**SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL**

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# **A: Study 1**

## **A.1: Context and data**

The European Parliament election took place on June 4th 2009. During and after the European Parliament election campaign in 2009, panel data was collected from a high-quality true probability sample of the population in the Netherlands, namely the Longitudinal Internet Studies for the Social Sciences (LISS). The LISS panel consists of around 8,000 individuals aged 16 years or older.

In April 2009, during the early stage of the election campaign, subjects were asked different questions related to the campaign. Important for the present study, in June 2009, i.e. after the election, subjects were interviewed again. This data is used to create a within subjects measure of changes in political interest from the campaign to after the campaign. Accordingly, the parameter of interest in this study is whether Openness can account for this change.

Political interest is measured with a 7-point scale asking the respondents to indicate their degree of interest in politics. Importantly, the question is identical in both waves and not specifically related to the election. The main outcome of interest in this setting is the difference between the two waves. Personality traits are measured using 50 items from the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) (Goldberg 1992). The traits are measured in a separate wave of the panel in May 2009 (from the 4th of May to the 27th of May).

For additional information on the dataset, see https://www.lissdata.nl/.

## **A.2: Question wording**

**Table A.1:** Question wording, variables and answers, LISS

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Title | Variable | Question | Answers |
| Political interest | ay09a018ay09b018 | Can you indicate your degree of interest in politics? | From “not at all interested” [1] to “very much intersted” [7] |
| Ideology | cv10c101 | Where would you place yourself on the scale below, where 0 means left and 10 means right? | From “left” [0] to “right” [10] |
| *Personality* |  |  |  |
| Openness | cp09b024cp09b029cp09b034cp09b039cp09b044cp09b049cp09b054cp09b059cp09b064cp09b069 | - Have a rich vocabulary.- Have difficulty understanding abstract ideas.- Have a vivid imagination.- Am not interested in abstract ideas.- Have excellent ideas.- Do not have a good imagination.- Am quick to understand things.- Use difficult words.- Spend time reflecting on things.- Am full of ideas. | From “very inaccurate” [1] to “very accurat” [5] |
| Conscientiousness | cp09b022cp09b027cp09b032cp09b037cp09b042cp09b047cp09b052cp09b057cp09b062cp09b067 | - Am always prepared.- Leave my belongings around.- Pay attention to details.- Make a mess of things.- Get chores done right away.- Often forget to put things back in their proper place.- Like order.- Shirk my duties.- Follow a schedule.- Am exacting in my work. |  |
| Extraversion | cp09b020cp09b025cp09b030cp09b035cp09b040cp09b045cp09b050cp09b055cp09b060cp09b065 | - Am the life of the party.- Don't talk a lot.- Feel comfortable around people.- Keep in the background.- Start conversations.- Have little to say.- Talk to a lot of different people at parties.- Don't like to draw attention to myself.- Don't mind being the center of attention.- Am quiet around strangers. |  |
| Agreeableness | cp09b021cp09b026cp09b031cp09b036cp09b041cp09b046cp09b051cp09b056cp09b061cp09b066 | - Feel little concern for others.- Am interested in people.- Insult people.- Sympathize with others' feelings.- Am not interested in other people's problems.- Have a soft heart.- Am not really interested in others.- Take time out for others.- Feel others' emotions.- Make people feel at ease. |  |
| Neuroticism | cp09b023cp09b028cp09b033cp09b038cp09b043cp09b048cp09b053cp09b058cp09b063cp09b068 | - Get stressed out easily.- Am relaxed most of the time.- Worry about things.- Seldom feel blue.- Am easily disturbed.- Get upset easily.- Change my mood a lot.- Have frequent mood swings.- Get irritated easily.- Often feel blue. |  |

## **A.3: Descriptive statistics**

|  |
| --- |
| **Table A.2:** Summary statistics, LISS |
|  |
| Statistic | N | Mean | St. Dev. | Min | Pctl(25) | Median | Pctl(75) | Max |
|  |
| Political interest, campaign | 4,333 | 3.98 | 1.66 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 |
| Political interest, non-campaign | 4,333 | 3.73 | 1.64 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 7 |
| Openness | 4,333 | -0.002 | 0.50 | -2.04 | -0.40 | 0.02 | 0.32 | 1.55 |
| Conscientiousness | 4,333 | 0.02 | 0.50 | -2.00 | -0.29 | -0.002 | 0.38 | 1.24 |
| Extraversion | 4,333 | -0.01 | 0.50 | -1.80 | -0.29 | 0.03 | 0.34 | 1.38 |
| Agreeableness | 4,333 | 0.004 | 0.50 | -2.44 | -0.28 | 0.02 | 0.33 | 1.15 |
| Neuroticism | 4,333 | 0.001 | 0.50 | -1.19 | -0.36 | -0.06 | 0.32 | 1.83 |
| Male | 4,333 | 0.47 | 0.50 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Age | 4,333 | 48.49 | 15.91 | 18 | 37 | 49 | 61 | 95 |
| Ideology | 3,306 | 5.22 | 2.12 | 0.00 | 4.00 | 5.00 | 7.00 | 10.00 |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Table A.3:** Correlation matrix, LISS |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (8) | (9) | (10) |
|  |
| (1) Political interest, campaign | 1 | 0.77 | 0.30 | 0.10 | 0.11 | 0.05 | -0.11 | 0.25 | 0.21 |
| (2) Political interest, non-campaign | 0.77 | 1 | 0.28 | 0.09 | 0.11 | 0.05 | -0.10 | 0.22 | 0.19 |
| (3) Openness | 0.30 | 0.28 | 1 | 0.21 | 0.33 | 0.24 | -0.18 | 0.10 | -0.13 |
| (4) Conscientiousness | 0.10 | 0.09 | 0.21 | 1 | 0.10 | 0.30 | -0.22 | -0.07 | 0.19 |
| (5) Extraversion | 0.11 | 0.11 | 0.33 | 0.10 | 1 | 0.31 | -0.25 | 0.01 | -0.09 |
| (6) Agreeableness | 0.05 | 0.05 | 0.24 | 0.30 | 0.31 | 1 | -0.04 | -0.32 | 0.06 |
| (7) Neuroticism | -0.11 | -0.10 | -0.18 | -0.22 | -0.25 | -0.04 | 1 | -0.17 | -0.08 |
| (8) Male | 0.25 | 0.22 | 0.10 | -0.07 | 0.01 | -0.32 | -0.17 | 1 | 0.08 |
| (9) Age | 0.21 | 0.19 | -0.13 | 0.19 | -0.09 | 0.06 | -0.08 | 0.08 | 1 |
|  |

