"I Am Who I Vote For": Personality Antecedents of Identity Fusion in the US and in Italy

Elsa Brunet

Spring Semester
2021

Submitted as master thesis at the

Department of Psychology, University of Oslo

In fulfillment of the requirements of the

European Master in the Psychology of Global Mobility,

Inclusion, and Diversity in Society

Supervisor:
Dr. Jonas R. Kunst
UiO

Co-Supervisor:
Dr. Rita Guerra
ISCTE-IUL

Abstract

The aim of this research was to a) investigate the underlying personality traits of identity fusion versus social identification, and b) explore the differences, in terms of personality, between who fuses with right or left-wing parties and leaders. We conducted two studies, in the United States (Study 1) and in Italy (Study 2). Participants completed an online survey about their political affiliation and reported their scores on the HEXACO traits and facets, the Dark Triad scale and Need for Cognitive Closure. A person-centered approach was used as well as a variable-centered one, to obtain a broad view of the possible associations. Results showed that several underlying traits of fusion are the same of social identification, although in the US Emotionality and its facets predicted only fusion across political orientation. Also, Need for closure predicted fusion with a left wing party in both Italy and the US. Fusion with leader seem to be related to distinctive traits that both the followers and the leader share. Individuals fused with Trump showed high Machiavellianism, fused with Sanders high Greed Avoidance and fused with Biden high Modesty. In Italy, low conscientiousness predicted fusion with Salvini, the far-right leader. Our findings provided a first framework to investigate the antecedents of fusion with political targets, which may help researchers to have a deeper understanding of political behavior.

Keywords: identity fusion, politic psychology, personality, leader fusion, party fusion, self-expansion

Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by me, Elsa Brunet, and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where states otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

Acknowledgements

Throughout the writing of this dissertation, I have received a great deal of support and assistance. I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Jonas R. Kunst, for the support, the feedback, and his incredible expertise. I never thought I would learn so much and develop so many fundamental skills throughout this year. I feel lucky and honored to have been your student and to have been a part of the CSB lab.

Also, I would like to thank the Global-MINDS program. These have been probably the best two years of my life. Sometimes you can truly face yourself only when you've been stripped of your old skin. It has been one of the greatest adventures of my life, and I feel grateful every day to have been given the possibility of experience this overwhelming and incredible master.

I would not even be here to write this without my roots. An enormous thanks goes to Napoli. You are the most incredible, complex, beautiful, difficult city in which a French introvert like me could have been born in. My beautiful Parthenope, where I learnt that if we don't **all together** arrive to the destination, no one arrived. Knowledge is not elitist and should never be. No school or university in the entire W.E.I.R.D. territories may teach as well as you, Napoli, how to interact with the real world, the real people, the grassroots epistemology of our human essence. No other place would have made me live the phylogenesis of the entire Mediterranean in my ontogenesis.

Contents

Introduction

"*Everybody is born alike, except Republicans and Democrats"*

-Groucho Marx

Personality is a key factor in determining political choice and behaviors. The relationship between personality traits and political affiliation with parties and leaders might be of primary importance to be investigated, even more in an era where populist parties are increasing their popularity or took the power in many Western countries. New form of alignment with political targets have been investigated, such as identity fusion, and a need has rose to understand the underlying mechanisms of what could bring people to define themselves so strongly in terms of their political affiliation.

The 6th of January 2021, the Capitol Hill in Washington D.C., US, was stormed by a group of pro-Trump protesters. Called by the former President on Twitter, thousands of people met outside the Congress to protest the results of the recent elections. The situation degenerated, with hundreds of people breaching into the building and beginning to riot. A group of people did that, a collective which destroyed, assaulted, and spread chaos in the name of the cause they all identify with. However, there were some people who stood out from the group itself, single persons who emerged from the anonymity of the group, willingly or not. People who seem to maintain a strong sense of self even when their social identity should be at its peak. From those who assaulted the guards to the "QAnon Shaman" (Fazio, 2021), those people are willing to do more for their cause, group, or leader than others in the same situation would do, and they proudly show it.

In plain sight, what these individuals seem to have in common is that they experience identity fusion with Donald Trump. Additionally, they presumably share a predisposition to fuse with a leader like him. We know what those people would do, but we do not know

anything about who they are. Recent research (Kunst et al., 2019) suggested that who fuse may have previous common inclinations with the leader they fuse with. This might extend to personality traits, so that to fully understand the mechanisms of fusion, it may be essential to investigate the personalities of the "fusers".

The aim of this research was to a) investigate the underlying personality traits of identity fusion versus social identification, and b) explore the differences, in terms of personality, between who fuses with right or left-wing parties and leaders; in two politically diverse countries, Italy and the US. Data were collected across 2020, and different statistical approaches were used to thoroughly investigate those differences.

Identity Fusion with Political Parties

A fused person experiences a visceral sense of oneness between their personal and social identity (Buhrmester et al., 2012; Swann et al., 2012). Whereas the personal self encompasses idiosyncratic properties of the individual (i.e., "extrovert", "open minded"), the social self encompasses features associated with group membership (i.e., "Republican," "American"; Tajfel and Turner, 1979). The borders between personal and social sense of self become permeable (Swann et al., 2012), which fosters a synergistic relationship between the two systems, simultaneously activating and reinforcing one another (Gomez, 2011; Simon, 2004). Fused people not only see themselves as part of the group, but they also "perceive the group through their personal self" (Swann et al, 2012, p. 442). What emerges is a visceral sense of connectedness, not only to the group as a category but to the other members. The continuous bidirectional influence of personal and social identities brings highly fused people to do as much for the group as they would do for themselves (Swann et al., 2012). This process fosters a perception of reciprocal strength, which can develop into a perception of invulnerability (Gomez et al., 2011).

Fusion is a unique construct that emphasizes synergistic, self–other influence processes (Gomez 2011). Although related, it has been demonstrated that identity fusion is different from identification and does not fit into the framework of the Social Identification Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). Both statistical (Gomez et al., 2011) and conceptual evidence (Swann et al., 2012; Swann et al., 2009) reinforce the theorization of identity fusion as a unique construct with its own properties. Four core principles of identity fusion, as identified by Swann and colleagues (2012), capture the most important ways that make fusion different from identification:

Agentic-personal-self principle. According to the Social identity perspective, the actions of highly identified individuals are regulated by the momentarily salient social self, while the personal self is "deactivated". This assumes that there are no feelings of personal agency involved in pro-group behavior. On the contrary, when a highly fused individual enacts pro-group behavior, their actions reflect both their personal and social identities. Fused people will intertwine their sense of personal agency to the group and foster a stronger sense of group agency. This feeling of increased agency may have a key role in motivating extreme pro-group behavior (Swann et al., 2010).

Identity synergy principle. The identity synergy principle holds that, increasing the salience of either the social or personal identities of fused participants, endorsement of pro-group action will be strengthened (Gómez, Brooks, et al., 2011; Swann et al, 2009). Social and personal identity are functionally equivalent in amplifying pro group behavior. Due to the porosity of the borders between personal and social self in highly fused individuals, activating either one will activate the other (Swann, 2012).

Relational ties principle. Highly identified individuals will relate to other members of the group in virtue of their prototypicality for the group. Those "membership-based"

attractions (Swann, 2012, pg. 443; Hogg et al., 1993) are depersonalized, and no relational ties are created. The relational ties principle contends that fused persons perceive other group members as unique individuals who are not interchangeable (Swann et al., 2010). Due to their salient personal self, fused individuals develop relationship-based bonds with members of the same group.

Irrevocability principle. The activation of social identities is highly dependent on contextual clues. Without contextual support, there is a diminution in identification. On the contrary, it has been theorized that fusion is more stable over time (Swann, 2012). More recent findings have reported that average levels of fusion change over time and as a reaction to events relevant for their in-group, but the shifting is almost never dramatic, with highly fused people remaining highly fused (Fredman et al., 2015). The strength of the bond with the group, and both the social and personal identities activated will start a strong self-verification cognitive defense (Swann, 2011) in case of perceived threats. This phenomenon may maintain the fusion overall stable.

Political affiliation is a significant part of an individual's self-description, and political parties or organizations represent a desirable group to fuse with. Identification with political groups predicts a series of political behaviors, as involvement in protests (Simon & Klandermans, 2001), but identity fusion has been demonstrated to be a better predictor for extreme behavior across different contexts and cultures (Kunst et al., 2018; Fredman et al., 2017; Besta, et al., 2014; Whitehouse et al., 2014).

The Capitol assaulters, though, did not act in the name of the Republicans, nor were incited by the official social media accounts of the party. Their allegiance was to Donald Trump, as their leader.

Identity Fusion with Political Leaders

The extent to which individuals feel a sense of belonging and attachment to a social group that forms and defines the social part of their self-concept is referred to as social identification (Hogg et al., 1995: Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Personal identification, on the other hand, captures the extent to which one defines oneself through another individual, such as one's leader, whose values and perspectives are perceived to be aligned with one's own (Kark et al., 2003; Steffens et al., 2015). Likewise, individuals may fuse with both groups and individuals. Specifically, it has been demonstrated how people can fuse with individuals whom they share a close relational bond with, as family members (Vàzquez et al., 2017), partners (Agnew et al., 1998), and work supervisors (De Cremer et al., 2005). Recent research (Kunst et al., 2019) has shown how individuals can fuse with a political leader. Kunst and colleagues' research (2019) demonstrated how fusion with Trump is distinct from identity fusion with Republicans and personal identification with Trump, and that fusion with Donald Trump is a predictor for willingness to engage in extreme behavior towards out-groups, such as Muslims and immigrants.

