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Reluctance or Power Hunger: Whom do Voters Prefer? A Test of the Wary Cooperator Theory and Evolutionary Political Behavior

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A TEST OF THE WARY COOPERATOR THEORY

AND EVOLUTIONARY POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

by

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Do voters prefer political candidates who express reluctance to seek office, or do voters prefer candidates who express great ambition and an implicit hunger for power? This study uses an experimental design to test overall support of reluctant or power-hungry candidates, and discusses which people would select which candidate and why. While limited by the survey design, the evidence suggests that there is no significant overall mean difference for overall support of either candidate. However, personality traits and the degree to which participants perceived certain descriptive attributes of the candidates both play a role in vote likelihood and candidate favorability for each of the two candidates. Most importantly, when participants perceived power hunger in a candidate, that candidate was avoided, which supports previous research.

Introduction

As demonstrated in an economic game experiment by Hibbing and Alford (2004), people are "wary" to give authority to someone who *seeks* power, and are more willing to give authority to someone who *reluctantly accepts* power given to them. In electoral politics, does this same concept apply? If, for example, a Congressional candidate has been nominated to run, and only seeks office out of a sense of public service and not a need for power, would more voters support them than they would a more ambitious Congressional candidate? The answer would be immediately relevant to those studying voter behavior—could it be that people would support a candidate simply by virtue of the fact that the candidate does not *want* to be supported? If so, is it not in the interest of campaigns to bill their candidate as reluctant to accept authority? Which voters prefer which candidate and why? This study seeks to address these questions.

This study employs an experimental design in which the key experimental manipulation pertains to a mock Congressional election candidate's level of expressed ambition. Half of participants read about a candidate expressing reluctance to run for office, and the other half of participants read about a candidate who expresses ambition and thirst for power. The survey includes favorability and vote likelihood batteries for each candidate, as well as a Big Five personality battery, issue attitudes, as well as the strength of the participants' political ideology and party identification.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Wary Cooperator Theory

Political scientists have had a difficult time studying vote choice among the general population. Many voters are ill-informed (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996) and the wild instability of people's political attitudes over time—as first studied by Campbell et al. (1960) and Converse (1964)—are reflective of a task for academics and scholars of vote choice that may serve to be impossible to solve. While some have put forth the idea that "rational choice" helps to explain political behavior (e.g. Chubb & Moe, 1988), the limits of human cognition and attention (see Downs, 1976; Simon, 1946) coupled with the general weaknesses and flaws inherent in the rational choice framework (see Green & Shapiro, 1996; Smith & Larimer, 2009, pp. 67-69) have led political behavior scholars to seek other methods by which they could explain behavior at the ballot box, as well as generalized political behavior.

In 2004, Hibbing and Alford used an economic game experiment to find that most people are "wary" to surrender authority to someone who explicitly exhibits a thirst for power, but are willing to give authority to someone who reluctantly accepts what is given to them (Hibbing & Alford, 2004). The authors consider this to be a common trait held by most people for evolutionary, biological reasons (p. 66n), as it is evolutionarily advantageous for our species to be cautiously cooperative, and aware of the possibility that we could be "screwed" out of resources of finite supply that we deserve (p. 74). In incorporating these facets of evolutionary psychology, Hibbing and Alford devised this framework of the "wary cooperator," which, for the purposes of this essay, will hereafter be referred to as "Wary Cooperator Theory," or WCT (see also Alford & Hibbing, 2004).

Before proceeding, it is important to more fully explain WCT's origins within evolutionary theory and natural selection. Aside from being the backbone of modern biological science (Dobzhansky, 1973; Kutschera & Niklas, 2004), natural selection has been easily applied across the social sciences, including political science (for a review, see Hatemi & McDermott, 2011; Tingley, 2006). Theoretically, it would best serve citizens' survival to elect the person who seemed most willing to serve the citizens, as opposed to electing someone that seems more willing to serve themselves.

The results of the economic game experiment by Hibbing and Alford were replicated by Smith in 2006, who also used an economic game to find that the decisions made by people who are power-hungry "are viewed with less legitimacy than those who do not overtly seek positions of authority," (Smith, 2006, p. 1019). This view was held by such political theorists as Machiavelli and James Madison (Larimer, Hannagan & Smith, 2007, p. 57). So, although the *idea* is nothing new, WCT offers a new take on political behavior and could help to explain an additional factor to which citizens may turn in formulating their voice choice.

Reluctant Candidates in Politics

Little research has been done on WCT in general outside of those who have explicitly employed it in economic games (Hibbing & Alford, 2004; Smith, 2006), and none have employed the theory to simulate an election, even though many candidates for political office throughout history have expressed reluctance to run for office in the first place—although it must be noted that Hibbing and Alford (2004) specifically test for participants' attitudes toward decision-makers, and not necessarily public officials.

Nevertheless, the attribute of reluctance has been common in political figures for millenia. The Roman dictator Quintus Cincinnatus had to be convinced to "leave his plow," and assume the dictatorship (Grimshaw, 1826, p. 38). The early U. S. Senate, after unanimously electing him, feared that the reluctant-to-be-a-politician George Washington would not be willing to assume the presidency (Chernow, 2011).

Meanwhile, in recent American history, the trend continues. Like many other office-seekers today, U. S. Senator Ron Johnson, Republican of Wisconsin, publicly asserted his initial unwillingness and overall hesitation to seek the office (Stiles, 2010). Governor Rick Perry, Republican of Texas, made his reluctance to seek the Republican Party presidential nomination a part of his campaign stump speech, noting that it was his wife—not the governor himself—who persuaded him to embark on a presidential campaign, telling him that he needed to "do his duty," (Harnden, 2011).

Historically, candidates who are widely known for reluctance may not be hindered by it—in fact, they may be helped. To illustrate, Dwight Eisenhower was not known for ambition, either publicly (New York Times, 1955) or privately (Galambos, 1989, p. 763). Of all of the U. S. Presidents since World War II, however, Eisenhower has one of the highest approval ratings (Rasmussen, 2007), and virtually *no* Americans believe him to be the *worst* U. S. President since World War II (Quinnipiac, 2006).

