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Which Personality Fits Personalized Representation?

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Abstract

In this article, we propose an individual level explanation for variation in personalized representation, and ask which personality fits personalized representation? Building on political psychology literature, we derive hypotheses about how fundamental personality traits such as extraversion and agreeableness, correlate with politicians' preferences for personalized representation. We investigate these expectations using new survey data collected simultaneously among Danish and British MPs, including comprehensive personality measures. We show that personalized representation is particularly pronounced among MPs with higher levels of extraversion, openness to experience, and lower levels of agreeableness. Furthermore, and in line with our theoretical expectations, we show that the correlations between personality traits and preferences for personalization vary across countries. Our findings suggest that personalized representation has an underlying personal dimension; consequently, politicians with certain personality traits may have an electoral advantage, particularly where politics become increasingly personalized.

Research argues that modern politics is increasingly personalized. Personalized politics refers to a situation where political individuals are more important to political processes relative to political groups (Pedersen and Rahat, this issue). Personalization or personalized politics can be found in many political arenas: media coverage focuses on the characters and opinions of individual politicians (van Aelst et al. 2012); voters disproportionately notice and prefer politicians who stand out as independent actors rather than party loyalists (Campbell et al. 2019; Kam 2009); and politicians sometimes think of themselves as representatives independent of their parties (Zittel 2012; Slapin et al. 2018; Holtz-Bacha et al. 2014).

This latter aspect of personalized politics – politicians' preferences for personalized representation – is often considered problematic from a democratic perspective, because it potentially challenges governance and accountability in party democracies. If politicians become more independent of their parties, parties may lose their ability to build and maintain majorities for policies and voters may no longer be able to hold unified parties accountable for their actions in government (Bøggild and Pedersen 2018; Balmas et al. 2014: 47; Swanson and Mancini 1996).

A growing literature is devoted to identifying what encourages or discourages personalized representation (Deschouwer et al. 2014; Kam 2009). However, this literature focuses almost exclusively on contextual factors that provide incentives or constraints for personalized representation. In this article, we introduce and test a new class of explanations looking at individual level characteristics – in particular – the personality traits of politicians. We ask: which personality fits personalized representation?

Our argument is straightforward: since personalized representation concerns an emphasis on personal characteristics and opinions, we expect it to be preferred by politicians with personality traits that provide the necessary motivations and talents for engaging in personalized representation. Building on the political psychology literature, we develop

hypotheses for how personality traits such as extraversion, agreeableness and openness to experience correlate with politicians' preferences for personalized representation. We explore the attitudinal aspect of personalized representation and investigate how preferences for personalized representation vary across politicians with different personalities. Moreover, we consider how contextual factors identified in existing work may reinforce or weaken the correlation between personality traits and preferences for personalized representation. As such, we do not consider personality traits a rival explanation to previously identified contextual explanations, but rather, a complementary framework that should be considered in interaction with political context.

We test our hypotheses using original survey data collected simultaneously among British (n= 89, response rate=13.7 percent) and Danish (n= 89, response rate=49.7 percent) MPs holding office in 2017. Both countries have strong parties, implying that politicians are under the influence of party socialisation and discipline when forming preferences for representation. However, Danish and British politicians also act in contexts with different institutions and norms that generate different levels of personalized representation. This allows us to observe how links between personality traits and preferences for personalized representation vary across political systems. Our data includes cross-national elite survey data, with comprehensive measures of personality traits, while maintaining response rates typical of elite survey data.

The article contributes to the existing literature in three ways. First, theoretically, we introduce a new class of explanations for personalized representation by turning to personality traits of individual politicians, and map out how these explanations interact with the traditional perspective on political context. Second, empirically, our results show how personality traits correlate with MP preferences for personalized representation in expected ways, and that these correlations vary systematically and meaningfully across political

contexts. Third, adding personality traits as a class of explanations has implications for the broader debate about the democratic concerns with personalized politics: our findings suggest that the level of personalized representation is not only a function of political context, but also the types of individuals that select into politics. As such, potential efforts to regulate personalized representation must also focus on the incentive structure in the recruitment process of political candidates.

Personalized Representation: Concept and Causes

Personalized politics is a multidimensional concept. Personalized politics may be found in the design of political institutions (Renwick and Pilet 2016); in media coverage (van Aelst et al. 2012); among voters, paying attention to character traits and public images of politicians (Lobo 2015; Wattenberg 1991); and among politicians, who conceive of and portray themselves as representatives independent of their parties in election campaigns, news media, or parliament (Zittel 2012; Slapin et al. 2018; Holtz-Bacha et al. 2014). We focus, within the behavioural arena, on personalized representation, where politicians' perceptions of politics and political actions are oriented towards political individuals rather than collectives (Pedersen and Rahat, this issue). We thus contribute to a growing literature that identifies explanations for a politician's emphasis on individual versus party issues and preferences, when understanding their roles as representatives and decision-makers.

The representative role of elected politicians forms a crucial linkage between voters and government in representative democracies. There is a plethora of research investigating variation in how politicians conceive of this role, how they enact it, and the consequences for parliamentary democracy (Butler, Naurin and Öhberg 2017; Gschwend and Zittel 2015; Colomer 2011; Carman 2006; Shugart, Valdini and Suominen 2005; Mendez-Lago and Martinez 2002; Esaiasson and Holmberg 1996; Studlar and McAllister 1996; Searing 1985;

Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina 1984). Much of this literature has studied how political context influences representative roles, including system-level institutional factors such as electoral systems (André et al. 2014) and party-level institutions, such as nomination procedures or campaign financing (Bøggild and Pedersen 2018; Kam 2009).