The processes involving fusion with a person are in line with the self-expansion framework (Aron & Aron, 1986). When people expand themselves, they incorporate the other's resources and beliefs into the personal self, fostering a sense of oneness with them (Aron et al., 2004). In doing so, their sense of efficacy and perceived competence increase (Besta et al., 2015). In a group context, members may choose to fuse with their leader, who typically is the person with most resources and power (Gardner et al., 1998). It has been recently shown how self-expansion, and the consequent increase in self efficacy, play important roles in the effects of identity fusion on collective action (Besta et al., 2018). Since fusion with a political leader entails adopting the leader's ideology, as self-expansion theory suggests, fused individuals are likely to become more prone to be directly influenced by the

leader (Gardner et al., 1998), and they may engage in illegal or immoral behavior (e.g., the assault at Capitol Hill; Gino & Galinsky, 2012).

Previous literature has given important insights on the differences between who fuses and who identify in terms of their behaviors, but what we still do not know is whether these people differ in terms of personality traits. If Identification and Fusion are indeed distinct constructs, we may assume that their underlying personality traits should be different to some extent. Additionally, investigating personality differences between who fuses with different leaders and or parties, may shed some light on the process of fusion itself.

Potential Underlying Role of Personality factors

In the last decades, there have been many changes in the political landscape regarding partisanship, recruitment, and citizen political engagement. “Among the most evident changes, there is the change from issue-centered politics to more candidate-centered politics. Modern politics has refocused the role of personal attributes as an anchor around which political information is organized” (Caprara & Vecchione, 2017, p. 8-9). Another significant change concerns the role of sociodemographic factors, such as age, gender, and social class. Traditionally, they have been considered key variables to explain political choices (Downs, 1957), whereas, with the structure of developed societies becoming less rigid in the last few decades, they have lost much of their importance (Caprara et al., 2003; Chirumbolo & Leone, 2010). Moreover, it has been found that self-reported personality accounts for more variance in voting behavior than do gender, age, and education (Caprara et al., 1999, 2002). Consequently, the personality of both voters and candidates has gained salience.

In particular, the electorate of modern democracies increasingly bases its decisions on personal factors, as beliefs and expectations, and must resort to heuristics- cognitive strategies- to cope with the complexity of political and overload of political information. As a

result, politicians have become concerned with conveying favorable impressions (Popkin, 1991), with the media playing a major role in crafting the images of political personalities. The personalization of politics includes not only the significant impact of a politician's personality characteristics on voter's preferences, but also the determining part that voters' personalities play in politics through their decisions and behaviors (Caprara & Zimbardo, 2004).

Three sets of traits have captured researchers' attention and demonstrated to be strong predictors of political ideology. The 6 traits of the HEXACO model, a variation of the Big Five; the "Dark Triad" of personality, Machiavellianism, Narcissism and subclinical Psychopathy; and Need for Cognitive Closure, a broader need to avoid uncertainty.

Big 6 Personality Traits

One of the most studied and accredited theories of personality structure is the Big Five model (McCrae & Costa, 1996, 1999), a framework for organizing major individual differences in personality. The model consists of five traits: Extraversion, the individual's tendency to behave and react vigorously in different situations; Agreeableness, which refers to an individual's concern for altruism, generosity, and loyalty; Conscientiousness, the tendency to pursue order and to meet one's own obligations; Emotional stability, that refers to control of impulses and emotions; and Openness to experience, that underlies interest in culture and curiosity. Traits are considered as consistent and stable patterns of experience and action that distinguish one person from another, predisposing individuals to how to manage themselves in various domains of life (McCrae & Costa, 1996, 1999).

Studies have shown that distinct personality profiles on the Big Five factors of personality were associated with a variety of political outcomes, such as voting choice, candidate preference, party affiliation, and policy preferences (Mondak, 2010). Moreover,

findings reported that Openness to experience is the personality trait that mostly predicts liberal or conservative association (McCrae, 1996). McCrae (1996) notes that "within Western societies, open individuals have an affinity for liberal, progressive, left-wing political views, whereas closed individuals prefer conservative, traditional, right-wing views" (McCrae, 1996, p. 325). Those low in Openness to Experience are uncomfortable with change and are more comfortable with predictable environments that reinforce traditional values and conceptions. These individuals naturally gravitate to political ideologies emphasizing traditionalism and aversion to change. People high on Openness, instead, resonate with liberal ideologies emphasizing diversity of values and tolerance for new ideas, and voted more consistently for a left-wing party (Caprara & Zimbardo, 2004). Specifically in the US, people scoring high on openness are more likely to identify themselves as Democrats, while those scoring high on conscientiousness are more likely to identify as Republicans (Mondak & Halperin, 2008). Conservatives, by contrast, scored higher than liberals on conscientiousness, a trait that includes the tendency to obey social rules calling for impulse control (Carney et al., 2008; Gerber et al., 2010).

Those findings were replicated in several studies across European countries with considerable differences in political systems, parties, and traditions (Caprara et al., 20011; Schoen & Schumann, 2007; Van Hiel et al., 2000). Moreover, it was found that differences exist in the role of traits in affecting voting behaviors, consistent with differences in policies and political environment in each country. For example, in Italy, Energy/Extraversion seems to be a distinct feature of the politics in the country. This trait was clearly related to the primary aims and images conveyed by the center-right, which in recent decades campaigned mostly on entrepreneurship and business freedom (Caprara et al., 2006). Unlike Openness and Conscientiousness, Energy/Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Emotional Stability have shown weaker and less consistent relationships with political orientation. Nonetheless, some

effects have been reported. Agreeableness scores were found to be higher among liberals (Caprara et al., 2003, 2006) and have been associated with preference for liberal candidates (Barbaranelli et al., 2007).

The HEXACO model (Honesty–Humility, Emotionality, EXtraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Openness) emerged from cross-cultural research (e.g., Ashton et al., 2004) and it soon demonstrated to be an excellent tool to predict both ideological orientation and voting (Chirumbolo & Leone, 2010). The pattern of results presented by Chirumbolo and colleagues appears consistent with previous findings within the Big Five framework (Caprara & Zimbardo, 2004). Conscientiousness, Agreeableness and Openness are typically found to predict political criteria.

The HEXACO traits and their facets compose a comprehensive model of human personality, and it has been an invaluable instrument for research. Using the HEXACO model in our study may allow to pinpoint accurately the underlying factors of fusion with political targets, and to highlight more subtle differences with different parties or leader.
Because of the difference in salience of personal identity between who fuses and who identifies (Swann et al., 2012), personality traits may be responsible for more variability in fusion. Furthermore, the model investigates several traits related to interpersonal relations, which may be worth exploring, since the salient difference of relationships that identified and fused people experience, individuals may tend to fuse with groups or leader which they share some important part of their personality with.

Need for Cognitive Closure

Need for cognitive closure (NFC) has been defined as the desire for "an answer on a given topic, any answer (…) compared to confusion and ambiguity" (Kruglanski, 1990, p.337). People may be motivated to rely on group norms and ideological cues to avoid

uncertainty in group contexts. It exists “sample evidence that political conservatism is in fact related to psychological conservatism” (McCrae, 1996, p. 325). It has been shown that conservatism satisfies the need to avoid cognitively complex or ambiguous situations, namely need for cognitive closure (Jost et al., 2003; Golec & Cislak, 2010). It is well established the positive relation between need for cognitive closure and support for conservative ideologies (Jost et al., 2003), right wing identification (Kemmelmeier, 1997) and stronger anti-immigrant and nationalistic attitudes (Chirumbolo et al., 2004). It is worth noting how a research from Golec and Cisklak (2010), has highlighted a pattern of relationships between need for closure, political conservatism, and inter-group aggressiveness. Conservative individuals with a high need for closure may resort to violence towards another group, if it is perceived as a threat.

Need for cognitive closure may be particularly relevant for identity fusion. Studies have shown that self-expansion increases feelings of agency and self-efficacy (Besta et al., 2018; Mattingly & Lewandosky, 2014). Thus, fusion may be an attractive state for individuals with high NFC, due to their tendency to experience high anxiety (Roets & Van Hiel, 2008) and frequent feelings of worry (Laugesen et al., 2003). People with high need for closure may have a predisposition to fuse as a coping mechanism to deal with with negative feelings, and to increase their perceived resources.

Dark Triad

Another set of personality traits that has sparked interests from scholars has been the Dark Triad (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Considered as the "dark side" of personality, the traits are: subclinical Psychopathy, characterized by low empathy, high impulsivity and callousness (Hare, 1991; Paulhus & Williams, 2002); Machiavellianism, denoting desire to maintain a good reputation, manipulation and a lack of ethical concern (Christie & Geis,

1970); Narcissism, which represent grandiosity, attention-seeking, and, generally, an over-inflated love for one's self (Jones & Paulhus, 2014).

The dark traits have been demonstrated to be powerful predictors of political affiliation and engagement (Jonason 2014; Bardeen & Michel, 2019; Hodson et al., 2009). Lower levels of Narcissism and higher Psychopathy were associated with higher levels of liberalism (Jonason, 2014). Moreover, all three traits correlated with immigrant threat perceptions and increased prejudice (Hodson, 2009). Interestingly, a recent research has found that the dark triad personality structure reinforces the effect of political identities and intentions to engage in political violence, but also in political activism (Gøtzsche-Astrup, 2019). Strong partisanship is causally related to extreme intergroup action, and that the relationship is stronger for individuals with high levels of the dark triad personality traits. Psychopathy and Narcissism predict stronger intentions to engage in political violence, as well as support for political violence (Gøtzsche-Astrup, 2019).

Investigating the link between fusion and the dark triad may give important insights on the construct. The fact that high scores in those traits enhance the political identity of an individual, may have an enhancing effect also on the personal identity of the fused person, strengthening even more the relationship that fused people have with their group. Additionally, due to how leader that show higher levels of dark triads traits have been appearing in several countries (Nai & Toros, 2019). Those leaders have impacted greatly the political atmosphere, and their electorate is more often devoted to the leader that the party they represent.

