10-10-2006

Personality and Emtional Response: Strategic and Tactical Responses to Changing Political Circumstances

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Abstract

Emotions help people navigate political environments, differentiating familiar situations where standard operating procedures are suitable from unfamiliar terrain when more attention is needed. While previous research identifies consequences of emotion, we know less about what triggers affective response. In this paper, we investigate what role personality has in the operation of the systems of affective intelligence. Using experimental data as well as responses from the 2000 and 2004 American National Election Studies, we first consider whether personality affects the activation of emotional response. Next, we explore the degree to which citizen attitudes like openness to information and compromise are explained by personality characteristics and subconscious emotional response. Finally, we consider the implications of these results for our normative understanding of democratic citizenship.

Personality and Emotional Response:
Strategic and Tactical Responses to Changing Political Circumstances

Emotions serve people by enabling them to navigate the diverse political environments they encounter. They do so with particular speed, generating appraisals within 80-120 milliseconds of exposure to some stimulus, far faster than perceptions that become consciously apparent after 500 milliseconds. According to the theory of affective intelligence, people respond to political situations via a dual system of emotional appraisal (Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen 2000). These preconscious appraisals precede and modify downstream affective, cognitive, and behavioral responses. Thus, affective states are swift modulations that express these appraisals, and initiate decision-making routes appropriate to the tactical demands of the moment.

For example, when confronted with the familiar, whether friend or foe, people rely on an appraisal system that makes active use of the emotions of enthusiasm and anger. These feelings guide our reliance on existing habits. But when people encounter unfamiliar circumstances, they rely on a second appraisal system that makes use of the emotional dimension of anxiety. When confronting novel situations, this system makes people anxious and induces people to rely less on standard routines. Instead, they become more attentive to the immediate circumstances and make deliberative rather than habitual responses. In this way, emotions can promote more thoughtful decision-making and more deliberative reasoning, but only in some circumstances (MacKuen et al. 2001).

Thus preconscious affective appraisal systems provide a potent dual capacity. One of these systems, the disposition system, provides a swift assessment of situations and manages the application of previously learned routines to the requirements of current circumstances. The other system, the surveillance system, assesses whether the circumstances are suitable to reliance on habituated response and automated control. If they are not, this system inhibits reliance on

habits and shifts control to self-conscious deliberative mechanisms (Marcus 2002; Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen 2000).

The notion that the practice of good citizenship might be regulated by preconscious emotional reactions and innate personality differences conflicts with the accounts of theorists that require deliberative approaches applied to all political choices (Benhabib 1996; Bohman 1997; Fishkin 1991; Habermas 1996). We have argued elsewhere (Marcus 2002) as have others (Sanders 1997; Young 2000) against the notion that each and every political decision needs to be the result of a deliberative process in order to secure a legitimate authoritative result (Gutmann 1996). First, this requirement presumes that deliberative decision-making mechanisms are always superior to more automatic processes, a claim that is generally false (Bargh and Chartrand 1999; Bargh and Ferguson 2000). Second, the proclamation of deliberation as the sole determinant of citizenship competence obscures the distinction between familiar circumstances wherein previously mastered routines offer speed of execution and predictability of result, and unfamiliar circumstances where habituated responses are likely to produce unreliable and potentially disastrous results. Deliberative approaches are indeed important, but only in those circumstances wherein prior information and approaches provide an inappropriate guide.

This dynamic suggests that people shift between two different decision-making tactics. One tactic relies on prior information encoded into habits and the second tactic values contemporary information considered by conscious mechanisms. But do the systems of affective intelligence operate in the same fashion across all people? Or are some people more receptive to threats, and more likely to be cued to attentiveness by anxious reactions? Previous research suggests that differences in issue framing have only a modest effect on emotional response (Wolak et al. 2003). Issue content and individual differences in the direction and intensity of

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prior preferences appear to play a more important role in explaining emotional response. We investigate whether emotional reactions are best understood as contemporary responses to current circumstances, or instead spurred by underlying personality traits.

In this paper, we investigate what role personality has in the operation of the emotional systems of affective intelligence and the practice of citizenship. Using experimental data as well as responses from the 2000 and 2004 American National Election Studies, we explore whether personality affects the activation of emotional response. Next, we consider whether political attitudes like openness to information better predicted by personality characteristics or emotional response. Investigating the roots of civic behavior informs normative concerns about promoting civic competence. If some are more predisposed to become emotionally engaged in politics than others, this suggests that some people will be more reactive to changes in their contemporary political environment, moving from habitual processing to more deliberative consideration. Similarly, those who are less likely to become anxious about politics will be less responsive to changes in immediate political environments. But if personality differences in emotional response are slight, it suggests that most individuals are able to adaptively use emotions to navigate political environments, differentiating occasions where habits are suitable from times when additional attention is needed.

