Can personality traits, right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation explain voting for the Austrian FPÖ?

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Abstract

Findings on possible psychological roots of radical right voting are still rare. The identification of authoritarianism and xenophobia or ingroup-outgroup distinctions as key features of radical right parties suggests to apply the psychological concepts of right wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation to explain individual variations in radical right voting. As both RWA and SDO are known to be shaped by personality, we link personality traits to right wing voting, using the two ideological attitude dimensions as intermediating variables following a bottom-up-approach. For our (limited) case-study of young men in Austria, we find that voters’ personalities can explain some variation of radical right voting via social dominance orientation and anti-immigrant attitudes: Most importantly, openness to experience and agreeableness reduce SDO and anti-immigrant attitudes, and thus the propensity to vote for the FPÖ. Interestingly, RWA does not explain radical right voting in our study.
1. Introduction

The rise of radical right parties in Europe has lead to an increasing literature that studies reasons for voting for the radical right (e.g. Kitschelt 2007; Van der Brug and Fennema 2007 for a review). Most studies agree, that radical right parties in Europe are most successful among the lower educated, blue collar workers, and people with low income (Iversflaten 2005; McGann and Kitschelt 2005; Oesch 2008). This phenomenon is sometimes traced back to the higher risk these people have to suffer from economic insecurities (e.g. Lubbers, Gijsberts et al. 2002; Mudde 2007). Besides the sociological and economic determinants of radical right voting, attitudinal factors have been identified to explain radical right voting, all above anti-immigrant attitudes, EU-skepticism and political dissatisfaction (e.g. Van der Brug, Fennema et al. 2000; Norris 2005; Rydgren 2008; Van der Brug and Fennema 2009).

Despite the growing literature on psychological predispositions and their possible impact on political attitudes or behaviours in political science (Gerber, Huber et al. 2011 give an overview; Verhulst, Eaves et al. 2012 for a critical review on causation or correlation), the link between psychological attributes of the voters and radical right voting is still weakly developed. Besides the usually used personality traits that were called to be one (of several) “key set[s] of determinants of political behavior” (Mondak 2010, p.182), the concepts of right wing authoritarianism (RWA) and social dominance orientation (SDO) seem especially interesting for explaining voting for the radical right: Following Mudde’s (2007) conceptualization of radical right parties, authoritarianism and xenophobia are key features of this parties. The first suggests applying the concept of right wing authoritarianism to the explanation of radical right voting. Regarding xenophobia, radical right parties are also characterized by using ingroup-outgroup differentiations in the context of fears and threats that emerge from outgroups like immigrant communities (Mudde 2007). Together with the numerous findings concerning the relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes or social disintegration and radical right voting (e.g. Lubbers and Scheepers 2000; Norris 2005; Rydgren 2008), the concept of social dominance orientation seems also useful, when trying to explain radical right voting on the
individual level, as this concept explains one’s predisposition to the preference of inter-group hierarchy in a society (Pratto, Sidanius et al. 1994).

Although authoritarianism is defined as a party characteristic of the radical right, there is no clear answer, if it is also a characteristic of voters. Some findings on the individual level show that radical right voters share some aspects of authoritarian attitudes (e.g. Lubbers and Scheepers 2000; Minkenberg 2000; Mayer 2003; Scheuregger and Spier 2007), whilst others reports, that RWA does not explain party choice in general (Altemeyer 1988) or the radical right vote in particular (Dunn 2012). According to there are some sporadic findings that link SDO to political conservatism (Sidanius, Pratto et al. 1996), we still do not know if SDO affects the chances to vote for a radical right party.

Personality traits have already been successfully linked to party choice (e.g. Vecchione, Schoen et al. 2011) including radical right voting (Schoen and Schumann 2007), but to our knowledge, the more comprehensive picture of how personality traits might be linked to radical right voting, is still missing.

This paper tries to fill these gaps and aims at exploring if and how personality traits and the two ideological attitude dimensions RWA and SDO can contribute to explain individual variations of radical right voting. We hypothesize that traits and RWA and SDO shape anti-immigrant attitudes which again are a commonly accepted predictor of voting for a radical right party. This helps us to improve our understanding of psychological attributes and their impact on radical right voting. To explore these questions, we select Austria and its prominent radical right Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) as a single case study.

