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The Secret Lives of Liberals and Conservatives:
Personality Profiles, Interaction Styles, and the Things They Leave Behind

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Abstract

Seventy-five years of theory and research on personality differences between political liberals and conservatives has produced a long list of dispositions, traits, and behaviors. Applying a “Five Factor Model” framework to this yield, we find that two traits, Openness to Experience and Conscientiousness, parsimoniously capture many of the ways in which individual differences underlying political orientation have been conceptualized. In four studies we investigate the relationship between personality and political orientation using multiple domains and measurement techniques, including: self-reported personality assessment; explicit beliefs, values, and preferences; nonverbal behavior in the context of social interaction; and personal possessions and the characteristics of living and working spaces. We obtained consistent and converging evidence that personality differences between liberals and conservatives are robust, replicable, and behaviorally significant. In general, liberals are more open-minded in their pursuit of creativity, novelty, and diversity, whereas conservatives seek lives that are more orderly, conventional, and better organized.

The Secret Lives of Liberals and Conservatives:

Personality Profiles, Interaction Styles, and the Things They Leave Behind

For almost as long as social scientists have located political orientation on a single left—right (or, in the United States, a liberal—conservative) dimension, they have speculated about the personality characteristics that typify each ideological pole (e.g., Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Costantini & Craik, 1980; DiRenzo, 1974; Eysenck, 1954; McClosky, 1958; Tomkins, 1963). As Tetlock and Mitchell (1993) have pointed out, it is possible to generate either flattering or unflattering psychological portraits at either end of the political spectrum. The important question, from a scientific point of view, is not whether any given theory is gratifying to left-wing or right-wing audiences, but whether it possesses truth value. Obtaining an accurate understanding of the personality needs and characteristics of liberals and conservatives has taken on added urgency in the current political climate, in which people from liberal “blue” states find it increasingly difficult to understand people from conservative “red” states and vice versa (see Bishop, 2004; Rentfrow, Jost, Gosling, & Potter, 2006).

In this article, we draw on eclectic sources of data to investigate the degree to which historical speculations concerning the traits of liberals and conservatives possess genuine diagnostic utility, that is, empirical accuracy.¹ We address three main questions. First, does political orientation covary with basic personality dimensions in the ways that have been suggested (but rarely tested) by psychological theorists over the past several decades? Second, what, specifically, are the differences (as well as similarities) between liberals and conservatives in terms of attitudes, tastes, and preferences, and how strong are they? Third, if there are indeed meaningful psychological differences between liberals and conservatives, how are they manifested in daily behavior?

Theories of Personality and Political Orientation

Influential theories mapping personality profiles to political ideology were developed by Jaensch (1938), Fromm (1947, 1964), Adorno et al. (1950), Tomkins (1963), Brown (1965), Bem (1970), and Wilson (1973), among others. In this section, we review a number of these perspectives, which span the last 75 years. All of these theories assume that specific “ideologies have for different individuals,

different degrees of appeal, a matter that depends upon the individual's needs and the degree to which these needs are being satisfied or frustrated" (Adorno et al., 1950, p. 2). Although the specific personality needs and characteristics under investigation (italicized below) have varied somewhat across cultural contexts and historical periods, we will show that the underlying contents identified by diverse theorists and observers converge to a remarkable degree.

Early Theories, 1930-1955

Early accounts of personality differences between left-wingers and right-wingers focused largely on issues that would come to define the syndrome of authoritarianism. Roger Brown (1965) famously recounted the work of Nazi psychologist Ernst Jaensch (1938), who offered one of the first distinctions between two personality types with clear political significance. The J-type, according to Jaensch, was predisposed to make a good Nazi: "J made *definite, unambiguous* perceptual judgments and *persisted* in them... [he] would recognize that human behavior is fixed by blood, soil, and national tradition... would be *tough, masculine, firm*; a man you could *rely* on" (Brown, 1965, p. 478, emphasis added). By contrast, the S-Type was someone of racially mixed heredity and included Jews, "Parisians," East Asians, and communists.

As Brown observed:

The S-Type [described a] synaesthetic: one who enjoys concomitant sensation, a subjective experience from another sense than the one being stimulated, as in color hearing. Synaesthesia, which we are likely to regard as a poet's gift, seemed to Jaensch to be a kind of *perceptual slovenliness*, the qualities of one sense carelessly mixed with those of another... characterized by *ambiguous* and *indefinite judgments* and to be lacking in *perseverance*. . . . The S would be a man with so-called "Liberal" views; one who would think of environment and education as the determinants of behavior; one who takes a childish wanton pleasure in being *eccentric*, S would say "*individualistic*." (Brown, 1965, p. 477, emphasis added)

Adorno et al. (1950) accepted at least a few of elements Jaensch's (1938) description but viewed the aggressive J-type as a societal menace, an authoritarian, a potential fascist—not as a cultural ideal. The right-wing personality type was recast as *rigid, conventional, intolerant, xenophobic*, and *obedient* to authority figures. Brown (1965) noted that "What Jaensch called '*stability*' we called '*rigidity*' and the flaccidity and eccentricity of Jaensch's despised S-Type were for us the *flexibility* and individualism of the democratic equalitarian" (p. 478, emphasis added). It is remarkable that such diametrically opposed theorists as Jaensch

and Adorno would advance parallel personality theories linking general psychological characteristics to specific ideological belief systems, but this is only one of many historical volleys in the longstanding effort to understand the relationship between personality and politics.

Members of the Frankfurt School—including Adorno, Fromm, Horkheimer, Reich, and others—were strongly influenced by both Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud. From Marx they inherited the notion that ideology is derived from economic class interests and material conditions of the capitalist system. But to really understand the relationship between the individual and society and the allure of political and religious ideologies, these theorists needed a psychology. What was available to them at the time was Freudian psychology, and so the members of the Frankfurt School turned to Freud’s writings on character structure. For example, Freud identified one personality configuration that seemed particularly relevant to political orientation:

The people I am about to describe are noteworthy for a regular combination of the three following characteristics. They are especially *orderly, parsimonious, and obstinate* . . . ‘Orderly’ covers the notion of bodily *cleanliness*, as well as of *conscientiousness* in carrying out small duties and *trustworthiness* . . . Parsimony may appear in the exaggerated form of *avarice*; and obstinacy can go over into defiance, to which *rage* and *revengefulness* are easily joined . . . it seems to me incontestable that all three in some way belong together. (Freud, 1959/1991, pp. 21-26, emphasis added)

Freud referred to this collection of traits—orderliness, parsimony, and obstinacy—as the “anal character” (see also Freud, 1930/1961, pp. 40-44) but one need not retain his scatological terminology to consider the possibility that these characteristics tend to co-occur. Indeed, Sears (1936) found in a sample of 37 fraternity brothers that peer ratings of a given individual’s degree of orderliness, stinginess (parsimony), and obstinacy, and were significantly intercorrelated at .36 or above (see also Hilgard, 1952, pp. 15-16).

Fromm (1947) built on Freud’s conception of the anal character, but he renamed it the “hoarding orientation” and suggested that it was: “*Conservative*, less interested in ruthless acquisition than in methodical economic pursuits, based on sound principles and on the *preservation of what had been acquired*” (p. 81, emphasis added). Fromm described the hoarding character in some detail:

This orientation makes people have little faith in anything new they might get from the outside world; their *security* is based upon *hoarding* and *saving*, while spending is felt to be a *threat* . . . Their *miserliness* refers to money and material things as well as to feelings

and thoughts . . . The hoarding person often shows a particular kind of *faithfulness* toward people and even toward memories . . . They know everything but are *sterile* and incapable of productive thinking . . . One can recognize these people too by *facial expressions* and *gestures*. Theirs is the *tight-lipped* mouth; their gestures are characteristic of the *withdrawn* attitude . . . Another characteristic element in this attitude is pedantic *orderliness* . . . his orderliness is sterile and *rigid*. He cannot endure things out of place and will automatically rearrange them . . . His compulsive *cleanliness* is another expression of his need to undo contact with the outside world. (Fromm, 1947, pp. 65-66, emphasis added)

Although much of this description seems critical, Fromm explicitly cited both positive and negative aspects of the hoarding (or preserving) orientation. The positive traits he listed include being careful, reserved, practical, methodical, orderly, loyal, and tenacious (p. 115). On the negative side, Fromm stressed that this personality type could be stingy, cold, anxious, suspicious, stubborn, obsessional, and unimaginative.²

Middle Era Theories, 1955-1980

Psychological investigations of the personalities of liberals and conservatives between 1955 and 1980 built on the earlier work on authoritarianism but pondered an ever-widening circle of traits. Daryl Bem (1970, pp. 19-21) described an unpublished study by Maccoby (1968) that set out to test Fromm's (1964) theory of the left-wing "biophilous character" and the right-wing "necrophilous character":

A person with intense love of life is attracted to that which is alive, which grows, which is *free and unpredictable*. He has an *aversion to violence* and all that destroys life . . . *dislikes sterile and rigid order* . . . rejects being mechanized, becoming a *lifeless part of machine-like organization*. He enjoys life in all its manifestations in contrast to mere excitement or thrills. He believes in molding and *influencing by love, reason and example rather than by force* . . . At the other pole, there are individuals attracted to that which is *rigidly ordered, mechanical, and unalive*. These people do not like anything free and *uncontrolled*. They feel that *people must be regulated* within well-oiled machines. (Maccoby, 1968, p. 2, quoted in Bem, 1970, p. 20, emphasis added)

Maccoby and Fromm constructed a questionnaire to measure these two personality poles and found that supporters of liberal and left-wing candidates in the 1968 Presidential primaries (e.g., E. McCarthy, N. Rockefeller, and R. F. Kennedy) scored disproportionately at the "life-loving" end of the scale, whereas supporters of conservative and right-wing candidates (e.g., R. Nixon, R. Reagan, and G. Wallace) scored disproportionately at the "mechanistic" end of the scale. Bem (1970) also noted that scores on this scale predicted liberal vs. conservative opinions on specific issues. The distinction between "life-loving" and

“mechanistic” personality styles is noteworthy not only for its originality and the fact that it received at least some empirical support in the late 1960s, but also because of the fact that some features of the distinction (e.g., an attraction to unpredictable, unconstrained life experiences vs. self-control, orderliness, and mechanistic coordination) parallel other accounts of liberal vs. conservative personality styles, including Sylvan Tomkins’ (1963) theory of ideological polarity.

