

# The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science

<http://ann.sagepub.com>

---

## Quick Read Synopsis

*The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 2007; 614; 213  
DOI: 10.1177/0002716207307213

The online version of this article can be found at:  
<http://ann.sagepub.com>

---

Published by:

 SAGE Publications

<http://www.sagepublications.com>

On behalf of:



[American Academy of Political and Social Science](#)

Additional services and information for *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* can be found at:

**Email Alerts:** <http://ann.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

**Subscriptions:** <http://ann.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

**Reprints:** <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

**Permissions:** <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

# QUICK READ SYNOPSIS

---

## The Biology of Political Behavior

*Special Editors:* JOHN R. HIBBING

and

KEVIN B. SMITH

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Volume 614, November 2007

Prepared by Herb Fayer, Jerry Lee Foundation

DOI: 10.1177/0002716207307213

---

## Testosterone and Aggression in a Simulated Crisis Game

Rose McDermott, University of California, Santa Barbara;  
Dominic Johnson, Princeton University; Jonathan Cowden,  
University of California, Santa Barbara; and Stephen Rosen,  
Harvard University

### *Background*

This study investigated the impact of testosterone on aggression in a crisis simulation game.

- The authors found a significant positive relationship between levels of testosterone and aggression.
- Men were much more likely to engage in aggressive action than women and more likely to lose their fights as well.
- The implications of the proper origin of aggression suggest different strategies for intervention; if social conditions are responsible for violence, then changing certain situational or institutional factors can reduce the incidence of death and destruction.
- However, if genetic predispositions and biochemical hormones play a decisive role, ethical intervention becomes more difficult to imagine.

### *Testosterone*

While it may be difficult to prove a direct relationship between testosterone and criminality, certain aggressive behaviors that can be exacerbated by high levels of testosterone tend to get men in trouble with the law.

- Prison studies, for example, show that high-testosterone men commit more violent crimes against other people, as opposed to property crimes, and act out more than lower-testosterone men.
- Men convicted of domestic violence also possess higher levels of testosterone and display greater physical violence than healthy controls.
- Testosterone also correlates with sensation seeking.

NOTE: The study looks at these hypotheses:

- Younger males will have higher testosterone and show greater aggression and older females will have higher testosterone (and lower estrogen) and show greater aggression.
- Individuals with higher levels of testosterone will be more likely to engage in aggressive action than those who possess relatively lower levels.

### Results

The following results came out of this study:

- *Testosterone and age*: The authors found a significant negative relationship between age and testosterone levels.
- *Testosterone and aggressive action*: Individuals with higher initial levels of testosterone were more likely to make an unprovoked attack on their opponent.

### Discussion

The findings in this study confirm several of the original hypotheses.

- Women clearly display a contrary dynamic to that of young men (who were more belligerent); however, *older* women are much more likely to engage in unprovoked attack than younger women.
- There is support for the hypothesis of a relationship between testosterone and aggressive action. However, there were no *within-sex* differences, so we do not know if aggression was driven by testosterone or by some other gender-specific factor.
- The authors did not find the expected relationship between testosterone and aggressive action.

## Genetic Configurations of Political Phenomena: New Theories, New Methods

Ira H. Carmen, University of Illinois

### Background

In this article, the author presents a new theory—sociogenomics—to replace the shopworn conceptions of yesterday's political science.

- He shows how social scientists can use the tools of molecular biology to flesh out the genes coding for baseline political attitudes/behaviors.
- The theory and methods of sociogenomics will serve to synthesize the social sciences with the natural sciences in a broader consilient framework, so that the laboratory of Darwinian investigation can become the laboratory of Aristotelian investigation.
- This article will engage the central issue for political science in our time: how can we construct an overarching paradigm for the grand purpose of at long last ending the interecine squabbles among those of us who believe in the scientific pursuit of things political?