The present research

It is well-known that personality traits of voters play an important role in predicting people's political ideology, and willingness to engage in political actions. Investigating fusion in a personality framework may shed some light on the potential underlying factors that could

bring an individual to fuse. In this research we will investigate the personality traits of who fuses with political targets, to look for commonalities and differences in fusion with leaders and parties of different ideologies. Moreover, this approach may help the debate about the difference between Fusion and Identification. If both are indeed different constructs, one may argue that their underlying traits should be different to some extent, too.

Two separate studies were conducted in the US (Study 1) and in Italy (Study 2), two Western democracies with different political contexts. While precedent literature on political fusion has focused mainly on right-wing groups, we investigated participants' levels of fusion with different parties and their leaders, belonging to diverse political orientations. This was done to investigate differences between who fuses with left-wing parties and who fuses with right-wing groups. Since identification and fusion are often assumed to be separate, although related constructs, social and personal identification were also measured to explore differences in the underlying processes of identification and fusion. To thoroughly investigate the personality profiles of participants, HEXACO or Big Five factors were measured, together with Need for cognitive closure and the Dark Triad, as each has been shown to predict political orientations, identification, and behavior. In both studies we used a person-centered approach as well as a variable-centered one.

In the variable-centered approach "the focus of interest is the relation between individuals' positions on latent dimensions, statistically studied across individuals" (Magnusson, 2003, p. 14). That is, this approach treats each variable in virtue of how it relates to other variables. On the other hand, the person-centered approach considers intra-individual variation within the variables (Marsh et al., 2009). Namely, it focuses on how the variables group within the sample, identifying groups who share a similar pattern of the considered factors (Meyer et al, 2013). The combination of the two methods offered valuable insights into the relationship between personality factors and identity fusion. We present two

studies conducted in the US and in Italy that delineate profiles of fused individuals across cultures.

Study 1

Introduction

In May 2020, the United States was facing a peak of infections by SARS-CoV-2. At the same time, the race for the White House was entering its crucial months. Three men were at the center of the political debate at the time: Donald Trump, the President and Republican candidate; Joe Biden, potential nominee for the Democratic Party, and Bernie Sanders, possible Democratic candidate as well.

In this study, a sample of US citizens of diverse age and political orientation replied to an online survey measuring their political attitudes and personality traits. Group identification and fusion were measured for the Democrats and the Republican respectively, while identification and fusion with leaders were measured for Trump, Biden and Sanders. HEXACO factors, need for cognitive closure and Dark triad traits were measured.

The aim of this study was to investigate the differences between social identification and identity fusion with ideologically different parties and their leaders in the US political scene.

Methods

Participants

A total of 320 participants were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk. Due to missing values, 308 were retained for the analysis. Sample Demographics are reported in Table 1.

Table 1

Sample Demographics

	Estimate
Age (*M, SD*)	42.77 (13.84)
Gender (%)	
Man	50.7
Woman	48.4
Place of living (%)	
Countryside	25.9
City	69.7
Education (%)	
Less than high school degree	.3
High school graduate	8.8
Some college but no degree	18.4
Associate degree in college (2-year)	8.1
Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)	42.8
Master's degree	13.1
Doctoral degree	1.6
Professional degree (JD, MD)	2.5
Income (%)	
Less than $15,000	4.7
$15,000 to $24,999	5.3
$25,000 to $34,999	10.3
$35,000 to $49,999	14.1
$50,000 to $74,999	23.8
$75,000 to $99,999	17.8
$100,000 to $149,999	14.7
$150,000 or more	5
Political Affiliation (%)	
Republican	35.9
Democrat	38.8
Independent	17.2
Other	1.3
No preference	2.5

Instruments

Hexaco-Pi-R. Participants completed the 60-item version of the HEXACO inventory (Ashton & Lee, 2009), on scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The scale assesses six dimensions of personality with each 10 items: Honesty-Humility (e.g.,

"I wouldn't pretend to like someone just to get that person to do favors for me.", α = .82), Emotionality (i.e., "I sometimes can't help worrying about little things.", α=.83), Extraversion (i.e., "In social situations, I'm the one who make the first move", α=.83), Agreeableness (i.e., "I rarely hold a grudge, even against people who have badly wronged me", α=.84), Conscientiousness (i.e., "I plan ahead and organize things, to avoid scrambling at the last minute", α=.82) and Openness to Experience (i.e., "People have often told me that I have a good imagination.", α=.81).

For each of the six traits we computed four subsuming facet scales (Ashton & Lee, 2009). Honesty-Humility facets: Sincerity (i.e., "I wouldn't use flattery to get a raise or promotion at work", α=.78), Fairness (i.e., "I would never accept a bribe", α=.85), Greed Avoidance (i.e., "Having a lot of money is not especially important to me.", r=.37, p<.001), Modesty (i.e., "I don't think that I am entitled to more respect than the average person is", r=.57, p<.001). Emotionality facets: Fearfulness (i.e., "I would feel afraid if I had to travel in bad weather conditions.", α=.66), Anxiety (i.e., "I sometimes can't help worrying about little things", r=.62, p<.001), Dependence (i.e., "When I suffer from a painful experience, I need someone to make me feel comfortable", r=.59, p<.001), Sentimentality (i.e., "I feel like crying when I see other people crying.", α=.73). Extraversion facets: Social self-esteem (i.e., "I feel reasonably satisfied with myself overall.", α=.75), Social boldness (i.e., "When I'm in a group of people, I'm often the one who speaks on behalf of the group", α=.71), Sociability (i.e., "The first thing that I always do in a new place is to make friends.", r=.59, p<.001), Liveliness (i.e., "On most days, I feel cheerful and optimistic", r=.47, p<.001). Agreeableness facets: Forgiveness (i.e., "My attitude toward people who have treated me badly is -forgive and forget-.", r=.71, p<.001), Gentleness (i.e., "I tend to be lenient in judging other people.", α=.71), Flexibility (i.e., "I am usually quite flexible in my opinions when people disagree with me.", α=.58), Patience (i.e., "Most people tend to get angry more quickly than I do.",

α=.52). Conscientiousness facets: Organization (i.e., "I plan ahead and organize things, to avoid scrambling at the last minute.", r=.42, p<.001), Diligence (i.e.," I often push myself very hard when trying to achieve a goal.", r=.44, p<.001), Perfectionism (i.e., "I always try to be accurate in my work, even at the expense of time.", α=.50), Prudence (i.e., "I make decisions based on careful thought", α=.72). Openness to experience facets: Aesthetic Appreciation (i.e., "If I had the opportunity, I would like to attend a classical music concert", r=.56, p<.001), Inquisitiveness (i.e., "I'm interested in learning about the history and politics of other countries.", r=.43, p<.001), Creativity (i.e., "I would enjoy creating a work of art, such as a novel, a song, or a painting.", α=.76), Unconventionality (i.e., "I like people who have unconventional views.", α=.60).

The Dirty Dozen Scale. The Dirty Dozen (DD; Jonason and Webster 2010) is a brief measure of the Dark Triad traits, Machiavellianism (i.e., "I tend to manipulate others to get my way", α=.88), Psychopathy (i.e., "I tend to lack remorse", α=.83), and Narcissism (i.e., "I tend to want others to admire me", α=.89). Participants completed the 12-item questionnaire on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 *(strongly agree*).

Need for Closure Scale. To assess participants' Need for Closure (Kruglanski, 1990), we used the short version of the revised NFC scale (Roets & Van Hiel, 2011; Roets & Van Hiel, 2007; Kruglanski, 1994). The scale consists of 15 items (i.e., "I don't like situation that are uncertain", α=.89) that the participants rated by denoting their agreement on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Party Identification. To determine participants' social identification with the Republicans and the Democrats, we used three items for each party (i.e., "I identify with other Democrats", α =.97; "I identify with other Republicans", α = .97), adapted from Ellemeers and colleagues' research (1999). All items were on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Leader Identification. Participants replied to nine items, three for each leader (i.e., "I identify with Joe Biden", α =.97; "I identify with Bernie Sanders", α =.97; "I identify with Donald Trump", α =.97), adapted from Doosje and colleagues (1995). All items were on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Party Identity Fusion. To assess Identity Fusion with Democrats and Republicans, participants were presented seven items for each party (i.e., "I am one with the Democrats", α =.98; "I am one with the Republicans", α =.96), adapted from Gomez and colleagues (2011), on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree)* to 7 (*strongly agree)*

Leader Identity Fusion. For what concerns Identity Fusion with leaders, we used seven items for leader (i.e., "I am one with Joe Biden", α =.98; "I am one with Bernie Sanders", α =.96; "I am one with Donald Trump", α =.98), from Gomez and colleagues (2011), on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Analyses

Confirmatory Factor Analysis. To validate the difference between Identification and Fusion, we run two different Confirmatory Factor Analysis, one to test the fit of a Republicans and Trump model, the other to test a Sanders, Biden and Democrats model. We used a Robust Maximum Likelihood Estimator, and the model was identified by standardizing the latent variables. Chi-square is presented for all models. However, previous research (Bentler, 1990; Bentler & Bonnett, 1980; Bollen, 1989; Mulaik et al., 1989) has shown that χ^2 fit index is highly dependent on sample size, so alternative fit indices derived from χ^2 are proposed. The most frequently used in literature are Comparative Fit Index (CFI, Bentler, 1990), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI; Bentler & Bonnett, 1980), for which values above .95 are considered to indicate an acceptable fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Marsh, Balla & McDonald, 1988); and lack of fit indices, as Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA; Browne & Cudek, 1992) and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual

(SRMR; Hu & Bentler, 1999), for which values smaller than .08 indicate approximate fit (Hoyle, 1995).

Variable-Centered Approach. Concerning the variable centered approach, we first run correlations among personality traits, identification and fusion variables in SPSS (IBM Corp. Released 2020). Then, we conducted a regression analysis with each of the political variables as independent variable, to test the influence of personality variables on identification and fusion with parties and leaders. Two different model were run for each political variable, one with all personality traits, the other with all facets.