In contrast, very little research has been devoted to analysing how explanations focused at the level of the individual politician explain styles of representation. In general, the conventional wisdom seems to be that the personal characteristics of politicians have little influence and that representative roles are mainly shaped by incentives produced by system and party-level institutions and norms. Deschouwer et al. (2014, p. 12), for example, note that politicians' representative behaviour "…appears indeed not to be a matter of personal choice or personal background." The limited research including individual-level explanations focuses almost exclusively on demographic factors such as age, gender and education of politicians (Baumann, Debus and Muller 2015).

This narrow attention to individual-level factors in explaining representative roles is unfortunate, especially considering that a growing literature argues that personality traits have a significant bearing on the political opinions and ideological placement among political elites (Nørgaard and Klemmensen 2019; Caprara and Zimbardo 2004; Jost et al. 2003). As many personality traits concern the motivations and talents people hold for interacting with others in social settings, it is plausible that such traits are also important factors explaining personalized representation among political elites. That is, in addition to the traditional contextual perspective emphasising the role of institutions and norms, we expect that a psychological or cognitive perspective emphasising effects of deep-seated personality traits may also be of importance in explaining personalized representation. To develop this idea further we, first, draw on relevant literature linking politicians' personality traits to their

preferences for political representation and, second, consider how these traits may interact with the political context in shaping preferences for personalized representation.

Personality for Personalized Representation

Personality can be understood as a set of fundamental personal traits. The Big-Five framework offers a model to structure the complexity of a person's personality by providing 'a hierarchical model of personality traits with five broad factors, which represent personality at the broadest level of abstraction' (Gosling et al., 2003: 506). These five traits are 1) *openness to experience* related to creativity, nonconformity, imagination and self-efficacy; 2) *conscientiousness* related to being responsible, dutiful, organized and not impulsive; 3) *extraversion* which refers to being social, lively, dominant, and self-certain; 4) *emotional stability* related to anxiety, emotionality and excitability; and 5) *agreeableness* which is also related to a person's social disposition like extraversion, but pertain to a person's ability and willingness to form alliances and coalitions. Agreeableness is thus related to co-operation and altruism (Mondak & Halperin, 2008: 342-7).

Although the study of personality and political elites has an illustrious history (see for example Adorno 1950), there is relatively scant literature that examines the relationship between personality and preferences for representation. A small body of research investigates whether certain personality traits are disproportionately reflected among political elites rather than the general population. For example, recent studies from the US and Germany found that, compared to the general population, politicians tend to be more emotionally stable (low on neuroticism), more extrovert, more open to new experiences, less conscientious and less agreeable (Hanania 2017; Best 2011; see also McConaughy 1950). Italian politicians have been found to have higher levels of energy, agreeableness, openness, and emotional stability than Italian voters (Caprara and Vecchione 2017). In Denmark, research has found that MPs

are more extraverted, open and conscientious (Nørgaard and Klemmensen 2019). Additional studies analyze the connection between politicians' personality on their attitudes. Openness to experience is generally higher among more left-leaning politicians, while the level of conscientiousness is higher among more conservative politicians (Dietrich et al 2012; Best 2011; Costantini and Craik 1980). These studies help us understand whether politicians differ from the public in terms of their personality traits and provide some preliminary evidence for their impact on ideology. However, we expect that the study of personality and elites can be advanced by investigating how personality traits of politicians correlate with their preferences for personalized representation.

Crucial to our argument, we expect that politicians face conflicting pressures when deciding how to conceive of their role as representatives. On the one hand, politicians face clear expectations from voters and the media to display independence and hold their ground when disagreements with the party arise. Personalized representation can ultimately entail direct instrumental benefits for the individual politician in terms of increased attention from media, name recognition, and votes among local constituents (Campbell et al. 2019; Carson et al. 2010). On the other hand, party loyalty is "the name of the game" in most European parliamentary systems, and MPs are expected to act according to this norm of party loyalty (Close and Gherghina 2018; Hazan 2003; Ozbudun 1970). Such norms are often enforced by parties through informal pressure or formal sanctions in terms of withholding campaign finances, candidate nominations, committee assignments, etc. (Bøggild and Pedersen 2018; Kam 2009; Pearson 2015; Russel 2012). Even though parties may prefer a modest level of personalization among politicians to maximize votes, they also instruct MPs to exhibit loyalty to the party and not openly speak against party decisions (Kam 2009; Ferrara and Weishaupt 2004; Pearson 2015). Hence, in party-centred political systems like most European political systems, those who engage with a more personalized style of representation should be

particularly willing to display group disobedience and engage in norm-breaking behaviour. Building on this premise, we argue that politicians with different personality traits will weigh benefits and costs associated with personalized representation differently. Accordingly, personality traits shape both the talents individuals hold for navigating social situations and influencing other individuals as well as their willingness to engage in conflict and risk-seeking behaviour.

Extraversion and agreeableness are the two factors of the Big Five personality traits that are intrinsically interpersonal (Amsalem et al. 2018; McCrae and Costa 1989: pp. 586). Agreeableness fundamentally inclines an individual to want to be part of a cohesive, cooperating group and preserve good group relations without conflict and dissent. Thus, we argue that politicians with higher levels of agreeableness should be particularly focused on adhering to the norm of party loyalty, look to avoid intra-group conflict, and therefore less likely to prefer personalized representation.