According to Tomkins (1963), people adopt “ideo-affective postures” toward the world that are either leftist (stressing freedom and humanism) or rightist (focusing on rule-following and normative concerns). People who “resonate” with left-wing ideologies believe that people are basically good and that the goal of society should be to foster human creativity and experience. Those who “resonate” with right-wing ideologies, by contrast, believe that people are inherently flawed and that the function of society is to set rules and limits to prevent irresponsible behavior. These differences, according to Tomkins, have important implications for emotions and their control:

The left-wing theorist stresses the *toxicity of affect control and inhibition*, and it therefore becomes a special case of the principle of minimizing negative affect that such *control should be kept to a minimum* . . . He is likely to stress the value both to the individual and to society of an *openness and tolerance* for *intrusions* of the *irrational*, of the *Dionysian* . . . The right-wing ideologist sets himself *sternly* against such intrusions and argues for the importance of controlling affects in the interest of *morality, achievement, piety* . . . he is for some *norm*, which may require *heroic mobilization* of affect and *energy* to achieve or which may require *unrelenting hostility* against those who challenge the good (Tomkins, 1963, p. 407, emphasis added)

Like Fromm (1947), Tomkins saw advantages to both left-wing and right-wing personality styles. Whereas the former is associated with humanism, creativity, openness, and emotional expression (especially enthusiasm and excitement), the latter is associated with norm attainment, conscientiousness, and morality. Several studies have revealed that liberals score higher than conservatives on measures of sensation-seeking and imaginativeness (Feather, 1979, 1984; Levin & Schalmo, 1974), whereas conservatives score higher than liberals on measures of self-control and orderliness (Costantini & Craik, 1980; Milbrath, 1962; St. Angelo & Dyson, 1968).

A “dynamic” theory of conservatism was proposed by Wilson (1973), who integrated the notion that there are emotional differences between liberals and conservatives with earlier work on dogmatism

and intolerance of ambiguity. The gist of the theory is that politically conservative individuals are driven by a “*generalized susceptibility to experiencing threat or anxiety in the face of uncertainty*” (Wilson, 1973, p. 259). Wilson and his collaborators suggested that conservatism is determined by “genetic” factors such as trait anxiety, stimulus aversion, and low IQ, as well as “environmental” factors, such as parental inconsistency and aggressiveness, low self-esteem, and low social class. Sources of threat and/or uncertainty in the social world (e.g., death, dissent, immigration, complexity, ambiguity, social change, and anarchy) are likely to prompt conservative ideological responses, including conventionalism, ethnocentrism, authoritarianism, militarism, moral rigidity, and religious dogmatism. Much of Wilson’s account has received correlational support, most especially the notion that situational and dispositional factors that produce heightened psychological needs to reduce uncertainty and threat tend to be associated with proponents of conservative (rather than liberal) ideology (see Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003 for a meta-analytic review).

Recent Theories, 1980-2005

Over the last quarter of a century, psychological accounts of differences between liberals and conservatives have focused largely on the dimension of *open-mindedness* vs. *closed-mindedness*. Building on earlier traditions of research on authoritarianism and uncertainty avoidance, numerous studies have shown that liberals tend to score higher than conservatives on individual difference measures of openness, cognitive flexibility, and integrative complexity (e.g., Altemeyer, 1998; Sidanius 1985; Tetlock 1983, 1984; Tetlock, Bernzweig, & Gallant, 1985). Furthermore, conservatives tend to possess stronger personal needs for order, structure, closure, and decisiveness in comparison with liberals (e.g., Jost et al., 2003; Kruglanski, 2005; Van Hiel, Pandelaere, & Duriez, 2004).

An important longitudinal study by Block and Block (in press) revealed that many of the personality differences between liberals and conservatives that appear in adulthood are already present when children are in nursery school, long before they define themselves in terms of political orientation. Specifically, preschool children who later identified themselves as liberal were perceived by their teachers as: self-reliant, energetic, emotionally expressive, gregarious, and impulsive. By contrast, those children

who later identified as conservative were seen as: rigid, inhibited, indecisive, fearful, and over-controlled. These findings—especially in conjunction with adult data (see Jost et al., 2003 for a summary) and growing evidence that there is a heritable component of political attitudes (Alford, Funk, & Hibbing, 2005)—appear to substantiate the convictions of Adorno et al., Tomkins, Wilson, and many others that basic personality dimensions underlie ideological differences between the left and right. The problem is that previous research in this area has been far from systematic, coordinated, or cumulative. Each investigator (or team of investigators) has merely added a new distinction or way of characterizing liberals and conservatives without attempting to develop a common or shared framework for interpreting and integrating the mass of theories and findings.

An Integrative Taxonomy and Overview of the Current Research

In an effort to distill a core set of personality characteristics that have been theorized to distinguish between political liberals and conservatives, we have listed in Table 1 the traits that have figured most prominently in relevant psychological theories since 1930. To help organize the resulting list into thematic categories that could be used to guide our research program, we drew heavily upon conceptual and empirical contributions of the Five-Factor Model (FFM) of personality, which provides a useful organizing framework for classifying and measuring distinct, relatively non-overlapping personality dimensions (e.g., Goldberg, 1992; John & Srivastava, 1999; McCrae & Costa, 1999; Wiggins, 1996). Because of the unprecedented scope, comprehensiveness, and empirical backing of the FFM, we found it to be uniquely helpful as a means of cataloguing and assessing the validity of the enormous number of trait descriptions of liberals and conservatives that psychologists have generated over the last seventy-five years (see also Caprara & Zimbardo, 2004). Thus, for each of the descriptive traits (or clusters of traits) listed in Table 1, we have sought to identify which of the five basic personality dimensions best capture the essence of the description. The result is a remarkable consensus over more than seven decades (and across numerous cultures and languages) that the two personality dimensions that should be most related to political orientation are Openness to Experience—consistently theorized to be higher among liberals—and Conscientiousness—sometimes theorized to be higher among conservatives.

Traits associated with the other three dimensions (Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism) have occasionally been linked to political orientation in previous theorizing (see Table 1), but their mention has been far less frequent and consistent.

Although direct attempts to understand personality differences between liberals and conservatives in terms of “Big Five” dimensions have been rare (e.g., see Caprara, Barbaranelli & Zimbardo, 1999), several FFM studies have included measures of political orientation. The largely serendipitous results derived from these studies are generally consistent with expectations gleaned from Table 1. By far the most consistent finding is that liberals tend to score higher than conservatives on self-report measures of Openness to Experience (e.g., Barnea & Schwartz, 1998; Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003; Jost et al., 2003; McCrae, 1996; Riemann, Grubich, Hempel, Mergl, & Richter, 1993; Trapnell, 1994; Van Hiel & Mervielde, 2004). There is also some evidence that conservatives tend to score slightly higher than liberals on Conscientiousness (Caprara et al., 1999; Gosling et al., 2003; Mehrabian, 1996; Van Hiel, Mervielde, & De Fruyt, 2004). Stenner (2005) argued that, “Conscientiousness, which is primarily associated with rigidity, orderliness, and a compulsion about being in control of one’s environment . . . promotes conservatism to a considerable degree” (p. 172). There is no consistent evidence in the research literature that Neuroticism, Extraversion, or Agreeableness are reliably correlated with political orientation, although some theorists have proposed differences between liberals and conservatives on traits related to these dimensions (see Table 1).

In our first study we sought to determine definitively whether the two dimensions of Openness to Experience and Conscientiousness would adequately capture personality trait differences between liberals and conservatives, at least in the context of the United States. We therefore examined correlations between scores on “Big Five” dimensions and liberalism-conservatism in 6 different samples. At the same time, we wanted to be sure that any personality differences were “genuine” and not merely the result of divergent self-presentational strategies adopted by liberals and conservatives. This was especially important given that many of the theories we have reviewed predict differences that would emerge only in private, nonreactive settings (e.g., cleanliness, expressiveness, and organization) or in the context of

interpersonal interaction (e.g., stubbornness, enthusiasm, and withdrawal). Therefore, we went well beyond traditional self-report methods of personality assessment to explore more subtle, unobtrusive differences (e.g., Webb et al., 1981) with respect to everyday preferences concerning issues, groups, and personal activities (Study 2), nonverbal behavior and social interaction styles (Study 3), and identity claims and behavioral residue in living and working spaces (Study 4). Taken as a whole, these studies provide the most sustained and comprehensive investigation of personality differences underlying political orientation to date.

Study 1: Personality Differences between Liberals and Conservatives

The goal of Study 1 was to obtain general personality profiles of liberals and conservatives to assess the accuracy of the theoretical speculations adumbrated in Table 1. It was hypothesized that, based on prior theory and research, liberals would score higher than conservatives on Openness to Experience, whereas conservatives would score higher than liberals on Conscientiousness. No consistent differences between liberals and conservatives on the three other Big Five dimensions (Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism) were expected. Personality profiles were gathered in 5 different American samples (total $N = 19,248$) by using individuals' scores on each of the Big Five personality dimensions to predict their political orientation. In this and in subsequent studies, political orientation was assessed using single self-report items, as is customary in the political science literature (e.g., Knight, 1999). Although very short measures can be subject to psychometric limitations, in many cases they are effective for assessing constructs that are well understood by laypeople (e.g., Burisch, 1997; Gosling et al., 2003). The single item measure of liberalism-conservatism demonstrates good test-retest reliability and predictive validity (e.g., see Jost, 2006; Knight, 1999).

