Relations Among Political Attitudes, Personality, and Psychopathology Assessed With New Measures of Libertarianism and Conservatism

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The relation between new Libertarianism–Totalitarianism and Conservatism–Liberalism scales was explored in four studies. The Libertarianism and Conservatism scales were free of social desirability bias. Results consistently showed that conservatives were more libertarian (or less totalitarian) than moderates and liberals, with the latter two groups not differing significantly. Political orientations were also explored in relation to three general systems of personality description: the Big Five personality factors, the nurturance and dominance factors of the Circumplex, and the Pleasure–Arousalability–Dominance (PAD) Temperament Model. Across four studies, the Libertarianism and Conservatism scales were consistently and strikingly unrelated to personality and temperament factors; nor were they related to measures of psychological adjustment–maladjustment (depression, trait anxiety, panic, somatization) or to measures of substance abuse (alcohol use and drug use).

Beginning with the early work of Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford (1950), a persistent theme in the literature on conservatism has been the study of a possible relation between conservatism and authoritarianism. Defined as the urge to impose one’s values, attitudes, and preferences on others, authoritarianism may be viewed broadly as a personality characteristic (e.g., internal control, hostility), or studied more narrowly as a component of political attitudes (totalitarianism). Another major focus of the literature was the possible association of socially

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undesirable or maladaptive characteristics with conservatism (e.g., superstitious resistance to science and intolerance of minorities, Wilson, 1973; lack of self-esteem, Boshier, 1969; contempt for the disadvantaged, Williams, 1984).

Much of the literature on conservatism is old and was based on faulty scales and/or scales that assessed reactions to issues of passing importance. For instance, Ray (1981) found a split-half reliability of .06 for the F-scale, and many items in the Conservatism scale reported by Wilson (1973) are seriously outdated (e.g., attitudes toward school uniforms, beatniks, modern art, working mothers, coeducation, chaperons, women judges).

Also, several initial reports on correlates of conservatism have not withstood careful scrutiny. A negative self-esteem/conservatism relation was not upheld in a review of available findings (Wylie, 1961). In addition, Joe (1974) and Rambo (1973) identified positive as well as negative personality correlates of conservatism.

Finally, Heaven and Connors (1988) did not confirm a positive authoritarianism/conservatism relation when they used the P-scale (H. J. Eysenck & S. B. Eysenck, 1975) to assess authoritarianism (or "tough-mindedness"). Instead, they found greater tough-mindedness in both radicals and conservatives compared with controls. However, their results could be criticized because the P-scale incorporates diverse and somewhat unrelated psychological characteristics, including impulsivity, sadism, aggressiveness, sensation seeking, and uncommon social attitudes (Zuckerman, 1991, p. 12). Also, Ray (1979) found no relation between authoritarianism (assessed with the Directiveness scale, which measures a tendency to enforce one's will on others) and right-wing and left-wing voting patterns.

MAJOR THEORETICAL AND PRAGMATIC QUESTIONS

The literature on individual political orientations raises a series of interrelated theoretical and pragmatic issues.

1. The first, and major, theoretical question is whether a person's political orientation is driven, at least in part, by that person's personality (e.g., dominance, altruism, empathy, cunning, greed) or level of psychological adjustment—maladjustment (e.g., anxiety or insecurity, depression, pathological dependency, paranoia, hostility, drug or alcohol dependency). The available literature does not provide any definitive answers.

The answer to this first theoretical question, however, can have important bearing on the conduct of political campaigns. If, for instance, a right (left) political orientation is driven by anxiety or insecurity, the major theme of political campaigns for right-leaning (left-leaning) candidates could emphasize uncertainties and unforeseen dangers for the public and ways a candidate can alleviate those sources of anxiety and insecurity. Furthermore, candidates whose characteristics were
appealing to the anxious and insecure (e.g., those possessing a generally reassuring and comforting demeanor and communication style) could be nurtured and cultivated. On the other hand, if a political orientation is found to be associated with paranoid and hostile characteristics, then a campaign designed to appeal to this orientation could exploit and exaggerate antagonism, hatred, and suspicion among various social groups. In short, knowledge of the possible personality and dysfunctional characteristics underpinning political orientations could become an important tool for analyzing the effectiveness of different political candidates or the themes and techniques of political campaigns.

2. The second major theoretical question bears on the possible relation between socioeconomic status (SES) and right- or left-leaning political orientation. If there is such a relation, political campaigns could specifically target (as with advertising campaigns for manufactured products) those socioeconomic groups that are known to be more receptive to the corresponding political orientation.

3. Finally, the third major theoretical question deals with the relation between conservatism–liberalism and totalitarianism (the narrower aspect of authoritarianism or dogmatism dealing with political ideas and actions): (a) Are conservatives more totalitarian than liberals? (b) Are the extreme right and extreme left more totalitarian than moderates? (c) Is there no relation between totalitarianism and right–left political orientation? Here, again, the answer can have important pragmatic bearing, especially for the electorate. For instance, if the correct answer is (b), then the electorate can expect to be subjected to more authoritarian rule when it elects candidates who represent extremes of either political persuasion.

STUDY OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

The series of studies in this article were designed to address the three basic theoretical questions previously mentioned.

1. Is it possible to identify any personality correlates of conservatism–liberalism and of libertarianism–totalitarianism by using basic and comprehensive systems of personality measurement? Also, are there any systematic relations between conservatism–liberalism or libertarianism–totalitarianism and psychological adjustment–maladjustment and substance abuse?