Extraversion, on the other hand, inclines an individual to seek attention and be willing to face conflict in order to promote themselves as individuals. As stated above, extraversion relates to sociability and liveliness but also assertiveness, persuasiveness, and dominance (Caprara & Vecchione 2013: 41). Assertiveness and dominance can make extraverted politicians more likely to engage in conflicts and challenge party discipline. Moreover, extroverted politicians' persuasiveness and liveliness make them skilful in political debates, boosting their self-confidence in defending their own views (Caprara and Vecchione 2017: 221). Among American voters, Mondak and Halperin (2008: 354) find that extraverted voters are more likely to believe that they can make a difference in their community, and the same result appears in Vecchione and Caprara's (2009) study of Italian students. At the elite level, Best (2011: 944) finds that extraverted German politicians ascribe more importance to the individual. Based on this, we expect that the dominance, assertiveness, liveliness, and

persuasiveness of extraverted politicians will make them more inclined to prefer personalized representation.

> *H1: Politicians with higher levels of agreeableness are less likely to prefer personalized representation.*

> *H2: Politicians with higher levels of extraversion are more likely to prefer personalized representation*

The remaining three personality traits are not directly relevant for interpersonal relations. As such, we do not expect that conscientiousness and emotional stability will relate to personalized representation in any systematic way.[1] However, we argue that since party discipline is a norm regulated behaviour, openness to experience will be relevant to explain variation in attitudes towards political representation.

Openness to experience is associated with lively imagination, willingness to try new things and to diverge from the rules or established ways of doing things (Mondak 2010: 51). People open to experience also have fewer behavioural inhibitions and are willing to take risks (Bakker et al. 2015: 2). The imaginative aspect of openness makes it possible for politicians to consider alternative ways of being an elected representative, even in highly party oriented systems, and the willingness to take risks will further allow them to express these ideas. Among voters, Bakker et al. (2015) show that people with higher levels of openness are more likely to switch their party preferences. Mondak and Halperin (2008: 358) show that openness is associated with engagement in political discussions, which may be

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[1] Conscientiousness is related to being dutiful and industrious. This may make politicians work harder but it is difficult to form expectations about how this will translate into stronger or weaker preferences for personalized representation. Similarly, emotional stability may influence politicians' career paths since it may influence their ability to handle stress and other types of pressure, but again it is difficult to theorise how it will influence preferences for representation.

necessary if a politician wants to break free from the party. Based on this, we expect politicians with higher levels of openness to be more willing to find their own personalized representative role, rather than depending on their party's norms.

H3: Politicians with higher levels of openness are more likely to prefer personalized representation.

Interactions with Political Context

Personalities operate within contexts. Personalized representation may not be equally prevalent, controversial or risky across different political contexts. The political context therefore has implications for the potential benefits and costs associated with personalized representation.

Concerning the negative association between agreeableness and personalized representation (H1 above), we expect that the correlation is stronger in political contexts that incentivise personalized representation. As outlined above, individuals high on agreeableness are motivated to 'toe the party line' and prefer party representation due to their intrinsic motivation to maintain group cohesion and cooperation. Accordingly, in contexts that incentivise personalized representation more strongly agreeableness is particularly important in order to prefer party representation, despite others taking advantage of the opportunity to win personal popularity from personalising their representation at the expense of the party.

H4: The negative correlation between agreeableness and preference for personalized representation is stronger among politicians in contexts that induce personalization.

In contrast, we expect the association between extraversion and preferences for personalized representation (H2) to be weaker in contexts that incentivise personalization. As outlined above, high extraversion should strengthen preferences for personalized representation because it is associated with dominance and willingness to engage in conflict. In political contexts where personalized representation is less controversial and more accepted by parties, the decision to seek out media attention and votes by personalizing should be easier and not restricted to highly extraverted politicians with preferences for engaging in self-promoting, risk-seeking and conflictual behaviours. In contrast, extraversion should be a more decisive factor for preferring personalized representation when the choice to personalise entails higher costs by constituting a challenge to established norms and traditions. Hence, we expect that the positive correlation between extraversion and preference for personalized representation is weaker in contexts where personalized representation is associated with smaller costs.

> *H5: The positive correlation between extraversion and preference for personalized representation is weaker among politicians in institutional contexts that induce personalization.*

Similarly, we expect that the positive correlation between openness to experience on personalized representation (H3) will be weaker in contexts that incentivise personalization. As outlined above, politicians who score high on openness to experience should be more likely to prefer personalized representation because they are able to imagine alternative styles of representation and motivated to engage in non-traditional, norm-breaking behaviours. This line of reasoning implies that the tendency for imaginative and open-minded people to prefer personalized representation should mostly exist in contexts where such representation in fact constitutes non-traditional and norm-breaking preferences. In contrast, in contexts where

personalized representation is relatively prevalent and common, even individuals scoring low on openness to experience should be inclined to embrace such preferences. In short, the more personalized representation is the norm in a given context – or at least a well-known and prevalent norm of representation – the less it should appeal exclusively to politicians high on openness to experience.

> *H6: The positive correlation between openness to experience and preference for personalized representation is weaker among politicians in contexts that induce personalization.*

This article provides an initial test of these interaction logics by comparing two countries with substantial variation in the prevalence of personalized representation. Importantly, we do not make any causal claims regarding the exact institutional or cultural variable(s) that account for this cross-national variation and, in turn, the differential effects of personality traits on preferences for personalized representation. As demonstrated in previous work, cross-national variation in personalized representation stems from a complex and intertwined set of institutional, historical, and cultural variables (Bøggild & Pedersen 2018; Heitshusen et al. 2005; Kam 2009). Hence, our aim is to situate and integrate our theoretical perspective in the existing literature by providing an initial test of how our individual-level explanations may interact in meaningful ways with important contextual variation identified in previous work.