It is not out of the question to assume that this popularity and favorability is due to the fact that Eisenhower was seen as an honorable war hero, and spent years avoiding becoming involved in politics until Henry Cabot Lodge entered Eisenhower in the New Hampshire Republican Presidential Primary in 1952—without Eisenhower's permission (Dykman, 2006), as Eisenhower declared to his friends that he did "*not want*" a political

career (Galambos, 1989, p. 763, emphasis in original letter from Eisenhower). Eisenhower only agreed to seek office out of a "summons to duty" for his country (Galambos, 1989, p. 764), making him a perfect example of a real-life reluctant candidate. He had such high levels of national support that he even came in second to three-term governor and "favorite son" Harold Stassen in the 1952 Minnesota Republican Presidential Primary despite not even being on the ballot due to notary error. Eisenhower finished with 108,692 *write-in votes* (38.7% of the vote) to the 129,076 of Stassen (46.0% of the vote), whose name *was* on the ballot (Grant, 1979, p. 311)[1].

As another example, Colin Powell was also urged to run for President or Vice President—in 1996 and 2000 (Dickstein et al., 1994)—and decided against it, in spite of high levels of approval and polling numbers (Voter News Service, 1996). Hibbing and Alford (2004) make special note of Powell—along with Cincinnatus—as being the type of candidate of whom people are fond; that is, if a reluctant decision-maker is preferred by most people most of the time (p. 71n).

Expressing reluctance is seen by some politicos, however, as a tactic. Bill Scranton, the Republican Governor of Pennsylvania during the early Sixties, was

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[1] However, it should be noted that scholars have since noted that Eisenhower took a very active and constructive role in shaping his party and platform, in spite of a perceived aversion to partisan politics (Cotter, 1983, p. 256). Of the Twentieth Century Presidents, Eisenhower was likely the President who exercised the second-greatest—after Franklin Roosevelt—amount of power over his party and party leadership (Greenstein, 1979). Although Americans may not be aware of this, the level of admiration of Eisenhower today may or may not be reflective of his reluctance to seek office, or the actual amount of constructive power he had within the Republican Party. Nevertheless, Eisenhower's history and success as a United States President offers an important insight into the idea of a reluctant candidate.

pressured by many to run—including, oddly enough, Dwight Eisenhower (Bird, 1964, p. 73)—for the Republican nomination for President in 1964, but publicly expressed a reluctance to do so (Time, 1964). Pennsylvania Democrats suspected this reluctance to be a shrewd political *tactic,* and they accused him of playing "hard to get," so to speak—as he had when he ran for Congress and the Pennsylvania Governorship years before—in order to attract powerful people to work on his campaign (Bird, 1964, p. 74). While the "Draft Scranton" movement ultimately failed, the notion that Democrats would think that Scranton's expressions of reluctance were a political tactic is evidence that this is not a new thought in American politics. This is especially true if future research reveals that, in concert with WCT, most people prefer a candidate who is reluctant to seek office over a politically ambitious candidate with high aspirations. Using an evolutionary lens to view this specific set of political behaviors, then, could prove to be a useful tool (see Alford & Hibbing, 2004, p. 718).

METHODS

Research Design

This experiment uses the guise of a mock Congressional election to situate participants within the aftermath of a primary election. Participants are shown newspaper articles about one of two candidates with identical backgrounds and demographics. The candidate, named Pat Wilson, is either a "recruitee" of party leaders, friends, and family who reluctantly accepts a party's nomination, or a markedly and hugely ambitious winner of a five-candidate primary. In other words, participants will be in the "Reluctant Candidate" or "Ambitious Candidate" condition, occasionally abbreviated as RC and AC respectively.

Participants begin the experiment by logging into a survey website, asked basic demographic information, and are shown one of two randomly selected articles. The differences in the article are shown in **Figure 1**.

Participants are then asked for the likelihood that they will vote for the candidate, their overall favorability of the candidate, and the degree to which a battery of character descriptors apply to the candidate. These descriptors serve as manipulation checks, as the battery includes terms such as "ambitious," and "power hungry." If participants do not notice the ambition of the AC, for example, the validity of the results is in question. Although, this research design allows for post-hoc participant analysis; that is, if necessary, only the participants who are properly "manipulated" by the experiment—e.g., consider the term "ambitious" to describe the AC to a large degree—could be subject to statistical analysis if necessary.

Figure 1: Article Differences

	Reluctant Candidate	Ambitious Candidate
	'Reluctant' Small Business Owner Nominated for First Congressional District Race by JOE STEVENS Small business owner Pat Wilson of Beatrice has been nominated to run for the open Congressional seat in the First District in a primary that included Wilson and perennial candidate Knute Overgaard. Wilson, 40, received 99% of the vote. A business owner and operator for fifteen years, Wilson was repeatedly urged to run for the open seat by family, friends, and community leaders who, Wilson said, "wouldn't leave me alone." Wilson continued, "Congressmen were calling me—everyone was saying I had to do this." Wilson said that the decision was ultimately made by having it explained that this was public service. "This is a good way to serve my community." When Lincoln voters expressed dissatisfaction with the current state of American politics to Wilson on the streets of Lincoln last week, Wilson responded, "That's why I don't really want to run. The system is broken." Wilson's friends see that as the reason they want their friend in Congress. One close friend reported, "Pat is such a great person and very humble. We need more people like that in Washington." When asked about Wilson's reluctance to seek office, they laughed, stating, "I still don't think that Pat wants to be running, no. That's probably a good thing in this day and age, though." The First District is currently up for grabs after the incumbent, Representative Jeff Fortenberry, announced his retirement. CQPolitics rates it as a "Toss-Up."	**'Ambitious' Small Business Owner Nominated for First Congressional District Race** by JOE STEVENS After a long primary season with a crowded field of candidates for an open Congressional seat, small business owner Pat Wilson of Beatrice was nominated to run for the First Congressional District. Wilson, 40, won with 22% of the vote, narrowly beating out four other candidates. A business owner and operator for fifteen years, Wilson admits to being very ambitious. "I'd like to be President someday." Wilson continued, "But I'm happy to start in Congress and work my way up from there." When Lincoln voters expressed dissatisfaction with the current state of American politics to Wilson on the streets of Lincoln last week, Wilson responded, "That's why I really want to run. The system is broken." Wilson's friends see that as the reason they want their friend in Congress. One close friend reported, "Pat is such a great person and very ambitious. We need more people like that in Washington." When asked about Wilson's higher ambitions, they laughed, stating, "Pat has wanted to be president for a long time. That's probably a good thing in this day and age, though." The First District is currently up for grabs after the incumbent, Representative Jeff Fortenberry, announced his retirement. CQPolitics rates it as a "Toss-Up."