NOTE: The waters are as murky as ever. The empiricism of behavioralism steeped in the premises and biases of social psychology and attitudinal inference has long since come under challenge from the deductivism of rational choice—steeped in the premises and biases of the economic marketplace and Rawlsian philosophy. The core thesis of this article is simply that these competing paradigms fail because they are not scientific *enough*.

### Genetics

Approximately thirty genes have been isolated in nonhuman species that, if isolated in *Homo sapiens*, would provide important information as to our political behavior repertoires.

- One notes fifteen gene-related sequences in the human with clear political implications.
- It is easy to spot the importance of the neurotransmitters serotonin and dopamine in influencing sociality.
  - A certain genetic promoter controls the serotonin transporter function.
  - A high correlation involving serotonin was reported for harm avoidance, especially worry, pessimism, fear of uncertainty, and fatigability.
  - Rather like serotonin, dopamine is one of those brain chemicals that needs to be at equilibrium in the typical case, or personality problems and worse arise.
  - Dopamine overload correlates with highly risky behavior: too much gambling, too much sex, too much drinking.

NOTE: Of course, it would be wrong to assume that “pure types” are forever gene-driven, that nothing will counterbalance their established mind-sets. Still, these efforts are corollary to the fundamental role of genetics in politics.

### God Gene

Perhaps the oddest, and certainly one of the most controversial, DNA sequences is Hamer's inaptly dubbed “God gene.”

- Some people display a greater sense of “self-transcendence” than others, what Hamer calls a sense of spirituality.
- Spirituality, he says, “provides a numerical measure of people’s capacity to reach out beyond themselves.”

### The Challenge

Ultimately, “The challenge is to link genes and their products into functional pathways, circuits, and networks” (Loomis and Sternberg 1995, 649).

- A proliferating literature in political science stresses the need to address decision making as a neuroscientific phenomenon.
- Experiments conjoining genetic and cranial parameters are needed.

### The Amygdala

The amygdala is a complex, socially relevant processing center, citations to which are just now beginning to appear in the political science literature.

- We now know through functional MRI amygdalar screenings that inhibited infants grow up generally to be “avoidance” adults, while uninhibited infants grow up generally to be novelty-seeking adults.
- To say that we need to appreciate the genetic mainsprings of amygdalar function is a gross understatement, though we have learned recently that the *stathmin* gene is highly expressed in the lateral nucleus of the mouse amygdala, and when this gene is knocked out, subjects do not respond either to learned or innate fear.

*The Future*

Access to the human genome, taken as a whole, provides parsimonious entrée to the investigation of complex traits of which human social behavior—human *political* behavior—is a prime example.

- Complex traits arise from a battery of genes acting together.
- Genes are no longer treated as static entities frozen in time.
- Some genes can be slipped into or out of animal models to pin down precise behavioral manifestations.
- Researchers scan the genome in search of precursor DNA chromosomal locations.
- At a higher level of magnitude, new theory also inspires new methods, and in this case, the breakthrough procedure of choice is called the microarray gene expression technology.
  - Microarrays have led to startling new genetic discoveries in nonhuman subjects.
  - Genes that exhibit different alleles in different people hold the secret to phenotypic variation.
- Eventually, political scientists working with biological scientists can commence to control for the role of each gene one by one, folding in as well interspecies and pedigree data.

## Balancing Ambition and Gender among Decision Makers

Christopher W. Larimer, University of Northern Iowa;  
Rebecca J. Hannagan, Northern Illinois University; and Kevin B. Smith,  
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

*Background*

Political theorists have recognized a paradox underlying the exercise of political power: citizens do not trust leaders perceived as desiring power, but those not desiring power are, by definition, unlikely to become political leaders.

- Political leaders who take up office as a burden of public service are viewed as more legitimate and trustworthy than those who are perceived to pursue power as an individual prize to be won.
- Overt ambition for power is clearly a political liability.

NOTE: This article builds a conceptual framework to explain why a universal predisposition to mistrust certain types of leaders might exist, what traits would trigger this mistrust, and how people would behaviorally respond.