2. Is there a relation between SES and political orientations?

3. What is the relation between conservatism–liberalism and totalitarianism or authoritarianism?

Relations of personality characteristics with political orientations were explored using three general systems of personality description: Wiggins’s Circumplex (Wiggins, Trapnell, & Phillips, 1988), the Big Five personality factors (Goldberg,
1992), and the PAD Temperament Model (Mehrabian, 1987, 1991, 1996). Thus, instead of selecting specific personality scales on an ad hoc basis, comprehensive frameworks of personality description were used.

The Circumplex consists of eight scales (assertive vs. shy, kind vs. coldhearted, cunning vs. uncalculating, extroverted vs. unsociable) that are used to define two basic dimensions of personality: nurturance and dominance. The Big Five personality factors include extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and intellect. The PAD Temperament Model focuses on individual emotional predispositions. Various linear combinations of trait pleasure–displeasure (P), trait arousability (A), and trait dominance–submissiveness (D) yield specific personality characteristics. For instance, extroversion, affiliation, nurturance, and arousal seeking involve different degrees of pleasantness, high arousability, and dominance, whereas dependency involves pleasantness, high arousability, and submissiveness. Empathy includes high arousability and pleasantness. Hostility consists of an unpleasant, arousable, and dominant temperament, whereas anxiety involves an unpleasant, arousable, and submissive temperament. Depression, like anxiety, includes unpleasant and submissive characteristics (Mehrabian, 1995-96; Mehrabian & Bernath, 1991; Mehrabian & O’Reilly, 1980).

Even though two of the personality models used included broad-based assessments of psychological adjustment–maladjustment, specific measures of depression, trait anxiety, somatization, and panic disorder were used also for a more comprehensive examination of relations of political orientations with psychopathology. To ensure broad coverage of psychological dysfunctions, scales of alcohol use and drug use were included as well. Finally, a demographic questionnaire was used to identify possible consistent socioeconomic correlates of political orientation.

Adequate exploration of the third theoretical question regarding the possible relation between conservatism–liberalism and authoritarianism required use of an authoritarianism scale that was free of response and social desirability bias. Libertarianism–totalitarianism was defined as valuing unhampered liberty of thought and action for the individual versus favoring some form of centralized and autocratic government. Items for successively improved versions of a new Libertarianism–Totalitarianism scale were written to contrast (a) preferences for small governments that allow individuals a maximum of social and economic freedoms—with, however, greater risks of hardship and failure—versus (b) preferences for strong central governments that restrict individual freedoms while attempting to provide security, economic prosperity, and enforced morality. Social desirability bias was controlled, for example, by writing totalitarian-oriented items to imply social benevolence.

A new Conservatism–Liberalism scale was developed also to assess general right–left political orientation without reliance on specific (and often period-sensitive) political issues.
Hypotheses of the study dealt with the relation of libertarianism–totalitarianism with conservatism and relations between demographic characteristics and conservatism. No relations of personality or psychopathology with political orientations were hypothesized. Instead, it was hoped that the use of general approaches to personality measurement across a series of four studies would yield some basic and robust findings pertaining to this important issue.

Ray's (1979) findings were deemed more valid than those of Heaven and Connors (1988) with the P-scale; accordingly, it was hypothesized that conservatism–liberalism and libertarianism–totalitarianism were unrelated. Also, in line with results obtained by Eysenck (1971) and Wilson (1973), age was hypothesized to be a positive correlate of conservatism.

In three of the following studies, an attempt was made to broaden the sampling of participants beyond college or university populations. Accordingly, participants were recruited from among adults attending a remedial driver training school in Study 2 and from among a variety of persons—including students—known to laboratory assistants in studies 3 and 4.

A COMPRENDIUM OF STUDY 1

A new 20-item Libertarianism–Totalitarianism scale was constructed and was studied in relation to a simple Conservatism–Liberalism scale, a demographic questionnaire, and three general systems of personality description: The Circumplex (Wiggins et al., 1988), the Big Five factors (Goldberg, 1992), and the Pleasure–Arousal–Dominance (PAD) Temperament Model (Mehrabian, 1987, 1995a, 1996). The Social Desirability scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960) was also included in the study.

The new 20-item Libertarianism–Totalitarianism scale used was a preliminary (first-stage) version of the scale given in Appendix A. Conservatism–liberalism was assessed with a single-item questionnaire (subsequently expanded into a multiple-item questionnaire in Studies 2 through 4). Participants checked one of nine spaces separating the words liberal and conservative, with the word moderate marking the middle space. The check-marks were scored from 1 for most liberal through 9 for most conservative.

The demographic questionnaire and three scales of the PAD Temperament Model are described in Study 3. The Big Five factors and the Social Desirability scale are described in Study 4. Wiggins's Circumplex was assessed with 64 single adjectives (e.g., introverted, cheerful, sly, antisocial). Participants rated each adjective from extremely inaccurate (1) to extremely accurate (8) as it applied to themselves. Their responses were used to calculate scores for two underlying orthogonal basic dimensions of personality: nurturance and dominance.

The 95 participants (39 men, 56 women) were University of California students. Participants were put in small groups, ranging from 2 to 7 participants in each group.
They were asked explicitly not to record their names on the questionnaires. Based on scheduling and time constraints, the experimenter determined which scales were to be completed by each group of participants. The demographic questionnaire, Libertarianism and Conservatism scales, and PAD scales were administered to all participants. Only 76 of the participants also completed the Social Desirability scale, and 66 of those also completed the Big Five personality factors and the Circumplex scales. Thus, 66 participants responded to all the materials in the study.