Person-Centered Approach. We conducted a *k*-mean cluster analyses with the fusion and identification variables with the whole sample, to investigate how the political variables grouped within our sample. We identified the optimal number of clusters with the *NBClust* package (Charrad et al., 2014) and subsequently visualized them using the *factoextra* package (Kassambara & Mundt, 2019) in R. Political identification and fusion, and personality differences among the extracted clusters were tested using analysis of variance (ANOVA). Holm correction was applied to control for Type-1 error inflation.

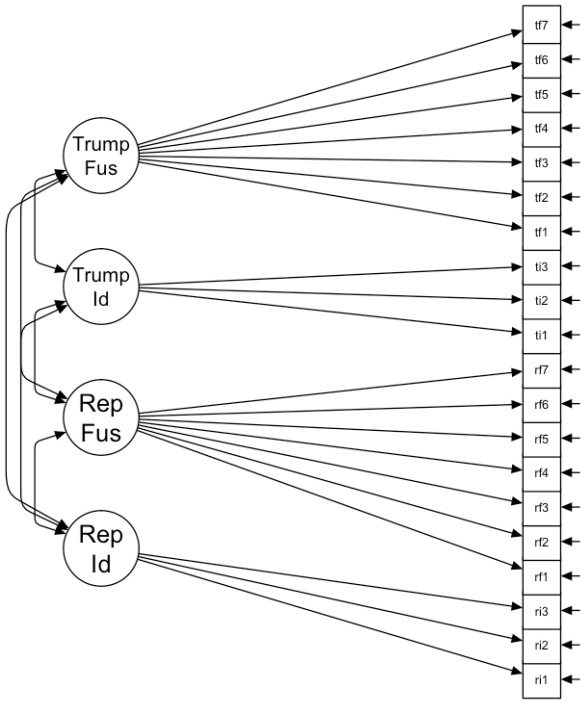
Results

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

A four-factor model (see Figure 1) was specified for the Confirmatory Factor analysis regarding Trump and Republicans to test whether identification with Republicans, fusion with Republicans, identification with Trump and fusion with Trump represented different constructs. We could conclude that the overall fit of our model was acceptable to satisfactory, $\chi^2(164) = 461.38$, $p < .001$, CFI=.947, TLI=.938, RMSEA=.077, SRMR=.028.

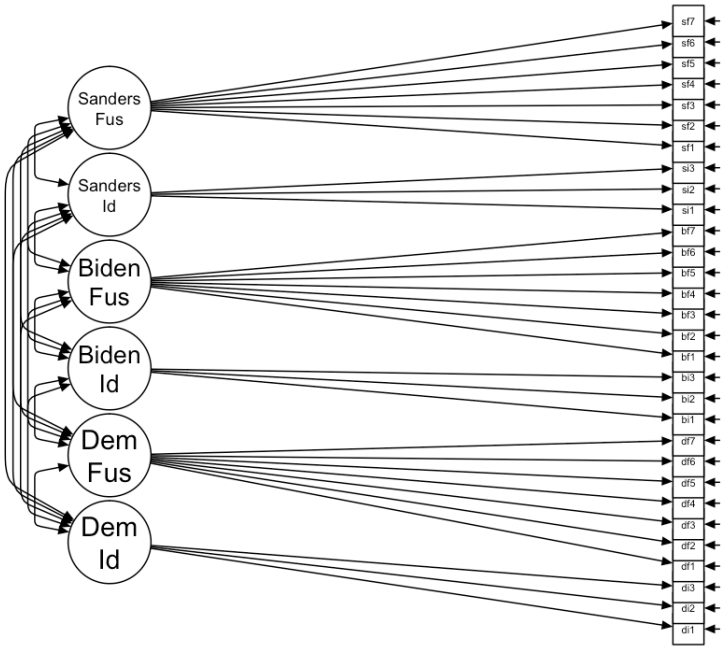
Figure 1

Path Model of Republicans and Trump model



A corresponding model was run for democrats. Given the focus on two candidates, the model had a 6-factor solution (see Figure 2): identification with Democrats, fusion with Democrats, identification with Sanders, fusion with Sanders, identification with Biden and fusion with Biden. The model failed to reach an acceptable fit, $\chi 2(390) = 1344.69$, $p<.001$, CFI=.890, TLI=.899, RMSEA=.093, SRMR=.081. However, model fit improved when we run specified two different models for the Democrats, one including only Biden variables, $\chi^2(190) = 534.65$, CFI=.937, TLI=.927, RMSEA=.088, SRMR=.03, the other with only Sanders variables, $\chi^2(164) = 693.07$, CFI=.907, TLI=.892, RMSEA=.105, SRMR=.060.

Figure 2
Path Model of Democrats, Biden and Sanders model.



Variable Centered Approach

Correlations and Regressions

To ease data visualization, all correlations are presented in Tables 2 and 3, and regression coefficients in Tables 4 and 5. Regarding the personality traits, both Identification and Fusion with Republicans correlated positively with Extraversion, Emotionality and Narcissism, while negatively with Openness to Experience.

Identification with Trump correlated positively with Extraversion, Narcissism and Honesty-Humility, but the last association failed to remain significant in the regression analysis. Fusion with Trump correlated positively with Extraversion, Narcissism, and

Machiavellianism; only the last relationship was not found significant in the regression analysis.

We found a positive association between Identification and Fusion with Democrats and Openness to Experience, and between Fusion with Democrats and Need for Closure. Concerning Biden variables, we found only a positive correlation between Fusion with Biden and Extraversion.

Identification and Fusion with Sanders both correlated positively with Openness to Experience, while only for Identification with Sanders we found a negative association with Narcissism. Fusion with Sanders correlated negatively with Honesty-Humility, but the relationship was not significant in the regression analysis; in addition, a negative correlation was found with Conscientiousness.

Concerning the facets, Identification with Republicans correlated positively with fairness, fearfulness, social boldness, sociability, and negatively with modesty, unconventionality, and inquisitiveness. Except the latter, all the relationships remained significant in the regression analysis. Fusion with Republicans correlated positively with fearfulness, dependence, sentimentality, social boldness, sociability and forgiveness. Except for sociability, all other relationships were found not significant in the regression analysis.

Negative correlations were found between Fusion with Republicans and greed avoidance, modesty, inquisitiveness, and unconventionality. The relationship with greed avoidance and inquisitiveness didn't remain significant in the regression analysis.

Identification and Fusion with Trump both correlated positively with social boldness and sociability, and negatively with modesty and unconventionality; only the relationship between Identification and social boldness didn't remain significant in the regression analysis. Fusion with Trump also correlated negatively with greed avoidance, aesthetic appreciation and inquisitiveness, while a positive correlation was found with dependence.

Only the relationship with aesthetic appreciation remained significant in the regression analysis.

Regarding the Democrats, both Identification and Fusion showed a positive correlation with unconventionality; Identification with Democrats correlated positively with gentleness, and negatively with sincerity, while Fusion had positive associations with dependence and fearfulness.

Identification and Fusion with Biden both correlated with dependence, but the relationship didn't remain significant in the regression analysis. We found positive associations between gentleness and unconventionality and Identification with Biden, and a negative one with patience. Fusion with Biden correlated negatively with conscientiousness, anxiety, modesty, and prudence, and positively with social boldness and sociability. All these relationships failed to remain significant in the regression analysis.

Both Identification and Fusion with Sanders correlated positively with greed avoidance and unconventionality, while negatively with diligence and fairness; the latter relationship didn't remain significant in the regression analysis. Additionally, we found a positive association between Identification with Sanders and perfectionism. Fusion with Sanders also correlated negatively with sincerity and social self-esteem, but we didn't find this relationship to be significant in the regression analysis.

Table 2
Correlations with Hexaco traits.

	Id. Republicans		Fus. Republicans		Id. Trump		Fus. Trump		Id. Democrats		Fus. Democrats		Id. Biden		Fus. Biden		Id. Sanders		Fus. Sanders	
	r	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*
Hexaco Factors																				
Hon/Hum.	.00	.952	-.05	.410	-.03	.600	-.09	.100	.00	.925	-.06	.295	-.05	.398	-.09	.130	-.09	.107	**-.12**	**.035**
Emotionality	.11	.061	**.16**	**.004**	.05	.381	.09	.122	.03	.598	.09	.129	.06	.309	.04	.491	-.03	.585	.01	.932
Extraversion	**.17**	**.003**	**.19**	**.001**	**.12**	**.029**	**.16**	**.004**	.00	.951	.05	.393	.08	.174	**.12**	**.041**	-.11	.050	-.03	.586
Agreeableness	.01	.918	.03	.572	-.02	.760	.00	.958	.07	.226	.00	.947	.06	.316	.03	.620	.00	.941	-.01	.810
Conscientiousness	.02	.696	-.03	.656	.00	.917	-.05	.404	.02	.696	-.03	.656	-.03	.564	-.10	.081	-.07	.284	**-.13**	**.022**
Openness	**-.22**	**.000**	**-.22**	**.000**	**-.20**	**.000**	**-.21**	**.000**	.10	.069	.07	.227	.04	.504	-.02	.702	**.17**	**.003**	.06	.326
Dark Triad																				
Narcissism	**.20**	**.000**	**.25**	**.000**	**.22**	**.000**	**.26**	**.000**	-.03	.571	.06	.329	.00	.966	.05	.340	-.04	.486	.04	.537
Machiavellianism	.02	.763	-.04	.470	.09	.105	**.15**	**.009**	-.01	.863	.03	.628	-.01	.910	.03	.552	.10	.080	.09	.135
Psychopathy	.00	.968	.01	.833	.07	.193	.10	.082	-.05	.363	.01	.876	-.02	.751	.03	.634	.05	.359	.07	.215
NFC Scale																				
Need For Closure	.05	.350	**.11**	**.044**	.06	.305	.08	.168	.05	.357	.09	.117	.02	.652	.04	.448	-.02	.700	.03	.647

