as one of the least corrupt U.S. states.

<sup>168</sup> More specifically, 18 of the Caribbean and Latin American countries in this study ranked in the bottom 50 percent in terms of their control of corruption in 2015.

<sup>169</sup> Values and innovation are two facets of the trait dimension of openness (John et al. 2008).

<sup>170</sup> As noted by Anderson and Tverdova (2003), corruption violates norms for accountable, democratic governance.

<sup>171</sup> A reversed accountability relationship between citizens and government also occurs when incumbent parties engage in clientelism—that is, trading electoral support for material rewards to citizens, many of whom may depend on such benefits due to their relatively low socioeconomic status (Brusco et al. 2004; Stokes 2005).

### *Extraversion and External Efficacy*

As with openness to experience, I anticipated a positive relationship between extraversion and external efficacy in Chapter 3. Items about perceived governmental responsiveness to citizen input may activate the extraversion facets of activity and energy; indeed, compared with introverts, extraverts are more likely to utilize their high levels of activity and energy to participate in public affairs and effect political change (e.g., Mondak 2010; Weinschenk 2013).

Empirical evidence tends to support my direct effects hypothesis, but not unanimously. Multiple studies of U.S. and European survey data, including my analysis of the ANES, have obtained the positive expected relationship between extraversion and external efficacy (e.g., Rasmussen and Nørgaard n.d.; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013). Nevertheless, the AmericasBarometer analysis in Chapter 3 revealed a negative effect for extraversion.

Once again, the discordant results could be due to samples being drawn from contexts that vary in the levels of political corruption. I already have noted the relatively high levels of corruption in many AmericasBarometer countries as well as the relative lack of corruption in the United States and Denmark. Likewise, Germany—the country under analysis by Schoen and Steinbrecher (2013)—has ranked in the top 10 percent in the world in terms of control of corruption since the World Bank (2016) first issued data for the year 1996.

The logic connecting corruption and extraversion centers on the trait facet of sociability (John et al. 2008). Individuals high in extraversion build and maintain expansive social networks, in part through sensitivity to group norms and group welfare. For extraverts, ignoring (supporting) group norms or group welfare can provoke ostracism (acceptance) from potential social contacts and estrangement (appreciation) from current ones. Extraverts are also an

assertive bunch and therefore may defy convention on occasion, but consistently antisocial behavior could eliminate virtually all nodes in an individual's interpersonal network.

Corruption violates group norms and group welfare. In modern democracies, citizens expect public officials to treat all individuals and organizations equally, regardless of their ability to pay a bribe (Anderson and Tverdova 2003). When services are nominally offered for free, bribery also harms the financial well-being of people in one's social network.<sup>172,173</sup>

Therefore, extraverts should be disappointed when political actors engage in corruption and pleased when political actors refrain from corruption. The interaction effect, in other words, should be negative: As the level of political corruption increases, the impact of extraversion on external efficacy should become more and more negative.

#### *Conscientiousness and Support for the Political Status Quo*

In contrast to the first two puzzles, I offered no hypothesis in Chapter 3 for the direct relationship between conscientiousness and attitudes toward actors, institutions, and procedures. Highly conscientious individuals value duty and order (John et al. 2008), but such characteristics would not necessarily translate to support for the political status quo because of social norms about the acceptability of criticizing the current government (Citrin 1974; Dalton 1999; Klingemann 1999). Instead, the direct effect of conscientiousness may be insignificant.

Empirical results, including my own, do not indicate a clear, direct relationship between conscientiousness and status quo attitudes. Many of the extant findings are statistically insignificant (e.g., Anderson 2010a, 2010b; Freitag and Ackermann 2016; Mondak and Halperin 2008; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013), and effects are also mixed between positive (Anderson

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<sup>172</sup> By contrast, a bribe could function as a "discount" for a fee-based service by illicitly funneling money to a public official instead of the government proper. Such discounts, however, reduce the incomes of government agencies, which in turn harms the public welfare through the attenuated ability to provide public goods.

<sup>173</sup> Meanwhile, a firm bidding for a public contract could benefit from paying a bribe, but the unsuccessful businesses would suffer.

2010a; Mondak and Halperin 2008; Mondak et al. 2017) and negative results (Cawvey et al. n.d.; Mondak and Halperin 2008; Sweetser 2014).

Perhaps the inconsistent results for conscientiousness are again attributable to samples being drawn from distinct contexts. One such environmental factor is the level of economic performance. As I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, an analysis of a 2005 national U.S. survey reported a positive conscientiousness effect (Mondak and Halperin 2008), but another obtained a negative result with the 2012 ANES (Cawvey et al. n.d.). The two time points differed in multiple ways, not least of which was the state of the economy. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2017), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate remained below 5.5 percent at the time of the 2005 survey but hovered around 8 percent during the 2012 survey. Insignificant conscientiousness results might occur in between the two extremes in economic context.

In more general terms, I expect high and low levels of economic performance to activate conscientiousness. Key to my argument is the conscientiousness facets of achievement-striving and competence (John et al. 2008). In public affairs, economic performance refers to the extent to which incumbents achieve their goal of successful policymaking. Positive economic growth signals the competence of government officials, whereas negative growth conveys the opposite information (Duch and Stevenson 2008). Because highly conscientious individuals value achievement and competence, I would expect citizens high in this trait dimension to reward or punish the government based on the level of economic performance. The result would be a positive interaction effect: As economic conditions improve, the impact of conscientiousness on support for political actors, institutions, and procedures will become more positive.

### *Conscientiousness and Democratic Support*

For my fourth and final puzzle, I transition from status quo attitudes to attitudes about regime principles. With regard to conscientiousness, Chapter 3 expected negative direct effects of this trait dimension on political tolerance and support for criminal rights because individuals high in this trait may be concerned about threats to social order from political dissidents and criminals. Some extant work is consistent with my hypothesis (Mondak and Hurwitz 2012; Swami et al. 2012), but other studies report insignificant direct effects (Mondak and Halperin 2008; Oskarsson and Widmalm 2016). Moreover, my findings in Chapter 3 revealed a negative and significant relationship between conscientiousness and political tolerance in the CCES and a positive and significant relationship between conscientiousness and support for criminal rights in the AmericasBarometer.

The discordant results for conscientiousness could be due to samples coming from distinct environments. The negative effects all occur with democratic support questions that may have raised threat perceptions because of references to a least liked group, terrorism, or “serious crime.” Meanwhile, the positive effect of conscientiousness in the AmericasBarometer could be due to the survey item’s explicit focus not on criminals, but on extralegal powers for the justice system, which is perceived as less trustworthy than the national or local government in general.

The two prior studies with insignificant trait effects, by contrast, occur in more neutral environments. Mondak and Halperin (2008) measure democratic support by asking if individuals of all political beliefs deserve the same legal rights. The items refer neither to “serious crime” nor terrorism. Meanwhile, Oskarsson and Widmalm (2016) analyze a sample that combines individuals from a relatively low-conflict city in India and a relatively high-conflict city in Pakistan. The insignificant direct effect of conscientiousness could be due to the combined

**Table 4.1**  
Hypotheses on Conditional Personality Effects

<i>Interaction</i>	<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Prediction</i>
Openness x Corruption	External Efficacy toward Actors & Institutions	Negative
Extraversion x Corruption	External Efficacy toward Actors & Institutions	Negative
Conscientiousness x Economic Performance	Support for Actors, Institutions, & Procedures	Positive*
Conscientiousness x Threats from Crime and Political Dissidents	Support for Criminal Rights and Political Tolerance	Negative

Note: \*The prediction is positive if the dependent variable refers to political support objects related to the incumbent party; the expected interaction effect is negative if the dependent variable pertains to the political opposition.

moderate level of threat in the two contexts. Indeed, Oskarsson and Widmalm interact each trait dimension with a country dummy variable and find that conscientiousness exerts a negative and significant effect only among Pakistani respondents. I test the trait–situation interaction more thoroughly by directly measuring the level of social threat.

In the terms of trait activation theory, I expect threat levels to send cues pertaining to the conscientiousness facets of orderliness and duty. Serious concerns about social stability may enable highly conscientious citizens to ignore the rights of political dissidents and criminals in favor of the norm of law and order; according to Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs, material needs such as social stability precede post-material needs such as free expression. Low threat levels, however, rebalance the equation in favor of democratic rights, for no serious hindrances to the material need of social cohesion are present. If threat levels are low, highly conscientious citizens are free to embrace the democratic norms of political tolerance and criminal rights. I thus expect a negative interaction effect: As the level of social threat increases, the impact of conscientiousness on political tolerance and support for criminal rights will become less and less positive.

### *Summary of Hypotheses*

Table 4.1 provides an overview of the conditional effects hypotheses discussed above. For corruption, I expect negative interaction effects for openness and extraversion in models of external efficacy. Meanwhile, conscientiousness should interact positively with economic performance to influence support for political actors, regime institutions, and regime performance. Finally, in models of political tolerance and support for criminal rights, I anticipate that conscientiousness will interact negatively with the level of social threat.

### **Investigating the Conditional Link: Data and Research Design**

I draw on three datasets to test my hypotheses on conditional personality effects: the 2010 AmericasBarometer, the 2012 American National Election Study (ANES), and the 2012 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES). The previous chapter employed each of these surveys, as well as a questionnaire of students at the University of Illinois. My student sample did not include questions on contextual perceptions, so I examine the other three surveys.

Of the three surveys, I focus on the AmericasBarometer because none other contains all of the items necessary to assess each of my hypotheses on the conditional effects of personality on political support. More specifically, political support questions in the AmericasBarometer include an actor external efficacy item, which is essential for the corruption hypotheses; political tolerance and support for criminal rights items, which are needed for the societal threat hypothesis; and 10 items for actor, institutional, and procedural support, which are useful for the economic performance hypothesis. I utilize all 10 of these items except for national legislature approval because of the lack of a clear basis for an expectation. On one hand, conscientious citizens may respond to positive economic conditions by rewarding the national legislature for its hand in successful policymaking; on the other hand, the presence of the political opposition in

the legislature could prompt conscientious citizens to focus their praise on the executive branch of government that oversaw the economic growth.

In addition to political support items, the 2010 survey included a Big Five personality battery and items pertaining to corruption perceptions, perceived national economic performance, concerns about political dissidents, and perceived threats from crime. Since the previous chapter documented my operationalization of political support and personality, this section highlights my contextual measures.

To measure corruption perceptions, I utilize an AmericasBarometer item about the prevalence of malfeasance among public officials. Respondents could select options ranging from “[v]ery common” to “[v]ery uncommon.” I have recoded the variable so that higher values refer to greater perceived corruption. Scores range from 0 to 1.

My primary measure of economic performance, meanwhile, is an AmericasBarometer item about retrospective national economic assessments over the past year. Responses varied from “[b]etter” to “[w]orse.” I reverse-coded the variable to range from 0 to 1, with higher scores pertaining to more positive perceptions.

Retrospective evaluations are not the only possible measure of a citizen’s perceptions of the national economy. Numerous political support studies have employed retrospective evaluations (e.g., Hetherington and Globetti 2002; Rudolph 2003b), but researchers also have incorporated contemporary and prospective economic perceptions (e.g., Chanley et al. 2000; Criado and Herreros 2007). Retrospective, contemporary, and prospective measures are all available in the 2010 AmericasBarometer, but I focus on the retrospective item in order to be consistent with previous studies and with such objective economic variables as growth over time



in gross domestic product per capita.<sup>174</sup> Nevertheless, I ran a robustness check with an economic perceptions item that combines all three variables into a single index.<sup>175</sup> The pattern for the interaction results with this alternative measure is identical to the main findings reported below.<sup>176</sup>

I operationalize social stability in two ways for my models of democratic support. For the political tolerance regression, I use an item from the AmericasBarometer about perceived threat from citizens “who disagree with the majority” in the country. The original question includes seven response options, and I have recoded this variable to range from 0 to 1, with higher values referring to greater perceived threat.

For my criminal rights model, I utilize an item from the AmericasBarometer about perceived threat from crime. Three perceptual items about crime are available in the AmericasBarometer, with one question about national well-being and two about safety in one’s neighborhood. Continuing with the pattern in this chapter, I focus on the item pertaining to the national context.<sup>177</sup> Respondents were asked about the extent to which the level of crime threatens national well-being.<sup>178</sup> Options ranged from “[v]ery much” to “[n]one,” and I have

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<sup>174</sup> I use this particular objective variable in the next chapter.

<sup>175</sup> The three items in the index all come from the same battery near the start of the AmericasBarometer survey. This index was produced via factor analysis because a different scale was used for one of the economic perceptions items. Factor analysis, with rotation, revealed a single factor with an eigenvalue of 0.95, which is very close to the goal of 1. To be consistent with the other perceptual items, the economic index was recoded to range from approximately 0 to 1.

<sup>176</sup> To be more precise, all eight of the significant conscientiousness–economic perceptions interactions in Table 4.3 remain significant if the economic perceptions index is used.

<sup>177</sup> This approach differs from Krause’s (2013) attention to the neighborhood level, but national perceptions about crime should be salient because of the issue’s prominence in national elections in Latin America (Krause 2013) and because of the overall importance of crime-related issues in the 24 AmericasBarometer countries. A plurality of respondents on the 2010 survey named delinquency/crime as the most important problem in their country. Nevertheless, I conducted a robustness check by replacing the national measure with the neighborhood measures. None of the interactions were statistically significant, which contrasts with the significant results reported below. The robustness check, therefore, suggests that trait-relevant cues for crime perceptions do not originate at the neighborhood level.

<sup>178</sup> The neighborhood items, meanwhile, inquired about the probability of being assaulted or robbed in one’s neighborhood, as well as the extent to which one’s neighborhood is influenced by gangs.

recoded the variable to run from 0 to 1. Higher values now refer to greater levels of perceived threat.

After testing my hypotheses with the AmericasBarometer, I briefly turn to the ANES and CCES in order to replicate my findings for the interactions involving corruption perceptions and economic perceptions. None of the other contextual measures are available in the ANES and CCES.

My measurement of corruption perceptions is less than ideal. The CCES does not refer to corruption, and the only ANES items on malfeasance are associated with political trust in the pre-election and post-election questionnaire documents. Although I prefer not to operationalize corruption perceptions with a measure of political support, the ANES leaves me with no other option. Therefore, I utilize the pre-election item about the prevalence of corruption among public officials.<sup>179</sup> I have recoded this item to range from 0 to 1; higher scores refer to greater perceived corruption.

For economic perceptions, I again focus on retrospective measures. My main results employ a single retrospective item from the CCES and a two-item index from the ANES about retrospective evaluations of unemployment and the national economy as a whole. The Cronbach's alpha for this index is 0.81. Both variables range from 0 to 1, with higher scores indicating more positive economic perceptions.<sup>180</sup>

Regarding the dependent variables, I incorporate all three external efficacy variables in the ANES for my analyses involving corruption perceptions and 15 ANES and CCES actor,

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<sup>179</sup> For the purposes of temporal order, I prefer for my independent variables to originate in a pre-election survey because some of my dependent variables also were asked before the election. Therefore, I do not examine the post-election item on the prevalence of corruption in government.

<sup>180</sup> For the significant interactions between conscientiousness and retrospective perceptions in the ANES, I have assessed the robustness with an economic perceptions index that combines the general retrospective item, a contemporary item, and a prospective item. The Cronbach's alpha is 0.74. Differences between the reported results and the ANES robustness checks are noted below. Meanwhile, the conscientiousness–retrospective perception interaction is not significant in the CCES, so there is no need to comment on the robustness of that interaction.

institutional, and procedural variables from the previous chapter for my analyses involving economic perceptions.<sup>181</sup> For the latter analyses, I include all Chapter 3 support variables from each level except for national legislature approval and House incumbent approval because of the uncertainty about conscientious citizens rewarding successful legislative policymaking versus preferring to credit the president rather than Congress. The opposition party controlled the House of Representatives in 2012.

Instead of displaying the results for all 15 models for the economic perceptions interactions, the tables below focus on the models in which the conditional effect for conscientiousness is statistically significant.

Descriptive statistics for all contextual perceptions are located in Appendix D.

### **Evidence for a Conditional Link: Results**

I now present my findings for the conditional effects of personality on political support. I begin with the openness–corruption and extraversion–corruption interactions in the AmericasBarometer before turning to the conscientiousness–economic performance interaction and then the conscientiousness–social stability interactions in the same survey. I conclude this section by using the ANES and CCES to conduct replication tests of my hypotheses involving corruption and economic perceptions.

#### *Personality Effects Conditioned by Corruption Perceptions: AmericasBarometer*

For the first step in my empirical analysis, I examine how corruption perceptions interact with openness and extraversion to influence external efficacy. Extant results in the direct effects

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<sup>181</sup> For the ANES, these dependent variables are an index of actor trust, global presidential job approval, issue-specific presidential approval, feeling thermometers for Democratic and Republican actors, a feeling thermometer index for government agencies, likeability measures for the Democratic Party and Republican Party, one external efficacy measure for political actors, two external efficacy measures for regime institutions, a democratic satisfaction item, and procedural support items on citizen rights and electoral integrity. The outcome variable for the CCES, meanwhile, consists of an approval item for the president.

literature are mixed, perhaps because samples are drawn from contexts with varying levels of malfeasance. As I argued in the theory section of this chapter, I expect high and low levels of corruption to activate openness and extraversion and produce negative interaction effects on the perceived responsiveness of the political system: Openness and extraversion should exert a more negative effect on external efficacy as the level of perceived corruption rises. In response to high levels of malfeasance, individuals high in openness will be disappointed by the lack of democratic accountability between citizens and elected officials, and extraverts will be frustrated by the violation of anticorruption norms and the negative effects of bribery on one's social network.

Table 4.2 reports the results of these interactions based on AmericasBarometer data. As expected, both interaction terms are negative and statistically significant.<sup>182,183</sup> The substantive effects of openness and extraversion are particularly strong.<sup>184</sup> For individuals who view corruption as “[v]ery common,” moving from 0 to 1 in openness (extraversion) reduces the probability of maximum external efficacy from 0.09 to 0.05 (0.09 to 0.05), which amounts to a decrease of 41.07 percent (40.52 percent). At the other extreme, among individuals who perceive malfeasance as “[v]ery uncommon,” the same change in openness (extraversion) raises the

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<sup>182</sup> Both interactions remain significant if corruption perceptions are allowed to interact with all five personality variables.

<sup>183</sup> The personality coefficients in Table 4.2 are largely insignificant, which might raise concerns that perceptions are simply a function of personality traits, rather than a source of trait-relevant cues that activate the Big Five and produce personality effects in accordance with trait activation theory. We must remember, however, that the openness and extraversion coefficients could appear insignificant because they are interacting with corruption perceptions in Table 4.2. Instead, we can address the issue by examining a direct effects model with corruption perceptions added to the regression. If personality traits remain significant with the inclusion of corruption perceptions, then we can conclude that perceptions may contain trait-relevant cues that signal the relevance of personality traits for external efficacy. Indeed, openness and extraversion, as well as conscientiousness, are significant in a direct effects model that includes corruption perceptions. These results are located in Appendix E, and they resemble the perception-free model in Table 3.7 of the previous chapter.

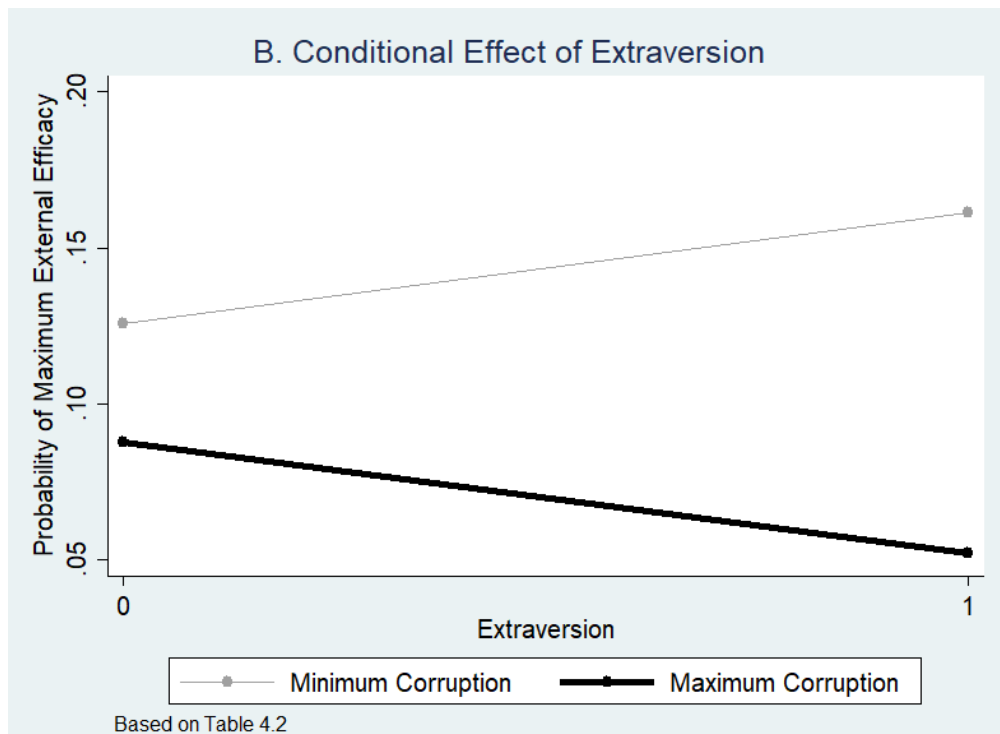
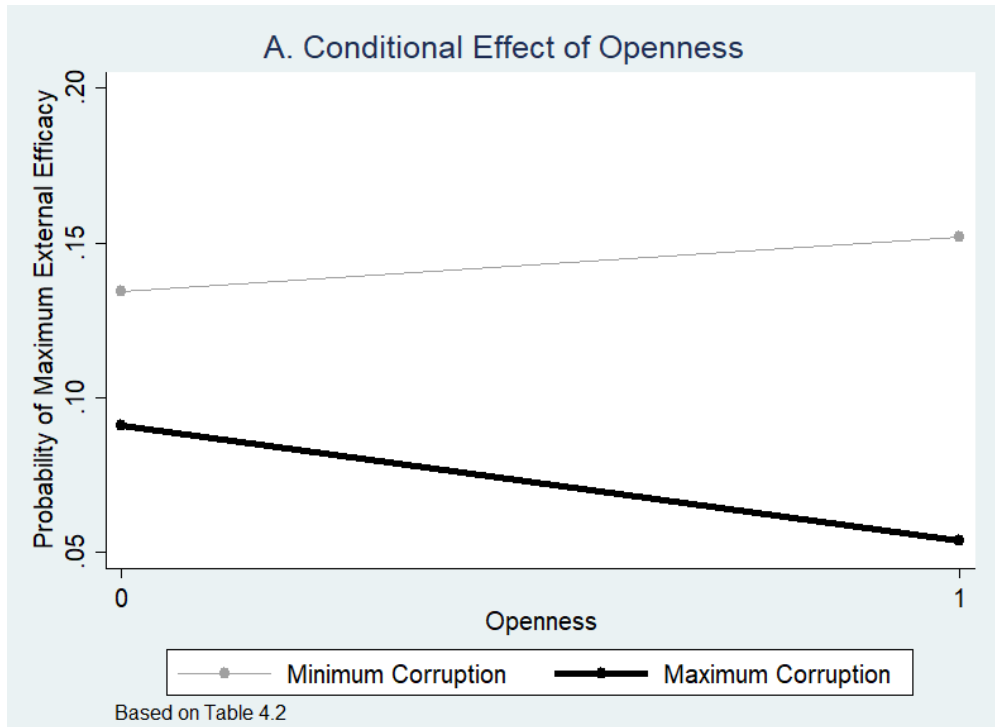
<sup>184</sup> Predicted probabilities in this chapter were calculated by holding all other variables in a model at their modal (dichotomous variables) or mean (non-dichotomous variables and country fixed effects in the AmericasBarometer) values.

**Table 4.2**  
 Conditional Effects of Openness and  
 Extraversion on External Efficacy:  
 AmericasBarometer

	Model I: Officials Care What People Think
Openness x Greater Perceived Corruption	-0.71** (0.24)
Extraversion x Greater Perceived Corruption	-0.85*** (0.21)
Greater Perceived Corruption	0.05 (0.16)
Openness	0.14 (0.19)
Conscientiousness	-0.10+ (0.06)
Extraversion	0.29 (0.18)
Agreeableness	0.09 (0.08)
Emotional Stability	0.00 (0.08)
Female	-0.03 (0.02)
Age	0.00+ (0.00)
White	0.02 (0.08)
Education	-0.03 (0.11)
Pseudo/Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.02
Number of Cases	33,861
Number of Countries	24
Method of Estimation	Ordinal

Note: Data come from the 2010 AmericasBarometer. Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Threshold parameters are omitted from the table. Country fixed effects are included but not shown, and standard errors are clustered by country. Data are weighted so that each nation's sample contributes a value of N = 1,500. \*\*\* p < .001  
 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

**Figure 4.1 Conditional Effects of Personality on External Efficacy**



probability of maximum external efficacy from 0.13 to 0.15 (0.13 to 0.16), or an increase of 13.07 percent (28.30 percent).

These interactions are displayed in Figure 4.1. The figure indicates that high levels of corruption activate openness and extraversion, and low levels of corruption activate extraversion. However, openness does not appear to exert a strong effect in response to low levels of corruption. The results are fully in line with my expectations for extraversion activation and partially in line with my expectations for openness activation.<sup>185</sup> I revisit my conclusions in Appendix E by reporting the effects of openness and extraversion at the minimum and maximum levels of malfeasance. The effects of both trait dimensions are significant in response to pervasive corruption, and the extraversion coefficient is nearly significant at the 0.10 level for respondents with minimum perceptions of malfeasance.

In sum, the results in Table 4.2 are consistent with my hypotheses of negative interactions between openness and corruption perceptions and between extraversion and corruption perceptions. Based on my analysis, divergent trait results in the direct effects literature could be attributable to samples coming from contexts that differ in the level of malfeasance.

#### *Personality Effects Conditioned by Economic Perceptions: AmericasBarometer*

Next, I consider whether positive and negative economic perceptions activate conscientiousness to influence citizen attitudes toward political actors, regime institutions, and regime performance. The direct effects of conscientiousness in previous research have been positive, negative, and insignificant, perhaps due to samples being drawn from different economic environments. Given their emphasis on achievement-striving and competence, highly conscientious individuals are likely to view robust (anemic) economic growth as an indication of policy effectiveness (ineffectiveness) and respond with favorable (unfavorable) views of the

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<sup>185</sup> I expected openness to be activated in response to both low and high levels of corruption.

political status quo. I thus expect to observe a positive interaction effect: The impact of conscientiousness on support should become more and more positive as perceptions of the national economy improve.

Using the AmericasBarometer, I interacted conscientiousness and retrospective economic perceptions in 9 models of actor, institutional, and procedural support.<sup>186</sup> Table 4.3 presents the results. In 8 of 9 models, the coefficient for the interaction term is positive and statistically significant, as expected.<sup>187,188</sup>

Two observations about Table 4.3 are noteworthy. First, the interaction effect is consistent across all three levels of support and for a variety of attitudes, from job approval ratings to political trust items to external efficacy opinions to global and issue-specific evaluations of regime performance. My hypothesis, in other words, explains a variety of observations (Lave and March 1975) and suggests the broad explanatory power of TAT for accounting for person–situation interactions in models of political support (Zinnes 1976).

Second, the significant interaction terms for conscientiousness contrast with the largely insignificant direct effects of this trait dimension that we observed in Chapter 3. My findings indicate that conscientiousness matters for political support, but the effect depends on the economic context perceived by the respondent. If we ignore the interaction between

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<sup>186</sup> Although prior personality studies have not examined procedural attitudes, I include them in order to assess the generalizability of my hypothesis on conditional conscientiousness effects and to account for the fact that economic perceptions have been shown to be significantly related to democratic satisfaction (Bratton and Mattes 2001).

<sup>187</sup> If economic perceptions are allowed to interact with all five trait dimensions, then 4 of the 8 significant interactions for conscientiousness remain significant, with at least one significant interaction for each level of support.

<sup>188</sup> An additional observation about Table 4.3 is the large number of significant personality coefficients, even with the inclusion of corruption perceptions in the regression. The significant personality results indicate that economic perceptions are not simply a function of traits but instead may contain trait-relevant cues that activate such personality traits as conscientiousness. Table E.2 in Appendix E reports the direct effects of personality and economic perceptions with no interaction terms; a total of 24 personality coefficients are significant in that table. Such an amount is nearly identical to the 26 personality coefficients in the AmericasBarometer that are significant for the same actor, institutional, and procedural outcome variables in Chapter 3.



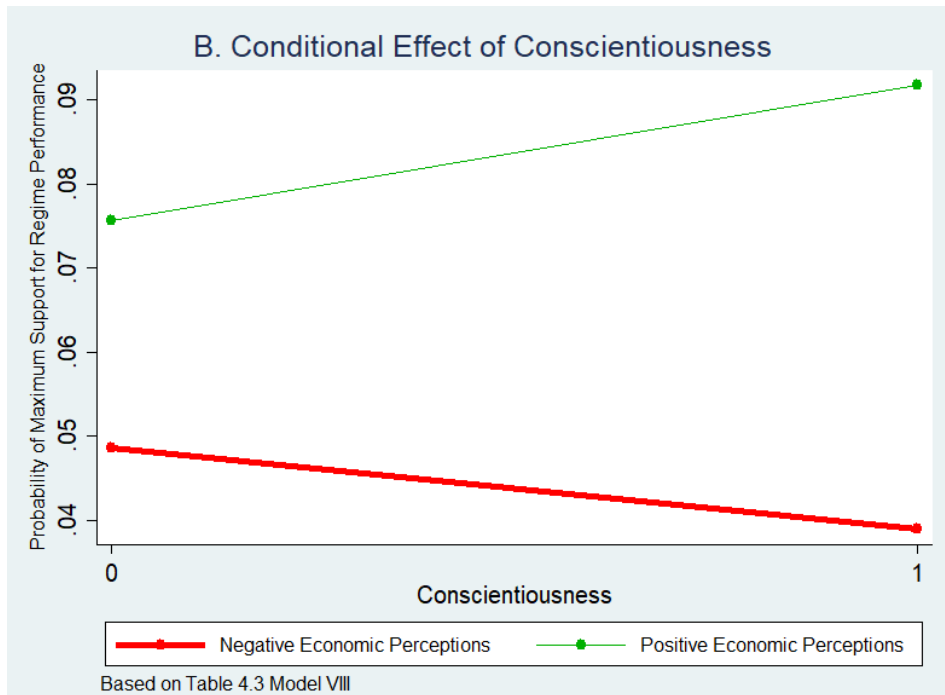
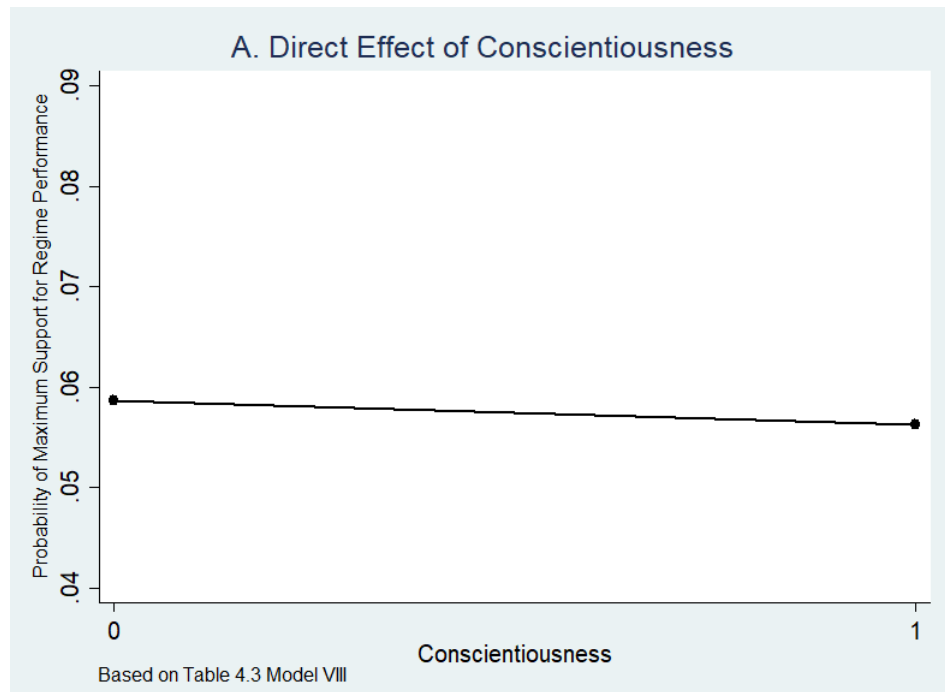
**Table 4.3**

Conditional Effects of Conscientiousness on Actor, Institutional, and Procedural Support: AmericasBarometer

	Political/Actors			Regime Institutions			Regime Performance		
	Model I: Executive Approval	Model II: Executive Approval on 5 Issues	Model III: Officials Care What People Think	Model IV: Index of Institutional Trust	Model V: Perceived Justice System Effectiveness of Local Gov't	Model VI: Perceived Effectiveness	Model VII: Democratic Satisfaction Index	Model VIII: Citizen Rights Protected	Model IX: Trust in Elections
Conscientiousness x Positive Economic Perceptions	0.86*** (0.17)	2.79*** (0.53)	0.72*** (0.20)	2.76** (0.82)	0.22+ (0.13)	0.13 (0.11)	0.44* (0.18)	0.44*** (0.12)	0.37+ (0.20)
Positive Economic Perceptions	1.04*** (0.18)	3.70*** (0.58)	0.27* (0.11)	4.41*** (0.71)	0.25* (0.10)	0.53*** (0.11)	0.71*** (0.16)	0.47*** (0.11)	0.41*** (0.11)
Openness	-0.14 (0.10)	-1.91*** (0.32)	-0.45*** (0.08)	-2.75*** (0.44)	-0.49*** (0.06)	-0.16* (0.08)	-0.14+ (0.08)	-0.36*** (0.07)	-0.13* (0.06)
Conscientiousness	-0.35** (0.12)	-1.31** (0.39)	-0.40*** (0.11)	-0.98+ (0.50)	-0.08 (0.09)	-0.11 (0.08)	-0.13 (0.10)	-0.23*** (0.07)	-0.09 (0.11)
Extraversion	-0.15+ (0.08)	-1.20** (0.38)	-0.37*** (0.07)	-1.94** (0.57)	-0.32*** (0.06)	-0.16** (0.06)	0.01 (0.08)	-0.33*** (0.07)	-0.11 (0.08)
Agreeableness	0.26*** (0.06)	0.96** (0.26)	0.10 (0.09)	1.73*** (0.44)	0.23** (0.08)	0.08 (0.06)	0.27*** (0.07)	0.16+ (0.08)	0.10 (0.09)
Emotional Stability	0.03 (0.09)	0.09 (0.27)	0.02 (0.08)	1.31* (0.50)	0.17* (0.08)	0.12 (0.07)	0.12 (0.10)	0.10 (0.09)	0.14 (0.10)
Female	0.06 (0.04)	-0.00 (0.15)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.20 (0.18)	-0.02 (0.03)	0.08*** (0.02)	-0.03 (0.03)	0.06* (0.03)	-0.08*** (0.03)
Age	0.00 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.00)	0.02 (0.01)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00*** (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)
White	-0.05 (0.10)	0.17 (0.24)	0.04 (0.07)	0.68+ (0.33)	0.13** (0.04)	0.13*** (0.04)	0.08 (0.06)	0.12* (0.06)	0.08* (0.04)
Education	-0.10 (0.12)	-2.15*** (0.52)	-0.12 (0.11)	-2.46** (0.84)	-0.45** (0.15)	0.20* (0.10)	-0.08 (0.12)	-0.22+ (0.12)	0.10 (0.13)
Pseudo/Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.09	0.24	0.02	0.15	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.04
Number of Cases	36,166	33,775	34,428	33,705	34,835	33,256	33,794	35,872	33,369
Number of Countries	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	22
Method of Estimation	Ordinal	OLS	Ordinal	OLS	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal

Note: Data come from the 2010 AmericasBarometer. Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Constants and/or threshold parameters are omitted from the table. Country fixed effects are included but not shown, and standard errors are clustered by country. Data are weighted so that each nation's sample contributes a value of N = 1,500. \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

**Figure 4.2 Direct and Conditional Effects of Conscientiousness on Regime Performance Attitudes**



conscientiousness and economic context, we may obtain the mixed and insignificant direct effects in the extant literature.

To emphasize the substantive value of interacting conscientiousness and economic perceptions, I turn to regime performance attitudes in Model VIII of Table 4.3. Results are depicted in Figure 4.2. By itself, conscientiousness exerts a minimal effect on attitudes toward the protection of citizen rights in one's country (Panel A); moving from 0 to 1 in this trait dimension reduces the probability of maximum support from 0.059 to 0.056, which amounts to a decrease of only 4.13 percent. We should not be surprised, therefore, that the direct effect of conscientiousness on regime performance attitudes was insignificant in Chapter 3. Meanwhile, if both conscientiousness and economic perceptions shift from 0 to 1, the trait effects are more substantial (Panel B). Among citizens with negative economic perceptions, moving from 0 to 1 in conscientiousness reduces the probability of maximum support from 0.05 to 0.04 (i.e., a decrease of 19.80 percent). For individuals with positive perceptions, though, shifting from 0 to 1 in this trait dimension increases the probability of maximum support from 0.08 to 0.09 (i.e., an increase of 21.15 percent).

Finally, I obtain support for my expectation that favorable and unfavorable economic perceptions would activate conscientiousness and produce positive and negative trait effects, respectively. The five negative and significant conscientiousness coefficients in Table 4.3 denote the expected trait effects for individuals with economic perceptions equal to 0. To understand the trait effects for citizens with positive views, I ran the same regressions with a reverse-coded economic perceptions variable and recorded the conscientiousness coefficients. Seven of the nine

coefficients are positive and significant. These results are located in Appendix E and occur more frequently than would be expected by chance.<sup>189</sup>

*Personality Effects Conditioned by Social Stability: AmericasBarometer*

My final hypothesis concerns democratic support. More specifically, I expect threats to political and social stability to activate conscientiousness because of this trait dimension's emphasis on orderliness and dutifulness to norms; when the threat level is high, highly conscientious individuals may be less likely to tolerate political dissidents or ensure criminal rights in order to promote societal cohesion and adhere to the norm of law and order. Normative considerations about democratic principles may be of secondary concern in such contexts because material needs of security are prioritized prior to post-material needs of citizen rights (Maslow 1943). However, when the threat level is low, conscientious citizens may feel compelled to tolerate political minorities and support criminal rights because material needs have been met and because they perceive no conflict between democratic norms and social stability. I thus expect a negative interaction effect: As threats to stability rise, the effect of conscientiousness should become more and more negative. My hypothesis could explain some of the divergent direct effects of conscientiousness on democratic support in the extant literature, for samples have originated from environments that vary in the level of threat to social stability.

Table 4.4 reports my results for the interactions between conscientiousness and perceived threat. As anticipated, both interaction terms are negative and statistically significant.<sup>190,191,192</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Using the 0.10 level of significance as a guide, we might expect 1 of 10 coefficients to be significant by chance.

<sup>190</sup> The result in each model is robust to the inclusion of interaction terms for all of the Big Five.

<sup>191</sup> The significant trait effects in Table 4.4 suggest that threat perceptions are not simply a function of personality traits but instead may contain trait-relevant cues that activate conscientiousness and other trait dimensions. Table E.3 in Appendix E also reports several significant trait effects in models that exclude interaction terms; each of the significant personality coefficients in Table E.3 also is significant in Table 3.10 of the previous chapter.

<sup>192</sup> The interaction in Model I remains significant if the data are limited to individuals who score above the midpoint in the institutional trust index. As might be expected, the correlation between institutional trust and threat perceptions of political dissidents is positive and significant at the 0.001 level. Restricting the analysis to pro-status

**Table 4.4**  
 Conditional Effects of Conscientiousness on  
 Democratic Support: AmericasBarometer

	Model I: Tolerance of Political Dissidents	Model II: Support for Criminal Rights
Conscientiousness x Perceived Threat	-2.69* (1.15)	-0.65** (0.24)
Perceived Threat from Political Dissidents or Crime	-1.49 (1.19)	0.33 (0.22)
Openness	2.60*** (0.36)	-0.00 (0.09)
Conscientiousness	1.42* (0.63)	0.75*** (0.21)
Extraversion	1.34*** (0.35)	-0.19*** (0.05)
Agreeableness	-2.04*** (0.40)	0.33*** (0.08)
Emotional Stability	0.63 (0.51)	0.23** (0.08)
Female	-1.10*** (0.18)	0.10*** (0.03)
Age	0.00 (0.01)	0.01*** (0.00)
White	0.11 (0.28)	-0.00 (0.05)
Education	3.43*** (0.63)	-0.00 (0.14)
Pseudo/Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.11	0.03
Number of Cases	32,696	35,070
Number of Countries	24	24
Method of Estimation	OLS	Logit

Note: Data come from the 2010 AmericasBarometer. Threat perceptions pertain to political dissidents in Model I and to crime in Model II. Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Constants are omitted from the table. Country fixed effects are included but not shown, and standard errors are clustered by country. Data are weighted so that each nation's sample contributes a value of N = 1,500. \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

quo citizens would be consistent with Sullivan et al.'s (1979) argument that political tolerance is not political *tolerance* unless a disliked political group is involved. During the administration of the AmericasBarometer, all respondents were provided with the same group about which to make political tolerance judgments.