Method and Procedure

Samples 1-4. Four samples ($Ns = 85, 79, 155, \text{ and } 1826$) were recruited from the University of Texas at Austin. Sixty-four percent of the participants (across samples) were female. Racial/ethnic group identification was as follows: 60% European American, 23% Asian American, and 12% Latino; the remaining 5% were of other ethnicities. Sample 1 completed the NEO-PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1985),

which contains 240 items that are answered on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Samples 2-4 completed the 44-item Big Five Inventory (BFI; John, Donahue, & Kentle, 1991).

Reliability was acceptable for all five factors and all four samples: Openness ($\alpha = .90$ for Sample 1, $.77$ for Sample 2, $.76$ for Sample 3, and $.79$ for Sample 4), Conscientiousness ($\alpha = .92, .76, .78, .77$), Extraversion ($\alpha = .90, .89, .86, .87$), Agreeableness ($\alpha = .89, .79, .82, .77$), and Neuroticism ($\alpha = .92, .85, .79, .77$). Participants indicated their political orientation on a scale ranging from 1 (*liberal*) to 9 (*conservative*) for Sample 1 ($M = 5.02, SD = 2.30$) and for Sample 4 ($M = 4.95, SD = 2.23$). For Sample 2, the scale ranged from 1 (*liberal*) to 7 (*conservative*), $M = 4.29, SD = 1.88$, and for Sample 3 it ranged from 1 (*liberal*) to 5 (*conservative*), $M = 3.17, SD = 1.15$.

Sample 5. Participants in Sample 5 were similar in terms of age and educational experience, but they constituted a larger and far more representative group. They were part of the Gosling-Potter Internet Personality Project and were recruited with the use of a non-commercial, advertisement-free website through one of several channels: (1) major search engines (in response to keywords such as "personality tests"), (2) portal sites, such as Yahoo! (under directories of personality tests), (3) voluntary mailing lists that participants had previously joined, and (4) "word-of-mouth" from other visitors. We analyzed data from 17, 103 American, college-attending participants between the ages of 18-25 years old who visited the website between March 2001 and May 2004. In terms of demographic characteristics, 68% of the sample was female, 72% identified themselves as European American, 8% as Asian American, 7% as African American, 7% as Latino, and 1% as Native American; the remaining 5% declined to provide racial/ethnic information about themselves.

Upon arrival at the website, participants opted to take a personality test. They completed the same 44-item BFI used in Samples 2-4. Scale means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and intercorrelations were consistent with those typically obtained in laboratory studies (e.g., John et al., 1991). Participants were also asked "how politically conservative-liberal are you?" They responded using a scale ranging from 1 (*extremely liberal*) to 5 (*extremely conservative*), $M = 2.94, SD = 1.40$.

Results

For each of the 5 samples we conducted a simultaneous regression analysis in which each of the five personality factor scores were used to predict participants' political orientation. This method enabled us to estimate the statistically unique contribution of each of the five personality dimensions, adjusting for the effects of the other four. Additionally, zero-order correlations between the Big Five scores and political orientation were computed (see Table 2). Finally, overall weighted mean effect sizes were estimated by aggregating across respondents from all 5 samples.

Samples 1-4. The same multiple regression analysis was conducted for each of the four Texas samples. With regard to Sample 1, the 5 personality factors were significant predictors of political orientation, $R = .46$, $F(5, 84) = 4.25$, $p < .01$, and accounted for 21% of the variance. The only significant unique predictor of political orientation was Openness ($\beta = -.40$, $t = -3.90$, $p < .001$). In terms of zero-order correlations, Openness was again the only statistically significant predictor ($r = -.42$), but Conscientiousness ($r = .21$) and Neuroticism ($r = -.19$) were marginally associated with political orientation. Because Sample 1 completed the NEO-PI-R, which measures 6 specific facets of each of the Big Five factors, the relations between personality and political orientation could be examined in finer detail. Liberals scored more highly than conservatives on all of the Openness facets: Values ($r = -.48$, $p < .001$), Aesthetics ($r = -.32$, $p < .005$), Actions ($r = -.27$, $p < .05$), Ideas ($r = -.24$, $p < .05$), Feelings ($r = -.24$, $p < .05$), and Fantasy ($r = -.19$, $p < .08$). They also scored more highly on the Tender-Mindedness facet of the Agreeableness subscale ($r = -.27$, $p < .02$). Conservatives scored more highly than liberals on two of the Conscientiousness facets, Achievement-Striving ($r = .24$, $p < .03$) and Order ($r = .21$, $p < .06$). No other significant differences emerged at the facet level of analysis.

Sample 2 was the only one for which no significant effects were obtained, either with respect to individual predictors or the model as a whole. For Sample 3, the 5 personality factors did account for a significant amount of the variance (13%) in political orientation, $R = .35$; $F(5, 154) = 4.25$, $p < .001$. Once again, Openness emerged as the only significant predictor in the simultaneous regression model ($\beta = -.33$, $t = -4.20$, $p < .001$) and in terms of zero-order correlations ($r = -.33$, $p < .001$). Higher scores on Openness were associated with increased liberalism, as before.

The regression model for Sample 4 (the largest of the university samples) revealed that the 5 personality factors were simultaneous significant predictors of political orientation, $R = .23$; $F(5, 1824) = 24.42$, $p < .001$; they accounted for 5% of the variance. Openness was again the largest unique predictor of political orientation ($\beta = -.22$, $t = -9.48$, $p < .001$), and it also generated the largest zero order correlation ($r = -.33$, $p < .001$). With the much larger sample, three other variables exerted weak but significant effects in the regression and correlation analyses. Increased conservatism was associated with higher scores on Conscientiousness ($\beta = .05$, $t = 2.33$, $p < .02$) and Agreeableness ($\beta = .06$, $t = 2.42$, $p < .02$) and lower scores on Neuroticism ($\beta = -.09$, $t = -3.57$, $p < .001$). There was no evidence that Extraversion was related to political orientation.

Sample 5. For the large Internet sample, the simultaneous regression model was statistically significant, $R = .28$, $F(5, 17102) = 282.37$, $p < .001$, and accounted for 8% of the variance in political orientation. As before, Openness was the largest unique predictor of political orientation ($\beta = -.26$, $t = -34.73$, $p < .001$) and also had the largest zero-order correlation ($r = -.26$, $p < .001$). As in 4 of the other 5 samples, higher scores on Openness were significantly associated with increased liberalism. Conscientiousness was the second largest unique predictor of political orientation ($\beta = .08$, $t = 10.02$, $p < .001$), indicating that higher scores on Conscientiousness predicted increased conservatism.³ Two other personality factors proved to be significant predictors of political orientation, although they accounted for a negligible amount of statistical variance. Increased conservatism was associated with slightly lower scores on Neuroticism ($\beta = -.02$, $t = -1.98$, $p < .05$) and slightly higher scores on Agreeableness ($\beta = .02$, $t = 3.05$, $p < .01$). Once again, Extraversion was unrelated to political orientation.

The size of Sample 5 allowed us to investigate the effects of various demographic variables with considerable statistical power. We therefore conducted a stepwise regression model with sex of participant, race/ethnicity (coded as white vs. non-white), and socioeconomic status (SES) entered in Step 1 to determine whether the effects of the 5 personality variables used to predict political orientation in Step 2 would be altered after adjusting for demographic variables. We found that none of the effects of personality were substantially changed by including sex, race, or SES in the model. However, not too

surprisingly, we did find that the race/ethnicity variable in Step 1 was a statistically significant predictor of political orientation, indicating that European American individuals scored higher on political conservatism than did members of ethnic minority groups ($\beta = .07, t = 16.38, p < .001$).

Overall effect size estimates. Taken as a whole, we obtained reasonably strong support for our hypotheses that (a) Openness to Experience would be negatively associated with conservatism, and (b) Conscientiousness would be positively associated with conservatism. Openness was a significant negative predictor of conservatism in 4 of the 5 samples, and Conscientiousness was a significant positive predictor in 2 of the 5 samples and a marginally significant predictor in one other sample. Weighted (and unweighted) mean correlations are listed in Table 2. Combining participants from all 5 samples, the weighted mean effect size for the association between Openness and conservatism was $r = -.26$, which was significantly different from zero ($Z = 9.58, p < .001$). The weighted mean effect size for the association between Conscientiousness and conservatism was substantially weaker but still significant at $r = .10$ ($Z = 3.81, p < .001$). Although it was not predicted, there was a very weak overall tendency for Agreeableness to be positively associated with conservatism ($r = .05, Z = 2.09, p < .02$). Neither Extraversion nor Neuroticism were consistent predictors of political orientation, contrary to the claims of Jaensch (1938) and Wilson (1973), respectively.

Discussion

In Study 1 we used the Five Factor Model to generate consistent and replicable personality profiles of liberals and conservatives. By taking a systematic empirical approach involving 5 different samples, we were able to provide fairly conclusive support for McCrae's (1996) claim that “variations in experiential Openness are the major psychological determinant of political polarities” (p. 325, emphasis omitted).⁴ More specifically, we obtained consistent evidence that liberals do indeed score significantly higher than conservatives on Openness to Experience. There was also some evidence that conservatives scored slightly higher than liberals on Conscientiousness. Taken as a whole, this evidence suggests that Freud (1959/1991), Fromm (1947, 1964), Adorno et al. (1950), Tomkins (1963), Wilson (1973), and others may have accurately perceived certain links between personality and political orientation when

they proposed that left-wingers are more motivated by creativity, curiosity, and diversity of experience, whereas right-wingers are more orderly, parsimonious, rigid, and more strongly motivated by self-control, norm-attainment, and rule-following (see also Block & Block, 2006; Jost et al., 2003). These results are also consistent with the listing of traits in Table 1, most of which pertain either to Openness or Conscientiousness. We found little evidence that any of the other three traits were strongly or consistently related to political orientation.