*Reliability scores (Cronbach's alpha)*

* Openness: 0.77
* Conscientiousness: 0.79
* Extraversion: 0.87
* Agreeableness: 0.81
* Neuroticism: 0.88

## **A.4: Main models**

|  |
| --- |
| **Table A.4**: Effect of personality traits on changes in political interest, OLS |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) |
|  |
| Openness | 0.10\*\*\* (0.03) | 0.09\*\* (0.04) | 0.08\* (0.05) |
| Conscientiousness |  | -0.003 (0.04) | 0.04 (0.04) |
| Extraversion |  | -0.004 (0.04) | 0.03 (0.04) |
| Agreeableness |  | 0.01 (0.04) | 0.01 (0.05) |
| Neuroticism |  | 0.0001 (0.04) | 0.04 (0.04) |
| Male |  | 0.09\*\* (0.04) | 0.12\*\*\* (0.04) |
| Age |  | 0.002\* (0.001) | 0.002\* (0.001) |
| Edu: Intermediate secondary |  | -0.19\*\* (0.10) | -0.10 (0.12) |
| Edu: Higher secondary |  | -0.15 (0.11) | -0.07 (0.13) |
| Edu: Intermediate vocational |  | -0.14 (0.10) | -0.03 (0.12) |
| Edu: Higher vocational |  | -0.07 (0.10) | 0.002 (0.12) |
| Edu: University |  | -0.17 (0.11) | -0.11 (0.13) |
| Edu: Other |  | 0.13 (0.17) | 0.26 (0.21) |
| Edu: Not completed |  | 0.10 (0.79) | 0.22 (0.78) |
| Edu: Not started |  | -0.06 (0.43) | -0.04 (0.56) |
| Ideology |  |  | -0.004 (0.01) |
| Constant | 0.25\*\*\* (0.02) | 0.24\*\* (0.12) | 0.14 (0.15) |
|  |
| Observations | 4,333 | 4,333 | 3,306 |
| Adjusted R2 | 0.002 | 0.005 | 0.004 |
| Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.Baseline for education is primary school.\* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. |

## **A.5: Results with Openness items**

|  |
| --- |
| **Table A.5**: Effects of Openness items on changes in political interest |
| Item  | Estimate  | SE | p-value  |
| Rich vocabulary  | 0.05 | 0.02 | 0.01 |
| Vivid imagination  | 0.05 | 0.02 | 0.01 |
| Excellent ideas  | 0.07 | 0.02 | 0.00 |
| Quick to understand things  | 0.04 | 0.02 | 0.15 |
| Use difficult words  | 0.04 | 0.02 | 0.03 |
| Reflect on things  | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.42 |
| Full of ideas  | 0.04 | 0.02 | 0.05 |
| Understand abstract ideas  | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.37 |
| Interested in abstract ideas  | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.67 |
| Good imagination  | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.59 |

# **B: Study 2a**

## **B.1: Context and data**

Study 2a uses panel data from the Swiss Electoral Studies collected before and after the 2015 Swiss federal election. The dataset provides identical measures of political interest just before and after the election on the same set of respondents. The election took place on 18th of October and interviews ended on the day of the election and began in the next wave on 19th of October.

The main outcome of interest in this setting is the difference in political interest between the two waves. Political interest is measured with the question ‘How interested are you in politics in general?’ on a 4 point scale ranging from ‘Not at all interested’ to ‘Very interested’. Personality traits are measured with 15 questions where the three questions on Openness relate to the respondent being highly imaginative, appreciates artistic experiences and is original and has new ideas. The estimation procedure is identical to the logic described in Study 1.

For additional information on the dataset, see https://forscenter.ch/projects/selects/.