Sources of Political Citizenship

Traditionally, the roots of good citizenship are thought to be in political socialization, where civics lessons help people assume the norms of citizenship. People must learn how to be good citizens (Almond and Verba 1963; Galston 2001). Through education, people become more politically knowledgeable and engaged, and supportive of principles of democracy (Nie, Junn, and Stehlik-Barry 1996). The barriers to deliberative citizenship are usually seen as attitudinal.

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Active partisans and those with strong prior preferences seek out information that supports their priors and resist consideration of alternative viewpoints (Redlawsk 2002; Taber and Lodge 2006). These studies suggest that those interested in promoting citizen deliberation and voter participation should focus their energies on programs of civic education. Programs in secondary schools can instill norms of good citizenship, and the effects of bias might be limited by urging people to be fair-minded and balanced in contemplating alternatives.

However, other evidence suggests that the practice of good citizenship has deeper roots than personal issue preferences and socialized views of citizenship. While good citizenship can be learned, some are perhaps more predisposed to support such principles than others. Personality has not been at the forefront of most research into political behavior (though see Sniderman 1975). Still there is a modest body of research worth noting. Personality differences can drive candidate evaluations and party preferences (Caprara et al. 1999; 2006), and genetic dispositions can influence ideological leanings (Alford, Funk, and Hibbing 2005). People's willingness to extend rights to disliked groups can also depend on personality. Marcus et al. (1995) find personality-based differences in tolerance, where greater neuroticism and extroversion limits tolerance and greater openness promotes it. Stenner (2005) also connects authoritarianism with political tolerance, where authoritarian predispositions combine with perceptions of threat to influence views on civil liberties and race. Dogmatism associated with authoritarianism can limit political tolerance and lead people to selective search for information that supports and reinforces prior preferences (Feldman 2003; Feldman and Stenner 1997; Lavine, Lodge, and Freitas 2005).

Beyond personality differences in the direction of issue preferences, personality differences have also been shown to influence people's levels of political engagement. Fowler

(2006) connects altruism to the inclination to turnout to vote, where those with greater concern for others report greater electoral participation. Individual differences in the need to evaluate help explain political activism and opinionation (Bizer et al. 2004). Bekkers (2005) also finds personality differences in political engagement, particularly for empathy but also extroversion and conscientiousness. These accounts suggest that there are important individual differences in reactivity to political signals. Faced with the same political threat, some will be more likely to become interested and be driven to act on this issue, while others will remain unresponsive – depending on underlying differences in traits.

Emotion, Personality, and Citizenship

Citizenship activities can be both internal, when we turn away from our private concerns to ponder matters from a political perspective, as well as public, when we engage in public discourse and political activities. In this study, we select three dimensions of citizenship that are central to most accounts of democratic citizenship. First, people become citizens when they turn away from the mundane affairs that consume their lives and shift their attention to some political issue that commands their attention. This requires consideration of new information and a desire to learn more about the stakes involved. Second, once they become attentive, people need to become more active, to speak up, to become active citizens. And, third, once engaged, by a political conflict, they have to determine whether to engage in compromise, to seek some middle ground that might resolve the dispute by mutual accommodation or remain steadfastly loyal to the cause until victory is obtained.

We have elsewhere shown that these citizenship features have their roots in emotionality (Marcus and MacKuen 1993; Marcus, Neuman, and 2000; MacKuen et al. 2001). Here we take up the question of whether adding personality into the mix adds and alters our understanding of

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citizenship. Our prior work on tolerance suggests that the effects of personality are "encapsulated" in factors more proximal rather than being direct (Marcus, et. al., 1995). That is to say, the basic individual differences in personality impacted on the standing decisions people acquired rather than directly on how they made tolerance decisions. Here, we are particularly interested in another situation most vital and central to democratic politics. Here we are interested in what engages people to become active citizens, directly engaged by an issue that asserts a position contrary to one they hold. When challenged, people may either respond or remain disengaged and focused on their private pursuits. If what shapes their engagement is largely due to historical factors like personality, then democratic politics will be practiced not on the basis of the merits of the contemporary issue challenge but rather by preexisting appetite for or aversion to the demands of democratic engagement (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002; Mansbridge 1980). For the most part, the normative expectation diverges from the more normal empirical expectation. Weak effects of personality and robust effects of emotional response are the desired normative result. Such a pattern would enable most, if not all, citizens to battle to a result based on the character of the conflict, rather than the deep personality suitability for politics that is not evenly distributed in the population.