At the same time, there are obvious limitations to what can be learned on the basis of purely self-report measures of personality, and our first study says little about how personality differences between liberals and conservatives are likely to play out in everyday life. It is useful to be able to describe liberals as relatively high on Openness (but low on Conscientiousness) and conservatives as relatively high on Conscientiousness (but low on Openness), but these differences would be more meaningful if they could be observed on objective behavioral indicators that are relatively immune from social desirability concerns (e.g., Webb et al., 1981). More generally, we were interested in how differences in the personalities of liberals and conservatives would play out in the contexts of everyday lives.

The remaining three studies address differences in terms of preferences, interaction styles, and behavioral residue (i.e., the things they leave behind), thereby supplementing our analysis in Study 1 of abstract, relatively decontextualized traits with an emphasis on more contextually localized individual differences (see McAdams, 1995). Study 2 focuses on mundane attitudes and preferences with respect to public policy issues, prevailing institutions, social groups, and personal activities. Study 3 investigates differences in nonverbal behavior and interaction style to shed light on the behavioral signatures of liberals and conservatives, thereby adding depth and detail to the personality profiles we have sketched out. Finally, Study 4 focuses on objective differences in personality as reflected in the things that liberals and conservatives leave behind in the physical spaces they occupy (i.e., bedrooms and offices). These studies were designed to move well-beyond explicit, pencil-and-paper, self-report measures of personality to understand similarities and differences in the private as well as public lives of liberals and conservatives.

Study 2: Attitudes, Tastes, and Preferences of Liberals and Conservatives

Although traits, such as those examined in Study 1, dominate the personality literature, they represent only one way of describing individuals. McAdams (1995) noted that traits pertain to “the psychology of the stranger,” providing a good first read on what someone is like but missing many other things that differentiate one person from another. To move beyond a superficial portrayal, we must delve deeper to assess the attributes of individuals in relation to the specific ideas and activities that fill their daily lives—that is, we must learn more about their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Thus, the goal of Study 2 was to shed light on the everyday tastes and preferences of liberals and conservatives as a way of adding depth to the personality profiles developed in Study 1.

We investigated a large number of attitude objects that were, as a rule, unrelated to political symbols. Because Openness and Conscientiousness emerged from Study 1 as the strongest predictors of political orientation, we focused especially on attitudes and preferences that would be related to these dimensions. Thus, we paid particular attention to attitudes concerning artistic and creative endeavors (e.g., reading poetry, listening to classical music), tolerance and diversity with regard to minority and majority social groups (e.g., gay men, African Americans), conventional adherence to social norms (e.g., going to church, keeping the house clean), and degree of support for institutional authorities (e.g., government, police). We also included a wide range of stimuli to determine how liberals and conservatives differ with regard to mundane preferences in terms of activities, hobbies, places, and possessions (e.g., getting drunk, going to the library, sex, masturbation, Country music, Rap music, small towns, big cities, motorcycles, and SUV's). Although the theoretical basis for at least some of these comparisons was exploratory, it was assumed that similarities and differences in the private lives of liberals and conservatives would be both intrinsically interesting and useful for subsequent theory-building with regard to the psychological basis of ideological preferences. We were also able to investigate the possibility arising from work by Haidt and Hersh (2001) suggesting that conservatives tend to be less open and more rigid with respect to sexual morality compared to liberals, especially concerning attitudes toward masturbation and homosexuality.

Method

Participants and procedure. Participants were 83 college students (53% female) from the University of Texas at Austin with a mean age of 19.1. Information about participants' race/ethnicity was not solicited. Participants visited a website and indicated the extent to which they liked a large number of attitude objects on scales ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*extremely*).

For clarity of presentation, we have organized the potentially relevant attitude objects according to four categories: (a) attitudes toward social issues, institutions, and authorities (e.g., legalized abortion, death penalty, big corporations), (b) liking for various social groups (e.g., atheists, Hispanics, lesbians), (c) preferences for forms of art, music, and entertainment (e.g., comedies, explicit sex movies, talk radio), and (d) personal activities and hobbies (e.g., going to bars, playing musical instruments, traveling).

Participants also indicated their degree of liking for Republicans and Democrats on the same scales ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*extremely*). These items were embedded in the context of the survey as a whole. A difference score was calculated to estimate each participant's degree of conservatism (which could have a positive or negative value) in terms of the magnitude of his or her preference for Republicans over Democrats. Overall, the sample leaned slightly to the right, showing a weak preference for Republicans ($M = .28$, $SD = 2.23$).

Results

Consistent with the notion that there are personality differences that covary with political orientation, we found that ideological preferences (for Republicans over Democrats or vice versa) were indeed correlated with a large number of everyday preferences. Because many of the attitude objects were assumed to elicit somewhat different reactions from male and female participants, we present the results in Table 3 separately for men and women (as well as combined). Within each stimulus category, the findings are organized in terms of effect sizes with the strongest positive predictors of conservatism for the total sample listed first and the strongest positive predictors of liberalism listed last.

With regard to attitudes toward social issues, institutions, and authorities, we found that conservatives were significantly more supportive of both the death penalty ($r = .28$) and big corporations ($r = .24$) than were liberals. On these two issues at least, the differences between liberals and

conservatives seem to have changed very little in 30 years or more (Wilson, 1973). Conservative males were significantly more likely to oppose abortion than were liberal males ($r = .36$), but (somewhat surprisingly) conservative females were *not* more likely than liberal females to oppose abortion. Conservative females were more appreciative of small towns than were liberal females ($r = .35$), but there was no effect of political orientation on liking for small towns among males. There was a trend for conservatives (men and women) to be more supportive than liberals of the U.S. government ($r = .19$). At the same time, there were several attitude objects that elicited appreciably similar reactions from liberals and conservatives. These included big cities, parents, marriage, police, and recycling (see Table 3).

The second category of attitude objects we considered included social groups, and these seemed to elicit greater ideological polarization. Consistent with the notion that liberals are more open, tolerant, egalitarian, and interested in social and cultural diversity, they were significantly more favorable in their attitudes toward Gay men ($r = .41$), Lesbians ($r = .37$), Street people ($r = .33$), Atheists ($r = .32$), African Americans ($r = .25$), Hispanics ($r = .21$), and Asians ($r = .19$). By contrast, conservatives were more favorable toward Fraternities and Sororities ($r = .37$), Caucasians ($r = .26$), and Politicians ($r = .26$). These differences seem readily interpretable in terms of preferences for heterogeneous vs. homogeneous and unconventional versus conventional groups. There were no reliable effects of political orientation on evaluations of Professors, Religious people, Rich people, Poor People, or Children.

Personality differences related to Openness and Conscientiousness were most likely to arise in connection with the last two categories we investigated, namely preferences for art, music, and entertainment as well as personal activities and hobbies. Liberalism was associated with an appreciation for classical music ($r = .38$) and jazz ($r = .26$), whereas conservatism was associated with liking for country music ($r = .21$). Somewhat surprisingly, no differences were observed for attitudes toward Rap, Hip Hop, or Top 40 music. There was a tendency for conservative men (but not women) to prefer relatively conventional forms of entertainment, including television ($r = .44$) and talk radio ($r = .28$). Conservatism (in both men and women) was also associated with liking for comedies ($r = .21$) and documentaries ($r = .23$). No differences between liberals and conservatives were observed on attitudes

toward video games or violent movies.

Based on research by Haidt and Hersh (2001), we thought that ideological differences might emerge in response to the stimulus of sexually explicit movies. In fact, there was no correlation between political orientation and liking for sexually explicit films for the sample as a whole or for the men in the sample. There was, however, a nonsignificant tendency for liberal women to be more approving than conservative women of sexually explicit movies ($r = .23$). With regard to romantic movies, there was a trend for liberal men to express more favorable attitudes than conservative men ($r = .21$), but no differences were observed among women.

We also considered the possibility that political orientation would be associated with preferences for certain personal activities and hobbies. Consistent with the notion that Openness to Experience is the personality dimension most strongly related to political orientation, we found that liberals (especially women) were more likely to enjoy intellectual and creative activities. For liberal women, preferred activities included reading in general ($r = .35$) and reading poetry in particular ($r = .44$), writing in a diary ($r = .26$), acting ($r = .25$), and playing musical instruments ($r = .31$). Liberal men were more likely than conservative men to enjoy riding motorcycles ($r = .31$), which may reflect greater excitement-seeking, as suggested by Tomkins (1963) and others. In general, conservatives (men and women) were significantly more likely to enjoy going to bars ($r = .22$) and getting drunk ($r = .26$). In light of the sample population (college students at the University of Texas) and the finding that conservatives hold more favorable attitudes toward fraternities and sororities ($r = .37$), these Dionysian pursuits seem relatively conventional in this context.

We found relatively little evidence that conservative activities reflected greater Conscientiousness than liberal activities. There was no association, for example, between political orientation and either going to church or keeping the house clean, and conservative women were less likely than liberal women to report going to the library ($r = .36$). Somewhat surprisingly, no reliable differences between liberals and conservatives were observed for attitudes toward sex or masturbation. Ideology also proved to be unrelated to attitudes toward such mundane activities as cooking, dancing, gardening, shopping, and

traveling. Thus, while some consequential differences in preferences and activities were obtained as a function of political orientation, there was also a good deal of similarity with regard to everyday preferences.

Discussion

In our second study we found that differences in the personality profiles of liberals and conservatives do indeed translate into meaningful differences with respect to tastes and preferences for certain institutions, authorities, social groups, artistic and musical styles, personal activities, and hobbies. It appears that asking people to express their attitudes about matters of institutional and social hierarchy and issues of creativity provided a rich context for the expression of ideology. We found that liberals were more likely than conservatives to report seeking intellectual stimulation and creative outlets in everyday life, and they manifested greater Openness in general, replicating and extending the results of Study 1. Liberals also showed somewhat more tolerance and appreciation for diverse cultural and aesthetic forms and for members of racial and ethnic minority groups. We addressed this issue even more directly in Study 3 by comparing liberals' and conservatives' nonverbal behavior in the context of interpersonal interaction with majority and minority group members.