Case Selection and Data

To investigate differential effects of personality traits across political contexts, we collected

original survey data simultaneously in two countries, Denmark and the United Kingdom.

Following the existing literature, we expect personalized representation to be significantly

more prevalent in the British compared to the Danish context (we substantiate this

expectation empirically below). Several factors may contribute to this contextual variation

(and, as stressed above, we do not make any claims of its causal antecedents). In terms of

culture, the United Kingdom is generally more individualised compared to Denmark, which

is somewhat closer to a collectivist society. Such cultural differences manifest themselves in

political differences in, for example, welfare state regimes (Esping-Andersen 1990).

Institutionally, the British political system is a first-past-the-post majoritarian system with

single member constituencies, providing favourable conditions for candidate-centred

behaviour and personalized politics (Zittel 2012; Cain et al. 1987). In a parliamentary system

with a majoritarian election system, such as the United Kingdom, parties may give individual

politicians more freedom to personalise because the party depends on representatives

individually securing the support of voters in their districts in a way that is not comparable to

systems with party lists (Proksch and Slapin 2012). In the Danish proportional multi-member

system, cohesive parties are the main mechanism for holding politicians accountable and

therefore less likely to allow personalized representation within parliament.[2]

We use comprehensive survey batteries to measure MP Big Five personality

structures. Recent research demonstrates that short personality measures are associated with

significant shortcomings in terms of measurement validity and reliability and that these

shortcomings have negative consequences for the potential to identify correlational patterns

(Bakker & Lelkes 2018). Comprehensive measures are particularly difficult to obtain in elite

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[2] Past work (André, Freire and Papp 2014) further shows that personalized representation is even less prevalent in truly closed list systems in which voters have no influence on which candidate within a party ends up serving their constituency. As such, it is possible that any interactions we establish with political context could be even more substantial if maximizing contextual variation through the inclusion of such political systems.

surveys, in which response rates are typically low and survey length is key to limit this problem. We balanced considerations of response rates and measurement accuracy when designing the survey and selecting the personality measurement instrument. One of the most validated and accepted measurement tools is the 60-item NEO-FFI-3, which includes 12 questions designed and adjusted over years to measure each of the five overarching personality traits (items are shown in Appendix A). We used this battery among Danish MPs as they have proven willing to answer personality questions previously, and are generally more inclined to participate in research surveys than British MPs. In the British case, we used a different strategy. First, we hired YouGov to recruit 500 nationally representative British citizens and had them answer the BFI battery including 44 items. We then analysed which items had the strongest loading on each of the five personality dimensions, and from this, we selected the most powerful items within this specific cultural context. Based on these data, we reduced the battery to 22 items for the UK case (shown in Appendix A).

The Danish survey was sent out to all 179 members of the national parliament (Folketinget) in the beginning of March 2017. Surveys were distributed via e-mail including links as well as via paper mail. In June, we initiated a phone campaign calling up the remaining MPs asking them to participate. We closed the surveying period in September 2017. Overall, 89 (49.7 %) Danish MPs provided some answers, and 74 (41.3 %) answered the full survey. In the United Kingdom, we launched the survey including electronic and paper versions simultaneously with the Danish data collection. However, for the British sample, we had to extend our surveying period due to the unexpected election in spring 2017. By November 2017, we had 89 MPs (13.7 %) that answered some questions and 68 MPs (10.5 percent) answering all questions relevant for analyses in this paper. While the Danish response rate is comparatively high, the British sample does indeed have a low response rate; however, it is comparable to other elite surveys including personality measures (Dietrich et

al. 2012; Best 2011; Caprara et al. 2004). Table 1 describes our samples compared to the

populations of Danish and British MPs in relation to age, gender and party.

Table 1: Representativeness of the Survey Samples

	Danish MPs		British MPs	
	Population	Survey sample	Population	Survey sample
Female	37.4	41.89	32.0	23.6
Average age in years	45.0	39.0	50.5	52
DK Social Democratic Party	26.26	29.73		
DK Liberal Party	18.99	16.22		
DK Danish Peoples' Party	20.67	20.27		
DK Conservative Party	3.35	1.35		
DK Liberal Alliance	7.3	2.70		
DK Social Liberals	4.47	4.05		
DK The Alternative	5.03	9.46		
DK Red-Green-Alliance	7.82	9.46		
DK Socialist Peoples' Party	3.91	4.05		
DK Nordic mandates	2.23	2.70		
UK Labour			40.3	47.06
UK Conservatives			48.8	32.35
UK Liberal Democrats			1.8	4.41
UK Scottish National Party			5.4	8.82
UK DUP			1.5	2.94
UK Plaid Cymru			0.6	4.41
UK UKIP			0.2	0.00
Green Party			0.2	0.00
N	179	74	650	68

Table 2 shows Cronbach's alpha scores for each personality trait. The reliability of the

measures is generally acceptable. The alpha scores are slightly lower in UK due to the

smaller number of items. In Denmark, agreeableness seems to be relatively less reliable,

which is very similar to the results of Gosling et al.'s analysis (2003: 519). The value on each

personality dimension is given by Bartlett scores to secure scores highly correlated with the

corresponding factor (DiStefano, Zhu & Mîndrilà 2009: 4-5). The measures are thus

constructed with a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of one.