The paper proceeds as follows: First we will discuss how psychological predispositions, including traits and cognitions, are meant to influence political attitudes and behavior, and then develop our hypotheses for the case of radical right voting. Second we will briefly discuss the case we selected, Austria, and its prominent radical right party, the FPÖ. After describing the data and measures we used for our empirical part, we will present our results. Finally we will discuss these results and their implications.
2. Psychological determinants of political attitudes and behaviors

In political psychology, personality has been identified as stable psychological structure that frames political attitudes and behaviors and thus adds to explain individual variance in these attitudes and behaviours (e.g. Mondak 2010; Gerber, Huber et al. 2011). In their longitudinal study examining the general effects of personality on ideology and political attitudes over 20 years, Block & Block (2006) were able to show that personality traits shown early in life predict general ideological tendencies later in life. This points to one approach of assessing personality: the measurement of personality traits, which are defined by McCrae and Costa (2003, p.25) as “dimensions of individual differences in tendencies to show consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings and actions”. Personality traits therefore are stable individual dispositions that are partly inherited and formed in early life. In interaction with environmental conditions they also shape value orientations, political attitudes, and policy preferences and may even account for substantial parts of variance in political judgments (e.g. Caprara, Barbaranelli et al. 1999; Caprara, Schwartz et al. 2006; Sibley and Duckitt 2009; Duckitt and Sibley 2010; Gerber, Huber et al. 2010; Mondak 2010; Mondak, Hibbing et al. 2010; Vecchione, Schoen et al. 2011).

We are aware of the on-going debate, if the relationship is indeed causal or rather correlational (Verhulst, Eaves et al. 2012). Nevertheless, for this paper we will stick to the idea, that traits shape attitudes which in turn shape behaviours, describing a bottom-up process of attitude formation (Jost, Federico et al. 2009).

2.1 The Big Five Framework

For the purpose of this paper, the Five Factor Model of personality (“Big Five”) seems to be a suitable framework for the assessment and distinction of individual differences in personality traits (e.g. Barbaranelli, Caprara et al. 2007; Mondak 2010) because of its comprehensiveness and validity. The Big Five contain five relatively independent broad-bandwidth dimensions of personality, which have been independently identified using multiple measurement methods (Costa and McCrae 1992): openness to experience, conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, and emotional stability.
People scoring high on openness to experience can be described as curious, imaginative and observant and tend to hold left or liberal political attitudes (Van Hiel, Kossowska et al. 2000; Carney, Jost et al. 2008). Highly conscientious people are characterized as reliable, rigid, methodical, and self-controlled. Their strong dutifulness matters for political behavior, given that they perceive citizenship as a duty rather than an ‘extracurricular activity’ (Mondak 2010, p.55). Conscientiousness has also been found to be associated with economic and social policy conservatism (Jost, Glaser et al. 2003; Gerber, Huber et al. 2010). People scoring high on extraversion are exceptionally communicative and sociable. High extraversion was shown to be linked to some forms of political participation (Mondak, Hibbing et al. 2010). Agreeableness describes mainly how people arrange their relationships with others. Highly agreeable people are characterized as being trusting, warm and harmonious. Correlations between agreeableness and political attitudes or behaviors have repeatedly been reported as rare or weak (Gerber, Huber et al. 2010; Mondak 2010; Gerber, Huber et al. 2011). Emotional stability is often described with its antonym, neuroticism. People scoring high on this trait are described as being calm, steadfast, and balanced. Emotional Stability has so far been associated with social and economic liberalism (Gerber, Huber et al. 2011).

By now, there has been some evidence, that personality traits are linked to party choice in general: Caprara, Barbaranelli, and Zimbardo (1999) found for Italy that openness to experience and extraversion are particularly influential in shaping voting behavior, with persons scoring high on openness and low on extraversion being disproportionately inclined to prefer the center-left coalition to the center-right coalition. Vecchione et al. (2011) showed that the Big Five were consistently linked to party preference in five European countries (Italy, Spain, Germany, Greece, Poland), as voters’ traits are seemingly congruent with the policies of their preferred party. Moreover, the personality traits in their study had higher effects on voting than socio-demographic characteristics (gender, age, income, educational level). Whereas openness has been shown to be the most generalizeable predictor of party preference across the examined countries, the predicting validity of conscientiousness was less robust and replicable. In one study for Germany, there are findings explicitly explaining radical
right voting: radical right voters\textsuperscript{1} were found to be less agreeable and less emotional stable (Schoen and Schumann 2007).

In exploring the links between personality traits and preference for a radical right party, we do not simply aim at replicating these results, but rather seize the suggestion to pay more attention to direct and indirect effects of traits on attitudes and behaviors (Caprara, Schwartz et al. 2006; Mondak 2010). Doing so, we want to deepen our understanding, why the correlations between traits and party choice occur. We will follow the idea of a bottom-up-process (Jost, Federico et al. 2009) that traits shape attitudes and one’s perceptiveness of political stances which in turn shape behaviour, and come up with our general expectation:

General expectation: Personality traits contribute to explaining vote choice for the radical right. The mechanism is not a simply direct one, but an indirect one: Traits shape attitudes, and attitudes affect vote choice.