Note. All significant associations are presented in bold

Table 3

HEXACO facets correlations

	Rep. Id		Rep. Fus.		Trump Id.		Trump Fus.		Dem. Id		Dem. Fus.		Biden Id.		Biden Fus.		Sanders Id.		Sanders Fus.	
	r	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*
Hon/Hum.																				
Sincerity	.01	.917	-.02	.797	.02	.778	-.05	.409	-.08	.141	-.09	.122	-.08	.169	-.10	.095	-.09	.134	**-.13**	**.027**
Fairness	**.14**	**.016**	.10	.075	.08	.183	.04	.517	.01	.927	-.01	.827	.02	.736	-.01	.824	**-.17**	**.004**	**-.12**	**.030**
Greed Av.	-.10	.070	**-.14**	**.012**	-.11	.055	**-.15**	**.008**	.05	.422	-.01	.859	-.04	.530	-.04	.477	.05	.344	.03	.661
Modesty	**.15**	**.008**	**-.21**	**.000**	**-.18**	**.002**	**-.21**	**.000**	.05	.360	-.07	.243	-.07	.227	**-.13**	**.023**	-.03	.649	-.07	.208
Emotionality																				
Fearfulness	**.11**	**.046**	**.18**	**.046**	.05	.342	.09	.101	.04	.498	.10	.076	.07	.233	.09	.100	-.02	.706	.03	.614
Anxiety	.00	.938	.02	.726	-.02	.736	-.02	.722	-.02	.686	-.20	.748	-.05	.435	-.10	.071	.02	.685	.00	.959
Dependence	.10	.072	**.15**	**.007**	.06	.276	**.12**	**.035**	.10	.095	**.13**	**.026**	**.13**	**.019**	**.13**	**.022**	-.01	.830	.07	.258
Sentimentality	.09	.118	**.13**	**.024**	.05	.414	.07	.244	-.01	.841	.05	.399	.02	.712	-.01	.893	-.07	.225	-.06	.283
Extraversion																				
Soc. Self-Est.	.08	.175	.06	.333	.01	.874	.02	.763	.00	.937	-.03	.055	.02	.711	-.02	.797	-.11	.061	**-.13**	**.027**
Soc. Boldness	**.14**	**.006**	**.16**	**.016**	**.15**	**.007**	**.18**	**.002**	-.03	.664	.03	.557	.06	.310	**.13**	**.025**	-.07	.203	.01	.885
Sociability	**.23**	**.001**	**.30**	**.000**	**.19**	**.001**	**.25**	**.000**	.02	.740	.10	.068	.11	.063	**.18**	**.002**	-.06	.286	.09	.132
Liveliness	.07	.199	.09	.118	.04	.491	.07	.218	.03	.554	.08	.188	.07	.258	.09	.102	-.09	.102	-.03	.549
Agreeableness																				
Gentleness	-.05	.427	-.03	.620	-.05	.356	-.03	.573	**.13**	**.023**	.05	.358	.01	.082	.04	.465	.05	.333	.01	.836
Forgiveness	.10	.077	**.14**	**.012**	.03	.552	.10	.211	-.01	.817	.00	.955	.05	.383	.10	.112	-.05	.423	.01	.884
Flexibility	.01	.927	.03	.576	.03	.666	.03	.552	.07	.207	.01	.870	.07	.225	.03	.619	-.01	.840	.00	.958
Patience	-.04	.505	-.05	.436	-.07	.253	-.08	.212	.00	.948	-.07	.188	-.07	.228	-.09	.105	-.03	.663	-.08	.148
Conscientiousness																				
Organization	.00	.991	-.02	.694	.00	.973	-.05	.368	.04	.474	.00	.979	-.03	.567	-.06	.324	-.06	.287	-.10	.088
Diligence	.04	.541	.01	.898	.03	.668	-.02	.773	-.05	.434	-.06	.324	-.03	.599	-.10	.078	**-.15**	**.009**	**-.19**	**.001**
Perfectionism	.03	.592	.01	.855	.05	.365	.03	.595	.04	.459	.03	.606	.00	.979	-.04	.522	.01	.809	-.04	.439
Prudence	-.05	.373	-.09	.114	-.08	.175	-.10	.076	.02	.705	-.05	.366	-.04	.456	**-.12**	**.043**	-.03	.630	-.11	.061
Openness																				
Aest. Appreciation	-.10	.091	-.11	.066	-.15	.010	**-.17**	**.003**	.04	.454	.01	.845	.02	.784	-.03	.643	.09	.120	.00	.915
Inquisitiveness	**-.12**	**.034**	**-.13**	**.019**	-.10	.068	**-.12**	**.042**	.06	.284	.01	.829	.04	.500	-.01	.825	.07	.259	.00	.952
Creativity	-.09	.120	-.07	.218	-.09	.123	.08	.168	.00	.945	-.05	.399	.00	.976	-.01	.899	.04	.462	.02	.783
Unconventionality	**-.36**	**.001**	**-.37**	**.000**	**-.27**	**.000**	**-.27**	**.000**	**.21**	**.000**	**.13**	**.028**	.07	.249	-.02	.707	**.31**	**.000**	**.14**	**.012**

Note. All significant associations are presented in bold.

Table 4

Regression based association with personality factors.

	Id. Republicans		Fus. Republicans		Id. Trump		Fus. Trump		Id. Democrats		Fus. Democrats		Id. Biden		Fus. Biden		Id. Sanders		Fus. Sanders	
	β^a	*p*	β^b	*p*	β^c	*p*	β^d	*p*	β^e	*p*	β^f	*p*	β^g	*p*	β^h	*p*	β^i	*p*	β^l	*p*
Hexaco Factors																				
Hon/Hum.	.15	.063	.09	.249	**.18**	**.029**	-.09	.142	-.06	.474	-.07	.463	-.13	.143	-.09	.302	-.12	.158	-.11	.086
Emotionality	**.13**	**.042**	**.19**	**.004**	.06	.597	.13	.801	-.01	.934	.06	.421	.09	.184	.07	.353	-.06	.396	-.01	.211
Extraversion	**.21**	**.001**	**.26**	**.000**	**.16**	**.013**	**.25**	**.000**	-.01	.933	.10	.131	.12	.078	**.21**	**.002**	-.13	.061	.02	.729
Agreeableness	.01	.848	.08	.204	.04	.597	.02	.125	.08	.255	.02	.765	.08	.282	.06	.427	.06	.373	.05	.465
Conscientiousness	.03	.629	-.02	.735	.04	.510	-.02	.898	-.04	.626	-.09	.205	-.07	.329	**-.15**	**.032**	-.06	.357	**-.16**	**.029**
Openness	**-.32**	**.000**	**-.28**	**.000**	**-.28**	**.000**	**-.24**	**.000**	.16	**.019**	.14	**.040**	.07	.294	.03	.653	**.25**	**.000**	**.15**	**.024**
Dark Triad																				
Narcissism	**-.07**	**.000**	**-.09**	**.000**	**.04**	**.000**	**.25**	**.000**	.05	.279	-.01	.771	-.07	.318	-.07	.672	**.14**	**.030**	.01	.352
Machiavellanism	.29	.435	.28	.309	.28	.687	.07	.450	-.08	.576	-.02	.914	-.08	.486	-.03	.484	-.16	.124	-.07	.901
Psychopathy	.07	.366	.12	.140	.09	.285	.13	.112	-.04	.647	.01	.895	.07	.435	.09	.300	-.04	.632	.03	.696
NFC Scale																				
Need For Closure	-.08	.244	.00	.969	-.04	.595	-.01	.894	.13	.072	**.15**	**.042**	.06	.407	.10	.174	.08	.276	.11	.146

Note. All significant effects are presented in bold. [a] Model with traits as predictors, $F(10,197)=6.31$, $p<.001$, $R^{-2}adj=.15$; [b] Model with traits as predictors, $F(10, 297)=7.75$, $p<.001$, $R^{-2}.adj=.18$; [c] Model with traits as predictors, $F(10, 297)=4.91$, $p<.001$, R^{-2} adj=.11; [d] Model with traits as predictors, $F(10,197)=4.91$, $p<.001$, R^{-2} adj =.11; [e] Model with traits as predictors, $F(10,297)=1.002$, p=.441, R^{-2} =.00; [f] Model with traits as predictors, $F(10,297)=1.16$, $p=.317$, $R^{-2}adj$ =.01; [g] Model with traits as predictors, $F(10,297)=.96$, $p=.481$, R^{-2} adj=.00; [h] Model with traits as predictors, $F(10,297)=1.69$, $p=.084$, R^{-2} $adj=.02$; [i] Model with traits as predictors, $F(10,296)=2.90$, $p=.002$, R^{-2} $adj=.06$; [l] Model with traits as predictors, $F(10,296)=1.37$, $p=.193$, , R^{-2} $adj=.01$