## **B.2: Question wording**

**Table B.1:** Question wording, variables and answers, SELECTS

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Title | Variable | Question | Answers |
| Political interest | W2\_f10100W3\_f10100 | How interested are you in politics in general? | From “Not at all interested” [1] to “Very interested” [4] |
| Ideology | f15201 | In politics one sometimes speaks of "left" and "right". Where would you rank your political position on a scale from 0 to 10? | From “Left” [0] to “Right” [10] |
| *Personality* |  | Now a few statements. Please indicate to each of them how much the statement applies to you or not. I am a person who ... | From “Does not apply at all” [1] to “Applies perfectly” [10] |
| Openness | W3\_f15771aW3\_f15771fW3\_f15770d | - Appreciates artistic experiences- Highly imaginative- Original and has new ideas |  |
| Conscientiousness | W3\_f15770aW3\_f15770gW3\_f15771c | - Works thoroughly- Rather lazy- Completes tasks effectively |  |
| Extraversion | W3\_f15770bW3\_f15770hW3\_f15771d | - Talkative- Sociable- Reserved |  |
| Agreeableness | W3\_f15770cW3\_f15770fW3\_f15771e | - At times too harsh with others- Is able to forgive- Considerate and friendly with others |  |
| Neuroticism | W3\_f15770eW3\_f15771bW3\_f15771g | - Worries often- Easily nervous- Relaxed and deals well with stress |  |

## **B.3: Descriptive statistics**

|  |
| --- |
| **Table B.2:** Summary statistics, SELECTS |
|  |
| Statistic | N | Mean | St. Dev. | Min | Pctl(25) | Median | Pctl(75) | Max |
|  |
| Political interest, campaign | 6,153 | 2.95 | 0.74 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Political interest, non-campaign | 6,153 | 2.95 | 0.74 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Openness | 6,153 | 0.01 | 0.50 | -1.72 | -0.37 | -0.01 | 0.35 | 0.99 |
| Conscientiousness | 6,153 | 0.003 | 0.49 | -2.31 | -0.31 | 0.04 | 0.39 | 0.75 |
| Extraversion | 6,153 | 0.003 | 0.50 | -1.79 | -0.35 | 0.03 | 0.31 | 1.08 |
| Agreeableness | 6,153 | 0.0003 | 0.50 | -2.23 | -0.29 | 0.04 | 0.36 | 0.90 |
| Neuroticism | 6,153 | 0.001 | 0.50 | -1.21 | -0.33 | 0.02 | 0.38 | 1.44 |
| Male | 6,142 | 0.53 | 0.50 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Age | 6,125 | 49.60 | 16.28 | 17.00 | 37.00 | 51.00 | 62.00 | 95.00 |
| Education | 6,110 | 8.58 | 3.33 | 2.00 | 5.00 | 9.00 | 12.00 | 13.00 |
| Ideology | 5,780 | 5.27 | 2.52 | 0.00 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 7.00 | 10.00 |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Table B.3:** Correlation matrix, SELECTS |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) |
|  |
| (1) Political interest, campaign | 1 | 0.82 | 0.11 | 0.04 | 0.09 | -0.01 | -0.08 | 0.17 | 0.27 | 0.18 |
| (2) Political interest, non-campaign | 0.82 | 1 | 0.09 | 0.05 | 0.10 | -0.01 | -0.10 | 0.17 | 0.27 | 0.17 |
| (3) Openness | 0.11 | 0.09 | 1 | 0.13 | 0.28 | 0.10 | -0.04 | -0.03 | 0.01 | 0.12 |
| (4) Conscientiousness | 0.04 | 0.05 | 0.13 | 1 | 0.20 | 0.22 | -0.13 | -0.07 | 0.05 | -0.01 |
| (5) Extraversion | 0.09 | 0.10 | 0.28 | 0.20 | 1 | 0.05 | -0.20 | -0.09 | -0.07 | 0.02 |
| (6) Agreeableness | -0.01 | -0.01 | 0.10 | 0.22 | 0.05 | 1 | -0.15 | -0.14 | -0.01 | -0.005 |
| (7) Neuroticism | -0.08 | -0.10 | -0.04 | -0.13 | -0.20 | -0.15 | 1 | -0.13 | -0.05 | -0.09 |
| (8) Male | 0.17 | 0.17 | -0.03 | -0.07 | -0.09 | -0.14 | -0.13 | 1 | 0.08 | 0.11 |
| (9) Age | 0.27 | 0.27 | 0.01 | 0.05 | -0.07 | -0.01 | -0.05 | 0.08 | 1 | -0.09 |
| (10) Education | 0.18 | 0.17 | 0.12 | -0.01 | 0.02 | -0.005 | -0.09 | 0.11 | -0.09 | 1 |
|  |

*Reliability scores (Cronbach's alpha)*

* Openness: 0.64
* Conscientiousness: 0.52
* Extraversion: 0.65
* Agreeableness: 0.43
* Neuroticism: 0.62