Thus, the next step is to determine, which attitudes might be the ones that are relevant to function as intermediating variables to link traits to the choice of a radical right party and to set up a bundle of specific hypotheses that describe the patterns underlying this relationship.

\textbf{2.2 Intermediating variables between traits and voting for a radical right party: RWA and SDO}

When studying personality and voting for radical right parties, it is important to provide a definition of ‘radical right’. In this paper, we will follow Mudde’s approach (2007), who defines a radical right party as a party that combines nationalism with xenophobia and authoritarianism (p.24). As corresponding concepts on the individual level, which may serve as a link between traits and vote choice, we identified social dominance orientation (SDO) and right-wing authoritarianism (RWA):

Whereas xenophobia and nationalism on the supply side can be translated into support for intergroup hierarchies (SDO) on the demand side, authoritarianism on the supply side has its equivalent on the

\footnote{Schoen and Schumann call the parties covered “right wing parties”, but their definition of right wing parties does not include the moderate right wing parties as CDU or FDP, but the small far right parties. Results can classify as results for the radical right.}
individual’s side in RWA. This also fits recommendations using these two ideological attitude dimensions when looking at individual differences concerning attitudes and behaviors (Duckitt 2001), because both, SDO and RWA have consistently been shown to mediate effects between personality traits and sociopolitical attitudes as well as political behavior (Campbell, Converse et al. 1960; Pratto, Sidanius et al. 1994; Altemeyer 1998; Duckitt 2005; Sibley and Duckitt 2008).

The concept of right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) describes submission to legitimate authorities, aggression in the name of these authorities, and a high degree of adherence to traditional social norms (Altemeyer 1998). People high on RWA believe furthermore that authorities should be trusted to a great extent and that they owe respect and obedience (Altemeyer 1988). More recent research identifies three sub dimensions of RWA, conservatism, traditionalism and authoritarianism (Duckitt, Bizumic et al. 2010), which is the conceptualization we mean to use in this paper. Social Dominance Orientation on the other hand is defined as “a general attitudinal orientation toward intergroup relations, reflecting whether one generally prefers such relations to be equal, versus hierarchical” (Pratto, Sidanius et al. 1994, p. 742). People high on SDO therefore support intergroup hierarchies and tend to arrange social groups in a superior-inferior order (Sidanius and Pratto 1999).

As we aim at using RWA and SDO as mediating variables between personality traits and radical right voting, we will briefly discuss, how the former two are rooted in personality, before we come up with our hypothesis concerning their possible effects on radical right voting:

Sibley & Duckitt (2008) observed that SDO was associated most strongly with low levels of agreeableness. RWA, on the other hand, was most strongly associated with low levels of openness to experience and was also positively correlated with high levels of conscientiousness. Additionally, in their one-year longitudinal study Sibley & Duckitt (2010) were able to show that low openness to experience increased the threat-driven motivation for social cohesion and collective security expressed by RWA. On the other hand, low levels of agreeableness and high levels of extraversion increased the competitive-driven motivation for group-based dominance and superiority expressed by SDO. However, the knowledge of how SDO and RWA can be traced back to personality traits is still
limited, and mostly based on students’ samples only. This paper will thus contribute to a deeper
understanding of links between personality traits and SDO and RWA by applying these findings to a
non student sample. Thus, our second expectation is the following:

Expectation: RWA and SDO can partly be explained by personality traits. We expect a
negative relationship between openness to experience with RWA, a positive between
conscientiousness and RWA, as well as negative relationships between agreeableness and
SDO and a positive relationship between extraversion and SDO.

There is surprisingly little literature on how RWA and SDO might be linked to voting behavior in
general and the choice of a radical right party in particular: Concerning the relationship between
RWA and party preference, existing results demonstrate that conservatives tend to score higher on
RWA than liberals (Altemeyer 1988; Altemeyer 2004). In addition, people high on RWA tend to
control the behavior of others through punishment (Altemeyer 1988) and they particularly hold on
conventional norms and values (Altemeyer 2006). Applied to the field of politics, this might point to a
higher approval of law-and-order policies typically demanded by radical right parties. Nevertheless
Altemeyer concludes that people high on RWA seem to show little preference for any particular
political party. Moreover, it has recently been demonstrated for six Western European countries that
exclusive nationalism predicts the preference for radical right parties stronger and more consistent
than authoritarianism (Dunn 2012). Mayer (2003) on the other hand was able to find correlations
between what she calls ‘authoritarian ethnocentrism’ and voting for the radical right Front National in
the French 2002 presidential election. Additionally, Scheuregger & Spier (2007) showed for five
Western European countries that ‘working-class authoritarianism’ promotes voting for radical right
parties. As these findings are still ambiguous, we will test, if the concept of RWA as we used it, can
be linked to party choice, and thus come up with our first hypotheses.