**Figure 4.3 Conditional Effects of Conscientiousness on Democratic Support**

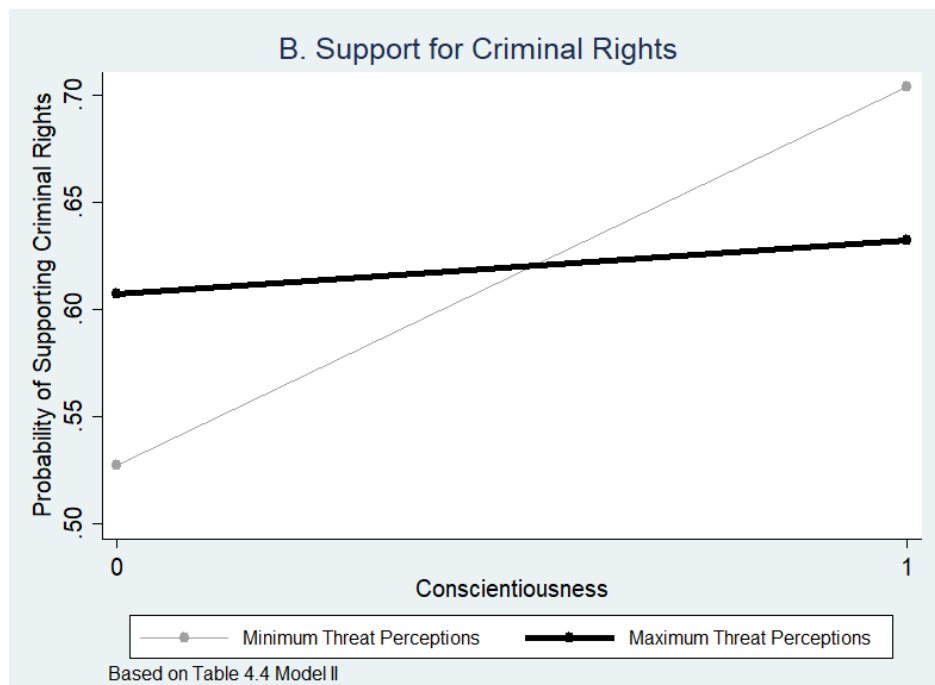
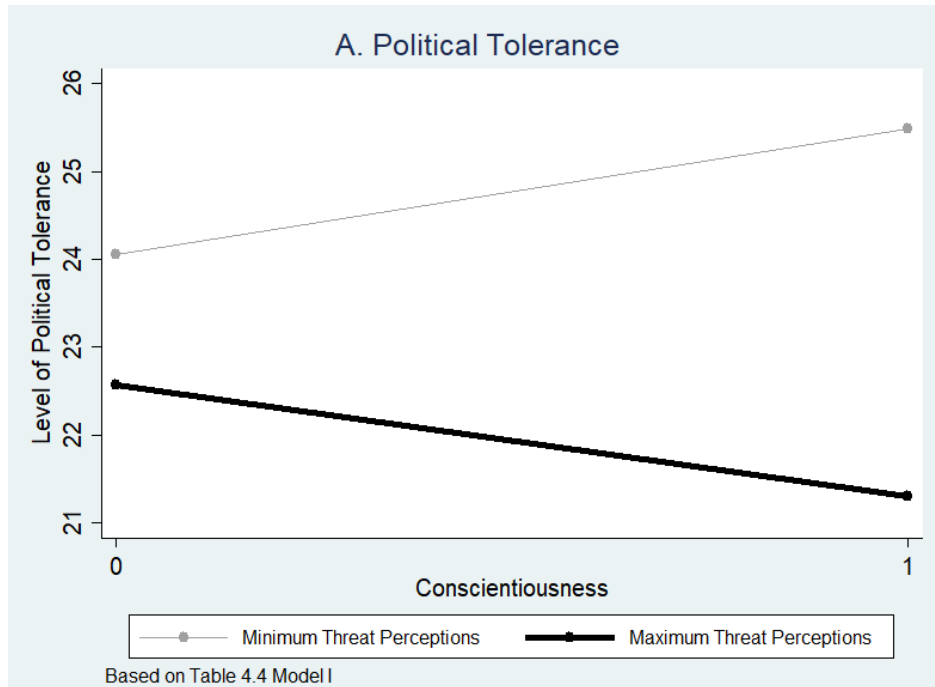


Figure 4.3 depicts each interaction in substantive terms. For political tolerance (Panel A), the effect of conscientiousness is substantial for individuals who perceive political dissidents as especially threatening or unthreatening. These observations are consistent with my expectations for trait activation. Among citizens with maximum threat perceptions, conscientiousness exerts a negative effect: Moving from 0 to 1 in this trait dimension reduces the expected level of political tolerance by 1.27 points on a dependent variable that varies from 4 to 40 (i.e., 3.52 percent of the range). Appendix E further reveals that the effect of conscientiousness is negative and statistically significant for citizens with maximum threat perceptions. Meanwhile, for individuals with minimum threat perceptions, shifting from 0 to 1 in conscientiousness actually raises the expected level of political tolerance by 1.42 points (i.e., 3.95 percent of the range). In other words, when threat levels are low, highly conscientious citizens perceive little conflict between the norms of democratic support and social order, resulting in a positive trait effect. The conscientiousness coefficient in Model I of Table 4.4 also shows that the trait effect at minimum threat perceptions is positive and statistically significant.

Panel B of Figure 4.3 displays the interaction between conscientiousness and perceived threat from crime. As expected, conscientiousness is activated for individuals with minimum threat perceptions: Moving from 0 to 1 in this trait dimension increases the probability of support for criminal rights from 0.53 to 0.70, which amounts to an increase of 33.39 percent. The coefficient for conscientiousness in Table 4.4 also shows that the effect of this trait dimension is positive and significant at minimum threat perceptions. At maximum threat perceptions, however, I observe little evidence of trait activation: Shifting from 0 to 1 in conscientiousness slightly increases democratic support from 0.61 to 0.63. Appendix E also indicates that the trait effect on support for criminal rights is not significant at maximum threat perceptions.

Overall, then, I obtain evidence that threat perceptions activate conscientiousness and produce negative interaction effects on democratic support attitudes.

*Personality Effects Conditioned by Corruption Perceptions: ANES*

Having obtained support for all four hypotheses with the AmericasBarometer, I revisit the first three expectations through a series of replication tests with U.S. survey data. My investigations begin with the interaction effects involving corruption perceptions. Malfeasance hinders democratic accountability and violates norms of governance (Anderson and Tverdova 2003). Because of their emphasis on democratic ideals (group norms and group welfare), I expect highly open (extraverted) citizens to become less and less supportive of the political status quo as the level of corruption rises. The interaction effects on external efficacy should be negative. Such results would indicate that inconsistent results in the direct effects literature on perceived governmental responsiveness are attributable to samples being drawn from contexts that vary in the pervasiveness of bribery, nepotism, and other forms of corruption.

Table 4.5 reports the interaction effects for all three of my ANES measurements of external efficacy. Although none of the extraversion–corruption perceptions interactions are statistically significant, one of the openness–corruption perceptions interactions is negative and statistically significant at the 0.10 level.<sup>193</sup> In substantive terms, for citizens with minimum (maximum) corruption perceptions, moving from 0 to 1 in openness raises (reduces) the probability of maximum external efficacy from 0.33 to 0.66 (0.104 to 0.098), or a change of 100.12 percent (6.27 percent). This interaction is depicted in Figure 4.4.

My ANES analyses thus yield evidence of openness activation in response to perceptions of minimum corruption but not in response to perceptions of maximum corruption. Along with

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<sup>193</sup> This result, however, is no longer significant if interactions with all five trait dimensions are included in Model III.

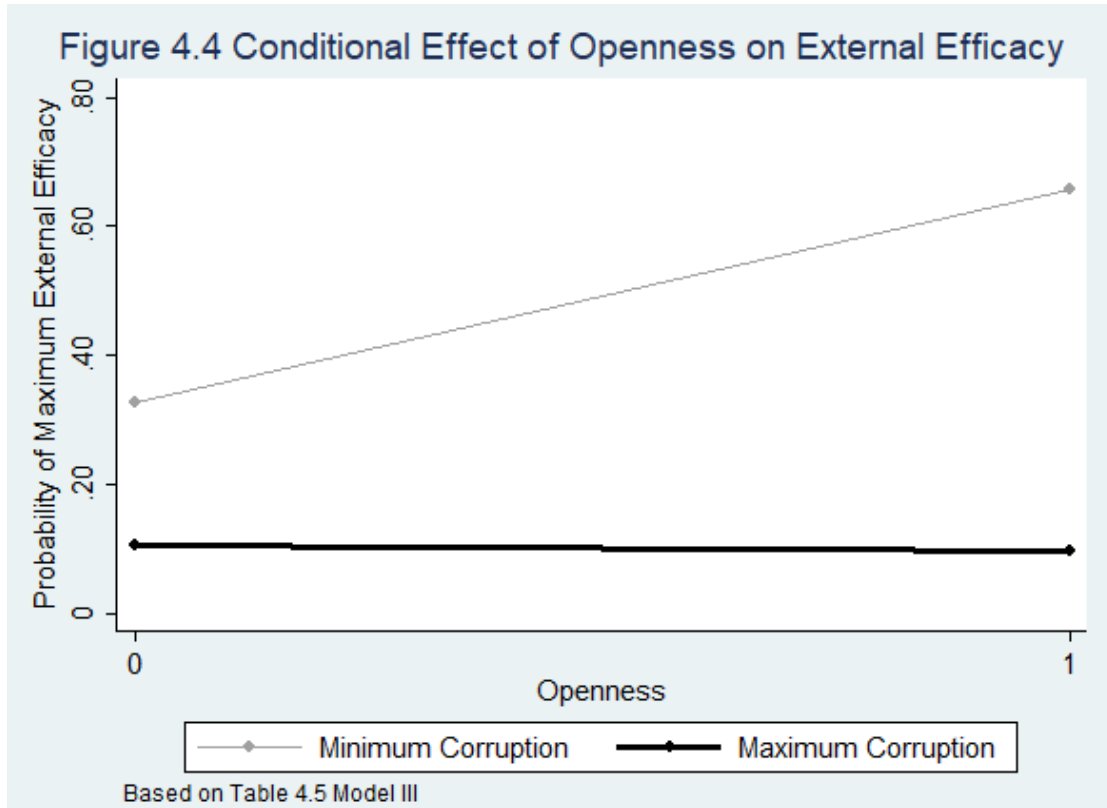


**Table 4.5**  
Conditional Effects of Openness and Extraversion on External Efficacy:  
ANES

	<i>Political Actors</i>	<i>Regime Institutions</i>	
	Model I: Officials Care What People Think	Model II: People Have Say in What Government Does	Model III: Elections Make Government Pay Attention
Openness x Greater Perceived Corruption	-0.10 (0.78)	0.88 (0.80)	-1.44+ (0.79)
Extraversion x Greater Perceived Corruption	0.87 (0.82)	0.42 (0.76)	0.27 (0.89)
Greater Perceived Corruption	-3.21*** (0.43)	-2.38*** (0.41)	-1.53*** (0.42)
Openness	0.59 (0.41)	0.24 (0.42)	1.37** (0.43)
Conscientiousness	-0.74*** (0.15)	-0.43** (0.16)	-0.06 (0.17)
Extraversion	0.32 (0.44)	0.42 (0.41)	-0.01 (0.47)
Agreeableness	0.10 (0.18)	0.13 (0.19)	0.28 (0.21)
Emotional Stability	0.21 (0.18)	0.50** (0.19)	0.24 (0.20)
Female	0.04 (0.08)	0.03 (0.07)	0.03 (0.08)
Age	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
White	-0.12 (0.08)	-0.40*** (0.08)	-0.35*** (0.09)
Education	0.52*** (0.13)	0.66*** (0.11)	0.25+ (0.13)
Pseudo/Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of Cases	5,258	5,253	5,257
Number of Countries	1	1	1
Method of Estimation	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal

Note: Data come from the 2012 ANES. Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Threshold parameters are omitted from the table. The Taylor series method was used for calculating significance tests; Stata does not report pseudo R-squared statistics for the Taylor series method. \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

Figure 4.4, the significant openness coefficient in Model III of Table 4.5 indicates that low levels of corruption perceptions can activate this trait dimension. Meanwhile, I found the effect of openness on external efficacy to be significant in the AmericasBarometer only in response to high levels of perceived malfeasance. Put together, the results bolster my expectation that openness would be activated by high and low levels of perceived corruption.



*Personality Effects Conditioned by Economic Perceptions: ANES*

My final set of analyses concerns the interaction between conscientiousness and economic performance. Because of the trait facets of competence and achievement-striving, I expect individuals high in this trait dimension to reward or punish the political status quo in response to the state of the economy. The interaction effect will be positive: As economic perceptions become more favorable, conscientiousness will exert an increasingly positive impact on status quo attitudes. If the dependent variable refers to the opposition party, the interaction effect will be negative because of the motivation to reward or punish the incumbent party for economic outcomes. Results consistent with my hypothesis could explain the combination of positive, negative, and insignificant direct effects of conscientiousness on support for actors and institutions in previous research.

Instead of reporting the results for all 15 ANES and CCES status quo attitudes, I focus on the six ANES models for which the interaction between conscientiousness and economic perceptions is statistically significant. Although a higher rate of success would have been preferable, a total of six significant interactions exceeds the number we would expect by chance.

The results are reported in Table 4.6. In each case, the interaction effect is consistent with expectations.<sup>194,195,196</sup> For Models I, II, III, V, and VI, individuals high in conscientiousness become more and more likely than individuals low in conscientiousness to reward the status quo as economic perceptions improve. Likewise, in Model IV, conscientious citizens who perceived the economy in favorable terms are more inclined to turn away from opposition political actors. The results in Table 4.6 apply to the actor, institutional, and procedural levels of support.

Figure 4.5 depicts the interaction for Model VI on beliefs about the government not posing a threat to individual freedoms. As with the citizen rights model in the AmericasBarometer, I obtain evidence of trait activation for ANES respondents with negative and positive perceptions of the national economy. For individuals with unfavorable views, moving from 0 to 1 in conscientiousness reduces the probability of maximum support for regime performance from 0.24 to 0.13 (i.e., a decrease of 44.61 percent), whereas the same change in conscientiousness for individuals with favorable views raises the probability of maximum support from 0.74 to 0.86 (i.e., an increase of 16.11 percent).

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<sup>194</sup> I should note that only the interaction in Model III continues to be significant at conventional levels if economic perceptions are allowed to interact with all five personality trait dimensions. The interactions in Models I, II, and VI, however, would remain significant at the 0.20 level.

<sup>195</sup> If we replace the retrospective economic perceptions index with an index combining retrospective, current, and prospective economic perceptions, the coefficients for the interactions in Models III, IV, and V would remain significant.

<sup>196</sup> Table 4.6 also includes a number of significant personality coefficients, and Table E.5 of Appendix E contains 15 significant trait coefficients in models that include economic perceptions but exclude person–situation interactions. Of these 15 effects, 13 are also significant in the perception-free models in Chapter 3. My results indicate that economic perceptions are not simply a function of personality and instead may contain trait-relevant cues for conscientiousness and other trait dimensions, as postulated by trait activation theory.

**Table 4.6**

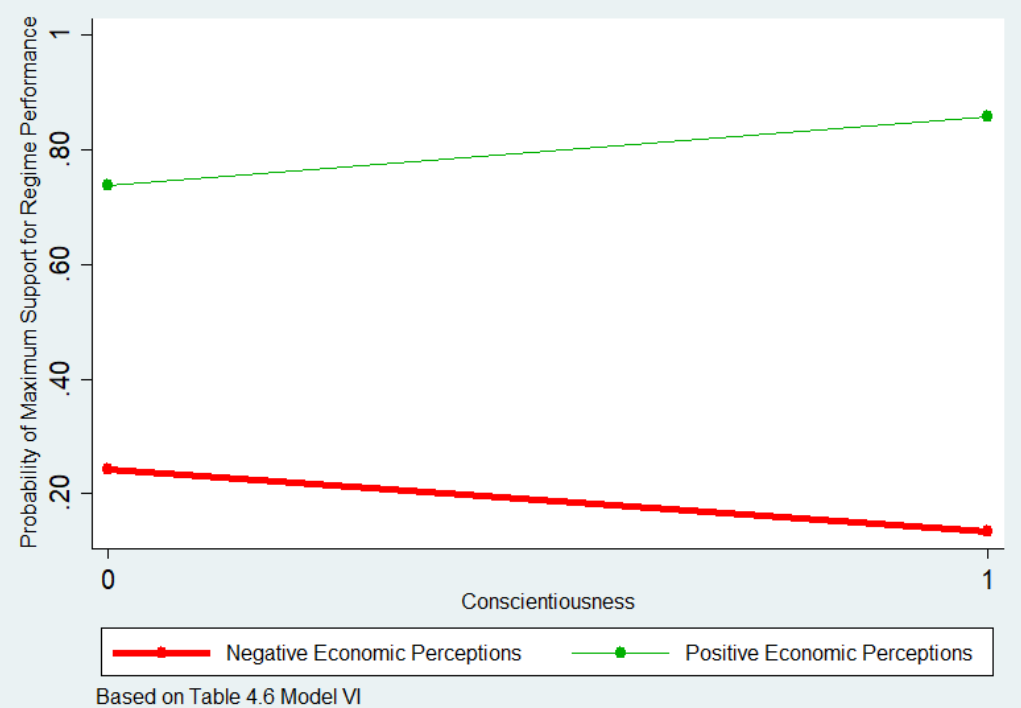
Conditional Effects of Conscientiousness on Actor, Institutional, and Procedural Support: ANES

	<i>Political Actors</i>				<i>Regime Institution</i>	<i>Regime Performance</i>
	Model I: Executive Approval	Model II: Executive Approval on 4 Issues	Model III: Thermometer Index for Democrats	Model IV: Thermometer Index for Republicans	Model V: Likeability of Democratic Party	Model VI: Government Not a Threat to Rights and Freedoms
Conscientiousness x Positive Economic Perceptions	1.85* (0.84)	1.71+ (0.90)	71.39*** (21.43)	-47.60* (24.21)	1.50+ (0.80)	1.48* (0.70)
Positive Economic Perceptions	4.86*** (0.57)	9.72*** (0.66)	157.91*** (15.44)	-110.08*** (17.38)	5.14*** (0.56)	2.18*** (0.49)
Openness	1.31*** (0.20)	1.97*** (0.31)	49.72*** (6.90)	-49.21*** (7.45)	1.88*** (0.25)	-0.36+ (0.20)
Conscientiousness	-1.69*** (0.48)	-1.87*** (0.53)	-52.90*** (12.78)	44.40*** (13.16)	-0.83+ (0.44)	-0.72* (0.36)
Extraversion	-0.03 (0.18)	-0.24 (0.30)	-0.03 (6.30)	24.28*** (6.77)	0.19 (0.25)	0.31 (0.20)
Agreeableness	0.27 (0.19)	0.18 (0.31)	15.83* (6.62)	18.62** (6.95)	0.63** (0.24)	0.12 (0.20)
Emotional Stability	-0.31 (0.19)	-0.07 (0.29)	-8.27 (6.29)	15.88* (6.72)	-0.24 (0.22)	0.10 (0.18)
Female	0.38*** (0.08)	0.61*** (0.13)	18.00*** (2.67)	-3.83 (2.97)	0.41*** (0.10)	0.26** (0.08)
Age	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.08 (0.08)	0.53*** (0.09)	0.01** (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
White	-1.37*** (0.09)	-2.36*** (0.15)	-48.06*** (3.21)	20.12*** (3.50)	-1.39*** (0.12)	-0.48*** (0.09)
Education	-0.88*** (0.14)	-0.72** (0.22)	-15.22** (4.93)	24.77*** (5.47)	-1.10*** (0.19)	0.16 (0.13)
Pseudo/Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	N/A	0.50	0.44	0.26	0.35	N/A
Number of Cases	5,207	4,933	5,161	4,608	5,246	5,154
Number of Countries	1	1	1	1	1	1
Method of Estimation	Ordinal	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	Ordinal

Note: Data come from the 2012 ANES. Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Constants and/or threshold parameters are omitted from the table. The Taylor series method was used for calculating significance tests; Stata does not report pseudo R-squared statistics for the Taylor series method. \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

As I expected, Figure 4.5 indicates that conscientiousness will be activated in response to negative and positive economic perceptions. Additional evidence in favor of my hypothesis is the significant conscientiousness coefficients in Table 4.6, which refer to the trait effects when economic perceptions are equal to 0. In Appendix E, I also show that one conscientiousness coefficient is positive and significant at the 0.10 level and two other coefficients are positive and significant at the 0.20 level when economic perceptions are equal to 1.

Figure 4.5 Conditional Effect of Conscientiousness on Support for Regime Performance



### *Reviewing the Evidence*

Overall, the results from the AmericasBarometer and ANES are consistent with my hypotheses on conditional personality effects.<sup>197</sup> Both the AmericasBarometer and ANES indicate that the effects of conscientiousness on support for actors, institutions, and procedures become more positive as economic perceptions become more favorable. My analyses from the AmericasBarometer and, to a lesser extent, the ANES also reveal that openness exerts a more negative effect on external efficacy as the level of perceived corruption rises. Furthermore, the AmericasBarometer results suggest that (1) extraverts, compared with introverts, become more and more pessimistic about governmental responsiveness as the level of perceived malfeasance increases and (2) highly conscientious citizens, compared to their less conscientious

<sup>197</sup> My results conflict with the idea that extreme levels of corruption perceptions, economic perceptions, and social threat perceptions constitute strong situations that inhibit trait effects (e.g., Tett and Burnett 2003). Instead, my findings indicate that low and high levels of each contextual variable contain trait-relevant cues that activate personality traits.

**Table 4.7**  
Results for Hypotheses on Conditional Personality Effects

<i>Interaction</i>	<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Prediction</i>	<i>Number of Significant and Expected Interactions</i>
Openness x Corruption	External Efficacy toward Actors & Institutions	Negative	1 of 1 (AB); 1 of 3 (ANES)
Extraversion x Corruption	External Efficacy toward Actors & Institutions	Negative	1 of 1 (AB); 0 of 3 (ANES)
Conscientiousness x Economic Performance	Support for Actors, Institutions, & Procedures	Positive*	8 of 9 (AB); 6 of 15 (ANES and CCES)
Conscientiousness x Threats from Crime and Political Dissidents	Support for Criminal Rights and Political Tolerance	Negative	2 of 2 (AB)

Note: \*The prediction is positive if the dependent variable refers to political support objects related to the incumbent party; the expected interaction effect is negative if the dependent variable pertains to the political opposition. "AB" refers to "AmericasBarometer." The 15 models for the ANES and CCES consist of the same dependent variables from Chapter 3, except for the ones noted in the text.

counterparts, express less political tolerance and support for criminal rights as the levels of perceived threat from political dissidents and crime rise.

Table 4.7 summarizes the evidence. For all four hypotheses, the number of significant interactions exceeds what would be expected by chance.

### **Conclusions and Implications**

The literature on personality and political support is filled with inconsistent direct effects from one survey to another. Public opinion questionnaires are completed in particular places and at particular times, so inconsistent trait effects might be attributable to contextual differences across surveys. In this chapter, I have investigated four empirical puzzles and attempted to resolve them by identifying cross-survey differences in the political, economic, and social environments. Using trait activation theory, I developed hypotheses about how the contextual factors and personality traits interact to influence attitudes toward political actors, regime institutions, regime performance, and regime principles. I then tested my hypotheses with cross-national survey data and, if possible, with U.S. survey data. Consistent with expectations, my

results showed that corruption perceptions condition the effects of openness and extraversion on external efficacy; economic perceptions condition the effects of conscientiousness on actor, institutional, and procedural support; and perceived threats from political dissidents and crime condition the effects of conscientiousness on political tolerance and support for criminal rights.

In addition to addressing empirical puzzles, this chapter has demonstrated the value of trait activation theory as a general model of trait–situation interactions. Few studies have utilized a broad framework to study conditional personality effects, but I have applied TAT to person–situation interactions for multiple traits, multiple contextual factors, and multiple forms of political support. All of my hypotheses have received empirical support. Each of my theoretical arguments draws on the logic and terminology of TAT and therefore may be useful to other scholars interested in studying the interplay between personality traits and contextual factors through TAT. Moreover, the broad scope of TAT and the potential of insights across studies are apparent in the connection of each of the following to the relevance of the conscientiousness facet of achievement-striving: my work on conscientiousness and economic perceptions, Freitag and Ackermann’s (2016) work on conscientiousness and direct democracy, and Colbert and Witt’s (2009) work on conscientiousness and job performance.

Theoretical considerations aside, the findings in this chapter have practical implications for the rhetorical strategies of political elites. Incumbent parties, opposition parties, and nongovernmental organizations should understand that citizens respond in different ways to the same information. Highly conscientious individuals, for example, are more likely than their less conscientious counterparts to support the political system when politicians preside over improvements in economic performance.<sup>198</sup> Higher levels of openness and extraversion also are

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<sup>198</sup> At the same time, I cannot claim that individuals low in conscientiousness are completely unresponsive to their economic perceptions. Among individuals scoring 0 in conscientiousness, more positive economic perceptions are

associated with greater responsiveness to information on political corruption.<sup>199</sup> Although these examples of good citizenship pertain to political attitudes, activists could employ targeted messaging to translate opinions into action. In contexts of high (low) corruption, opposition (incumbent) parties and nongovernmental organizations could recruit citizens by contacting news organizations with audiences high in openness to experience, such as online outlets and television satire shows (Gerber et al. 2011b). Messages about economic performance, likewise, should appeal to audiences of television political talk programs, which tend to be high in conscientiousness (Gerber et al. 2011b). Conversely, appearances on local news (political satire) programs to discuss corruption (economic performance) could waste the resources of political elites because these programs tend to attract audience members who are less receptive to such information, namely individuals low in openness (conscientiousness) (Gerber et al. 2011b).

Similar pieces of advice could be offered to promote political tolerance or support for criminal rights, which are influenced by an interplay of threat perceptions and conscientiousness. To activate conscientiousness, democratic activists could appear on television political talk programs and other shows with high concentrations of orderly audience members (Gerber et al. 2011b).<sup>200</sup> Tailored messages for such programs could emphasize the disciplined, yet peaceful tactics of dissident groups and thereby produce greater political tolerance among the public.

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associated with greater support for (opposition toward) status quo (opposition) actors, institutions, and procedures in Tables 4.3 and 4.6. Nevertheless, the significant interactions show that individuals high in conscientiousness are more responsive to their environment than individuals low in conscientiousness.

<sup>199</sup> In addition to the significant interactions, we can assess responsiveness by examining the coefficient for corruption perceptions. Because of the interaction, the corruption perceptions coefficient denotes the impact of the variable when openness and extraversion are equal to 0. If less open and less extraverted citizens are unresponsive to their environment, the coefficient for corruption perceptions should be insignificant. Indeed, this is what we observe in Table 4.2 (AmericasBarometer), but not in Table 4.5 (ANES). Highly open and extraverted citizens, meanwhile, are quite responsive to their environment. If reverse-coded openness and extraversion variables replace their normally coded counterparts, the corruption perception coefficient would be negative and significant in all models of Tables 4.2 and 4.5. That coefficient would refer to the impact of corruption perceptions for individuals with the maximum levels of openness and extraversion.

<sup>200</sup> Individuals with high levels of conscientiousness tend to be more responsive to the level of social threat, as the significant interactions in Table 4.4 would attest. In addition, we can assess responsiveness by replacing the



Political activists are not limited to information about the personality profiles of various television audiences. Targeted communications could be directed to any group high or low in particular personality traits. Cross-national as well as subnational differences in average personality traits (e.g., McCrae et al. 2005; Rentfrow 2010) indicate that some rhetorical strategies could be more effective in some locations than others.

Finally, this chapter represents a first step to understanding how contextual factors condition the effect of personality on political support. I have focused on contextual perceptions, but individuals can misinterpret information from their surroundings.<sup>201</sup> Good citizenship requires accurate information reception as well as an appropriate response. Thus far, I have assumed the first step while focusing on the second one to address empirical puzzles in the personality and support literature. The next chapter continues to consider inconsistent trait effects but turns to objective contextual factors to determine whether my results with perceptual variables travel to objective situations.

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normally coded conscientiousness variable with a reverse-coded conscientiousness variable. With this replacement, the threat perception coefficients in Table 4.4 would become negative and significant, indicating that threat perceptions reduce the level of democratic support among individuals high in conscientiousness. By contrast, the threat perception coefficients are insignificant in Table 4.4; these coefficients denote the impact of threat perceptions on democratic support for individuals who score 0 in conscientiousness. Individuals low in conscientiousness are less responsive to the level of threat.

<sup>201</sup> In addition, contextual perceptions are potentially problematic because I cannot eliminate the possibility of perceptions simply being a function of personality traits. Analyses in Appendix E address, but do not fully resolve, the issue.

CHAPTER 5  
THE CONDITIONAL LINK FROM PERSONALITY TO POLITICAL SUPPORT—PART 2:  
INCORPORATING OBJECTIVE CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

According to my model, personality traits exert significant effects on attitudes toward the political system in response to trait-relevant cues in the political support opportunity and the broader economic, social, and political context. Chapter 3 investigated the direct impacts of personality due to trait-relevant cues about the level and domain of support under consideration, and Chapter 4 turned to the interactions between traits and an individual's perceptions of his or her environment.

The current chapter responds to two limitations in the previous chapter. First, we could be concerned that contextual perceptions are simply the function of an individual's personality traits. Such a directional relationship would violate the causal order in trait activation theory (TAT) (Tett and Burnett 2003; Tett and Guterman 2000) of contextual factors sending trait-relevant cues, trait-relevant cues activating personality traits, and personality traits influencing the outcome of interest (e.g., political trust). Second, exclusive attention to contextual perceptions raises concerns about the practical and normative implications of my research. Will political elites strive for more economic growth, less corruption, and less crime in *reality* if they can increase political participation merely by citizen *perceptions* of societal progress? To what extent do individuals with particular psychological characteristics (e.g., high in conscientiousness) exercise democratic competence by supporting or opposing the political system based on actual outcomes?

Incorporating objective contextual factors can alleviate both concerns. An individual's personality traits are unlikely to affect external factors such as government-issued unemployment

data,<sup>202</sup> and public officials will have a reason to promote actual societal well-being if objective contextual factors interact with personality traits to influence political support attitudes.

Therefore, this chapter revisits each of the hypotheses in the previous chapter, but with objective measures of the political, economic, and social context. Specific contextual factors consist of the level of political corruption, the extent of economic performance, and the rate of crime.

To test my hypotheses, I combine individual-level public opinion data with objective contextual data. The environmental information primarily originates from the World Bank, the U.S. government, and aggregations of mass survey data to the subnational or national level.

The rest of this chapter is organized in the following manner. First, I recount the logic of the hypotheses tested in the previous and current chapters. Second, I describe the data and research design; I pay particular attention in the methodology section to two factors: my objective measures of context and the multilevel modeling employed for each of the tests in the current chapter. Third, I report my results from cross-national and U.S. survey data. Fourth, I summarize the findings and discuss their practical implications.

### **Four Puzzles Revisited**

In the previous chapter, I documented four inconsistent direct relationships between personality and political support: the impact of openness on external efficacy, the impact of extraversion on external efficacy, the impact of conscientiousness on status quo support, and the impact of conscientiousness on attitudes toward political dissidents and criminals. Referring to existing studies and my own research, I identified environmental factors that could interact with

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<sup>202</sup> I also addressed the issue of causal order in Chapter 4 by examining whether the impact of personality on political support remains significant after contextual perceptions are added to the model.

personality traits to influence citizen views of the political system. I then utilized trait activation theory to explain my hypotheses on conditional personality effects.

First, I expect levels of political corruption to activate openness and produce a negative interaction effect on external efficacy. Individuals high in openness value democratic ideals and therefore should be concerned about the corrosive impact of corruption on political accountability. Instead of politicians responding to citizens, corruption often involves members of the public complying with a government employee's demand for a bribe.<sup>203</sup> The effect of openness on external efficacy, therefore, should become increasingly negative as the level of corruption rises.

Second, corruption levels also should signal the relevance of extraversion for external efficacy attitudes. Because of their sociability (John et al. 2008), extraverts seek to preserve and expand their networks of family and friends by avoiding the criticism that results from ignoring group norms and group welfare. High (low) levels of corruption violate (comply with) standards of democratic governance and harm (benefit) the financial well-being of one's fellow citizens. Therefore, extraverts will reward or punish the political system based on the level of malfeasance. I expect the impact of extraversion to become more and more negative as the prevalence of corruption increases. The interaction effect, in other words, should be negative.

Third, I anticipate conscientiousness to interact with economic performance to influence opinions on political actors, regime institutions, and regime performance. Robust and sluggish economies should activate the conscientiousness facets of achievement-striving and competence (John et al. 2008), producing a positive interaction effect: As economic performance improves, the impact of conscientiousness should become more and more positive.

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<sup>203</sup> The logic of my argument resembles Stokes' (2005) point about clientelism—that is, electoral support traded for material rewards—causing citizens to be accountable to public officials.

**Table 5.1****Hypotheses on Conditional Personality Effects**

<i>Interaction</i>	<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Prediction</i>
Openness x Corruption	External Efficacy toward Actors & Institutions	Negative
Extraversion x Corruption	External Efficacy toward Actors & Institutions	Negative
Conscientiousness x Economic Performance	Support for Actors, Institutions, & Procedures	Positive*
Conscientiousness x Threats from Crime and Political Dissidents	Support for Criminal Rights and Political Tolerance	Negative

Note: \* The prediction is positive if the dependent variable refers to political support objects related to the incumbent party; the expected interaction effect is negative if the dependent variable pertains to the political opposition.

Fourth, levels of political and criminal threat could activate conscientiousness and influence attitudes toward disliked political groups and criminals. Because of their penchant for regulation and their dutifulness to the norm of law and order (John et al. 2008), highly conscientious citizens might be willing to sacrifice democratic principles such as minority rights in response to high levels of perceived threat from political dissidents and criminals. Tipping the balance in favor of the norm of law and order could be the priority assigned by most individuals to material needs (e.g., security) over post-material needs (e.g., self-expression) (Maslow 1943). Tradeoffs between law and order and democratic norms become moot as serious threats subside, so the impact of conscientiousness on democratic support in unthreatening scenarios could be positive. I thus expect a negative interaction effect: The impact of conscientiousness on democratic support will become more and more negative as the threat level rises.

This chapter tests all four hypotheses with objective contextual factors. Each hypothesis received support in Chapter 4, so consistent results will bolster our confidence that environmental factors activate personality traits, which in turn raise or lower levels of political support.

A summary of hypotheses is offered in Table 5.1.

## Investigating the Conditional Link: Data and Research Design

To test my hypotheses, I again utilize data from the 2010 AmericasBarometer, 2012 American National Election Study (ANES), and 2012 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES).<sup>204</sup> All three surveys contain items on personality traits and political support. For personality, I utilize the Big Five indices described in Chapter 3; for political support, I employ all of the items and indices from Chapter 4, with two exceptions. For the conscientiousness–economic performance hypothesis tests, I omit the ANES dependent variable about government not being a threat to rights and freedoms because multilevel regressions failed to converge for this outcome variable. Meanwhile, I add House incumbent approval to my economic performance analyses, for conscientious citizens may hold their legislative representative responsible for the economic conditions in their state.<sup>205,206</sup>

Objective contextual measures also are required for the present chapter. I incorporate subnational contextual measures for all three surveys and country-level contextual measures for the AmericasBarometer, which is cross-national in scope. In some cases, I create the contextual variable by aggregating survey data to the subnational or national level; in others, I draw on

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<sup>204</sup> Meanwhile, this chapter does not examine the University of Illinois student questionnaire because of the lack of variance in potential contextual variables; all respondents shared the same basic environment as students in the Champaign–Urbana area.

<sup>205</sup> The previous chapter omitted House incumbent approval due to my attention to national economic conditions. Although national economic well-being could be attributed to successful legislative policymaking, conscientious citizens may have been hesitant to reward members of Congress due to the presence in the two-chamber body of the opposition (i.e., non-presidential) party, which controlled a majority of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives in 2012.

<sup>206</sup> Therefore, the AmericasBarometer dependent variables in this chapter consist of global executive approval, executive approval on five issues, actor external efficacy, an index of institutional trust, perceived justice system effectiveness, perceived effectiveness of local government, a democratic satisfaction index, beliefs about citizen rights being protected, trust in elections, and support for criminal rights. The ANES dependent variables consist of an index of actor trust, global executive approval, approval of the House incumbent, executive approval on four issues, a feeling thermometer index for Democratic political actors, a feeling thermometer index for Republican political actors, Democratic Party likeability, Republican Party likeability, a feeling thermometer index for government institutions, actor external efficacy, institutional external efficacy, beliefs about elections making government pay attention, democratic satisfaction, and beliefs about votes being counted fairly. And the CCES dependent variables consist of executive approval and approval of the House incumbent.

academic, U.S. government, and World Bank data sources. Consistent results across multiple contextual variables will bolster our confidence in the empirical support for this chapter's hypotheses.

### *Operationalizing Corruption*

I have obtained cross-national and subnational variables for corruption. For the AmericasBarometer, I utilize four measures of malfeasance. The first item is the World Bank's 2009 estimate of control of corruption, reversed and recoded to range from 0 to 1.<sup>207</sup> As a Worldwide Governance Indicator, the control of corruption estimate draws on multiple data sources, such as mass surveys and country experts, to determine the perceived level of governance in a country (Kaufmann et al. 2009). With the recoded variable, higher scores now refer to greater levels of malfeasance. Canada ranks as the least corrupt country in my sample, and Venezuela as the most corrupt.

The second measure of political corruption is also available from the World Bank. Businesses in all 24 AmericasBarometer countries, except for Canada and the United States, provided information on the occurrence of firm-related bribery in 2009 and 2010. Data from only one of these years are available for all 22 countries. The contextual measure in this study refers to the proportion of firms in a country reporting bribery. Scores range from 0.01 in Chile to 0.32 in Paraguay.

Meanwhile, the final two measures of contextual corruption are aggregated from AmericasBarometer survey data. Individuals responded to a battery of questions about their bribery experiences over the previous year; specific questions asked whether the individual paid a bribe to a police officer, the municipal government, the court system, the public health system,

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<sup>207</sup> As a general rule, for non-aggregated contextual variables, I prefer to use data from at least the year before a particular survey was administered.

or any government employee.<sup>208</sup> Because of the potential overlap of the first four items with the final item on this list, I coded the individual-level bribery variable so that citizens with at least one bribery experience receive a score of 1 and all others receive a score of 0. Finally, I designed the subnational bribery rate and national bribery rate by calculating the average bribery score for all individuals in the respective collectivity.<sup>209</sup> The subnational bribery rate spans from 0.02 in Central Panama to 0.38 in the northern Bolivian department of Beni. At the national level, bribery rates range from 0.04 in Canada to 0.32 in Mexico.

Each of the country-level corruption measures should, according to the ideals of construct validity, correlate significantly with the other two national variables. Indeed, the correlations range from 0.44 to 0.56, and all are significant at the 0.05 level or better. These observations attenuate my concerns about the self-generated national aggregated bribery measure.<sup>210</sup>

To explore the interactions of personality and corruption in the ANES, I turn to two state-level measures of corruption. Dincer and Johnston (2014) recently surveyed journalists about the extent of corruption at the executive, legislative, and judicial levels in 49 states. Their survey distinguished between legal corruption (i.e., campaign contributions to a government official traded for benefits to the donor) and illegal corruption (i.e., illicit bribes to a government official traded for benefits to the donor).

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<sup>208</sup> The bribery battery also inquired about malfeasance in one's work and one's interaction with his or her child's school. I do not include either item in my bribery measures because the items do not explicitly refer to interaction with government.

<sup>209</sup> The AmericasBarometer determined the subnational regions based on local tradition within the country. Regions in the United States, for instance, consist of the Northeast, Midwest, South, and West. Overall, I possess data for 118 regions across the 24 countries under analysis.

<sup>210</sup> Because subnational regions are nested within countries, the validity of the national aggregated bribery variable can bolster our confidence in the validity of its subnational counterpart.



Given the more natural association of corruption and bribery,<sup>211</sup> I focus on illegal corruption for the first state-level measure. My variable sums the corruption scores at the executive, legislative, and judicial levels and then recodes them to range from 0 to 1, with higher scores denoting greater malfeasance. Arizona ranked as the most corrupt state in the country, whereas Idaho, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Vermont all received the lowest corruption score in the Dincer and Johnston (2014) measure.

The second state-level corruption measure is more objective than perceptions by journalists. Using data from the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Census Bureau, I calculated the average number of federal corruption convictions in a state from 2007 to 2011 divided by the average population in the state over the same time span. The conviction rate per million population spans from 0.77 in Idaho to 65.94 in Washington, D.C. Besides the score for the District of Columbia, the next highest score of 10.56 belongs to Alaska. The extreme score for Washington, D.C., prompted me to take the natural log of this variable and recode the variable to range from 0 to 1. Scores for Alaska and the District of Columbia—0.59 and 1, respectively—are now more comparable.

Construct validity for the two state-level measures is not ideal. The correlation of 0.14 is positive, as expected, but not significant at conventional levels.