Next, participants are given a forty-four statement Big Five personality battery (John, Donahue, & Kentle, 1991; John & Srivastava, 1999). The importance of individual personality traits in political attitudes and behaviors cannot be understated. Each of the Big Five traits—openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability, all of which are well-established in psychological literature (for a review, see Saucier & Goldberg, 1998)—have been shown to correlate with either political orientation or participation, or both (for a review, see Mondak, 2010).

Then, participants are asked for their party identification, political orientations, and given a basic set of political knowledge questions. Whether asking people political trivia questions—naming current office holders, in this experiment's case—actually reflects their political knowledge remains to be seen (for a review, see Brady, 2000); however, participants' knowledge of what is essentially political trivia could have an impact on the degree to which they grasped a newspaper article about political news. Prior to the final debrief page of the experiment, the final interactive section—issue attitudes—is included for the same reason.

Hypotheses

H1: Most participants will prefer and have more positive feelings toward the reluctant candidate as opposed to the ambitious candidate, indicated by higher vote likelihood and overall favorability.

This is a direct application of WCT. As previously explained, in economic games, people will be more willing to cooperate and put their trust in another player if the other

player does not appear to be power-seeking. Therefore, it should be expected that people will be more willing to put their trust in a political representative who seems to be less power-seeking, and they will do so by indicating a higher likelihood of voting for the RC than the AC, and a higher favorability rating of the RC over the AC.

H2: The Big Five trait of Emotional Stability will mitigate these preference effects such that subjects with low scores in Emotional Stability—that is, high scores in Neuroticism—will prefer the ambitious candidate.

This would be expected due to what Neuroticism—the inverse of Emotional Stability—is, by definition: A trait marked by emotional tenseness, nervousness, and anxiety (McCrae & John, 1992). Research has shown that those who score high in Neuroticism are poor self-managers and look to strong leadership in their everyday lives (for a review, see Mondak, 2010, pp. 62-63).

Additionally, reluctance is, in itself, a trait of Neuroticism (Mondak, 2010, p. 62). Those who score high in Neuroticism would not necessarily prefer or reject that trait in a political representative. However, the other general characteristics of Neuroticism are likely to drive, at the very least, unfavorable ratings of the RC by Neuroticism high-scorers.

H3: The opposite will be true for those who score high in Agreeableness. They will prefer and favor the reluctant candidate more than the ambitious candidate.

This is also an extrapolation of the definition of the trait, in this case, of Agreeableness. Those who score high in agreeableness prefer cooperation and collaboration over competition and conflict (for a review, see Mondak, 2010, p. 61), and, as a result, should prefer the candidate who ran virtually unopposed for the nomination, as opposed to the candidate who was in a "crowded field" of candidates.

RESULTS

The demographics of the sample were as expected for a population of college students from a Midwestern university (**Table 1**) who were enrolled in an introductory political science course in the fall of 2011, and were awarded class credit for their participation. Republicans were slightly oversampled, but due to the fact that there are no political stances included in the vignettes, this should not affect the results. Neither the average age of 19.6 years nor gender showed any interaction with any variables in the analysis.

Table 1: Demographics	
Total n	431
Females	201
Males	230
Republicans	227
Democrats	119
Independents	85
"Reluctant" Condition	220
"Ambitious" Condition	211

First, H1 was shown to be incorrect, as there was no mean difference (**Table 2**). An ANOVA reveals that there is no statistically significant mean difference between the vote likelihood or the favorability of each candidate on the original seven-point scale, or the reduced three-point scale[2].

[2] The seven-point scale was the scale that was originally on the survey, going from -3 to 3, strongly unlikely or strongly unfavorable to the opposite. The three-point scale was a post-experiment variable creation. -3, -2, and -1 became -1, 0 stayed 0, and 1, 2, and 3 became 1. This scale is used sparingly in this paper and, when it is used, it is noted.

Table 2: Overall Vote Likelihood and Favorability				
	Reluctant Candidate	Ambitious Candidate	F	*p*
	7-Point Scale			
Vote Likelihood	0.277	0.450	1.799	0.181
Favorability	0.800	0.848	0.178	0.673
	3-Point Scale			
Vote Likelihood	0.205	0.318	2.345	0.126
Favorability	0.505	0.564	0.797	0.373

The reasons behind this null result are difficult to discern. A check on the degree to which subjects were manipulated reveals that the vignettes were successful in causing subjects to associate their respective candidates with reluctance or power hunger—the latter to a lesser-than-desired degree. But, there were also several other differences in the amounts that subjects thought each of the words or phrases following the article described their candidate (**Table 3**). **Figure 2** illustrates these differences.

Though the mean difference was small, subjects rated the AC as, for example, more of a "strong leader" than the RC, but the RC as more moral, honest, trustworthy, and slightly more competent. A correlation analysis demonstrates that the "strong leader" descriptor has the largest effect on association with both vote likelihood ($R = .349$, $p < .001$) and favorability ($R = .368$, $p < .001$) of both candidates—although, separately, "trustworthy" has a larger effect on evaluation of the AC, and the second-largest effect for both conditions (**Table 4**).

Table 3: Average Descriptor Rating by Candidate			
	Reluctant	Ambitious	F**
Moral	3.582	3.043	31.226
Enthusiastic	1.945	4.194	674.618
Strong Leader	2.868	3.209	10.968
Ambitious	2.414	4.479	505.198
Knowledgeable	3.191	2.810	13.475
Power Hungry	1.336	2.550	140.748
Honest	4.191	3.223	115.027
Competent	3.355	3.038	10.479
Trustworthy	3.745	3.171	37.829
Narcissistic	1.541	1.976	22.258
			**p < .01