## **B.4: Main models**

|  |
| --- |
| **Table B.4**: Effect of personality traits on changes in political interest, OLS |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) |
|  |
| Openness | 0.03\*\* (0.01) | 0.03\*\* (0.01) | 0.02\* (0.01) |
| Conscientiousness |  | -0.01 (0.01) | -0.01 (0.01) |
| Extraversion |  | -0.02 (0.01) | -0.02 (0.01) |
| Agreeableness |  | 0.002 (0.01) | -0.005 (0.01) |
| Neuroticism |  | 0.02 (0.01) | 0.01 (0.01) |
| Male |  | 0.005 (0.01) | 0.003 (0.01) |
| Age |  | 0.0003 (0.0004) | 0.0002 (0.0004) |
| Education |  | 0.001 (0.002) | 0.002 (0.002) |
| Ideology |  |  | -0.002 (0.002) |
| Constant | 0.001 (0.01) | -0.03 (0.02) | -0.03 (0.03) |
|  |
| Observations | 6,272 | 6,071 | 5,704 |
| Adjusted R2 | 0.001 | 0.001 | 0.001 |
|  |
| Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. |

## **B.5: Results with Openness items**

|  |
| --- |
| **Table B.5**: Effects of Openness items on changes in political interest |
| Item  | Estimate  | SE | p-value  |
| Appreciates artistic experiences  | 0.03  | 0.01  | 0.01  |
| Highly imaginative  | 0.01  | 0.01  | 0.29  |
| Original and has new ideas  | 0.02  | 0.01  | 0.14  |

# **C. Study 2b**

## **C.1: Context and data**

Study 2b examines the Swiss federal election in 2011 as a quasi-experiment. The data stems from Swiss Household Panel (SHP) and was collected during the period in which the election took place, the 23rd of October. To ensure that other events cannot account for any of the results here, I focus on respondents interviewed one week before and one week after the election. Respondents interviewed on the day of the election are not included. The focus on this brief period ensures that any potential effects can be attributed to the election.

The personality traits are measured with the short Big Five Inventory (BFI-10, Rammstedt and John 2007). These traits are measured in the 2009 wave, i.e. two years prior to the election. Political interest is measured with an 11-point scale asking subjects about their interest in politics, ranging from not at all interested to very interested.

For additional information on the dataset, see https://forscenter.ch/projects/swiss-household-panel/.

## **C.2: Question wording**

**Table C.1:** Question wording, variables and answers, SHP

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Title | Variable | Question | Answers |
| Political interest | p11p01 | Interest in politics | From “not at all interested” [0] to “very interested” [10] |
| Political interest, placebo | p10p01 |  |  |
| Campaign | month11day11 |  |  |
| Male | sex11 | Gender of respondent | Male [1], Female [0] |
| Age | age11 | Age in years |  |
| Education | edu\_1\_09 | Highest level of education achieved. | From incomplete compulsory school to university. |
| Ideology | p09p10 | When they talk about politics, people mention left and right. Personally, where do you position yourself, 0 means "left" and 10 "right"? | From “left” [0] to “right” [10] |
|  |  |  |  |
| *Personality* |  | I see myself as someone who |  |
| Openness | p09c64p09c69 | ... has an active imagination.... has artistic interests. | From “completely disagree” [0] to “completely agree” [10] |
| Conscientiousness | p09c62p09c67 | ... does a thorough job.... tends to be lazy. |  |
| Extraversion | p09c60p09c65 | ... is reserved.... is outgoing, sociable. |  |
| Agreeableness | p09c61p09c66 | ... is generally trusting.... tends to find fault with others. |  |
| Neuroticism | p09c63p09c68 | ... is relaxed, handles stress well.... gets nervous easily. |  |

## **C.3: Descriptive statistics**

**Table C.2:** Summary statistics, SHP

|  |
| --- |
|  |
| Statistic | N | Mean | St. Dev. | Min | Pctl(25) | Median | Pctl(75) | Max |
|  |
| Election | 1,002 | 0.56 | 0.50 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Political interest | 1,002 | 5.10 | 2.88 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 10 |
| Political interest, placebo | 969 | 5.38 | 2.74 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 10 |
| Male | 1,002 | 0.45 | 0.50 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Age | 1,002 | 44.80 | 17.48 | 16 | 31 | 46 | 57 | 95 |
| Education | 1,001 | 5.14 | 3.19 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 10 |
| Ideology | 857 | 4.85 | 2.01 | 0.00 | 4.00 | 5.00 | 6.00 | 10.00 |
| Openness | 1,002 | 0.02 | 0.50 | -1.69 | -0.35 | 0.05 | 0.46 | 0.99 |
| Conscientiousness | 1,002 | -0.01 | 0.49 | -2.26 | -0.30 | 0.03 | 0.36 | 0.85 |
| Extraversion | 1,002 | 0.03 | 0.49 | -1.49 | -0.30 | 0.10 | 0.37 | 0.90 |
| Agreeableness | 1,002 | 0.01 | 0.48 | -1.88 | -0.29 | 0.06 | 0.42 | 1.12 |
| Neuroticism | 1,002 | 0.01 | 0.48 | -1.45 | -0.29 | 0.003 | 0.29 | 1.02 |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Table C.3**: Correlation matrix, SHP |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) |
|  |
| (1) Election | 1 | 0.10 | 0.06 | 0.07 | 0.09 | 0.03 | -0.06 | 0.001 | -0.07 | 0.01 | 0.003 |
| (2) Political interest | 0.10 | 1 | 0.83 | 0.19 | 0.26 | 0.30 | 0.05 | 0.04 | -0.001 | 0.01 | 0.05 |
| (3) Political interest, placebo | 0.06 | 0.83 | 1 | 0.18 | 0.30 | 0.32 | 0.05 | 0.04 | -0.003 | 0.02 | 0.08 |
| (4) Male | 0.07 | 0.19 | 0.18 | 1 | 0.02 | 0.09 | -0.13 | -0.04 | -0.05 | 0.01 | 0.16 |
| (5) Age | 0.09 | 0.26 | 0.30 | 0.02 | 1 | 0.32 | -0.01 | 0.23 | -0.14 | 0.13 | 0.02 |
| (6) Education | 0.03 | 0.30 | 0.32 | 0.09 | 0.32 | 1 | 0.08 | 0.20 | -0.05 | -0.003 | 0.07 |
| (7) Openness | -0.06 | 0.05 | 0.05 | -0.13 | -0.01 | 0.08 | 1 | 0.11 | 0.22 | 0.10 | 0.09 |
| (8) Conscientiousness | 0.001 | 0.04 | 0.04 | -0.04 | 0.23 | 0.20 | 0.11 | 1 | 0.15 | 0.28 | 0.20 |
| (9) Extraversion | -0.07 | -0.001 | -0.003 | -0.05 | -0.14 | -0.05 | 0.22 | 0.15 | 1 | 0.16 | 0.19 |
| (10) Agreeableness | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.01 | 0.13 | -0.003 | 0.10 | 0.28 | 0.16 | 1 | 0.21 |
| (11) Neuroticism | 0.003 | 0.05 | 0.08 | 0.16 | 0.02 | 0.07 | 0.09 | 0.20 | 0.19 | 0.21 | 1 |
|  |