The Effects of Personality

The enduring features of personality implicates as an evolutionary adaptation that provide varied response options to ensure that the population has available a wider repertoire of options to new as well as old challenges that have to be confronted (Alford, Funk, and Hibbing 2005). Jeffery Gray (1981, 1985, 1987a, 1987b, 1990) suggested that these affective systems have personality or trait features, such that people will respond not only to the changing circumstances

through emotional assessments but also by virtue of their personality differences.[1] The idea that some people are by their nature more inclined to attend to politics and be interested by political debates is suggested in a number of studies. We consider whether inherent differences in learning and engagement depend on deep-rooted personality differences.

We focus on four personality characteristics: neuroticism, extroversion, openness, and authoritarianism. The first three traits are components of the five-factor model of personality. Neuroticism is the personality trait most closely connected to emotionality, representing emotional stability. Those high on neuroticism can be characterized as moody, anxious, self-conscious, or insecure, while those low in neuroticism are described as unemotional – relaxed, calm, and secure. We expect that those who tend to be neurotic will be more sensitive to political threats, and more likely report emotional responses, particularly the negative emotions of aversion and anxiety. The consequences of the trait anxiety of neuroticism for citizenship are less clear. On one hand, studies of affective intelligence show a relationship between policy anxiety and the desire to learn more about the issue (MacKuen et al. 2001). This suggests that those who are more neurotic may be more likely to seek out information to ease their feelings of anxiety. But to the extent to which neurotic individuals feel not just anxiety but also hostility or distress, neuroticism may instead close the door to consideration, discouraging consideration of compromise and political action.

Extroversion and openness to experience, however, will likely have a positive relationship with citizenship behaviors of learning and compromise. Extroverts are outgoing and optimistic, more likely to emotionally expressive and interested in political participation than reserved, introverted individuals. We expect that extroverts will also be more likely to consider

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[1] We offer a fuller elaboration of Gray's personality model and its application to emotional response in Marcus et al. (1995).

new information and express a desire for greater personal political engagement. Those high in openness are more curious, and will be more likely to express interest in learning more about policy issues than those who prefer to avoid unfamiliar or new experiences. We expect that those who are low in openness to be less likely to embrace new information or political action. Authoritarianism is a personality trait associated with support for social conventions and respect for authorities (Adorno et al. 1950; Altemeyer 1988). Those high in authoritarianism are less likely to challenge the views of authorities and skeptical of the motives of others. We expect that people high in authoritarianism will be more likely to respond to threats with aversion rather than anxiety. In terms of the behavioral consequences, we expect that authoritarian individuals will be less open to consideration of new information and less interested in political action.

Personality and Emotional Reactions to Policy Issues

We explore these questions first using responses from an experimental study. Participants were undergraduates at a public university in the south who participated for course credit. In total, 162 individuals participated. First, participants completed a pretest questionnaire. Several days later, they were sent a link that directed them to a policy story in the style of an online newspaper article and a questionnaire about what they read. Participants later read two more policy stories and completed two more questionnaires over the next few weeks.

The policy articles concerned one of four issues – affirmative action programs at universities, mental health budget cuts, tuition costs, and music downloading policies. Three different issue frames were also used in additional to a neutral presentation – one that emphasized this policy change as extreme, one which described the policy change as within one's own state of residence rather than some distant setting, and one that varied whether the policy change was proposed or passed into law. The issues were selected to challenge the prior

preferences of most, where the issue is contrary to pretest preferences in 89% of these cases. In 11% of the cases, participants were sent a link that presented an issue presentation that affirmed their position to enable us to contrast responses to reassuring circumstances (affirmation) and disturbing circumstances (confrontation). To measure personality, we used the battery of items developed by Costa and MacRae (1985, 1992) that assess neuroticism, extroversion, and openness. Each personality trait was assessed with twelve items, as described in Marcus et al (1995, p.251-2). To measure authoritarianism, we use a scale of nine items concerning matters such as support for traditional values and respect for authorities.[2]

To assess people's emotional reactions, we asked them how the policy changes made them feel – very anxious, somewhat anxious, not very anxious, or not at all anxious. Responses about feelings of anxiety, unease, and fear were summed to create a measure of anxiety. The measure of enthusiasm reflects sentiments of pride, hopefulness, and enthusiasm, while aversion concerns the degree to which the policy made one feel contemptuous, bitter, angry, and disgusted (Marcus et al. 2006). Because emotions are used differently depending on the character of the contemporary environment, we consider the roots of emotion and citizenship separately depending on whether one saw a policy article that challenged or complemented people's prior issue preferences. In this study, most people were presented with a policy issue that challenged their prior positions, so we must be cautious in generalizing from the reassure condition, as our sample size here is quite low.