Figure 2: Average Characteristic Rating

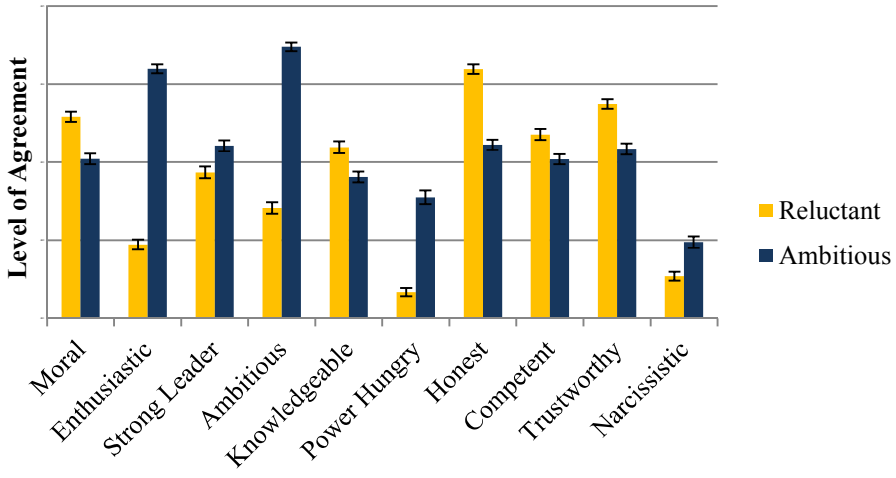
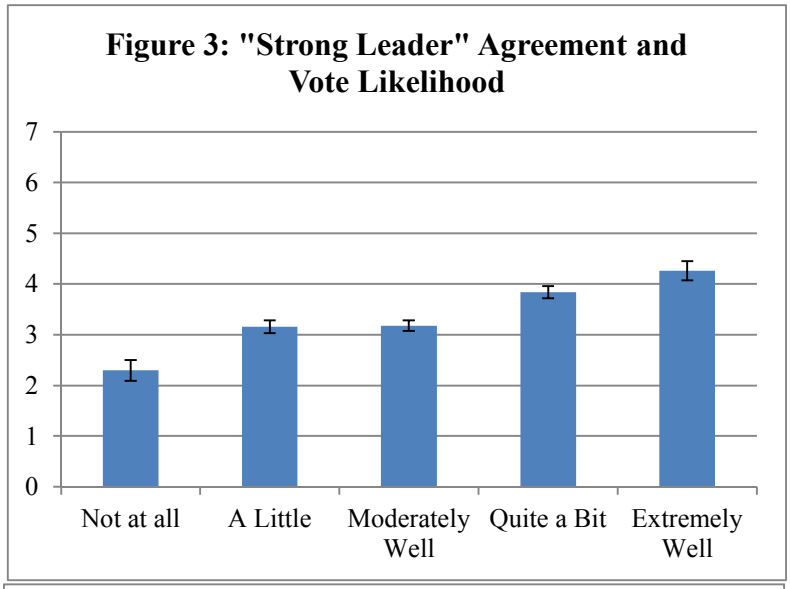


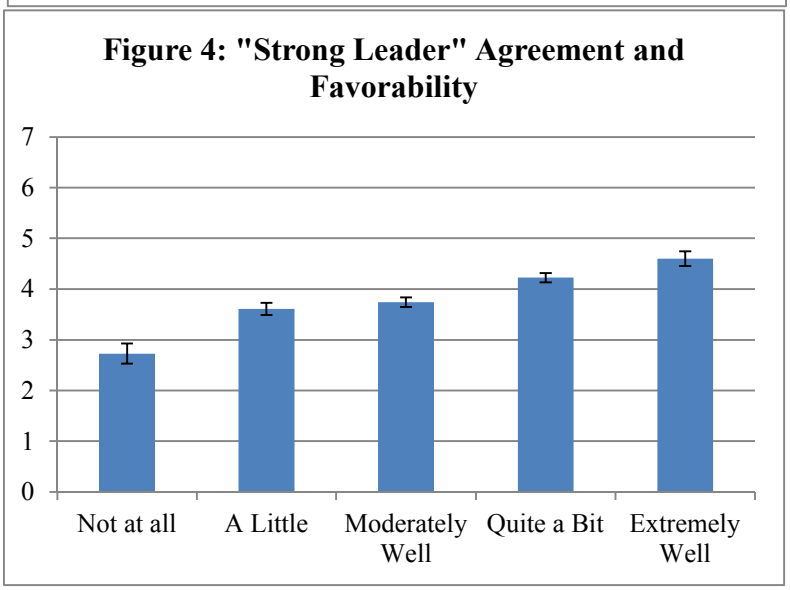
Table 4: Descriptor Correlations						
	Both		Reluctant		Ambitious	
	VL	Fav.	VL	Fav.	VL	Fav.
Moral	.316	.312	.310	.295	.407	.380
Enthusiastic	.253	.218	.340	.350	.306	.287
Strong Leader	.349	.368	.398	.411	.261	.309
Ambitious	.233	.218	.275	.326	.274	.253
Knowledgeable	.277	.273	.283	.263	.314	.309
Power Hungry	-.138	-.124	-.148*	-.090‡	-.270	-.226
Honest	.173	.213	.192	.180	.289	.345
Competent	.272	.308	.230	.234	.380	.435
Trustworthy	.303	.326	.296	.242	.406	.483
Narcissistic	-.141	-.161	-.201	-.230	-.122‡	-.113‡
All values are significant at a $p < .01$ level, unless: * $p < .05$						
‡ $p > .05$						

As each of the descriptors are quite collinear with each other (for a full table, see Appendix), the effect of one descriptor—"strong leader"—alone is worth analysis. **Table 5** shows the mean levels of vote likelihood and favorability of both candidates together and apart on the seven-point scale explained earlier.

Table 5: "Strong Leader" Agreement Means and Corresponding Attitudes							
		Not at all	A Little	Moderately Well	Quite a Bit	Extremely Well	Pearson's R
Vote Likelihood	Both	-0.703**	0.155**	0.178**	0.836**	1.257**	.349**
	Reluctant	*-0.923*	*0.085*	*0.100*	*1.000*	*1.471*	.398**
	Ambitious	*-0.182*	*0.263*	*0.250*	*0.721*	*1.056*	.261**
Favorability	Both	-0.270**	0.608**	0.740**	1.224**	1.600**	.368**
	Reluctant	*-0.346*	*0.678*	*0.657*	*0.657*	*1.941***	.411**
	Ambitious	*-0.091*	*0.500*	*0.816*	*0.816*	*1.278***	.309**
**p < .001							

Figure 3 and **Figure 4** illustrate this interaction. A positive relationship is evident, with, as shown in **Table 5** and discussed earlier, relatively strong linear relationships between vote likelihood and the degree to which participants described their candidate as a "strong leader." The *differences* between the effect sizes of "strong leader" on candidate evaluation (.398 vs. .261 and .411 vs. .309) are not statistically significant (Fisher's Z = 1.588 and 1.210 on RC and AC respectively; both values are less than the critical Z of 1.96).