### *Operationalizing Economic Performance*

As with corruption, one may utilize multiple approaches to measure economic performance. Prominent objective indicators include growth in gross domestic product (GDP),

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<sup>211</sup> As noted by Treisman (2007, 211), “The quintessential corrupt transaction envisioned is the gift of a bribe by a private citizen to a public official in return for some service that the official should either provide for free (e.g., registering a firm) or not provide at all (e.g., inside information).”

unemployment rates, and inflation.<sup>212</sup> For the AmericasBarometer, I also can aggregate individual-level survey items about economic well-being to the subnational or national level.

For this chapter, I have selected growth in GDP per capita,<sup>213</sup> change in the unemployment rate,<sup>214</sup> and aggregate measures of change in economic well-being. I opted against inflation because of the low or negative inflation rates that occurred in the aftermath of the 2008–2009 economic crisis. In the United States, for example, inflation based on consumer prices decreased by 0.36 percent in 2009 while the country experienced economic growth of -3.62 percent in 2009 and a rise in unemployment from 5.8 percent in 2008 to 9.3 percent in 2009. Across the 24 AmericasBarometer countries, inflation based on consumer prices does not correlate significantly with either GDP per capita growth or change in unemployment, and an alternative measure of inflation (i.e., the growth rate of the GDP implicit deflator) actually correlates in the unexpected direction, but insignificantly, with the economic growth and unemployment variables.<sup>215,216</sup>

Data for cross-national measures of 2009 GDP per capita growth and 2008–2009 change in unemployment are available from the World Bank’s World Development Indicators.<sup>217</sup> In 2009, Argentina witnessed the greatest decrease in GDP per capita (-6.88 percent), whereas

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<sup>212</sup> Powell and Whitten (1993, 391), for instance, refer to “[a] large literature” that has examined the impact of GDP growth, inflation, and unemployment on incumbent support.

<sup>213</sup> I prefer GDP per capita growth over GDP growth because the latter does not account for changes in population over time.

<sup>214</sup> Static levels of unemployment appear to be the more common measure of unemployment (Powell and Whitten 1993), but I have opted for change in unemployment over time in order to be consistent with the longitudinal measure of growth in GDP per capita and the longitudinal character of the aggregate economic performance measures discussed below. In addition, citizens may choose to punish the political system in response to increases in unemployment, even if they have become accustomed to high unemployment rates. In the 24 AmericasBarometer countries, the average unemployment rate rose from 7.42 in 2008 to 8.19 in 2009 and did not drop below 7.42 until 2012. Furthermore, the U.S. unemployment rate remained above the 2008 level until the 2015 level of 5.3 percent.

<sup>215</sup> That is, the implicit deflator measure of inflation is positively associated with GDP per capita growth and negatively associated with change in unemployment.

<sup>216</sup> By contrast, the correlation of -0.45 between GDP per capita growth and change in unemployment in the 24 AmericasBarometer countries is in the expected direction and significant at the 0.05 level.

<sup>217</sup> The World Bank offers multiple unemployment measures; I used the estimate from the International Labour Organization.

Uruguay experienced the greatest increase in GDP per capita (3.87 percent). Meanwhile, change in the unemployment rate ranged from -5.80 in Suriname to 4.65 in Belize.

For U.S. state-level data, I obtained 2011 GDP per capita growth data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis and 2010–2011 change-in-unemployment data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. A total of 17 (34) states experienced negative (positive) economic growth in 2011,<sup>218</sup> with Louisiana (North Dakota) leading the way with a GDP per capita growth rate of -5.9 (9.4) percent. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate declined in 48 states from 2010 to 2011, with the variable ranging from -2.4 in Michigan to 0.2 in Mississippi. The GDP per capita growth and change-in-unemployment items correlate negatively, as expected, at -0.18, although the relationship is not statistically significant.

For the subnational and national aggregate variables, I have drawn on an AmericasBarometer item about change in personal economic situation over the previous year. I recoded the variable to range from 0 to 1, with higher scores indicating better egotropic outcomes, and then aggregated the data to the subnational and national levels.<sup>219</sup> The subnational variable ranges from 0.26 in the Cayo region in Belize to 0.66 in region 3 in Guyana, and the national variable ranges from 0.30 in Belize to 0.62 in Uruguay.

To assess construct validity, I correlated the national aggregated measure with the World Bank GDP per capita growth and change-in-unemployment items. As would be expected, the national aggregated measure is positively related to GDP per capita growth (0.49) and negatively related to change in unemployment (-0.45). Both correlations are significant at the 0.05 level.

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<sup>218</sup> The number of “states” totals 51 because the District of Columbia is included.

<sup>219</sup> Following the previous chapter, I combined retrospective, current, and prospective egotropic survey items in the AmericasBarometer to design alternative subnational and national economic variables. All of the significant interactions reported below remain significant with the substitution of the alternate contextual variables.

## *Operationalizing Crime*

The next contextual variables under consideration are threats from political dissidents and threats from crime. Due to the difficulty in measuring the former, I focus on the latter. In particular, I rely on crime rates generated from survey data because official law enforcement statistics can be subject to underreporting by citizens and manipulation by elites (Gottfredson 1986).

Crime data come from the World Bank and the AmericasBarometer. From the World Bank, I have obtained data about property crime that were collected in 22 of the 24 AmericasBarometer countries by Enterprise Surveys during interviews with businesses in 2009 or 2010.<sup>220</sup> The specific variable refers to the losses to a firm because of arson, robbery, theft, and vandalism, as a percentage of annual sales. Losses range from 0.1 percent in Belize to 2.5 percent in Brazil.

An alternative measure of crime is available from the AmericasBarometer. The cross-national survey asked respondents if they had experienced “robbery, burglary, assault, fraud, blackmail, extortion, violent threats, or **any other type** of crime in the past 12 months.”<sup>221</sup> I coded the variable so that individuals with at least one crime experience receive a score of 1; all other respondents have a score of 0. Because of my interest in the national context, individuals also are assigned a score of 0 if their last crime experience occurred outside of their home country.<sup>222,223</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Data are not available from Canada and the United States for either year. Survey data for the other countries are available for 2009 or 2010, but not both.

<sup>221</sup> The boldface type appears in the official questionnaire.

<sup>222</sup> In the 24 countries under analysis in the AmericasBarometer, only 34 respondents said that their most recent victimization experience occurred in another country.

<sup>223</sup> The AmericasBarometer included a parallel question about whether a household member had experienced a crime in the previous year. I opted against using the household crime item for my main results because crime rates pertain to the rates of personal, not vicarious, victimization. Nevertheless, results with the subnational and national

After developing the individual-level variable, I aggregated to the subnational and national levels. Subnational crime rates range from 0.02 in region 6 of Guyana to 0.41 in the Metropolitan Area of Guatemala City. Guyana, likewise, witnessed the lowest national crime rate of 0.09; the highest crime rate of 0.31 occurred in Peru.

I assessed the construct validity of the aggregated national crime rate by correlating the variable with the business losses variable and other World Bank variables related to crime. The additional items are the homicide rate, based on official statistics, as well as the political stability and rule of law estimates from the Worldwide Governance Indicators.<sup>224</sup> I reverse-coded the latter two items to range from 0 to 1. Although the aggregated variable correlated negatively and insignificantly with the homicide rate ( $p = 0.74$ ), the aggregated variable was positively related to the business losses variable ( $p = 0.31$ ), the political instability variable ( $p = 0.05$ ), and low rule of law variable ( $p = 0.06$ ). I thus conclude that the aggregated national crime rate functions as an adequate measure of victimization.

Descriptive statistics for all contextual variables are located in Appendix F.

### *Testing the Hypotheses with Multilevel Regression*

Previous chapters have tested my hypotheses with single-level regression analyses, but the technique becomes inadequate with the introduction of objective measures of corruption, economic performance, and crime because all individuals in a particular collectivity are responding to the same contextual factors. Since the observations are not independent, neither

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household crime measures are similar to the main results reported below, although the interaction between conscientiousness and national crime is not significant at the 0.10 level or better ( $p = 0.18$ ).

<sup>224</sup> I do not utilize the political stability and rule of law items for my main empirical analyses because neither exclusively measures crime. The political stability estimate refers to government destabilization and other forms of political violence, and the rule of law estimate concerns the probability of crime as well as the quality of law enforcement (Kaufmann et al. 2009).

are the errors of a single-level model, which violates a key assumption of the regression (Steenbergen and Jones 2002).

Instead of single-level regression, I employ multilevel regression for the empirical analyses in the current chapter. Respondents to the ANES and CCES are nested in states, yielding two-level models. To estimate a nationally representative sample, I include the appropriate individual-level weight variable for each survey.

Meanwhile, I generate three-level models for the AmericasBarometer by nesting individuals in subnational regions and nesting subnational regions in countries. The AmericasBarometer offers a weight variable that would equalize the effective sample size of each country to 1,500 respondents, but I opted against including this weight because of the focus of some models on the subnational context, rather than the national context. Instead, I ran a robustness check in which I excluded the countries with noticeable deviations from a sample size of 1,500—that is, Brazil (N = 2,482), Bolivia (3,018), Chile (1,965), and Ecuador (3,000).<sup>225</sup> Nine of the 11 significant AmericasBarometer interactions reported below remain significant when these four countries are omitted from the analysis. The two exceptions are noted below.

In all multilevel models, I test my hypotheses by generating a cross-level interaction between the personality trait(s) of interest and the contextual factor of interest.<sup>226</sup> In other words,

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<sup>225</sup> The other 20 AmericasBarometer countries in this study had samples of approximately 1,500 respondents. In particular, sample sizes ranged from 1,410 in Argentina to 1,562 in Mexico.

<sup>226</sup> However, to calculate an R-squared value, I follow Snijders and Bosker (2012) by running an identical regression with no cross-level interaction. For models with continuous dependent variables (i.e., greater than 7 categories), the formula for the R-squared value is as follows: (Snijders and Bosker 2012, 112):  $1 - (\text{sum of intercept variance component and level-1 variance component in a model with independent variables}) / (\text{sum of intercept variance component and level-1 variance component in the empty model})$ . For logistic and ordinal models, the formula for the R-squared value is as follows (Snijders and Bosker 2012, 306, 311):  $(\text{estimated variance of the fitted values}) / (\text{estimated variance of the fitted values} + \text{estimated intercept variance} + \pi^2/3)$ .

I model the personality trait as a function of the objective environmental variable. The model also includes the other Big Five trait dimensions and the sociodemographic controls.<sup>227</sup>

I have conducted the multilevel analyses with HLM 6.02 (Raudenbush et al. 2005).

### **Evidence for a Conditional Link: Results**

I now report my findings with objective contextual factors. I start with the AmericasBarometer and ANES results for the corruption hypotheses and then present my findings for the economic performance hypothesis with data from all three surveys. I conclude the section by examining how the crime rate moderates the effect of conscientiousness on support for criminal rights.

#### *Personality Effects Conditioned by Corruption*

First, I examine whether corruption levels interact with openness and extraversion to influence external efficacy attitudes. Individuals high in openness value democratic ideals and individuals high in extraversion are sensitive to group norms and group welfare, so citizens at the high end of each trait dimension will be inclined to reward or punish the political system based on its consistency with anticorruption standards for governance. Therefore, I expect negative effects for both interactions; in other words, the impact of both trait dimensions should become more and more negative as the level of corruption rises.

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<sup>227</sup> Therefore, the number of individual-level independent variables in the model far outweighs the number of contextual variables. Because the slope of a personality variable could be the function of more than one contextual factor, I also ran a robustness check in which I added economic development as a predictor of the personality trait(s) of interest. To be more precise, the AmericasBarometer multilevel analyses used the subnational aggregated education average to accompany subnational aggregated bribery, economic performance, or crime; the national aggregated education average to accompany national aggregated bribery, economic performance, or crime; and country-level 2009 GDP per capita in constant 2010 U.S. dollars (World Bank 2017a) to accompany non-aggregated bribery, economic performance, or crime. Meanwhile, the ANES and CCES robustness checks employed the natural log of the state-level 2011 per capita real GDP in chained 2009 dollars. (I employed the natural log for the U.S. analyses because of convergence problems with the unlogged data and because of the substantial gap in income between the wealthiest collectivity and second-wealthiest collectivity. In particular, the District of Columbia had a 2011 GDP per capita of \$166,872, whereas Alaska had a 2011 GDP per capita of \$70,573.) Of the 20 significant interactions in the multilevel regressions reported below, only 2 interactions ceased to be significant with the inclusion of GDP per capita or logged GDP per capita. These two exceptions are noted below. I should note that not all of the analyses for this robustness check produced results with robust standard errors.

Table 5.2 reports the cross-level interactions between corruption and personality in the AmericasBarometer. As anticipated, the extraversion interaction is negative and significant in three of four models,<sup>228,229</sup> and the openness interaction in Model I is also negative and statistically significant.<sup>230</sup> All of the interactions for both trait dimensions, in fact, run in the negative direction. The consistent extraversion results for both World Bank corruption measures and for the national aggregated corruption measure constitutes strong evidence in favor of the expected negative interaction effect. My findings are not simply a function of a particular operationalization of malfeasance.

To explore the substantive impact of the corruption–extraversion interactions, I turn to the conditional effect in Model I. Figure 5.1 depicts this interaction. As anticipated, the effect of extraversion on the probability of maximum external efficacy is positive for individuals in contexts at the lowest level of observed corruption (i.e., an increase from 0.08 to 0.09); the effect, however, is relatively minimal.<sup>231</sup> Meanwhile, moving from 0 to 1 in extraversion in an environment with the highest level of observed corruption attenuates the probability of maximum external efficacy by 43.09 percent, from 0.10 to 0.06.<sup>232</sup>

A final observation about Table 5.2 pertains to the responsiveness of citizens to contextual information. Individuals high in openness and extraversion appear to be more responsive to the level of corruption, as indicated by the significant interactions. We also can assess responsiveness by turning to the corruption coefficient, which refers to the effect of

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<sup>228</sup> In addition, the extraversion interaction in Model IV becomes significant if the countries with oversamples are omitted from the regression.

<sup>229</sup> However, the extraversion interactions in Models I and III become insignificant if GDP per capita is added as a predictor for the extraversion and openness slopes.

<sup>230</sup> This openness interaction is no longer significant if the countries with oversamples are omitted from the model.

<sup>231</sup> Furthermore, the extraversion coefficient in Model I of Table 5.2 shows that this trait dimension does not exert a significant effect when corruption is equal to 0.

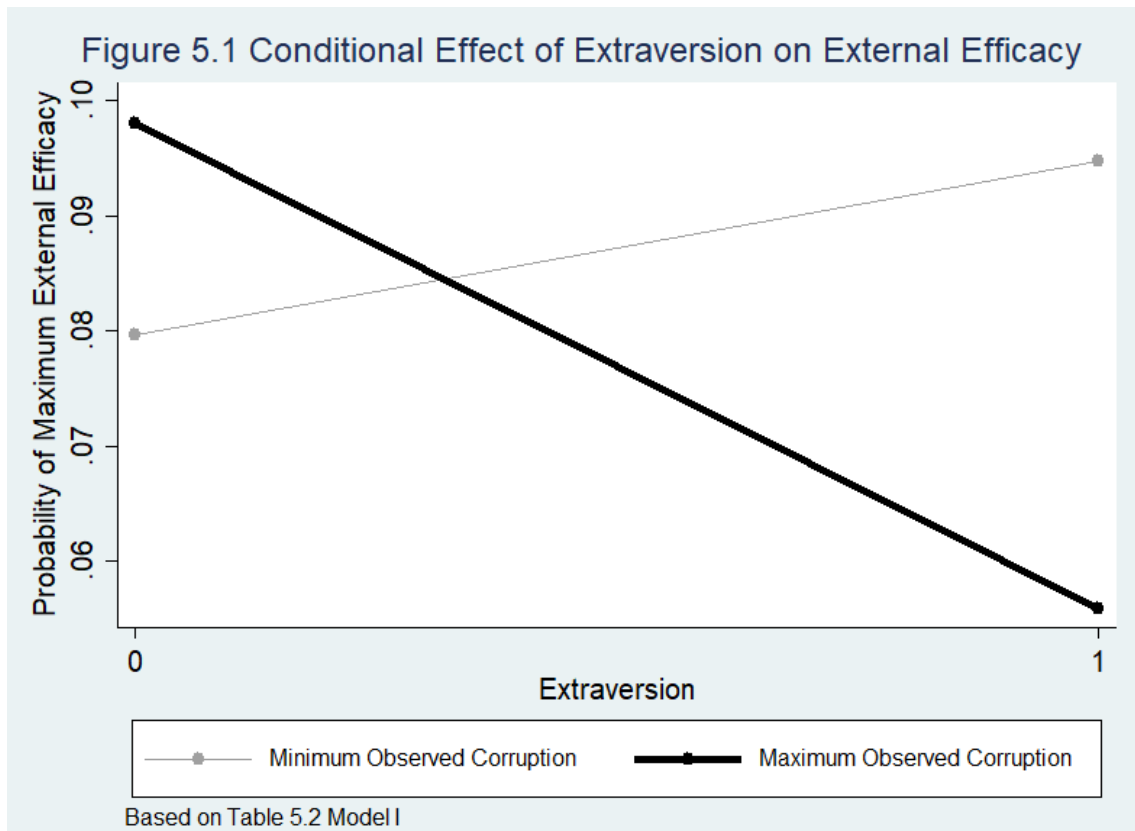
<sup>232</sup> Predicted probabilities in this chapter are based on all variables, except the ones of interest, being fixed to their mean (non-dichotomous) or modal (dichotomous) values.



**Table 5.2****Personality, Corruption, and External Efficacy Revisited: AmericasBarometer**

	Model I: Country-Level World Bank Corruption Perceptions Measure	Model II: Country-Level World Bank Firms Receiving One or More Bribe Requests	Model III: Country-Level Bribery Rate Aggregated from Survey Data	Model IV: Region-Level Bribery Rate Aggregated from Survey Data
Openness x Greater Corruption	-0.47+ (0.25)	-0.20 (1.00)	-0.65 (0.63)	-0.54 (0.58)
Extraversion x Greater Corruption	-0.80* (0.31)	-1.74* (0.65)	-2.03* (0.96)	-0.72 (0.88)
Corruption	0.53+ (0.29)	-1.29* (0.62)	0.78 (0.81)	0.72 (0.72)
Openness	-0.11 (0.18)	-0.43** (0.14)	-0.34* (0.12)	-0.34** (0.12)
Conscientiousness	-0.10* (0.05)	-0.09+ (0.05)	-0.10* (0.05)	-0.11* (0.05)
Extraversion	0.19 (0.23)	-0.22* (0.08)	-0.06 (0.14)	-0.24+ (0.14)
Agreeableness	0.07 (0.08)	0.05 (0.08)	0.08 (0.08)	0.08 (0.08)
Emotional Stability	0.06 (0.07)	0.08 (0.07)	0.06 (0.07)	0.07 (0.07)
Female	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.04+ (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)
Age	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
White	0.03 (0.07)	0.08 (0.06)	0.03 (0.07)	0.04 (0.07)
Education	-0.10 (0.11)	-0.10 (0.11)	-0.11 (0.11)	-0.11 (0.11)
R <sup>2</sup> -value	0.01	0.02	0.01	N/A
Number of Cases	35,114	33,617	35,114	35,114
Number of Subnational Regions	118	111	118	118
Number of Countries	24	22	24	24
Method of Estimation	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal

Note: Data come from the 2010 AmericasBarometer. Coefficients are the result of a random coefficient multi-level model. Individual respondents were nested within regions, and regions were nested within countries. Robust standard errors (in parentheses) are reported; the intercept and threshold parameters are omitted from the table. As recommended by Snijders and Bosker (2012), the R-squared value in each model is based on the results of a random intercept model with the same individual-level and contextual variables; the formula used for calculating the R-squared value also is provided by Snijders and Bosker (2012, 306, 311). An "N/A" entry occurs because Snijders and Bosker do not offer a formula for calculating explained variance for a three-level ordinal or logistic model in which the only contextual variables are present at the second level. For more details about calculating the R-squared value, see the main text. \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10



malfeasance when openness and extraversion are equal to 0. If individuals low in both trait dimensions are responsive to their environment and comply with anticorruption norms, we would observe negative and significant corruption coefficients in Models I through IV. Instead, the coefficient for corruption is negative and significant in only one model and actually positive and significant in another model.<sup>233</sup> Individuals low in each trait dimension thus do not appear to reward or punish the political system based on the level of corruption.<sup>234</sup>

I now assess the generalizability of my AmericasBarometer findings by testing the corruption hypotheses in the ANES. In Table 5.3 we observe that none of the

<sup>233</sup> Meanwhile, the corruption coefficients in Models I and II are both negative and significant if we replace the normally coded openness and extraversion variables with reverse-coded openness and extraversion variables. These replacements mean that the corruption coefficients now refer to the impact of corruption for individuals who score 1 in openness and extraversion. The significant and negative effects of corruption point to the greater responsiveness of individuals high in the two trait dimensions.

<sup>234</sup> Likewise, the corruption perception coefficient in Table 4.2 is not significant, indicating that perceptions of malfeasance are not strongly related to external efficacy attitudes for AmericasBarometer respondents who score at the minimum levels of openness and extraversion.

**Table 5.3**  
**Personality, Corruption, and External Efficacy Revisited: ANES**

	<i>Officials Care What People Think</i>		<i>People Have Say in What Government Does</i>		<i>Elections Make Government Pay Attention</i>	
	Model I: Corruption Perceived by Journalists in State	Model II: Corruption Convictions per Million State Population (Logged)	Model III: Corruption Perceived by Journalists in State	Model IV: Corruption Convictions per Million State Population (Logged)	Model V: Corruption Perceived by Journalists in State	Model VI: Corruption Convictions per Million State Population (Logged)
Openness x Greater Corruption	-0.55 (0.74)	-3.41** (1.14)	0.13 (0.68)	-1.71 (1.54)	-0.43 (0.52)	-0.46 (1.30)
Extraversion x Greater Corruption	-0.02 (0.39)	0.38 (1.04)	0.17 (0.39)	0.35 (1.31)	0.43 (0.48)	-1.52 (1.04)
Corruption	0.15 (0.33)	1.04* (0.47)	0.11 (0.28)	0.63 (0.42)	0.12 (0.28)	0.56 (0.84)
Openness	0.59 (0.44)	1.29*** (0.36)	0.41 (0.47)	1.05* (0.43)	0.96* (0.37)	0.81+ (0.42)
Conscientiousness	-0.63*** (0.14)	-0.64*** (0.14)	-0.24* (0.12)	-0.26* (0.11)	-0.04 (0.14)	-0.02 (0.14)
Extraversion	0.60* (0.27)	0.42 (0.32)	0.49 (0.32)	0.44 (0.41)	-0.13 (0.32)	0.52 (0.36)
Agreeableness	0.34* (0.13)	0.30* (0.14)	0.28* (0.12)	0.24+ (0.13)	0.42* (0.17)	0.40* (0.16)
Emotional Stability	0.22+ (0.13)	0.24+ (0.13)	0.44*** (0.11)	0.39** (0.12)	0.22+ (0.12)	0.25* (0.12)
Female	0.02 (0.05)	0.03 (0.05)	0.02 (0.05)	0.01 (0.05)	0.04 (0.04)	0.05 (0.04)
Age	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00* (0.00)	0.00+ (0.00)
White	-0.25*** (0.07)	-0.23*** (0.07)	-0.47*** (0.09)	-0.50*** (0.08)	-0.51*** (0.06)	-0.51*** (0.06)
Education	0.77*** (0.08)	0.80*** (0.08)	0.70*** (0.11)	0.71*** (0.11)	0.45*** (0.10)	0.42*** (0.11)
R <sup>2</sup> -value	0.03	0.03	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.04
Number of Cases	5,236	5,345	5,235	5,344	5,232	5,339
Number of States	49	51	49	51	49	51
Method of Estimation	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal

Note: Data come from the 2012 ANES. The number of "states" may be 51 because of the inclusion of Washington, D.C., in the study. The dependent variable is located at the top of the column in italics, and the operationalization of corruption context is located immediately below the model number. The conviction rate measure ranges from 0 to 1. Coefficients are the result of a random coefficient multi-level model. Individual respondents were nested within states. Robust standard errors (in parentheses) are reported; the intercept and threshold parameters are omitted from the table. The "weight\_full" variable was employed at the individual level of analysis. As recommended by Snijders and Bosker (2012), the R-squared value in each model is based on the results of a random intercept model with the same individual-level and contextual variables; the formula used for calculating the R-squared value also is provided by Snijders and Bosker (2012, 306, 311). For more details about calculating the R-squared value, see the main text. \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

extraversion–corruption interactions in the ANES are statistically significant, thus tempering the cross-national findings from the AmericasBarometer. The inconsistent results across datasets could be attributable to the lower degree of variation in corruption within the United States than across North America, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Among the four U.S. regions in the AmericasBarometer, the bribery rate ranged from 0.03 in the Northeast to 0.07 in the South, with

an overall national average of 0.05. Of the 23 other AmericasBarometer countries, 21 experienced greater prevalence of corruption according to the aggregated national bribery rate.

In spite of the relatively low level of corruption in the United States, one of the openness–corruption interactions in Table 5.3 is negative and statistically significant. I would have preferred to observe a greater number of significant interactions; however, I can report that the significant interaction in Model II is robust to a number of checks. In particular, the interaction remains negative and significant if I remove the collectivity with the highest corruption conviction rate (i.e., the District of Columbia) or if I remove Washington, D.C., and replace the logged corruption variable with its unlogged counterpart. Likewise, the interaction continues to be negative and significant if I add individual-level controls for ideology and partisanship or if I add cross-level interactions for openness and a logged measure of GDP per capita as well as extraversion and a logged measure of GDP per capita.<sup>235</sup>

The AmericasBarometer and ANES results overlap in two respects. First, the significant openness interaction in both datasets occurs for efficacy evaluations at the actor level of political support. Openness activation thus appears to influence attitudes about the democratic relationship between citizens and government officials.<sup>236,237</sup> Second, consistent with the findings

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<sup>235</sup> I logged GDP per capita because of the substantial gap between the two wealthiest collectivities: the District of Columbia (\$166,872) and Alaska (\$70,573).

<sup>236</sup> Likewise, the interaction between openness and corruption perceptions is negative and significant in the AmericasBarometer actor efficacy model in Table 4.2. I should note, however, that in the ANES the only significant openness–corruption interaction from Chapter 4 pertained to institutional external efficacy (i.e., elections making government pay attention). I classify the pay-attention dependent variable as an example of institutional efficacy since political actors are not explicitly mentioned in the question.

<sup>237</sup> My argument anticipates that low and high levels of corruption will activate both trait dimensions, resulting in positive and negative trait effects, respectively. One can consider trait activation at minimum levels of corruption by observing the openness and extraversion coefficients if the contextual variable in question is coded to range from 0 to 1. The same is true for trait activation at maximum levels of corruption, although the contextual variable must be reverse-coded. Consistent with expectations, I observe a positive (negative) and significant openness effect at minimum (maximum) corruption in Model II of Table 5.3. The openness and extraversion effects also are negative and significant at maximum corruption in Models I, II, and III of Table 5.2, as anticipated. Trait effects at minimum levels of corruption in the AmericasBarometer, however, do not conform to expectations, for I find negative and

in Table 5.2, the corruption coefficient in Model II of Table 5.3 is actually positive, which denotes a lack of traditional responsiveness to contextual information on the part of individuals low in openness and extraversion.<sup>238</sup> Instead, greater levels of corruption are rewarded with *higher* external efficacy evaluations.<sup>239</sup>

### *Personality Effects Conditioned by Economic Performance*

For my next hypothesis, I shift from openness and extraversion to conscientiousness and from corruption to economic performance. I expect robust (anemic) sociotropic conditions to activate the achievement-striving and competence facets of conscientiousness and produce positive (negative) trait effects as individuals high in this trait dimension seek to reward (punish) actors, institutions, and procedures for economic outcomes. In other words, as economic conditions improve, the impact of conscientiousness on status quo attitudes should become more and more positive. The anticipated interaction effect will be positive when the contextual factor is measured by GDP per capita growth or aggregated economic situation, and negative when the contextual factor is measured by increases in the unemployment rate.

I utilize data from all three surveys to test my hypothesis. With multiple contextual factors and numerous dependent variables, the number of tests totaled 36 for the AmericasBarometer, 28 for the ANES, and 4 for the CCES. I conserve space by presenting only the regressions with a statistically significant cross-level interaction between conscientiousness and economic performance.

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significant openness effects in Models II and III and a negative and significant extraversion effect in Model II. For exact results from my analyses of trait activation, see Appendix G.

<sup>238</sup> The significant interaction, meanwhile, underscores the responsiveness of individuals high in openness. Indeed, the corruption coefficient becomes negative and significant if the normally coded openness and extraversion variables are replaced by their reverse-coded counterparts; these replacements would cause the corruption coefficient to denote the effect of malfeasance among individuals who score 1 in openness and extraversion.

<sup>239</sup> Meanwhile, the coefficients for corruption perceptions in Table 4.5 indicate that perceptions of malfeasance, as expected, are negatively related to external efficacy attitudes for ANES respondents who score at the minimum level of openness and extraversion. I should note, however, that corruption perceptions are measured with an item in a political trust battery, rather than with an item in a battery focused on malfeasance.

The AmericasBarometer results are presented in Table 5.4. Of the 36 tests, 5 are statistically significant and in the hypothesized positive direction.<sup>240</sup> Although a higher number of significant interactions would be ideal, the total of 5 still exceeds what would be expected by chance if we anticipate 10 percent of the coefficients (i.e., about 4) being statistically significant in either direction.

From a substantive perspective, interesting patterns emerge from the AmericasBarometer results. First, I observe positive and significant interactions for political support at the actor (i.e., executive approval), institutional (i.e., perceived justice system effectiveness), and procedural (i.e., citizen rights protected) levels. Highly conscientious citizens appear willing to respond to economic information in their attitudes at all three levels of status quo support. Second, the significant interactions with regional and national aggregated economic conditions indicate the value of both sources of information as individuals high in conscientiousness assess the political system.<sup>241</sup> Extant research on Argentina, the United States, and other democracies has questioned the impact of subnational economic outcomes on electoral results (Remmer and Gélinau 2003; Rodden and Wibbels 2010), but my analysis of data from Latin America, North America, and the Caribbean suggests that local sociotropic conditions matter once they are interacted with conscientiousness.<sup>242</sup> Third, I find that citizens high in conscientiousness are more responsive to economic information than citizens low in conscientiousness. Beyond the significant interactions, we can assess responsiveness by considering the economic performance coefficients, which refer to the impact of sociotropic conditions for individuals with a score of 0

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<sup>240</sup> The interaction in Model V ceases to be significant if the countries with oversamples are omitted.

<sup>241</sup> For both executive approval and citizen rights being protected, neither the subnational nor national cross-level interaction is statistically significant if both aggregated variables are included in the same model. Such a result could be due to the nested nature of the two variables.

<sup>242</sup> The current chapter, of course, attends to political support attitudes, so future work on conscientiousness, subnational economic outcomes, and actual vote choice is to be encouraged.

**Table 5.4****Conscientiousness, Economic Performance, and Status Quo Support Revisited: AmericasBarometer**

	<i>Executive Approval</i>		<i>Perceived Justice</i>	<i>Citizen Rights Protected</i>	
	Model I: Country-Level Economic Situation Aggregated from Survey Data	Model II: Region-Level Economic Situation Aggregated from Survey Data	Model III: Country-Level World Bank Growth in 2009 GDP per Capita	Model IV: Country-Level Economic Situation Aggregated from Survey Data	Model V: Region-Level Economic Situation Aggregated from Survey Data
Conscientiousness x Positive Economic Performance	1.78+ (0.89)	1.43+ (0.76)	0.04+ (0.02)	1.34* (0.54)	1.28* (0.59)
Positive Economic Performance	3.98* (1.64)	2.53* (1.11)	0.03 (0.03)	0.71 (0.93)	0.49 (0.54)
Openness	-0.09 (0.09)	-0.09 (0.09)	-0.49*** (0.06)	-0.32*** (0.06)	-0.31*** (0.06)
Conscientiousness	-0.87+ (0.45)	-0.72+ (0.39)	0.10+ (0.06)	-0.69* (0.26)	-0.63* (0.28)
Extraversion	-0.13+ (0.07)	-0.13+ (0.07)	-0.26*** (0.05)	-0.30*** (0.06)	-0.29*** (0.06)
Agreeableness	0.21*** (0.06)	0.21*** (0.06)	0.23*** (0.07)	0.14* (0.07)	0.14* (0.07)
Emotional Stability	0.10 (0.08)	0.10 (0.08)	0.18** (0.07)	0.15* (0.07)	0.15* (0.07)
Female	0.02 (0.04)	0.02 (0.04)	-0.03 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)	0.04+ (0.03)
Age	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
White	-0.05 (0.10)	-0.05 (0.10)	0.14*** (0.04)	0.11+ (0.06)	0.11+ (0.06)
Education	-0.06 (0.14)	-0.06 (0.14)	-0.35** (0.12)	-0.14 (0.11)	-0.14 (0.10)
R <sup>2</sup> -value	0.04	N/A	0.02	0.01	N/A
Number of Cases	36,887	36,887	35,553	36,532	36,532
Number of Subnational Regions	118	118	118	118	118
Number of Countries	24	24	24	24	24
Method of Estimation	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal

Note: Data come from the 2010 AmericasBarometer. The dependent variable is located at the top of the column in italics, and the operationalization of economic context is located immediately below the model number. Coefficients are the result of a random coefficient multi-level model. Individual respondents were nested within regions, and regions were nested within countries. Robust standard errors (in parentheses) are reported; the intercept and threshold parameters are omitted from the table. As recommended by Snijders and Bosker (2012), the R-squared value in each model is based on the results of a random intercept model with the same individual-level and contextual variables; the formula used for calculating the R-squared value also is provided by Snijders and Bosker (2012, 306, 311). "N/A" entries occur because Snijders and Bosker do not offer a formula for calculating explained variance for a three-level ordinal or logistic model in which the only contextual variables are present at the second level. For more details about calculating the R-squared value, see the main text. \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

in conscientiousness. Only two economic performance coefficients in Table 5.4 are positive and statistically significant.<sup>243</sup> Individuals low in conscientiousness thus may not account for economic performance in their attitudes toward the political system, whereas individuals at the other end of the spectrum are more likely to reward or punish the political system based on the level of economic performance.<sup>244</sup>

Next, I report the conscientiousness–economic performance interactions for the ANES in Table 5.5. As expected, all of the significant change-in-unemployment (GDP per capita growth) interactions are in the negative (positive) direction.<sup>245</sup> Conscientiousness exerts an increasingly positive effect on attitudes toward political actors and institutions as the level of economic performance in one’s state improves. Again, my findings question the notion that citizens fail to account for subnational economic performance in their political attitudes and behavior (Remmer and Gélinau 2003; Rodden and Wibbels 2010). Less conscientious citizens may ignore local sociotropic conditions,<sup>246</sup> but highly conscientious citizens value such information.<sup>247</sup>

The interactions in Table 5.5 for House incumbent approval are particularly significant, implying that conscientious citizens reward or punish their legislative representative for the

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<sup>243</sup> Meanwhile, the greater responsiveness of highly conscientious citizens is apparent if we replace the normally coded conscientiousness variable with a reverse-coded conscientiousness variable. Such a change in each model of Table 5.4 causes every economic performance coefficient—which now refers to the impact of sociotropic conditions for highly conscientious individuals—to be positive and significant.

<sup>244</sup> Such an observation applies only to the coefficients for objective economic performance. In Table 4.3 we observed that the economic perception coefficients are all positive and significant, indicating that among less conscientious individuals, positive economic views facilitate greater support for the political status quo.

<sup>245</sup> The 7 significant interactions in 28 regressions exceed what would be expected based on chance.

<sup>246</sup> To measure the lack of responsiveness by individuals low in conscientiousness, we can examine the economic performance coefficients in Table 5.5. If less conscientious citizens were responding to their economic conditions, the economic performance coefficient should be negative for the change-in-unemployment interactions and positive for the GDP per capita growth interactions. Instead, the pattern is reverse so that citizens who score 0 in conscientiousness actually *punish* the political system for improved economic performance. I should note, however, that such unexpected patterns are not apparent for the ANES economic perception coefficients in Table 4.6, all of which are positive (negative) when the dependent variable refers to status quo (opposition) support.

<sup>247</sup> The greater reactivity of highly conscientious citizens is apparent not only in the significant interactions in Table 5.5, but also in the impact of economic performance among individuals high in conscientiousness. If we replace the normally coded conscientiousness variable with a reverse-coded conscientiousness variable, the economic performance coefficient becomes significant in the expected direction for Models I through V of Table 5.5.



**Table 5.5**  
Conscientiousness, Economic Performance, and Status Quo Support Revisited: ANES

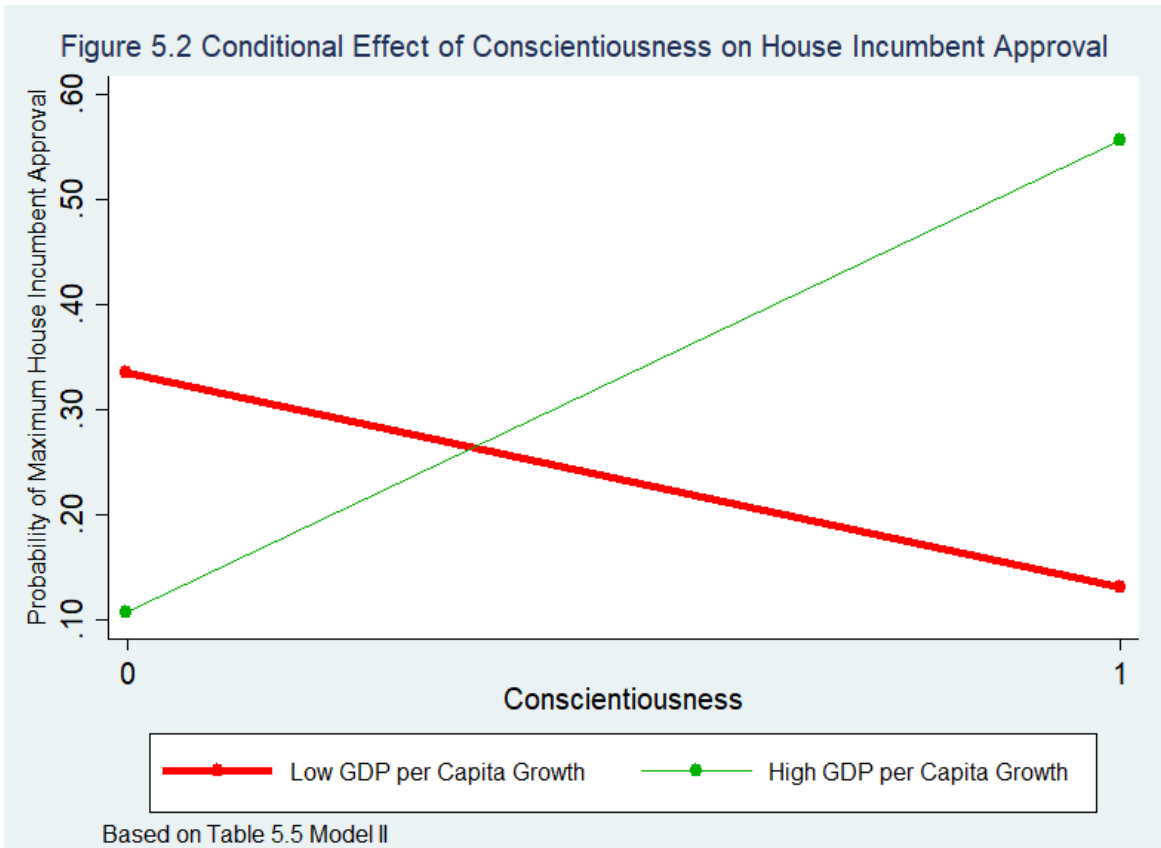
	<i>Index of Actor Trust</i>	<i>House Incumbent Approval</i>		<i>Thermometer Index for Democrats</i>	<i>Likeability of Democratic Party</i>	<i>Thermometer Index for Gov't Agencies</i>	<i>People Have Say in What Government Does</i>
	Model I: State-Level Bureau of Labor Statistics Change in Unemployment Rate, 2010–2011	Model II: State-Level Bureau of Economic Analysis Growth in 2011 GDP per Capita	Model III: State-Level Bureau of Labor Statistics Change in Unemployment Rate, 2010–2011	Model IV: State-Level Bureau of Labor Statistics Change in Unemployment Rate, 2010–2011	Model V: State-Level Bureau of Economic Analysis Growth in 2011 GDP per Capita	Model VI: State-Level Bureau of Labor Statistics Change in Unemployment Rate, 2010–2011	Model VII: State-Level Bureau of Economic Analysis Growth in 2011 GDP per Capita
Conscientiousness x Positive Economic Performance	-0.26+ (0.13)	0.23** (0.07)	-0.87*** (0.24)	-34.67+ (17.61)	0.31+ (0.16)	-19.75+ (11.06)	0.12* (0.05)
Positive Economic Performance	0.13 (0.10)	-0.09+ (0.05)	0.53** (0.16)	7.97 (11.28)	-0.14 (0.10)	11.84+ (7.04)	-0.11** (0.04)
Openness	-0.11+ (0.06)	0.13 (0.18)	0.14 (0.18)	64.02*** (7.95)	2.28*** (0.35)	3.85 (5.71)	0.64*** (0.17)
Conscientiousness	-0.44*** (0.12)	0.17 (0.15)	-0.31 (0.20)	-59.34*** (16.78)	-0.87* (0.37)	-23.18* (11.27)	-0.38** (0.11)
Extraversion	0.06 (0.06)	-0.14 (0.12)	-0.15 (0.12)	-7.08 (6.83)	0.00 (0.28)	24.53*** (5.16)	0.51*** (0.13)
Agreeableness	0.17*** (0.05)	0.06 (0.20)	0.05 (0.20)	22.37** (8.44)	0.81** (0.29)	23.10*** (5.03)	0.22+ (0.13)
Emotional Stability	0.12* (0.06)	0.14 (0.22)	0.14 (0.22)	-9.85 (8.18)	-0.34 (0.27)	11.23* (4.83)	0.41** (0.13)
Female	0.04 (0.03)	0.15* (0.06)	0.16* (0.06)	16.58*** (3.22)	0.36*** (0.11)	8.27*** (2.40)	0.01 (0.05)
Age	-0.00+ (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)	-0.01 (0.08)	0.01* (0.00)	0.13* (0.06)	0.00 (0.00)
White	-0.31*** (0.04)	0.00 (0.11)	0.01 (0.12)	-68.36*** (7.35)	-2.00*** (0.23)	-22.45*** (3.62)	-0.48*** (0.09)
Education	0.14** (0.05)	0.00 (0.14)	-0.01 (0.14)	12.83* (5.98)	-0.22 (0.17)	-21.85*** (3.02)	0.69*** (0.11)
R <sup>2</sup> -value	0.05	0.01	0.01	0.14	0.11	0.06	0.05
Number of Cases	5,150	4,323	4,323	5,203	5,294	5,259	5,344
Number of States	51	50	50	51	51	51	51
Method of Estimation	OLS	Ordinal	Ordinal	OLS	OLS	OLS	Ordinal

Note: Data come from the 2012 ANES. The number of "states" may be 51 because of the inclusion of Washington, D.C., in the study. The dependent variable is located at the top of the column in italics, and the operationalization of economic context is located immediately below the model number. Coefficients are the result of a random coefficient multi-level model. Individual respondents were nested within states. Robust standard errors (in parentheses) are reported; intercepts and any threshold parameters for a model are omitted from the table. The "weight\_full" variable was employed at the individual level of analysis. As recommended by Snijders and Bosker (2012), the R-squared value in each model is based on the results of a random intercept model with the same individual-level and contextual variables; the formulas used for calculating the R-squared value also are provided by Snijders and Bosker (2012, 112, 306, 311). For more details about calculating the R-squared value, see the main text. \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

economic climate in their state. Figure 5.2 depicts the interaction for GDP per capita growth.<sup>248</sup>

As anticipated, I observe evidence of trait activation in response to low and high levels of state economic performance. Poor economic conditions trigger a negative trait effect, as moving from 0 to 1 in conscientiousness reduces the probability of maximum approval from 0.34 to 0.13 (i.e., a decline of 60.58 percent). Conversely, conscientiousness effects are positive in U.S. states with robust economies: The same change in conscientiousness in contexts of positive economic

<sup>248</sup> I focus on the interaction with GDP per capita growth because of the results of a supplemental analysis in which I included interactions for both economic performance variables. Only the interaction for GDP per capita growth remained statistically significant.



performance raises the likelihood of maximum approval from 0.11 to 0.56 (i.e., an increase of 415.32 percent).