Only the following significant correlations were obtained for the demographic variables: Conservatism correlated positively with participant age ($r = .29, p < .05$), income ($r = .25, p < .05$), religiousness ($r = .36, p < .05$), and libertarianism ($r = .21, p < .05$). Libertarianism correlated positively with participant income ($r = .27, p < .05$). Participants were divided into three groups: participants with conservatism $z$ scores less than $-1$ (liberals), those with conservatism $z$ scores between $-1$ and $+1$ (moderates), and those with $z$ scores greater than $+1$ (conservatives). An ANOVA of libertarianism scores for these three groups only approached significance ($p = .10$). Since, however, the same ANOVA was significant in all three following studies, $t$-test comparisons were done and showed that conservatives were significantly more libertarian than liberals and moderates, with liberals and moderates not differing significantly on libertarianism.

There were no significant personality correlates of the Libertarianism scale and there was only one significant personality correlate of the Conservatism scale: Goldberg's (1992) intellect or sophistication factor correlated negatively with conservatism ($r = -.26, p < .05$).

Mehrabian's Trait Pleasure-Displeasure scale is a broad-based measure of psychological health versus maladjustment (e.g., Mehrabian, 1987, 1996). Thus, the absence of significant correlations between libertarianism and conservatism on the one hand, and trait pleasure on the other, suggested that neither measure of political orientation related significantly to psychopathology. Finally, neither the Libertarianism nor the Conservatism scale exhibited a significant relation with the Social Desirability scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960).

A COMPENDIUM OF STUDY 2

This study was designed to improve the Libertarianism and Conservatism scales used in Study 1 and to investigate relations of both with the PAD temperament scales and with measures of psychopathology and substance abuse.

The 25-item Libertarianism–Totalitarianism and the 5-item Conservatism–Liberalism scales used were improved and expanded versions of the preliminary scales in Study 1. Most of the items from these improved, second-stage versions are contained among the items given in Appendix A. The demographic questionnaire
and three PAD temperament scales are described in Study 3. Psychopathology was assessed with Spielberger, Gorsuch, and Lushene's (1970) and Mehrabian's (1995–1996) trait anxiety scales, Zung's (1965) and Mehrabian's (1995–1996) depression scales, the Panic and Somatization scales (Mehrabian, 1994b), and the alcohol use and drug use scales (Mehrabian, 1994a).

Participants were recruited from a remedial driver training school for adults. The participants had volunteered for the training to have their traffic tickets expunged from their driving records. The 189 participants included 95 men and 94 women (mean age = 28 years, SD = 12 years). Based on the amount of recess and after-school time available to a participant, a laboratory assistant selected a stapled packet of scales to be completed by the participant in a place of the participant's choice at the school. Participants were asked explicitly not to record their names on the questionnaires and were told that, immediately on receipt, their packets would be intermixed with other completed packets so participants could remain anonymous. All 189 of the participants completed the demographic, libertarianism, conservatism, and pleasure–arousability–dominance questionnaires. Only 94 of the participants were also administered the Mehrabian (1994a, 1994b, 1995–1996) scales of trait anxiety, depression, panic, somatization, and alcohol use and drug use. Of the latter, only 46 were also asked to complete the Spielberger et al. (1970) trait anxiety and the Zung (1965) depression scales.

The Conservatism scale and religiousness correlated positively ($r = .23, p < .05$). Also, the Conservatism and Libertarianism scales intercorrelated positively ($r = .34, p < .05$). As in Study 1, the libertarianism/conservatism relation was explored further by dividing participants into three groups (liberals, moderates, and conservatives) using the +1 and −1 standard deviation cutoffs on the Conservatism scale. ANOVA of libertarianism scores for these three groups showed that conservatives were significantly more libertarian than liberals and moderates, with liberals and moderates not differing significantly on libertarianism.

As in Study 1, the two political attitude scales yielded essentially nonsignificant relations with all measures of individual differences. For the PAD temperament scales, the only significant result was a negative correlation between trait arousability and conservatism ($r = -.18, p < .05$).

The absence of significant libertarianism/trait pleasure and conservatism/trait pleasure correlations in Study 1 had been interpreted to signify that neither measure of political attitude related to psychopathology. Several specific measures of psychopathology were included in Study 2 to explore this issue in greater depth. Results showed that none of the measures of trait anxiety, depression, panic, somatization, alcohol use, or drug use related significantly to the Libertarianism or Conservatism scales. Also, as in Study 1, the Trait Pleasure scale (which was administered to all participants) did not relate significantly to the Libertarianism or Conservatism scales.
STUDY 3

This study was designed to improve the Libertarianism and Conservatism scales and to investigate relations between these two improved scales, demographic variables, and the three PAD temperament scales.

Method

Participants

The 153 participants (49 men, 104 women) in this study were recruited by eight laboratory assistants from among their relatives, friends, acquaintances, and co-workers.

Materials

Demographic questionnaire. This questionnaire assessed a participant’s age, sex, educational attainment, income (rated on a 9-point scale ranging from low to high,) and religiousness (rated on a 9-point scale ranging from not religious to very religious). It assessed a participant’s parents’ income (rated on a 9-point scale ranging from low to high.) Finally, it assessed the participant’s father’s and mother’s educational attainment.