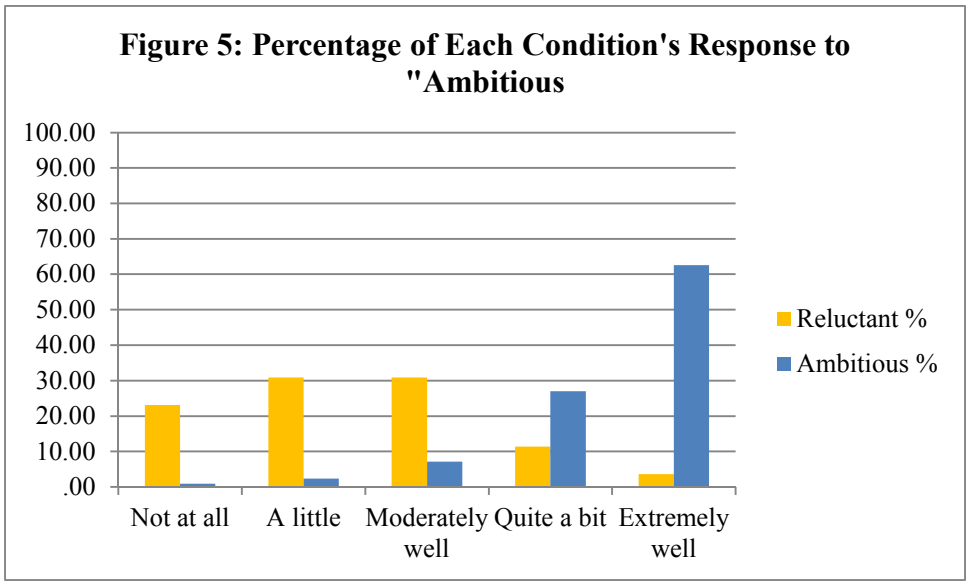




Using the participants' responses to the battery of descriptors, it is possible and necessary to more closely examine the impact that the perceived characteristics of the candidates have on vote likelihood and favorability. By selecting only the cases that exhibited the largest degree of desired manipulation, the ability to better examine whether perceived ambition or power hunger versus reluctance and a lack of ambition affects candidate evaluation.

I will proceed through the use of two methods of data selection. The first method—henceforth referred to as "Method 1"—will select only the participants who reported that "Ambitious" described the AC "Quite a bit" or "Extremely well," as opposed to "Moderately well," "A little," or "Not at all." In addition, only the participants who reported that "Ambitious" described the RC "Not at all," or "A little," will be included.

First, as shown in **Figure 5**, the manipulation worked for a large percentage of the participants, and the AC was seen as significantly more ambitious than the RC ($F(1,430)=505.20$, $p < .001$). However, a noticeable percentage of participants did not fall into the first method's selection—for the RC, nearly 46% of participants thought "ambitious" described their candidate "Moderately well," "Quite a bit," or "Extremely well," while for the AC, 10.5% thought "ambitious" described their candidate "A little," or "Not at all."

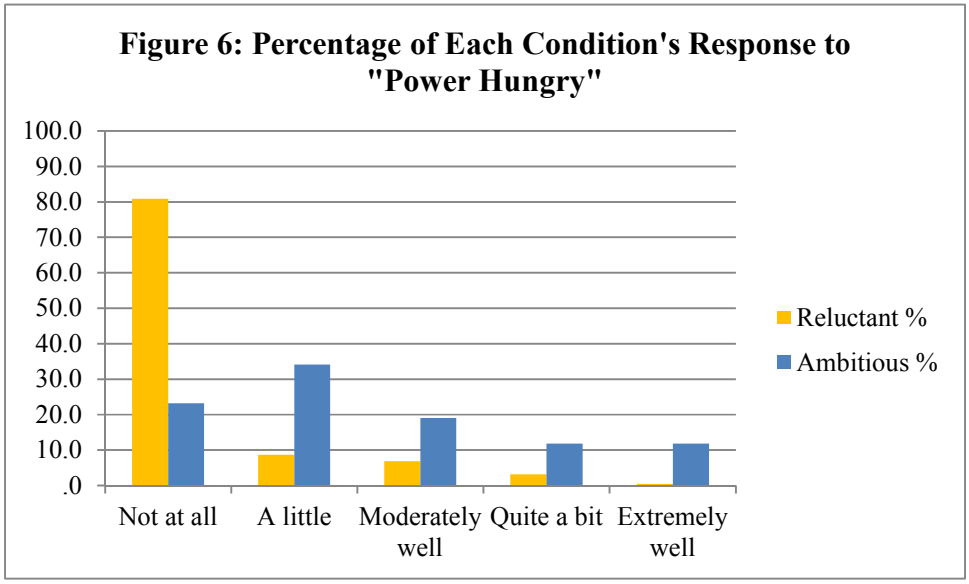


The reason to only select a sample, in this case, is clear—a large percentage of participants were not properly manipulated. When the Method 1 sample is analyzed, the overall results shift (**Table 6**). For participants who perceive the experimentally desired levels of ambition, the AC is significantly more favored than the RC in both candidate evaluation metrics. A power analysis should be conducted, however. For vote likelihood, there is almost exactly 80% power, barely meeting the threshold for significance (R = .20). For favorability, however, there is less than 80% power, meaning that the sample lacks enough power to dismiss the risk of a Type I error.

Table 6: Method 1 Sample

	Candidate		
	Reluctant	Ambitious	F
Vote Likelihood	2.992	3.545	13.421**
Favorability	3.479	3.921	10.389**
			**p < .01

For Method 2, I will explore the "power hungry" descriptor in the same fashion. **Figure 6** shows the percentage of participants who selected each descriptor agreement. For the manipulation to have worked completely, no participants in the RC condition should have selected anything but "Not at all." Only the 81% of RC participants will be selected in this analysis. For the AC condition, properly manipulated subjects were expected to perceive at least "Quite a bit" of power hunger; therefore, only the top two levels—23.6% of the condition participants—will be selected. Although this selection method cuts down the total sample to 52.9% of its original size, it is necessary, if only for comparison purposes—that is, what one can surmise *may* have happened had the experimental design properly manipulated experiment participants.



The results show no statistically significant mean difference between either candidate evaluation metric (**Table 7**). However, due to the small sample size of this selection method, the null result could be a factor of not enough statistical power—as

previously mentioned—only slightly more than half of participants were selected for Method 2.

Table 7: Method 2 Sample			
	Candidate		
	Reluctant	Ambitious	F
Vote Likelihood	3.332	3.080	1.127
Favorability	3.820	3.560	1.469
For each F-test, p > . 05			

Nevertheless, even for the subjects on whom the manipulation worked, the perception of a candidate having a hunger for power makes no difference for vote choice.