Table 5

Regression based association with personality facets

	Rep. Id		Rep. Fus.		Trump Id.		Trump Fus.		Dem. Id		Dem. Fus.		Biden Id.		Biden Fus.		Sanders Id.		Sanders Fus.	
	β^a	*p*	β^b	*p*	β^c	*p*	β^d	*p*	β^e	*p*	β^f	*p*	β^g	*p*	β^h	*p*	β^i	*p*	β^j	*p*
Hon/Hum.																				
Sincerity	.11	.102	.13	**.041**	.13	.057	.09	.187	-.18	**.011**	-.12	.088	-.09	.219	-.06	.426	-.11	.086	-.10	.169
Fairness	.10	.143	.05	.436	.10	.177	.05	.470	.05	.526	.02	.752	.06	.422	.01	.886	-.13	.064	-.07	.312
Greed Av.	-.09	.161	-.09	.142	-.06	.330	-.08	.244	.08	.254	.07	.290	.00	.979	.03	.628	.14	**.015**	.14	**.066**
Modesty	-.11	.132	-.19	**.005**	-.17	**.017**	-.19	**.007**	-.01	.844	-.11	.131	-.10	.189	-.12	.097	-.03	.675	-.11	.151
Emotionality																				
Fearfulness	-.02	.820	.07	.340	-.05	.519	.01	.897	.12	.120	.17	**.036**	.12	.129	.21	**.009**	.11	.161	.13	.107
Anxiety	.08	.271	.09	.214	.05	.553	.03	.663	-.14	.081	-.14	.077	-.10	.221	-.17	**.030**	-.07	.334	-.08	.341
Dependence	.05	.481	.05	.473	.02	.763	.05	.458	.11	.124	.08	.300	.12	.123	.10	.158	-.05	.521	.01	.929
Sentimentality	.01	.921	.02	.767	.04	.610	.02	.767	-.06	.459	.00	.990	-.06	.433	-.08	.272	-.01	.859	-.05	.516
Extraversion																				
Soc. Self-Est.	-.03	.689	-.08	.307	-.12	.178	-.11	.198	-.03	.761	-.14	.126	-.02	.846	-.14	.129	.01	.927	-.13	.136
Soc. Boldness	.11	.130	.11	.114	.16	**.035**	.14	.059	-.07	.335	-.05	.564	.01	.908	.08	.276	-.09	.243	-.04	.633
Sociability	.11	.140	.17	**.023**	.07	.398	.12	.122	.06	.427	.11	.155	.04	.612	.08	.322	.07	.386	.16	.047
Liveliness	.05	.513	.09	.235	.03	.671	.08	.308	.01	.862	.12	.137	.03	.700	.13	.127	-.07	.372	.05	.569
Agreeableness																				
Gentleness	-.07	.384	-.05	.539	-.04	.627	-.01	.901	.20	**.013**	.14	.073	.18	**.028**	.11	.156	.16	.713	.10	.214
Forgiveness	.08	.267	.13	.059	.00	.979	.04	.569	-.06	.389	-.01	.928	.01	.862	.08	.257	-.03	.713	.02	.816
Flexibility	.02	.820	.03	.728	.12	.121	.09	.237	-.02	.785	-.07	.394	.02	.808	-.05	.559	-.04	.563	-.01	.852
Patience	.02	.743	.03	.684	-.02	.756	-.01	.890	-.10	.165	-.12	.119	-.17	**.031**	-.12	.114	-.08	.282	-.09	.207
Conscientiousness																				
Organization	.00	.957	.05	.540	.04	.641	-.01	.902	.12	.130	.15	.069	.04	.640	.11	.193	.03	.660	.07	.370
Diligence	.00	.992	-.03	.711	-.02	.764	-.06	.443	-.10	.221	-.11	.173	-.03	.723	-.12	.150	-.21	**.008**	-.21	**.012**
Perfectionism	.01	.893	-.01	.841	.07	.341	.08	.257	.10	.207	.07	.338	.03	.727	.03	.663	.15	**.035**	.09	.211
Prudence	.05	.507	.06	.412	.00	.977	.06	.478	-.04	.652	-.01	.864	-.01	.908	-.01	.904	-.02	.811	.02	.816
Openness																				
Aest. Appreciation	-.02	.825	-.05	.497	-.12	.114	-.16	**.026**	-.01	.896	-.05	.504	-.02	.796	-.04	.640	.05	.482	-.01	.852
Inquisitiveness	.02	.817	.02	.697	.03	.701	.04	.543	-.01	.914	-.02	.788	.04	.573	.03	.630	-.02	.725	-.01	.893
Creativity	-.05	.508	-.05	.478	-.04	.544	-.03	.722	-.08	.288	-.02	.773	-.08	.285	-.06	.437	-.05	.517	-.03	.659
Unconventionality	-.34	**.000**	-.29	**.000**	-.23	**.001**	-.21	**.002**	.32	**.000**	.26	**.000**	.17	**.025**	.10	.178	.37	**.000**	.25	**.001**

Note. All significant effects are presented in bold [a] Model with all facets as predictors, $F(24, 283)=6.307$, $p<.001$, $R^2adj = .15$; [b] Model with all facets as predictors, $F(24, 283)=4.28$, $p<.001$, $R^2 =.20$; [c] Model with all facets as predictors, $F(24, 283)=2.44$, $p<.001$, R^2 *adj*=.10; [d] Model with all facets as predictors, $F(6,301)=6.23$, $p<.001$, R^2 *adj*=.10; [e] Model with all facets as predictors, $F(24, 283)=1.99$, $p=.005$, R^2 *adj*=.00; [f] Model with all facets as predictors, $F(24, 283)=1.692$, $p=.025$, $R^2adj=.05$; [g] Model with all facets as predictors, $F(24, 283)=.96$, $p=.252$, R^2 *adj*=.01; [h] Model with all facets as predictors, $F(24,283)=1.85$, $p=.011$, R^2 *adj*=.06; [i] Model with all facets as predictors, $F(24,282)=2.98$, $p<.001$, R^2 *adj*=.13; [l] Model with all facets as predictors, $F(24,282)=1.89$, $p=.010$, , R^2 *adj*=.06.

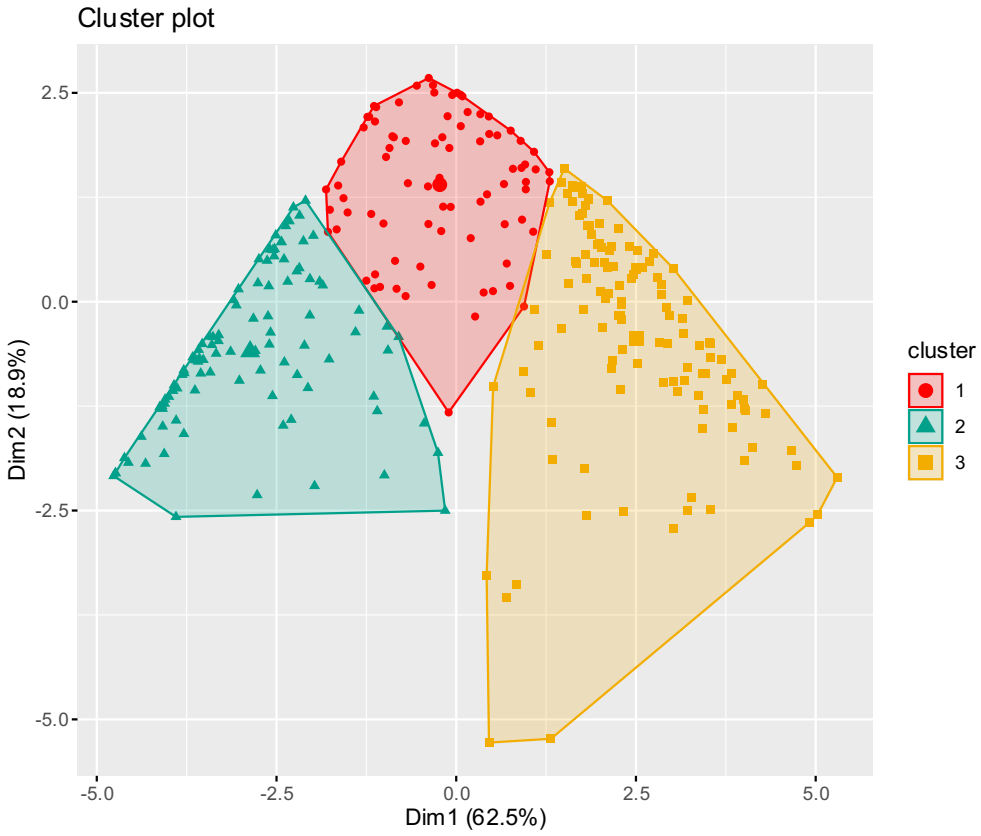
Person Centered Approach

Cluster Analysis

Three clusters were indicated as the best fit according to the majority rule (see Figure 1 and the R output in the Appendix). The observed clusters were identified as Republicans, Democrats and Independents, which included those who indicated themselves as "independents", "others", or having "no political preference". Being this analysis focused on Democrats and Republicans, the Independent cluster was excluded from further analyses. Other two k-mean cluster analyses were run with the Democrats and Republicans participants, for which three and two sub-clusters were extracted respectively.

Figure 1

Cluster analysis on the whole sample.

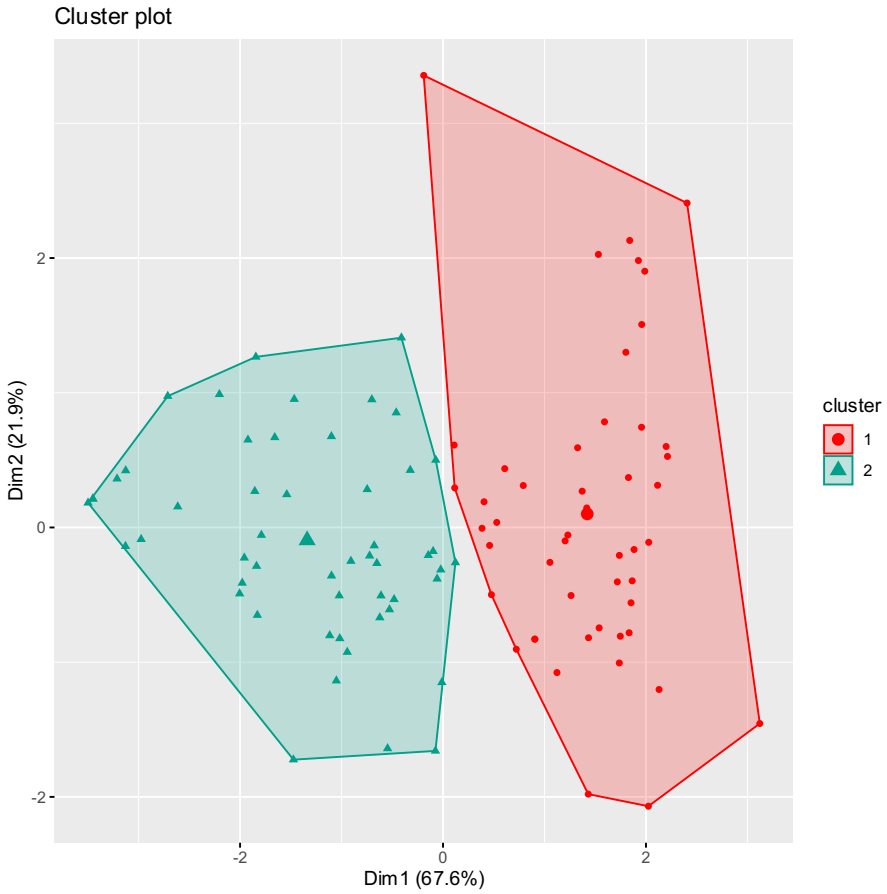


Note. Dimension 1 includes all Fusion variables; Dimension 2 includes all Identification variables. Cluster 1 (N=82) seemed to represent the Independents; Cluster 2 (N=101) the Democrats; Cluster 3 (N=101) the Republicans.