Mehrabian’s PAD Temperament scales. These three scales were designed to provide a comprehensive assessment of emotional traits (i.e., individual emotional predispositions). Items of the Trait Pleasure–Displeasure scale are in semantic-differential format and assess generalized positive–negative affective states (Mehrabian, 1978). Participants report their habitually felt emotions by placing a check mark in one of nine spaces separating contrasting pairs of adjectives (e.g., affectionate–nasty, excited–enraged).

The Trait Arousability scale (Mehrabian, 1977, 1995b) assesses characteristic arousal patterns to sudden increases in information rate (i.e., complexity, change, or novelty) of stimuli. More arousable persons exhibit greater arousal amplitudes and slower habituation of arousal to information-rate spikes. Items of the Trait Arousability scale elicit estimates of the amplitude of arousal response and slowness of habituation to high-information spikes. Sample items and item scoring directions are “I am not affected much by sudden or intense events” (-), and “My strong emotions in a situation carry over for one or two hours after I leave it” (+).

The Trait Dominance–Submissiveness scale (Mehrabian & Hines, 1978) assesses generalized feelings of being in control and influential versus feeling
controlled and influenced—in diverse everyday situations. Sample items of the scale are “I control situations rather than let them control me” (+), “I work best when someone has outlined a job for me” (−), or “Domineering people don’t intimidate me” (+).

The Libertarianism–Totalitarianism scale. The 19 items for this scale, retained from Study 2, were augmented by seven new items, resulting in a 26-item scale. These were comprised of items 1 through 18 of the final Libertarianism–Totalitarianism scale, and items A through H, shown in Appendix A.

The Conservatism–Liberalism scale. Four items retained from Study 2 were augmented by two new ones. These were items 1 through 6 of the final Conservatism–Liberalism scale in Appendix A. Unlike traditional conservatism scales (e.g., Comrey & Newmeyer, 1965; Ray, 1983; Wilson, 1973), items of the present scale did not deal with specific issues (e.g., religiousness, patriotism, punishment of criminals). Instead, items assessed general self-reports of right–left political orientation.

Procedure

Participants were recruited individually by the laboratory assistants. All the questionnaires were collated and stapled in a single packet and were given to participants to complete at leisure and in a place of their choice. Participants were asked explicitly not to record their names on the questionnaires and were told that, immediately on receipt, their packets would be intermixed with other completed packets so participants could remain anonymous. Of the 180 packets distributed, 153 completed packets (85%) were returned to the laboratory assistants.

Results and Discussion

Sample characteristics. Mean age of participants was 25 years (SD = 9). Parental income during the participant’s first 15 years of age averaged 5.5 (SD = 1.7) on a scale ranging from 1 (low) to 9 (high). Thus, 2 SDs below and above the mean corresponded to a range from 2.1 (1.1 points above the poorest) to 8.9 (nearly the wealthiest), showing a wide dispersion of family income with a mean slightly above middle-income level. Mean years of education was 14.3 (SD = 2.7) for the participant, 13.9 (SD = 2.8) for his or her mother, and 15.6 (SD = 3.8) for his or her father. Again, 2 SDs below and above the father’s mean corresponded to a range
of 8 years (i.e., middle school graduate) to the equivalent of a doctorate at the high end, showing a wide dispersion of parental education levels. Overall, the participant sample represented a wide range of the socioeconomic spectrum, being skewed slightly toward above average.

**Item analyses of the Libertarianism–Totalitarianism and Conservatism–Liberalism scales.** The alpha reliability coefficient for the full 26-item Libertarianism scale was .86. Nevertheless, eight items with absolute item–total scale correlations of .35 or less were deleted. Total scores for libertarianism, based on the remaining 18-item scale, were used in the data analyses below. Absolute values of item–total scale correlations ranged from .65 to .82 for the Conservatism scale; thus, all six items were retained. Total scores for conservatism used in data analyses were based on the latter 6-item scale.

**Correlations of the Libertarianism and Conservatism scales with demographic and temperament measures.** Correlations, given in Table 1, show that participant age and income were both positive correlates of the Libertarianism and Conservatism scales. However, in contrast to findings in Studies 1 and 2, religiousness was not a significant positive correlate of the Conservatism scale. Also, father’s education correlated negatively with the Libertarianism scale \( r = -0.35, p < .05 \).

The Libertarianism and Conservatism scales correlated positively \( r = 0.46, p < .05 \). The Fisher \( r \)-to-\( z \) transformation was used to compare the libertarianism–conservatism correlation for men only \( r = 0.58, p < .05 \) with the corresponding correlation for women only \( r = 0.35, p < .05 \). Using a two-tail test, the obtained \( z \)-difference score of 1.65 failed to achieve significance \( p > .05 \), showing an absence of significant sex differences in the libertarianism–conservatism relation.

The libertarianism–conservatism relation was explored further by dividing participants into three groups (liberals, moderates, and conservatives) using the +1 and -1 standard deviation cutoffs on the Conservatism scale. ANOVA of libertarianism scores for these three groups yielded significance, \( F(2, 149) = 13.3, p < .05 \). Mean libertarianism scores of the three groups were as follows: liberals 11, moderates 16, and conservatives 41. Conservatives were significantly more libertarian (or less totalitarian) than the combined group of liberals and moderates, \( t(151) = 3.9, p < .01 \), with liberals and moderates not differing significantly on libertarianism.