H1a: The higher people score on RWA, the more likely they are to prefer a radical right party.
(direct effect)
There is even less literature on how SDO might be linked to party choice: Sidanius et al. (Sidanius, Pratto et al. 1996) were able to link SDO to political conservatism and Duckitt & Sibley (Duckitt and Sibley 2010, p. 1877) concluded, that individuals high in RWA and SDO are assumed to be “more supportive of right wing political parties, causes and policies”. We will extend these findings to radical right parties. As radical right parties are known to use a “us” and “them” language to distinguish between favourable and non-favourable groups in a society (Norris 2005; Mudde 2007), and people scoring high on SDO favour group hierarchies, Social Dominance Orientation can thus be assumed to make people more open a radical right party’s rhetoric. We thus assume that SDO increases the chances that a person will vote for the radical right.

H1b: The higher people score on SDO, the more likely they are to prefer the radical right (direct effect).

However, we will allow another intermediating variable: Both, high RWA and high SDO have been shown to be strongly related to generalized prejudice (Ekehammar, Akrami et al. 2004), negative attitudes toward women, lesbians and gays (Altemeyer 1998) and toward various ethnic and minority groups (Sidanius and Pratto 1999; Akrami, Ekehammar et al. 2000). The main characteristic of people high on SDO - their support of intergroup hierarchies – and the impact of RWA and SDO on generalized prejudiced makes us link the two social attitudes with specific anti-immigrant attitudes.

H2a: RWA and SDO increase anti-immigrant attitudes

Following the bottom-up-model by Jost et al. (2009) anti-immigrant policies of radical right parties are assumend to be also directly related to personality traits:

H2b: Personality traits shape anti-immigrant attitudes.

Voters of the radical right parties were found to vote upon their ideological agreement with a party and their policy preferences, as voters of others parties do as well, with the anti-immigrant issues as the most important issue(Van der Brug, Fennema et al. 2000). Anti-immigrant attitudes are hence a key set of explanatory variables when political scientists explain radical right voting, as anti-
immigrant policies are on a radical right parties agenda (Rydgren 2008; Van der Brug and Fennema 2009). We thus assume also an indirect effects of RWA and SDO, and personality traits on radical right voting via anti-immigrant attitudes.

H3a: Indirect effect: RWA and SDO enforce anti-immigrant attitudes, and thus have an indirect positive effect on the preference of the radical right.

We have to add the expectation here, that the effect of SDO on anti-immigrant attitudes will be stronger than the effect of RWA.

As openness to experience and agreeableness are assumed to be the most important traits when explaining RWA and SDO, we thus expect these two traits to be of particular importance for radical right voting:

H3b: Indirect effect: Personality traits, in particular openness to experience and agreeableness decrease RWA, SDO and anti-immigrant attitudes, and thus have an indirect negative effect on the preference of the radical right.

Combining prior findings on links between traits and RWA and SDO with the hypotheses derived in this paper, we are now able to link personality traits with radical right voting, as suggested in our overall research question: We assume that personality traits, in particular agreeableness and openness to experience have an effect on SDO and RWA\(^2\), which again are assumed to affect anti-immigrant attitudes. As anti-immigrant attitudes can be linked to radical right voting, we thus can trace back some variance of radical right voting to individual differences in personality\(^3\) (Figure 1).

\(^2\) concerning this causal order between personality traits and RWA and SDO see also Ekehammar et al. 2004 and Duriez & Soenens 2006

\(^3\) We are aware that personality is one important factor that influences the extent of RWA and SDO, whereas situational aspects are another one: Thus, RWA and SDO cannot only be traced back to personality, they additionally vary to some extent depending on the situation and the context (Duckitt and Fisher 2003; Stenner 2005)
3. Case selection