*Gender*

Two potential reasons are forwarded to explain gender differences.

- Socialization, that is, that a system of gender-specific behavioral expectations or roles are institutionalized (invariably to the advantage of men and the disadvantage of women).
- There are innate psychological differences between males and females, products of evolved responses to differing adaptive problems (notably, though not exclusively, reproduction).

NOTE: Males are more competitive, physically aggressive, risk-tolerant, status-oriented, and oriented toward dominance. Given this, there is a high probability that a “big man”—a leader with negative ambition—is indeed going to be a male.

- Ambition* If negative ambition is a particularly male trait, reactions to ambition may be mediated by gender.
- Ambition in female decision makers may not prompt such severe leveling mechanism responses as those in males.
  - Female policy makers could conceivably even benefit from ambition if it is seen as a type of leveling mechanism itself.
  - The female candidate may actually have an advantage because negative ambition is so stereotypically male.
  - Women who are successful in gaining office and keeping it are often those who present themselves as having a clear and deliberate message and represent themselves as being as “independent a decision maker as any man, but more caring and trustworthy.”
- Hypotheses* The authors tested three types of hypotheses.
- The first concerns inferences about ambitious decision makers.
  - The second type of hypothesis concerns the choices people will make in selecting a decision maker for a group.
  - The third type of hypothesis concerns the reaction to unfair allocations.
- Conclusions* The findings of this study have significant implications for the study of trait inferences and mass political behavior.
- First, the authors provide a theory and empirical support for why the trait of ambition is important for candidate evaluation.
  - Second, they show that judgments of fairness and the behavioral consequences of those judgments are less about what people get from a decision maker and more about a specific set of decision-maker traits.
  - Third, their argument has important implications for research on gender stereotypes and representation.

---

## An Evolutionary Model of Racial Attitude Formation: Socially Shared and Idiosyncratic Racial Attitudes

Thomas Craemer, University of Connecticut

- Background* A growing body of research in political science and social psychology has uncovered evidence of a “split personality” among Americans when it comes to racial attitudes.
- People appear to voice different attitudes publicly than privately when given the opportunity to express their views anonymously.
  - This discrepancy is often interpreted as a social desirability effect among white Americans who engage in self-monitoring.

- Differences between implicit and explicit attitudes are often interpreted as a result of self-monitoring in response to a new, problack norm of “political correctness.”
- At present there is no theoretical model that could account for the emergence of a discrepancy between individual attitudes and social norms.
- This article provides a simple theoretical model of racial norms evolution that is based on a few simple assumptions about neural organization and social communication.

*Attitudes*

There is a two-by-two classification of attitudes:

- implicit idiosyncratic,
- explicit idiosyncratic,
- implicit socially shared, and
- explicit socially shared.

NOTE: Three of the above were considered in this study (implicit idiosyncratic, implicit socially shared, and explicit socially shared).

*Model Assumptions*

The theoretical model of racial norms evolution combines two assumptions of neural organization with one assumption about social communication processes.

- The first of these assumptions holds that perceptions of internal body states (“chemistry” or idiosyncratic attitudes) and perceptions of external stimuli (socially shared attitudes) are processed in different (yet interconnected) areas of the brain.
- The second assumption holds that both idiosyncratic and socially shared attitudes can become automatic through attitude rehearsal, that is, Hebbian Learning (frequent simultaneous activation of neurons leading to faster signal transmission).
- The third assumption of the model holds that social communication can produce social norms by virtue of a random evolutionary process first described by Kimura (1983) as “random drift.”

*Approach*

This article investigates the possibility that random norms evolution may help us explain the otherwise puzzling observation that people adjust their views to powerful social norms.