Republican Clusters. Two sub-clusters were extracted from the Republican sample and were named "Moderate Republicans" and "Radical Republicans" (see Figure 2). ANOVAs (see Figure 3) showed that Radical Republicans had higher scores in identification and fusion with both the Republican party and Donald Trump. In terms of personality traits, Radical Republicans had higher extraversion than the Moderates, and had higher scores in two of the extraversion facets, social boldness and sociability (see Table 6).

Figure 2

Republicans Clusters



Note. Dimension 1 includes all Fusion variables; Dimension 2 includes all Identification variables. Cluster 1 (N=49) represents the Moderate Republicans, Cluster 2 (N=52) the Radical Republicans. Big symbols represent means.

Figure 3

Cluster differences in political variables

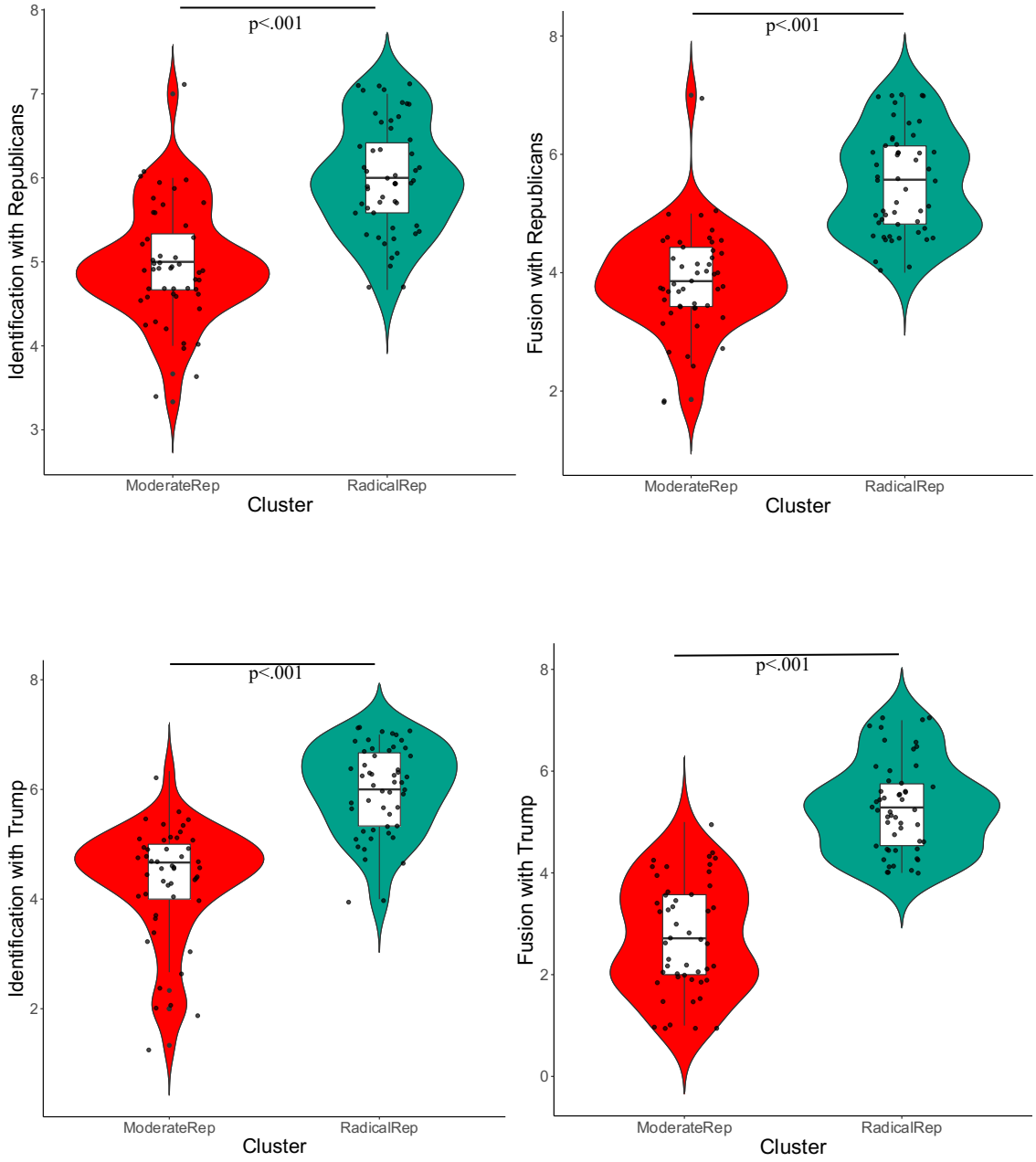


Table 6

Personality traits of Republican clusters

	Moderate Republicans		Radical Republicans					
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*df*	*p*	*d*
Hexaco Factors								
Honesty- Humility	3.62	.71	3.60	.88	.03	1	.869	.03
Emotionality	3.19	.72	3.31	.71	.69	1	.410	.17
Extraversion	**3.13**	.60	**3.43**	.72	4.92	1	.029	.36
Agreeableness	3.25	.59	3.37	.90	.62	1	.432	.16
Conscientiousness	3.89	.52	4.00	.65	.91	1	.342	.19
Openness	3.39	.58	3.42	.80	.05	1	.823	.04
Dark Triad								
Narcissism	2.77	1.30	3.26	1.59	2.89	1	.093	.34
Machiavellanism	2.15	1.21	2.49	1.42	1.70	1	.196	.26
Psychopathy	2.20	1.11	2.21	1.32	.00	1	.976	.01
Need For Closure Scale								
Need For Closure	4.88	.85	4.83	.87	.09	1	.771	.06

Note. All significantly different means are presented in bold.

Table 7

HEXACO facets of Republican clusters.

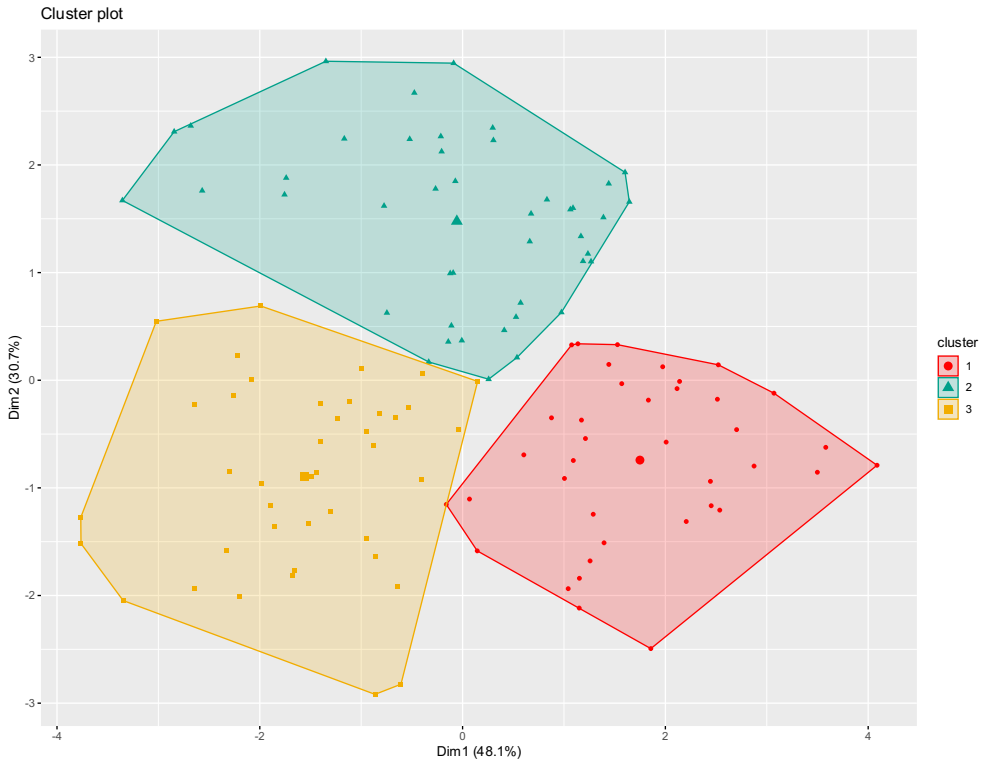
	Moderate Republicans		Radical Republicans					
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*df*	*p*	*d*
Honesty/Humility Facets								
Sincerity	3.62	1.01	3.66	1.08	.04	1	.844	.04
Fairness	3.73	1.03	3.96	1.29	.95	1	.333	.20
Greed Avoidance	3.18	.88	2.85	1.08	2.95	1	.089	-.33
Modesty	3.90	.94	3.70	1.14	.88	1	.351	-.19
Emotionality Facets								
Fearfulness	3.15	.98	3.28	.87	.52	1	.474	.14
Anxiety	3.47	1.04	3.46	1.03	.00	1	.970	-.01
Dependence	2.73	1.06	2.86	1.16	.30	1	.586	.12
Sentimentality	3.35	.79	3.53	.99	1.08	1	.302	.20
Extraversion Facets								
Social Self Esteem	3.76	.88	3.84	.93	.19	1	.667	.09
Social Boldness	**2.75**	.84	**3.17**	.92	5.86	1	.017	.48
Sociability	**2.61**	.93	**3.08**	.97	6.07	1	.016	.49
Liveliness	3.29	.81	3.53	1.00	1.79	1	.185	.26
Agreeableness Facets								
Forgiveness	3.01	.98	3.13	1.17	.29	1	.595	.11
Gentleness	3.12	.75	3.29	1.01	.94	1	.335	.19
Flexibility	3.29	.71	3.35	1.02	.12	1	.734	.07
Patience	3.64	.84	3.78	1.05	.51	1	.476	.15
Conscientiousness Facets								
Organization	3.89	.57	4.13	.82	.09	1	.764	.34
Diligence	4.02	.65	4.18	.80	1.24	1	.268	.22
Perfectionism	3.68	.60	3.85	.68	1.67	1	.200	.27
Prudence	3.88	.79	3.96	.84	.19	1	.663	.10
Openness Facets								
Aesthetic Appreciation	3.53	.97	3.39	1.34	.34	1	.562	-.12
Inquisitveness	3.66	.95	3.64	.95	.01	1	.920	-.02
Creativity	3.37	.80	3.53	1.01	.75	1	.387	.18
Unconventionality	3.14	.73	3.19	.95	.09	1	.770	.06