*Reliability scores (Cronbach's alpha)*

* Openness: 0.34
* Conscientiousness: 0.39
* Extraversion: 0.50
* Agreeableness: 0.15
* Neuroticism: 0.52

## **C.4: Main models**

|  |
| --- |
| **Table C.4**: Heterogeneous effect of personality traits, SHP, OLS |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|  |
| Election | 0.35\*\* (0.16) | 0.40\*\* (0.17) | 0.40\*\* (0.17) | 0.41\*\* (0.18) |
| Male | 1.01\*\*\* (0.17) | 1.01\*\*\* (0.17) | 1.00\*\*\* (0.17) | 0.77\*\*\* (0.18) |
| Age | 0.03\*\*\* (0.005) | 0.03\*\*\* (0.01) | 0.03\*\*\* (0.01) | 0.04\*\*\* (0.01) |
| Education | 0.20\*\*\* (0.03) | 0.20\*\*\* (0.03) | 0.21\*\*\* (0.03) | 0.19\*\*\* (0.03) |
| Ideology |  |  |  | -0.07 (0.04) |
| Openness |  | -0.05 (0.24) | -0.05 (0.25) | 0.08 (0.27) |
| Conscientiousness |  |  | -0.43 (0.27) | -0.68\*\* (0.30) |
| Extraversion |  |  | 0.27 (0.27) | 0.46\* (0.28) |
| Agreeableness |  |  | -0.03 (0.29) | 0.12 (0.31) |
| Neuroticism |  |  | -0.11 (0.28) | 0.01 (0.30) |
| Openness $×$ Election |  | 0.77\*\* (0.33) | 0.72\*\* (0.34) | 0.64\* (0.36) |
| Conscientiousness $×$ Election |  |  | 0.23 (0.36) | 0.63 (0.40) |
| Extraversion $×$ Election |  |  | 0.02 (0.36) | -0.24 (0.37) |
| Agreeableness $×$ Election |  |  | -0.04 (0.38) | -0.30 (0.41) |
| Neuroticism $×$ Election |  |  | 0.20 (0.37) | 0.21 (0.39) |
| Constant | 2.12\*\*\* (0.25) | 2.10\*\*\* (0.26) | 1.92\*\*\* (0.27) | 2.42\*\*\* (0.38) |
|  |
| Observations | 1,066 | 1,004 | 1,001 | 856 |
| Adjusted R2 | 0.15 | 0.16 | 0.15 | 0.14 |
|  |
| Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. |

## **C.5: Placebo tests**

As placebo tests, I estimated similar models as the ones reported in the main text with a placebo measure of political interest, i.e. political interest from the previous year, and a placebo measure of the campaign, i.e. the period from the previous year.

Model 1 in Table C.5 shows the placebo measure of political interest regressed on Openness and the placebo campaign. Here we see no evidence for a heterogeneous effect. Model 2 looks at the placebo measure of political interest but with the election campaign and Model 3 looks at political interest during the campaign but with the placebo measure of the campaign. In none of the models do we find any evidence for changes that can account for the main findings.

|  |
| --- |
| **Table C.5**: Placebo tests on heterogeneous effects, SHP, OLS |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) |
|  | Placebo interest | Placebointerest | Realinterest |
|  |
| Openness | 0.74\*\* | 0.05 | 0.88\*\*\* |
|  | (0.30) | (0.25) | (0.32) |
| Placebo | 0.08 |  | 0.21 |
|  | (0.19) |  | (0.20) |
| Openness $×$ Placebo | -0.35 |  | -0.43 |
|  | (0.39) |  | (0.42) |
| Election |  | 0.36\*\* |  |
|  |  | (0.18) |  |
| Openness $×$ Election |  | 0.49 |  |
|  |  | (0.35) |  |
| Constant | 5.54\*\*\* | 5.18\*\*\* | 5.21\*\*\* |
|  | (0.15) | (0.13) | (0.15) |
|  |
| Observations | 799 | 972 | 791 |
| Adjusted R2 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 |
|  |
| Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. |