Table 2: Reliability of Personality Measures among Danish and British MPs, Cronbach's Alpha

	Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Openness	Agreeableness	Emotional
DK	0.797	0.808	0.732	0.516	0.820
UK	0.651	0.723	0.660	0.680	0.683

To measure our outcome variable, preference for personalized representation, we used a common measure applied and validated in previous research conducted in the UK and Denmark (Eulau et al. 1959; Bøggild 2019). We asked our respondents how they thought an MP should vote in a situation where there is a disagreement between the position of the party and the position of the MP. Respondents could either answer: 1) the MP should vote according to the position of the party (coded as 0, 50 %), or 2) the MP should vote according to his/her own opinion (coded as 1, 50 %). In line with our definition of personalized representation, the latter answer is taken as a preference for personalized representation. Our measure forces representative roles into a dichotomy rather than a continuum. In this approach, we lose variations in terms of degrees of personalized representation, but reveal whether politicians primarily see themselves as personal trustees or party delegates (Converse and Pierce 1986).

Following extant work in political psychology (e.g., Bakker, Hopmann and Persson 2015; Best 2011; Mondak 2010), we consider personality traits deep-seated psychological constructs that are highly stable and largely determined causally prior to many other individual-level variables. This notion is directly supported by empirical research showing that personality traits are heavily shaped by genes and during early childhood (Bouchard and McGue 2003; Jang, Livesley and Vernon 1996; Lamb et al. 2003). Hence, we do not consider issues with omitted variable bias and, particularly, reverse causality to be major concerns in our cross-sectional analyses. Still, we include possible confounders that may correlate with the relevant personality traits as well as preferences for representation. We include gender,

since boys and girls possibly meet different demands and expectations as they grow up, which will potentially cause them to strengthen specific aspects of their personality. Furthermore, gender has been shown to correlate with representative behaviour (Bauman et al. 2015). We also include age since social ideas and values may change across generations, influencing how different personality traits are looked upon and strengthened or weakened in social interaction. Age may also influence representative behaviour since it is associated with parliamentary seniority and intra-party positions. Gender and age of the MPs, were collected from parliamentary website biographies. Finally, we include the remaining two personality traits (conscientiousness and emotional stability). Traits are specific dimensions of a personality but have been shown to correlate to some extent (see Gosling et al. 2003: 510). Moreover, among citizens, these traits have proven relevant for their job performance, political engagement and decision-making (Mondak & Halperin 2008; Kowert & Hermann 1997), which suggests that they may also influence the way MPs carry out their job, although there is no clear argument as to exactly how from the political psychology literature.

Results

Table 3 displays the results of our analyses, which show the impact of personality traits, gender, age and country of the MPs on preferences for personalized representation. The first model tests the direct effects of the three personality traits (H1-H3), while Models 2-4 each include an interaction term between one of the three traits and MP country, testing our hypotheses regarding the moderating impact of political context (H4-H6). We estimate standard errors clustered by party to take the hierarchical structure of the data into account.

The first noteworthy result reported in Table 3 is that preferences for personalized representation is more pronounced among British MPs. The predicted probability of a British MP answering that MPs should vote according to their own opinion when in conflict with the

party is 67 percent, holding other independent variables at their mean. The probability of a

Danish MP answering the same is only 25 percent. This confirms our theoretical expectation

that preferences for personalized representation is more pronounced among British relative to

Danish MPs.

Table 3. Personality and Personalized Representation

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Agreeableness	-0.529*	-0.538*	-0.537*	-0.106
	(0.274)	(0.264)	(0.278)	(0.311)
Extraversion	0.652**	0.598*	0.741*	0.691**
	(0.242)	(0.253)	(0.393)	(0.257)
Openness	0.337*	0.725*	0.329*	0.383*
	(0.179)	(0.417)	(0.170)	(0.383)
Country of MP: UK	1.713**	1.781**	1.730**	1.814**
	(0.556)	(0.574)	(0.571)	(0.591)
UK*Openness		-0.655[†]		
		(0.399)		
UK*Extraversion			-0.159	
			(0.514)	
UK*Agreeableness				-1.141**
				(0.388)
Conscientiousness	-0.241	-0.241	-0.262	-0.367*
	(0.183)	(0.191)	(0.194)	(0.221)
Emotional Stability	0.051	0.079	0.051	-0.012
	(0.200)	(0.180)	(0.202)	(0.198)
Female	-0.167	-0.001	-0.162	-0.107
	(0.393)	(0.386)	(0.386)	(0.403)
Age	1.203	1.082	1.178	1.210
	(1.266)	(1.209)	(1.283)	(1.422)
N	130	130	130	130
McFadden R2	0.185	0.194	0.186	0.207

Note: ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.1, [†] p=0.101 in two-sided tests. Logit models are estimated with standard errors clustered by party. Reference category for the UK variable is Denmark.