Power Hunger

However, a simple bivariate correlation changes the picture. As the perception of power hunger increases for the AC, vote likelihood and favorability decrease significantly (see **Table 4**)—"Power Hunger" agreement has a significant, medium-sized, negative correlation with vote likelihood and favorability (R= -.270 and -.226 respectively). As the notion of "power hunger" is central to the purpose of this experiment, *this is likely the most important finding of the study*.

Moreover, as shown in **Figure 7** and **Figure 8**, the overall effect of power hunger on vote choice and favorability for the AC is noticeable, and an ANOVA F-test reveals these overall mean differences to be significant for both vote choice ($F(4,206) = 4.912$, $p < .01$) and favorability ($F(4,206) = 5.428$, $p < .001$) of the AC.

Figure 7: "Power Hungry" Agreement and Mean Vote Likelihood for AC

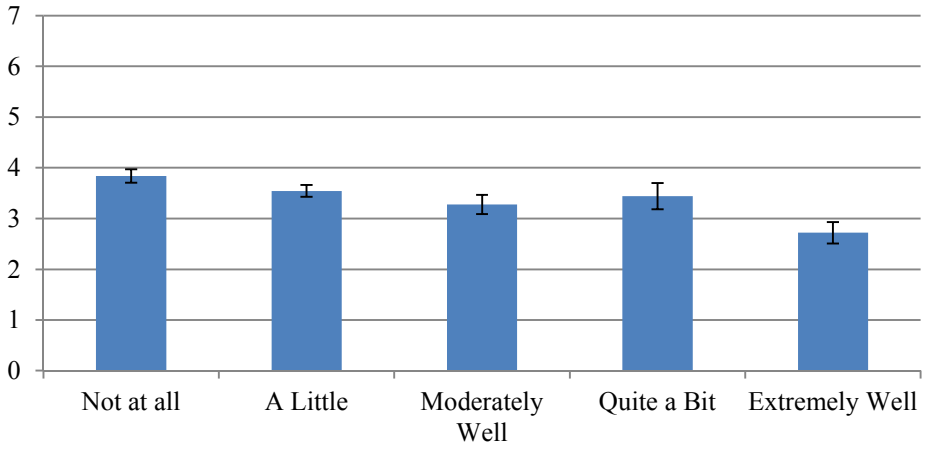
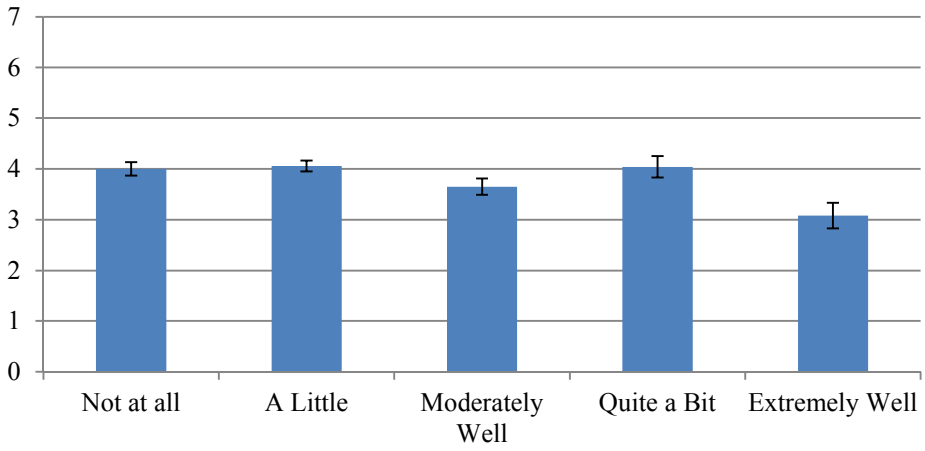


Figure 8: "Power Hungry" Agreement and Mean Favorability for AC



The Big Five

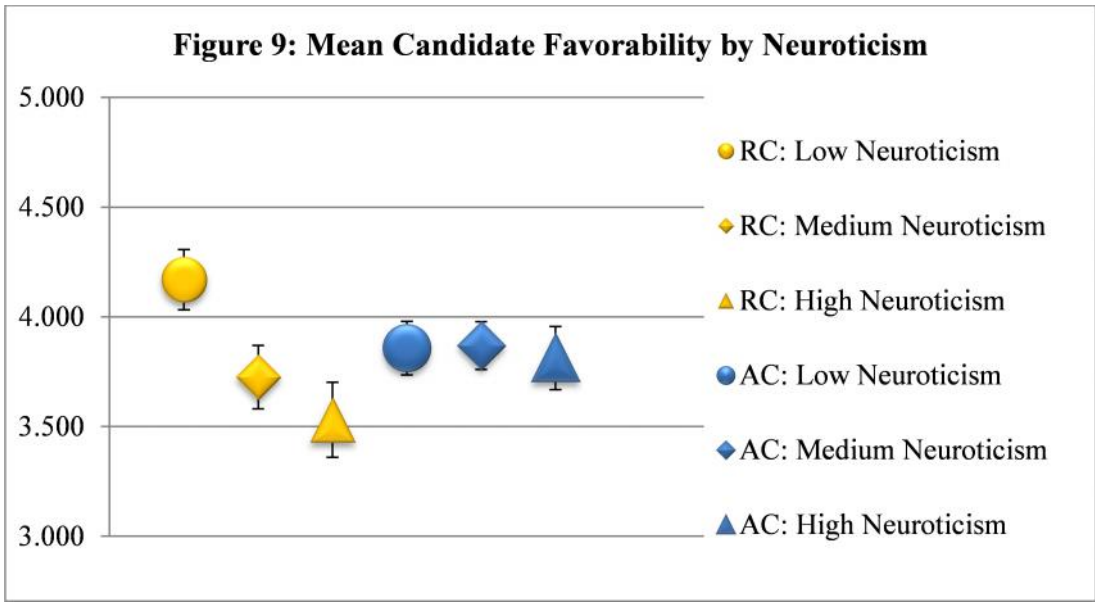
To test H2, attention will be turned to any effect that Emotional Stability/Neuroticism had on candidate evaluation. Although, it should first be noted that correlations between the Big Five traits and self-reported ideology were consistent with previous research (see Appendix).

Neuroticism had no significant role in evaluation of the AC, but it had a small role in evaluation of the RC (**Table 8**). The higher the participant's Neuroticism score, the less favorable of a rating they gave to the RC.