## **C.6: Robustness tests**

|  |
| --- |
| **Table C.6:** Heterogeneous effects controlling for various interactions, SHP, OLS |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
|  |
| Election | 0.16 (0.24) | 0.19 (0.53) | 0.47 (0.37) | 0.99\*\* (0.47) | 1.05 (0.74) |
| Male | 0.45\* (0.27) | 0.77\*\*\* (0.18) | 0.77\*\*\* (0.18) | 0.77\*\*\* (0.18) | 0.41 (0.28) |
| Age | 0.04\*\*\* (0.01) | 0.03\*\*\* (0.01) | 0.04\*\*\* (0.01) | 0.04\*\*\* (0.01) | 0.03\*\*\* (0.01) |
| Education | 0.19\*\*\* (0.03) | 0.19\*\*\* (0.03) | 0.19\*\*\* (0.05) | 0.19\*\*\* (0.03) | 0.22\*\*\* (0.05) |
| Ideology | -0.07 (0.04) | -0.07 (0.04) | -0.07 (0.04) | 0.003 (0.07) | 0.03 (0.07) |
| Openness | 0.05 (0.26) | 0.07 (0.26) | 0.07 (0.26) | 0.09 (0.26) | 0.08 (0.27) |
| Conscientiousness | -0.31 (0.20) | -0.31 (0.20) | -0.31 (0.20) | -0.31 (0.20) | -0.75\*\* (0.31) |
| Extraversion | 0.33\* (0.19) | 0.34\* (0.19) | 0.33\* (0.19) | 0.33\* (0.19) | 0.42 (0.28) |
| Agreeableness | -0.06 (0.20) | -0.06 (0.20) | -0.06 (0.20) | -0.06 (0.20) | 0.17 (0.32) |
| Neuroticism | 0.14 (0.20) | 0.14 (0.20) | 0.14 (0.20) | 0.13 (0.20) | 0.05 (0.30) |
| Male $×$ Election | 0.56 (0.36) |  |  |  | 0.65\* (0.37) |
| Age $×$ Election |  | 0.005 (0.01) |  |  | 0.004 (0.01) |
| Education $×$ Election |  |  | -0.01 (0.06) |  | -0.06 (0.06) |
| Ideology $×$ Election |  |  |  | -0.12 (0.09) | -0.16\* (0.09) |
| Openness $×$ Election | 0.71\*\* (0.35) | 0.64\* (0.35) | 0.64\* (0.35) | 0.60\* (0.35) | 0.67\* (0.37) |
| Conscientiousness $×$ Election |  |  |  |  | 0.78\* (0.41) |
| Extraversion $×$ Election |  |  |  |  | -0.16 (0.38) |
| Agreeableness $×$ Election |  |  |  |  | -0.39 (0.41) |
| Neuroticism $×$ Election |  |  |  |  | 0.14 (0.40) |
| Constant | 2.57\*\*\* (0.39) | 2.56\*\*\* (0.47) | 2.40\*\*\* (0.41) | 2.08\*\*\* (0.46) | 2.04\*\*\* (0.56) |
|  |
| Observations | 856 | 856 | 856 | 856 | 856 |
| Adjusted R2 | 0.14 | 0.14 | 0.14 | 0.14 | 0.14 |
|  |
| Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. |

## **C.7: Results with Openness items**

|  |
| --- |
| **Table C.7**: Effects of Openness items on changes in political interest |
| Item  | Estimate  | SE | p-value  |
| Imagination  | 0.43 | 0.37 | 0.25 |
| Artistic interests  | 0.48 | 0.36 | 0.19 |

# **D: Study 3**

## **D.1: Context and data**

As in Study 2b, the setup rely on respondents interviewed one week prior to September 11th, 2001, and the respondents interviewed one week after the event. Respondents interviewed on the day of the event are excluded.

In the BHPS, personality traits are measured in one wave, namely in wave 15 with the 15-item Big Five Inventory (in the field September 2005 to May 2006).

The traits are measured with statements on what degree the specific statements apply to the respondent personality. Openness is about the degree to which the respondent comes up with ideas, values artistic experiences, and has an active imagination. Political interest is measured on a 4-point scale ranging from not at all interested to very interested.

For additional information on the dataset, see https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/bhps.