- If we assume that social norms are simply an additive function of individual attitudes, no systematic differences should occur between average idiosyncratic and average socially shared attitudes.
- In contrast, if we assume that an individual’s socially shared attitudes will differ from idiosyncratic ones due to the norms-generating effect of social communication, we would expect the two sets of attitudes to differ substantially.
- Simulations based on the random norms evolution model hold idiosyncratic attitudes constant while allowing for changes in socially shared attitudes due to random persuasion among neighbors.
- The simulation results are surprisingly similar to the observed college student experiment described in this article. No systematic racial bias is observable at the level of implicit idiosyncratic attitudes (implicit closeness),

while racial groups significantly differ in their explicit racial attitudes (explicit closeness). Further implicit socially shared attitudes display a universal prowhite and antiblack bias (racial priming).

- As a maximally parsimonious baseline model, the random racial norms evolution model suffices to produce considerable similarity between observed and simulated racial attitude data.
- Due to its parsimony, the model of racial norms evolution presented here may serve as a null model against which more complex models can be tested in the future.

---

## Neuroendocrine Mechanisms, Stress Coping Strategies, and Social Dominance: Comparative Lessons about Leadership Potential

William D. Anderson and Cliff H. Summers,  
University of South Dakota

### *Background*

This article broadly focuses on the likely neuroendocrine and neurochemical foundations for extreme leadership and subordination phenotypes.

- The concern is with leaders, followers, the creation of social dominance hierarchies, and traits and behaviors that drive individuals to leadership.
- The article addresses two extreme but useful cases of leadership and followership—social dominance orientation (SDO) and right-wing authoritarianism (RWA).
- The article diagrams likely neuroendocrine and neurochemical profiles for these dominance/subordination phenotypes.
- The article suggests two potentially fruitful directions for research.

### *Biology and Leadership*

The human personality traits most closely related with dominance and leadership—confidence, initiative, and extraversion—also have heritable hormonal and neurotransmitter antecedents.

- Among the potential hormones or neurotransmitters that might be studied, testosterone has received the most attention.
- Important other hormones—cortisol, for example—and neurotransmitters such as serotonin also likely influence leadership and subordination emergence and persistence.
- The mechanisms causing changes in concentrations of these hormones and neurotransmitters in the blood and brain appear to be caused by a confluence of genetic predisposition and environmental or social stresses.

### *SDO and RWA*

SDO and RWA, coupled with perceived threat or stress, have proven to be strong predictors of political attitudes and behaviors.

- After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Crowson, Debacker, and Thoma (2006, 746) found that both SDOs and RWAs were more supportive of restrictions on rights and the use of aggression in U.S. foreign policy.

- Moreover, SDOs and RWAs evince a preference for conservative over liberal political candidates.
- High SDOs emphasize group-based dominance and superiority.
- Individuals with higher SDO scale scores hold hostile worldviews and are prejudiced against those in identified out-groups.

NOTE: Taken together, the elements of the high-SDO leadership profile suggest predominately male individuals who lack a moral center and who disproportionately manipulate followers—even to those followers' harm—to achieve political and social ends.

*RWA People*

RWAs are “followers who have submissive attitudes toward established authorities, show a general aggressiveness toward persons ‘targeted by those authorities,’ and adhere to social conventions.”

*SDO People*

SDOs fit the profile of impulsive, proactive individuals that produce fits of unrestrained severe aggression but not affiliative or cooperative behavior.

*Next Steps*

The above suggested that dominance and subordination—or leadership and followership—have clear biological foundations. Hormone and neurotransmitter profiles for SDOs and RWAs are provided, and a series of potential research steps are offered to test the veracity of these suggested profiles.

- The first step to testing the hypothesized neurochemical profiles for SDOs and RWAs is to understand the basal neurochemical profiles for highly dominant, highly submissive, and healthy dominance–submission profiles.
- Although the tests suggested provide some elucidation of the neuroendocrine profiles that differentiate high SDOs and RWAs, a focus only on peripheral chemical messengers—such as androgens and glucocorticoids—is only preliminary.
- Real understanding of these behavioral phenotypes requires some measure of the subject's brain neurochemistry.
- Such an approach will allow us to make even stronger inferences about the neurochemical foundations for leadership, dominance, subordination, and any resulting political and social behaviors.