Finally, neither the Libertarianism nor the Conservatism scale related significantly to any of the three PAD temperament scales. Since the PAD temperament scales provided a general assessment of personality and psychopathology, these results suggested an absence of relations between political orientations and personality or psychopathology.
TABLE 1
Correlations of the Libertarianism–Totalitarianism and Conservatism–Liberalism Scales With Demographic and Temperament Measures in Study 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Number of Observations</th>
<th>Libertarianism</th>
<th>Conservatism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>.22*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex (female = 1, male = 2)</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>.23*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiousness</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatism</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>.46*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental income</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s education</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>-.35*</td>
<td>-.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s education</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trait Pleasure (Mehrabian)</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trait Arousalibility (Mehrabian)</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trait Dominance (Mehrabian)</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Correlations that attained the .05 level of significance are marked with an asterisk. Alpha reliability coefficients for the PAD scales were as follows: Trait Pleasure (.94), Trait Arousalibility (.90), Trait Dominance (.92).

STUDY 4

This study was designed to finalize the Libertarianism and Conservatism scales and to investigate relations between the latter two scales and (a) demographic variables, (b) two measures of conservatism, (c) the three PAD temperament scales, (d) the Big Five personality factors, (e) the Social Desirability scale, and (f) six indicators of psychopathology: depression, trait anxiety, panic, somatization, alcohol use, and drug use.

Method

Participants

The 167 participants (67 men, 100 women) in this study were recruited by nine laboratory assistants from among their relatives, friends, acquaintances, and coworkers.

Materials

Demographic questionnaire and PAD temperament scales. These were identical to the ones used and described in Study 3.
The Big Five personality factors. Up-to-date markers for each of the Big Five factors (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, intellect) were provided by Goldberg (1992). These consisted of 100 adjectives (20 per factor) presented to participants in an intermixed order. Participants rated how accurate each adjective was as a self-descriptor using a 9-point accurate-inaccurate scale. These ratings were transformed into five total scale scores, as follows: For each factor, a participant's ratings of negatively worded adjectives/markers were summed and subtracted from his or her ratings of positively worded adjective/markers.

The Libertarianism–Totalitarianism scale. The 18 items for this scale, retained from Study 3, were augmented by three new items, resulting in a 21-item scale. These were items 1 through 20 and item I in Appendix A; the new items were items 19, 20, and I.

The Conservatism–Liberalism scale. The six items retained from Study 3 were augmented by one item, resulting in a 7-item scale. All seven items are given in Appendix A; the new item was item 7.

Ray's (1983) Conservatism scale. Sample items of Ray's 22-item Conservatism scale (used in its entirety) were: "The government should do everything it can to eradicate poverty in this country" (−), and "Schoolchildren should have plenty of discipline" (+).

Comrey and Newmeyer's Radicalism–Conservatism scale. Comrey and Newmeyer (1965) developed two 30-item forms of their scale. Of these 60 items, 20 representative items were selected for use in this study. Examples: "Public libraries should contain only books which are morally sound" (+), "Our laws give too much protection to criminals" (+), "I would rather have a foreign power take over our country than start another world war to stop it" (−). As indicated by the scoring directions accompanying the preceding sample items, the 20 Comrey and Newmeyer items used were scored for conservatism in Study 4.

Measures of Psychopathology. Six of the measures used in Study 2 were used again in the present study. These were the Depression and Trait Anxiety scales (Mehrabian, 1995–1996), the Panic and Somatization scales (Mehrabian, 1994b), and the Alcohol and Drug Use scales (Mehrabian, 1994a).

The Social Desirability scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). The 33 items of this scale were exemplified by: "I always try to practice what I preach" (+), and "I like to gossip at times" (−).
Procedure

Participants were recruited individually by the laboratory assistants. Each participant was given a stapled packet of questionnaires selected by the experimenter along with the same instructions as in Study 3. Of the total group of participants, 72 were tested in our laboratory and administered all the questionnaires in the study. The remaining participants took the questionnaires home to complete at leisure and received only the Libertarianism and Conservatism scales of Appendix A, the demographic questionnaire, and the PAD scales. Nine of this group also completed the Mehrabian (1995–1996) Trait Anxiety and Depression scales. Of the 110 packets participants took home, 95 (86%) were completed and returned to the laboratory assistants.

Results and Discussion

Sample characteristics. Participant age had a mean value of 25 years ($SD = 9$). Parental income during the participant’s first 15 years of age averaged 5.1 ($SD = 1.5$) on a scale ranging from 1 (low) to 9 (high). Two $SD$s below and above the mean corresponded to a range from 2.1 (1.1 points above the poorest) to 8.1 (nearly one point below the wealthiest), showing a wide dispersion of family income, with a mean at middle-income level. Mean years of education was 16 ($SD = 1.4$) for the participant, 14 ($SD = 4.6$) for his or her mother, and 15.2 ($SD = 4.6$) for his or her father. Standard deviations of parents’ educational attainments were even greater than in Study 3, showing a wide dispersion of parental education levels. Overall, the participant sample represented a wide range of the socioeconomic spectrum, being skewed very slightly toward above average.

Composition and reliability of the Libertarianism–Totalitarianism scale. One of the 21 items in this scale, item I in Appendix A, had an absolute item–total scale correlation below .30 and was deleted from the scale. The final 20-item Libertarianism–Totalitarianism scale—composed of 10 positively and 10 negatively worded items (given in Appendix A)—had an alpha reliability coefficient of .81 and was balanced for response bias.