## **D.2: Question wording**

**Table D.1:** Question wording, variables and answers, BHPS

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Title | Variable | Question | Answers |
| Political interest | kvote6 | How interested would you say you are in politics? | “Very interested” [3], “Fairly interested” [2], “Not very interested” [1], and “Not at all interested” [0] |
| Political interest, placebo | fvote6 |  |  |
| Terror | kdoimkdoid |  |  |
| Male | osex | Respondent is … | Male [1], Female [0] |
| Age | oage | Would you please tell me your exact date of birth? |  |
| Education | oqfedhi | Highest educational qualification | From no qualifaction [13] to higher degree [1] |
|  |  |  |  |
| *Personality* |  | I see myself as someone who ... | From “Does not apply to me at all” [1] to “Applies to me perfectly” [7] |
| Openness | optrt5o1optrt5o2optrt5o3 | - Is original, comes up with new ideas- Values artistic, aesthetic experiences- Has an active imagination |  |
| Conscientiousness | optrt5c2optrt5c1optrt5c3 | - Tends to be lazy- Does a thorough job- Does things efficiently |  |
| Extraversion | optrt5e3optrt5e1optrt5e2 | - Is reserved- Is talkative- Is outgoing, sociable |  |
| Agreeableness | optrt5a1optrt5a2optrt5a3 | - Is sometimes rude to others- Has a forgiving nature- Is considerate and kind to almost everyone |  |
| Neuroticism | optrt5n3optrt5n1optrt5n2 | - Is relaxed, handles stress well- Worries a lot- Gets nervously easily |  |

## **D.3: Descriptive statistics**

**Table D.2:** Summary statistics, BHPS

|  |
| --- |
|  |
| Statistic | N | Mean | St. Dev. | Min | Pctl(25) | Median | Pctl(75) | Max |
|  |
| Terror | 1,679 | 0.62 | 0.49 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Political interest | 1,679 | 1.28 | 0.87 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Political interest, placebo | 1,462 | 1.31 | 0.88 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Male | 1,679 | 0.43 | 0.50 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Age | 1,679 | 52.81 | 18.69 | 19 | 38 | 51 | 68.5 | 97 |
| Education | 1,645 | 6.80 | 3.53 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 10 | 13 |
| Openness | 1,679 | -0.03 | 0.48 | -1.38 | -0.30 | -0.03 | 0.24 | 1.05 |
| Conscientiousness | 1,679 | -0.03 | 0.51 | -1.97 | -0.44 | 0.01 | 0.32 | 0.78 |
| Extraversion | 1,679 | -0.02 | 0.51 | -1.46 | -0.33 | -0.04 | 0.38 | 1.09 |
| Agreeableness | 1,679 | -0.01 | 0.50 | -2.04 | -0.39 | 0.10 | 0.43 | 0.76 |
| Neuroticism | 1,679 | -0.005 | 0.49 | -1.00 | -0.37 | 0.01 | 0.26 | 1.27 |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Table D.3:** Correlation matrix, BHPS |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) |
|  |
| (1) Terror | 1 | -0.02 | -0.004 | 0.02 | -0.14 | -0.08 | 0.05 | 0.01 | 0.04 | 0.03 | 0.05 |
| (2) Political interest | -0.02 | 1 | 0.66 | 0.15 | 0.23 | -0.13 | 0.13 | -0.03 | 0.01 | -0.01 | -0.09 |
| (3) Political interest, placebo | -0.004 | 0.66 | 1 | 0.20 | 0.23 | -0.14 | 0.13 | -0.04 | 0.001 | -0.0002 | -0.11 |
| (4) Male | 0.02 | 0.15 | 0.20 | 1 | -0.01 | -0.10 | 0.09 | -0.02 | -0.09 | -0.17 | -0.28 |
| (5) Age | -0.14 | 0.23 | 0.23 | -0.01 | 1 | 0.39 | -0.22 | -0.13 | -0.18 | 0.02 | -0.11 |
| (6) Education | -0.08 | -0.13 | -0.14 | -0.10 | 0.39 | 1 | -0.33 | -0.11 | -0.10 | 0.04 | 0.03 |
| (7) Openness | 0.05 | 0.13 | 0.13 | 0.09 | -0.22 | -0.33 | 1 | 0.25 | 0.26 | 0.20 | -0.06 |
| (8) Conscientiousness | 0.01 | -0.03 | -0.04 | -0.02 | -0.13 | -0.11 | 0.25 | 1 | 0.23 | 0.38 | -0.15 |
| (9) Extraversion | 0.04 | 0.01 | 0.001 | -0.09 | -0.18 | -0.10 | 0.26 | 0.23 | 1 | 0.16 | -0.19 |
| (10) Agreeableness | 0.03 | -0.01 | -0.0002 | -0.17 | 0.02 | 0.04 | 0.20 | 0.38 | 0.16 | 1 | -0.05 |
| (11) Neuroticism | 0.05 | -0.09 | -0.11 | -0.28 | -0.11 | 0.03 | -0.06 | -0.15 | -0.19 | -0.05 | 1 |
|  |

*Reliability scores (Cronbach's alpha)*

* Openness: 0.67
* Conscientiousness: 0.51
* Extraversion: 0.53
* Agreeableness: 0.52
* Neuroticism: 0.67