---

## The Political Consequences of Perceived Threat and Felt Insecurity

Leonie Huddy, Stanley Feldman, and Christopher Weber,  
Stony Brook University

*Background*

This study explores political reactions to threat and how a sense of security interacts with threat to influence support for national security policies.

- Personal threat increases one's sense of vulnerability and motivates individual action designed to minimize personal risk.

- Threat not only drives protective individual behaviors, it also promotes support for protective government policies. These include support for increased surveillance against current and potential Arab immigrants to the United States and policies that promise increased domestic safety.
  - But some individuals are able to maintain a sense of security even in the face of threatening events. This sense of security may undercut their need for protective personal and government policies in response to threatening events.

NOTE: The authors further explore the link between threat and support of national security policy by examining the extent to which it depends on a person's degree of felt security.

### *Adult Attachment*

Numerous scholars have explored the likely evolutionary advantage of adult attachment under conditions of threat.

- Adult attachment could improve human reproductive fitness through the process of kin selection by promoting the protection of those with whom one shares similar genes.
- Adult attachment could be a simple outgrowth of humans' protracted developmental period in infancy in which attachment is needed to protect offspring and stimulate complex social and cognitive skills.
- Adult attachment may foster long-lasting romantic and parenting relationships that may improve the fitness of one's offspring.

### *Hypotheses*

This research closely examines whether a sense of felt security provides a buffer against threatening events and reduces the need for government action to maintain a sense of safety.

- In essence, the authors test whether perceived threat coupled with a feeling of insecurity promotes support for policies that enhance domestic security but may reduce civil liberties, and leads to increased support for overseas military action.
- The authors supplement past findings with recent psychological insights from attachment and terror-management theories on the importance of felt security in dealing with stressful events.
- The authors focus specifically on the degree to which the political effects of threat depend on a sense of insecurity.
- The authors contrast the origins of felt security with other reactions to the 9/11 terrorist attacks and expect security to be less influenced by the details of the immediate event than anxiety and depression because it is based on a long-standing sense of secure attachment.
- Consistent with the predictions of attachment theory, the authors also expect felt security to moderate the influence of threat on anxiety.
- The authors examine whether a sense of security moderates the desire to bolster self-esteem through an increase in American patriotism and heightened denigration of outsiders, consistent with the expectations of a blended attachment–terror management approach.
- Finally, the authors evaluate whether felt security decreases the political effects of perceived threat on support of national security policy.

*Conclusion*

The current findings demonstrate that the greatest impact of threat is concentrated among individuals who had difficulty maintaining a sense of security in the months following the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

- Drawing on psychological attachment theory, the authors suggest that feelings of security are a long-standing individual characteristic that may derive from early childhood attachment experiences.
- Attachment theory indicates that most adults achieve a secure attachment, and this, in turn, improves their ability to deal with stress through imagined or real proximity to attachment figures.
- The authors uncover suggestive evidence consistent with attachment theory that felt security was not greatly affected by the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and was much less affected than other reactions such as anxiety or depression.
- Felt security helped to minimize feelings of anxiety and mitigated the need to elevate feelings of symbolic patriotism to cope with threat.

## A Dual-Edged Sword: Empathy and Collective Action in the Prisoner's Dilemma

John A. Sautter; Levente Littvay, Central European University;  
and Brennen Bearnes

*Background*

Researchers guided by evolutionary psychology have theorized that in an iterated Prisoner's Dilemma, reciprocal behavior is a product of evolutionary design, where individuals are guided by an innate sense of fairness.

- Results suggest that an empathetic disposition does not lead to a higher rate of cooperation but interacts with environmental conditioning to produce either a highly cooperative or highly uncooperative personality type.
- Evolutionary theory posits that group-level selection gives humans a propensity for cooperative behavior in the absence of selective incentives by equipping the human mind with prosocial emotions.
- Some people get more satisfaction than others out of political participation or paying attention to civic issues.