Our first hypothesis states that politicians with higher levels of agreeableness are less likely

to prefer personalized representation. As demonstrated in model 1, the effect of agreeableness

is negative as expected. The left-hand panel of Figure 1 displays the predicted probability of

an MP preferring to vote according to his/her own opinion and hereby dissent from the party

Figure 1: Effect of Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Openness on Personalized Representation
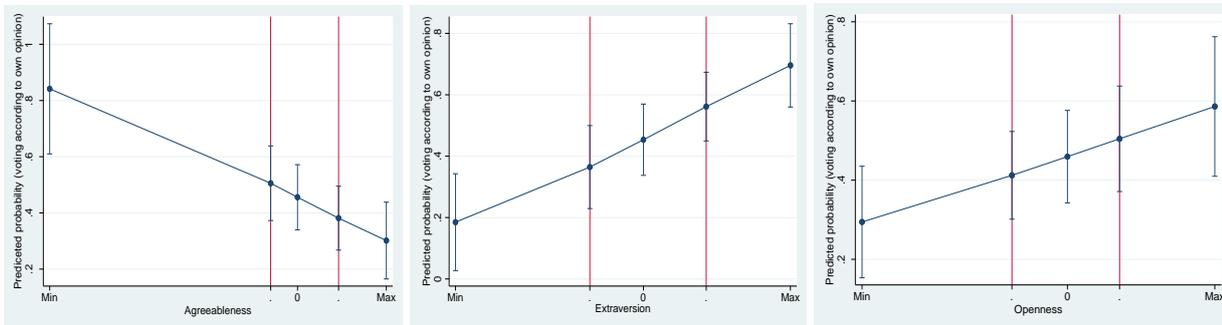
Note: Estimates based on model 1 in Table 3. Reference lines indicate the first and third quartile. 90 percent confidence intervals.

across different levels of agreeableness. From the minimum to the maximum score of agreeableness, the predicted probability decreases by 54 percentage points. Between the first and the third quartile, the effect is still substantial, amounting to 13 percentage points. The correlation between agreeableness and preference for personalized representation is thus not only statistically significant but also substantially large.

Our second hypothesis states that politicians with higher levels of extraversion are more likely to prefer personalized representation and it is also supported. The centre panel of Figure 1 shows that the predicted probability of the least extraverted politicians to prefer voting according to their own opinion is only 18.5 percent, while the probability is 69.6 percent for the most extraverted politicians in our sample. The difference between the first and third quartile is 20 percentage points.

Our third hypothesis regarding the positive association between openness and preference for personalized representation is also supported. The right-hand panel of Figure 1 shows that the difference in the predicted probability of a politician indicating to vote according to his/her own opinion between the lowest and highest level of openness amounts

to 30 percentage points, whereas the difference between the first and third quartile amounts to 9 percentage points.

We now turn to our hypotheses regarding how the impact of personality is moderated by political context. The implications of our hypotheses are that the positive effects of openness and extraversion should be especially pronounced in Denmark (i.e., negative coefficients for the interaction terms), whereas the negative effect of agreeableness should be especially pronounced in UK (i.e., negative coefficient for the interaction term). Table 3 shows that the data partly support our expectations.[3] However, only the interaction term including agreeableness (Model 4) reaches the conventional level of statistical significance in two-sided tests, whereas the term including openness only barely does so (p=0.101). While the interaction term including extraversion points in the expected direction the coefficient is not statistically significant (p=0.600). Therefore, Figure 2 only illustrates the effects of agreeableness and openness in each country.

The upper left- and right-hand panels of Figure 2 show the effects of openness on preferences for personalized representation in the UK and Denmark, respectively. In the UK, the difference in predicted probability amounts to 31 percentages points as we compare the lowest and highest level of openness. In Denmark, the probability of a politician indicating a preference for voting according to his/her own opinion when it conflicts with the party position increases from 8% to 53% when we compare politicians with the lowest level of openness to those with the highest level. The difference amounts to 45 percentage points. In both countries, the effect is positive as expected, but the association is stronger in Denmark, although the interaction effect falls just short of reaching statistical significance at conventional levels.

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[3] As a robustness test, we reran all models with reduced measures for personality traits for Danish MPs to make the measures as comparable as possible to the British measures. The presented results remain substantially similar in these models.

Figure 2. The Marginal Effect of Agreeableness and Openness on Voting Norms across UK and Denmark
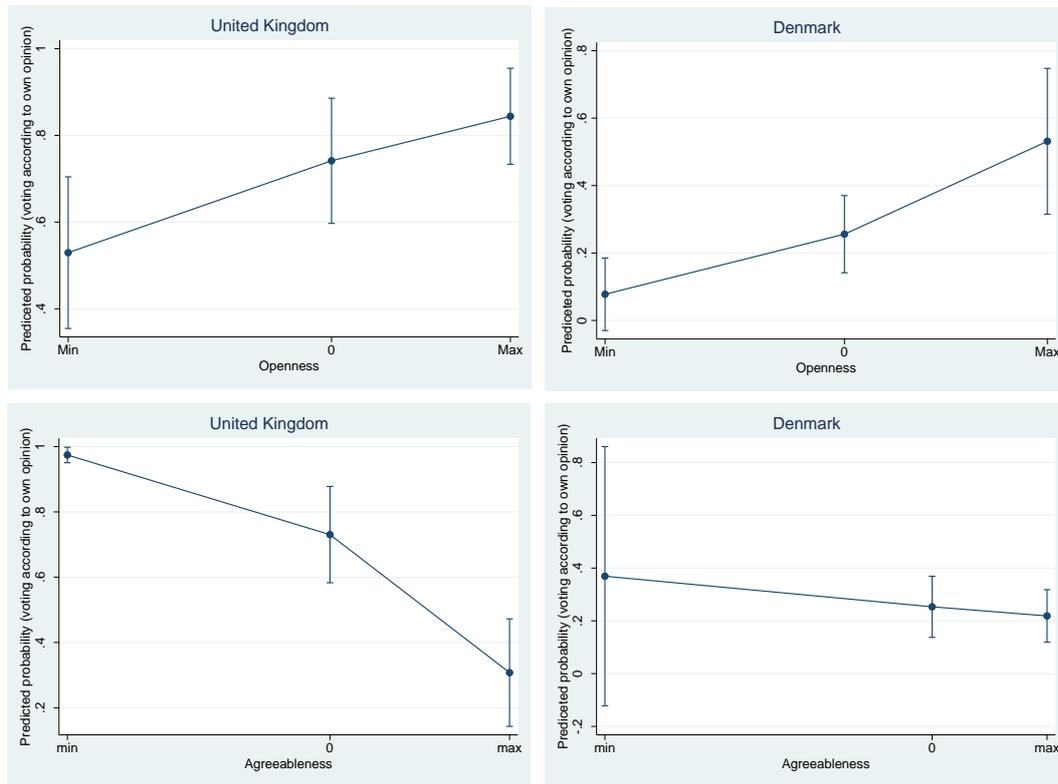
Turning to agreeableness, the lower right-hand and left-hand panels display the effects across MPs in the UK and Denmark, respectively. Among Danish MPs, we see that the difference between those with the lowest and highest levels of agreeableness is 15 percentage points, whereas the difference amounts to 66 percentage points among British MPs. As expected, the impact of agreeableness on preferences for personalized representation is thus negative in both countries but significantly stronger in the UK.