Although conservatives expressed more conventional preferences and had somewhat greater reverence for authorities and traditions, we did not find much evidence that they adhered to higher normative standards in areas of personal conduct, academic achievement, or religious behavior. Thus, Study 2 further supported the finding from Study 1 in suggesting that Conscientiousness plays a less significant role than Openness in its relation to political orientation. The one area in which conservatives did seem to be more Conscientious than liberals in general was with respect to personal cleanliness and orderliness, a finding that is consistent with the facet-level analysis of the NEO-PI-R in Study 1. Therefore, in Study 4 we addressed this possibility more directly by examining contexts (personal living and office spaces) in which behaviors related to "orderliness" would be especially relevant and observable.

Study 3: Nonverbal Behavior and Interpersonal Styles of Liberals and Conservatives

Certain personality characteristics emerge only in specific settings and may be latent in others. As Gordon Allport famously declared, “the same heat that melts the butter, hardens the egg.” (1937, p. 63). Research has indeed shown that person attributes such as altruism, self-regulation ability, cognitive prowess, social savvy, race-bias, and even physical strength vary in their behavioral expression as a function of the situational context (e.g., Carlo, Eisenberg, Troyer, Switzer, & Speer, 1991; Shoda, Mischel, & Wright, 1993). Many of the traits hypothesized to differentiate liberals and conservatives would be expected to arise only in the heat of interpersonal interaction. These include traits such as expressive, excited, enthusiastic, sensitive, and tolerant—theorized to be stronger among liberals—as well as stern, cold, mechanical, withdrawn, reserved, stubborn, restrained, inhibited, and prejudice—theorized to be stronger among conservatives (see Table 1).

In Study 3, we measured the political orientation of White participants and then coded their nonverbal behavior during structured interactions with either White or Black conversation partners. We were especially interested in whether differences related to Openness and Conscientiousness would emerge with respect to facial expressions, nonverbal signals, and interaction style in general. Given prior research linking political conservatism to the holding of implicit as well as explicit racial biases (e.g., Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1996) and the finding in Study 2 that conservatism was associated with less liking for African Americans and other minority groups, it was hypothesized that liberals and conservatives would behave differently in conversation with Black (vs. White) research confederates (see also Flynn, 2005). We also varied the topic of conversation to determine whether differences between liberals and conservatives in terms of interaction style would emerge only when political issues were being discussed or whether they would arise more generally in discussions of any kind.

To examine interpersonal interaction style, we focused on nonverbal behaviors that, according to previous research, should be most related to the personality dimensions of Openness and Conscientiousness. By measuring nonverbal (rather than verbal) behavior we were able to minimize the effects of social desirability (e.g., Webb et al., 1981). To identify relevant behaviors to code, we reviewed

past research on the behavioral correlates of Openness and Conscientiousness. Using a cut-off point of $r = .20$, we found that Openness is: (a) positively associated with expressiveness, smiling behavior, relaxed posture, and others' ratings of friendliness and pleasantness (Borkenau & Liebler, 1995; Funder & Sneed, 1993), and (b) negatively associated with halting speech (Borkenau & Liebler, 1995). In addition, our review of the literature revealed that Conscientiousness is: (a) positively related to eye gaze and perceived responsiveness (Borkenau & Liebler, 1995), and (b) negatively related to the number of hand movements and gestures (Borkenau & Liebler, 1995) and the expression of hostility (Funder & Sneed, 1993). Our analysis therefore focused on these nonverbal cues. (It should be noted that some of these behaviors are also related to other traits [e.g., Extraversion and Agreeableness] that are not the focus of the present research.) Consistent with the way in which biased Whites generally behave toward Blacks (see Dovidio, Kawakami, & Gaertner, 2002; McConnell & Leibold, 2001; Word, Zanna, & Cooper, 1974), we also considered the possibility that conservatives would behave more negatively and less positively in general toward Blacks than Whites.

Method

Participants and design. Sixty-two European American undergraduates (55% women) participated in a 1-hour experiment for partial course credit. Participants interacted with one of five African American (2 male, 3 female) and one of four European American (2 female, 2 male) confederates. A 2 (race of confederate: within-participants) x 2 (socio-political conversation: between-participants) factorial design was used. The order in which participants interacted with Black and White confederates was counterbalanced.

Procedure. Participants were told that the experiment involved college students' opinions and perceptions of current or popular movies. Specifically, they would be interviewed on videotape by two different student interviewers for 3-minutes each about a movie. The interviewers were actually confederates of the experimenter.

Participants indicated which of 10 movies (5 of which were the target movies) they had seen, and the to-be-discussed movie was selected randomly from the target movies participants had seen. Each of

the 5 target movies was pre-tested ($N = 20$) and selected if at least 1 of the 5 had close to a 100% chance of having been seen by the student population. The five target movies were: *As Good as it Gets*, *The Green Mile*, *The Matrix*, *Pulp Fiction*, and *Shawshank Redemption*.

During the social interactions, participants were seated alongside the confederate; both were facing slightly toward each other but also facing the video camera. Confederates were handed a sheet of questions to ask the participant. The socio-political nature of the conversation was varied in the content of the questions asked. For some participants, the first question introduced a race-related topic by asking either “Do you think this movie accurately depicted relations between Blacks and Whites?” or “Do you think Blacks or Whites would be offended by the way race is depicted in the movie?” Other participants received one of two control questions instead: “Do you think this movie is an accurate depiction of life?” or “Do you think there was anything offensive about this movie?” After 3-minute interactions with both the European American and African American confederates, participants were brought into a separate room to complete the post-interaction questionnaire.

Students then participated in an ostensibly unrelated experiment in which a demographic questionnaire was administered. Political orientation was measured on a 1 (*extremely liberal*) to 5 (*extremely conservative*) scale, $M = 2.85$, $SD = .81$. Participants also completed the following two measures in a randomly determined order: the Implicit Association Test to measure anti-Black race-bias (IAT; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998), and a self-report measure of negative attitudes toward Blacks (Attitudes Toward Blacks Scale; Brigham, 1993).

Behavior assessments. Eight coders rated the presence of 8 behavioral indicators of Openness and Conscientiousness. All 3 min of each videotaped interaction were coded for the following 4 nonverbal/social behaviors related to Openness: body orientation (on a -5 to +5 scale with a 0 indicating the target person was facing the camera); expressivity (a global rating made on a 7-point scale with 7 being *extremely expressive*); speech errors (frequency); and smiles (frequency). Four behaviors reflecting Conscientiousness were also coded: detached from interaction (global rating on a 7-point scale with 7 being *extremely detached*); gaze (looking time coded in milliseconds); self-touching (any hand to

head/body/limb touching coded as an instance); and hostility (global rating on a 7-point scale with 7 being *extremely hostile*). Inter-rater reliability was calculated by having a comparison coder complete a small subset (2% - 8%) of the coding tasks; correspondence was high for all behaviors, with a mean inter-rater r of .81 and a range from .68 to .98.

Results

Previous research has found that Openness is associated with more friendliness, more expressivity, less halting speech, and more smiling. Building on prior theorizing and results, we hypothesized that liberals would exhibit this pattern of nonverbal behavior, whereas conservatives would exhibit the opposite pattern. As shown in Table 4, these predictions received relatively consistent, albeit modest support. Self-reported liberalism significantly predicted both smiling behavior ($r = .29$) and body orientation toward the interaction partner ($r = .32$). It was marginally associated with greater expressiveness ($r = .25$). Conservatism was marginally associated with more halting speech ($r = .23$).

Given that previous research has found Conscientiousness to be related to more eye gaze, less distractedness, less hand movement, and less hostility, one might expect that conservatives would be more likely than liberals to exhibit this pattern of nonverbal behavior. However, this was not the case (see Table 4). Self-reported conservatism was *positively* associated with an unresponsive, distracted interaction style ($r = .29$). Liberalism was marginally associated with increased eye gaze ($r = .25$). Political orientation was unrelated to the other two indicators of Conscientiousness, namely number of hand movements and degree of hostility (assumed to be inversely correlated with Conscientiousness).

Next we considered the possibility that the interaction styles of liberals and conservatives would vary as a function of the race of their interaction partner and whether or not they discussed a topic of social and political significance. Relevant data are presented in Table 5. In the top panel of the table, results are collapsed across conversation topics. We found that conservatism was indeed associated with significantly more speech dysfluencies (pauses and halting speech) when the confederate was Black ($r = .32$) but not White ($r = .10$; $z = 2.27$, $p < .05$ for the difference). In general, however, there were not many nonverbal differences between liberals and conservatives due to the race of their interaction partner.

The only other significant difference was that conservatism was significantly associated with fewer hand movements (a behavior generally indicative of more Conscientiousness) with White ($r = -.26$) but not Black ($r = -.03$) confederates ($z = 2.17, p < .05$ for the difference).

When the interaction began with a socio-political question (see middle panel of Table 5), results indicated that conservatism predicted more hand movements and self-touching when interacting with Blacks ($r = .14$) but fewer hand movements and less self-touching when interacting with Whites ($r = -.19$). This difference was marginally significant ($z = 1.80, p < .10$). No other significant differences were observed as a function of race of interaction partner when the issue of race had been made salient.

When no socio-political content was explicitly raised (see bottom panel of Table 5), the effects of political orientation tended to be stronger, suggesting that the effects of ideology on behavior were the result of largely automatic (or implicit) rather than controlled processes. Conservatism was more strongly associated with a body orientation turned away from the interaction partner when he or she was Black ($r = -.57$) than when he or she was White ($r = -.22; z = 2.02, p < .05$ for the difference). Furthermore, conservatism was associated with significantly more pauses and halting speech when the confederate was Black ($r = .45$) but not White ($r = -.15; z = 2.85, p < .01$). Finally, conservatism was associated with significantly *less* hostility toward Black ($r = -.41$) but not White interaction partners ($r = .01; z = 4.14, p < .001$), suggesting a possible dissociation between nonverbal and other behavioral manifestations of racial attitudes.⁵

With regard to the effects of political orientation on racial attitudes, we largely replicated the results of Study 2 and those of previous studies (e.g., Cunningham, Nezlek, & Banaji, 2004). Conservatism was strongly related to expressed negativity toward Blacks at the explicit level, $r(60) = .48, p < .001$. It was only modestly and (given the sample size) non-significantly correlated with the IAT measure of implicit race bias, $r(60) = .18, p = .16$ (but see Jost et al., 2004 for a larger and more representative sample). At an implicit level, liberals and conservatives alike exhibited the usual pro-White/anti-Black bias ($M = .26; SD = .36$); the magnitude of the bias was significantly different from zero, $t(61) = 5.67, p < .001$.