The 20-item Libertarianism scale was factor analyzed and a principal components solution was obtained. The eigenvalue plot and scree test (Cattell, 1988) showed a clear “elbow” at the third eigenvalue, suggesting a two-factor solution (eigenvalues for the first four factors were 4.8, 2.6, 1.4, and 1.3, respectively). Oblique rotation of two factors yielded a first factor, labeled totalitarianism, which included 12 items. These items, listed in order of the magnitudes of their loadings on factor 1, were numbers 18, 12, 15, 17, 2, 20, 11, 6, 3, 4, 10, and 9 (given in Appendix A). The second factor, labeled economic libertarianism, included the
following 8 items, listed in order of their factor loadings on Factor 2: 7, 13, 16, 14, 1, 8, 5, and 19 (in Appendix A).

The 12 items in Factor 1 (totalitarianism) were used to compute a total score for each participant on Factor 1. Similarly, the 8 items in Factor 2 (economic libertarianism) yielded a total score for each participant on Factor 2. As expected, total scores of the two factors correlated negatively \( r = -0.28, p < .05 \).

**Composition and reliability of the Conservatism–Liberalism scale.** All 7 items of the Conservatism scale had satisfactory item–total scale correlations, were retained, and are given in Appendix A. This scale was nearly balanced for response bias, being composed of 3 positively and 4 negatively worded items.

Principal components analysis of the 7 items showed a clear "elbow" at the second eigenvalue (eigenvalues for the first three factors were 3.1, 1.1, and 0.8, respectively), suggesting the scale was unidimensional. The alpha reliability coefficient for this 7-item Conservatism scale was a satisfactory .77.

**Reliabilities of all the remaining scales.** All remaining reliabilities are given in the footnote to Table 2.

**Interrelations among measures of libertarianism and conservatism.** The first six rows of Table 2 include correlations among the three Conservatism scales, ranging from .60 to .64 \( p < .05 \), showing convergent validity for the Conservatism scale in Appendix A. The Libertarianism scale (Appendix A) exhibited weak positive correlations with all three Conservatism scales: The Libertarianism/proposed Conservatism \( r = .22, df = 165, p < .05 \) and the Libertarianism/Comrey and Newmeyer (1965) Conservatism \( r = .41, df = 70, p < .05 \) correlations attained significance, whereas the Libertarianism/Ray (1983) Conservatism \( r = .22, df = 70, p > .05 \) correlation failed to achieve significance. Finally, Factor 1 (totalitarianism) of the Libertarianism scale exhibited negative significant relations with two of the three Conservatism scales, whereas Factor 2 (economic libertarianism) showed positive significant relations with the same two Conservatism scales.

As in Study 3, the Fisher \( r-t-z \) transformation was used to compare the libertarianism–conservatism (Appendix A) correlation for men only \( r = .22, df = 63, p < .07 \) with the corresponding correlation for women only \( r = .22, df = 97, p < .05 \). The obtained \( z \)-difference score of zero failed to achieve significance \( p > .05 \). Thus, findings were consistent across Studies 3 and 4, showing an absence of significant sex differences in the libertarianism–conservatism relation.

The libertarianism/conservatism relation was explored further by dividing participants into three groups (liberals, moderates, and conservatives) using the +1 and
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<th>Variable</th>
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<th>Libertarianism</th>
<th>Conservatism (Mehrabian)</th>
<th>Conservatism (Ray)</th>
<th>Conservatism (Comrey)</th>
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<td>.15*</td>
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Note. Correlations that attained the .05 level of significance are marked with an asterisk. Coefficient alpha scale reliabilities were as follows: Comrey and Newmeyer Conservatism (.67), Ray Conservatism (.65), Trait Pleasure (.94), Trait Arousalility (.89), Trait Dominance (.93), Extroversion (.91), Agreeableness (.90), Conscientiousness (.86), Emotional Stability (.83), Intellect (.90), Trait Anxiety (.91), Depression (.95), Panic (.86), Somatization (.69), Alcohol Use (.90), Drug Use (.89), Social Desirability (.77).
−1 standard deviation cutoffs on the Conservatism scale (Appendix A). ANOVA of libertarianism scores for these three groups yielded significance, $F(2, 164) = 6.1$, $p < .05$. Mean libertarianism scores were as follows: liberals 7, moderates 7, conservatives 22. Conservatives were significantly more libertarian than the combined group of liberals and moderates, $r(165) = 2.8$, $p < .01$, there being no significant difference between liberals and moderates in libertarianism.

The preceding analysis was replicated by categorizing participants into three groups using the +1 and −1 standard deviation cutoffs on the Comrey and Newmeyer (1965) Conservatism scale. ANOVA of libertarianism scores for the three groups yielded significance, $F(2, 69) = 11$, $p < .05$. Mean libertarianism scores of the three groups were as follows: liberals −1, moderates 5, conservatives 30. Conservatives were significantly more libertarian than the combined group of liberals and moderates, $r(70) = 3.8$, $p < .01$, with liberals and moderates not differing significantly on libertarianism.

When participants were categorized into three groups using Ray's (1983) Conservatism scale, ANOVA of libertarianism scores for the three groups also yielded significance, $F(2, 69) = 4$, $p < .05$. Mean libertarianism scores for the three groups were: liberals 6, moderates 4, conservatives 21. Conservatives were significantly more libertarian than the combined group of liberals and moderates, $r(70) = 3.4$, $p < .01$, with liberals and moderates not differing significantly on libertarianism.