As we tackle a rather unexplored topic, we limited ourselves to a single country case study, and even more to a group where we think patterns might be detected easily. We selected Austria as one of the countries in Europe where the radical right is particularly successful. The Austrian Freedom Party (Freiheitliche Partei Österreich, FPÖ) has been classified to be rather similar in its policy positions to other radical right parties as the Dutch Vlaamsbelang, the Italian Lega Nord or the Swiss Volkspartei (Ennser 2012). The FPÖ has ever been known for its high profile leaders and its rhetoric strategies that foster a positive self- and negative other-representation (Wodak 2005). Thus this party represents a case where exploring the effects of SDO and RWA on party choice might be indicated. The FPÖ transformed into a radical right populist party after Jörg Haider was elected leader in 1986. Since then it has always obtained a considerable share of votes, never falling below 9.7% in 1986 ever since and was part of the Austrian government after its most successful election in 1999, where it gained 27
percent of the votes. However, the electoral success in opposition was not easily to be kept up in
government, and the FPÖ had to face a significant loss of votes in 2002 (Heinisch 2003; Luther 2003;
Heinisch 2004; Mudde 2007). After some internal turbulence, the FPÖ split into two parties, with Jörg
Haider as the most prominent representative of the new Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ). In
the 2008 federal election both radical right parties were successful, the FPÖ obtaining 17.5 percent of
the votes, and the BZÖ 10.7 percent (Müller 2009). After Haider’s death in 2008 the support for the
BZÖ decreased dramatically, and it was partly re-united with the FPÖ.

A lot of studies of radical right voters are highly limited due to the small number of supporters in the
surveys (Mudde 2007). This is why we decided not to go for a population survey, but limited
ourselves to a subgroup where the radical right is known to be particularly strong. We did so in order
to make it easier to detect patterns of psychological roots of right wing voting while keeping the total
sample size reasonable. The FPÖ is – as many radical right parties – particularly successful among
men, young voters and in occupational groups as blue collar workers in Austria (Plasser and Seeber
2010; Wagner and Kritzinger 2012). Moreover, following Lipset’s approach of ‘working class
authoritarianism’ and the more recent findings that confirm it (Scheuregger and Spier 2007), might
increase the chances to detect relationships between authoritarian attitudes and radical right voting
using this group. This is why young men (aged less than 30) with lower and middle social status were
defined as our subpopulation of interest. We do so, in order to test our models in a group where the
chances that significant patterns are detectable, are high.

As the research question focuses on party preference, we examined respondents eligible to vote in
federal elections, that are Austrian citizens, aged 16 and older.
**4. Data and Measures**

We carried out a telephone survey among young men aged 16 to 29 with lower or middle social status. The total number of respondents with Austrian citizenship was n=1,036.

As dependent variable, the *propensity to vote for the FPOE* is used, as it captures the likelihood that a respondent will ever vote for this party (van der Eijk, van der Brug et al. 2006). It ranges from 0 to 10, and is highly skewed.

The *big five personality traits* were measured in a 10 item battery, each trait with two balanced items, and with a German version which has been tested successfully (Rammstedt and John 2007). However, as it has been shown, that response styles, especially acquiescence bias, cause problems with this scale, in particular in groups with lower education, we too needed to correct for these bias. We followed the approach of ‘ipsatizing’ the items in the Big 5 item battery (Rammstedt, Goldberg et al. 2010; Rammstedt and Kemper 2011). As the item battery is balanced, the mean and standard deviation for each respondent across all ten items can be interpreted as two measures for his general tendency to answer questions. By ipsatizing items, the answers in the item battery are ‘corrected’ by their individual means and standard deviation across the items. The technique was successful, as exploratory factor analysis of the original items came up with one single factor, whereas exploratory factor analysis of the ipsatized items proved the five-factor structure that was expected (Table 3 in the Appendix), even though there are doubts that ipsatized items come up with meaningful results (Rammstedt, Goldberg et al. 2010).

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4. Sampling was random sampling of phone numbers, and followed by screening for the target group (age, education). The study was carried out on behalf of the Chamber of Labour, this is why a considerable number of questions tackles other topics. The questions that are important for this paper were asked in the second half of the survey, total length was 20 min.

5. We refrained from including the propensity to vote for BZÖ in the dependent variable for several reasons: We ran some robustness checks. Results did not change substantially, when we replaced the propensity to vote for FPÖ with the mean propensity to vote for one of the two radical right parties. Nor did they change, when we changed from the propensity to vote to the actual party preference.

6. We ran exploratory factor analysis (principal axis factoring) with promax rotation, as the traits are not necessarily independent from each other. 4 Eigenvalues were greater than one, however, the fifth was 0.95.
As there is no commonly used SDO short scale in German, we included three items\(^7\), each to be asked on a 4-point scale: (1) ‘We need more social equality’ [this was omitted later], (2) ‘It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top in society and others at the bottom.’, (3) ‘Some people are just worth more than others. For measuring RWA, we also included three items, only one for the three sub dimensions suggested by Duckitt et al. (Duckitt, Bizumic et al. 2010): (1) ‘We should be grateful for leaders, that tell us exactly what we shall do and how.’ (2) ‘People should stick to the established, instead of trying out different ideas and experiences’, and (3) ‘Our society has to crack down harder on criminals’. As these items for RWA and SDO are not balanced, they were ipsatized using a general mean and standard deviation that was derived from four balanced item batteries with a total of 28 items.