Discussion

Differences between liberals and conservatives with respect to Openness, as manifested in self-report measures in Study 1, played out in terms of nonverbal behavior and interpersonal interaction style in Study 3. Liberals were more expressive, smiled more, and were more engaged in conversation with both Black and White confederates (see also Lippa & Arad, 1999). Conservatives did not behave in ways that reflected greater Conscientiousness, however. In the context of the experimental situation, conservatives behaved in a more detached and disengaged manner in general. Although this behavior was not indicative of Conscientiousness, it did reflect the kind of withdrawn, reserved, inhibited, and perhaps rigid interaction style that many theorists have associated with conservatism over the years (see Table 1).

It is, of course, possible that this particular context (a discussion about movies) was not optimal for the expression of Conscientiousness. Thus, we sought out another setting in which to make unobtrusive observations concerning aspects of Openness and Conscientiousness. One domain in which these traits are known to leave markers is in personal living and working spaces (Gosling, Ko, Mannarelli, & Morris, 2002). By examining the features of such spaces, it is possible not only to track differences between liberals and conservatives in terms of self-reported personality characteristics (Study 1), attitudes, values, tastes, and preferences (Study 2), and interpersonal interaction styles (Study 3), but also in terms of behavioral residue as left behind in their physical environments.

Study 4: Room Cues and the Things They Leave Behind

The goal of Study 4 was to explore the manner in which personality differences associated with political orientation are revealed in behavioral contexts such as personal living and working spaces. To meet this aim, the contents (i.e., “behavioral residues”) of bedrooms ($N = 76$) and offices ($N = 68$) were inventoried and related to occupants’ degrees of liberalism-conservatism.⁶ Building on the results of our previous studies, it was predicted that rooms of liberals would possess more cues associated with Openness, including style, color, and distinctiveness, as well as containing a greater number and diversity of books, compact disks, travel documents, and art supplies. It was also predicted that rooms of conservatives would possess more cues associated with Conscientiousness, including neatness,

organization, conventional forms of decoration, and a greater number of items such as calendars and cleaning supplies.

Method

Personal living spaces. The personal living spaces were rooms in private houses, apartments, dormitories, co-ops, and Greek-system housing situated in an urban setting close to a large West Coast public university. Most of the rooms studied contained single occupants. Multi-occupant rooms were examined only if occupants' sections of the room could be clearly demarcated.

Personal living space occupants. Participants were 76 college students (68.4% female) at the University of California-Berkeley with a mean age of 21.9 years. The two largest racial/ethnic groups represented were Asian American (40.5% of the sample) and European American (36.5%); the remaining 23% identified with other racial/ethnic groups.

Offices. Five office locations in a large U.S. city were chosen. These locations were a commercial real estate agency, an advertising agency, a business school, an architectural firm, and a retail bank.

Office occupants. With the consent of management, employees at each company were given an opportunity to participate in this research. Ninety-four office occupants (59% women) with an average age of 37.03 ($SD = 10.10$) years participated in this study. Occupants' ethnicities were 5% Asian, 85% White, and 10% were of other ethnicities.

Coded features of the environments. A broad range of environmental attributes were coded with the Personal Living Space Cue Inventory (PLSCI; Gosling, Craik, Martin, & Pryor, 2005). The first part of the PLSCI contains 43 global descriptors on which coders make bipolar ratings on 7-point scales concerning environmental attributes such as *well-lit* vs. *dark*. The second part of the PLSCI contains 385 specific content items such as "ironing board." The PLSCI was developed for use on personal living spaces (not work spaces), so most of the specific items (e.g., laundry basket) are irrelevant to work contexts. Therefore, global PLSCI items are reported for both living spaces (i.e., bedrooms/dorm rooms) and offices, whereas specific PLSCI items are reported for living spaces only. All items were selected using extensive item-generation and selection procedures (see Gosling et al., 2005).

Procedure for global PLSCI. Teams of research assistants independently coded each personal living space and office. Occupants' photographs and other identifying information were covered before coders entered the living/working spaces, and coders were not permitted to communicate while making the global ratings. Guided by previous findings, only those cues that explicitly or conceptually related to Openness and/or Conscientiousness reported by Gosling et al. (2002) were examined. Coder ratings were aggregated into composites. These composite codings showed reasonable levels of reliability, with a mean coefficient alpha of .75 for the personal living spaces and .62 for the office spaces.

Procedure for specific PLSCI. Each of the assistants coded an equivalent subset of the specific content items. Coders were not permitted to touch or move any items, so their codings reflected only what could be seen by walking around the room. Coders were permitted to communicate with each other while coding specific PLSCI items in order to point out items that other coders might miss (e.g., a book on a windowsill that could be missed by the coder responsible for inventorying books). A large proportion of items were excluded for the following reasons: (a) lack of occupant control (structural items over which inhabitants have no control such as type of flooring or color of walls); (b) extreme commonality (standard furniture pieces such as chairs, desks, beds, and linens); and (c) extreme specificity (categories of items such as "books about culture" were recorded but specific book titles were not).

Political orientation. Occupants' political orientation was measured by asking respondents to state their political views on a 1 (*liberal*) to 5 (*conservative*) scale for bedroom occupants ($M = 2.41$, $SD = .87$) and a 1 (*liberal*) to 7 (*conservative*) scale for office occupants ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 1.60$).

Results

Correlations between the political orientation of occupants and room cues—especially those pertaining to Conscientiousness and Openness—are listed in Table 6. The findings are organized in terms of effect sizes with the strongest positive predictors of conservatism listed first and the strongest positive predictors of liberalism listed last. Conservatives' bedrooms tended to include more organizational items, including event calendars ($r = .31$), general calendars ($r = .23$), and postage stamps ($r = .30$). They also contained more conventional decorations and items, including sports paraphernalia ($r = .34$), flags of

various types ($r = .23$), American flags in particular ($r = .21$), and alcohol bottles and containers ($r = .23$), thereby replicating results from Study 2 concerning both patriotism and drinking behavior. In general, conservative bedrooms were somewhat more neat ($r = .15$), clean ($r = .16$), fresh ($r = .17$), organized ($r = .17$), and well-lit ($r = .20$). They were also significantly more likely to contain household cleaning and mending accessories such as laundry baskets ($r = .25$), irons and ironing boards ($r = .28$), and string or thread ($r = .29$). These results appear to confirm theoretical contentions that concerns with cleanliness, hygiene, and order are related to political conservatism (see Table 1). Conservative offices tended to be more conventional ($r = .24$), less stylish ($r = .32$), and less comfortable ($r = .24$), in comparison with liberal offices.

The bedrooms of liberals indeed suggested that their occupants were relatively high on Openness to Experience. They contained a significantly greater number ($r = .25$) and variety of books ($r = .34$), including books about travel ($r = .21$), ethnic issues ($r = .24$), feminism ($r = .25$), and music ($r = .25$), as well as a greater number ($r = .23$) and variety of music CD's, including world music ($r = .26$), folk music ($r = .24$), classic and modern rock ($r = .22$), and "oldies" ($r = .25$). Liberal bedrooms also contained a greater number of art supplies ($r = .27$), stationery ($r = .26$), movie tickets ($r = .25$), and a number of items pertaining to travel, including international maps ($r = .25$), travel documents ($r = .22$), books about travel ($r = .21$), and cultural memorabilia ($r = .22$). Offices and workspaces used by liberals were judged by our coders as being more distinctive ($r = .39$), colorful ($r = .20$), and "fresh" ($r = .22$), and as containing more CD's ($r = .31$) and a greater variety of books ($r = .29$). These results are highly consistent with those of Study 2 indicating that liberals are significantly more interested than conservatives in music, art, and literature. The findings of Study 4 suggest that travel and cultural exploration should be added to the list.

General Discussion

In four studies employing very different methods of observation we have obtained consistent and converging evidence that personality differences between liberals and conservatives are indeed robust, replicable, and behaviorally significant. Our results clearly contradict Mehrabian's (1996) conclusion that

liberalism-conservatism is “consistently and strikingly unrelated to personality and temperament factors” (p. 469). On the contrary, we found support for many of the observations made by social and psychological theorists over the last seventy-five years or so—including Adorno et al. (1950), Fromm (1947, 1964), Tomkins (1963), Wilson (1973), and others—concerning the ways in which personality differences covary with political orientation (see Table 1). Liberals did appear to be more open, tolerant, creative, curious, expressive, enthusiastic, and drawn to novelty and diversity, in comparison with conservatives, who appeared to be more conventional, orderly, organized, neat, clean, withdrawn, reserved, rigid, and relatively intolerant. Most, but perhaps not all, of these differences can be understood in terms of two basic personality dimensions identified by “Big Five” researchers: Openness and Conscientiousness. An advantage of these studies is that they have demonstrated personality differences between liberals and conservatives not only on self-report trait and attitudinal measures but also on unobtrusive measures of interaction style and behavioral residue.

As Bishop (2004) noted, political segregation has been growing rapidly in the United States, with an increasing number of people moving to areas with like-minded residents. We suspect that a similar sorting process occurs with respect to career choice, insofar as people’s personality and ideological inclinations affect their decisions about whether to study and practice such diverse fields as engineering and finance, in which order and structure are inherently imposed, as opposed to the arts, humanities, and even social sciences, in which creativity, openness, and cognitive flexibility are job requirements. Future research would do well to investigate political segregation in vocational choice in relation to the basic personality needs of liberals and conservatives as well as to replicate our results in more diverse samples. Our findings to date clearly suggest that the political divide extends far beyond overtly ideological opinions to much subtler and more banal personal interests, tastes, preferences, and interaction styles.