Finally, I turn to the interaction between economic performance and conscientiousness in the CCES. Table 5.6 reports that the effect of conscientiousness on House incumbent approval becomes more and more negative as the unemployment rate rises. Furthermore, the insignificant economic performance coefficient denotes a low level of responsiveness to economic information on the part of citizens low in conscientiousness. Consistent with previous observations, individuals high in conscientiousness appear to be rewarding the political system for positive economic outcomes and punishing the political system for negative economic outcomes.<sup>249</sup>

<sup>249</sup> The significant interaction in Table 5.6 signals the greater responsiveness of highly conscientious citizens. In addition, the reactivity of such individuals is apparent if a reverse-coded conscientiousness variable replaces the

**Table 5.6**  
 Conscientiousness, Economic Performance, and  
 House Incumbent Approval: CCES

	Model I: State-Level Bureau of Labor Statistics Growth in Unemployment Rate, 2010–2011
Conscientiousness x Positive	-1.00*
Economic Performance	(0.45)
Positive Economic Performance	0.45 (0.36)
Openness	0.08 (0.59)
Conscientiousness	-1.09* (0.54)
Extraversion	-0.32 (0.42)
Agreeableness	0.94* (0.44)
Emotional Stability	0.93+ (0.50)
Female	0.16 (0.15)
Age	0.01 (0.01)
White	-0.07 (0.18)
Education	-0.38 (0.29)
R <sup>2</sup> -value	0.03
Number of Cases	738
Number of States	51
Method of Estimation	Ordinal

Note: Data come from the 2012 CCES. The number of "states" is 51 because of the inclusion of Washington, D.C., in the study. Coefficients are the result of a random coefficient multi-level model. Individual respondents were nested within states. Robust standard errors (in parentheses) are reported; the intercept and threshold parameters are omitted from the table. The "V102" weight variable was employed at the individual level of analysis. As recommended by Snijders and Bosker (2012), the R-squared value in each model is based on the results of a random intercept model with the same individual-level and contextual variables; the formula used for calculating the R-squared value also is provided by Snijders and Bosker (2012, 306, 311). For more details about calculating the R-squared value, see the main text. \*\*\* p < .001  
 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

normally coded conscientiousness variable. The coefficient for the change-in-unemployment variable now refers to the contextual effect among individuals high in conscientiousness, and this coefficient is negative and significant, as expected.

In sum, all of the significant interactions reveal, as expected, that conscientiousness exerts a more positive effect on actor, institutional, and procedural support as economic conditions improve.<sup>250</sup>

### *Personality Effects Conditioned by Crime*

Shifting to democratic support, I expect conscientiousness to interact with the crime rate to influence a person's willingness to guarantee rights to the accused. Levels of threat from crime should activate the orderliness and duty facets of conscientiousness. High crime rates will evoke concern for societal stability and the norm of law and order from individuals high in this trait dimension; such concerns may overrule adherence to democratic norms because of the prioritization of material needs for security over post-material needs for minority rights (Maslow 1943). Meanwhile, low crime rates will reassure highly conscientious citizens about the possibility of securing the peace without violating democratic standards regarding criminal rights. Therefore, I anticipate the relationship between conscientiousness and support for criminal rights to become more and more negative as the crime rate increases.

Table 5.7 reports my findings. As expected, we observe negative conditional effects in all three models, and the interactions for the national and subnational aggregated crime rates are statistically significant. The insignificant crime coefficients in the table also indicate that the crime rate exerted no effect on individuals with the minimum score of conscientiousness. Highly conscientious citizens in the AmericasBarometer, therefore, were more responsive to the level of

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<sup>250</sup> As Figure 5.2 would indicate, I observe conscientiousness activation at both low and high scores of the economic performance variables. One can identify trait activation at the minimum (maximum) values of the contextual variables by coding the contextual variables to range from 0 to 1 (0 to 1, reversed) and then examining the conscientiousness coefficient. The process thus requires two supplemental regressions per model. Across the 13 models in Tables 5.4 through 5.6, I ran 26 regressions. Of the 26 conscientiousness coefficients, 16 are significant and in the expected direction. My results reveal trait activation at low and high scores of economic performance. For more details on these analyses, see Appendix G.

**Table 5.7**

Conscientiousness, Crime, and Support for Criminal Rights Revisited:  
AmericasBarometer

	Model I: Country-Level World Bank Firm Losses Due to Crime	Model II: Country-Level Crime Rate Aggregated from Survey Data	Model III: Region-Level Crime Rate Aggregated from Survey Data
Conscientiousness x Higher Crime	-0.14 (0.12)	-2.52** (0.81)	-2.53** (0.77)
Higher Crime	0.04 (0.17)	-1.49 (1.43)	0.23 (0.76)
Openness	0.03 (0.07)	0.05 (0.07)	0.05 (0.07)
Conscientiousness	0.32* (0.14)	0.66*** (0.17)	0.69*** (0.17)
Extraversion	-0.17*** (0.05)	-0.18*** (0.05)	-0.18*** (0.05)
Agreeableness	0.25** (0.08)	0.24** (0.07)	0.24** (0.07)
Emotional Stability	0.23** (0.08)	0.25** (0.08)	0.25** (0.08)
Female	0.10*** (0.02)	0.11*** (0.02)	0.11*** (0.02)
Age	0.01*** (0.00)	0.01*** (0.00)	0.01*** (0.00)
White	0.03 (0.03)	0.01 (0.04)	0.01 (0.03)
Education	0.01 (0.13)	0.02 (0.12)	0.02 (0.12)
R <sup>2</sup> -value	0.01	0.02	0.02
Number of Cases	33,959	35,448	35,448
Number of Subnational Regions	111	118	118
Number of Countries	22	24	24
Method of Estimation	Logit	Logit	Logit

Note: Data come from the 2010 AmericasBarometer. Coefficients are the result of a random coefficient multi-level model. Individual respondents were nested within regions, and regions were nested within countries. Robust standard errors (in parentheses) are reported; intercept parameters are omitted from the table. As recommended by Snijders and Bosker (2012), the R-squared value in each model is based on the results of a random intercept model with the same individual-level and contextual variables; the formula used for calculating the R-squared value also is provided by Snijders and Bosker (2012, 306, 311). For more details about calculating the R-squared value, see the main text. \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

robbery, assault, extortion, and other illegal activity in their environment by withholding or extending rights to potential criminals.<sup>251,252</sup>

Furthermore, the subnational crime rate appears more likely to activate conscientiousness than the national crime rate. In a separate analysis with both cross-level interactions, only the one for the region-level crime rate was negative and statistically significant. Individuals high in conscientiousness, understandably, are more responsive to the immediate threats in their environment.<sup>253</sup>

Because of the greater importance of subnational crime, I concentrate my analysis of substantive effects on the interaction in Table 5.7 between conscientiousness and the regional crime rate. Figure 5.3 depicts the results. We find that both low and high levels of crime activate conscientiousness and produce positive and negative trait effects, respectively. At the lowest observed crime rate, moving from 0 to 1 in conscientiousness raises the probability of supporting criminal rights by more than 13 points, from 0.58 to 0.72 (i.e., an increase of 25.09 percent). But in subnational regions with the highest observed crime rate, the same change in conscientiousness reduces the probability of democratic support from 0.60 to 0.51 (i.e., a decrease of 14.19 percent).<sup>254</sup>

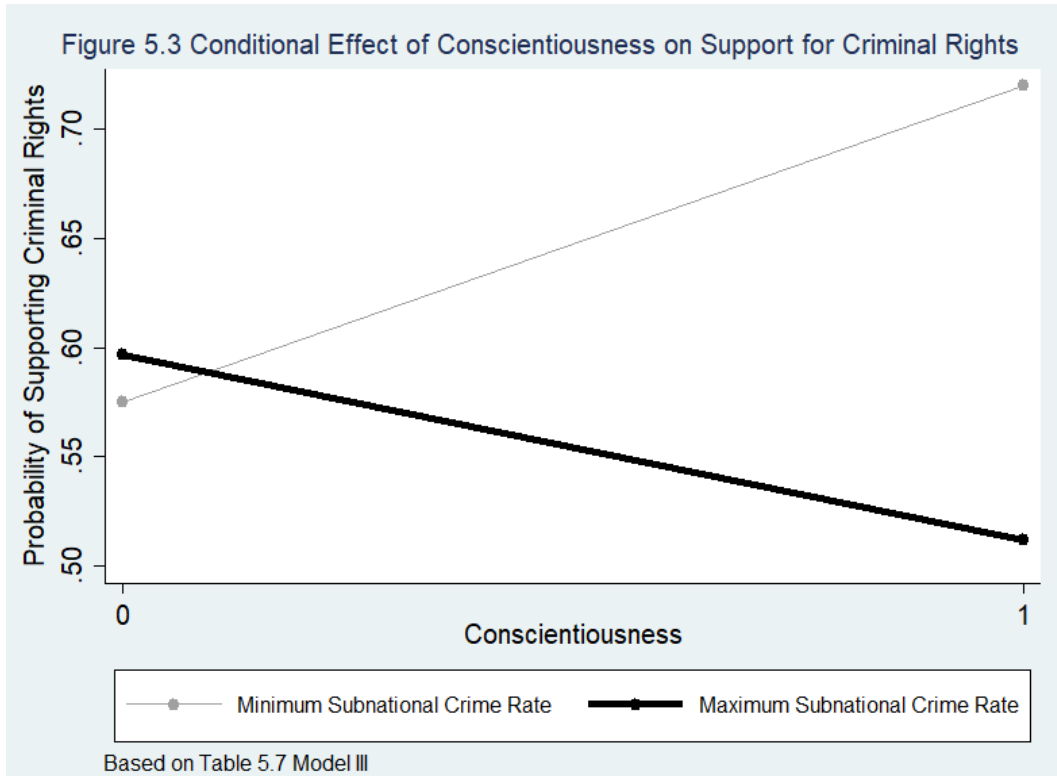
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<sup>251</sup> The two significant interactions in Table 5.7 signal the greater reactivity of highly conscientious individuals. To further examine the issue, a supplementary analysis replaced the normally coded conscientiousness variable with a reverse-coded conscientiousness variable. This replacement caused the crime variable to refer to the impact of the crime rate among highly conscientious respondents, and the coefficients were negative and significant in Models II and III, as expected.

<sup>252</sup> The threat perception variables in Table 4.4 also are insignificant, meaning that among less conscientious citizens, concerns about crime and political dissidents do not exert a significant effect on support for criminal rights and political tolerance, respectively.

<sup>253</sup> Furthermore, I have constructed national and subnational crime rates from an individual-level variable about household crime victimization. The interaction between conscientiousness and the subnational household crime rate is negative and significant, but the interaction between conscientiousness and the national household crime rate is not significant. The analysis thus reinforces the greater salience of local crime information for individuals high in conscientiousness.

<sup>254</sup> Consistent with Figure 5.3, the effect of conscientiousness is positive and significant at the minimum observed subnational crime rate and negative and significant at the maximum observed subnational crime rate.



In short, the effect of conscientiousness on support for criminal rights becomes more and more negative as the level of crime rises. The results are especially robust for the local crime rate.

### *Reviewing the Evidence*

Using objective contextual factors, I have obtained support for each of my hypotheses on conditional personality effects. In both the AmericasBarometer and ANES, I show that openness interacts with corruption to influence external efficacy attitudes, and the AmericasBarometer analyses also reveal significant interactions between extraversion and corruption. My results indicate, as expected, that the effects of openness and extraversion become more and more negative as the prevalence of corruption rises. Across the AmericasBarometer, ANES, and CCES, I also find that conscientiousness becomes more and more positive in response to

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Conscientiousness also exerts a positive and significant effect on support for criminal rights at the minimum observed aggregated national crime rate. For more on the analyses in this footnote, see Appendix G.

**Table 5.8**  
Results for Hypotheses on Conditional Personality Effects

<i>Interaction</i>	<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Prediction</i>	<i>Number of Significant and Expected Interactions</i>
Openness x Corruption	External Efficacy toward Actors & Institutions	Negative	1 of 4 (AB); 1 of 8 (ANES)
Extraversion x Corruption	External Efficacy toward Actors & Institutions	Negative	3 of 4 (AB); 0 of 8 (ANES)
Conscientiousness x Economic Performance	Support for Actors, Institutions, & Procedures	Positive*	5 of 36 (AB); 7 of 28 (ANES); 1 of 4 (CCES)
Conscientiousness x Threats from Crime and Political Dissidents	Support for Criminal Rights and Political Tolerance**	Negative	2 of 3 (AB)

Note: \* The prediction is positive if the dependent variable refers to political support objects related to the incumbent party; the expected interaction effect is negative if the dependent variable pertains to the political opposition. \*\* This chapter did not test the political dissident/political tolerance component of the fourth hypothesis. The total number of interactions refers to all interactions, not only the ones reported in the tables for this chapter. "AB" refers to "AmericasBarometer."

increasingly robust economic conditions. Only the AmericasBarometer enables me to test my hypothesis on support for criminal rights, but I observe the expected negative interaction between conscientiousness and crime. As the crime rate worsens, conscientious individuals are more likely to oppose the rights of the accused in an effort, presumably, to promote societal stability and the norm of law and order.

Table 5.8 summarizes the pattern of results for each hypothesis. In every row, the number of significant and expected interactions surpasses the 10 percent threshold that would be expected based on statistical chance.

### **Conclusions and Implications**

The central purpose of the present chapter has been to revisit the hypotheses from Chapter 4 with objective measures of the political, economic, and social context. Because the previous chapter employed contextual perceptions, I could not state definitively whether my results were attributable to personality influencing perceptions or whether perceptions send trait-relevant cues that in turn activate psychological traits.



The current chapter on objective contextual factors also addresses the issue of accuracy. Are trait–situation interactions based on actual levels of corruption, economic performance, and crime, or only on the perceptions of citizens?

The answer to this question carries implications for the actions and rhetorical strategies of public officials. If only contextual perceptions interact with personality traits, then political elites do not need to spend their time attempting to improve the economy, minimize corruption, or reduce the crime rate. Instead, incumbents could target messages to audiences based on their personality traits and present messages about the *impressions* of the status quo, rather than the actual status quo. However, such indolence will be insufficient if many recipients of elite messages also obtain, and respond accurately to, objective information about their political, economic, or social environment. In that case, political prudence would dictate that public officials combine effective governance with tailored communications that improve political support levels, which in turn should increase participation rates and the ability of citizens to express their interests.

Across multiple hypotheses and datasets, I find that objective contextual factors interact with personality traits to influence attitudes toward the political system. Individuals high in openness and extraversion respond to information about political corruption, rewarding clean political systems and punishing malfeasant ones in their external efficacy attitudes. Likewise, highly conscientious citizens often react to the level of economic performance and crime in their environment. As a result, conscientiousness exerts an increasingly positive effect on actor, institutional, and procedural support as economic performance improves, and an increasingly negative effect on support for criminal rights as the crime rate rises.

My findings have implications for the personality and support literature, for the academic community's understanding of person–situation interactions, and for the rhetorical strategies of political elites. Each of the hypotheses in the current and previous chapters has addressed an inconsistency, or empirical puzzle, in past research on the direct effects of personality on political support. Across the two chapters, my results for the corruption, economic performance, and crime hypotheses indicate that discrepant findings in past research are attributable to surveys being administered in divergent contexts. Perhaps different findings on openness and external efficacy, for example, are due to cross-survey variation in the level of corruption.

With regard to person–situation interactions, the current and previous chapters point to the value of trait activation theory (Tett and Burnett 2003; Tett and Guterman 2000) as a general framework for understanding how environmental and personality factors influence individual attitudes and behavior. I have obtained consistent findings for multiple hypotheses derived from TAT. These hypotheses have pertained to multiple levels of political support, and I have tested my expectations with as many as three surveys and with perceptual as well as objective contextual factors. My findings, along with extant studies in occupational psychology (e.g., Colbert and Witt 2009; Hirst et al. 2011), suggest the applicability of TAT to the study of conditional personality effects in a variety of substantive fields, including political science.

With regard to rhetorical strategies, political elites should understand which citizens are most responsive to information in their environment. Individuals high in openness and extraversion, for example, are more reactive to corruption levels than their less open and extraverted counterparts.<sup>255</sup> Politicians and nongovernmental organizations interested in raising levels of political support and political participation, therefore, could emphasize reductions in the

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<sup>255</sup> Because of the insignificant corruption coefficient in Table 4.2, this statement particularly applies to the AmericasBarometer interactions in Chapter 4 between (1) openness and corruption perceptions and (2) extraversion and corruption perceptions.

number of corruption convictions before a highly open or extraverted audience. In the United States, research has shown that online and television satire audiences tend to be high in openness, and newspaper readers and viewers of television political talk programs tend to be high in extraversion (Gerber et al. 2011b).

I also reported that highly conscientious citizens tend to respond to economic performance and crime information.<sup>256</sup> Therefore, to raise support for the status quo or to improve criminal rights attitudes, political elites can present highly conscientious audiences with positive economic news and news about improvements to public safety. Audiences high in conscientiousness, at least in the United States, include television viewers of local news and political talk programs (Gerber et al. 2011b).

After examining the direct and conditional effects of personality on attitudes toward the political system, I must examine the final component of my model: the implications of the trait–support relationship for political behavior. Therefore, the next and final empirical chapter will investigate whether traits work through political support attitudes to influence citizen participation.

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<sup>256</sup> This statement also applies to the conscientiousness–crime perception interaction in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 6  
PERSONALITY, POLITICAL SUPPORT, AND BEHAVIOR:  
TESTING THE MEDIATION HYPOTHESIS

Thus far, I have shown that personality traits exert direct and conditional effects on attitudes toward the political system. Although my findings in previous chapters contribute to our knowledge of attitude formation, I have yet to demonstrate the practical relevance of the personality–support relationship. If traits fail to work through political support to influence real-world outcomes such as political participation, then my research carries no implications for such responsibilities of democratic citizenship such expressing group interests, working together on societal problems, and holding elected officials accountable. My policy recommendations for targeted messaging also assume that political support encourages citizen engagement. Otherwise, such communications would amount to little more than attitude manipulation by political elites. The present chapter addresses the concrete political implications of the personality–support linkage by examining the full chain from traits to attitudes to participation.

According to the mediation hypothesis (Blais and St-Vincent 2011; Gallego and Oberski 2012), personality influences attitudes and attitudes affect political behavior. Psychological traits appear to be a reasonable starting point for the chain due to the genetic roots of personality (e.g., Heath et al. 1992; Pilia et al. 2006) and the manifestation of personality early in life (e.g., Asendorpf and van Aken 2003; Ehrler et al. 1999). Attitudes, such as civic duty, also can motivate individuals to overcome the costs of participation and the low probability of being the decisive person in a mobilization effort (Muller and Opp 1986; Riker and Ordeshook 1968), so the arrow from attitudes to behavior is sensible. Indeed, several studies of personality and participation have reported evidence of mediation with attitudes such as civic duty and political interest (e.g., Blais and St-Vincent 2011; Gallego and Oberski 2012; Mondak et al. 2010).

Mediation research on political support attitudes, however, remains rare. The existence of only two mediational studies with clean measures of political support (Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013; Wang 2016) is puzzling given the impact of personality on support documented in the previous three chapters and previous studies as well as the impact of support on behavior documented in the extant literature (e.g., Dalton 2004; Norris 1999a; Remmer 2010).<sup>257</sup> Therefore, I recommend testing the mediation hypothesis with political support attitudes.

This recommendation is based not just on the neglect of political support in the personality and participation literature, but also on the opportunity to generate unexpected theoretical results. Although past research may indicate that the relationship between personality and participation is uniformly positive (negative), some paths from traits to support attitudes to behavior could run in the negative (positive) direction (Rucker et al. 2011).<sup>258</sup> Extant studies, for example, reveal a consistently positive total and indirect effect of extraversion on political participation (e.g., Gallego and Oberski 2012; Gerber et al. 2011a; Mondak 2010; Ribeiro and Borba 2016; Weinschenk 2013),<sup>259</sup> but my attention to political support identifies a path that runs in the negative direction. More specifically, extraversion may be negatively linked to political trust and other status quo attitudes (e.g., Cawvey et al. n.d.; Freitag and Ackermann 2016; Mondak et al. 2017),<sup>260</sup> and lower levels of support could reduce citizen engagement (e.g., Hooghe and Marien 2013; Karp and Milazzo 2015; Norris 1999b). Some attitudes, therefore,

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<sup>257</sup> Other studies (Ribeiro and Borba 2016; Russo and Amnå 2016, n.d.; Vecchione and Caprara 2009) incorporate efficacy items into their analyses but fail to measure only evaluations of governmental responsiveness.

<sup>258</sup> See Curtis (2016) for an example of a study considering mediation effects even when the total effect is insignificant or when the total effect is in one direction (i.e., negative) while the indirect effect is in the other direction (i.e., positive).

<sup>259</sup> In this chapter, I use the term “total effect” to refer to the effect of a variable on the main outcome of interest, with all mediators excluded from the model. This is equivalent to the term “direct effect” used in previous chapters. “Direct effect” in this chapter refers to the impact of the main variable on the outcome after accounting for the mediators in the model. For more on these terms, see Rucker et al. (2011).

<sup>260</sup> In addition to the cited studies, Chapter 3 indicates that extraversion tends to be negatively related to political trust and job approval ratings.

could counteract the largely positive effect of extraversion on political engagement. Instead, introverts can become involved in the political process through their relatively high level of political trust.

A brief example indicates the plausibility of extraversion exerting a negative indirect effect on participation through political trust. Consider Jeb Bush, a politician and self-described introvert (North 2015). Based on his level of extraversion alone, one would expect Bush to avoid campaigning for governor of Florida or president of the United States,<sup>261</sup> but he nevertheless ran for both public offices. What explains Bush's participation, aside from his family name? The answer could reside in the Republican politician's relatively high level of political trust. In early 2013, Bush crossed party lines by praising Democratic President Barack Obama's efforts to work with Republicans to address the budget crisis (Poor 2013). His comments on CNN, in fact, emphasize the value of trust: "It's important to build trust if you're trying to deal with big things. Big issues require everybody to get outside their comfort zone." Perhaps high levels of trust have propelled Bush and some other introverted citizens into public affairs when few other attitudinal factors would.

In addition to pursuing theoretical progress about the impact of personality on citizen engagement, I assess the utility of tailored communications for improving participation rates. Political elites can maximize the effectiveness of their interventions if messages are adjusted to the dominant personality traits of an audience, for consistent messages for all audiences can alienate individuals on one side of the personality spectrum and appeal to individuals on the other side of the personality spectrum. Through targeted messaging, citizens at both ends of the spectrum may become more participative, but in response to messages focused on different

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<sup>261</sup> Research on political elites complements the positive link between extraversion and participation in the mass behavior literature. In their study of U.S. state legislators, Dietrich and his colleagues (2012) report that nearly 84 percent of respondents described themselves as outgoing, sociable, and extraverted.

support attitudes. In other words, the indirect effect of the same trait on political engagement could be positive for one support mediator and negative for another support mediator, implying the utility of a diverse set of rhetorical strategies for political organizations and political elites interested in the mobilization of citizens into the political process.

To obtain theoretical innovation and evaluate my policy recommendations, I examine the indirect effects of personality on participation via political support attitudes. Using the 2010 AmericasBarometer, I explore the outcomes of turnout, campaign work, attending political meetings, and contacting public officials. The broad range of behavioral outcomes expands upon the attention of prior mediation and support studies on turnout (Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013) and vote choice (Wang 2016).<sup>262,263</sup>

The rest of this chapter is structured as follows. Next, I provide an overview of previous research on personality and political participation. I then develop a set of hypotheses connecting personality, political support, and political engagement. Some of these hypotheses contrast with previous findings on psychological traits and political behavior. The subsequent section summarizes my measurement of participation and mediation variables and also reviews my empirical strategy for testing expectations. I then report my results and conclude by recounting my findings and discussing their implications.

### **Endpoints of the Chain: Personality and Political Participation**

I contend in this chapter that paths from personality to support to behavior do not always have the same sign as previous studies would suggest. We should not assume that all indirect effects for a trait are positive or negative. In some cases, personality traits will work through

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<sup>262</sup> I omit the latter from consideration in this chapter because of the close association between vote choice and support for current political actors.

<sup>263</sup> Ribeiro and Borba (2016), as well as Russo and Amnå (2016, n.d.) and Vecchione and Caprara (2009), investigate the path from personality traits to efficacy attitudes to non-voting forms of political participation. However, their efficacy attitudes do not solely refer to evaluations of governmental responsiveness.

political support to influence participation in the same way as they operate through other mediators in the personality and political behavior literature, but at other times indirect effects will contrast with extant findings.

Previous research, therefore, informs my investigation and underscores how my attention to political support can contribute to our knowledge about the relationship between personality and participation. In this section, I summarize past work on the Big Five and a variety of political behaviors, namely voting, campaigning, attending political meetings, and contacting public officials.

I begin with the effects of openness on participation. Individuals high in this trait dimension are creative, adventurous, and attracted to ideas (John et al. 2008; Mondak et al. 2010), so we might expect a positive *total* effect of openness on nearly all forms of political involvement as individuals interact with the political system in order to communicate their views. Indeed, the evidence points more in a positive direction than a negative one for each of the participation outcomes under consideration (e.g., Ha et al. 2013; Mondak 2010; Mondak et al. 2010; Ribeiro and Borba 2016), although some of the extant results are insignificant (e.g., Mondak et al. 2011; Weinschenk 2013).

Several studies also have uncovered positive *indirect* effects of openness on political engagement. Consonant with the mediation hypothesis as well as the attraction of open citizens to ideas, scholars have found that high levels of openness are associated with greater political interest and internal political efficacy,<sup>264</sup> which in turn facilitate protest involvement, turnout,

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<sup>264</sup> Weinschenk and Dawes (2017) do not incorporate political behavior into their study, but they do find that openness and political interest are positively correlated. Furthermore, their results indicate that more than half of the association between openness and political interest is due to genetic factors. Such a finding strengthens the link between personality and attitudes that is vital for the mediation hypothesis.



and other conventional behaviors beyond turnout (e.g., Gallego and Oberski 2012; Mondak et al. 2010, 2011; Vecchione and Caprara 2009).

In short, extant research points nearly exclusively to a positive relationship between openness and participation.

The same tends to be true for extraversion. As noted by Mondak and his colleagues (2010), the question for this trait dimension is whether a political activity involves social interaction and therefore would appeal to extraverts. Although individualistic campaign activities such as donating money or putting a political sign in one's yard may not be significantly related to extraversion (e.g., Ha et al. 2013; Mondak 2010; Mondak et al. 2010), studies have reported positive relationships between extraversion and such interpersonal modes of participation as protesting (e.g., Mondak et al. 2011; Ribeiro and Borba 2016), volunteering for a campaign (e.g., Mondak 2010; Weinschenk 2013), attending political meetings (e.g., Mondak and Halperin 2008; Mondak et al. 2010) and contacting public officials (Ha et al. 2013; Mondak 2010).<sup>265</sup> Turnout on Election Day requires a modicum of social interaction in order to receive a ballot, and scholars have observed positive (e.g., Gerber et al. 2011a; Moreno and Wals 2014) and insignificant (e.g., Ha et al. 2013; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013) total effects of extraversion on voting participation.

In addition, some researchers have turned to mediation analysis to examine the indirect effects of extraversion on political involvement, and positive results have been reported. Using data from Latin America and Europe, several studies have observed that extraversion promotes attitudes such as internal efficacy, political interest, and strength of party identification, which

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<sup>265</sup> Gerber and his colleagues (2011a) also report positive effects for extraversion on three indices of non-turnout participation. Items in the indices mostly include social activities such as attending a campaign rally, but two of them incorporate campaign donations and another uses an item for wearing a political button. In some cases, therefore, ostensibly individualistic forms of participation could be positively related to extraversion, perhaps because of this trait dimension's emphasis on activity (John et al. 2008).

then motivate individuals to turn out to vote, join a political protest, or engage in a variety of activities (e.g., Gallego and Oberski 2012; Ribeiro and Borba 2016; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013).<sup>266</sup> Positive indirect effects are quite sensible. The extraversion facet of confidence (John et al. 2008) pertains directly to an individual's perceived level of political understanding, and high levels of sociability could predispose extraverts to be interested in public affairs and committed to political parties, among other political groups (Mondak 2010; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013). In turn, efficacious, interested, and partisan citizens are more likely to participate due to a greater degree of confidence in their political decisions and a higher level of investment in their political communities (Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013).

After openness and extraversion, the effects of other Big Five dimensions on political participation are more heterogeneous. Perhaps due to conflict between duty to one's political community and to one's occupation and family (John et al. 2008; Mondak et al. 2010), conscientiousness is inconsistently related to turnout (e.g., Gerber et al. 2011; Ha et al. 2013), attending local meetings (e.g., Mondak et al. 2011; Weinschenk 2013), and contacting public officials (e.g., Mondak et al. 2010; Weinschenk 2013).<sup>267</sup> Meanwhile, studies have identified a negative association between conscientiousness and campaigning (e.g., Ha et al. 2013; Mondak 2010), perhaps due to the time requirements for such behaviors. With regard to indirect effects, fewer studies have reported significant results for conscientiousness and citizen engagement (e.g., Gallego and Oberski 2012; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013) than for openness or

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<sup>266</sup> Although Weinschenk and Dawes (2017) do not examine political participation, they do report a positive link between extraversion and political interest, with at least 41 percent of this correlation attributable to genetic factors. Such a finding strengthens the link between personality and political attitudes that is part of the mediation hypothesis.

<sup>267</sup> In addition to positive (Ha et al. 2013) and negative (Gerber et al. 2011) significant conscientiousness effects on turnout, studies have reported an insignificant relationship between this trait dimension and voting (e.g., Moreno and Wals 2010; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013). Effects of conscientiousness on contacting officials, meanwhile, are both positive (Ha et al. 2013; Mondak and Halperin 2008) and negative (Mondak 2010; Mondak et al. 2010; Weinschenk 2013), and many of the associations between conscientiousness and meeting attendance are insignificant (Mondak et al. 2011; Weinschenk 2013).

extraversion and political behavior. One finding connects high levels of conscientiousness to turnout via civic duty attitudes (Gallego and Oberski 2012; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013); given the dutifulness facet of conscientiousness, this finding is quite sensible.

Meanwhile, agreeableness generally exerts a weak effect on political participation. Extant results collectively indicate that voting (e.g., Moreno and Wals 2014; Ha et al. 2013), campaigning (e.g., Mondak 2010; Weinschenk 2013), attending local meetings (e.g., Mondak et al. 2011; Weinschenk 2013), and contacting officials (Mondak et al. 2010; Ha et al. 2013) are no more likely for agreeable than for disagreeable citizens. The muted effects could be due to ambivalence on the part of agreeable citizens: Although the highly agreeable may value the prosocial aspects of political participation (Mondak et al. 2011), they also could be repelled by the conflictual side of public affairs. Moreover, few indirect effects for agreeableness on participation have been identified.<sup>268</sup>

Finally, emotional stability effects tend to be heterogeneous. On one hand, extant research indicates that individuals low in emotional stability are more likely to contact public officials and partake in campaign activities (e.g., Ha et al. 2013; Mondak 2010). Due to their high levels of anxiety (Ha et al. 2013; Mondak 2010), citizens low in emotional stability may perceive an urgent need to address political problems or help a candidate or party take office. On the other hand, several studies report a positive link between emotional stability and turnout (e.g., Gerber et al. 2011a; Ha et al. 2013; Moreno and Wals 2014; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013). These positive results could be attributable to the relatively low levels of anxiety experienced by emotionally stable citizens on Election Day (Ha et al. 2013). Finally, relatively few studies have shown evidence of indirect effects of emotional stability on participation, with

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<sup>268</sup> For an exception, see Schoen and Steinbrecher (2013).

**Table 6.1**

Effects of Personality on Political Participation: Patterns in the Extant Literature

	<i>Turnout</i>	<i>Campaigning</i>	<i>Attending Meetings</i>	<i>Contacting Officials</i>
Openness	Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive
Conscientiousness	No expectation	Negative	No expectation	No expectation
Extraversion	Positive	Positive*	Positive	Positive
Agreeableness	No expectation	No expectation	No expectation	No expectation
Emotional Stability	Positive	Negative	No expectation	Negative

Note: \* The relationship between extraversion and campaigning holds especially for social forms of campaign participation. For studies consistent with the classifications in this table, see the main text.

two reporting a positive effect (Anderson 2009; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013) and another reporting a negative effect (Russo and Amnå 2016).

In sum, this brief review highlights the mobilizing effects of openness and extraversion, the heterogeneous effects of emotional stability, and the relatively weak or inconsistent effects of conscientiousness and agreeableness. Table 6.1 provides an overview of the effects of personality on various modes of participation as reported in past research.

### **Completing the Chain: Expectations for Indirect Personality Effects**

Having reviewed the literature, I now can consider when paths from personality to support to participation will be consistent and inconsistent with previous research on the effects of psychological traits on citizen engagement. In certain cases, indirect trait effects through some political support attitudes could run in the same direction as paths through more traditional mediators such as political interest and internal political efficacy. Other indirect effects, however, could contradict past findings by revealing countervailing paths from the same traits to other attitudes toward the political system to political participation.

Developing my hypotheses requires a two-step process. First, I must understand how personality relates to political support. Second, I must account for the association between political support and political behavior. Because Chapter 3 covered the first link, I turn to the connection between support attitudes and citizen engagement.

### *Connecting Support to Behavior*

Scholars have developed several arguments to explain the connection between political support and political participation. For democratic support, the link is fairly obvious: Democracy as a concept and empirical reality cannot exist without political participation,<sup>269</sup> for citizen involvement enables the public to elect government officials, ensure the representation of citizen interests, hold politicians accountable, communicate grievances to the government, and resolve community problems in accordance with majority rule and minority rights. Such goals are attainable through all forms of behavior considered in this chapter, namely voting, campaigning, attending meetings, and contacting public officials. Therefore, it is sensible to expect citizens who support democratic principles to engage in activities that promote basic democratic objectives and perpetuate the current regime (Bengtsson and Christensen 2016; Carlin 2011; Dalton 2004; Smith 2009), and extant results are generally consistent with this hypothesis (e.g., Dalton 2004; Karp and Milazzo 2015; Norris 2011).<sup>270</sup> Norris, for example, finds that high levels of democratic support significantly increase citizen interest in a 40-country sample. “Citizen interest” is an index comprising turnout, political interest, and the perceived importance of politics.

Likewise, the connection between the other levels of support and individual engagement is grounded in one’s willingness to invest in the current political system. If citizens perceive actors and institutions as trustworthy, effective, responsive, and likeable or if citizens are pleased with democratic performance, they will be more likely to engage in behaviors that perpetuate the status quo, such as voting or campaigning (Booth and Seligson 2009). Enthusiasm will expand as citizens work with public officials and government agencies to strengthen democracy and

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<sup>269</sup> The connection between citizen involvement and democracy is especially strong for individuals who adhere to a conception of democracy that emphasizes participation over representation (Bengtsson and Christensen 2016).

<sup>270</sup> For an exception, see Smith (2009).

governmental effectiveness (Norris 1999b). A similar story would occur for attitudes toward the political community, as a robust love for country or strong national identification could motivate individuals to participate in order to make their society an even better place to live. On the flipside, citizens with pessimistic views of actors, institutions, procedures, or the national community could develop apathy as they refuse to participate and fail to observe changes in the political system (Norris 1999b). Consistent with my argument, several studies have reported positive associations between support for the status quo and national community on one hand and citizen engagement on the other (e.g., Dalton 2004; Hooghe and Marien 2013; Kaase 1999; Norris 1999b, 2011). Hooghe and Marien, for instance, find that political trust is positively and significantly related to institutionalized political participation in a sample of 25 European countries.<sup>271</sup>

To be sure, alternative arguments linking political support and conventional participation are possible. The relationship between support and political action might run in the negative direction, for anger could motivate involvement and satisfaction could encourage citizens to stay home and defer to public officials (Norris 1999b). Nevertheless, the weight of the evidence favors a positive association between support and conventional political behavior. In addition, scholars have investigated whether citizens at the extreme levels of political support are more likely to participate (Booth and Seligson 2009), or whether attitudes toward democracy interact with political trust to influence voter registration (Carlin 2011).

I appreciate previous work on the conditional effects of support attitudes on participation (Booth and Seligson 2009; Carlin 2011). Future applications of the mediation hypothesis should examine whether interactions of the same or different political support variables mediate the

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<sup>271</sup> The index of institutionalized participation in Hooghe and Marien's (2013) study consists of working for a political party or action group, being a member of a political party, and contacting government officials.

relationship between personality and political behavior. In the interest of simplicity, however, I concentrate on the path from personality to political support to political participation without any interactions.

Therefore, in this chapter I expect both status quo and democratic support attitudes to be positively related to political participation.

### *Selecting Political Support Mediators*

Before I develop my hypotheses, one additional task is necessary. Political support encompasses a vast number of levels and multiple domains within each level, and the effects of personality on support (i.e., the first link in the chain from traits to behavior) are fairly heterogeneous. If I considered all potential political support mediators, the rest of this chapter would be intractable in terms of the number of hypotheses and the clarity of the empirical analysis. Therefore, I have selected two support attitudes from the 2010 AmericasBarometer: political trust and approval of mass participation.

My decision to focus on these attitudes is threefold. First, I want to study attitudes from multiple levels of support, as previous chapters have done. Political trust attitudes encompass views about status quo actors, institutions, and procedures, whereas approval of mass participation pertains to a core democratic principle.

Second, incorporating status quo and democratic attitudes enables me to identify paths for openness and extraversion that run in different directions. As I noted in Chapter 3, openness and extraversion are positively related to support for mass participation but negatively related to political trust. If both trust and mass participation attitudes are positively linked to political participation, then indirect effects through mass participation approval will be positive and indirect effects through political trust will be negative. The former would be consistent with the

positive total and indirect trait effects in the literature, whereas the latter would indicate that the effects of openness and extraversion on participation are not uniformly positive. Through their relatively high levels of political trust, some less open and less extraverted citizens can become involved in the political process.

Third, the particular measures of trust and mass participation approval are quite flexible and allow me to use support attitudes that are relevant for a particular political behavior. The 2010 AmericasBarometer includes a diverse battery of political trust questions, such as trust in elections and trust in local government. Whereas the former should be more likely to influence turnout, the latter should be more pertinent<sup>272</sup> for attending local political meetings. A broad trust index, by contrast, may exert weak effects on a particular mode of participation because relevant trust items are paired with irrelevant trust items.