## **D.4: Main models**

|  |
| --- |
| **Table D.4**: Heterogeneous effects of personality traits, BHPS, OLS |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) |
| Terror | -0.06\* | -0.03 | 0.01 |
|  | (0.04) | (0.04) | (0.04) |
| Openness |  | 0.06 | 0.09 |
|  |  | (0.07) | (0.07) |
| Conscientiousness |  |  | 0.03 |
|  |  |  | (0.07) |
| Extraversion |  |  | 0.07 |
|  |  |  | (0.07) |
| Agreeableness |  |  | -0.13\* |
|  |  |  | (0.07) |
| Neuroticism |  |  | -0.06 |
|  |  |  | (0.07) |
| Male |  |  | 0.23\*\*\* |
|  |  |  | (0.05) |
| Age |  |  | 0.01\*\*\* |
|  |  |  | (0.001) |
| Openness $×$ Terror |  | 0.30\*\*\* | 0.23\*\* |
|  |  | (0.09) | (0.09) |
| Conscientiousness $×$ Terror |  |  | -0.14 |
|  |  |  | (0.09) |
| Extraversion $×$ Terror |  |  | -0.01 |
|  |  |  | (0.09) |
| Agreeableness $×$ Terror |  |  | 0.18\*\* |
|  |  |  | (0.09) |
| Neuroticism $×$ Terror |  |  | 0.08 |
|  |  |  | (0.09) |
| Education controls | X | X | X |
| Observations | 2,608 | 1,707 | 1,645 |
| Adjusted R2 | 0.001 | 0.02 | 0.14 |
| Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. |

## **D.5: Placebo tests**

Model 1 in Table D.5 shows the placebo measure of political interest regressed on Openness and the placebo event. Here we see no evidence of a heterogeneous effect. Model 2 looks at political interest during the event but with the placebo measure of the event and Model 3 looks at the placebo measure of political interest but with the event. In none of the models do we find any evidence for changes that can account for the main findings.

|  |
| --- |
| **Table D.5**: Placebo tests on heterogeneous effects, BHPS, OLS |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) |
|  | Placebointerest | Real interest | Placebo interest |
|  |
| Placebo | 0.02 | -0.01 |  |
|  | (0.05) | (0.05) |  |
| Terror |  |  | -0.02 |
|  |  |  | (0.05) |
| Openness | 0.24\*\*\* | 0.19\*\* | 0.16\*\* |
|  | (0.09) | (0.09) | (0.07) |
| Openness $×$ Placebo | -0.08 | -0.005 |  |
|  | (0.11) | (0.10) |  |
| Openness $×$ Terror |  |  | 0.12 |
|  |  |  | (0.09) |
| Constant | 1.29\*\*\* | 1.33\*\*\* | 1.33\*\*\* |
|  | (0.04) | (0.04) | (0.04) |
|  |
| Observations | 1,303 | 1,306 | 1,490 |
| Adjusted R2 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.02 |
|  |
| Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. |

## **D.6: Robustness tests**

|  |
| --- |
| **Table D.6:** Heterogeneous effects controlling for various interactions, BHPS, OLS |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|  |
| Terror | 0.02 (0.06) | 0.34\*\* (0.13) | 1.08\*\*\* (0.32) | 1.38\*\*\* (0.35) |
| Openness | 0.09 (0.07) | 0.12 (0.07) | 0.11 (0.07) | 0.11 (0.07) |
| Conscientiousness | 0.03 (0.07) | 0.05 (0.07) | 0.04 (0.07) | 0.06 (0.07) |
| Extraversion | 0.07 (0.07) | 0.08 (0.07) | 0.08 (0.07) | 0.09 (0.07) |
| Agreeableness | -0.12\* (0.07) | -0.14\*\* (0.07) | -0.14\* (0.07) | -0.14\* (0.07) |
| Neuroticism | -0.06 (0.07) | -0.03 (0.07) | -0.05 (0.07) | -0.02 (0.07) |
| Male | 0.25\*\*\* (0.07) | 0.24\*\*\* (0.05) | 0.24\*\*\* (0.05) | 0.27\*\*\* (0.07) |
| Age | 0.01\*\*\* (0.001) | 0.02\*\*\* (0.002) | 0.01\*\*\* (0.001) | 0.02\*\*\* (0.002) |
| Openness $×$ Terror | 0.23\*\* (0.09) | 0.18\*\* (0.09) | 0.19\*\* (0.10) | 0.18\* (0.10) |
| Conscientiousness $×$ Terror | -0.14 (0.09) | -0.17\* (0.09) | -0.14 (0.09) | -0.16\* (0.09) |
| Extraversion $×$ Terror | -0.01 (0.09) | -0.04 (0.09) | -0.01 (0.09) | -0.04 (0.09) |
| Agreeableness $×$ Terror | 0.18\* (0.09) | 0.21\*\* (0.09) | 0.21\*\* (0.09) | 0.21\*\* (0.09) |
| Neuroticism $×$ Terror | 0.07 (0.09) | 0.04 (0.09) | 0.07 (0.09) | 0.02 (0.09) |
| Constant | 0.86\*\*\* (0.17) | 0.66\*\*\* (0.18) | 0.15 (0.27) | -0.04 (0.28) |
|  |
| Gender $×$ Terror control | Yes | No | No | Yes |
| Age $×$ Terror control | No | Yes | No | Yes |
| Education $×$ Terror control | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 1,645 | 1,645 | 1,645 | 1,645 |
| Adjusted R2 | 0.14 | 0.15 | 0.15 | 0.15 |
|  |
| Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. |

## **D.7: Results with Openness items**

|  |
| --- |
| **Table D.7**: Effects of Openness items on changes in political interest |
| Item  | Estimate  | SE | p-value  |
| Original, come up with ideas  | 0.27  | 0.08  | 0.00  |
| Values artistic experiences  | 0.17  | 0.09  | 0.05  |
| Active imagination  | 0.18  | 0.09  | 0.04  |

# **References not included in the main text**

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