Although our studies show clearly that there are genuine differences between liberals and conservatives, we do not wish to overstate the magnitude of these differences, especially given the current, highly polarized political environment in the U.S. (Bishop, 2004). Most of the differences we observed were of moderate magnitude, at least in terms of Cohen’s (1988) effect sizes (but see Hemphill,

2003). Our studies revealed a number of similarities between liberals and conservatives, some of which were slightly surprising. First, we observed little or no differences on personality dimensions of Extraversion, Agreeableness, or Neuroticism, despite occasional speculation that traits pertaining to these dimensions would covary with political orientation (see Tables 1 and 2). Second, we found no differences between liberals and conservatives in their attitudes toward a wide range of social stimuli, interests, and activities, including big cities, recycling, police officers, professors, video games, violent movies, top 40 music, dancing, sex, masturbation, cooking, and gardening (see Table 3). Third, although we did observe a number of differences in terms of interaction style and the orderliness and distinctiveness of personal living and office spaces, almost all of these differences were small or moderate in magnitude (see Tables 4-6), suggesting that liberals and conservatives are not in fact doomed as roommates or co-workers. On the contrary, the many areas of overlap identified in our research suggest that cooperation and compromise across the political divide may indeed be possible.

Political orientation appears pervades almost every aspect of our public and private lives, perhaps now more than in recent decades (see Jost, 2006). Not only does it describe how we think about and what we value in terms of government and society as a whole, but it also appears to leave its mark on what we eat, drink, watch, and listen to, how we celebrate, travel, decorate our walls, clean our bodies and our homes, and with whom we choose to spend our free time. A parsimonious way of summarizing these diverse differences is in terms of the themes of Openness and Conscientiousness. As a general rule, liberals are more open-minded in their pursuit of creativity, novelty, and diversity, whereas conservatives seek lives that are more orderly, conventional, and better organized. These basic differences may help to explain both the contours and the fault lines in the topography of ideology.

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Table 1: Personality Traits (and their Five-Factor Model Classifications) Theorized to be Associated with Liberal (or Left-Wing) and Conservative (or Right-Wing) Orientation, 1930-2005

| <u>Liberal/Left-Wing</u> | <u>Conservative/Right-Wing</u> |
|--|--|
| Slovenly, ambiguous, indifferent ¹ (C-) | Definite, persistent, tenacious ^{1,2,5} (C+) |
| Eccentric, sensitive, individualistic ^{1,3} (O+) | Tough, masculine, firm ^{1,2,3,18} (C+, A-) |
| Open, tolerant, flexible ^{2,3,9,20} (O+) | Reliable, trustworthy, faithful, loyal ^{1,4,5} (C+, A+) |
| Life-loving, free, unpredictable ^{7,8} (O+, C-, E+) | Stable, consistent ^{1,2} (C+, N-) |
| Creative, imaginative, curious ^{9,10,11,20} (O+) | Rigid, intolerant ^{2,3,5,7,8,15,18,20,22} (O-, A-) |
| Expressive, enthusiastic ^{9,22} (O+, E+) | Conventional, ordinary ^{2,3,5,18} (O-, C+) |
| Excited, sensation-seeking ^{9,10,11,20} (O+, E+) | Obedient, conformist ^{2,3,18} (O-, C+, A+) |
| Desire for novelty, diversity ^{9,20} (O+) | Fearful, threatened ^{2,15,18,20,22} (N+) |
| Uncontrolled, impulsive ^{9,12,13,22} (C-, E+) | Xenophobic, prejudiced ^{2,3,15,18,19} (O-, A-) |
| Complex, nuanced ^{16,17,18,20,21} (O+) | Orderly, organized ^{4,5,7,8,12,13,14,20} (C+) |
| Open-minded ^{20,21} (O+) | Parsimonious, thrifty, stingy ^{4,5} (C+) |
| Open to experience ^{10,11,20,23,24,25} (O+) | Clean, sterile ^{4,5,7,8} (C+) |
| | Obstinate, stubborn ^{4,5} (O-, C+, A-) |
| | Aggressive, angry, vengeful ^{2,3,4,15} (A-) |
| | Careful, practical, methodical ⁵ (O-, C+) |
| | Withdrawn, reserved ^{5,9} (E-) |
| | Stern, cold, mechanical ^{5,7,8,9} (O-, E-, A-) |
| | Anxious, suspicious, obsessive ^{5,6,15} (N+) |
| | Self-controlled ^{7,8,9,12,13,14} (C+) |
| | Restrained, inhibited ^{7,8,9,22} (O-, C+, E-) |
| | Concerned with rules, norms ^{7,8,9} (C+) |
| | Moralistic ^{9,15,18,28} (O-, C+) |
| | Simple, decisive ^{19,20,21} (O-, C+) |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>Closed-minded^{20,21} (O-)</p> <p>Conscientious^{25,26,27} (C+)</p> |
|--|--|

Sources: ¹ Jaensch (1938); ² Adorno et al. (1950); ³ Brown (1965); ⁴ Freud (1959/1991); ⁵ Fromm (1947); ⁶ Kline & Cooper (1984); ⁷ Maccoby (1968); ⁸ Bem (1970); ⁹ Tomkins (1963); ¹⁰ Levin & Schalmo (1974); ¹¹ Feather (1984); ¹² Milbrath (1962); ¹³ St. Angelo & Dyson (1968); ¹⁴ Costantini & Craik (1980); ¹⁵ Wilson (1973); ¹⁶ Tetlock (1983, 1984); ¹⁷ Sidanius (1985); ¹⁸ Altemeyer (1998); ¹⁹ Van Hiel, Pandelaere, & Duriez (2004); ²⁰ Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway (2003); ²¹ Kruglanski (2005); ²² Block & Block (in press); ²³ McCrae (1996); ²⁴ Barnea & Schwartz (1998); ²⁵ Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann (2003); ²⁶ Caprara, Barbaranelli & Zimbardo (1999); ²⁷ Rentfrow, Jost, Gosling, & Potter (2006); ²⁸ Haidt & Hersh (2001)

Note: O = “Openness to Experience”; C = “Conscientiousness”; E = “Extraversion”; A = “Agreeableness”; N = “Neuroticism”; + = “High”; - = “Low”

Table 2: *Correlations between Scores on Big Five Personality Dimensions and Political Conservatism (Study 1).*

| Sample | N | Instrument | Correlation with conservatism | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------|------------|-------------------------------|--------|------|--------|---------|
| | | | O | C | E | A | N |
| Sample 1 | 85 | NEO-PI-R | -.42*** | .21+ | .13 | .03 | -.19+ |
| Sample 2 | 79 | BFI | -.05 | .16 | .10 | .04 | .06 |
| Sample 3 | 155 | BFI | -.33*** | .03 | -.05 | .13 | .02 |
| Sample 4 | 1,826 | BFI | -.20*** | .08** | -.02 | .09** | -.08*** |
| Sample 5 (Internet) | 17,103 | BFI | -.26*** | .10*** | -.01 | .05*** | -.03*** |
| Total (unweighted mean <i>r</i>) | | | -.26*** | .12*** | .03 | .07* | -.04* |
| Total (weighted mean <i>r</i>) | | | -.26*** | .10*** | -.01 | .05* | -.03+ |

Note: Personality instruments ("BFI" and "NEO-PI-R") are described in the Methods section for Study 1.

"O" = Openness to Experience; "C" = Conscientiousness; "E" = Extraversion; "A" = Agreeableness; and

"N" = Neuroticism.

+ $p < .10$ * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed)

Table 3: *Correlations between Preference for Republicans (over Democrats) and Attitudes, Tastes, and Preferences (Study 2).*

| | Correlation with preference for Republicans (over Democrats) | | |
|---|---|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| | Women (<i>n</i> = 41) | Men (<i>n</i> = 42) | Total (<i>n</i> = 83) |
| <u>Issues/Institutions/Authorities</u> | | | |
| Death penalty | .35* | .20 | .28* |
| Big corporations | .29+ | .22 | .24* |
| U.S. government | .23 | .18 | .19+ |
| Marriage | .22 | .14 | .16 |
| Small towns | .35* | .01 | .15 |
| Your parents | .19 | .11 | .12 |
| Big cities | -.04 | .10 | .02 |
| Recycling | -.17 | -.01 | -.09 |
| Police | -.13 | -.05 | -.10 |
| Abortion being legal | .13 | -.36* | -.16 |
| <u>Liking for Various Social Groups</u> | | | |
| Fraternities/sororities | .37* | .40** | .37** |
| Politicians | .31* | .23 | .26* |
| Caucasians | .29+ | .24 | .26* |
| Children | .25 | .18 | .18 |
| Religious people | .12 | .09 | .08 |
| Poor people | -.01 | .12 | .05 |
| Rich people | -.01 | .13 | .04 |
| Professors | -.14 | -.03 | -.08 |
| Asians | -.23 | -.13 | -.19+ |