Similarly, some mass participation attitudes could be more important than others for the political behavior at hand. Approval of campaigning probably will matter more for national campaign involvement than approval of local organizing would. More generally, I also would expect the relationship between mass participation attitudes and political participation to be stronger than the relationship between other forms of democratic support and citizen engagement. Attitudes toward checks and balances, for example, pertain to political elites and therefore are only indirectly related to citizen participation.<sup>273</sup>

The flexibility of my political support measures thus enables me to select attitudinal variables that are conceptual cousins to the behavioral dependent variable. Other applications of

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<sup>272</sup> Consistent with my argument, Remmer (2010) has found that local governmental support in Costa Rica facilitated turnout in a December 2002 local election but not in a February 2002 national election. The index of local political support consists of positive assessments of municipal services, positive assessments of municipal management, and support for increased municipal funding. The final item in the index is technically a policy preference, but nevertheless reflects the extent to which an individual trusts the local government with the handling of resources.

<sup>273</sup> As noted by Carlin and Singer (2011), democracy is a heterogeneous concept, and citizens who endorse one democratic principle will not necessarily support the other principles.



the mediation hypothesis have investigated attitudes that are closely linked to the political behavior under investigation. In particular, researchers have considered whether voting as a civic duty mediates the relationship between personality and turnout (Blais and St-Vincent 2011; Gallego and Oberski 2012; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013). Blais and St-Vincent (2011, 396) acknowledge the close connection between their mediating and dependent variables: “The first claim that we make is that the two most crucial *proximate* political attitudes that affect the propensity to vote are sense of civic duty and political interest” (emphasis added).

In spite of the advantages of my mediating variables, I cannot rule out alternative explanations for the relationship between political support and political behavior. It is possible for participation experiences to influence attitudes, rather than the reverse.<sup>274</sup> For example, if an individual engages in public affairs due to social pressure, he or she may witness the efficacy of involvement and develop higher levels of political trust and greater approval of mass participation. The connection between political support and political behavior also could be spurious, for personality traits could influence attitudes and participation through separate processes. Each of these alternate explanations would violate the order of the mediation hypothesis (Blais and St-Vincent 2011; Gallego and Oberski 2012), which expects traits to affect attitudes and attitudes to affect behavior.

Nevertheless, the order postulated by the mediation hypothesis appears to be reasonable due to the heritability (e.g., Heath et al. 1992; Pilia et al. 2006) and early manifestation (e.g., Asendorpf and van Aken 2003; Ehrler et al. 1999) of personality traits and to the ability of attitudes such as civic duty to enable citizens to overcome obstacles to involvement, including the low probability of being the decisive participant (Muller and Opp 1986; Riker and Ordeshook 1968).

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<sup>274</sup> Indeed, Anderson and Tverdova (2003) find that nonvoters express less trust in civil servants.

### *Developing Hypotheses on Indirect Effects*

I now turn to my hypotheses on indirect personality effects, beginning with openness to experience and extraversion. As noted above, virtually all previous studies have identified positive total and indirect effects of each trait dimension on political participation. The thick arrows at the top of Figure 6.1 depict the positive paths from openness and extraversion to standard mediators (e.g., political interest) to citizen engagement.

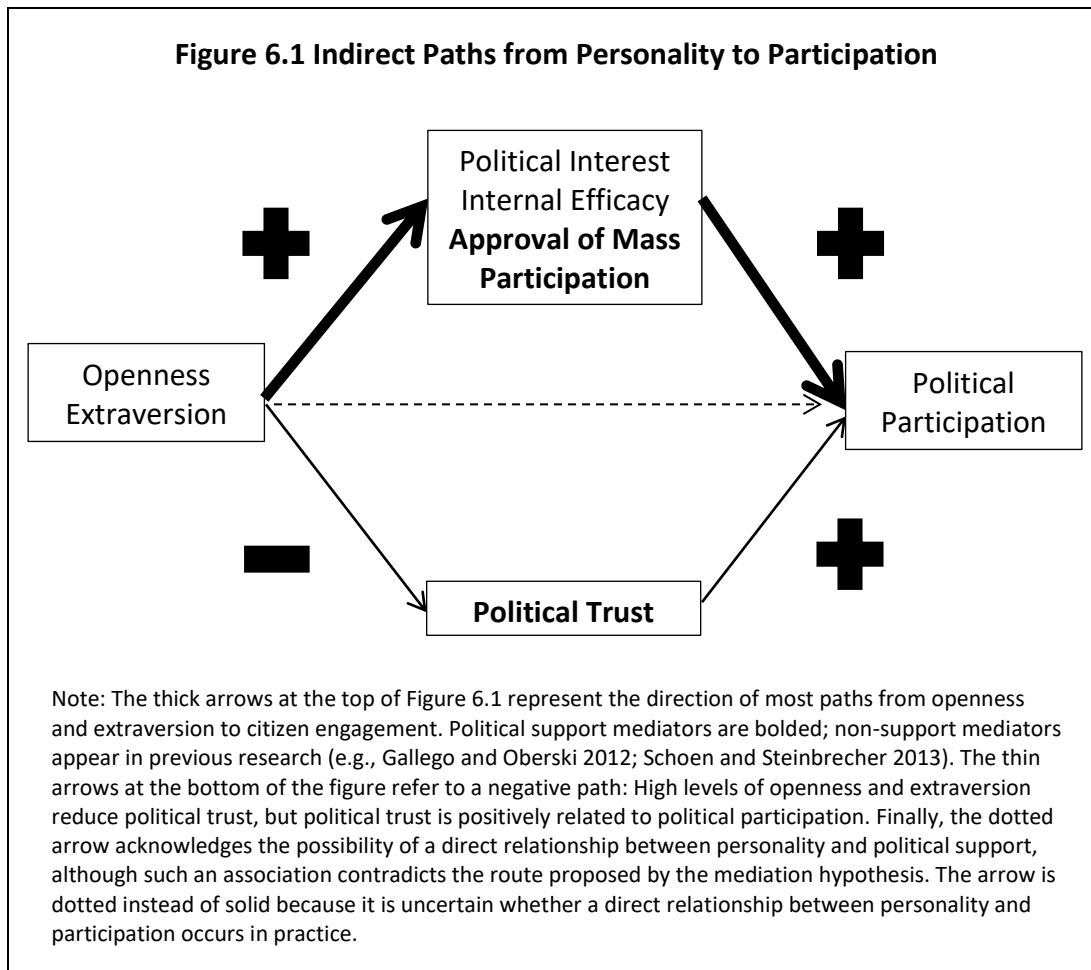
Figure 6.1 also adds approval of mass participation to the list of mediators facilitating positive indirect effects for openness and extraversion. Open individuals value the democratic ideal of the free exchange of ideas, which in turn should motivate the actual expression of political views through contacting officials, campaigning, and other political behavior. Likewise, extraverts are responsive to social norms, including support for mass participation,<sup>275</sup> and therefore will embrace the principle of political activity for the majority and engage in political behavior themselves. The democratic motivations of highly extraverted and open citizens will complement their relatively high levels of political interest and internal efficacy, resulting in positive paths from these trait dimensions to participation (e.g., Gallego and Oberski 2012; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013). I control for interest and internal efficacy in order to determine the indirect effects through mass participation approval over and above existing explanations.

In short, I expect to observe positive indirect effects for openness and extraversion that operate through mass participation approval to encourage political behavior.

Nevertheless, we should not assume that all paths from openness and extraversion to participation are positive, for the positive total and indirect effects in the literature could obscure negative indirect effects that run through other support attitudes, such as political trust. In other words, it is possible for some relatively unopen and introverted citizens to become active in

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<sup>275</sup> In the 24 countries under analysis, the mean for each mass participation item exceeds the midpoint.



public life through their higher level of trust in the political system. Rucker and his colleagues (2011) acknowledge the possibility of countervailing forces in an overview of mediation research in social psychology, and Schoen and Steinbrecher’s (2013) work on personality and turnout in Germany suggests the same point. In their report of total, direct, and indirect effects, Schoen and Steinbrecher find that extraversion and openness exert positive indirect effects on turnout, but the direct effect of each trait is *negative* and significant. The “direct effect” in this case refers to a trait’s impact after accounting for selected mediators, which include political interest and internal

efficacy.<sup>276</sup> The negative direct effect could have become insignificant if other attitudes were added to the model and resulted in negative indirect trait effects for openness and extraversion through the additional mediators.

One such mediator is political trust. As noted in Chapter 3, both openness and extraversion are negatively associated with a person's confidence in political actors, institutions, and procedures. The results for openness would appear to be attributable to dissatisfaction with political innovation, and the findings for extraversion could be linked to the distant character of the political system, compared with an individual's personal network of acquaintances, friends, and family. Meanwhile, political trust should be positively related to citizen engagement, for supportive citizens will be more likely than unsupportive citizens to take action to preserve the current political system.

If we combine the personality–trust and trust–behavior links, the result would be negative indirect effects for openness and extraversion. Each trait dimension will be negatively related to political trust, but political trust is positively linked to individual participation. In other words, individuals *low* in each trait dimension would have the higher levels of trust associated with greater citizen engagement. A relatively high degree of political confidence will enable some less open and less extraverted citizens to participate in politics. The expected negative indirect effects stand in contrast to the positive openness and extraversion effects normally identified in extant research. The proposed alternate pathway is depicted at the bottom of Figure 6.1.

Empirical examples bolster the plausibility of my arguments for positive and negative indirect trait effects on participation. As noted in the introduction, Republican politician Jeb Bush is an introvert but nevertheless has engaged in high-profile political participation, perhaps

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<sup>276</sup> For another example of an indirect effect and a direct effect with opposite signs, see Mondak's (2010) analysis of agreeableness, partisanship, and support for legalized abortion.

because of his high level of political trust. Meanwhile, former U.S. President Bill Clinton epitomizes the proposed path from extraversion to support for mass participation to political participation. A well-known extravert (Cain 2012), Bill Clinton not only ran for his own terms for president but also participated in Hillary Clinton's presidential campaigns in 2008 and 2016. The former president also has expressed his approval of mass participation by characterizing voter identification laws as a restriction on the franchise (Rafferty 2014). At the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library in 2014, Bill Clinton remarked that such legislation "is a way of restricting the franchise after 50 years of expanding it" (Rafferty 2014).

In addition to openness and extraversion, I offer hypotheses for conscientiousness and emotional stability. Chapter 3 failed to uncover a clear pattern for the relationship between conscientiousness and political trust, so I turn my attention to the path from conscientiousness to mass participation approval to political engagement. I identified a strong relationship between conscientiousness and support for campaigning, organizing, and legal protesting in Chapter 3, presumably because of highly conscientious citizens responding to social norms in favor of the principle of mass participation. Approval of mass participation, in turn, could facilitate campaign behavior and other forms of engagement. Previous research instead has reported a negative relationship between conscientiousness and campaigning.

I thus expect to observe a positive indirect effect of conscientiousness through mass participation approval. Past mediation work also has identified positive paths from conscientiousness to participation that included political interest and internal efficacy (Gallego and Oberski 2012; Russo and Amnå 2016; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013), so I will control for other mediation effects in order to determine the value added by attitudes toward mass participation.

**Table 6.2**  
Hypotheses on Indirect Effects of Personality on Political Participation

<i>Independent Variable of Interest</i>		<i>Mediator</i>		<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Indirect Effect of Personality on Participation</i>	<i>Is the Indirect Effect Consistent with Past Work on Personality and Participation?*</i>
Openness	→	Political Trust	→	Conventional Participation	Negative	No
Openness	→	Approval of Mass Participation	→	Conventional Participation	Positive	Yes
Extraversion	→	Political Trust	→	Conventional Participation	Negative	No
Extraversion	→	Approval of Mass Participation	→	Conventional Participation	Positive	Yes
Conscientiousness	→	Approval of Mass Participation	→	Conventional Participation	Positive	No for Campaigning
Emotional Stability	→	Political Trust	→	Conventional Participation	Positive	Yes for Turnout and No for Campaigning and Contacting
Emotional Stability	→	Approval of Mass Participation	→	Conventional Participation	Positive	Yes for Turnout and No for Campaigning and Contacting

Note: \* For an overview of the personality and participation literature, see the section of this chapter titled "Endpoints of the Chain: Personality and Political Participation."

Meanwhile, for emotional stability I anticipate positive indirect effects on political participation. Emotional stability was the only trait dimension in Chapter 3 with a consistently positive effect across levels and domains of support, due presumably to low levels of anxiety and low levels of insecurity about the political system. Unlike openness and extraversion, emotional stability should be positively related to political trust, which in turn will promote political behavior. I also expect to observe a positive path from emotional stability to mass participation approval to participation.

Positive indirect effects of emotional stability would be consistent with some findings in the personality and participation literature and inconsistent with others. Research on total and indirect effects of emotional stability have reported positive relationships between this trait dimension and turnout. Mediators in extant work include internal efficacy (Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013). I account for this mediator and political interest in order to isolate the indirect trait effects on turnout through political support. Meanwhile, researchers have found negative total effects of emotional stability on campaigning and contacting public officials, whereas I anticipate positive indirect effects.

In contrast to the other trait dimensions, I offer no hypotheses for the indirect effects of agreeableness. Previous studies provide little evidence to show that agreeableness exerts a direct

or indirect effect on citizen engagement, and I have selected my hypotheses with the purpose of identifying indirect trait effects that are consistent and inconsistent with past work. I thus refrain from hypothesizing about agreeableness.

Table 6.2 summarizes my hypotheses for the indirect effects of personality on political participation.

### **Investigating the Chain: Data and Research Design**

Previous chapters in this dissertation have utilized as many as four surveys, but data limitations prevent me from employing all of them to investigate whether political support mediates the relationship between personality and political participation. The 2012 American National Election Study lacked democratic support items, the 2012 Cooperative Congressional Election Study did not include political trust and mass participation approval items, and the fall 2015 University of Illinois subject pool survey focused on attitudes but omitted items for approval of mass participation or previous political behavior. Therefore, I focus on indirect personality effects in the 2010 AmericasBarometer, which included a wide range of items on political trust, mass participation attitudes, and actual citizen engagement.

The 2010 AmericasBarometer does possess one limitation with regard to mediation analysis. As a cross-sectional survey, I cannot demonstrate definitively whether personality traits cause attitudes, which in turn influence political participation. All of my variables are recorded at the same point in time. I should note, however, that most tests of the mediation hypothesis employ cross-sectional data (e.g., Gallego and Oberski 2012; Mondak et al. 2010; Russo and Amnå 2016), and none of the previous mediation studies with panel data have utilized the ideal

format, with personality items in wave 1, attitudinal items in wave 2, and behavioral items in wave 3.<sup>277,278</sup>

Although I cannot verify the proposed causal order of the mediation hypothesis, the path from personality to attitudes to behavior appears to be reasonable on theoretical grounds.

Psychological traits manifest themselves early in life (e.g., Asendorpf and van Aken 2003; Ehrler et al. 1999), prior to one's attitudinal or behavioral engagement with the political system as an adult. Likewise, attitudes such as civic duty enable individuals to overcome the high costs of involvement and low probability of being the decisive participant (Muller and Opp 1986; Riker and Ordeshook 1968), so the link from opinion to behavior is also plausible.

For the remainder of this section, I discuss the operationalization of my participation dependent variables and potential mediators, and then review my method of testing the hypotheses on indirect trait effects.

### *Operationalizing Political Participation*

To test my hypotheses thoroughly, I utilize a variety of conventional political behaviors that previous studies of personality and participation have considered: turnout, campaigning, contacting public officials, and attending political meetings.<sup>279</sup>

The AmericasBarometer asked respondents about all four modes of conventional political behavior. To measure voter turnout, I utilize an item about whether the respondent voted in the

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<sup>277</sup> Furthermore, two of the studies with panel data measure attitudes and behavior concurrently (Blais and St-Vincent 2011; Vecchione and Caprara 2009). Blais and St-Vincent also combine data from two waves to form their personality independent variables, attitudinal mediators, and propensity to vote dependent variable. Such an approach contrasts with the attitude-to-behavior order postulated by the mediation hypothesis.

<sup>278</sup> Instead of panel studies, researchers could introduce an experimental manipulation to influence the mediator, which then exerts an effect on the outcome of interest (Bullock et al. 2010). For an example outside of political science, see Bolger and Amarel (2007).

<sup>279</sup> An item on protest involvement also was available in the AmericasBarometer, but I do not examine this item because I would not be testing the hypotheses about openness and extraversion exerting negative indirect effects on participation through political trust. In contrast to the positive link between political support and conventional participation (e.g., Hooghe and Marien 2013; Karp and Milazzo 2015), past research has identified a negative relationship between status quo attitudes and unconventional participation (e.g., Hooghe and Marien 2013; Seligson 1980).



most recent national election. Scores of 1 correspond to self-reported turnout, and scores of 0 refer to abstention.

For campaign participation, I employ an item that asked whether the respondent worked for a party or candidate during the most recent national elections.<sup>280</sup> I have recoded this variable so that scores of 1 denote an affirmative response and scores of 0 refer to a negative response.

Meanwhile, the AmericasBarometer measured contacting public officials with a battery of items about requesting help or cooperation from local officials, the national legislature, or a government agency. Each item was recoded so that affirmative responses have a score of 1 and negative responses have a score of 0. Because the Cronbach's alpha for the three variables is 0.61, I created an additive index that ranges from 0 to 3.

AmericasBarometer respondents answered several questions about attending political and civic meetings, and I employ two of the political items. For one question, individuals reported whether they had attended a local government meeting over the past year; responses have been recoded so that scores of 1 refer to affirmative responses and scores of 0 to negative responses. The other item, meanwhile, inquired about the frequency of attending political party meetings. Responses ranged from "[o]nce a week" to "[n]ever," and the variable has been recoded so that higher scores refer to more frequent participation.<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>280</sup> As indicated by Table 6.1, previous studies suggest that extraversion exerts a positive effect on campaign activities that are social in nature, but not necessarily on less interpersonal forms of involvement (e.g., putting a political bumper sticker on one's car). The wording of the AmericasBarometer campaign item is ambiguous but leans in the direction of active, social modes of campaign participation. Therefore, I expect to observe positive total and indirect effects of extraversion on campaigning.

<sup>281</sup> Instead of examining each of the participation variables separately, one option would be to combine the items into a single index of conventional participation. If the questions had all been part of the same battery, it may have been possible to develop such an index. That was not the case. Moreover, factor analysis of the constituent items, with rotation, revealed that each dependent variable should be analyzed separately. Only the items in the contact battery featured factor loadings above 0.51, and only those three items loaded onto a factor with an eigenvalue of 0.95 or higher. The other items and the other factor had lower factor loadings and a lower eigenvalue, respectively. Based on my analysis, I group the contact items into a single dependent variable and separately study the other participation measures.

Descriptive statistics for the dependent variables are located in Appendix H. Respondents reported a turnout level of 77 percent, but scores for the other variables fell well below the midpoint of their respective scales. For example, only 11 percent of respondents in the 24 countries under analysis reported participating in a political campaign in the most recent national elections. The discrepancy between high rates of voting participation and comparatively low rates of non-voting participation is consistent with prior research (e.g., Booth and Seligson 2009; Gerber et al. 2011a).

In addition to my main dependent variables, I have run a robustness check with a variable for hypothetical turnout. AmericasBarometer respondents were asked about which party or candidate would receive their vote if a national election were held that week. I recoded this variable so that scores of 1 encompass individuals who would vote for the incumbent party or candidate or a non-incumbent party or candidate. Scores of 0, meanwhile, consist of respondents who said they would abstain or would leave their ballot blank or intentionally cancel their vote.

Although vote intention does not necessarily indicate actual turnout, I examine the variable in order to respond to concerns about temporal ordering. My other participation variables refer to past behavior, but the attitudinal items pertain to the present. The mediation hypothesis argues that attitudes precede behavior, so I must assume that current attitudes correlate strongly with previous attitudes. This assumption is quite reasonable according to extant research in political science (e.g., Bloeser et al. 2015; Goren 2005).<sup>282</sup> Nevertheless, I cannot directly address the issue because of the cross-sectional nature of the AmericasBarometer. As an alternative, I allow current attitudes to predict intentions of future voting behavior.

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<sup>282</sup> Goren (2005), for example, reports moderate-to-high levels of temporal stability for partisan identification, equal opportunity attitudes, and other political opinions.

The hypothetical turnout analyses are reported in Appendix I. In all cases, I observe the same pattern of indirect trait effects via political support for hypothetical turnout and previous turnout. Such results bolster the plausibility of the temporal order proposed by the mediation hypothesis.

### *Operationalizing Potential Mediators*

Based on the considerations in the previous section, I focus on political trust and approval of mass participation for my political support mediating variables. The specificity of some of my participation variables (e.g., local meeting attendance) suggests that particular mediating variables (e.g., local political trust) would be more strongly associated with political engagement than broader support indicators. Therefore, I discuss which mediating variables will be employed for which dependent variable.

For previous turnout, I utilize the seven-point trust-in-elections item and an additive index for approval of campaigning and organizing.<sup>283,284</sup> The connection between turnout and trust in elections is obvious, and campaigning and organizing to solve a problem are two behaviors that occur prior to Election Day.

Meanwhile, for campaign involvement, I utilize a seven-point item for trust in political parties and a single item for approval of campaigning. Campaign approval pertains directly to campaign involvement, and the campaign participation question inquired about activism on behalf of candidates and *parties*. Trust in political parties would encompass all parties in the previous election, not just the victorious one.

I also employ distinct political support mediators for the two meeting attendance items. For local meeting attendance, I rely on a seven-point local political trust item and a single item

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<sup>283</sup> The Cronbach's alpha for the approval index is 0.67.

<sup>284</sup> I use the same mediation variables for the robustness check for hypothetical turnout in Appendix I.

for approval of organizing to solve a community problem. The local character of the mediating variables indicates that each will be significantly related to attending a government meeting in one's community.

For political party meeting attendance, I utilize the seven-point party trust item as well as a single item for attitudes toward campaign involvement. Given the connection between parties and campaigning mentioned earlier, the attention to campaign approval appears to be reasonable.

Finally, the index of contacting government officials encompasses interactions with local leaders, the national legislature, and a government agency. I therefore measure political confidence with a three-item index that combines local trust, legislative trust, and national governmental trust.<sup>285</sup> Of the mass participation approval items, the question on organizing appears to be the most relevant to contacting government officials. Activists intent on solving a political problem are likely to interact with public officials, whereas campaigning is more likely to focus on interactions with one's fellow citizens. Both the mass participation item on organizing and the government contacting battery also refer to community problems.

In addition to political support, other political attitudes could mediate the relationship between personality and political participation. If personality works through support attitudes to influence participation, then the indirect effects of personality attributable to political support should continue to be significant after adding other attitudes as potential mediators. I would not be contributing to previous tests of the mediation hypothesis if the trait effects through political support were insignificant with the inclusion of mediators that previous studies have considered, such as political interest, civic duty, and internal efficacy (e.g., Gallego and Oberski 2012; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013).

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<sup>285</sup> The Cronbach's alpha for the three-item trust index is 0.75.

I have access to items on political interest and internal efficacy in the AmericasBarometer.<sup>286</sup> To measure political interest, the AmericasBarometer asked about the level of interest in politics, with options ranging from “[a] lot” to “[n]one.” I have reverse-coded the variable so that higher scores refer to more political interest. The political interest variable ranges from 1 to 4.

To measure internal efficacy, I employ an item that allowed respondents to assess the extent to which they agree that they understand the country’s most important political issues. Responses range from 1 (“[s]trongly disagree”) to 7 (“[s]trongly agree”).

Descriptive statistics for the potential mediators are located in Appendix H.

### *Examining Indirect Effects*

To test my hypotheses on indirect trait effects, I explore the path from personality to political attitudes to political behavior. Mediation can occur only if psychological traits influence political support and only if support attitudes affect citizen participation. In other words, the personality–support link must be statistically significant, and the support–behavior link must be statistically significant.

Significant indirect trait effects are possible even if the total effect of personality on participation is insignificant (Rucker et al. 2011). An insignificant total effect could be attributable to positive and negative indirect effects offsetting one another. In addition, a significant total effect in the positive (negative) direction could mask a negative (positive) indirect effect.

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<sup>286</sup> As with the relationship between political support and political participation, engaging in public affairs could raise an individual’s level of political interest or internal efficacy. However, measurements of internal efficacy (Finkel 1985) and political interest (Prior 2010) appear to be fairly stable over time, and Finkel has failed to uncover an effect of voting on internal efficacy. Such information bolsters the case for the path proposed by the mediation hypothesis—that personality affects attitudes and attitudes influence participation.

Therefore, I have opted not to follow the traditional approach to mediation analysis. To detect mediation, analysts often examine whether an independent variable of interest is significantly related to the dependent variable. If the total effect is significant, then mediation occurs when the coefficient for the independent variable becomes less significant or altogether insignificant once a mediator is inserted into the regression model (Rucker et al. 2011).

Because indirect effects can be observed in the absence of significant total effects for personality, I turn to an alternative technique for my primary mediation analysis: the KHB method developed by Karlson and his colleagues (Karlson and Holm 2011; Karlson et al. 2012; Kohler et al. 2011).<sup>287</sup> The KHB method decomposes the total effect of an independent variable into the direct effect and the indirect effect attributable to each mediator in the model. By permitting the inclusion of multiple mediators at the same time, the KHB method enables me to determine the indirect trait effects due to political trust and approval of mass participation even after controlling for indirect trait effects through more traditional mediators, namely political interest and internal efficacy.<sup>288</sup> The technique is also efficient, for mediation through multiple independent variables (e.g., each of the Big Five) can be assessed simultaneously. Furthermore, I can include sociodemographic control variables and account for survey and questionnaire design by inserting survey weights, clustering standard errors by country, and adjusting the method of estimation to the number of response options in the dependent variable. Models with dichotomous dependent variables are estimated with logistic regression, and models with polychotomous dependent variables are estimated with ordinal logistic regression.<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> For an application of the KHB method in political science, see Wang (2016).

<sup>288</sup> I expect positive trait effects through approval of mass participation and the more traditional mediators in my model, namely political interest and internal efficacy. Therefore, I control for interest and internal efficacy because examining only indirect effects through political support attitudes would leave me open to the charge that my results could be due to omitted mediators.

<sup>289</sup> The KHB method was executed with the *khb* command in Stata.

With the KHB method, significant indirect effects through a particular mediator would denote a strong link between the personality trait and the political support attitude and a strong link between political support and political participation. Therefore, my main results do not report separate analyses for the effects of personality on support or the effects of support on behavior. Such information is located in Appendix I. The results in Appendix I comport with expectations in nearly every instance.<sup>290</sup>

The indirect effects reported by the KHB method are causal in nature as long as the sequential ignorability assumption is met. As noted by Wang (2006), this assumption contains two conditions. First, the main independent variables should be independent of the mediating and dependent variables. Following Wang (2016), I attempt to meet the first condition by controlling for other predictors of political participation, namely sociodemographics.<sup>291</sup> Second, the mediators should not be causally related to one another. I cannot prove with cross-sectional data whether one mediator causes another. However, evidence in my favor would be a factor analysis that I conducted on all of the mediating variables in this chapter. The political trust items formed the only factor with an eigenvalue above 1, and none of the other items loaded onto the trust factor. If one attitude caused another, I might have observed greater overlap in the attitude structure for the potential mediators.<sup>292</sup>

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<sup>290</sup> Of the 24 pertinent personality–support coefficients, 22 are in the expected direction and significant at the 0.10 level or better; the two remaining coefficients are in the expected direction and have relatively low p-values of 0.103 and 0.167. In addition, all of the political support mediators are significantly and positively associated with participation. For more details on my empirical analyses of the trait–support and support–behavior links, see Appendix I.

<sup>291</sup> For examples of sociodemographic variables being significantly related to political participation, see Klesner (2009) and Valentino et al. (2011).

<sup>292</sup> Furthermore, I observe little evidence that political trust causes approval of mass participation or vice versa, for correlations between the political support mediators in Tables 6.3 through 6.7 never surpass 0.16. Based on the correlational analyses and my factor analyses, I conclude that the mediating variables are fairly independent of one another, and it makes sense to refer to negative indirect effects through political trust and positive indirect effects through the other mediating variables.

In sum, it is possible for personality to affect political attitudes and attitudes to influence participation. Nevertheless, I remain cautious in the interpretation of results because of the cross-sectional nature of my data.

### **Testing the Mediation Hypothesis: Results**

Before reporting the results of the KHB method, I first briefly review my hypotheses for the connection between traits and support as well as support and behavior. I expect openness and extraversion to reduce levels of political trust because of the disappointment of highly open and extraverted individuals in a static, impersonal status quo. I also anticipate both trait dimensions to increase approval of mass participation because of the preference of highly open citizens for democratic ideals and the responsiveness of highly extraverted citizens to social norms.

Likewise, rights for the majority conflate popular social norms and democratic norms, which should appeal to highly conscientious individuals and their tendency toward dutifulness. Finally, the consistent, positive perspective of emotionally stable individuals should produce positive relationships between this trait dimension on one hand and both political trust and approval of mass participation on the other.

My expectations for support attitudes and political behavior are comparatively simple. Because conventional political involvement perpetuates the current political system, I anticipate that both political trust and approval of mass participation will encourage greater rates of participation.

If we combine the two links, the hypotheses on indirect trait effects are as follows. For openness and extraversion, I expect negative indirect effects on behavior via political trust and



**Table 6.3**Decomposing the Total Effect of Personality Traits on **Previous Turnout** via Political Attitudes

	Openness	Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Emotional Stability
Total Effect	0.17* (0.08)	0.25** (0.08)	0.24** (0.08)	0.08 (0.09)	-0.04 (0.08)
Direct Effect	0.09 (0.08)	0.22** (0.08)	0.18* (0.08)	0.13 (0.08)	-0.06 (0.08)
Indirect Effect	0.08** (0.03)	0.03 (0.03)	0.06+ (0.03)	-0.05 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)
via Trust in Elections	-0.01* (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.01* (0.00)	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
via Approval of Campaigning and Organizing	0.02** (0.01)	0.02** (0.01)	0.01* (0.01)	0.01* (0.00)	0.01+ (0.00)
via Political Interest	0.06*** (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.02)	0.00 (0.01)
via Internal Efficacy	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
<b>Mediation Percentages</b>					
Percentage of Total Effect	48.11%	10.50%	23.86%	-54.88%	-55.87%
via Trust in Elections	-4.70%	1.51%	-4.33%	5.66%	-20.62%
via Approval of Campaigning and Organizing	14.40%	7.61%	5.27%	12.94%	-17.87%
via Political Interest	36.40%	0.66%	21.48%	-70.78%	-11.56%
via Internal Efficacy	2.01%	0.72%	1.44%	-2.70%	-5.82%

Note: Data come from the 2010 AmericasBarometer. The dependent variable is previous turnout. Cell entries in the top panel are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Country fixed effects; the constant parameter; and controls for gender, age, race, and education are not shown. Standard errors are clustered by country. Data are weighted so that each nation's sample contributes a value of N = 1,500. Number of cases: 31,962. Number of countries: 22. Method of estimation for the outcome variable: logit. \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

positive indirect effects on behavior via approval of mass participation. For conscientiousness, indirect effects through approval of mass participation should be positive, and emotional stability should exert positive indirect effects through both political trust and approval of mass participation.

I now review the results of the KHB method for each mode of political participation. Table 6.3 reports the total, direct, and indirect effects of personality on previous turnout. The total effect refers to the trait effects without any of the mediators. As expected based on past research (Gerber et al. 2011; Mondak et al. 2010), openness and extraversion exert a positive

total effect on voting behavior. I also would anticipate a positive total effect for emotional stability based on past research (Gerber et al. 2011; Ha et al. 2013), but the result in Table 6.3 is not significant.

For openness and extraversion, the positive total effects are partially attributable to indirect effects through the attitudinal variables in the model. Consistent with past research on the mediation hypothesis (Gallego and Oberski 2012; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013), I observe significant and positive indirect effects of openness and extraversion through political interest. A one-unit increase from 0 to 1 in openness would indirectly raise an individual's probability of turnout by 3.6 percent via political interest.<sup>293</sup> An increase of 3.6 percent would be substantively meaningful in a close election, such as the 2016 Peruvian presidential contest between Pedro Pablo Kuczynski and Keiko Fujimori. The margin of victory for Kuczynski amounted to less than 0.5 percent of the popular vote.

Over and above political interest, I find positive and significant indirect trait effects through mass participation approval. The indirect effects for openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and emotional stability are consistent with expectations. In substantive terms, openness exerts the largest indirect effect via democratic support, as a one-unit increase in this trait dimension would indirectly raise the probability of turnout by 1.4 percent. As the previous example makes clear, such an increase could have altered the outcome of the 2016 Peruvian presidential election.

Table 6.3 also reports negative indirect effects of openness and extraversion via trust in elections. The negative indirect effects contrast with the positive total effects and positive

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<sup>293</sup> All changes in predicted probability for the mediation analyses have been calculated via the *ape* option for the *khb* command in Stata. "Ape" stands for "average partial effects." The *ape* command returns results for a one-standard deviation change in the key personality variable, but these have been converted to shifts in predicted probability for moving from 0 to 1 in the trait dimension under consideration.

indirect effects of both trait dimensions through mass participation approval and political interest. Previous studies also have reported positive total and indirect effects of openness and extraversion on turnout. Instead, the negative indirect effects comport with my expectations for political trust mediators and indicate that citizens who are low in openness and extraversion can engage in public affairs through their relatively high levels of confidence in the political system.

The bottom panel of Table 6.3 reports the percentage of the total trait effect attributable to indirect effects. Altogether, the indirect effects for openness and extraversion cover 48.11 percent and 23.86 percent of the total trait effect, respectively. The effect of conscientiousness via mass participation approval also amounts to 7.61 percent of the total trait effect. Negative percentages in the bottom panel are due to indirect effects having the opposite sign of the total trait effect. Positive and negative percentages for openness and extraversion point to the possibility of countervailing paths from a trait dimension to political participation.

A final observation about Table 6.3 pertains to the value of the KHB method. Because of the insignificant total effects for emotional stability and agreeableness, traditional mediation approaches would have ruled out the possibility of indirect effects for either trait dimension. Instead, I observe positive and significant indirect effects of agreeableness and emotional stability through approval of mass participation as well as a negative and significant indirect effect of agreeableness through political interest. Such results are consistent with the point that insignificant total effects can be attributable to countervailing indirect effects (Rucker et al. 2011).

The remaining empirical analyses apply my hypotheses to more uncommon forms of conventional political behavior. In the AmericasBarometer, fewer than 25 percent of respondents reported joining campaigns, attending political meetings, or contacting public officials.

**Table 6.4****Decomposing the Total Effect of Personality Traits on Campaign Involvement via Political Attitudes**

	Openness	Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Emotional Stability
Total Effect	0.21* (0.10)	-0.04 (0.08)	0.52*** (0.09)	0.10 (0.13)	-0.23+ (0.13)
Direct Effect	0.02 (0.10)	-0.08 (0.08)	0.38*** (0.09)	0.22+ (0.13)	-0.28* (0.13)
Indirect Effect	0.19** (0.06)	0.04 (0.06)	0.14* (0.06)	-0.12* (0.06)	0.05 (0.06)
via Trust in Political Parties	-0.01* (0.01)	-0.01+ (0.00)	-0.02** (0.01)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
via Approval of Campaigning	0.04*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)	0.02* (0.01)	0.02** (0.01)
via Political Interest	0.13*** (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	0.11*** (0.02)	-0.13*** (0.03)	0.01 (0.02)
via Internal Efficacy	0.02** (0.01)	0.01* (0.00)	0.02** (0.01)	-0.01* (0.01)	0.01* (0.01)
<b>Mediation Percentages</b>					
Percentage of Total Effect	89.32%	-114.83%	27.06%	-117.96%	-22.00%
via Trust in Political Parties	-6.39%	15.86%	-3.09%	0.38%	-1.98%
via Approval of Campaigning	21.16%	-96.13%	5.33%	19.70%	-9.84%
via Political Interest	63.68%	-7.05%	20.64%	-123.99%	-4.06%
via Internal Efficacy	10.86%	-27.50%	4.18%	-14.04%	-6.12%

Note: Data come from the 2010 AmericasBarometer. The dependent variable is campaign involvement. Cell entries in the top panel are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Country fixed effects; the constant parameter; and controls for gender, age, race, and education are not shown. Standard errors are clustered by country. Data are weighted so that each nation's sample contributes a value of N = 1,500. Number of cases: 32,255. Number of countries: 22. Method of estimation for the outcome variable: logit. \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

As discussed above, I expect openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and emotional stability to exert positive effects on participation through approval of mass participation, whereas the impacts of openness and extraversion via political trust should be negative. Emotional stability, however, should be positively associated with participation through political trust.

I turn to campaign involvement in Table 6.4. Regarding total effects, I find that high levels of openness and extraversion encourage campaign participation, whereas the reverse is true for emotional stability. Previous research is consistent with each of these findings (e.g., Mondak 2010; Weinschenk 2013). Table 6.4 also reports that openness and extraversion exert a positive effect on campaign involvement via internal efficacy and political interest; such findings

comport with past mediation studies on various forms of participation (e.g., Gallego and Oberski 2012; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013).

As expected, multiple trait dimensions are significantly related to campaign participation through political support attitudes. Openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and emotional stability all exert positive and significant effects on campaign involvement via approval of mass participation, and the indirect effects of openness and extraversion through political trust are negative. I thus continue to identify significant indirect personality effects through political support, even as I control for indirect effects via political interest and internal efficacy. The indirect effects are especially meaningful for openness, as they cover nearly 90 percent of the total effect.<sup>294</sup> The major pathways from openness to campaigning appear to be specified with the mediators in the model.<sup>295</sup>

In substantive terms, openness and conscientiousness exert the largest indirect effects on campaign involvement via political support. A one-unit change in openness (conscientiousness) would indirectly raise a respondent's probability of campaigning by 1.5 percent (1.3 percent) via approval of mass participation. The substantive influence of each trait dimension is meaningful for a dependent variable with a mean of 0.11 on a scale from 0 to 1. Moreover, the substantive impact of openness (conscientiousness) through internal efficacy amounts only to +0.8 percent (+0.4 percent). Political support thus outperforms internal efficacy as a mediator for the relationship between each trait dimension and campaign involvement.

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<sup>294</sup> The percentage exceeds 95 percent if we ignore the negative percentage associated with political trust.

<sup>295</sup> Additional mediators that produce negative indirect effects for openness, of course, will reduce this percentage.

**Table 6.5**Decomposing the Total Effect of Personality Traits on **Local Meeting Attendance** via Political Attitudes

	Openness	Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Emotional Stability
Total Effect	0.06 (0.09)	0.05 (0.13)	0.61*** (0.12)	-0.06 (0.09)	-0.02 (0.09)
Direct Effect	-0.06 (0.10)	0.02 (0.14)	0.52*** (0.12)	0.02 (0.08)	-0.06 (0.09)
Indirect Effect	0.12** (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)	0.09* (0.04)	-0.08* (0.04)	0.04 (0.04)
via Trust in Local Government	-0.02** (0.01)	0.01* (0.00)	-0.02** (0.01)	0.01** (0.00)	0.01* (0.01)
via Approval of Organizing	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.00)	0.01 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
via Political Interest	0.09*** (0.02)	-0.00 (0.01)	0.07*** (0.01)	-0.08*** (0.02)	0.01 (0.01)
via Internal Efficacy	0.03*** (0.01)	0.01** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)	-0.02** (0.01)	0.02** (0.01)
<b>Mediation Percentages</b>					
Percentage of Total Effect	195.38%	55.98%	14.80%	130.30%	-168.53%
via Trust in Local Government	-30.53%	19.00%	-2.72%	-23.99%	-49.20%
via Approval of Organizing	24.77%	17.74%	1.14%	-11.44%	-8.85%
via Political Interest	147.79%	-5.67%	11.66%	132.23%	-31.11%
via Internal Efficacy	53.35%	24.92%	4.72%	33.51%	-79.36%

Note: Data come from the 2010 AmericasBarometer. The dependent variable is local meeting attendance. Cell entries in the top panel are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Country fixed effects; the constant parameter; and controls for gender, age, race, and education are not shown. Standard errors are clustered by country. Data are weighted so that each nation's sample contributes a value of N = 1,500. Number of cases: 33,868. Number of countries: 24. Method of estimation for the outcome variable: logit. \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

The positive indirect effects for conscientiousness and emotional stability contrast with the negative and significant total effect for emotional stability in Table 6.4 and with the negative total effects for both trait dimensions observed in prior research (e.g., Mondak 2010; Weinschenk 2013). As I have noted for openness and extraversion, the impact of personality on participation may not be uniformly positive or negative. Trait effects through political support can contradict previous findings.

Next, I consider the indirect effects of personality on attending local government meetings in Table 6.5. As expected, extraversion exerts a positive and significant total effect on attendance (Mondak and Halperin 2008; Weinschenk 2013), and openness and extraversion are

positively related to political activism through the two traditional mediators, namely political interest and internal efficacy (Mondak et al. 2010; Gallego and Oberski 2012).

Results are mixed for indirect effects through political support. Although personality does not appear to influence local meeting attendance through approval of mass participation, openness and extraversion continue to exert negative indirect effects through political trust. For extraversion, the indirect effects cover 14.80 percent of the significant total trait effect. Moving from 0 to 1 in extraversion would reduce the probability of attending a local meeting by 0.7 percent via political trust. Such a change would qualify as fairly meaningful for a dependent variable with a mean of 0.12 among the individuals in the model.<sup>296</sup>

In addition, I observe a positive and significant indirect effect of emotional stability via political trust, as expected. The impact through political trust is more than half as much as the indirect effect through internal efficacy, as indicated by the percentages in the lower panel of the table.