First, we consider the degree to which personality traits explain emotional reactions to political issues. Because each participant viewed three different stimuli, we report standard errors clustered by individual. In the first two columns of Table 1, we consider the roots of policy

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[2] The items scale together well (see appendix for list of items). For the NEO items, the Cronbach's alpha for neuroticism was 0.88, 0.85 for extroversion, and 0.77 for openness. And, for authoritarianism, alpha = 0.86.

anxiety. While we expected those high on neuroticism to be more sensitive to policy change and more likely to have their surveillance systems activated, we find no significant differences in anxiety by level of neuroticism.[3] Those open to experiences are slightly more likely to become anxious when confronted by a policy that challenges their prior preferences, but no more prone to feelings of fear when that policy change favors prior attitudes. Among those viewing issue challenges at the lowest level of openness, the predicted level of anxiety is 0.49, compared to 0.64 for those with the highest level of openness, all else equal. While extroversion has no effect on anxiety among those facing challenging policies, extroverted individuals faced with a favorable policy change do see a decrease in levels of anxiety. Authoritarian predispositions have no significant influence on levels of issue anxiety for those viewing either reassuring or challenging stimuli.[4] On the whole, personality differences play only a modest role in the activation of the emotional surveillance system, and these traits operate differently depending on whether circumstances challenge support prior preferences.

Next, we consider the roots of feelings of anger. For those who read about policies that support personal preferences, personality traits fail to have a significant effect on levels of policy aversion. Under the condition of policy challenge, however, the association between personality and policy anger is more substantial. Authoritarianism fails to be a significant predictor of anger, but neuroticism, extroversion, and openness all predict policy aversion. Neuroticism and extroversion are positively associated with anger. Those higher in neuroticism are more sensitive to emotional signals, and become more angry when faced with a policy change opposed to prior preferences. Extroverts are also more likely to react in anger in the face of policy challenges than

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[3] The pattern of results is robust to inclusion of controls for issue type, issue frame, attitude strength, and personal issue salience.
[4] While openness to experience and authoritarianism are correlated (r=0.58), authoritarianism fails to significantly predict emotional response to policy issues even when openness to experience is excluded from the specification.

those who are more introverted. Openness to experience, however, is negatively correlated with policy anger. Those open to new experiences are less likely to become angry at challenging policies than those closed to experiences, perhaps because they are more able to engage with diverse settings than those who are less open to new experiences. The magnitude of the effect size is similar across the three personality traits, but the contribution to explaining the variance of policy aversion is more modest than the overall explanatory contribution from the emotional reactions of anxiety and enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is negatively related to aversion, while increasing anxiety predicts greater policy aversion. Moving from the lowest level of anxiety to the highest increases aversion by half a point, compared to about a 0.15 predicted point increase from a similar size movement on any of the three personality dimensions.

The other emotion of the disposition system, enthusiasm, is also predicted by levels of extroversion. Extroverts who encounter reassuring policy changes are less likely to become enthusiastic. When faced with policy challenges, the effect is in the opposite direction (though not significant), where extroverts are more likely to become enthusiastic. In this way, personality complements the effects of the surveillance system, summoning interest in the face of challenges and decreasing emotional engagement in the face of what is familiar and favored. Personality differences in authoritarianism, neuroticism, and openness appear unrelated to levels of policy enthusiasm regardless of whether the issue favors or opposes a person's prior issue predispositions.

Overall, personality traits do affect emotional engagement in policy issues, but only to a limited degree. The greatest effects of personality are in the generation of policy anger in the face of policy threats. While we have only a limited sample to generalize from, the effects of personality in the face of reassuring policy changes are slight, confined to the effects of

extroversion – which can promote anxiety and limit enthusiasm. For the most part, personality operates to promote additional engagement – openness triggers the surveillance system and limits the expression of aversion. The exceptions are in the case of policy anger, where neuroticism and extroversion promote aversion in the face of policy challenges.