Liberals and conservatives

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------|--------|---------|
| Hispanics | -.32* | -.12 | -.21+ |
| African Americans | -.44** | -.06 | -.25* |
| Atheists | -.41** | -.28+ | -.32** |
| Street people | -.22 | -.39** | -.33** |
| Lesbians | -.49** | -.28+ | -.37** |
| Gay men | -.38* | -.42** | -.41*** |
| <u>Art/Music/Entertainment</u> | | | |
| Documentaries | .20 | .25 | .23* |
| Country music | .19 | .40** | .21+ |
| Comedies | .15 | .26 | .21+ |
| Television (watching) | -.23 | .44** | .13 |
| Rap | .29+ | -.12 | .07 |
| Video games (playing) | .13 | -.12 | .04 |
| Talk radio | -.29+ | .28+ | .03 |
| Top 40 music | .18 | -.06 | .03 |
| Graphic violence movies | -.09 | .01 | .03 |
| Explicit sex movies | -.23 | -.02 | -.05 |
| Hip hop | -.01 | -.25 | -.13 |
| Romantic movies | .04 | -.21 | -.15 |
| Jazz | -.19 | -.42** | -.26* |
| Classical music | -.36* | -.39* | -.38*** |
| <u>Personal Activities/Hobbies</u> | | | |
| Getting drunk | .29+ | .24 | .26* |
| Going to bars | .24 | .22 | .22* |
| Sports Utility Vehicles | .08 | .19 | .11 |
| Going to church | .08 | .19 | .11 |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------|-------|-------|
| Masturbation | -.09 | .11 | .07 |
| Shopping | .20 | .07 | .05 |
| Cooking | .14 | .01 | .03 |
| Sex | .08 | -.12 | .03 |
| Keeping the house clean | -.05 | .10 | -.02 |
| Dancing | -.01 | -.04 | -.08 |
| Gardening | -.15 | .06 | -.10 |
| Traveling | -.14 | -.11 | -.14 |
| Acting | -.25 | -.01 | -.15 |
| Playing musical instruments | -.31* | -.06 | -.15 |
| Reading | -.35* | .10 | -.15 |
| Going to the library | -.36* | .08 | -.15 |
| Motorcycles | -.17 | -.31* | -.20+ |
| Singing songs | -.08 | -.27+ | -.21+ |
| Reading poetry | -.44** | -.06 | -.25* |
| Keeping diaries | -.26+ | -.19 | -.26* |

+ $p < .10$ * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed)

Table 4: *Correlations between Political Conservatism and Nonverbal Behavior (Study 3)*

| Behavior toward confederates | <i>r</i> |
|---|----------|
| Behaviors related to Openness | |
| Body oriented toward conversation partner (+) | -.32* |
| Expressive (+) | -.25+ |
| Halting speech/number of pauses (-) | .23+ |
| Number of smiles (+) | -.29* |
| Behaviors related to Conscientiousness | |
| Distracted/unresponsive (-) | .29* |
| Eye gaze (+) | -.25+ |
| Hand movements/self-touching (-) | -.14 |
| Hostility (-) | .05 |

Note: The direction of previously observed relations between personality factors (Openness and Conscientiousness) and the coded behavior (or closely related behavior) is noted in parentheses.

+ $p < .10$ * $p < .05$ (two-tailed)

Table 5: *Correlations between Political Conservatism and Nonverbal Behavior toward Black and White Confederates (Study 3)*

| | Race of confederate | | Z-test (two-tailed) |
|--|---------------------|-------|------------------------|
| | Black | White | |
| <u>Behavior collapsed across conversation topic (N = 62)</u> | | | |
| Behaviors related to Openness | | | |
| Body oriented toward conversation partner (+) | -.34** | -.16 | -1.58 |
| Expressive (+) | -.13 | -.23+ | .71 |
| Halting speech/number of pauses (-) | .32* | .10 | 2.27* |
| Number of smiles (+) | -.31* | -.21+ | -.85 |
| Behaviors related to Conscientiousness | | | |
| Distracted/unresponsive (-) | .24+ | .22+ | .14 |
| Gaze (+) | -.23+ | -.13 | -1.12 |
| Hand movements/self-touching (-) | -.03 | -.26* | 2.17* |
| Hostility (-) | -.23+ | -.12 | -1.01 |
| <u>Socio-political conversation topic (n = 33)</u> | | | |
| Behaviors related to Openness | | | |
| Body oriented toward conversation partner (+) | -.11 | -.04 | -.44 |
| Expressive (+) | -.30+ | -.12 | -1.22 |
| Halting speech/number of pauses (-) | .25 | .23 | .13 |
| Number of smiles (+) | -.36* | -.17 | -1.30 |

Behaviors related to Conscientiousness

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|------|------|-------|
| Distracted/unresponsive (-) | .33+ | .24 | .76 |
| Gaze (+) | -.17 | -.07 | -.91 |
| Hand movements/self-touching (-) | .14 | -.19 | 1.80+ |
| Hostility (-) | -.08 | -.10 | .16 |

Neutral conversation topic ($n = 29$)

Behaviors related to Openness

| | | | |
|---|--------|-------|--------|
| Body oriented toward conversation partner (+) | -.57** | -.22 | -2.02* |
| Expressive (+) | -.08 | -.37+ | 1.50 |
| Halting speech/number of pauses (-) | .45* | -.15 | 2.85** |
| Number of smiles (+) | -.35+ | -.36+ | .10 |

Behaviors related to Conscientiousness

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------|------|----------|
| Distracted/unresponsive (-) | .25 | .13 | .61 |
| Gaze (+) | .33+ | -.19 | -1.00 |
| Hand movements/self-touching (-) | -.14 | -.22 | .58 |
| Hostility (-) | -.41* | .01 | -4.14*** |

Note: The direction of previously observed relations between personality factors (Openness and Conscientiousness) and the coded behavior (or closely related behavior) is noted in parentheses.

+ $p < .10$ * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed)

Table 6: *Correlations between Political Conservatism of Occupant and Room Cues in Bedrooms and Office Spaces (Study 4)*

| | Correlation with conservatism | |
|---|-------------------------------|---------|
| | Bedrooms | Offices |
| Sports-related décor (posters, paintings, photos) | .34** | n/a |
| Event calendar | .31** | n/a |
| Postage Stamps | .30** | n/a |
| Presence of string/thread | .29* | n/a |
| Iron and/or ironing board | .28* | n/a |
| Laundry basket | .25* | n/a |
| Conventional (vs. unconventional) | n/a | .24* |
| General calendar | .23* | n/a |
| Any type of flag (including U.S.A. flags) | .23* | n/a |
| Alcohol bottles/containers | .23* | n/a |
| Flag of USA | .21+ | n/a |
| Well-lit (vs. dark) | .20+ | .10 |
| Fresh (vs. stale) | .17 | -.22+ |
| Neat (vs. messy) | .16 | .01 |
| Clean (vs. dirty) | .15 | .14 |
| Modern (vs. old fashioned) | .15 | -.27* |
| Good (vs. poor) condition | .13 | -.07 |
| Organized (vs. disorganized) | .10 | -.01 |
| Colorful (vs. gloomy) | .07 | -.20+ |
| Stylish (vs. unstylish) | .06 | -.32** |
| Comfortable (vs. uncomfortable) | -.01 | -.24* |

| | | |
|--|-------|---------|
| Organized (vs. disorganized) CDs | -.10 | -.07 |
| Cluttered (vs. uncluttered) | -.11 | .13 |
| Distinctive (vs. ordinary) | -.11 | -.39*** |
| Full (vs. empty) | -.15 | .19 |
| Varied (vs. homogenous) CDs | -.19 | .18 |
| Books about travel | -.21+ | n/a |
| Classic rock CDs | -.22+ | n/a |
| Modern rock CDs | -.22+ | n/a |
| Reggae music CDs | -.22+ | n/a |
| Collections (e.g., stamps, action figurines, etc.) | -.22+ | n/a |
| Cultural memorabilia (e.g., trinkets brought back from vacation) | -.22+ | n/a |
| Tickets for/from travel | -.22+ | n/a |
| Many (vs. few) CDs | -.23* | -.31* |
| Books about ethnic topics | -.24* | n/a |
| Folk music CDs | -.24* | n/a |
| Tape dispenser | -.24* | n/a |
| Movie tickets | -.25* | n/a |
| Books about feminist topics | -.25* | n/a |
| Books about music | -.25* | n/a |
| Oldies music CDs | -.25* | n/a |
| International maps (maps of countries other than the U.S.A.) | -.25* | n/a |
| Many (vs. few) books | -.25* | -.11 |
| Many (vs. few) items of stationery | -.26* | -.17 |
| World music CDs | -.26* | n/a |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--------|-------|
| Art supplies | -.27* | n/a |
| Variety of music | -.27* | n/a |
| Varied (vs. homogenous) books | -.34** | -.29+ |

Note: $N = 76$ for all bedroom cues except for varied (vs. homogenous) books ($n = 73$), organized (vs. disorganized) CD's ($n = 67$), and varied (vs. homogenous) CD's ($n = 62$). $N = 68$ for all office cues except for varied (vs. homogenous) books ($n = 42$).

+ $p < .10$ * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed)

Notes

¹ For purposes of simplicity in exposition we frequently use the categorical terms of “liberals” and “conservatives,” although these labels refer to opposite poles of a single, underlying dimension, and our statistical analyses will treat it as such (see also Jost, 2006; Knight, 1999).

² Although there has been no direct attempt to assess Fromm’s (1947) theory, there is at least some factor analytic evidence that authoritarian conservatism is associated with anal (or “obsessional”) characteristics (Kline & Cooper, 1984).

³ Because previous research has indicated that Conscientiousness statistically interacts with other personality variables to predict social behavior (King, George, & Hebl, 2005), we considered the possibility that Openness and Conscientiousness (the two biggest predictors in our analyses) would interact to predict political ideology. For our largest sample (Study 1, Sample 5), we found that these two personality variables did indeed interact to predict political ideology ($\beta = .08, t = 2.53, p < .02$). After adjusting for the main effects of each personality variable, the combination of low Openness and high Conscientiousness was associated with increased conservatism. However, this interaction effect was not replicated in any of the other 4 samples.

⁴ There is some reason to think that this conclusion is more true of the American context than other cultural contexts (see Thorisdottir, Jost, Liviatan, and Shrout, 2006).

⁵ Coders also made ratings of confederate nonverbal behavior. Black and White confederates’ behavior varied slightly such that Black confederates acted marginally more friendly than did White confederates ($p < .07$). There were also individual differences in friendliness and body orientation behavior among the five different Black confederates ($ps < .001$) and among the 4 different White confederates ($p < .001$). All behavioral analyses reported here adjusted for individual differences in Black and White confederates’ behavior by entering them as covariates.

⁶ Other analyses based on the samples investigated in Study 4 were reported in an article by Gosling, Ko, Mannarelli, and Morris (2002), but it contained no analyses involving political orientation.