NOTE: The Prisoner's Dilemma framework is ideal for a test of prosocial emotional disposition in an incentive-based game because it is simple enough for those first exposed to it in an experimental setting to comprehend, yet theoretically sophisticated enough to allow a rich interpretation of the results.

*Evolution and Empathy*

Evolution has cultivated a multitude of personality traits that vary among humans.

- Whether an individual is more of a rational calculator or an empathetic altruist, both would have played an important role in collective success in humans' distant past.
- Geneticists have found important links between genes and behavior.
  - Studies of autism, violent behavior, and other asocial disorders indicate that genetic inheritance is an important determinant of patterns of behavior.
- Prosocial personality traits have also been connected to an individual's genetic makeup.

- It is likely that genetic inheritance of behavioral traits affects the preferences that individuals form for cooperative social behavior.

NOTE: Empathy is arguably one of the most important socioemotional experiences because it provides the impetus and mental processes involved in “the effort to understand the internal mental and emotional events of other human beings” (Rosenberg 1990, 8).

### *Hypotheses*

There are two empathetic hypotheses presented in this article.

- A more robust empathetic psychological disposition will lead to higher rates of “punishment” (or mutual defection) in the face of defection by an opposing player.
  - The study shows that a participant’s empathetic disposition was a significant predictor of defection in retaliation to the opposing player’s second-stage defections.
- Empathy will predict more forgiving behavior during a period when the opposing player attempts to reestablish mutual cooperation.
  - Here the study indicates that even marginal levels of empathy led to more defection in the final rounds of the experiment.

### *Conclusion*

Judging by this experiment, empathy seems to have a bipolar nature.

- Higher rates of empathy tended to have two contrary effects by either making an individual more likely to defect or more likely to cooperate but not to converge toward the median level of cooperation as the majority of participants in this experiment.
- Contrary to the hypotheses originally being tested, it is not that empathy has a simple positive linear relationship with a desire for egalitarian outcomes; rather, an empathetic emotional disposition likely cultivates a sensitivity to social decisions, which, depending on an individual’s social conditioning, leads to a more intense display of cooperation and defection.

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

Jennifer Wolak, University of Colorado at Boulder;  
and George E. Marcus, Williams College

### *Background*

In this article, the authors investigate what role personality has in the operation of the systems of affective intelligence.

- The authors first consider whether personality affects the activation of emotional response.
- They explore the degree to which citizen attitudes like openness to information and compromise are explained by personality characteristics and subconscious emotional response.
- They consider the implications of these results for our normative understanding of democratic citizenship.
- Thus, this article considers the personality roots of emotional response.

*Emotion's Use*

When confronted with familiar friends or foes, people rely on an appraisal system that uses variations in the emotions of enthusiasm and anger to deliver assessments of the situation and guide habitual routines to manage such recurring events.

- These feelings guide our reliance on existing habits.
- As anxiety increases, people become more attentive to the immediate circumstances and rely on expressly deliberative strategies rather than continued reliance on habitual responses.
- Preconscious affective appraisal systems provide a potent dual capacity, distinguishing the situations when previously learned routines are suitable from the contexts where greater attentiveness and consideration are needed.

*Citizenship*

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 differences can drive candidate evaluations and party preferences.
- People's willingness to extend rights to disliked groups can also depend on personality.
- Authoritarian predispositions combine with perceptions of threat to influence views on civil liberties and race.
- Dogmatism associated with authoritarianism can limit political tolerance.
- Personality differences have also been shown to influence people's levels of political engagement.
- Individual differences in the need to evaluate help explain political activism and opinionation.

NOTE: These accounts suggest important individual differences in reactivity to political signals. In this study, the authors 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. Second, once they become attentive, people need to speak up and 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 to remain steadfastly loyal to the cause.

*Personality Effects*

The authors focus on four personality characteristics: neuroticism, extroversion, openness, and authoritarianism.