Six items measuring anti-immigrant attitudes were included in the survey: (1) ‘Due to the many immigrants I sometimes feel like a stranger in my own country.’, (2) ‘Immigrants take away jobs from people born in Austria’ (3) ‘Immigrants abuse our social system’, (4) ‘Immigrants make Austria more open for new ideas and other cultures’, (5) ‘There should be more immigrants working in the police and public administration’, (6) ‘We have to prevent that peacefully living together is destroyed by stoking hate’ [Item 6 was omitted later]. Again the items were ipsatized. These anti immigrant attitudes capture perceived cultural or economic threats by immigrants.

For all concepts to be captured, manifest indicators were computed, as the factor structure was supported for all concepts except right wing authoritarianism. The correlations among the three indicators or RWA were rather poor; the 3 x 3 matrix did not fit the KMO criterion of higher than 0.5. Following Duckitt et al (2010), we assume that the three sub dimensions of RWA might be particularly weakly correlated among our respondents, maybe due to some measurement problems that were not solved by the ipsatizing approach. Due to strong theoretical reasons, we nevertheless used the three items for a manifest indicator of RWA. For SDO we omitted the first of the three items,

\(^7\) We want to thank Professor Gernot von Collani (University of Leipzig) for sharing his tests on SDO items that he carried out with his students. Moreover, we want to thank the team auf the Austrian National Election Study AUTNES, as they tested items capturing SDO in cognitive pretest interviews. We selected the items for this survey based upon their joint findings.
as it is poorly correlated with the other two items. Regarding the anti-immigrant attitudes, item six was omitted ex post, as it did not fit in the factor structure.

Finally, we came up with indicators for the Big Five personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness to experience - each consisting of the mean of the two ipsatized items, where one had to be rescaled and where higher values indicate a higher score on the specific trait), an indicator for social dominance orientation (mean score of two ipsatized items), one for right wing authoritarianism (mean of three ipsatized items) and one for anti-immigrant attitudes (mean of five ipsatized items, two of which had to be rescaled and a higher value indicating stronger anti-immigrant attitudes).

We only introduce migration background as control variable (the usual age, gender, and education controls have no or very low variation in our data set). Obviously, anti-immigrant attitudes might be affected by the fact, that the respondents or their families are immigrants. Migration background in our data means that at least one of the respondent’s parents was not born in Austria.

5. Results

The path model was run in MPlus. Due to the skewed distribution of some of the indicators, we chose an MLM estimator, which implicates that only cases with full information can be included. All respondents with at least one missing value in one of the indicators were thus excluded from the analysis. Finally, we could include n=781 respondents in the model. The model was set up according to the prior findings and the hypotheses summarized in Figure 1. Moreover, we included a correlation of error variance between SDO and RWA, as these two concepts have been found to be distinct concept, which are nevertheless closely interrelated. (Sibley and Duckitt 2009). The control variable if a respondent had a migrant background was introduced for anti-immigrant attitudes and the propensity to vote for the FPÖ.

Goodness of fit indicators proved a very good model fit, meaning that the deviation of the correlation structure in the data from the correlation structure theorized by the model is very small (CHI2 = 7.730 with p-value = 0.3570; RMSEA= 0.012 and CFI= 0.999). For the subpopulation we selected, the
model is supported by the data. The data gives evidence that the general expectation about the mechanisms how personality can be linked to radical right voting, holds true. Moreover, a substantial part of the propensity to vote for the FPÖ can be explained by anti-immigrant attitudes and its roots in personalities (R-Square: 0.186). The standardized coefficients of the model are presented in Table 1.

In our model, we only have indirect effects of personality traits on party choice, as stated in our general expectation. As a robustness check we ran an additional model that also included direct effects from traits on the propensity to vote for the FPÖ. In this model, neither the goodness of fit indices increase, nor was and of the coefficients significantly different from zero.

-----Table 1-------

SDO can be explained by the traits agreeableness and openness to experience, whereas RWA can only be explained by openness to experience. The other personality traits cannot explain why young men vary in their levels of SDO and RWA. This result fits to earlier findings (Sibley and Duckitt 2008; 2010).