In sum, our data demonstrate that the impact of personality trait is moderated by the political context. As expected, high levels of agreeableness – resulting in a personal drive for group loyalty and cohesion – discourages politicians from holding preferences for personalized representation but mostly in a context where personalized representation is more prevalent. Moreover, there is a tendency for high levels of openness to experience – resulting in a personal drive for exploring new, alternative ways of behaving – to be more positively associated with preferences for personalized representation in contexts where party

loyalty is strong and personalized representation does in fact constitute an alternative way of doing things. However, we also found that high levels of extraversion increase the likelihood of preferring personalized representation independently of political context. As demonstrated above, the main effect of extraversion was stronger compared to the other personality traits, which may imply that the motivation for risk-seeking and conflictual behaviour is always a precondition for MPs to prefer personalized representation. Finally, the impact of the control variables (gender, age, conscientiousness and emotional stability) on preferences for personalized representation is not statistically significant.

Discussion

Our results show that personality traits influence MPs' preferences for personalized representation and that these effects vary across political systems. We show that personality traits have a theoretically justified effect: as predicted, higher levels of extraversion and openness to experience increase the likelihood of politicians preferring personalized representation, while higher levels of agreeableness dampen politicians' likelihood of holding preferences for personalized representation. Furthermore, we show that personality works in interaction with the political context.

With these findings, this article contributes to the literature on personalized politics theoretically and empirically. Theoretically, we focus on personalized representation and suggest a new explanation based on fundamental psychological predispositions that influence how motivated and talented politicians are for personalizing their representation in light of the potential costs and benefits associated with such preferences. We add explanatory power for understanding and accounting for variation in preferences for personalized representation. In addition, we incorporate our theoretical arguments with the existing literature by unfolding how personal attributes such as personality interact with political context. Empirically, we

leverage comprehensive measures of personality among elite actors and demonstrate how these measures correlate with representative norms related to personalized representation.

Our study spurs three general considerations regarding personalization of politics as a process and its normative, democratic implications. First, our results suggest that a specific type of personality is better fit for making it in a personalized political context. If personalized representation is indeed becoming an increasingly beneficial strategy for MPs to gain media attention, win votes and, ultimately, make it in politics (e.g. Campbell et al. 2019; Kam 2009), our findings would imply that this pressure will increase the proportion of MPs with high levels of extraversion and openness and low agreeableness since such traits are associated with motivations and talents for carrying out such a winning strategy. We may thus identify another aspect of personalization of politics, which is the personalization of recruitment, leading to an increasing number of highly extraverted politicians open to new experiences but less oriented toward cooperation as they have lower levels of agreeableness. If personalization of politics changes the pool of MPs towards more dominant and less cooperative individuals, this could result in future difficulties in reaching parliamentary decisions and compromise as parties will face difficulties in enforcing discipline.

Second, and related, given that preferences for personalized representation is not solely facilitated by the political context but also individual-level personality traits, potential initiatives to regulate personalized representation must also focus on the recruitment of candidates. While the current literature has mainly considered potential reforms of electoral systems and the internal workings of parties (e.g., Bøggild & Pedersen 2018), our results imply that personalized representation may also enter politics through the recruitment process.

Third, representation is a product of demand and supply. As mentioned above, if voters prefer independent politicians, these politicians have incentives to personalise in order

to be re-elected and be successful (Carson et al 2010). Voters' preferences for personalization may thus increase representatives' personalization. However, it is also possible that more extraverted and open personalities find politics attractive, which implies that we may also witness that increased personalization of representation increases voter personalization since media and voters will attend to these politicians and come to expect such personalized styles of campaigning, arguing and voting. The different sub-dimensions of personalized political behaviour may thus be interconnected and mutually reinforcing which leads to further personalization of politics.

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Appendix A: Personality Questions

Items included in the British survey to measure the five personality traits
Q28 Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you agree or disagree that you are someone who likes to spend time with others? Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement below. Are you someone who...

All items included five Likert-type answering categories (ranging from fully disagree to fully agree).