Additionally, when the sample is divided into three Neuroticism groups—the middle fiftieth percentile, and the upper and lower twenty-fifth percentiles—H2 is partially supported. Although this division results in a null result in terms of mean vote likelihood differences—as it does in the bivariate correlation analysis shown in **Table 8**—candidate favorability is also shown to be affected (**Figure 9**). Those who score the lowest in Neuroticism indicate significantly greater favorability of the RC than those in the medium- and highest-scoring groups ($F(2,217) = 4.134$, $p < .05$). Although, as is immediately apparent when inspecting **Table 8** and **Figure 9**, the overall effects of Neuroticism on candidate evaluation are significant, but minimal.

The same is true for Agreeableness. The effect sizes remain quite small, but significant, for both candidate favorability and vote likelihood. Using the same group breakdown as in the Neuroticism analysis, the only statistically significant mean difference is for vote likelihood on a three-point scale ($F(2,217) = 3.691$, $p < .05$). The effect size ($R = .181$) has more than 80% statistical power. **Figure 10** shows the mean differences. Those who score low in Agreeableness have a significantly lower mean likelihood of voting for the RC than the medium- and high-scoring groups, which are essentially identical in their mean ratings.

Table 8: Big Five Correlations		
	7-Point Scale	
	Reluctant Candidate	
Trait	Vote Likelihood	Favorability
Agreeableness	.156*	.175**
Conscientiousness	0.094	.095
Neuroticism	-.125	-.187**
Openness	-.063	.061
Extraversion	.077	.076
	3-Point Scale	
Agreeableness	.140*	.204**
Conscientiousness	.059	.095
Neuroticism	-.091	-.198**
Openness	-.078	.086
Extraversion	.062	.076
		* p < .05
		** p < .01



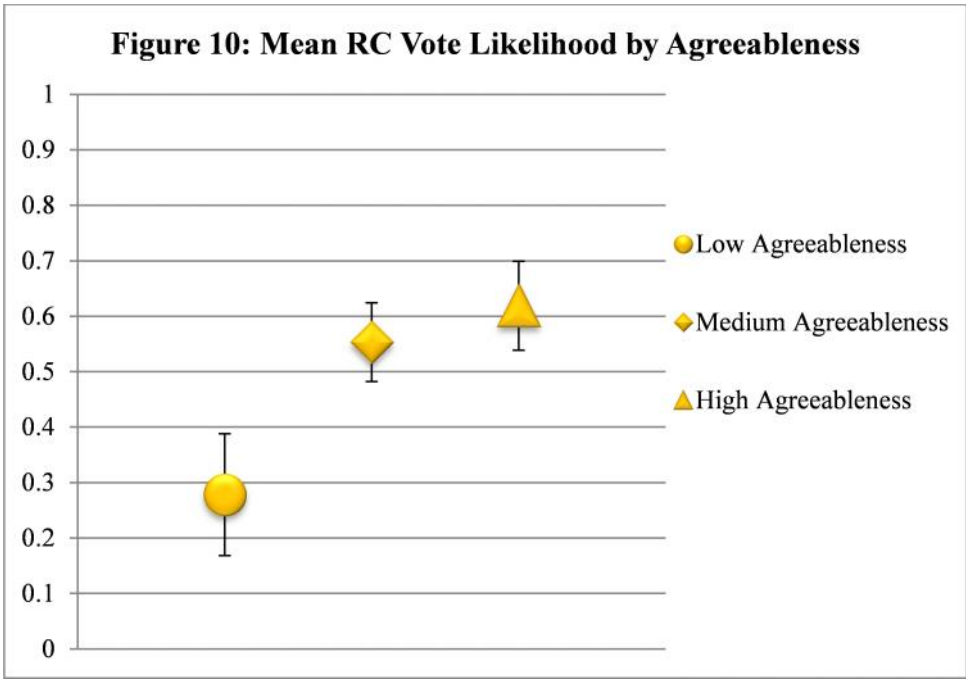


Figure 10: Mean RC Vote Likelihood by Agreeableness
1
0.9
0.8
0.7
0.6
0.5
0.4
0.3
0.2
0.1
0
Low Agreeableness
Medium Agreeableness
High Agreeableness

DISCUSSION

Central Results

The manipulation check revealed that the central conceit of the experiment worked for a majority of participants, but there was still a null result in terms of mean vote likelihoods and favorability ratings of the respective candidates. Even for the subjects on whom the manipulations were especially successful—using Methods 1 and 2 of participant selection—there was either no mean difference between the candidate evaluations. In the case of Method 1, in one instance, the *opposite* of H1 was observed—although this effect was small and barely statistically powerful enough to warrant discussion.

Method Comparison

Of the two post-hoc participant selection methods, Method 1 resulted in a statistically significant mean difference that was contrary to the hypothesized result. In other words, for study participants who either described the RC as "Not at all" or "A little" ambitious, or the AC as "Quite a bit" to "Extremely" ambitious, the AC was rated with a significantly higher vote likelihood.

I can only speculate as to why this is the case, but there appears to be one primary reason: Participants linked "ambitious" and "strong leader" together very strongly. Interestingly, participants' ratings of the RC's ambition and leadership were statistically much more strongly correlated than participants' ratings of the AC's ambition and leadership (.549 vs. .228, Fisher's $Z = 3.966$, which is greater than the critical value of

2.33 for $p < .01$). The small number of participants who gave a highly ambitious rating to the RC, however, renders the power of this test insignificant.

Nevertheless, it is most likely that it was not *ambition* that affected vote likelihood, but rather the perception of the ability to possess strong *leadership*. The correlation between vote likelihood of the entire sample and "strong leader" is significantly larger than "ambitious." The difference between the mean agreement with the descriptor of "strong leader" for either candidate was significant and statistically powerful—although the effect size was small ($F(1,429) = 10.968$, $R = .158$).

Moreover, the perception of power hunger—absolutely central to this experiment—was a significant factor in vote likelihood and candidate favorability for the AC. The more "power hungry" that participants thought the AC was, the less favorable their attitudes toward them, and the less likely the participants were to vote for them. This is the largest confirmation of WCT of the experiment. Participants were, indeed, wary to support a candidate they perceived to be power hungry.