Next, we consider the effects of personality on three citizenship behaviors – the willingness to learn more about the issue, interest in political participation, and consideration of policy compromise. We explain citizenship behavior as a function of emotion and personality, controlling for attitude strength and personal issue salience.[5]   If emotions are the primary predictors of citizenship behavior, this indicates the effects of personality are indirect, channeled through the operation of the system of affective intelligence. If personality measures are significant, this indicates direct effects of trait differences in learning and participation.

We assess people's willingness to learn more with three measures that ask people whether they would like to learn more about the views of issue proponents, the perspectives of issue opponents, and more about the issue generally. People respond yes, maybe, or no, where responses are summed to create a seven-point scale of the willingness to learn more about the issue. We interact personality with seeing a reassuring or challenging policy issue, to see if personality operates differently in the presence of policy threat. First, we find that anxiety prompts greater interest in learning more about the policy issue, confirming prior affective

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[5] Attitude strength is a four point measure of the strength of one's prior issue preference. Issue salience reflects one's personal connection to the issue. For the affirmative action issue, this is coded 1 if the respondent was nonwhite. For the mental health issue, respondents were asked if they knew a close friend or family member treated for mental health issues. For the music downloading issue, participants were asked about how frequently they used the web to download music. And for the tuition issue, responses about whether the student helped pay for the costs of college were considered.

intelligence findings (Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen 2000, MacKuen et al. 2001). Enthusiasm is also positively associated with the desire to learn more.[6]

We also find significant direct effects of personality on citizenship behavior beyond its contribution via emotional engagement. Those who are open to experiences are more likely to report a desire to learn more about policy issues. Moving from the lowest level of openness to the highest level of openness predicts a thirty percent increase in the desire to learn more about the issue among those who see a challenging issue, all else equal. Earlier we found no connection between trait differences in neuroticism and the activation of the surveillance system. Here, we find effects for neuroticism only in the condition of when people confront a familiar and affirming issue position, where those high in neuroticism express a heightened desire to learn more about the policy. For those who see reassuring policy change, levels of extroversion are also positively associated with a willingness to learn about public policy. These effects come in addition to significant positive effects on learning from attitude strength and personal issue salience. Thus, as expected, personality plays a modestly greater role in when subjects are in a reassuring familiar context and a lesser role when in the confrontational disturbing condition, as we find significant interactions with neuroticism and extraversion and this treatment condition.

Next, we consider the role of emotional engagement and trait differences in people's desire to engage in politics. Anxiety can promote a desire for information – does it also encourage political participation? Study participants were asked if they would be interested in participating in the issue in one of several ways – sending a letter to the editor, signing an online petition, writing to legislators, donating money, participating in a rally, or receiving additional information by e-mail from groups. Study participants checked as many or as few of these

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[6] Interactions of emotional reactions and personality predispositions are not significant explanations of the desire to learn more. Similarly, the directional effects of anxiety and enthusiasm are not conditioned on whether one views a reassuring or challenging policy change.

activities as they would be interested in engaging in. We sum responses to create a measure of one's overall willingness to commit to political action. Negative binomial regression results are shown in the second column of Table 2.

We find first that anxiety relates to a desire to politically engage in the issue. Moving from the lowest to the highest level of anxiety predicts an increase of interest in one additional political act, all else equal. Here, we find no significant effects for anger or enthusiasm on interest in participation once we control from trait differences and variations in issue strength and salience. Personality traits like openness and extroversion also have little effect on the willingness to consider political action. The main personality effect is among those viewing reassuring policy change, where high authoritarianism limits interest in political participation. When confronted with a reassuring policy change, those who are highest in authoritarianism are predicted to express interest in two fewer political acts than those lowest in authoritarianism, all else equal. This is consistent with Feldman and Stenner's (1997) work which suggests that authoritarianism is expressed differently depending on whether circumstances are threatening.

Lastly, we consider people's endorsement of policy compromise, to see whether personality predispositions leave people resistant to consideration of middle-ground policy remedies. In the posttest, participants were asked what they preferred as a policy outcome – the policy they read about, a reversal of this policy, or a compromise remedy. Results of probit estimation are shown in the third column of Table 2. Again, we find emotional roots to deliberative behavior. Those who become anxious about the policy change report greater willingness to support some sort of policy compromise as a solution. Those who react with anger, however, resist middle-ground remedies and are less likely to support a compromise.

