

Erratum

**Erratum to “Correlation not Causation:
The Relationship between Personality Traits
and Political Ideologies” *American Journal
of Political Science* 56 (1), 34–51**

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The authors regret that there is an error in the published version of “Correlation not Causation: The Relationship between Personality Traits and Political Ideologies” *American Journal of Political Science* 56 (1), 34–51. The interpretation of the coding of the political attitude items in the descriptive and preliminary analyses portion of the manuscript was exactly reversed. Thus, where we indicated that higher scores in Table 1 (page 40) reflect a more conservative response, they actually reflect a more liberal response. Specifically, in the original manuscript, the descriptive analyses report that those higher in Eysenck’s psychoticism are more conservative, but they are actually more liberal; and where the original manuscript reports those higher in neuroticism and social desirability are more liberal, they are, in fact, more conservative. We highlight the specific errors and corrections by page number below:

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Consistent with our conceptualization of ideology as a set of interrelated attitudes, we specified a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to capture three latent attitudinal dimensions from a Wilson-Patterson (1968) inventory: social attitudes (e.g., Gay Rights, Abortion), economic attitudes (e.g., Foreign Aid, Federal Housing), and defense/military attitudes (e.g., The Draft, Military Drill; see online Appendix 1), with higher scores indicating the more liberal response.

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First, opposite our expectations, higher P scores correlate with more liberal military attitudes

and more socially liberal beliefs for both females and males.

... Further, we find a positive relationship between Neuroticism and economic conservatism ($r_{\text{females}} = -0.242$, $r_{\text{males}} = -0.239$). People higher in Neuroticism tend to be more economically conservative. What is intriguing about this relationship is that it is in the direction of what past theories would predict (Fromm 1947; Wilson 1973), but opposite with more recent evidence (Gerber et al. 2010; Van Hiél, Pande-laere, and Duriez 2004). That is, neurotic people are less likely to support public policies that provide aid to the economically disadvantaged (public housing, foreign aid, immigration, etc). Moreover, Neuroticism is unrelated to social ideology ($r_{\text{female}} = -0.016$, $r_{\text{male}} = -0.050$). This finding suggests that neurotic individuals cope with their anxiety by supporting more “conservative” economic policies rather than “conservative” social policies.

... Thus, it appears that people who are motivated to present themselves in a socially desirable light also present themselves as socially conservative.

... The analysis above extends the existing personality and politics literature in several important ways. Opposite our expectations, P (positively related to tough mindedness and authoritarianism) is associated with social liberalism and liberal military attitudes.

Intriguingly, the strength of the relationship between P and political ideology differs across sexes. We also find individuals higher in Neuroticism are more likely to be economically conservative. Furthermore, Neuroticism is completely unrelated to social ideology, which has been the focus of many in the field. Finally, those higher in Social Desirability are also more likely to express socially conservative attitudes.

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... P is substantially correlated with liberal military and social attitudes, while Social Desirability is related to conservative social attitudes, and Neuroticism is related to conservative economic attitudes.

The error is important for descriptive purposes, but the main thesis of the paper, analyses, findings and theoretical contribution remain unchanged. The goal of the paper was to explore the nature of the covariance between personality and attitudes, and to test whether the relationship between several personality traits and political attitude dimensions was causal or correlational. The analyses rely on the magnitude of the cross-twin cross-trait covariation, and second moment of data, and are agnostic as to whether liberals or conservatives are higher or lower in any given personality trait. Thus, the direction of the correlation between the personality traits and attitudes was not relevant for our research question and subsequent analyses. As such, the main conclusions of the paper are unaffected. Specifically we find a pattern of relationships that implies a non-causal relationship between personality traits and political attitudes.

The potential for an error in our article initially was pointed out by Steven G. Ludeke and Stig H. R. Rasmussen in their manuscript, "(Mis)understanding the relationship between personality and sociopolitical attitudes." We found the source of the error only after an investigation going back to the original copies of the data. The

data for the current paper and an earlier paper (Verhulst, Hatemi and Martin (2010) "The nature of the relationship between personality traits and political attitudes." *Personality and Individual Differences* 49:306–316) were collected through two independent studies by Lindon Eaves in the U.S. and Nichols Martin in Australia. Data collection began in the 1980's and finished in the 1990's. The questionnaires were designed in collaboration with one of the goals being to compare and combine the data for specific analyses. The data were combined into a single data set in the 2000's to achieve this goal. Data are extracted on a project-by-project basis, and we found that during the extraction for the personality and attitudes project, the specific codebook used for the project was developed in error.

Since these personality traits and their antecedents have been previously found to both positively and negatively predict liberalism, or not at all, the descriptive analyses did not appear abnormal to the authors, editors, reviewers or the general academy. We thank Dr.'s Ludeke and Rasmussen for bringing the possibility of a coding error to our attention. We apologize for any inconvenience caused by our error.

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