A final observation about Table 6.5 concerns the impact of openness on local meeting attendance. The total effect is insignificant, possibly due to a combination of positive effects through such attitudes as interest and internal efficacy and negative effects through such attitudes as local political trust. Such countervailing indirect effects for a trait dimension can produce insignificant total effects.

Results for party meeting attendance in Table 6.6 are also consistent with expectations. As anticipated, extraversion exerts positive and significant total and indirect effects, with 27.35 percent of the total effect accounted for by the mediation analyses. The total impact for openness is not significant, but most of the indirect effects are positive and significant, comporting with

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<sup>296</sup> The mean is 0.11 if we consider only non-missing responses to the local meeting attendance variable.

**Table 6.6**Decomposing the Total Effect of Personality Traits on **Party Meeting Attendance** via Political Attitudes

	Openness	Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Emotional Stability
Total Effect	0.09 (0.11)	-0.06 (0.10)	0.45*** (0.10)	-0.45*** (0.09)	0.00 (0.08)
Direct Effect	-0.08 (0.11)	-0.09 (0.10)	0.33*** (0.09)	-0.32*** (0.09)	-0.07 (0.08)
Indirect Effect	0.17** (0.06)	0.03 (0.06)	0.12+ (0.06)	-0.14* (0.06)	0.07 (0.06)
via Trust in Political Parties	-0.04*** (0.01)	-0.02* (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.02+ (0.01)
via Approval of Campaigning	0.03*** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)	0.01* (0.01)	0.02** (0.01)
via Political Interest	0.15*** (0.02)	0.00 (0.01)	0.12*** (0.02)	-0.14*** (0.03)	0.02 (0.02)
via Internal Efficacy	0.03*** (0.01)	0.01** (0.00)	0.03*** (0.01)	-0.02** (0.01)	0.02** (0.01)
<b>Mediation Percentages</b>					
Percentage of Total Effect	188.04%	-44.97%	27.35%	30.34%	4,392.36%
via Trust in Political Parties	-44.42%	27.53%	-9.22%	-0.73%	1,030.48%
via Approval of Campaigning	38.06%	-42.02%	4.40%	-3.13%	982.24%
via Political Interest	162.40%	-7.89%	26.33%	30.14%	1,206.27%
via Internal Efficacy	32.01%	-22.59%	5.84%	4.06%	1,173.37%

Note: Data come from the 2010 AmericasBarometer. The dependent variable is party meeting attendance. Cell entries in the top panel are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Country fixed effects; threshold parameters; and controls for gender, age, race, and education are not shown. Standard errors are clustered by country. Data are weighted so that each nation's sample contributes a value of N = 1,500. Number of cases: 33,899. Number of countries: 24. Method of estimation for the outcome variable: ordinal logit. \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

previous research on political participation (e.g., Mondak et al. 2010; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013). In particular, both openness and extraversion are positively related to attending party meetings through mass participation approval, political interest, and internal efficacy. Although most paths for openness and extraversion—including through democratic support—run in the positive direction, the indirect effects via political trust are negative and significant, outpacing all other indirect openness or extraversion effects except for the ones through political interest in terms of absolute magnitude.

For conscientiousness and emotional stability, I again observe positive and significant indirect effects through mass participation approval, and emotional stability also works through



**Table 6.7**Decomposing the Total Effect of Personality Traits on **Contacting Officials** via Political Attitudes

	Openness	Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Emotional Stability
Total Effect	0.13 (0.09)	0.08 (0.10)	0.36*** (0.07)	0.00 (0.08)	-0.37*** (0.10)
Direct Effect	0.04 (0.08)	0.05 (0.11)	0.30*** (0.07)	0.04 (0.08)	-0.40*** (0.10)
Indirect Effect	0.09** (0.03)	0.03 (0.03)	0.06* (0.03)	-0.04 (0.03)	0.03 (0.03)
via Trust in Local Gov't, National Gov't, and National Legislature	-0.02* (0.01)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.01* (0.01)	0.01* (0.01)	0.01+ (0.00)
via Approval of Organizing	0.03* (0.01)	0.02* (0.01)	0.01* (0.01)	0.01* (0.01)	0.00 (0.00)
via Political Interest	0.06*** (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
via Internal Efficacy	0.02** (0.01)	0.01* (0.00)	0.02* (0.01)	-0.01* (0.00)	0.01* (0.00)
<b>Mediation Percentages</b>					
Percentage of Total Effect	68.05%	34.43%	17.76%	-2473.58%	-8.12%
via Trust in Local Gov't, National Gov't, and National Legislature	-13.52%	5.54%	-3.98%	736.09%	-1.87%
via Approval of Organizing	20.39%	19.39%	3.60%	706.01%	-1.08%
via Political Interest	47.79%	-1.02%	13.73%	-3276.25%	-2.25%
via Internal Efficacy	13.40%	10.52%	4.40%	-639.43%	-2.92%

Note: Data come from the 2010 AmericasBarometer. The dependent variable is the index for contacting officials. Cell entries in the top panel are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Country fixed effects; threshold parameters; and controls for gender, age, race, and education are not shown. Standard errors are clustered by country. Data are weighted so that each nation's sample contributes a value of N = 1,500. Number of cases: 30,536. Number of countries: 23. Method of estimation for the outcome variable: ordinal logit. \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

political trust to facilitate political behavior. The positive effects of emotional stability on trust and mass participation approval that were observed in Chapter 3 have downstream effects on facilitating party meeting attendance.

Finally, I examine the influence of personality traits and political attitudes on contacting public officials in Table 6.7. Consistent with the extant literature, the total effects of extraversion and emotional stability are positive and negative (e.g., Ha et al. 2013; Mondak et al 2010), respectively, and the overall indirect effects of openness and extraversion are positive (e.g.,

Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013; Vecchione and Caprara 2009). Likewise, openness and extraversion exert positive indirect effects via political interest, internal efficacy, and—as expected—approval of mass participation. Collectively, these three indirect effects for openness (extraversion) account for nearly 82 percent (22 percent) of the total trait effect.

Nevertheless, some of the findings from Table 6.7 contrast with prior research but are consistent with my expectations. The indirect effects of openness and extraversion through political trust are negative, and two of the indirect effects for emotional stability are positive and significant. Therefore, there are some paths by which citizens high in openness and extraversion (emotional stability) are less (more) likely to contact public officials.

The results also reveal a positive indirect effect of conscientiousness through mass participation approval. Past work on this trait dimension and contacting public officials, meanwhile, has reported a combination of positive and negative effects (e.g., Ha et al. 2013; Mondak 2010; Mondak and Halperin 2008).

### *Reviewing the Evidence*

My empirical analyses replicate, complement, and challenge previous research. With regard to replication, I corroborate past findings by observing positive total effects of openness in two models, positive total effects for extraversion in all five models, and negative total effects for emotional stability in the campaign and contacting models. Past assessments of the mediation hypothesis also have shown that openness and extraversion work through political interest and internal efficacy to influence political participation, and my mediation analyses reveal the same findings for both trait dimensions in 5 of 5 models for political interest and 4 of 5 models for internal efficacy.

**Table 6.8**  
Results for Hypotheses on Indirect Effects of Personality on Political Participation

<i>Independent Variable of Interest</i>	<i>Mediator</i>	<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Indirect Effect of Personality on Participation</i>	<i>Is the Indirect Effect Consistent with Past Work on Personality and Participation?*</i>	<i>In How Many Models Is the Indirect Effect Significant and in the Expected Direction?</i>
Openness	→ Political Trust	→ Conventional Participation	Negative	No	5 of 5 Models
Openness	→ Approval of Mass Participation	→ Conventional Participation	Positive	Yes	4 of 5 Models
Extraversion	→ Political Trust	→ Conventional Participation	Negative	No	5 of 5 Models
Extraversion	→ Approval of Mass Participation	→ Conventional Participation	Positive	Yes	4 of 5 Models
Conscientiousness	→ Approval of Mass Participation	→ Conventional Participation	Positive	No for Campaigning Yes for Turnout and No for Campaigning and Contacting	4 of 5 Models
Emotional Stability	→ Political Trust	→ Conventional Participation	Positive	Yes for Turnout and No for Campaigning and Contacting	3 of 5 Models
Emotional Stability	→ Approval of Mass Participation	→ Conventional Participation	Positive	Yes for Turnout and No for Campaigning and Contacting	3 of 5 Models

Note: \* For an overview of the personality and participation literature, see the section of this chapter titled "Endpoints of the Chain: Personality and Political Participation."

In addition to corroboration, I challenge and complement the extant literature by examining indirect trait effects via political trust and approval of mass participation. The pattern of results appears in Table 6.8. Consistent with previous research on positive indirect effects, I offer consistent evidence in 4 of 5 models that openness and extraversion are positively related to citizen engagement via approval of mass participation. Meanwhile, I show in all five models that openness and extraversion are negatively related to political participation through political trust. In other words, less open and extraverted citizens can become more politically engaged via their relatively high levels of confidence in the political system. This chapter, therefore, has identified a path by which individuals with low levels of openness and extraversion become *more* likely to partake in public affairs, holding indirect effects through other mediators constant.

Four of the five models also reveal positive indirect effects of conscientiousness via approval of mass participation. Previous studies have reported negative effects of conscientiousness on campaign involvement and inconclusive results for other modes of political behavior, but I have found a positive path from conscientiousness to campaigning as well as from this trait dimension to turnout, party meeting attendance, and contacting public officials. The total effects for conscientiousness are insignificant in the non-turnout models, but they mask significant indirect effects.

Finally, I observe positive indirect effects for emotional stability in three of the five mediation analyses. Whereas openness and extraversion exert positive and negative indirect effects through democratic support and political trust, respectively, indirect emotional stability effects on participation are positive for both mediators. Such consistency is reflective of the

stable, positive effect of this trait dimension on political support that was documented in Chapter 3.<sup>297</sup>

## **Conclusions and Implications**

This chapter has analyzed the practical implications of the relationship between personality and political support with data from as many as 24 countries in the Western Hemisphere. The connection between traits and attitudes toward the political system extends beyond a citizen's opinions to his or her engagement in public affairs. Building on previous work on the mediation hypothesis and political support, I report that the chain from personality to support to behavior encompasses not just an activity with a high participation rate, namely voter turnout, but also activities with low participation rates, such as contacting public officials and attending political meetings. My findings thus apply to a variety of means by which individuals can exercise their responsibilities as democratic citizens to express their interests, confront societal problems, and hold public officials accountable.

### *Connections to Previous Research*

The results of this study are both consistent and inconsistent with extant findings on personality and participation. On one hand, I observe positive indirect effects for openness and extraversion via democratic support attitudes; these indirect effects run in the same direction as ones for more traditional mediators, such as political interest and internal efficacy.<sup>298</sup> Incorporating mass participation attitudes allows me to paint a more comprehensive picture of the positive paths from traits to attitudes to behavior, and I control for interest and internal

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<sup>297</sup> The patterns summarized in Table 6.8 occur more frequently than would be expected by chance. If we assume that 10 percent of the indirect effects would be significant by chance, then only 3 or 4 of 35 hypothesized indirect effects would be significant in Tables 6.3 through 6.7. Instead, 28 are significant.

<sup>298</sup> In addition, the positive effects of extraversion on behavior via mass participation approval are consistent with the motivating example of former U.S. President Bill Clinton.

efficacy so as to avoid misattributing the effects of previously explored mediators to democratic support.

On the other hand, some of my findings challenge prior results. Unlike most work in the personality literature, I identify negative effects of openness and extraversion on participation via political trust, a positive effect of conscientiousness on campaigning via approval of mass participation, and positive effects of emotional stability on campaigning and contacting officials via mass participation approval and political trust, respectively.<sup>299</sup>

### *Relevance for Elite Political Rhetoric*

Put together, the concordant and discordant results offer multiple strategies for political elites to encourage citizen participation through tailored communications based on the dominant traits of their audience.<sup>300</sup> Such messages could function as an exogenous shock that promotes political support and participation due to the receptivity of recipients to the communication.<sup>301</sup> For openness and extraversion, politicians and nongovernmental organizations can target individuals at both ends of each trait dimension. Messages directed to highly open and extraverted citizens should emphasize democratic ideals and participation norms in order to maximize mass participation approval and mobilize participation from individuals high in each trait dimension. At the same time, communications to less open and less extraverted citizens should stress the trustworthiness of political institutions and procedures in order to promote the political confidence and engagement of other members of the public.

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<sup>299</sup> The negative effect of extraversion on participation via political trust is consistent with one of the motivating examples in this chapter: the case of Republican politician Jeb Bush.

<sup>300</sup> Online media communications in the United States, for example, should be directed to a highly open audience (Gerber et al. 2011b).

<sup>301</sup> In addition to political support, a comprehensive mobilization campaign would seek to raise participation rates by using targeted messaging to increase levels of political interest and internal political efficacy. I concentrate, however, on communications related to political support because of the substantive focus of this dissertation.

Meanwhile, past research has identified negative effects of conscientiousness on campaigning and negative effects of emotional stability on campaigning and contacting officials. Although I have not uncovered negative paths running from these trait dimensions through political support, my findings do highlight opportunities for political activists to encourage political support and participation from citizens who are generally less inclined to campaign and contact public officials—that is, citizens who are high in conscientiousness and emotional stability. To appeal to such citizens, political elites could promote the importance and temporal permanence of democratic norms, especially those pertaining to mass participation. In addition, I have observed a positive path from emotional stability to political trust to contacting, so messages about the consistency and predictability of institutional policies should appeal to individuals high in this trait dimension.

The interventions suggested above possess a realistic opportunity to influence levels of mass participation approval and political trust and thereby to affect participation rates. Citizens high in openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and emotional stability have not reached the maximum level of mass participation approval. For each of these trait dimensions, I calculated the mean score for the two-item mass participation approval index among individuals above the mean in the particular trait dimension under consideration. The mean in each case ranged between 15.43 and 15.67 on a scale ranging from 5 to 20.<sup>302</sup>

Likewise, individuals low in openness, low in extraversion, and high in emotional stability can become even more trusting of the political system. To demonstrate my point, I generated an index of all of the political trust items in this chapter, except for trust in elections due to its omission in the Canadian and U.S. surveys. Then, I calculated the average for individuals below the mean in openness, below the mean in extraversion, and above the mean in

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<sup>302</sup> I limited my calculations to the 24 AmericasBarometer countries in this study.

emotional stability.<sup>303</sup> These averages—15.39, 15.22, and 14.99, respectively, on a scale ranging from 4 to 28—indicate that tailored communications could raise the trust attitudes of many individuals who are low in openness, low in extraversion, or high in emotional stability.

By understanding the paths from personality traits to support attitudes to political participation, political elites can utilize targeted messaging to increase participation rates and thereby influence the quality of democracy. Maximizing voter turnout and increasing citizen involvement in political meeting attendance and other activities with low participation rates can enable the public to articulate its interests, work together to address societal problems, and hold elected officials accountable for their actions.

Two examples from the mass media illustrate the potential of tailored communication to increase political participation. First, consider a 2014 news story on a local television channel in Iowa. Gerber and his colleagues (2011b) find that local television news audiences tend to be less open to new experiences; according to my results, news stories about trustworthy politicians could improve participation rates. About two weeks before the 2014 elections, longtime Iowa Governor Terry Branstad appeared on the local ABC affiliate in Des Moines in a story featuring his trustworthiness and job effectiveness. “I love this state,” he told KCCI’s Todd Magel. “I’m a lifelong Iowan except for my two years in the service, and I want to run the best campaign I’ve ever run.” He also stressed the soundness of the state budget and the presence of job growth in Iowa. KCCI represents just one television station in Iowa, but the focus on trustworthiness could be representative of local TV outlets in a year in which Branstad won 59 percent of the vote. Consistent with my argument about the link between trust and participation, in 2014 Iowa also experienced the largest raw vote total in a midterm election in at least three decades, and the turnout rate also slightly exceeded the rates for the 2006 and 2010 elections (Murphy 2014).

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<sup>303</sup> My analysis focused on the 24 AmericasBarometer countries in this study.



Second, let us turn to a 2014 interview on a national satire television show. Gerber et al. (2011b) report a positive effect of openness on viewing such programs; therefore, based on the results in this chapter, I would expect politicians on such programs to appeal to the highly open audiences by emphasizing the democratic principle of mass participation. Indeed, then-President Barack Obama lamented the low rate of voter turnout in the 2014 midterm elections during an interview in December of that year on Comedy Central's *The Colbert Report*. The president made similar comments during a press conference immediately after the 2014 midterm elections. According to the United States Election Project by political scientist Michael P. McDonald (2017), midterm turnout of voting-eligible citizens declined from 41.8 percent in 2010 to 36.7 percent in 2014.<sup>304</sup> The ultimate impact of President Obama's attention to mass participation will not be known until after the 2018 midterm elections, but we could compare turnout in 2012 and 2016, approximately two years after President Obama's comments. Consistent with my argument, turnout increased modestly across the two presidential election cycles, from 58.6 percent in 2012 to 60.2 percent in 2016.

### *Next Steps*

The existence of a chain from personality to support to behavior enhances the plausibility of the policy recommendations in this dissertation, including the tailored communications described in the present chapter. The actual efficacy of such proposals, however, is an open question and constitutes an arena for additional investigation.<sup>305</sup> If political elites and nongovernmental organizations target their messages based on the dominant traits of their audience, do citizens become more trusting and approving of mass participation? Are they more

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<sup>304</sup> The turnout rates in this paragraph refer to the total ballots counted (McDonald 2017).

<sup>305</sup> As I detail in the next chapter, personality scholars have begun to explore how psychological factors interact with experimental treatments to influence political behavior or behavioral intentions (e.g., Gerber et al. 2013; Weinschenk and Panagopoulos 2014). Although these researchers have not investigated the path from personality to support to participation, their work suggests the viability of such an approach for future scholarship.

likely to participate in public life? I discuss these questions and other avenues for future research in the final chapter, which also summarizes the discussion and reviews my findings.

CHAPTER 7  
PERSONALITY AND POLITICAL SUPPORT:  
A CONCLUSION

Political support matters. It affects the number of citizens who vote on Election Day, join political campaigns, and attend government meetings. In turn, participation rates determine the ability of the public to express group interests, address societal problems, and hold elected officials accountable for their actions and policies. Aggregate levels of political support thus carry implications for the quality of democracy.

Furthermore, mass attitudes toward the political system can determine the outcome of an election. As I noted in the opening anecdote on Venezuela, distrust in government in the 1990s fueled the electoral futility of the Democratic Action Party (AD) and Social Christian Party (COPEI) as well as the electoral success of new political parties, such as National Convergence in 1993 and the Fifth Republic Movement in 1998.

In the case of Venezuela, the participative and partisan consequences of political support became intertwined. Pessimism toward political actors and institutions in the 1993 elections hindered turnout, upending the AD–COPEI monopoly on the presidency and attenuating the two-party majority in both chambers of the legislature. Turnout for all parties declined by 22 percent between 1988 and 1993, with vote totals for the AD and COPEI combined dropping by more than half in the presidential and legislative contests. In addition to losing the presidency in 1993, the two parties witnessed noticeable reductions in the percentage of legislative seats. Together, the AD and COPEI controlled 164 of 201 (42 of 46) seats in the Chamber of Deputies (Senate) after the 1988 election, but only 108 of 203 (30 of 50) seats following the 1993 setbacks. Two-party control ceased with the legislative elections of 1998.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> To be precise, with the 1998 election, the AD and COPEI held exactly 50 percent of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies and just 42 percent of the seats in the Senate.

The impact of political support in Venezuela sparks another question: Where do attitudes toward the political system originate? The preceding chapters have responded to this question by turning to the influence of personality on political support attitudes and the relevance of the personality–support relationship for political behavior. I have argued that personality constitutes a useful starting point for explaining inter-individual variation in political support because of the heritability (e.g., Heath et al. 1992; Riemann et al. 1997) and longitudinal stability (e.g., Costa and McCrae 1988; Rantanen et al. 2007) of psychological traits, as well as their early manifestation in life (e.g., Asendorpf and van Aken 2003; Ehrler et al. 1999).

### **Filling the Gaps**

My investigation of personality, political support, and citizen participation has addressed theoretical and empirical limitations in prior research. On the theoretical front, I developed a general model in Chapter 2 to account for the path from traits to support attitudes to political behavior, and then utilized the framework to derive specific hypotheses in each of the subsequent chapters. Most students of personality and political support, by contrast, form their hypotheses on an ad hoc basis, which hinders their ability to identify theoretical and empirical connections across studies. The extant literature also rarely explores the practical relevance of the personality–support relationship by considering whether traits work through support attitudes to affect actual political engagement. I have identified only two such studies (Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013; Wang 2016).

To explain the impact of personality on political support, Chapter 2 applied a model from occupational psychology known as trait activation theory (TAT) (Tett and Burnett 2003; Tett and Guterman 2000). The basic premise of TAT is that personality traits will influence an outcome in response to trait-relevant cues in the environment. Such cues include characteristics of the

dependent variable (e.g., the actor or community level of political support) as well as aspects of the broader political, economic, and social context (e.g., the level of corruption or economic performance). In Chapter 3 I focused on the former source of trait-relevant cues in order to study the direct relationship between personality and political support, and Chapters 4 and 5 considered the latter source of trait-relevant cues in order to investigate how contextual factors condition the impact of traits on attitudes toward the political system.

Secondly, the general model in Chapter 2 incorporated the mediation hypothesis (Blais and St-Vincent 2011; Gallego and Oberski 2012) in order to account for the indirect effect of personality on political participation through political support attitudes. Hypotheses derived from the second part of the theoretical framework were tested in Chapter 6.

Following Chapter 2, each of the empirical chapters addressed theoretical and empirical gaps in the political behavior literature. Chapter 3 considered the direct relationship between personality and political support and expanded upon prior research in three ways. First, I utilized trait activation theory as a unifying and integrative explanation for current findings on the impact of personality on attitudes toward the political system (Zinnes 1976). Past studies, for example, have indicated that openness to experience is negatively related to political trust (e.g., Anderson 2010a, 2010b; Mondak et al. 2017) and positively related to political tolerance (e.g., Marcus et al. 1995; Oskarsson and Widmalm 2016), and TAT would suggest that the divergent results are attributable to fundamental differences between the actor and institutional levels on one hand and the regime principle level on the other. In particular, instrumental evaluations of the status quo always could improve in the eyes of highly open individuals, who value innovation, whereas democratic values understandably appeal to the ideals facet of openness (John et al. 2008).

Throughout Chapter 3, I applied TAT to all levels (e.g., actor and institutional) and domains (e.g., political trust and job effectiveness evaluations) of political support.

Second, I pursued additive cumulation (Zinnes 1976) in Chapter 3 by considering previously untested relationships between personality and political support attitudes. Prior studies had not explored the impact of psychological traits on patriotism; democratic support, besides political tolerance and support for criminal rights; regime performance attitudes; institutional affect; institutional job evaluations, actor affect; and issue-specific actor job evaluations. I considered each relationship in Chapter 3.

Third, I expanded the geographic scope of personality and support research with the incorporation of data from the developing world in Chapter 3. Extant studies rely on surveys from advanced industrial countries,<sup>307</sup> leaving the generalizability of their findings in doubt. Chapter 3, meanwhile, compared findings from the United States with results from a cross-national sample of Latin American, Caribbean, and North American countries.

Results for Chapter 3 demonstrated the applicability of TAT to all levels of political support and to the United States as well as a cross-national sample. For example, I showed in multiple datasets that openness tends to be negatively related to actor, institutional, and procedural support and positively related to democratic support. My results indicated that highly open individuals resemble the “critical citizens” identified by Pippa Norris in a prominent volume on political support from the late 1990s. More broadly, the findings in Chapter 3 pointed to TAT as a general model of the relationship between personality and attitudes toward the political system.

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<sup>307</sup> I am aware of only two exceptions: Mondak et al.’s (2017) study of political trust in the Americas and Oskarsson and Widmalm’s (2016) study of political tolerance in India and Pakistan.

Building on Chapter 3, I explored conditional personality effects on political support attitudes in Chapters 4 and 5. Both chapters addressed limitations in prior research, including the paucity of conditional personality effects in the political support literature. The two extant studies of which I am aware utilize data from India and Pakistan (Oskarsson and Widmalm 2016) as well as Switzerland (Freitag and Ackermann 2016), whereas my data cover a broader range of countries from throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Furthermore, Chapters 4 and 5 responded to empirical inconsistencies in previous research on the direct relationship between personality and political support. I argued that studies have reported divergent personality effects because surveys have been administered in different contexts that contain dissimilar trait-relevant cues. In particular, I identified cross-survey differences in corruption as a contributing factor to the inconsistent effects of openness and extraversion on external efficacy; cross-survey differences in economic performance as a contributing factor to the inconsistent effects of conscientiousness on attitudes toward actors, institutions, and procedures; and cross-survey differences in social threat to the inconsistent effects of conscientiousness on democratic support. Using TAT, I hypothesized that the effects of openness and extraversion on external efficacy become more negative as the level of corruption rises, the effect of conscientiousness on status quo support becomes more positive as economic conditions improve, and the effect of conscientiousness on political tolerance and support for criminal rights becomes more negative as the level of threat from political dissidents and crime increases.

I obtained support for each of these hypotheses. I operationalized the environment with contextual perceptions in Chapter 4 and objective contextual factors in Chapter 5, and the results were consistent. Likewise, I obtained support for the anticipated openness–corruption interaction

and conscientiousness–economic performance interaction in multiple datasets in Chapters 4 and 5.

Finally, Chapter 6 demonstrated the practical relevance of this dissertation by examining whether personality traits work through political support attitudes to affect actual political behavior. Extant applications of the mediation hypothesis rarely consider political support as a possible mediator, but I argued for the plausibility of the chain from traits to support attitudes to citizen engagement. The first link is evident from Chapters 3, 4, and 5 of my dissertation, and previous studies have documented a significant association between political support and political participation (e.g., Hooghe and Marien 2013; Karp and Milazzo 2015).

The results from Chapter 6 complemented and challenged prior findings on the relationship between personality and political behavior. To date, studies have reported positive effects of openness (e.g., Ha et al. 2013; Mondak 2010) and extraversion (e.g., Mondak and Halperin 2008; Weinschenk 2013) on most modes of citizen participation, negative effects of conscientiousness and emotional stability on campaigning (e.g., Ha et al. 2013; Mondak 2010), and positive effects of emotional stability on voting (e.g., Gerber et al. 2011a; Moreno and Wals 2014). Consistent with extant research, I found that openness and extraversion work through approval of mass participation to facilitate voting, campaigning, attending party meetings, and contacting public officials, and the effect of emotional stability on voting via approval of mass participation was also positive.<sup>308</sup> These findings are present even with the inclusion of indirect effects through more traditional mediators, namely political interest and internal efficacy.

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<sup>308</sup> Many of the total trait effects in Chapter 6 also replicate prior findings on the relationship between personality and political participation. In particular, the total effect of openness was positive and significant in 2 of 5 models, the total effect of extraversion was positive and significant in 5 of 5 models, and the total effects of emotional stability on campaigning and contacting were negative.



But not all of the indirect effects via political support conformed to the findings in previous studies. Dominant paths, such as the ones discussed above, can mask indirect effects that have the opposite sign (Rucker et al. 2011). Instead of negative effects, I reported a positive effect of conscientiousness on campaigning via approval of campaign involvement and positive effects of emotional stability on campaigning and contacting officials via mass participation approval and political trust, respectively. Likewise, rather than positive effects, both openness and extraversion exert negative effects on participation through political trust attitudes. My findings thus indicate that individuals low in openness and extraversion—and high in conscientiousness and emotional stability—are not doomed to withdraw from public affairs. Political mobilization for less open and less extraverted (highly conscientious and highly emotionally stable) individuals can occur through their relatively high levels of political trust (approval for mass participation and political trust, respectively).

### **Practical Implications**

In addition to filling theoretical and empirical gaps in prior research, this dissertation has offered practical suggestions for mobilizing more citizens into the political process. I have argued that nongovernmental organizations and other political elites could raise participation rates in the population by influencing levels of political support through communications that are tailored to the dominant personality traits of an audience. For example, emphasizing economic success may appeal to a crowd of highly conscientious, achievement-oriented citizens, but could have a minimal or counterproductive effect on individuals at the other end of conscientiousness.

Effective messaging will require elites to be aware of which citizens are most responsive to contextual information. Chapter 4 and, especially, Chapter 5 indicated that individuals high in openness and extraversion are more likely than citizens at the low end of each dimension to form

their external efficacy attitudes based on the level of corruption in their environment. Likewise, I found that highly conscientious citizens are more responsive than less conscientious citizens to the level of economic performance (Chapter 5) and the level of social threat from political dissidents and crime (Chapters 4 and 5).

From a normative perspective, Chapter 5 provided reassurance that trait–situation interactions can be grounded in reality. Politicians might be tempted to avoid effective governance and instead manipulate perceptions about political, economic, or social conditions in order to raise the level of political support and the rates of pro-incumbent behavior. However, I showed that individuals high in openness, extraversion, and conscientiousness reward and punish the political status quo on the basis of objective contextual factors, such as bribery rates aggregated from survey data on citizen experiences. Elected officials thus have an incentive to improve actual societal conditions, along with mass perceptions of those conditions.

Finally, targeted communications could mobilize individuals at the low and high end of a personality dimension. Based on the results in Chapter 6, messages about the democratic principle of mass participation could increase support levels and participation rates among audiences high in openness and extraversion, whereas messages about the trustworthiness of actors, institutions, and procedures could accomplish the same goal for recipients who are low in openness and extraversion.<sup>309</sup> A combination of communication strategies thus could maximize the number of voices represented in the political process, as well as the number of people who are willing to address societal problems or hold politicians accountable for their actions.

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<sup>309</sup> Given the greater responsiveness of open and extraverted citizens to contextual information, however, communicators must ensure that targeted messages to less open and less extraverted audiences are received and understood.

### **Data: Advantages and Limitations**

I have harnessed the temporal, geographic, and measurement diversity of as many as four surveys to assess the generalizability of my findings. Data have come from a 2015 student sample in Illinois, two 2012 representative surveys from the United States, and a 2010 cross-national survey of citizens from 24 countries. Collectively, the surveys offer multiple measurements of personality and numerous political support items for analysis, and I have access to perceptual and objective measures of the environment through the survey data and other sources. The AmericasBarometer also includes a variety of political participation variables. In short, my data are well-suited to testing the hypotheses for this dissertation.

Nevertheless, the data suffer from four limitations that future studies should address. First, the geographic and temporal scope of the survey data could be broader, expanding to different world regions and different time periods. Future research, therefore, should examine the path from personality to support attitudes to political participation in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Oceania, as well as other Western Hemisphere countries not included in the data used for this dissertation (e.g., Haiti and Honduras). Scholars will need to collect new survey data in some countries, and I encourage efforts to replicate my findings with surveys previously administered in the Western Hemisphere. For example, a 1998 survey of residents in the Tallahassee, Florida, area included items on conscientiousness, sociotropic economic evaluations, and presidential job approval (Mondak and Halperin 2008). Building on Chapter 4, researchers could investigate whether the effect of conscientiousness on job evaluations of President Bill Clinton became more and more positive as perceptions of the national economy became more favorable.

Second, the generalizability of my findings would be improved with additional data from AmericasBarometer countries. The cross-national survey did not include items for political

affect, institutional external efficacy, actor trust, or national identification, so analyses for these political support attitudes were limited to the United States. Likewise, data limitations prevented me from including all 24 countries in the Chapter 6 analyses of previous turnout (N = 22 countries), hypothetical turnout (N = 21), campaign participation (N = 22), and contacting public officials (N = 23). The Canadian and U.S. surveys omitted the trust-in-elections item used for the two turnout models, and the surveys for Canada, Chile, and the United States failed to ask about hypothetical turnout. Furthermore, no Canadian and U.S. respondents were asked both the approval-of-campaigning item and the campaign participation item. Finally, the Bolivian survey did not include the contacting government battery. Future iterations of the AmericasBarometer or another cross-national survey of the Western Hemisphere should field all requisite questions for testing the hypotheses in Chapter 6.<sup>310</sup>

Third, as noted by Hauser (1974), all contextual analysis is subject to the threat of self-selection. Individuals choose whether to remain in one community or country or relocate to another, and the contextual factors in this dissertation (e.g., the strength of the economy) could influence a person's preferred residence. To rule out the possibility of self-selection, researchers could randomly assign experimental subjects to receive one of at least two vignettes about a political community, real or imagined. The vignettes could differ on the contextual factor of interest. Ideally, the trait–situation interactions from the survey experiment would resemble the ones from observational data that were reported in Chapters 4 and 5.

Fourth, Chapter 5 noted the relatively low rate of significant trait–situation interactions with objective contextual factors. Although the number of significant interactions was greater

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<sup>310</sup> Post-2010 AmericasBarometer questionnaires have lacked a Big Five battery, preventing analyses of the path from personality to political support to political participation. The sole exception is the 2014 survey, which contains only the two items for emotional stability. Even so, the emotional stability battery was fielded in only some countries.

than expected by chance, I would have preferred to obtain even more support for my hypotheses on conditional personality effects. Perhaps the contextual factors were low in salience due to the myriad distractions in everyday life. More conspicuous contextual factors, by contrast, may convey trait-relevant cues more clearly, increasing the consistency of person–situation interactions. To explore such a possibility, scholars could randomly assign experimental subjects to vignettes that vary in the intensity of treatment (e.g., a vignette that briefly refers to the level of economic performance versus a vignette that focuses solely on the level of economic performance).<sup>311</sup>

### **Covering New Territory**

In addition to addressing data limitations, the theoretical model and empirical analyses in this dissertation suggest several new lines of inquiry in the study of personality and politics. Areas for additional study encompass conditional personality effects, mediation analysis, and applications of the model to outcomes besides political support. I consider each in turn.

#### *Further Examination of Conditional Personality Effects*

Chapters 4 and 5 considered solutions to several empirical puzzles, or inconsistencies, in the personality and support literature. In future research, scholars could offer other solutions to the same puzzles. For instance, economic performance is not the only contextual variable that pertains to political success or failure; other contextual factors, such as the electoral margin of victory, could activate the conscientiousness facet of achievement-striving and produce positive or negative trait effects. Three extant surveys illustrate the potential utility of interacting conscientiousness with incumbent vote share. On one hand, Mondak and Halperin (2008) report a positive and significant conscientiousness effect on U.S. executive job approval in 2005, after

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<sup>311</sup> Alternatively, powerful doses of contextual information in a vignette could create a strong situation that limits the number of viable political support response options to one.

President George W. Bush's majority victory in the popular vote. On the other hand, the impact of conscientiousness on executive job approval and external efficacy is insignificant in two surveys conducted after plurality incumbent victories in the popular vote: a 1998 survey from the United States (Mondak and Halperin 2008) and a 2009 survey from Germany (Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013), respectively.

Meanwhile, scholars should feel free to study person–situation interactions even if inconsistent trait effects are not present in the extant literature. The absence of empirical puzzles does not preclude the utility of further investigation. Imagine if I had limited Chapters 4 and 5 to collectivities with moderate-to-robust economies. Although my data would have included cues of economic success, I would have omitted cues of economic failure. Both sets of cues activated conscientiousness in Chapters 4 and 5, producing negative effects in unhealthy economies, positive effects in healthy economies, and positive and significant interaction effects. Without the negative trait effects in anemic situations, interactions between conscientiousness and economic performance could become insignificant.<sup>312</sup> In a similar way, current studies may need to expand the number of countries under analysis in order to amass contexts with sufficient variance in the environmental factor(s) under analysis. Empirical examination of the relationship between openness and political trust illustrates my point. Prior studies exclusively have found a negative and often significant association between openness and political trust (e.g., Anderson 2010a, 2010b; Freitag and Ackermann 2016; Mondak et al. 2017). However, surveys have been

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<sup>312</sup> For example, the significant interaction in Model II of Table 5.4 becomes insignificant if I omit subnational regions with poorly performing economies, denoted by a mean below 0.50 for the subnational economic performance variable. This contextual variable ranges from a theoretical minimum of 0 to a theoretical maximum of 1. The trimmed model has 54 regions from 16 countries. Although a higher number of countries would be preferable, the number of regions is acceptable, and the model nevertheless converges in HLM. (I also should note that Table G.3 shows a negative and significant conscientiousness effect in Model II of Table 5.4 if economic performance is at its minimum and an insignificant conscientiousness effect if economic performance is at its maximum. Omitting poorly performing economies understandably results in an insignificant interaction.)

drawn only from countries with moderate-to-high levels of economic inequality.<sup>313</sup> Given the emphasis of highly open people on innovation and novelty (John et al. 2008), a negative reaction to such a status quo would be expected. Results for the openness–trust relationship might be more heterogeneous if researchers also considered the most equal quartile of countries.

At the same time, personality and support scholars should not assume that trait activation always occurs in response to the positive and negative extremes of a contextual variable. In Colbert and Witt’s (2009) application of trait activation theory, conscientiousness exerts a significant effect in contexts of high goal-focused leadership and an insignificant effect in contexts of low goal-focused leadership. Although this dissertation has not anticipated insignificant trait effects at one extreme of an environmental variable, political support researchers must ask themselves whether trait-relevant cues are present at both high and low levels of a contextual factor. Conflicting considerations for a trait dimension could minimize personality effects, whereas consistent considerations for a trait dimension could maximize personality effects. Take as an example the interaction between economic performance and emotional stability in models of status quo attitudes. Positive economic news could provoke a positive effect of emotional stability on actor, institutional, and procedural attitudes because of consistency between the baseline preferences of individuals high in this trait dimension to persevere with current officials and with the current democratic political system. However, negative economic news creates a conflict for emotionally stable citizens between the desire to persevere with status quo officials and the desire for accountability, a core component of any democratic system; as a result of the absence of consistent trait-relevant cues, the impact of emotional stability could be insignificant at low levels of economic performance. I did not test

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<sup>313</sup> This statement is based on available GINI index data for the year 2009 (World Bank 2017b). If the 2009 entry is unavailable, I count the closest prior data point. Studies of openness and political trust have included data from the 34th most unequal country (i.e., Switzerland) to the 112th most unequal country (i.e., Colombia).

this hypothesis in Chapters 4 and 5 because of my attention to empirical puzzles with positive and negative significant effects in extant research, including my own, but I encourage researchers to examine the interaction of emotional stability and economic performance, and to consider other circumstances in which trait-relevant cues are present and absent.

#### *Further Examination of the Mediation Hypothesis*

Future studies also could build on my research on the mediation hypothesis in Chapter 6. After examining trait–situation interactions in models of political support, scholars should apply the mediation hypothesis by examining whether psychological characteristics interact with contextual factors to influence support attitudes, which in turn affect participation. In other words, do political support attitudes mediate the relationship between trait–situation interactions and citizen participation?<sup>314,315</sup> Chapter 6 omitted these interactions for the sake of simplicity. Now that I have documented paths from personality traits to support attitudes to citizen engagement, a logical next step would be to incorporate trait–situation interactions.<sup>316</sup>

Another potential addendum to Chapter 6 pertains to behavioral outcomes. Future research should investigate the path from personality to support attitudes to protest participation and other forms of unconventional activity. In Chapter 6, by contrast, I focused exclusively on turnout and other traditional behaviors because of my interest in negative indirect effects of openness and extraversion on participation via political trust. I could not have tested the hypothesis of negative indirect effects if the outcome had been protest involvement because prior research had shown a negative link between political trust and unconventional activity (e.g.,

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<sup>314</sup> For an example of mediation involving a person–situation interaction, see Colbert and Witt’s (2009) study of conscientiousness and workplace outcomes.

<sup>315</sup> Prior studies have investigated the conditional effects of political support on participation (Booth and Seligson 2009; Carlin 2011), so researchers also could study whether traits work through political support interactions to influence citizen behavior.

<sup>316</sup> I thank Corinne McConaughy from George Washington University and Joanne Miller from the University of Minnesota for suggesting the incorporation of context into the study of the path from personality to support to behavior.



Hooghe and Marien 2013; Seligson 1980). Therefore, the expected indirect effects for openness and extraversion would be positive because of the negative links between traits and trust in Chapter 3 and the negative link between trust and protest behavior (i.e., two negatives equal a positive). Likewise, I would expect positive openness and extraversion effects on demonstration involvement through approval of mass participation due to the positive connection between each trait dimension and democratic support in Chapter 3 and the positive connection in past research between democratic support and protest participation (Dalton 2004).

A mediational study on personality, support, and protest involvement thus would be valuable to personality and participation research as a complement to past findings about the positive effects of openness and extraversion on citizen behavior (e.g., Mondak 2010; Weinschenk 2013).

Moreover, scholars could apply the mediation hypothesis to other behavioral outcomes besides political participation. Prior studies have examined the relationships between political support and compliance with the law (Dalton 2004; Norris 1999b; Sunshine and Tyler 2003; Tankebe 2009; Tyler 1990, 2005) and political support and involvement in civil society (Norris 1999b), so additional mediation research could examine the paths from personality to support attitudes to each of these alternative behavioral outcomes.