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We also find a number of personality differences in the willingness to endorse policy compromise. Those high in authoritarianism support convention, and here resist policy compromise. Those with the lowest level authoritarianism are predicted to support compromise 80% of the time in the face of policy challenge, all else equal. For those highest in authoritarianism, this prediction drops to a 55% likelihood of supporting compromise. We also find that openness to experience surprisingly also acts to limit compromise. Levels of extroversion relate to support for compromise, with effects that vary depending on whether the issue favors or challenges people's prior predispositions. Under the condition of issue challenge, extroverts support compromise, while extroverts who see reassuring policy change are less likely to endorse compromise. Here, personality traits have significant explanatory power over people's willingness to support compromise, beyond any indirect influence through emotional response.

While trait differences play only a modest role in emotional engagement in policy issues, they play a greater role in explaining people's propensity to learn more about public policy and engage in political participation. In the case of policy learning, the effects are generally positive, where openness, neuroticism, and extroversion predict a stronger desire to find out more about the policy issue. In the case of participation and compromise, however, the effects of trait differences are primarily in the opposite direction – openness limits compromise and high levels of authoritarianism discourage compromise and political action.

Emotion, Authoritarianism, and Evaluations of Presidential Candidates

Next, we consider the connections between personality characteristics and emotional reactions to the presidential candidates, to see whether trait differences underlie reactions to politicians. We rely on responses from the 2000 and 2004 American National Election Studies. While the sample is more representative than the respondents in our above experiment, we can

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consider only the effects of authoritarianism, and not neuroticism, extroversion, or openness. We proceed in a similar fashion as the previous analyses. First, we consider the effects of personality differences on emotional response. Those high in authoritarianism are more responsive to political threats, so we expect that authoritarians will be more likely to experience the negative emotion of aversion. Second, we consider whether authoritarianism has unique effects on political learning and participation beyond any indirect effects through emotion. We expect authoritarians to resist accumulating political information and avoid political engagement, and report less campaign learning and participation.

In Table 3, we consider the effects of authoritarianism on emotional engagement. Emotional reactions to the presidential candidates are assessed with a set of eight items. To measure enthusiasm, respondents were asked about whether the candidates made them feel hopeful or proud. Anxiety is measured by asking if the candidates made the respondent afraid, and aversion is measured with responses about anger toward the candidates. Because we are interested in the general emotional reactivity of people, we sum reactions to the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates to consider cumulative levels of emotional response. Authoritarianism is measured with a set of four items about the ideal qualities for children (Feldman and Stenner 1997).[7] We also control for strength of partisanship, measured as a folded version of the seven point party identification scale.

We find that authoritarianism is not significantly related to activation of the emotional surveillance system. Those high in authoritarianism are no more likely to experience anxiety than those low in authoritarianism. Authoritarianism is however correlated with the operation of the

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[7] The four items ask respondents to choose one value as more important, independence versus respect for elders, curiosity versus good manners, obedience versus self-reliance, being considerate or being well-behaved. Those who choose the authoritarian response are coded 1, those who choose the other option are coded 0, and those who volunteer answers of "both" or "neither" are coded 0.5. Responses are summed to create our authoritarianism measure.

emotional disposition system. Authoritarians are more likely to report enthusiasm about the candidates, and less likely to report angry reactions to the candidates. While authoritarianism was unrelated to people's emotional reactions to policy issues, here we find a greater connection to personality and candidate emotions.

In Table 4, we consider the effects of emotion and personality on political learning and participation. To measure learning, we sum the number of likes and dislikes people mention about the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates. Again, we control for strength of partisanship, also adding controls for education, age, gender, and race. Considering the role of personality, we find that those high in authoritarianism are significantly less likely to recall candidate details. For example, in 2000, moving from the lowest level of authoritarianism to the highest level predicts one fewer recalled consideration about the candidates all else equal, a significant effect given that the average respondent recalls about five pieces of information about the presidential candidates. Emotional reactions also relate to levels of candidate recall. We find that anxious respondents report greater campaign knowledge in 2000. In 2004, the relationship is also positive, but not statistically significant. Anger and enthusiasm are also correlated with the number of likes and dislikes mentioned. Those who are angry recall more details about the candidates, and those who are enthusiastic also recall more details.

In Table 4, we report summary results for likes and dislikes of both candidates. If we model favorable recall and disliked considerations for each candidate separately, a few differences emerge. First, candidate anxiety prompts greater recall of disliked attributes about the Republican and Democratic candidates, while the number of favorable comments about the candidates falls for those who experience greater anxiety about the candidates. We also find that candidate aversion is negatively associated with recalled likes of the Democratic and Republican

presidential candidates, and positively associated with recalled dislikes of the candidates. Regarding the other emotion of the surveillance system, we find the opposite pattern of effect, where candidate enthusiasm is positively associated with recalled likes and negatively related to candidate dislikes. Finally, the negative effect of authoritarianism on candidate recall is greatest for recalled likes of Democratic candidates and recalled dislikes of Republican candidates.