When explaining anti-immigrant attitudes, our results show that people scoring high on SDO hold substantially stronger anti-immigration attitudes than people scoring low on SDO. Contradicting one of our hypotheses, there is no significant effect from RWA to anti-immigrant attitudes. Hypotheses 2a is thus only partly confirmed. Moreover, the results show additional direct effects from the personality traits on anti-immigrant attitudes (confirming hypotheses 2b): Scoring low on openness, emotional stability, agreeableness and conscientiousness increases anti-immigrant attitudes. In total, anti-immigrant attitudes are affected directly by all personality traits except extraversion, plus indirectly by low agreeableness and openness via the mediating variable of social dominance orientation. In other words, anti-immigrant attitudes are rooted in ones personality, partly expressed by one’s preference of intergroup hierarchy. As expected, respondents with a migrant background score much lower on anti-immigrant attitudes.

8 We do not present the numbers here.
The propensity to vote for the radical right FPÖ is finally explained by anti-immigrant attitudes, as the literature on the radical right suggests. Again, it is much lower for respondents with migration background. As we find no additional significant direct effect from SDO and RWA on the propensity to vote for the FPÖ, we must reject our hypotheses 1a and 1b that assumed these direct effects.

In all, we can trace back the propensity to vote for the radical right FPÖ to differences in personality traits and to our two ideological attitude dimensions. However, these links work via anti-immigration attitudes. The total effects of the personality traits and the two ideological attitude dimensions RWA and SDO are presented in Table 2.

This again shows that our hypothesis 3a suggesting an indirect effect from SDO and RWA to radical right voting is confirmed only for SDO: Social dominance orientation on the other side has a total effect of 0.158 (standardized coefficient): Young men scoring high on SDO therefore are more likely to ever vote for the FPÖ in Austria. Concerning RWA affecting ones’ propensity to vote for a radical right party, the hypothesis has to be rejected.

Moreover, confirming hypotheses 3b, there is a substantial total effect (0.109) of openness to experience on the propensity to vote for the FPÖ: The more open young men are, the less likely they will ever vote for the FPÖ. Emotional stability, conscientiousness and agreeableness also decrease the preference for the FPÖ. The total effect of extraversion is not significant.

-----Table 2------

6. Discussion and implications

What this study can contribute to the understanding of radical right voting is that personality traits indeed can help to explain variances in the propensity to vote for a radical right party. The specific mechanisms though, seem to be more complicated than usually assumed: Following earlier suggestions to model direct and indirect effects (Caprara, Schwartz et al. 2006; Mondak 2010), we
were able to show that personality traits shape ideological attitude dimensions and attitudes, which in turn shape voting for a radical right party, in particular the FPÖ in Austria.

To answer our central research question, all personality traits except extraversion contribute to the explanation of radical right voting. In our study, young males who are less agreeable, less emotionally stable (as Schoen and Schumann 2007), and less open to experience (as Vecchione et al 2011) were found to have a higher propensity to vote for the radical right. Contradicting Vecchione et al. (2011), the present results showed that lower levels of conscientiousness led to lower levels of the propensity to vote for the radical right. As a new contribution that goes beyond confirming former results, our study describes, that these traits are not directly, but indirectly linked to radical right voting:

Our results reconfirm for the case of young men with lower education in Austria that agreeableness and openness to experience shape SDO, whereas the latter also has an impact on RWA (Sibley and Duckitt 2010). Deviating from former results, we do not find a significant negative effect from conscientiousness to RWA, nor a positive from extraversion to SDO. As our study was limited to a different subgroup of a population (young men with lower education) that the former findings (mostly students), we still need to further explore the relationships between traits and these two social attitudes.

Noteworthy, in our case RWA does not contribute to explaining anti-immigrant attitudes, although it was theoretically and empirically shown that RWA increases general prejudice (Sidanius and Pratto ; Akrami, Ekehammar et al. 2000). Moreover, it does not explain the vote for the radical right, although it mirrors one characteristic attribute of radical right parties, authoritarianism (Mudde 2007). When compared to studies who presented contradicting results (Mayer 2003; Scheuregger and Spier 2007), we have to point to the fact that all studies used slightly different conceptualizations of ‘authoritarianism’ which might to some extent explain the different results. This paper rather adds to the evidence, that RWA does not explain radical right voting (Altemeyer 1988; Dunn 2012), at least not for young men in Austria and the FPÖ. As RWA as we used it, can be interpreted as authoritarian attitudes rather than authoritarianism, our findings support that – if at all – authoritarianism explains
party choice, it is not the attitudes that are more located in the front, but the dispositions that are deep-rooted (Scheuregger and Spier 2007).

Replicating earlier findings, SDO significantly adds to explaining anti-immigrant attitudes. However, we were also able to link the concept of social dominance orientation to radical right voting, and to our knowledge, we are the first to establish this link: SDO does have significant indirect effects on the propensity to vote for the radical right FPÖ via anti-immigrant attitudes. Young men with a stronger preference for intergroup hierarchies have a higher propensity to vote for the radical right FPÖ. This mechanism does not work directly, but indirectly via anti-immigrant attitudes.