Finally, future research can examine the path from personality to support to behavior by testing the efficacy of audience-centered communication. The results in Chapter 6 indicate that political elites can mobilize more citizens into the political process by tailoring messages to the dominant personality traits of an audience, but field experiments and survey experiments could clarify the utility of such interventions. Scholars can design these experiments in multiple ways. In one option, the researcher could administer a personality battery and then randomly assign

individuals to receive no vignette or a vignette designed to appeal to their score on a particular trait dimension. For individuals low (high) in openness and extraversion, the vignette could underscore the trustworthiness of the electoral process (the democratic principle of mass participation). The next step would be to measure the mediator, either with a political trust battery or a battery on approval of mass participation. Finally, researchers would observe actual political behavior if the study were a field experiment, or behavioral intentions (e.g., the intention to vote) if the study were a survey experiment. If the experiment worked as expected, the experimental intervention would increase political support levels, which in turn would raise participation rates in a field experiment or strengthen behavioral intentions in a survey experiment.<sup>317,318</sup>

Experiments in other subfields of political behavior denote the potential utility of the interventions described above. In both survey and field experiments, Gerber and his colleagues (2013) randomly assigned individuals to a control group or to a get-out-the-vote vignette. Empirical analyses interacted the treatment assignment with each of the Big Five, revealing greater participation rates and stronger behavioral intentions among highly open citizens who received the treatment. Meanwhile, Weinschenk and Panagopoulos (2014) conducted a survey experiment in which subjects were randomly assigned to a positive or negative political ad and then asked behavioral intention items. Both extraversion and agreeableness interacted with the treatment to influence general and specific behavioral intentions: Negative ads mobilized extraverts but demobilized highly agreeable citizens.

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<sup>317</sup> For an example of a study testing for mediation effects through experimental research, see Bolger and Amarel (2007).

<sup>318</sup> Scholars should be aware of the roadblocks to the effective use of experiments in tests for mediation effects. For more on the topic, see Bullock et al. (2010).

### *Beyond Political Support*

I have framed my model as a general theory connecting personality, political attitudes, and political behavior, so empirical applications of the framework need not be limited to political support. Political psychologists and psychologists in other substantive fields could find trait activation theory and the mediation hypothesis to be useful for their own research. I outline one application of my model below.

In addition to political support, scholars could apply my theoretical framework to the topic of policy attitudes. Both policy preferences and political support are multifaceted. Political support consists of multiple levels and multiple domains within each level, and the intra- and inter-level differences can convey unique trait-relevant cues for the direct relationship between personality and attitudes toward the political system. Likewise, policy attitudes pertain to social, economic, and foreign domains, with multiple issues in each domain; within the economic domain, for instance, citizens express preferences on ideal tax rates and ideal levels of economic redistribution. Differences across and within policy domains could generate unique trait-relevant cues and divergent trait effects for the direct relationship between personality and policy preferences.

Secondly, researchers could utilize TAT to study the conditional effects of personality on policy preferences. Citizens develop their policy attitudes in response to multiple contextual factors, many of which may interact with individual personality traits. Policy norms in a given collectivity, for instance, could influence the opinions of incoming residents, although some will be more resistant to social pressures than others. In an effort to coexist peaceably with friends and acquaintances in their community, highly agreeable individuals could be more likely than disagreeable citizens to conform to the dominant policy preferences in their newfound

surroundings. Similarly, highly conscientious newcomers may be more likely than their less conscientious counterparts to adjust their policy opinions due to the dutifulness of the former group to social norms.

The third step of model application would involve the mediation hypothesis. Directional forms of political participation (e.g., antiwar protests) may be motivated by an individual's policy preference on a relevant issue (e.g., opposition to military conflict), which could be influenced by personality traits (e.g., openness to experience).<sup>319</sup> In addition, scholars should examine whether some personality traits facilitate policy extremity and whether policy extremity mediates the relationship between psychological characteristics and political behavior.<sup>320</sup>

### **Improving the Quality of Democracy**

This study of personality and political support has real-world implications. Psychological traits influence attitudes toward the political system, these attitudes affect actual political behavior, and the collective participation rate in a society shapes the quality of democracy. Ideal democratic citizens participate in the public arena in order to express their interests, address societal problems, and hold government officials accountable for their actions. Although political behavior benefits society, participation rates are often low because citizens have an incentive to free ride on the political engagement of others.<sup>321</sup> If one's fellow citizens are participating in politics, an individual can reap the societal benefits of an active public without bearing the individual costs (Riker and Ordeshook 1968). Political activists who want to witness higher societal rates of campaign involvement, meeting attendance, contact with public officials, and

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<sup>319</sup> Indeed, Mondak (2010) reports a negative relationship between openness and support for the War in Iraq in 2006.

<sup>320</sup> Research on response biases, for instance, suggests that high levels of openness encourage individuals to express more extreme opinions (Hibbing et al. n.d.). Perhaps the relationship also holds for substantive responses to policy preference items. The link between policy extremity and political behavior also appears to be reasonable, given van der Meer et al.'s (2009) observation of a positive relationship between ideological extremity and citizen participation.

<sup>321</sup> As noted in Chapter 6, all of the non-turnout forms of participation have means well below the midpoints of their respective scales.

other political engagement will need to change attitudes so that individuals overcome obstacles to the collective action problem.

Political support attitudes constitute one such solution. As citizens become attitudinally attached to the community, principles, procedures, institutions, and actors of the political system, they develop a greater willingness to invest in public affairs through political participation (Booth and Seligson 2009). One key to motivating behavior and improving the quality of democracy, then, is identifying the correlates of political support and offering targeted communications to individuals based on their scores on known antecedents of political support. The antecedents of interest in this dissertation have pertained to a core attribute of all people: their personality.

APPENDIX A  
PERSONALITY BATTERIES FOR CHAPTER 3

**ANES Personality Battery**

We're interested in how you see yourself. Please mark how well the following pair of words describes you, even if one word describes you better than the other.<sup>322</sup>

tipi\_extra: 'extraverted, enthusiastic' describes me...  
tipi\_crit: 'critical, quarrelsome' describes me...  
tipi\_dep: 'dependable, self-disciplined' describes me...  
tipi\_anx: 'anxious, easily upset' describes me...  
tipi\_open: 'open to new experiences, complex' describes me...  
tipi\_resv: 'reserved, quiet' describes me...  
tipi\_warm: 'sympathetic, warm' describes me...  
tipi\_disorg: 'disorganized, careless' describes me...  
tipi\_calm: 'calm, emotionally stable' describes me...  
tipi\_conv: 'conventional, uncreative' describes me...

Note: Respondents rated themselves on a 1-to-7 scale, with "1" meaning "[e]xtremely poorly" and "7" meaning "[e]xtremely well." Using the procedure described in the main text, I combined items 1 and 6 for extraversion, items 2 and 7 for agreeableness, items 3 and 8 for conscientiousness, items 4 and 9 for emotional stability, and items 5 and 10 for openness.

**CCES Personality Battery**

Note: For the CCES, respondents answered 20 questions on a 1-to-7 scale, with "1" meaning "[s]trongly disagree" and "7" meaning "[s]trongly agree." The first four items pertained to openness, the next four to conscientiousness, the next four to extraversion, the next four to agreeableness, and the final four to emotional stability. I combined the items for each trait dimension according to the procedure described in the main text.

Note: Matthew V. Hibbing of the University of California, Merced, selected the CCES items from the 44-item Big Five Inventory (John and Srivastava 1999). The BFI is copyrighted, so I do not include the full question wordings here. Instead, I provide the exact wording for the main phrase or phrases for each item.

Openness: reflect/play with ideas, curious, work that is routine, active imagination

Conscientiousness: thorough job, reliable worker, disorganized, does things efficiently

Extraversion: talkative, reserved, quiet, assertive

Agreeableness: find fault, helpful/unselfish, cold/aloof, considerate/kind

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<sup>322</sup> The following variable names correspond to the names in the dataset, not the questionnaire.

Emotional Stability: relaxed/handles stress well, tense, worries, emotionally stable/not easily upset

### **Subject Pool Personality Battery**

Note: The following was the introduction on the background survey:

On this page, you will answer a series of questions related to your personality. For example, the next question contains pairs of words people sometimes use to describe themselves. For each pair of words, we would like you to indicate on a scale from zero to ten which word best describes you. For example, in the first row the number zero means “unimaginative,” the number 10 means “imaginative,” and the number 5 is exactly in the middle, neither unimaginative nor imaginative.<sup>323</sup>

personality\_1: Indicate which word best describes you.-Unimaginative | Imaginative  
personality\_2: Indicate which word best describes you.-Reserved | Outgoing  
personality\_3: Indicate which word best describes you.-Tense | Calm  
personality\_4: Indicate which word best describes you.-Reliable | Unreliable  
personality\_5: Indicate which word best describes you.-Uncooperative | Cooperative  
personality\_6: Indicate which word best describes you.-Talkative | Quiet  
personality\_7: Indicate which word best describes you.-Kind | Unkind  
personality\_8: Indicate which word best describes you.-Bold | Shy  
personality\_9: Indicate which word best describes you.-Sloppy | Neat  
personality\_10: Indicate which word best describes you.-Steady | Moody  
personality\_11: Indicate which word best describes you.-Careless | Careful  
personality\_12: Indicate which word best describes you.-Uninquisitive | Curious  
personality\_13: Indicate which word best describes you.-Relaxed | Nervous  
personality\_14: Indicate which word best describes you.-Philosophical | Practical  
personality\_15: Indicate which word best describes you.-Cold | Warm

Note: The following was the introduction on the researcher survey:

First, you will answer a series of questions related to your personality. For each pair of words, we would like you to indicate on a scale from zero to ten which word best describes you. For example, in the first row the number zero means “enthusiastic,” the number 10 means “unenthusiastic,” and the number 5 is exactly the middle, neither enthusiastic nor unenthusiastic.<sup>324,325</sup>

person2\_1: Indicate which word best describes you.-Enthusiastic | Unenthusiastic  
person2\_2: Indicate which word best describes you.-Angry | Calm  
person2\_3: Indicate which word best describes you.-Stingy | Generous

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<sup>323</sup> The actual variables sent to me were coded to range from a possible minimum of 1 to a possible maximum of 11.

<sup>324</sup> The actual variables sent to me were coded to range from a possible minimum of 1 to a possible maximum of 11.

<sup>325</sup> Please note that the variable names below are capitalized in the codebook and original dataset, but pasting the data into Stata changed the capitalization to lowercase. The lowercase approach also matches the format used in the other parts of Appendix A.

person2\_4: Indicate which word best describes you.-Sophisticated | Unsophisticated  
person2\_5: Indicate which word best describes you.-Contented | Discontented  
person2\_6: Indicate which word best describes you.-Lazy | Hardworking  
person2\_7: Indicate which word best describes you.-Uncreative | Creative  
person2\_8: Indicate which word best describes you.-Trustful | Distrustful  
person2\_9: Indicate which word best describes you.-Unadventurous | Adventurous  
person2\_10: Indicate which word best describes you.-Responsible | Irresponsible

Note: Using the procedure described in the main text, I combined personality\_1, personality\_12, personality\_14, person\_2\_4, and person\_2\_7 for openness; personality\_2, personality\_6, personality\_8, person\_2\_1, and person\_2\_9 for extraversion; personality\_3, personality\_10, personality\_13, person\_2\_2, and person\_2\_5 for emotional stability; personality\_4, personality\_9, personality\_11, person\_2\_6, and person\_2\_10 for conscientiousness; and personality\_5, personality\_7, personality\_15, person\_2\_3, and person\_2\_8 for agreeableness.

### **AmericasBarometer Personality Battery**

Here are a series of personality traits that may or may not apply to you. Using the 1-7 ladder, where 1 means ‘strongly disagree’ and 7 means ‘strongly agree,’ please tell me the number that indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement.<sup>326</sup> You should rate the extent to which the pair of traits applies to you, even if one characteristic applies more strongly than the other.<sup>327</sup>

You see yourself as a:

per1: Sociable and active person.  
per2: Critical and quarrelsome person.  
per3: Dependable and self-disciplined person.  
per4: Anxious and easily upset person.  
per5: Open to new experiences and intellectual person.  
per6: Quiet and shy person.  
per7: Generous and warm person  
per8: Disorganized and careless person.  
per9: Calm and emotionally stable person.  
per10: Uncreative and unimaginative person.

Note: Using the procedure described in the main text, I combined items 1 and 6 for extraversion, items 2 and 7 for agreeableness, items 3 and 8 for conscientiousness, items 4 and 9 for emotional stability, and items 5 and 10 for openness.

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<sup>326</sup> The underlined part appears in the actual questionnaire.

<sup>327</sup> The capitalization of the variable names matches the approach in the dataset, not the questionnaire. The lowercase approach matches the format used in the other parts of Appendix A.



APPENDIX B  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR VARIABLES IN CHAPTER 3

**Table B.1**  
Descriptive Statistics for Chapter 3: Independent Variables

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
<i>ANES</i>					
Openness	5,490	0.47	0.22	0.00	1
Conscientiousness	5,492	0.64	0.24	0.00	1
Extraversion	5,487	0.37	0.21	0.00	1
Agreeableness	5,490	0.53	0.22	0.00	1
Emotional Stability	5,487	0.50	0.23	0.00	1
Female	5,510	0.51	0.50	0	1
Age	5,454	49.51	16.74	17	90
White	5,484	0.59	0.49	0	1
Education	5,468	0.49	0.29	0	1
Conservative	4,941	0.53	0.25	0	1
Republican/Party ID	5,489	0.42	0.35	0	1
Vote History	5,510	0.46	0.50	0	1
ERS	5,446	0.50	0.11	0.08	0.96
ARS	4,968	0.49	0.16	0	1
<i>CCES</i>					
Openness	968	0.52	0.19	0.04	1
Conscientiousness	967	0.65	0.20	0.00	1
Extraversion	961	0.35	0.19	0.00	1
Agreeableness	967	0.55	0.19	0.17	1
Emotional Stability	966	0.40	0.19	0.00	1
Female	1,000	0.54	0.50	0	1
Age	1,000	51.52	16.37	18	90
White	1,000	0.73	0.45	0	1
Education	1,000	0.53	0.30	0	1
Conservative	944	0.55	0.30	0	1
Republican/Party ID	953	0.45	0.37	0	1
Vote History	1,000	0.41	0.49	0	1
ERS	829	0.55	0.13	0.15	1
ARS	808	0.50	0.12	0	0.90
<i>Subject Pool</i>					
Openness	206	0.43	0.15	0.17	0.94
Conscientiousness	206	0.46	0.18	0.10	1
Extraversion	206	0.41	0.18	0.03	1
Agreeableness	206	0.49	0.17	0.19	1
Emotional Stability	205	0.35	0.14	0.02	0.88

Note: "SD" refers to "Standard Deviation," "Min" to "Minimum," "Max" to "Maximum," "Party ID" to "Party Identification," "ERS" to "Extreme Response Style," and "ARS" to "Acquiescence Response Style."

Table B.1 (cont.)

<i>Subject Pool</i>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>
Female	206	0.53	0.50	0	1
Age	206	19.57	1.90	17	37
White	206	0.61	0.49	0	1
Education	206	0.42	0.34	0	1
Conservative	206	0.39	0.26	0	1
Republican/Party ID	206	0.42	0.26	0	1
ERS	206	0.44	0.09	0.22	0.74
<hr/>					
<i>AmericasBarometer</i>					
Openness	39,318	0.64	0.27	0.00	1
Conscientiousness	40,115	0.67	0.25	0.00	1
Extraversion	40,160	0.58	0.25	0.00	1
Agreeableness	40,194	0.65	0.25	0.00	1
Emotional Stability	40,058	0.53	0.26	0.00	1
Female	40,642	0.51	0.50	0	1
Age	40,480	39.80	16.05	16	98
White	39,827	0.27	0.44	0	1
Education	40,487	0.55	0.25	0	1
Conservative	31,742	0.52	0.27	0	1
Party ID	38,918	0.17	0.38	0	1
Vote History	40,642	0.37	0.48	0	1
ERS	37,780	0.54	0.14	0.02	1
ARS	31,082	0.48	0.15	0	1

Note: "SD" refers to "Standard Deviation," "Min" to "Minimum," "Max" to "Maximum," "Party ID" to "Party Identification," "ERS" to "Extreme Response Style," and "ARS" to "Acquiescence Response Style."

**Table B.2**

## Descriptive Statistics for Chapter 3: Dependent Variables

	Survey	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
<i>Table 3.3: Political Trust</i>						
Index of Actor Trust	ANES	5,283	-0.00	0.77	-1.35	2.78
Index of Actor Trust	Subject Pool	171	0.00	0.82	-1.55	2.22
Index of Institutional Trust	Subject Pool	207	9.47	2.03	3	14
Index of Institutional Trust	AB	36,162	30.69	10.78	8	56
<i>Table 3.4: Overall Job Evaluations</i>						
Executive Approval	ANES	5,384	2.62	1.28	1	4
Executive Approval	CCES	979	2.38	1.26	1	4
Executive Approval	AB	39,543	3.20	1.03	1	5
House Incumbent Approval	ANES	4,424	2.76	1.01	1	4
House Incumbent Approval	CCES	799	2.69	0.95	1	4
Approval of National Legislature	ANES	5,130	1.73	0.96	1	4
Approval of National Legislature	CCES	932	1.72	0.82	1	4
Approval of National Legislature	AB	35,180	2.83	0.90	1	5
<i>Table 3.5: Issue-Specific Job Evaluations</i>						
Executive Approval on 4 Issues	ANES	5,072	10.41	4.60	4	16
Politican Approval on 5 Issues	Subject Pool	207	13.52	2.71	5	21
Executive Approval on 5 Issues	AB	36,525	18.73	7.88	5	35
Perceived Justice System Effectiveness	AB	38,132	2.27	1.01	1	4
Perceived Effectiveness of Local Gov't	AB	36,395	3.01	0.93	1	5
<i>Table 3.6: Affective Support</i>						
Thermometer Index for Democrats	ANES	5,340	180.24	92.86	0	300
Thermometer Index for Democrats	Subject Pool	190	216.58	57.08	25	340
Thermometer Index for Republicans	ANES	4,753	197.00	85.38	0	400
Thermometer Index for Republicans	Subject Pool	205	133.87	49.37	0	270
Likeability of Democratic Party	ANES	5,436	5.72	3.21	0	10
Likeability of Republican Party	ANES	5,438	4.25	2.85	0	10
Thermometer Index for Gov't Agencies	ANES	5,398	224.11	63.95	0	400
Thermometer for State Legislature	Subject Pool	205	44.31	15.93	0	80
<i>Table 3.7: External Efficacy</i>						
Officials Care What People Think	ANES	5,492	2.35	1.00	1	5
Officials Care What People Think	Subject Pool	207	2.80	1.04	1	5
Officials Care What People Think	AB	37,515	3.37	1.98	1	7
People Have Say in What Government Does	ANES	5,489	2.68	1.16	1	5
Elections Make Government Pay Attention	ANES	5,487	2.08	0.71	1	3

Note: "SD" refers to "Standard Deviation," "Min" to "Minimum," "Max" to "Maximum," and "AB" to "AmericasBarometer."

Table B.2 (cont.)

	Survey	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
<i>Table 3.8: Regime Performance Attitudes</i>						
Democratic Satisfaction Item	ANES	5,447	2.74	0.76	1	4
Democratic Satisfaction Index	Subject Pool	207	5.91	0.93	3	8
Democratic Satisfaction Index	AB	36,685	5.39	1.32	2	8
Government Not a Threat to Rights and Freedoms	ANES	5,323	3.77	1.40	1	5
Citizen Rights Protected	Subject Pool	207	3.39	0.95	1	5
Citizen Rights Protected	AB	38,853	3.88	1.69	1	7
Votes Counted Fairly	ANES	5,449	3.10	0.81	1	4
Trust in Elections	AB	36,585	4.20	1.86	1	7
<i>Table 3.9: Abstract Democratic Support</i>						
Democracy Best System	Subject Pool	207	3.86	1.01	1	5
Democracy Best System	AB	38,578	5.31	1.71	1	7
Democracy Preferred to Authoritarian Government	AB	37,941	2.65	0.70	1	3
<i>Table 3.10: Support for Democratic Principles</i>						
Political Tolerance Index	CCES	814	1.58	1.23	0	3
Political Tolerance Index	AB	37,493	24.32	9.88	4	40
Support for Criminal Rights	AB	38,070	0.61	0.49	0	1
Approval of Campaigning, Organizing, and Protesting	AB	37,813	22.10	6.32	3	30
Prefer Balance between Executive and Other Political Institutions	AB	34,796	15.00	4.82	3	21
Prefer Balance between Executive and Supreme Court	Subject Pool	207	3.92	0.81	2	5
Oppose Executive Orders in Response to Congress	Subject Pool	207	3.24	0.97	1	5
Prefer Balance between Branches during Foreign Invasion	Subject Pool	207	0.53	0.50	0	1
Oppose Coups in Response to Corruption, Crime, and Unemployment	AB	35,675	2.03	1.14	0	3
<i>Table 3.11: Political Community Support</i>						
National Identification Index	ANES	5,479	8.52	1.76	2	10
National Identification Item	Subject Pool	207	3.50	1.09	1	5
Patriotism Index	ANES	5,463	8.61	1.54	2	10
Patriotism Index	Subject Pool	207	7.79	1.74	2	10
Patriotism Item	AB	40,320	6.45	1.18	1	7

Note: "SD" refers to "Standard Deviation," "Min" to "Minimum," "Max" to "Maximum," and "AB" to "AmericasBarometer."

APPENDIX C  
SUPPLEMENTARY RESULTS FOR CHAPTER 3

**Controlling for Political Bias**

An individual's partisan affiliation or previous voting history can be a powerful predictor of political support (Anderson et al. 2005; Anderson and Tverdova 2003; Criado and Herreros 2007; Huddy et al. 2005; MacKuen and Brown 1987; Rudolph 2003a). Citizens who affiliate with or voted for the current incumbent's party may support the political system due to a sense of loyalty or agreement with the government's policy agenda. The link between political bias and political support should be stronger for attitudes toward political actors than for attitudes toward other objects of the political system because the other levels of support pertain less to particular political parties. Political institutions, regime principles, and the political community exist regardless of the current party in power. Different parties may hold different priorities for regime performance, but even these differences may be limited in practice because of institutional constraints (e.g., a recalcitrant bureaucracy).

Although political bias matters for political support, I do not control for political bias in the models in the main text. As stated above, political bias should matter more for actor support than other forms of political support, and I would prefer for all of the regressions to contain the same independent variables in order to ensure that results cannot be attributable to differences in model specification. In addition, political bias variables could represent some of the personality attributes included in my theoretical discussion, and including partisan affiliation or previous voting history could unduly reduce the effects of personality variables. For example, adding political bias variables could attenuate the impact of openness because some parties are more progressive than others, and much of the discussion for openness concerned the trait facet of innovation.

Therefore, I present results for political bias variables in this appendix instead of the main text. I focus on political actor models because these are the dependent variables for which partisan affiliation and previous vote history should have the strongest effect. In total, there are 17 actor dependent variables in Tables 3.3 through 3.7.

To measure partisan affiliation, I use seven-point items in the ANES, CCES, and subject pool. Variables are recoded to range from 0 (strong Democrat) to 1 (strong Republican).<sup>328</sup> A seven-point scale is not available in the AmericasBarometer, but the survey does allow respondents to state with which party they affiliate, if any. The partisanship variable for the AmericasBarometer is coded so that 1 refers to affiliation with the party of the executive or with a party in the executive's electoral coalition and 0 refers to unaffiliated and anti-incumbent respondents.<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>328</sup> The coding of partisan affiliation in the ANES, CCES, and subject pool does not correspond with the party of the incumbent president, but it does correspond with the direction of the ideology variable used in Chapter 3. I should note that the direction of the ideology variable is irrelevant to the robustness of the personality results. Because of the variable coding, the expected relationship between partisan affiliation and actor support in the ANES, CCES, and subject pool is negative.

<sup>329</sup> Including unaffiliated voters allows me to reduce the number of missing cases in the AmericasBarometer models. On the initial partisan affiliation item, 26,306 respondents in the 24 countries under analysis said that they do not identify with any party.

**Table C.1**

Robustness Check: Change in Personality Coefficients with the Addition of Political Bias in Actor Support Models

	A. No Change in Coefficient	B. In Favor of Hypotheses		C. Contrary to Hypotheses		D. Totals
		NS-->Sig in	Sig in Unexp	NS-->Sig in	Sig in Exp	
		Exp Direction	Direction-->NS	Unexp Direction	Direction-->NS	
<i>Control: Partisan Affiliation</i>						
Openness	12	2	1	0	2	17
Conscientiousness	---	---	---	---	---	---
Extraversion	16	0	0	0	1	17
Agreeableness	13	1	0	0	3	17
Emotional Stability	12	2	2	0	1	17
<b>Totals</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>68</b>
<i>Control: Previous Vote History</i>						
Openness	10	1	0	0	1	12
Conscientiousness	---	---	---	---	---	---
Extraversion	11	0	0	0	1	12
Agreeableness	11	1	0	0	0	12
Emotional Stability	10	0	1	0	1	12
<b>Totals</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>48</b>

Note: Findings for conscientiousness are not reported because no hypothesis was offered for the impact of this trait dimension on actor support. Results are based on comparing the political bias results to the findings in Tables 3.3 to 3.7. "NS," "Sig," "Exp," and "Unexp" are abbreviations for "Not Significant," "Significant," "Expected," and "Unexpected," respectively.

Information for previous vote history is available in the ANES, CCES, and AmericasBarometer. All three surveys included a question about previous vote choice. Individuals who voted for the current incumbent receive a score of 1 for the vote history variable, and all other respondents receive a score of 0.<sup>330,331</sup>

After controlling for political bias, I found that the personality results remained largely the same as the ones in the main text. I inserted partisan affiliation into 17 models and offered hypotheses for 68 personality coefficients. Of those 68 coefficients, 15 changed from significant to insignificant or vice versa. Meanwhile, I included previous vote history in 12 models and hypothesized about 48 personality coefficients.<sup>332</sup> A total of 6 of those 48 coefficients changed from significant to insignificant or vice versa.

Table C.1 shows that many of these changes are in favor of my hypotheses. Of the 15 coefficients that change with the addition of partisan affiliation (top panel), 5 switch from insignificant to significant in the expected direction, and another 3 switch from significant in the unexpected direction to insignificant. Meanwhile, of the 6 coefficients that change with the inclusion of previous vote history (bottom panel), 2 switch from insignificant to significant in the hypothesized direction, and another one switches from significant in the unexpected direction to insignificant.

For the most part, no discernible pattern occurs in terms of the evidence for or against the hypotheses for a particular trait. The only exception is agreeableness in the top panel. Controlling

<sup>330</sup> Scores of 0 thus consist of anti-incumbent voters, non-voters, non-responders, and people in the AmericasBarometer who said they turned in a blank, spoiled, or null ballot. I included all of these respondents in order to minimize the number of missing cases in the regressions.

<sup>331</sup> Descriptive statistics for political bias variables are located in Appendix B.

<sup>332</sup> The total is not 17 since the subject pool lacked a measure of previous vote history.

for partisan affiliation causes three significant and expected agreeableness coefficients to become insignificant, compared with just one coefficient that becomes significant in the expected direction.

### **Controlling for Survey Response Styles**

The hypotheses in the direct effects chapter are based on the substantive relationship expected between personality traits and attitudes toward the political system, but the results could be spurious if a non-substantive factor were related both to personality traits and to political support attitudes. In this robustness check, I consider the role of survey response styles, which refer to a person's general approach to answering questions on public opinion surveys. My own work, along with other research, shows that personality traits can influence one's tendency to provide extreme responses to opinion questions or to acquiesce on agree–disagree or approve–disapprove items (e.g., Austin et al. 2006; He and van de Vijver 2013; Hibbing et al. n.d.).

To respond to the potential implications of response styles for my research, I develop measures for extreme response style (ERS) and acquiescence response style (ARS) and then control for these factors in my models. Hibbing et al. (n.d.) offer such an approach for researchers interested in capturing the substantive impact of personality on the outcome in question.

This robustness check focuses only on dependent variables that could be subject to ERS or ARS. To be influenced by ERS, political support dependent variables—or the constituent questions for multi-item indices—would need to include more than two response options. I counted 51 such dependent variables in Chapter 3.<sup>333</sup> Of these 51 variables, I examined 50 for this robustness check; the democracy versus authoritarianism item in Table 3.9 was omitted because the response options were not asked in an order ranking from the least democratic to most democratic response option, or vice versa. The dependent variable reorders the responses to run from the least to most democratic options. The original order of response options would complicate the expected influence of ERS on the level of democratic support.<sup>334</sup>

Meanwhile, ARS would be possible for dependent variables asked in agree–disagree or approve–disapprove formats. I counted 22 such dependent variables in Tables 3.3 through 3.11, all of which could also be subject to ERS.<sup>335,336</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> The two actor trust indices in Table 3.3 of the main text included dichotomous and non-dichotomous opinion items. These dependent variables were included in my ERS analyses.

<sup>334</sup> For the same reason, the item for this dependent variable also was omitted from the construction of ERS in the AmericasBarometer.

<sup>335</sup> The ANES external efficacy variables in Models I and IV of Table 3.7 deserve comment. Each of these dependent variables combines an agree–disagree question asked to about half of respondents and a non-agree–disagree question asked to the other respondents. Both the agree–disagree and non-agree–disagree questions measure the same concept (i.e., actor or institutional external efficacy). These dependent variables are included in my ARS analyses because some of the responses may have been influenced by the tendency of individuals to acquiesce.

<sup>336</sup> I included ARS in this robustness check for the following dependent variables: all of the job approval items in Table 3.4, the first two issue-specific indices in Table 3.5, the first four external efficacy items in Table 3.7, the subject pool citizen rights protected item in Table 3.8, the two democracy best system items in Table 3.9, and all of the democratic support variables in Table 3.10 except for the ones for Model I, Model III, Model VIII, and Model IX.

**Table C.2**

Robustness Check: Change in Personality Coefficients with the Addition of Response Styles

	A. No Change in Coefficient	B. In Favor of Hypotheses		C. Contrary to Hypotheses		D. Totals
		NS-->Sig in	Sig in Unexp	NS-->Sig in	Sig in Exp	
		Exp Direction	Direction-->NS	Unexp Direction	Direction-->NS	
Openness	44	1	1	0	4	50
Conscientiousness	11	0	0	0	1	12
Extraversion	44	0	0	0	3	47
Agreeableness	41	4	0	0	5	50
Emotional Stability	44	4	1	1	0	50
<b>Totals</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>209</b>

Note: The response style variables included in the regressions are extreme response style (ERS) and, when appropriate, acquiescence response style (ARS). Controlling for ARS occurred in response to agree-disagree or approve-disapprove questions for the dependent variable. Only hypothesized coefficients are included in the table. Results are based on comparing the ERS/ARS results to the findings in Tables 3.3 to 3.11. "NS," "Sig," "Exp," and "Unexp" are abbreviations for "Not Significant," "Significant," "Expected," and "Unexpected," respectively.

In sum, I always controlled for ERS and included ARS in the regression model when appropriate.

I used the following steps to measure ERS. First, I identified opinion items on each survey with at least three response options.<sup>337</sup> Second, each of these questions was folded to create an item that ranged from 0 for the midpoint or middle two response options to 1 for the lowest or highest response option. Third, I averaged the folded items for each survey to create an ERS variable that ranges from a minimum possible score of 0 to a maximum possible score of 1.<sup>338</sup>

Meanwhile, I used the following steps to operationalize ARS. First, I identified all agree-disagree or approve-disapprove opinion items on each survey. Second, each of these questions was recoded so that a score of 1 referred to a response in the agreeable portion of the scale and 0 referred to neutral, disagreeable, or missing responses. Third, I averaged the dichotomous items for each survey to create an ARS variable that ranges from a minimum possible score of 0 to a maximum possible score of 1.<sup>339,340</sup>

After controlling for ERS and ARS, I found that the personality results remained largely the same as the ones in the main text. In the 50 models, I offered hypotheses for 209 personality coefficients. Of those 209 coefficients, only 25 changed from significant to insignificant or vice versa.

Table C.2 shows that 11 of the 25 changed coefficients are supportive of my hypotheses. With the addition of response style(s), 9 coefficients shift from insignificant to significant in the

<sup>337</sup> All opinion items were eligible for the ERS independent variable, except for the Big Five personality items, items in which the response options were not presented in order (e.g., favor, oppose, neither favor nor oppose), ANES items that were not presented to all respondents in a particular wave, two subject pool media questions with a larger maximum value than included in the codebook, and subject pool questions asked in conjunction with randomly assigned vignettes.

<sup>338</sup> Only respondents who answered 75 percent or more of the ERS constituent items were included.

<sup>339</sup> Respondents who did not provide a substantive response to more than one of the ARS constituent items were omitted.

<sup>340</sup> Descriptive statistics for ERS and ARS variables are located in Appendix B.



expected direction, and another 2 change from being significant in the unexpected direction to insignificant. Meanwhile, 13 of the significant and expected coefficients become insignificant, and another coefficient changes from insignificant to significant and in the unexpected direction.

As Table C.2 reveals, controlling for ERS and ARS improves the support for the hypotheses for some traits more than others. I obtain more evidence for the emotional stability hypotheses by adding response styles to the models, as five coefficients become more favorable for my hypotheses compared with one becoming less favorable. Meanwhile, more of the changes for openness and extraversion are contrary to expectations than in favor of expectations. Finally, for conscientiousness and agreeableness, nearly the same number of coefficients switch from insignificant to significant in the expected direction as switch from significant in the expected direction to insignificant.

APPENDIX D  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR VARIABLES IN CHAPTER 4

**Table D.1**  
Descriptive Statistics for Chapter 4: Contextual Perceptions

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>
<i>AmericasBarometer</i>					
Greater Perceived Corruption	38,663	0.73	0.28	0	1
Positive Economic Perceptions (Main Indicator)	39,680	0.42	0.37	0	1
Economic Perceptions Index (Alternative Indicator)	34,591	0.45	0.24	0.00	1
Threat from Political Dissidents	36,457	0.38	0.33	0	1
Threat from Crime (Main Indicator)	38,505	0.83	0.26	0	1
Crime Measure on Neighborhood Safety (Alternative Indicator)	38,895	0.59	0.31	0	1
Crime Measure on Presence of Gangs in Neighborhood (Alternative Indicator)	38,414	0.38	0.36	0	1
<i>ANES</i>					
Greater Perceived Corruption	5,404	0.48	0.23	0	1
Positive Economic Perceptions (Main Indicator)	5,443	0.46	0.25	0	1
Economic Perceptions Index (Alternative Indicator)	5,353	0.46	0.20	0	1
<i>CCES</i>					
Positive Economic Perceptions (Main Indicator)	985	0.43	0.28	0	1
Economic Perceptions Index (Alternative Indicator)	879	0.49	0.26	0	1

Note: "SD" refers to "Standard Deviation," "Min" to "Minimum," and "Max" to "Maximum."

## APPENDIX E SUPPLEMENTARY RESULTS FOR CHAPTER 4

The results section of Chapter 4 noted several additional empirical analyses for my study of personality and contextual perceptions. My main tables reported the interactions between personality and perceptions, but I also examined the direct effects of perceptions and personality in regressions without interaction terms. The presence of multiple significant personality traits in those regressions would reduce the possibility of perceptions simply being a function of personality. Instead, I proposed a different causal order, with contextual perceptions containing trait-relevant cues that activate personality traits and, in turn, produce trait effects (Tett and Burnett 2003; Tett and Guterman 2000). These results are reported below.

Secondly, I referred in the main text of Chapter 4 to analyses of the main results in which I utilized a reverse-coded contextual variable instead of the ordinary contextual variable. To explain the purpose of such a procedure, let me first refer to the openness coefficient in Table 4.2. Because openness is interacted with corruption perceptions, the openness coefficient is the effect of this trait dimension when corruption perceptions are equal to 0. A significant coefficient constitutes evidence of trait activation when corruption perceptions are at the minimum score of 0. Meanwhile, to determine whether openness is activated at the maximum level of perceived malfeasance, I can insert a reverse-coded corruption perceptions variable and refer again to the openness coefficient. The same principle applies to extraversion in Table 4.2 and to the other interacted traits in the other tables of the main text. The tables below compare the effect of a trait at the minimum and maximum scores of a contextual variable.

### **Contextual Perceptions and Personality Traits: Direct Effects**

Tables E.1 through E.5 report the direct effects of contextual perceptions and personality traits on political support. In each table, multiple personality traits exert significant effects on the dependent variable(s) in question. Furthermore, most of the significant personality coefficients in Chapter 3 remain significant with the addition of a contextual perception variable. Such evidence reduces the possibility of contextual perceptions simply being a function of personality traits; instead, I expect perceptions to send trait-relevant cues that signal the relevance of personality traits for the political support dependent variable of interest.

### **Evidence of Trait Activation**

Tables E.6 through E.10 identify whether a personality trait is significant at the minimum and maximum levels of a contextual variable. I expected trait activation at low and high scores of each perceptual variable. Tables E.6, E.7, and E.8 utilize data from the AmericasBarometer, and Tables E.9 and E.10 draw on the ANES.

Table E.6 reveals that both openness and extraversion exert significant and negative effects at the maximum level of perceived corruption but insignificant and positive effects at the minimum level of perceived malfeasance. Nevertheless, the effect for extraversion at minimum corruption is nearly significant at the 0.10 level.

**Table E.1**Direct Effects of Corruption Perceptions  
and Personality on External Efficacy:

AmericasBarometer

	Model I: Officials Care What People Think
Greater Perceived Corruption	-0.87*** (0.09)
Openness	-0.37*** (0.07)
Conscientiousness	-0.10+ (0.06)
Extraversion	-0.35*** (0.07)
Agreeableness	0.09 (0.08)
Emotional Stability	-0.00 (0.08)
Female	-0.03 (0.02)
Age	0.00+ (0.00)
White	0.02 (0.08)
Education	-0.03 (0.11)
Pseudo/Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.02
Number of Cases	33,861
Number of Countries	24
Method of Estimation	Ordinal

Note: Data come from the 2010 AmericasBarometer. Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Threshold parameters are omitted from the table. Country fixed effects are included but not shown, and standard errors are clustered by country. Data are weighted so that each nation's sample contributes a value of N = 1,500. \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

**Table E.2**

Direct Effects of Economic Perceptions and Personality on Actor, Institutional, and Procedural Support: AmericasBarometer

	<i>Political Actors</i>			<i>Regime Institutions</i>			<i>Regime Performance</i>		
	Model I: Executive Approval	Model II: Executive Approval on 5 Issues	Model III: Officials Care What People Think	Model IV: Index of Institutional Trust	Model V: Perceived Justice System Effectiveness	Model VI: Perceived Effectiveness of Local Gov't	Model VII: Democratic Satisfaction Index	Model VIII: Citizen Rights Protected	Model IX: Trust in Elections
Positive Economic Perceptions	1.62*** (0.17)	5.61*** (0.57)	0.75*** (0.10)	6.29*** (0.75)	0.40*** (0.06)	0.62*** (0.09)	1.00*** (0.12)	0.77*** (0.11)	0.66*** (0.11)
Openness	-0.14 (0.10)	-1.90*** (0.32)	-0.45*** (0.07)	-2.74*** (0.44)	-0.49*** (0.06)	-0.16* (0.08)	-0.14+ (0.08)	-0.35*** (0.07)	-0.13* (0.06)
Conscientiousness	-0.00 (0.08)	-0.16 (0.30)	-0.10+ (0.06)	0.16 (0.30)	0.01 (0.06)	-0.05 (0.06)	0.05 (0.04)	-0.05 (0.05)	0.07 (0.07)
Extraversion	-0.16* (0.08)	-1.22** (0.38)	-0.37*** (0.07)	-1.96** (0.57)	-0.32*** (0.06)	-0.16** (0.06)	0.01 (0.08)	-0.33*** (0.07)	-0.11 (0.08)
Agreeableness	0.26*** (0.06)	0.94** (0.26)	0.09 (0.09)	1.71*** (0.43)	0.23** (0.08)	0.08 (0.06)	0.26*** (0.07)	0.16+ (0.08)	0.10 (0.09)
Emotional Stability	0.03 (0.09)	0.10 (0.27)	0.02 (0.08)	1.32* (0.50)	0.17* (0.08)	0.12 (0.07)	0.13 (0.10)	0.11 (0.09)	0.14 (0.09)
Female	0.06 (0.04)	0.00 (0.15)	-0.00 (0.02)	0.21 (0.18)	-0.02 (0.03)	0.08*** (0.02)	-0.03 (0.03)	0.06* (0.03)	-0.08** (0.03)
Age	0.00 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.00)	0.02 (0.01)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00*** (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)
White	-0.05 (0.10)	0.17 (0.24)	0.04 (0.07)	0.68+ (0.33)	0.13** (0.04)	0.13*** (0.04)	0.08 (0.06)	0.12* (0.06)	0.08* (0.04)
Education	-0.10 (0.12)	-2.16*** (0.52)	-0.12 (0.11)	-2.47** (0.84)	-0.45** (0.15)	0.20* (0.10)	-0.08 (0.12)	-0.22+ (0.12)	0.09 (0.13)
Pseudo/Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.09	0.24	0.02	0.15	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.04
Number of Cases	36,166	33,775	34,428	33,705	34,835	33,256	33,794	35,872	33,369
Number of Countries	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	22
Method of Estimation	Ordinal	OLS	Ordinal	OLS	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal

Note: Data come from the 2010 AmericasBarometer. Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Constants and/or threshold parameters are omitted from the table. Country fixed effects are included but not shown, and standard errors are clustered by country. Data are weighted so that each nation's sample contributes a value of N = 1,500. \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

Meanwhile, Table E.7 shows evidence of conscientiousness activation for negative and positive economic perceptions, with five negative and significant trait effects at the minimum score of the contextual variable and seven positive and significant trait effects at the maximum score of the contextual variable.