Next, we consider the effects of personality on campaign participation. To measure participation, we sum responses to questions that asked whether people donated to a candidate, party, or other group during the campaign, attended a rally, worked for a candidate, displayed a campaign sign, or tried to persuade another how to vote. We find a similar pattern of results. Anxious voters are more likely to participate, as are angry and aversive voters. Those high in authoritarianism however, are less likely to report campaign activity. Overall, those with higher levels of authoritarianism are less likely to report anger about the candidates and more likely to express enthusiasm. But when it comes to campaign engagement, authoritarians are less involved, reporting less campaign recall and lower levels of campaign participation.

Conclusions

Overall, we find only modest evidence that the activation of the emotional surveillance system depends on personality differences. When the political environment presents familiar friends and foes, the disposition system has particular utility. When the unexpected or the unfamiliar arises, the emotional surveillance is triggered to spur people to engage in more deliberative processing. The activation of this system appears to be similar across most individuals, such that some people do not seem more predisposed to benefit from the operation of an emotional surveillance system. Trait differences have their greatest influence in other parts of opinion expression and political behavior. The greatest personality differences in emotional

response are within people's disposition system, where personality traits influence the generation of anger and enthusiasm. And when it comes to matters of compromise and political participation, traits again have greater influences to propel people along particular deliberative paths much in the same way that prior preferences or attitude strength might operate.

Research is often taken to be significant when robust results obtain. More rare is when insignificant empirical findings warrant the greater attention. The recurring and seemingly stable existence of individual differences raises an interesting normative issue. If democratic citizenship requires an array of talents and orientations and these are not uniformly distributed within the population then some will find themselves less well suited to and perhaps disinclined to engage in democratic politics. The number of studies that show that the demands of democratic politics, and engagement in conflicted situations, is discomforting to some is considerable (Adorno et al. 1950; Fromm 1965; Mansbridge 1980; Altemeyer 1988; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002). If personality had robust relationships to such factors as we study here, or some other features such as intolerance and support for authoritarian regimes, then democracy's normative appeal is diminished.

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Table 1: The Effects of Personality on Emotional Response

	Anxiety		Aversion		Enthusiasm	
	Challenge	Reassure	Challenge	Reassure	Challenge	Reassure
Neuroticism	0.048	-0.002	0.096*	0.038	0.032	-0.116
	(0.043)	(0.053)	(0.043)	(0.075)	(0.033)	(0.083)
Extroversion	0.033	-0.167*	0.102*	0.126	0.084	-0.191*
	(0.052)	(0.063)	(0.048)	(0.078)	(0.053)	(0.100)
Openness	0.106*	0.108	-0.088*	-0.032	-0.020	0.017
	(0.054)	(0.083)	(0.046)	(0.152)	(0.054)	(0.135)
Authoritarianism	0.029	0.138	-0.035	-0.141	-0.003	-0.053
	(0.036)	(0.084)	(0.036)	(0.147)	(0.040)	(0.096)
Anxiety	---	---	0.514*	0.851*	-0.082	-0.533*
			(0.050)	(0.128)	(0.055)	(0.184)
Aversion	0.522*	0.575*	---	---	-0.336*	0.080
	(0.048)	(0.106)			(0.053)	(0.166)
Enthusiasm	-0.087	-0.362*	-0.352*	0.080	---	---
	(0.058)	(0.149)	(0.060)	(0.176)		
Constant	0.301*	0.427*	0.313*	-0.092	0.455*	0.605*
	(0.039)	(0.084)	(0.043)	(0.132)	(0.032)	(0.082)
N	384	45	384	45	384	45
R^2	0.38	0.71	0.45	0.59	0.22	0.39

Regression estimates. *$p<0.05$ Standard errors in parentheses.