On the whole, the lower propensity to vote for the radical right can partially be explained in the dispositional tendencies to approach new experiences openly and curiously, and to be cooperative and empathetic. Young men who share those personality traits moreover prefer egalitarian to hierarchical group relations and tend to reject anti-immigrant attitudes.

Nevertheless, this paper has major limitations: This is a single country case study and it moreover covers only a subpopulation where the radical right is known to be particularly successful. As the Austrian FPÖ is known to be similar to other radical right parties, as e.g. the *Lega Nord*, the *Vlaamsbelang* or the *Schweizer Volkspartei*, one could assume, that the findings might be transferrable to voters of these similar parties. But of course, this assumption has to be tested in a comparative study. More importantly, we need to employ the model in a study representative for the population. As we chose the case in a way that it might be easier to detect these patterns, we assume the patterns less visible in a population survey.

These findings encourage more research that explores the complex mechanisms how personality affects and especially mediates political behavior.
References


Table 1: standardized coefficients in the path model

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RWA explained by...</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extraversion</td>
<td>0.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agreeableness</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conscientiousness</td>
<td>0.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emotional stability</td>
<td>0.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>openness to experience</td>
<td>-0.115 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SDO explained by...</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extraversion</td>
<td>0.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agreeableness</td>
<td>-0.203 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conscientiousness</td>
<td>-0.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emotional stability</td>
<td>-0.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>openness to experience</td>
<td>-0.180 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anti-immigrant attitudes explained by...</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RWA</td>
<td>0.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDO</td>
<td>0.234 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extraversion</td>
<td>0.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agreeableness</td>
<td>-0.102 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conscientiousness</td>
<td>-0.113 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emotional stability</td>
<td>-0.092 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>openness to experience</td>
<td>-0.205 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>migrant</td>
<td>-0.302 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FPÖ explained by...</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-immigrant attitudes</td>
<td>0.389 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RWA</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDO</td>
<td>0.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>migrant</td>
<td>-0.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RWA with SDO (correlated error variances)</strong></td>
<td>0.286 ***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001
Table 2: total effect on the propensity to vote for FPÖ (indirect effects + direct effects, standardized coefficients)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanatory variables</th>
<th>Coeff.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RWA</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDO</td>
<td>0.158 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agreeableness</td>
<td>-0.072 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conscientiousness</td>
<td>-0.051 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emotional stability</td>
<td>-0.046 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>openness to experience</td>
<td>-0.109 ***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Appendix

Table 3: Factors structure of the ipsatized items measuring the big5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Factor1</th>
<th>Factor2</th>
<th>Factor3</th>
<th>Factor4</th>
<th>Factor5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item1 (extraversion)</td>
<td>0.8824</td>
<td>0.0114</td>
<td>0.0893</td>
<td>0.0639</td>
<td>-0.0022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item2 (agreeableness)</td>
<td>-0.2298</td>
<td>0.1423</td>
<td>0.2120</td>
<td>-0.1109</td>
<td>-0.7352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item3 (conscientiousness)</td>
<td>0.1145</td>
<td>-0.0307</td>
<td>-0.0532</td>
<td>-0.7987</td>
<td>0.0557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item4 (emotional stability)</td>
<td>0.0746</td>
<td>-0.9226</td>
<td>-0.0088</td>
<td>-0.0351</td>
<td>-0.1073</td>
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<tr>
<td>Item5 (openness to experience)</td>
<td>-0.1100</td>
<td>-0.0108</td>
<td>-0.8849</td>
<td>0.0854</td>
<td>0.0055</td>
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<td>Item6 (extraversion)</td>
<td>-0.8382</td>
<td>-0.0270</td>
<td>-0.0275</td>
<td>0.1168</td>
<td>0.0111</td>
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<tr>
<td>Item7 (agreeableness)</td>
<td>-0.1691</td>
<td>0.1554</td>
<td>0.1400</td>
<td>-0.1098</td>
<td>0.8615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item8 (conscientiousness)</td>
<td>0.0721</td>
<td>0.0284</td>
<td>-0.0364</td>
<td>0.7961</td>
<td>0.0206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item9 (emotional stability)</td>
<td>0.2241</td>
<td>0.7423</td>
<td>-0.0697</td>
<td>0.0198</td>
<td>-0.0934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item10 (openness to experience)</td>
<td>0.0039</td>
<td>-0.0715</td>
<td>0.7813</td>
<td>0.1527</td>
<td>0.0378</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EFA, promax rotation