In Table E.8, I find that conscientiousness exerts positive effects in response to minimum threat perceptions and, in the political tolerance model, negative effects in response to maximum threat perceptions. These results are consistent with my expectations for trait activation.

Moving to the ANES, I find little evidence of trait activation in Table E.9 that is consistent with expectations. The positive and significant trait effects at maximum corruption run in the opposite direction than anticipated, but none of those interactions are significant in the main text. The only consistent result is for openness at minimum corruption perceptions in the third model; this is the regression with the significant interaction in Table 4.5.

Results for conscientiousness activation in the ANES are more consonant with my hypotheses. In Table E.10, all of the coefficients are significant and in the expected direction at minimum economic perceptions; this statement applies also to the positive and significant effect for the

**Table E.3**

Direct Effects of Threat Perceptions and Personality on Democratic Support: AmericasBarometer

	Model I: Tolerance of Political Dissidents	Model II: Support for Criminal Rights
Perceived Threat from Political Dissidents or Crime	-3.43*** (0.59)	-0.09 (0.12)
Openness	2.59*** (0.36)	-0.00 (0.09)
Conscientiousness	0.43 (0.29)	0.21** (0.07)
Extraversion	1.34*** (0.35)	-0.20*** (0.06)
Agreeableness	-2.06*** (0.40)	0.33*** (0.08)
Emotional Stability	0.64 (0.51)	0.22* (0.09)
Female	-1.10*** (0.18)	0.10*** (0.03)
Age	0.00 (0.01)	0.01*** (0.00)
White	0.10 (0.28)	-0.00 (0.05)
Education	3.41*** (0.63)	-0.00 (0.14)
Pseudo/Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.11	0.03
Number of Cases	32,696	35,070
Number of Countries	24	24
Method of Estimation	OLS	Logit

Note: Data come from the 2010 AmericasBarometer. Threat perceptions pertain to political dissidents in Model I and to crime in Model II. Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Constants are omitted from the table. Country fixed effects are included but not shown, and standard errors are clustered by country. Data are weighted so that each nation's sample contributes a value of N = 1,500.

\*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

Republican thermometer index because conscientious citizens who perceive minimum economic performance are implicitly punishing the presidential party by turning to the political opposition. Meanwhile, five of the conscientiousness coefficients for individuals with maximum perceptions are in the expected direction, and three are statistically significant at the 0.20 level or better (i.e., the thermometer index for Democratic actors, the likeability item for the Democratic Party, and the regime performance item on rights and freedoms).

In sum, I find that conscientiousness often is activated at minimum and maximum levels of the economic and social variables. In Tables E.7, E.8, and E.10, the conscientiousness coefficient is significant and in the expected direction in 22 of 34 opportunities. Evidence of openness and extraversion activation in response to corruption is less consistent with expectations.

**Table E.4**

Direct Effects of Corruption Perceptions and Personality on External Efficacy: ANES

	<i>Political Actors</i>	<i>Regime Institutions</i>	
	Model I: Officials Care What People Think	Model II: People Have Say in What Government Does	Model III: Elections Make Government Pay Attention
Greater Perceived Corruption	-2.94*** (0.17)	-1.82*** (0.16)	-2.11*** (0.18)
Openness	0.54** (0.18)	0.67*** (0.19)	0.65** (0.20)
Conscientiousness	-0.73*** (0.15)	-0.43** (0.16)	-0.07 (0.17)
Extraversion	0.74*** (0.19)	0.62*** (0.17)	0.13 (0.19)
Agreeableness	0.10 (0.18)	0.13 (0.19)	0.27 (0.21)
Emotional Stability	0.21 (0.18)	0.50** (0.19)	0.24 (0.20)
Female	0.04 (0.08)	0.03 (0.07)	0.03 (0.08)
Age	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
White	-0.12 (0.08)	-0.40*** (0.08)	-0.35*** (0.09)
Education	0.51*** (0.13)	0.65*** (0.11)	0.25+ (0.13)
Pseudo/Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of Cases	5,258	5,253	5,257
Number of Countries	1	1	1
Method of Estimation	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal

Note: Data come from the 2012 ANES. Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Threshold parameters are omitted from the table. The Taylor series method was used for calculating significance tests; Stata does not report pseudo R-squared statistics for the Taylor series method. \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

**Table E.5**

Direct Effects of Economic Perceptions and Personality on Actor, Institutional, and Procedural Support: ANES

	<i>Political Actors</i>				<i>Regime Institution</i>	<i>Regime Performance</i>
	Model I: Executive Approval	Model II: Executive Approval on 4 Issues	Model III: Thermometer Index for Democrats	Model IV: Thermometer Index for Republicans	Model V: Likeability of Democratic Party	Model VI: Government Not a Threat to Rights and Freedoms
Positive Economic Perceptions	6.03*** (0.21)	10.83*** (0.24)	204.43*** (5.51)	-141.20*** (6.39)	6.12*** (0.20)	3.13*** (0.17)
Openness	1.30*** (0.20)	1.98*** (0.31)	49.71*** (6.94)	-49.10*** (7.44)	1.88*** (0.26)	-0.36+ (0.20)
Conscientiousness	-0.80*** (0.18)	-1.11*** (0.28)	-21.13*** (6.34)	23.14*** (6.80)	-0.16 (0.22)	-0.10 (0.17)
Extraversion	-0.04 (0.18)	-0.25 (0.30)	-0.17 (6.32)	24.34*** (6.76)	0.18 (0.25)	0.31 (0.20)
Agreeableness	0.25 (0.19)	0.17 (0.31)	15.62* (6.66)	18.84** (6.95)	0.62* (0.24)	0.11 (0.20)
Emotional Stability	-0.31 (0.19)	-0.07 (0.29)	-8.23 (6.31)	15.76* (6.71)	-0.24 (0.22)	0.10 (0.18)
Female	0.39*** (0.08)	0.62*** (0.12)	18.59*** (2.66)	-4.22 (2.97)	0.43*** (0.10)	0.27*** (0.08)
Age	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.07 (0.08)	0.53*** (0.09)	0.01** (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
White	-1.37*** (0.09)	-2.36*** (0.15)	-48.16*** (3.20)	20.23*** (3.51)	-1.39*** (0.12)	-0.47*** (0.09)
Education	-0.89*** (0.14)	-0.72** (0.22)	-15.63** (4.94)	25.11*** (5.46)	-1.11*** (0.19)	0.16 (0.13)
Pseudo/Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	N/A	0.50	0.44	0.26	0.35	N/A
Number of Cases	5,207	4,933	5,161	4,608	5,246	5,154
Number of Countries	1	1	1	1	1	1
Method of Estimation	Ordinal	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	Ordinal

Note: Data come from the 2012 ANES. Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Constants and/or threshold parameters are omitted from the table. The Taylor series method was used for calculating significance tests; Stata does not report pseudo R-squared statistics for the Taylor series method. \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

**Table E.6**

Evidence of Openness and Extraversion Activation for External Efficacy: AmericasBarometer

<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Openness Effect When Corruption Perceptions Are at Their ...</i>		<i>Extraversion Effect When Corruption Perceptions Are at Their ...</i>	
	Min Value	Max Value	Min Value	Max Value
Officials Care What People Think	0.14 (0.19)	-0.57*** (0.08)	0.29 (0.18)	-0.56*** (0.08)

Note: Data come from the 2010 AmericasBarometer. Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Each cell entry in a column comes from a separate regression. The regressions in the "Min Value" column all employed a corruption perceptions variable in which higher scores indicate greater perceived corruption, whereas regressions in the "Max Value" column all used a reverse-coded corruption perceptions variable. In all cases, openness and extraversion were interacted with the corruption perceptions variable. The other personality variables and the demographic controls were included but are not shown. The methods of estimation were identical to the ones in Table 4.2. For other methodological details, see the main text of Chapters 3 and 4. "Min" refers to "Minimum," and "Max" refers to "Maximum." \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10



**Table E.7**

Evidence of Conscientiousness Activation for Actor, Institutional, and Procedural Support: AmericasBarometer

<i>Dependent Variables</i>	<i>Conscientiousness Effect When Economic Perceptions Are at Their ...</i>	
	<i>Min Value</i>	<i>Max Value</i>
Executive Approval	-0.35** (0.12)	0.51*** (0.11)
Executive Approval on 5 Issues	-1.31** (0.39)	1.48** (0.42)
Officials Care What People Think	-0.40*** (0.11)	0.32* (0.12)
Index of Institutional Trust	-0.98+ (0.50)	1.78** (0.51)
Perceived Justice System Effectiveness	-0.08 (0.09)	0.14 (0.09)
Perceived Effectiveness of Local Gov't	-0.11 (0.08)	0.03 (0.09)
Democratic Satisfaction Index	-0.13 (0.10)	0.31** (0.10)
Citizen Rights Protected	-0.23*** (0.07)	0.21* (0.09)
Trust in Elections	-0.09 (0.11)	0.29* (0.13)

Note: Data come from the 2010 AmericasBarometer. Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Each cell entry in a column comes from a separate regression. The regressions in the "Min Value" column all employed an economic perceptions variable in which higher scores indicate more positive views, whereas regressions in the "Max Value" column all used a reverse-coded economic perceptions variable. In all cases, conscientiousness was interacted with the economic perceptions variable. The other personality variables and the demographic controls were included but are not shown. The methods of estimation were identical to the ones in Table 4.3. For other methodological details, see the main text of Chapters 3 and 4. "Min" refers to "Minimum," and "Max" refers to "Maximum." \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

**Table E.8**  
Evidence of Conscientiousness Activation for  
Democratic Support: AmericasBarometer

<i>Dependent Variables</i>	<i>Conscientiousness Effect When Threat Perceptions Are at Their ...</i>	
	Min Value	Max Value
Tolerance of Political Dissidents	1.42* (0.63)	-1.27+ (0.64)
Support for Criminal Rights	0.75*** (0.21)	0.11 (0.08)

Note: Data come from the 2010 AmericasBarometer. Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Each cell entry in a column comes from a separate regression. The regressions in the "Min Value" column all employed a threat perception variable in which higher scores indicate greater perceived threat, whereas regressions in the "Max Value" column all used a reverse-coded threat perceptions variable. In all cases, conscientiousness was interacted with the threat perceptions variable. When the dependent variable was political tolerance, threat perceptions of political dissidents were used; when the dependent variable was support for criminal rights, threat perceptions of crime were used. The other personality variables and the demographic controls were included but are not shown. The methods of estimation were identical to the ones in Table 4.4. For other methodological details, see the main text of Chapters 3 and 4. "Min" refers to "Minimum," and "Max" refers to "Maximum." \*\*\* p < .001  
\*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

**Table E.9**  
Evidence of Openness and Extraversion Activation for External Efficacy: ANES

<i>Dependent Variables</i>	<i>Openness Effect When Corruption Perceptions Are at Their ...</i>		<i>Extraversion Effect When Corruption Perceptions Are at Their ...</i>	
	Min Value	Max Value	Min Value	Max Value
Officials Care What People Think	0.59 (0.41)	0.49 (0.44)	0.32 (0.44)	1.19** (0.45)
People Have Say in What Government Does	0.24 (0.42)	1.12* (0.46)	0.42 (0.41)	0.84* (0.42)
Elections Make Government Pay Attention	1.37** (0.43)	-0.07 (0.46)	-0.01 (0.47)	0.26 (0.50)

Note: Data come from the 2012 ANES. Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Each cell entry in a column comes from a separate regression. The regressions in the "Min Value" column all employed a corruption perceptions variable in which higher scores indicate greater perceived corruption, whereas regressions in the "Max Value" column all used a reverse-coded corruption perceptions variable. In all cases, openness and extraversion were interacted with the corruption perceptions variable. The other personality variables and the demographic controls were included but are not shown. The methods of estimation were identical to the ones in Table 4.5. For other methodological details, see the main text of Chapters 3 and 4. "Min" refers to "Minimum," and "Max" refers to "Maximum." \*\*\* p < .001  
\*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

**Table E.10**

Evidence of Conscientiousness Activation for Actor, Institutional,  
and Procedural Support: ANES

<i>Dependent Variables</i>	<i>Conscientiousness Effect When Economic Perceptions Are at Their ...</i>	
	<i>Min Value</i>	<i>Max Value</i>
Executive Approval	-1.69*** (0.48)	0.16 (0.43)
Executive Approval on 4 Issues	-1.87*** (0.53)	-0.16 (0.53)
Thermometer Index for Democrats	-52.90*** (12.78)	18.49 (11.84)
Thermometer Index for Republicans	44.40*** (13.16)	-3.19 (14.63)
Likeability of Democratic Party	-0.83+ (0.44)	0.68 (0.47)
Government Not a Threat to Rights and Freedoms	-0.72* (0.36)	0.76+ (0.41)

Note: Data come from the 2012 ANES. Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Each cell entry in a column comes from a separate regression. The regressions in the "Min Value" column all employed an economic perceptions variable in which higher scores indicate more positive views, whereas regressions in the "Max Value" column all used a reverse-coded economic perceptions variable. In all cases, conscientiousness was interacted with the economic perceptions variable. The other personality variables and the demographic controls were included but are not shown. The methods of estimation were identical to the ones in Table 4.6. For other methodological details, see the main text of Chapters 3 and 4. "Min" refers to "Minimum," and "Max" refers to "Maximum." \*\*\*  $p < .001$  \*\*  $p < .01$  \*  $p < .05$  +  $p < .10$

APPENDIX F  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR VARIABLES IN CHAPTER 5

**Table F.1**  
Descriptive Statistics for Chapter 5: Objective Contextual Factors

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>
<i>AmericasBarometer</i>					
Country-Level World Bank Corruption Perceptions Measure (2009)	24	0.68	0.25	0.00	1
Country-Level World Bank Firms Receiving One or More Bribe Requests (2009 or 2010)	22	0.10	0.07	0.01	0.32
Country-Level Bribery Rate Aggregated from Survey Data (2010)	24	0.14	0.08	0.04	0.32
Region-Level Bribery Rate Aggregated from Survey Data (2010)	118	0.15	0.09	0.02	0.38
Country-Level World Bank Growth in 2009 GDP per Capita	24	-1.98	2.89	-6.88	3.87
Country-Level World Bank Change in Unemployment Rate, 2008–2009	24	0.77	1.99	-5.80	4.65
Country-Level Economic Situation Aggregated from Survey Data (2010) (Main Indicator)	24	0.48	0.08	0.30	0.62
Country-Level Economic Situation Aggregated from Survey Data (2010) (Alternative Indicator)	24	0.54	0.07	0.40	0.65
Region-Level Economic Situation Aggregated from Survey Data (2010) (Main Indicator)	118	0.48	0.09	0.26	0.66
Region-Level Economic Situation Aggregated from Survey Data (2010) (Alternative Indicator)	118	0.54	0.07	0.33	0.70
Country-Level World Bank Firm Losses Due to Crime (2009 or 2010)	22	0.89	0.65	0.1	2.5
Country-Level Crime Rate Aggregated from Survey Data (2010) (Main Indicator)	24	0.19	0.06	0.09	0.31
Country-Level Crime Rate Aggregated from Survey Data (2010) (Alternative Indicator)	24	0.19	0.08	0.06	0.33
Region-Level Crime Rate Aggregated from Survey Data (2010) (Main Indicator)	118	0.19	0.08	0.02	0.41
Region-Level Crime Rate Aggregated from Survey Data (2010) (Alternative Indicator)	118	0.19	0.10	0.04	0.48
Country-Level GDP per capita in 2009	24	10,207.02	11,998.43	1,494.90	47,575.61
Country-Level Education Aggregated from Survey Data (2010)	24	0.55	0.10	0.40	0.79
Region-Level Education Aggregated from Survey Data (2010)	118	0.54	0.11	0.34	0.80

Note: "SD" refers to "Standard Deviation," "Min" to "Minimum," and "Max" to "Maximum."

Table F.1 (cont.)

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>
<i>ANES</i>					
Corruption Perceived by Journalists in State (Dincer and Johnston 2014)	49	0.44	0.29	0	1
Corruption Convictions per Million State Population (Department of Justice and U.S. Census Bureau, 2007–2011)	51	0.31	0.18	0.00	1
State-Level Bureau of Economic Analysis Growth in 2011 GDP per Capita	51	0.90	2.23	-5.9	9.4
State-Level Bureau of Labor Statistics Change in Unemployment Rate, 2010–2011	51	-0.61	0.43	-2.4	0.2
Bureau of Economic Analysis Natural Log of State-Level GDP per Capita in 2011	51	10.76	0.26	10.35	12.02
<i>CCES</i>					
State-Level Bureau of Economic Analysis Growth in 2011 GDP per Capita	51	0.90	2.23	-5.9	9.4
State-Level Bureau of Labor Statistics Change in Unemployment Rate, 2010–2011	51	-0.61	0.43	-2.4	0.2
Bureau of Economic Analysis Natural Log of State-Level GDP per Capita in 2011	51	10.76	0.26	10.35	12.02

Note: "SD" refers to "Standard Deviation," "Min" to "Minimum," and "Max" to "Maximum."

## APPENDIX G SUPPLEMENTARY RESULTS FOR CHAPTER 5

The results section of Chapter 5 noted an additional empirical analysis for my study of personality and objective contextual factors. These analyses have been prompted by the expectations that low and high levels of corruption, economic performance, and crime would activate personality traits and produce trait effects. However, two factors prevent the tables in the main results from conveying the trait effects at the minimum and maximum values of the contextual variables. First, many of the contextual factors are not coded to run from 0 to 1. If they were, the personality coefficients in the main tables would denote the trait effects at the minimum observed score of the contextual variable in question. Second, a 0-to-1 reverse-coded contextual variable is required in order for the actual personality coefficients to refer to the trait effects at the maximum score of the contextual variable.

Therefore, I have run all of the significant interactions in Tables 5.2 through 5.7 with contextual variables that run from 0 to 1 and with reverse-coded contextual variables that run from 0 to 1. The tables in this appendix refer to evidence of trait activation.

Table G.1 documents the openness and extraversion effects on external efficacy in the AmericasBarometer at the minimum and maximum values of corruption. As expected, I observe negative effects for both trait dimensions at the maximum level of corruption, although the negative effects at the minimum level of corruption are a surprise.

Table G.2 focuses on trait activation in Model II of Table 5.3 (i.e., the only model with a significant interaction). As anticipated, openness exerts a positive effect on actor external efficacy at the minimum level of corruption and a negative effect at the maximum level of corruption. The effects of extraversion in the same ANES model are not significant.

The next three tables transition to conscientiousness effects at the minimum and maximum levels of economic performance. I expected to observe negative conscientiousness effects in response to anemic sociotropic conditions (i.e., low levels GDP per capita growth, low aggregate levels of change in economic well-being, and increases in unemployment) and positive conscientiousness effects in response to robust sociotropic conditions (i.e., high levels of GDP per capita growth, high aggregate levels of change in economic well-being, and decreases in unemployment).

These expectations are realized in 50 percent of the coefficients in Table G.3. Three conscientiousness coefficients in the AmericasBarometer are negative (positive) and significant when economic conditions are at their minimum (maximum) value.

Results also comport with my hypothesis in the ANES analyses in Table G.4. In the four unemployment models, one conscientiousness coefficient is positive and significant in response to the greatest observed reduction in unemployment, and four coefficients are negative and significant in response to the greatest observed increase in unemployment. Likewise, in the three GDP per capita growth models, three conscientiousness coefficients are negative and significant when economic conditions are at their worst, and one coefficient is positive and significant when economic conditions are at their best.

**Table G.1**

Evidence of Openness and Extraversion Activation for External Efficacy:  
AmericasBarometer

<i>Model Number in Table 5.2</i>	<i>Openness Effect When Corruption Is at Its ...</i>		<i>Extraversion Effect When Corruption Is at Its ...</i>	
	Min Value	Max Value	Min Value	Max Value
Model I	-0.11 (0.18)	-0.58*** (0.09)	0.19 (0.23)	-0.61*** (0.10)
Model II	-0.43** (0.13)	-0.49* (0.20)	-0.25** (0.07)	-0.77*** (0.15)
Model III	-0.37** (0.10)	-0.55*** (0.11)	-0.14 (0.11)	-0.71*** (0.18)

Note: Data come from the 2010 AmericasBarometer. Coefficients are the result of a random coefficient multi-level model. Individual respondents were nested within regions, and regions were nested within countries. Robust standard errors (in parentheses) are reported. Each cell entry in a column comes from a separate regression. The regressions in each "Min Value" column all employed a corruption variable in which higher scores indicate greater corruption, whereas regressions in each "Max Value" column all used a reverse-coded corruption variable. In all cases, openness and extraversion were interacted with the corruption variable. The other personality variables and the demographic controls were included but are not shown. The methods of estimation were identical to the ones in Table 5.2. For other methodological details, see the main text of Chapters 3 and 5. "Min" refers to "Minimum," and "Max" refers to "Maximum." \*\*\*  $p < .001$  \*\*  $p < .01$  \*  $p < .05$  +  $p < .10$

**Table G.2**

Evidence of Openness and Extraversion Activation for External Efficacy:  
ANES

<i>Model Number in Table 5.3</i>	<i>Openness Effect When Corruption Is at Its ...</i>		<i>Extraversion Effect When Corruption Is at Its ...</i>	
	Min Value	Max Value	Min Value	Max Value
Model II	1.29*** (0.36)	-2.12* (0.82)	0.42 (0.32)	0.80 (0.76)

Note: Data come from the 2012 ANES. Coefficients are the result of a random coefficient multi-level model. Individual respondents were nested within states. Robust standard errors (in parentheses) are reported. Each cell entry in a column comes from a separate regression. The regression in each "Min Value" column employed a corruption variable in which higher scores indicate greater corruption, whereas the regression in each "Max Value" column used a reverse-coded corruption variable. In all cases, openness and extraversion were interacted with the corruption variable. The other personality variables and the demographic controls were included but are not shown. The methods of estimation were identical to the ones in Table 5.3. For other methodological details, see the main text of Chapters 3 and 5. "Min" refers to "Minimum," and "Max" refers to "Maximum." \*\*\*  $p < .001$  \*\*  $p < .01$  \*  $p < .05$  +  $p < .10$

**Table G.3**

Evidence of Conscientiousness Activation for  
 Status Quo Support: AmericasBarometer

<i>Model Number in Table 5.4</i>	<i>Conscientiousness</i>	
	<i>Effect When Economic Performance Is at Its ...</i>	
	Min Value	Max Value
Model I	-0.33 (0.19)	0.24+ (0.13)
Model II	-0.35+ (0.20)	0.23 (0.14)
Model III	-0.15 (0.13)	0.24+ (0.12)
Model IV	-0.29* (0.10)	0.14 (0.10)
Model V	-0.30* (0.13)	0.22+ (0.13)

Note: Data come from the 2010 AmericasBarometer. Coefficients are the result of a random coefficient multi-level model. Individual respondents were nested within regions, and regions were nested within countries. Each cell entry in a column comes from a separate regression. The regressions in the "Min Value" column all employed an economic performance variable in which higher scores indicate more favorable conditions, whereas regressions in the "Max Value" column all used a reverse-coded economic performance variable. In all cases, conscientiousness interacted with the economic performance variable. The other personality variables and the demographic controls were included but are not shown. The methods of estimation were identical to the ones in Table 5.4. For other methodological details, see the main text of Chapters 3 and 5. "Min" refers to "Minimum," and "Max" refers to "Maximum." \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10



**Table G.4**

Evidence of Conscientiousness Activation for Status Quo  
Support: ANES

<i>Model Number in Table 5.5</i>	<i>Conscientiousness</i>	
	<i>Effect When Economic Performance Is at Its ...</i>	
	Min Value	Max Value
Model I (Change in Unemployment)	0.18 (0.23)	-0.50** (0.15)
Model II (GDP per Capita Growth)	-1.20* (0.45)	2.34*** (0.63)
Model III (Change in Unemployment)	1.79*** (0.45)	-0.48+ (0.24)
Model IV (Change in Unemployment)	23.88 (28.74)	-66.28** (19.93)
Model V (GDP per Capita Growth)	-2.72* (1.21)	2.09 (1.35)
Model VI (Change in Unemployment)	24.21 (17.30)	-27.13* (13.28)
Model VII (GDP per Capita Growth)	-1.08** (0.35)	0.74 (0.52)

Note: Data come from the 2012 ANES. Coefficients are the result of a random coefficient multi-level model. Individual respondents were nested within states. Each cell entry in a column comes from a separate regression. The regressions in the "Min Value" column all employed an economic performance variable in which higher scores indicate more favorable conditions, whereas regressions in the "Max Value" column all used a reverse-coded economic performance variable. In all cases, conscientiousness interacted with the economic performance variable. The other personality variables and the demographic controls were included but are not shown. The methods of estimation were identical to the ones in Table 5.5. For other methodological details, see the main text of Chapters 3 and 5. "Min" refers to "Minimum," and "Max" refers to "Maximum." \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

**Table G.5**

Evidence of Conscientiousness Activation for Status Quo  
Support: CCES

<i>Model Number in Table 5.6</i>	<i>Conscientiousness Effect When Economic Performance Is at Its ...</i>	
	<i>Min Value</i>	<i>Max Value</i>
Model I (Change in Unemployment)	1.30 (0.93)	-1.29* (0.59)

Note: Data come from the 2012 CCES. Coefficients are the result of a random coefficient multi-level model. Individual respondents were nested within states. Each cell entry in a column comes from a separate regression. The regression in the "Min Value" column employed an economic performance variable in which higher scores indicate more favorable conditions, whereas the regression in the "Max Value" column used a reverse-coded economic performance variable. In all cases, conscientiousness interacted with the economic performance variable. The other personality variables and the demographic controls were included but are not shown. The methods of estimation were identical to the ones in Table 5.6. For other methodological details, see the main text of Chapters 3 and 5. "Min" refers to "Minimum," and "Max" refers to "Maximum." \*\*\* p < .001  
\*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

**Table G.6**

Evidence of Conscientiousness Activation for  
Support for Criminal Rights: AmericasBarometer

<i>Model Number in Table 5.7</i>	<i>Conscientiousness Effect When the Crime Rate Is at Its ...</i>	
	<i>Min Value</i>	<i>Max Value</i>
Model II	0.44*** (0.10)	-0.12 (0.11)
Model III	0.64*** (0.15)	-0.34* (0.17)

Note: Data come from the 2010 AmericasBarometer. Coefficients are the result of a random coefficient multi-level model. Individual respondents were nested within regions, and regions were nested within countries. Each cell entry in a column comes from a separate regression. Each regression in the "Min Value" column employed a crime rate variable in which higher scores indicate a greater prevalence of crime, whereas each regression in the "Max Value" column used a reverse-coded crime variable. In all cases, conscientiousness interacted with the crime variable. The other personality variables and the demographic controls were included but are not shown. The methods of estimation were identical to the ones in Table 5.7. For other methodological details, see the main text of Chapters 3 and 5. "Min" refers to "Minimum," and "Max" refers to "Maximum." \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

In addition, the CCES results in Table G.5 show that the effect of conscientiousness at the maximum increase in unemployment is negative and significant, as expected.

The final set of analyses returns to the AmericasBarometer and considers the effects of conscientiousness on support for criminal rights at minimum and maximum crime rates. As anticipated, in Table G.6 conscientiousness exerts a positive effect when subnational and national crime rates are at their minimum values, and a negative effect when the subnational crime rate is at its maximum value.

In sum, 27 of 46 coefficients are significant and in the expected direction. The anticipated trait activation, therefore, occurs more often than not.

APPENDIX H  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR VARIABLES IN CHAPTER 6

**Table H.1**  
Descriptive Statistics for Chapter 6: Participation and  
Mediating Variables

<i>Participation Variables</i>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>
Previous Turnout	36,869	0.77	0.42	0	1
Hypothetical Turnout	29,682	0.71	0.45	0	1
Campaign Involvement	37,001	0.11	0.31	0	1
Local Meeting Attendance	38,684	0.11	0.32	0	1
Party Meeting Attendance	38,764	1.25	0.61	1	4
Contacting Officials	35,841	0.32	0.69	0	3
<i>Mediating Variables</i>					
Trust in Elections	36,585	4.20	1.86	1	7
Trust in Political Parties	39,641	3.11	1.75	1	7
Trust in Local Government	39,452	4.01	1.79	1	7
Trust in Local Gov't, National Gov't, and National Legislature	35,156	11.81	4.51	3	21
Approval of Campaigning and Organizing	36,611	15.01	4.32	2	20
Approval of Campaigning	38,262	6.93	2.68	1	10
Approval of Organizing	38,706	8.09	2.31	1	10
Political Interest	40,305	2.17	0.99	1	4
Internal Efficacy	37,646	3.99	1.80	1	7

Note: All data come from the 2010 Americas Barometer. Only countries included in the results in the main text are reported here. If the number of countries varies from one analysis to another, the descriptive statistics for individuals from the larger number of countries are documented in this table. "SD" refers to "Standard Deviation," "Min" to "Minimum," and "Max" to "Maximum."

APPENDIX I  
SUPPLEMENTARY RESULTS FOR CHAPTER 6

**Analyzing Hypothetical Turnout**

As noted in the main text, the mediation hypothesis (Blais and St-Vincent 2011; Gallego and Oberski 2012) expects personality to influence attitudes, which in turn should affect political behavior. Therefore, the best data source for testing the mediation hypothesis would be a panel study that measures traits at time 1, political support at time 2, and political participation at time 3. The 2010 AmericasBarometer, however, is cross-sectional in nature, and the question wording conflicts with the preferred temporal order because the behavioral items refer to past actions and the attitudinal items denote current opinions about the political system. Nevertheless, scholars have noted the temporal stability of political attitudes (e.g., Bloeser et al. 2015; Goren 2005), so it is reasonable to assume that current support attitudes resemble the attitudes that individuals held prior to engaging in their previous political behavior. The longitudinal stability of personality noted in previous research (e.g., Rantanen et al. 2007) also minimizes concerns about the sequence proposed by the mediation hypothesis.

I cannot fully demonstrate causality with cross-sectional data. Nevertheless, to further address the issue of temporal order, I examine whether my results for previous turnout apply to hypothetical turnout. Although all items are measured at the same point in time, current attitudes are now predicting future behavior, in contrast to current attitudes predicting reports of past behavior.

In Table I.1, I observe a similar set of findings for hypothetical turnout as I observed for previous turnout. The table shows that openness and extraversion exert positive and significant total effects on participation, but the effects are largely accounted for by the mediators included in the model. The direct effects are insignificant.

I also observe positive and negative indirect effects of openness and extraversion on hypothetical turnout. As with the findings for previous turnout, openness and extraversion have positive and significant indirect effects on hypothetical turnout through political interest and approval of campaigning and organizing, and in Table I.1 the indirect effects through internal efficacy are positive and significant. Consistent with the results for previous turnout, I also find in Table I.1 that openness and extraversion exert negative indirect effects via political trust. In substantive terms, a one-unit increase from 0 to 1 in openness (extraversion) would indirectly reduce an individual's probability of turnout by 1.5 percent (1.9 percent) via political trust. Indirect effects through political interest are much larger in absolute magnitude, as indicated by the percentages in the bottom panel of the table. Nevertheless, the substantive impacts of openness and extraversion could determine the winner in a close election.

Two other hypotheses also receive support in Table I.1, as I find that conscientiousness and emotional stability exert positive indirect effects on hypothetical turnout through approval of mass participation. Again, these findings are consistent with the results for previous turnout reported in Table 6.3.

**Table I.1**Decomposing the Total Effect of Personality Traits on **Hypothetical Turnout** via Political Attitudes

	Openness	Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Emotional Stability
Total Effect	0.23*** (0.06)	0.04 (0.10)	0.22+ (0.12)	0.04 (0.12)	0.10 (0.09)
Direct Effect	0.07 (0.07)	-0.01 (0.10)	0.09 (0.12)	0.13 (0.12)	0.04 (0.08)
Indirect Effect	0.17* (0.07)	0.05 (0.07)	0.13+ (0.07)	-0.09 (0.07)	0.06 (0.07)
via Trust in Elections	-0.02* (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	-0.03** (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
via Approval of Campaigning and Organizing	0.05*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.02** (0.01)	0.02** (0.01)	0.01+ (0.01)
via Political Interest	0.13*** (0.03)	-0.00 (0.02)	0.12*** (0.02)	-0.12*** (0.03)	0.02 (0.02)
via Internal Efficacy	0.01* (0.00)	0.01* (0.00)	0.01* (0.01)	-0.01+ (0.00)	0.01* (0.00)
<b>Mediation Percentages</b>					
Percentage of Total Effect	70.52%	129.63%	58.94%	-226.42%	57.27%
via Trust in Elections	-10.00%	28.87%	-11.94%	31.87%	16.92%
via Approval of Campaigning and Organizing	21.29%	96.86%	10.05%	57.57%	11.08%
via Political Interest	55.24%	-11.99%	55.45%	-303.28%	22.72%
via Internal Efficacy	3.98%	15.89%	5.38%	-12.58%	6.55%

Note: Data come from the 2010 AmericasBarometer. The dependent variable is hypothetical turnout. Cell entries in the top panel are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Country fixed effects; the constant parameter; and controls for gender, age, race, and education are not shown. Standard errors are clustered by country. Data are weighted so that each nation's sample contributes a value of N = 1,500. Number of cases: 26,068. Number of countries: 21. Method of estimation for the outcome variable: logit. \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10

Moreover, the bottom panel of Table I.1 reports that the 70.52 percent and 58.94 percent of the total effects of openness and extraversion are due to the indirect effects through the mediating variables in the model. These percentages are even higher if we ignore the negative indirect effects via political trust.

In sum, the consistent results for previous and hypothetical turnout attenuate concerns about the cross-sectional nature of the data and the focus of the AmericasBarometer on previous behavior and current attitudes. My empirical analyses in this appendix bolster the plausibility of the temporal order proposed by the mediation hypothesis, although I cannot prove that traits cause support attitudes and these attitudes cause behavior.

### **Examining the Personality–Support and Support–Participation Links**

As noted in the main text, mediation can be observed only if an independent variable is meaningfully related to a mediating variable and if the mediating variable is meaningfully related

to the dependent variable. Both conditions are met when the KHB method reports significant indirect effects, as accounted for in Tables 6.3 through 6.7 of the main text.

To supplement my primary results in Chapter 6, I have used traditional regression analysis to examine the relationship between personality and political support, as well as the relationship between political support and political participation. Controls for gender, age, racial or ethnic self-identification, and education are included in all models, and I also have inserted political interest and internal efficacy as independent variables predicting citizen behavior. Only countries in the empirical analyses in Chapter 6 are part of the results in this robustness check.

Table I.2 reports the effects of personality on the political support variables used in Chapter 6. As expected, all of the openness coefficients are negative and significant in the trust models (i.e., Models I through IV) and positive and significant in the democratic support models (i.e., Models V through VII). Likewise, all of the conscientiousness coefficients are positive and significant in the mass participation approval regressions.

Furthermore, nearly all of the extraversion and emotional stability coefficients are consistent with expectations. As anticipated, 3 of 4 extraversion effects on political trust are negative and significant, and all four emotional stability coefficients are positive and significant.<sup>341</sup> Furthermore, 3 of 3 extraversion coefficients and 2 of 3 emotional stability coefficients are positive and significant in the three models for mass participation approval.<sup>342</sup>

Meanwhile, the impact of political support on political participation is documented in Table I.3. As expected, both political trust and approval of mass participation are positively related to voting, campaigning, attending meetings, and contacting government officials.<sup>343</sup>

The results in Tables I.2 and I.3, therefore, corroborate the indirect effects observed in the main text. High levels of political support encourage citizen participation in every model of Table I.3. In Table I.2 only openness and extraversion are negatively related to political trust, and each of these trait dimensions exerts a negative indirect effect on political behavior in Tables 6.3 through 6.7. Meanwhile, openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and emotional stability are all positively associated with approval of mass participation in Table I.2, and I observe positive indirect effects for each of these trait dimensions through democratic support in a majority of the models in the main text. Finally, individuals high in emotional stability express greater political trust in Table I.2, and three of the five indirect effects of emotional stability via trust are positive and significant in the main text.

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<sup>341</sup> However, the emotional stability coefficient in Model II becomes insignificant if the United States and Canada are omitted from the regression. The two countries are not included in the mediation analysis for campaign involvement, but all 24 are part of the mediation analysis for party meeting attendance.

<sup>342</sup> The insignificant emotional stability coefficient in Model VII becomes significant if Bolivia is omitted from the regression. Bolivia is not included in the mediation analysis for contacting public officials, but all 24 are part of the mediation analysis for local meeting attendance.

<sup>343</sup> The results in Table I.3 minimize concerns about a spurious relationship between political support and political participation, for I have controlled for known correlates of behavior—namely political interest, internal efficacy, and sociodemographics (e.g., Brady et al. 1995; Schoen and Steinbrecher 2013; Valentino et al. 2013)

**Table I.2****Total Effects of Personality on Political Support**

	<i>Political Trust</i>				<i>Approval of Mass Participation</i>		
	Model I: Trust in Elections	Model II: Trust in Political Parties	Model III: Trust in Local Government	Model IV: Trust in Local Gov't, National Gov't, and National Legislature	Model V: Approval of Campaigning and Organizing	Model VI: Approval of Campaigning	Model VII: Approval of Organizing
Openness	-0.13* (0.06)	-0.32*** (0.08)	-0.29*** (0.07)	-1.02*** (0.19)	1.51*** (0.15)	0.65*** (0.08)	0.91*** (0.09)
Conscientiousness	0.07 (0.07)	-0.17** (0.07)	0.12+ (0.07)	0.19 (0.16)	1.15*** (0.16)	0.47*** (0.09)	0.61*** (0.09)
Extraversion	-0.11 (0.08)	-0.31*** (0.09)	-0.18* (0.07)	-0.71** (0.21)	0.80*** (0.15)	0.37*** (0.08)	0.45*** (0.09)
Agreeableness	0.10 (0.09)	-0.01 (0.07)	0.25*** (0.07)	0.74*** (0.17)	0.72*** (0.19)	0.29* (0.11)	0.44*** (0.09)
Emotional Stability	0.17+ (0.09)	0.11+ (0.06)	0.23** (0.08)	0.51* (0.19)	0.44* (0.17)	0.27** (0.09)	0.15 (0.09)
Female	-0.09*** (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	0.02 (0.02)	0.08 (0.09)	-0.16** (0.05)	-0.06* (0.03)	-0.10** (0.03)
Age	0.01** (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
White	0.08* (0.04)	0.12+ (0.07)	0.13*** (0.03)	0.22 (0.15)	-0.18 (0.14)	0.02 (0.07)	-0.13+ (0.08)
Education	0.11 (0.13)	-0.07 (0.11)	-0.28* (0.11)	-0.93* (0.35)	0.93*** (0.21)	0.46** (0.14)	0.54*** (0.08)
Pseudo/Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.10	0.11	0.09	0.10
Number of Cases	34,092	37,097	36,910	33,153	34,145	35,741	36,067
Number of Countries	22	24	24	23	22	24	24
Method of Estimation	Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS

Note: Data come from the 2010 AmericasBarometer. Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Constants and/or threshold parameters are omitted from the table. Country fixed effects are included but not shown, and standard errors are clustered by country. Data are weighted so that each nation's sample contributes a value of N = 1,500. \*\*\* p < .001  
 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 + p < .10



**Table I.3****Total Effects of Support Attitudes on Political Participation**

	<i>Voting</i> Model I: Previous Turnout	<i>Campaigning</i> Model II: Campaign Involvement	<i>Attending Meetings</i> Model III: Local Meeting	Model IV: Party Meeting	<i>Contacting</i> Model V: Contact Index
Trust in Elections	0.05*** (0.01)				
Trust in Political Parties		0.05*** (0.01)		0.13*** (0.02)	
Trust in Local Government			0.07*** (0.01)		
Trust in Local Gov't, National Gov't, and National Legislature					0.01* (0.01)
Approval of Campaigning and Organizing	0.02** (0.01)				
Approval of Campaigning		0.07*** (0.01)		0.05*** (0.01)	
Approval of Organizing			0.02* (0.01)		0.03* (0.01)
Political Interest	0.30*** (0.04)	0.63*** (0.03)	0.38*** (0.03)	0.65*** (0.02)	0.27*** (0.03)
Internal Efficacy	0.01 (0.01)	0.06*** (0.02)	0.08*** (0.01)	0.07*** (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)
Female	0.09* (0.05)	-0.15* (0.07)	-0.18*** (0.05)	-0.16*** (0.05)	0.06 (0.05)
Age	0.06*** (0.00)	0.00* (0.00)	0.00+ (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.01*** (0.00)
White	-0.11* (0.05)	-0.17+ (0.10)	0.05 (0.07)	-0.02 (0.06)	0.01 (0.06)
Education	0.92*** (0.17)	0.27+ (0.15)	-0.13 (0.21)	-0.23+ (0.12)	-0.25* (0.12)
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.16	0.10	0.07	0.11	0.03
Number of Cases	33,094	33,399	35,038	35,029	31,514
Number of Countries	22	22	24	24	23
Method of Estimation	Logit	Logit	Logit	Ordinal	Ordinal

Note: Data come from the 2010 AmericasBarometer. Cell entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. Constants and/or threshold parameters are omitted from the table. Country fixed effects are included but not shown, and standard errors are clustered by country. Data are weighted so that each nation's sample contributes a value of N = 1,500. \*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01

\* p < .05 + p < .10

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