**Demographics and political orientations.** The only significant correlations were between age and libertarianism ($r = .18$, $p < .05$) and positive correlations between religiousness and all three Conservatism scales (Table 2).

**Personality and psychopathy in relation to political orientations.** There was only one significant correlation: Conscientiousness correlated positively with the Comrey and Newmeyer (1965) Conservatism scale ($r = .24$, $p < .05$).

Correlations of Factor 1 (totalitarianism) and Factor 2 (economic libertarianism) of the Libertarianism–Totalitarianism scale with the temperament, personality, and psychopathy scales were also computed. Factor 2 (economic libertarianism) did not relate significantly to any of the three PAD temperament scales, the Big Five personality factors, or the measures of depression, trait anxiety, panic, somatization, alcohol use, and drug use. Factor 2 (totalitarianism) correlated negatively with extroversion ($r = −.25$, $p < .05$) and correlated positively with panic ($r = .31$, $p < .05$). Since a total of 28 correlations were tested for significance, 1.4 significant .05-level correlations could be expected on the basis of chance alone. Thus, the two significant correlations cannot be interpreted with confidence, particularly when data bearing on the more stable total scores of the Libertarianism scale produced no significant relationships with the temperament, personality, and psychopathy scales.
GENERAL DISCUSSION

Demographic Variables in Relation to Political Orientation

The present findings showed consistent positive relations between religiousness and conservatism and only weak positive relationships between age and income, on the one hand, and conservatism and libertarianism, on the other. In particular, political ideology and educational attainment of a participant or his or her parents were unrelated. Thus, only a small part of the variance in political orientations was explained in terms of the demographic variables explored.

Relation Between Conservatism–Liberalism and Libertarianism–Totalitarianism

In all four studies, the proposed Conservatism and Libertarianism scales had positive and significant intercorrelations ranging from .21 to .48. In addition, in Study 4, the Libertarianism scale correlated positively with the Comrey and Newmeyer (1965) Conservatism scale \( r = .41, p < .05 \), but did not yield a significant relation with Ray’s (1983) Conservatism scale \( r = .22, p > .05 \). Thus, across all four studies, a predominant pattern of findings (five out of six comparisons) ran counter to the hypothesized independence of libertarianism and conservatism and instead showed a positive relation between the two.

Detailed analysis of the conservatism/libertarianism relation across all four studies showed that moderates and liberals (categorized according to the Conservatism scale in Appendix A and, only in Study 4, also categorized according to the Comrey and Newmeyer scale or Ray’s scale) did not differ significantly in libertarianism; however, conservatives were consistently more libertarian (and less totalitarian) than moderates and liberals.

The present findings have an important implication regarding the effects of emerging third parties on the outcomes of major elections in the United States. When a third party incorporates libertarian-like themes, our positive conservatism/libertarianism correlation suggests that such a third party is likely to siphon off a significant segment of the conservative vote. Since most political races are won by a difference of a few percentage points, the emergence of libertarian-like third parties is likely to be significantly damaging to Republicans.

Temperament and Personality in Relation to Political Orientation

Three general systems of personality description were used: the PAD Temperament scales (all four studies), the Big Five personality factors (Studies 1 and 4), the
Wiggins et al. (1988) nurturance and dominance factors (Study 1). Neither one of Wiggins's factors related significantly to libertarianism or conservatism. Across four studies, the PAD scales yielded only one significant relation with the libertarianism and conservatism scales. Since a total of 30 relations were tested, the single unreplicated finding can be attributed to chance.

The Big Five factors also failed to yield significant relations with political attitudes. Again, since a total of 30 possible relations were explored, the significant negative intellect/conservatism correlation in Study 1 (not replicated in Study 4) and the significant positive conscientiousness/conservatism correlation in Study 4 (not replicated in Study 1) must be interpreted as chance results.

The absence of significant relations between personality factors and political orientations in the findings of these studies are in sharp contrast to the literature in this area. Generally, studies of personality characteristics of conservatives have relied on isolated aspects and measures of personality. In contrast, the four studies discussed in this article were designed to cast a broad net by incorporating three general systems of personality description and measurement. The obtained results were surprisingly consistent in showing an absence of significant patterns of relations between personality factors and conservative or libertarian political orientation.

Social Desirability in Relation to Political Orientation

Approval-seeking or the tendency to give socially desirable responses can be treated as a personality dimension, and had no significant relation to the Conservatism and Libertarianism scales (according to findings in Studies 1 and 4). This too was consistent with the absence of personality/political orientation relations. In addition, the low and nonsignificant correlations between the Social Desirability scale and the Libertarianism and Conservatism scales (Appendix A) show that the proposed scales were free of social desirability bias. Absence of a desirability bias in reference to the liberal or conservative pole of the Conservatism scale is not altogether unexpected, since political attitudes and voting statistics are generally equally divided between conservatism versus liberalism. However, developing a Libertarianism—Totalitarianism scale devoid of social desirability bias was a considerable challenge and results indicate that this particular objective was achieved.

Psychopathology in Relation to Political Orientation

Studies 2 and 4 yielded no significant relations of measures of trait anxiety, depression, panic, somatization, alcohol use and drug use with measures of political orientation. In addition, none of the four studies yielded significant relations between trait pleasure—displeasure (a very general measure of psychological adjustment—maladjustment) and measures of conservatism and libertarianism. In sum,
across the four studies, a total of 44 relations were assessed between various indicators of psychopathology and political orientations, and none of these were found to be significant—a highly consistent and striking result.