- 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.
- Authoritarianism is a personality trait associated with support for social conventions and respect for authorities.

*Personality and Citizenship* The next considerations are 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.

- Anxiety prompts greater interest in learning more about the policy issue, confirming prior affective intelligence findings.
- There are significant direct effects of personality on citizenship behavior beyond any contribution via emotional engagement.
- Here, the authors 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.

NOTE: Thus, personality plays a modestly greater role 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.

*Conclusion* Overall, the authors found modest evidence that the activation of the emotional surveillance system depends on personality differences, where the joint interaction of extraversion and neuroticism heightens anxiety responses.

- In the practice of citizenship, they found mixed evidence of the influence of personality traits.
- When it comes to matters of compromise and political participation, traits tend to propel people along particular deliberative paths.
- The effects of traits depend on both the citizenship behavior and the nature of policy threat.

NOTE: Overall, while the authors found some influence of personality traits in the triggering of emotional response and the practice of political citizenship, neither is determined by these prior predispositions.

## Personal, Interpersonal, and Political Temperaments

John R. Alford, Rice University; and John R. Hibbing,  
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

*Background* Research in behavioral genetics and elsewhere increasingly indicates a biological basis for the manner in which people behave in personal, interpersonal, and political situations, but this biological basis does not mean behavior in these three very different contexts is correlated.

- This article tests for the degree to which personal, interpersonal, and political temperaments are related.
- As expected, the overall correlations are quite low—standard personality traits do not predict political attitudes, and neither political attitudes nor personality predicts the extent to which subjects are generous in interpersonal situations.

*The Three  
Temperaments*

- Behavior is partially biological, but the systems involved in shaping political behavior seem to be largely, but not completely, distinct from those involved in shaping personal and interpersonal behavior.

This article argues that the behaviors of an individual are not influenced solely by the personal temperaments traditionally studied by psychologists but also by reasonably distinct interpersonal and political temperaments that operate alongside personal.

- Personal temperaments are predispositions (e.g., fastidiousness) that can manifest themselves even when other people are not present.
- Interpersonal temperaments are predispositions (e.g., extroversion) that are at least dyadic in that they involve at a minimum one person in the immediate social environment.
- Political temperaments (e.g., conservatism) are those that apply to the governance of large-scale social life—life beyond one's immediate social environment—and involve the norms, mores, and statutes that govern large-scale social life: norms and statutes that do not only apply to people well known and close by but also unknown and far away.

*Temperament  
Links*

There are three possible links among these temperament categories:

- the link between the personal and the political,
- the link between the personal and the interpersonal, and
- the link between the interpersonal and the political.

NOTE: This article looks at each of these links and the available research.

*Key Results*

Individuals' preferences for the conduct of their personal lives are only weakly predictive of their preferences for both large-scale societal organization and behaviors in concrete, small-scale social situations.

- The real message is that people's personal behaviors are quite different from the behaviors they advocate for society as a whole.
- To the extent that political and interpersonal temperaments do not correlate with personal temperament, these areas of study must be undertaken with separate approaches, theories, and expectations.

*Discussion*

The findings hold little hope for any of the current hypotheses.

- Deeply encoded, stable personality traits offer little predictive purchase on self-sacrificing prosocial behavior; ideology fares no better.
- The authors view ideology as being no less deeply encoded in the genes and brains of humans than personality and are not harnessed to a conception that yields clear centrality to personality as an explanatory variable on the basis of its presumed unique deep encoding.
- Placing both personality and something as presumably abstract as ideology abreast of each other in terms of their level of biological encoding, and hence temporal priority, allows for an alternative view of the sources of interpersonal generosity.
- Rather than arising from either of these deeply encoded temperaments, interpersonal generosity may arise from a conceptually distinct third deeply encoded temperament.
- If each of these distinct realms of human nature originates at a similarly deep level, then there is no reason to suppose that they must be closely correlated.