	Personality trait	Factor loading[1]
Is talkative	Extraversion	0.656
Tends to find fault with others	Agreeableness (R)[2]	0.666
Is depressed, blue	Emotional stability	0.463
Is original, comes up with new ideas	Openness	0.512
Is helpful and unselfish with others	Agreeableness	0.440
Can be somewhat careless	Conscientiousness (R)	0.494
Is relaxed, handles stress well	Emotional stability (R)	0.690
Is full of energy	Extraversion	0.550
Starts quarrels with others	Agreeableness (R)	0.466
Can be tense	Emotional stability	0.538
Generates a lot of enthusiasm	Extraversion	0.554
Has a forgiving nature	Agreeableness	0.463
Tends to be disorganised	Conscientiousness (R)	0.663
Worries a lot	Emotional stability	0.588
Tends to be quiet	Extraversion (R)	0.681
Tends to be lazy	Conscientiousness (R)	0.372
Is inventive	Openness	0.359
Perseveres until the task is finished	Conscientiousness	0.277
Values artistic, aesthetic experiences	Openness	0.778
Is considerate and kind to almost everyone	Agreeableness	0.622
Does things efficiently	Conscientiousness	0.799
Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature	Openness	0.720

[1]Principal Factor Analysis
[2]R indicates that the question values has been reversed

Items included in the Danish Survey to measure the five personality traits

All items included five Likert-type answering categories (ranging from fully disagree to fully agree).

	Personality trait	Factor loading[1]
Controversial lecturers only confuse and misguide students	Openness(R)[2]	0.291
Rarely experience strong feelings/emotions	Openness (R)	0.081
Philosophical discussions are boring	Openness (R)	0.433
I have a lively fantasy [imagination]	Openness	0.570
Often try new and unfamiliar food	Openness	0.539
Other peoples' perception of right and wring can be right/valid for them	Openness	0.386
Enjoy to concentrate on a fantasy or daydream and let it grow	Openness	0.440
Poetry does not speak to me	Openness (R)	0.588
Most comfortable in familiar surroundings	Openness (R)	0.430
Little interest in speculating about mysteries of the universe or conditions of man kind	Openness (R)	0.613
Sometimes when reading a poem or looking at art I feel a puff of pitch/excitement	Openness	0.565
Strangest things - e.g. special scents or names of distant places -- invoke strong emotions	Openness	0.340
Known for judgment and common sense	Conscientiousness	0.127
Sometimes not as reliable as I ought to be	Conscientiousness (R)	0.530
Clear goals and work systematically to achieve them	Conscientiousness	0.678
Think things through before deciding	Conscientiousness	0.302
Not methodical and systematic person	Conscientiousness (R)	0.597
Productive person who always get my work done	Conscientiousness	0.795
Often situations where I am not properly prepared	Conscientiousness (R)	0.613
Work hard to achieve my goals	Conscientiousness	0.669
Hard to pull myself together and do things I ought to	Conscientiousness (R)	0.617
Always consider consequences before I act	Conscientiousness	0.400
Apparently never able to organize my things	Conscientiousness (R)	0.391
Try to be careful so I don't have to redo things	Conscientiousness	0.503
Like to have people around me	Extraversion	0.754
Let others talk at meetings	Extraversion (R)	0.371
Really like to talk with people	Extraversion	0.574
Not as quick and lively as other people	Extraversion (R)	0.522
Like to be the centre of attention	Extraversion	0.513
Easy to smile and be extrovert [outgoing] towards strangers	Extraversion	0.688
Happy and cheerful	Extraversion	0.440
Enjoy parties with a lot of people	Extraversion	0.691
Do not find it easy to take control of a situation	Extraversion (R)	0.592

A very active person	Extraversion	0.563
Like to be among the crowd at sports events	Extraversion	0.271
Have a ready laugh	Extraversion	0.412
Some think I am selfish and self-absorbed	Agreeableness (R)	0.257
Rather collaborate than compete with other people	Agreeableness	0.088
Don't mind bragging about my skills and achievements	Agreeableness (R)	0.236
If necessary manipulate people to get what I want	Agreeableness (R)	0.420
Most people will take advantage of you, if they can get away with it	Agreeableness (R)	0.409
Some consider me cold and calculating	Agreeableness (R)	0.436
I am better than most people and I know it	Agreeableness (R)	-0.136
We can never do too much for old and poor	Agreeableness	-0.074
All people deserve respect	Agreeableness	0.302
Inclined to think the best about people	Agreeableness	0.418
Sometimes pressure and flatter to make people do what I want them to	Agreeableness (R)	0.511
I am obstinate and stubborn	Agreeableness (R)	0.420
I am a balanced person	Emotional stability (R)	0.510
Sometimes I feel I am not good at anything	Emotional stability	0.693
I rarely feel anxious or uneasy	Emotional stability (R)	0.662
Rarely depressed or sad	Emotional stability (R)	0.656
Sometimes I feel so ashamed that I just want to disappear	Emotional stability	0.457
Under great pressure sometimes I feel like I am breaking down	Emotional stability	0.717
Often feel tense and nervous	Emotional stability	0.723
Compared to others I often feel inferior	Emotional stability	0.546
Hard for me to decide	Emotional stability	0.561
Sometimes I do impulsive things that I later regret	Emotional stability	0.141
Even small annoyances can make me frustrated	Emotional stability	0.490
I am always able to control myself [my feelings]	Emotional stability (R)	0.215

[1]Principal Factor Analysis

[2]R refers to a reversed item