Conclusions

Personality, psychopathology, and substance abuse were assessed with a large variety of measures across the four studies: Results were consistent in showing a striking absence of consistent patterns of significant relations between these and conservatism—liberalism or libertarianism—totalitarianism. Considering the breadth of the instruments used, a clear implication of the results of these studies is that desirable or undesirable personality traits or various aspects of adjustment—maladjustment cannot be attributed to conservatives or liberals, or to libertarians or totalitarians. The sharp contrast between the present results and those reported in the previous literature must be attributed, in part, to the "file drawer effect," whereby nonsignificant personality/conservatism and psychopathology/conservatism findings were unreported, while isolated and somewhat unrelated significant results were published. Also, unlike contrary findings based on the Authoritarianism scale (e.g., Adorno et al., 1950), the present findings were obtained using scales that were free of social desirability bias. Finally, gradual shifts over the last few decades in the definitions and ideological ingredients of conservatism and liberalism could also account for differences in findings obtained here and in the earlier literature.

REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

The Final Libertarianism–Totalitarianism Scale

Please use the following scale to indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. Record your numerical answer to each statement in the space provided preceding the statement. Try to describe your attitudes accurately and generally.

+4 = very strong agreement
+3 = strong agreement
+2 = moderate agreement
+1 = slight agreement
0 = neither agreement nor disagreement
-1 = slight disagreement
-2 = moderate disagreement
-3 = strong disagreement
-4 = very strong disagreement

(+) ___ 1. Excessive taxation is a prime example of the way in which governments take away individual freedom.

(-) ___ 2. We need a stronger government to create a better society.

(+ ) ___ 3. Government programs discourage individual responsibility and achievement while fostering dependency and failure.

(-) ___ 4. In my kind of ideal society, all basic needs (food, housing, health care, education) will be guaranteed by the government for everyone.

(+ ) ___ 5. The more powerful a government becomes, the greater is the risk that it will become corrupt and unresponsive to the will of its people.

(-) ___ 6. A fair society is not possible without strict and comprehensive government controls.

(+ ) ___ 7. Individuals create wealth and governments tax it away to promote the interests of those in control.

(+ ) ___ 8. Individual freedom and opportunity are greater when government is smaller and less able to intervene in social and economic areas.

(-) ___ 9. Government laws and regulations make it possible to have a moral society.

(+ ) ___ 10. I am entitled only to the fruits of my own labor; not to that of others passed on to me through government handouts.

(-) ___ 11. I am willing to exchange my personal freedoms for greater security provided by government programs.

(-) ___ 12. We need strict government intervention to ensure that everyone will succeed socially and economically.
Typically, government agencies spend our money carelessly and wastefully, which is natural, since they don’t have to earn it.

Most of our economic woes are caused by repeated and massive government meddling in the economy.

Our government is not active enough; we need more laws and government programs to regulate and improve our lives and dealings with each other.

As a government gets bigger and more powerful, its citizens become poorer and less free.

For me, government-imposed social order and security are more important than individual freedom.

Our society can improve only with more government controls over individuals and businesses.

My ideal government would be very small and would only perform a very few essential functions.

Government must limit our individual freedoms so as to prevent unchecked selfishness, greed, and immorality.

The Final Conservatism–Liberalism Scale

I am politically more liberal than conservative.

In any election, given a choice between a Republican and a Democratic candidate, I will select the Republican over the Democrat.

Communism has been proven to be a failed political ideology.

I cannot see myself ever voting to elect conservative candidates.

The major national media are too left-wing for my taste.

Socialism has many advantages over capitalism.

On balance, I lean politically more to the left than to the right.

Norms and Required Scale Formats for Administration

Titles of the two scales and plus and minus scoring directions accompanying each item are omitted when the scales are administered to participants. The paragraph of instructions to participants and the 9-point response format given for the Libertarianism–Totalitarianism scale are applicable to the Conservatism–Liberalism scale as well. When, as would generally be the case, the scales are administered together, the instructions and participant response formats are described only once.

The mean for the Libertarianism–Totalitarianism scale is 9.5 ($SD = 9$). The mean for the Conservatism–Liberalism scale is −1 ($SD = 10$). Thus, the mean Libertarian score was .48 per item (equivalent to very slight agreement on average with items)
and the mean Conservatism score was \(-.14\) per item (neither agreement nor disagreement on average with items).

Deleted Items in Studies 3 and 4

Items A through H below for the Libertarianism–Totalitarianism scale had been included in Study 3, but were deleted from the scale following item analyses. Item I below was included in Study 4, but also was deleted following item analyses.

A. Whenever a segment of the population has a problem, government should step in and help solve it.

B. Individuals should be responsible for their own success or failure, instead of seeking government help and programs to bail them out.

C. Government programs, though well-meaning, are typically very costly and fail to produce the desired results.

D. The government must step in to educate and guide individuals to do the right thing.

E. Standards of political correctness are necessary to ensure that everyone is treated equally.

F. I would not mind living in a dictatorship, provided I agreed with its policies.

G. Powerful governments weaken opposition to higher taxes and to more government power by pitting groups against each other (e.g., rich vs. poor). This is the age-old technique of “divide and conquer.”

H. Politically correct speech, as currently enforced, is an infringement on free speech.

I. When people don’t have enough sense to know what is good for them, government must step in and, if necessary, use force to show them the way.