Big Five and Candidate Evaluations

Two of the Big Five—Agreeableness and Neuroticism—had a small, yet important role in attitude formation related to the candidates. The mere fact that they were shown to associate with basic candidate evaluation is an important result. While previous research has dealt with the personality and the way people make political decisions (Mondak, 2010), the political decisions made—or not made—by this study's participants suggest a willingness to favor or oppose a political candidate based only on the fact that a candidate expressed reluctance to run for office.

Implications for Wary Cooperator Theory

The Wary Cooperator Theory, then, is not wholly applicable to candidate evaluation in a mock Congressional campaign, although it is not dismissed, either. To illustrate, ambition is not as immediately relevant to WCT as power hunger is, and the absolutely more power hungry candidate was not preferred.

The purpose was to deceive participants into believing that this was a real situation. In order to do that, realistic candidates needed to be presented. Though it may have better served the overarching purpose of this experiment to have a more openly power-hungry candidate, it would have defeated the realism—very few candidates in modern American politics are open about a burning desire for great power.

However, the reluctant version of the candidate served their purpose well. As discussed in the literature review, an open reluctance—whether legitimate or feigned—to seek power or hold office is nothing new in American politics.

Limitations

There are certainly issues with using undergraduate students enrolled in introductory political science courses as an experimental subject pool (for a review, see Druckman & Kam, 2011). An ideal participant sample would be nationally representative sample of Americans—or, if the study was about differences in geography on candidate evaluation, then representative city samples—and not limited to undergraduate students. With undergraduates, researchers run the risk of not properly representing a wider sample—that is, external validity is sacrificed for convenience (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010).

External validity is also in-question as a result of the fact that participants took the survey in a non-lab setting—which is typically injurious to external validity. However, this was dealt with by taking into account the time it took participants to finish the survey and removing those who rushed through it; those who finished the survey in less time than 95% of the rest of the participants—completing the survey in less than four minutes when the average time it took participants to finish was around twenty minutes—were removed from analysis.

Additionally, participants were reminded on each section of the survey they would receive credit for taking the survey regardless of how they answered the questions, and were encouraged to take as much time as they needed, and pay close attention to the questions being asked. The final prompt of the survey was "I have been paying close attention for the entirety of this survey," and participants overwhelmingly chose "Strongly Agree." Those who did not choose "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" (n=15) were not included in the final analysis. Coincidently, the participants who were eliminated as a result of that question were almost entirely made up of the same participants who were also eliminated as a result of not taking enough time.

Nevertheless, I make no claims about the overall generalizability of this experiment to a larger population. The results are completely internally valid, but any attempts to generalize the results to the rest of America are ill-advised.

Recommendations for Future Research

If the candidates were given partisan identification, or any sort of political platform, the effect of the candidates' politics on subjects' evaluations of the candidates

would be a topic of study. If most Americans are moderates as many scholars would argue (Fiorina, 2005)—although others reject this claim (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2005)—then the more extreme a candidate's views are, the less likely they should be supported. Meanwhile, conservatives' general preferences for strong leadership and authoritarian hierarchies in governance would almost certainly play a role (for a review, see Jost et al., 2003). But, the impact that a candidate's reluctance to seek office has on voters' evaluations of the candidate may mitigate any effects of the candidate's political stances, as a result of the inherent differences between different political ideologies.

The degree to which a participant's partisan identification or political orientation affects their support of a candidate of their own party or orientation, or opposition to a candidate of another party or orientation is an interesting question. The effect that personality would have on such a design would also be a fascinating subject for future research. Future iterations of this study could include designs like that outlined in the paragraph above, in which one of each candidate is shown to participants, and they are asked to choose between the two.

Moreover, as political science continues to incorporate natural science methods into its metrics (e.g. Alford, Funk, & Hibbing, 2005; Fowler, Baker, & Dawes, 2008; McDermott, 2011; Schreiber, 2011; Smith & Hibbing, 2011), one possible step forward in this area could be to measure—as Oxley et al. (2008) do—physiological response to threat, and how it may affect one's favorability of either candidate. This would be especially important in a design in which two candidates are presented to participants, and participants are asked to choose one or the other.

CONCLUSION

The better we understand the processes by which voters make political decisions, the better we can understand the effectiveness and progress of the American political system. Although a candidate's expression of either higher political ambitions or deep political reluctance plays no *overall* role in the way the participants in this study evaluated their respective candidates, the experiment did reveal participants' ostensible distrust and negative feelings toward what they perceived to be power hunger, as shown in **Figure 7** and **Figure 8**. While these results may be used by political campaigns to portray their candidates as less power-hungry and more reluctant and dutiful, the results may also be used by the electorate—more aware that a campaign's portrayal of a candidate as reluctant could hypothetically be a reflection of the opposite trait, more aware that this is another method through which campaigns could take advantage of them, and more aware that a way forward for the American experiment is a fuller, wider, and greater cognizance of those two concepts.

APPENDIX

Descriptor Collinearity

Intra-Descriptrive Correlations

	Moral	Enthusiastic	Str. Ldr.	Ambitious	Knowldg.	Pwr. Hungry	Honest	Competent	Trustworthy	Narcissistic
Moral		-0.058	.435**	-0.053	.468**	-.155**	.564**	.452**	.576**	-.106*
Enthusiastic	-0.058		.328**	.779**	-0.036	.486**	-.289**	-0.02	-.098*	.211**
Strong Leader	.435**	.328**		.398**	.539**	.141**	.242**	.447**	.418**	0.078
Ambitious	-0.053	.779**	.398**		0.044	.449**	-.264**	0.056	-0.082	.216**
Knowledgeable	.468**	-0.036	.539**	0.044		0.032	.406**	.601**	.496**	0.055
Power Hungry	-.155**	.486**	.141**	.449**	0.032		-.272**	-0.022	-.204**	.599**
Honest	.564**	-.289**	.242**	-.264**	.406**	-.272**		.465**	.641**	-.108*
Competent	.452**	-0.02	.447**	0.056	.601**	-0.022	.465**		.583**	-0.018
Trustworthy	.576**	-.098*	.418**	-0.082	.496**	-.204**	.641**	.583**		-0.054
Narcissistic	-.106*	.211**	0.078	.216**	0.055	.599**	-.108*	-0.018	-0.054	

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

Big Five and Ideology

Big Five and Ideology		
	Ideology	
	Social	Econ.
Agreeableness	-.064	-.083
Conscientiousness	.160**	.163**
Neuroticism	-.143**	-.139**
Openness	-.188**	-.106*
Extraversion	-.001	.013
Conservatism has the higher code * p < .05		
** p < .01		

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