Table 2: Emotions and Personality as Explanations of Citizenship Behaviors

	Learn more	Interest in participation	Compromise
Neuroticism	-0.078	-0.144	0.245
	(0.064)	(0.202)	(0.251)
Extroversion	0.002	-0.022	0.524*
	(0.078)	(0.253)	(0.306)
Openness	0.212*	0.394	-0.756*
	(0.084)	(0.276)	(0.347)
Authoritarianism	0.065	0.145	-0.452*
	(0.064)	(0.203)	(0.250)
Reassuring policy change	0.050	-0.280	-0.458*
	(0.054)	(0.176)	(0.229)
Reassure*Neuroticism	0.301*	0.622	-0.109
	(0.153)	(0.569)	(0.555)
Reassure*Extroversion	0.299*	0.275	-1.657*
	(0.163)	(0.643)	(0.689)
Reassure*Openness	0.012	0.010	0.912
	(0.201)	(0.909)	(0.780)
Reassure*Authoritarianism	-0.154	-1.475*	1.023
	(0.140)	(0.592)	(0.674)
Anxiety	0.227*	0.968*	0.658*
	(0.082)	(0.249)	(0.389)
Aversion	0.073	0.273	-0.882*
	(0.077)	(0.256)	(0.392)
Enthusiasm	0.151*	0.394	-0.247
	(0.071)	(0.262)	(0.410)
Attitude strength	0.112*	0.414*	-0.385
	(0.049)	(0.177)	(0.264)
Personal issue salience	0.094*	0.204*	-0.073
	(0.028)	(0.084)	(0.154)
Constant	0.283*	0.894*	-0.791
	(0.068)	(0.332)	(0.258)
N	414	382	414
R^2/Pseudo R^2	0.14	0.04	---
χ^2	---	24.21[+]	72.68[+]

Regression estimates, first column, Probit estimates second column, Negative binomial regression last column. Standard errors in parentheses.
* $p<0.05$, [+] indicates χ^2 significant at .05 level.

Table 3: Authoritarianism and Emotional Reactions to Presidential Candidates

	Anxiety		Aversion		Enthusiasm	
	2000	2004	2000	2004	2000	2004
Authoritarianism	-0.027	-0.031	-0.110*	-0.168*	0.089*	0.059*
	(0.031)	(0.041)	(0.032)	(0.043)	(0.035)	(0.036)
Candidate anxiety	---	---	0.494*	0.478*	0.051*	0.127*
			(0.023)	(0.030)	(0.029)	(0.027)
Candidate aversion	0.474*	0.419*	---	---	0.163*	0.026
	(0.022)	(0.026)			(0.029)	(0.026)
Candidate enthusiasm	0.040*	0.168*	0.134*	0.039	---	---
	(0.023)	(0.036)	(0.023)	(0.039)		
Strength of partisanship	0.006	-0.008	0.001	0.026*	0.080*	0.077*
	(0.009)	(0.012)	(0.009)	(0.013)	(0.010)	(0.011)
Constant	0.089*	0.116*	0.205*	0.405*	0.240*	0.393*
	(0.027)	(0.041)	(0.027)	(0.042)	(0.030)	(0.034)
N	1470	1007	1470	1007	1470	1007
R^2	0.25	0.23	0.27	0.23	0.09	0.09

Regression estimates, standard errors in parentheses. *$p<0.05$

Table 4: The Effects of Authoritarianism and Emotion on Learning and Participation

	Number of comments about presidential candidates		Campaign participation	
	2000	2004	2000	2004
Authoritarianism	-1.047*	-1.178*	-0.429*	-0.236*
	(0.297)	(0.357)	(0.140)	(0.122)
Candidate anxiety	1.389*	0.361	0.332*	0.266*
	(0.229)	(0.253)	(0.100)	(0.086)
Candidate aversion	1.084*	1.256*	0.381*	0.412*
	(0.223)	(0.234)	(0.100)	(0.084)
Candidate enthusiasm	1.698*	1.689*	0.535*	0.593*
	(0.204)	(0.291)	(0.098)	(0.108)
Strength of partisanship	0.303*	0.221*	0.186*	0.287*
	(0.080)	(0.101)	(0.039)	(0.037)
Education	0.522*	0.357*	0.105*	0.101*
	(0.052)	(0.063)	(0.025)	(0.022)
Age	0.008*	0.011*	0.004	-0.001
	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Female	-0.530*	-0.311	-0.327*	-0.151*
	(0.156)	(0.191)	(0.074)	(0.067)
Black	-0.676*	-0.686*	-0.049	-0.260*
	(0.259)	(0.278)	(0.130)	(0.109)
Constant	0.796*	1.688*	-1.504*	-1.495*
	(0.433)	(0.513)	(0.217)	(0.190)
N	1434	1002	1431	999
R^2/Pseudo R^2	0.27	0.18	0.06	0.08

Regression estimates, first two columns. Negative binomial regression, last two columns. Standard errors in parentheses. *$p<0.05$