Note. All significantly different means are presented in bold

Democrats Cluster. After having extracted three clusters (see Figure 4), ANOVAs were run to better understand differences among clusters in terms of identification and fusion with Democrat party and leaders.

Figure 4

Democrats' clusters.



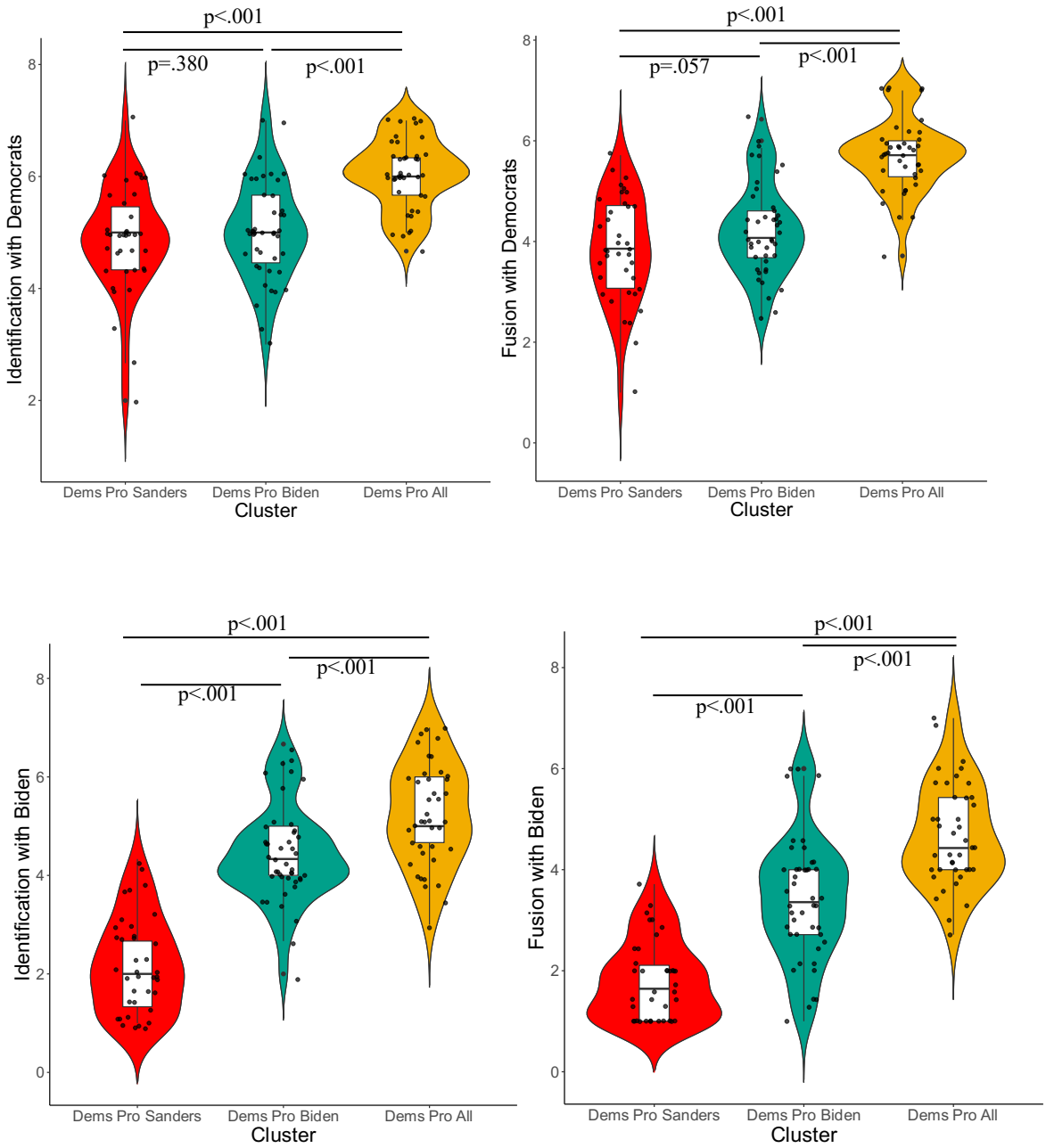
Note. Dimension 1 includes all Fusion variables; Dimension 2 includes all Identification variables. Cluster 1 (N=38) represents the Dems Pro Sanders, Cluster 2 (N=44) the Dems Pro Biden, Cluster 3 (N=41) Democrats Pro All.

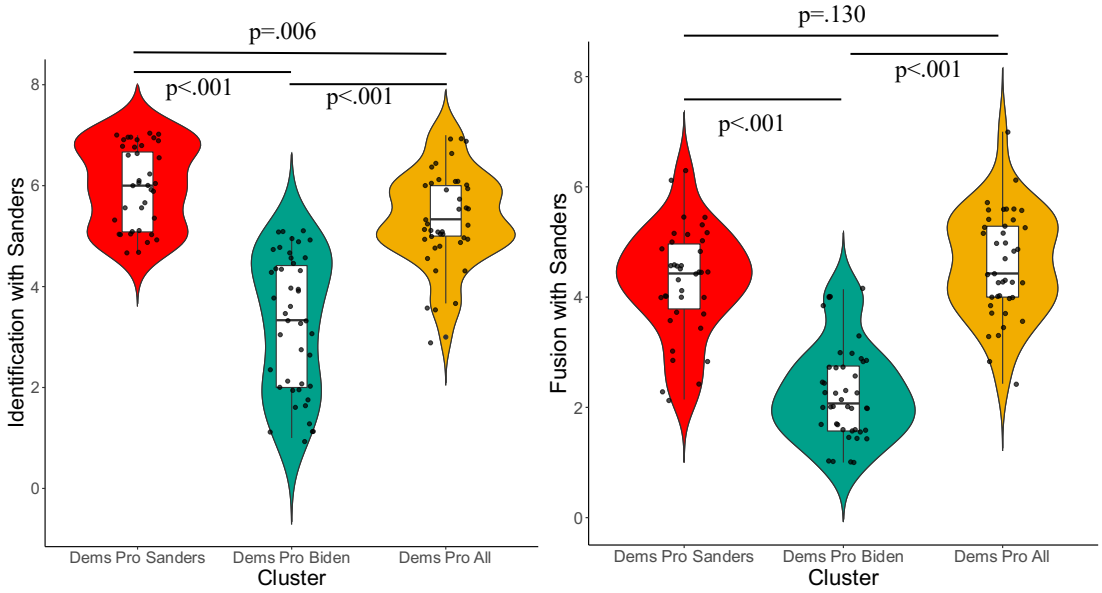
The first cluster, named "Dems Pro Sanders", included democrats with relatively moderate identification and fusion with the Democrats as a party, very high identification and fusion with Bernie Sanders, and low or almost no identification and fusion with presidential candidate Joe Biden. The second one, the "Dems Pro Biden", showed a moderate

identification and fusion with the party, no different than cluster one, very low identification and fusion with Bernie Sanders, and higher identification and fusion with Joe Biden compared to the first cluster. The third, "Dems Pro All", appeared to have a very high identification and fusion with the Democrats compared to the other two clusters, a lower identification with Bernie Sanders than the "Pro Sanders" cluster, but equal fusion, and higher identification and fusion with Joe Biden than the other clusters (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Cluster differences in political variables





ANOVAs concerning personality traits and facets are displayed in table 8 and 9. In terms of traits, participants in the “Pro All” cluster showed more extraversion and narcissism than the “Pro Sanders” cluster. Regarding the extraversion facets, the “Pro Sanders” had higher social boldness, sociability and liveliness than the “Pro Sanders” cluster, but no difference with the “Pro Biden”. Concerning the honesty-humility facets, the “Pro Sanders” showed more greed avoidance than the “Pro All”, and higher modesty than both the “Pro Biden” and “Pro All” clusters. No other differences in terms of personality traits and facets were found.

Table 8

Personality traits of Democrat clusters

	Democrats Pro Sanders		Democrats Pro Biden		Democrats Pro All							
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*df*	*p*	*d (1-2)*	*d(2-3)*	*d (3-1)*
Hexaco Factors												
Honesty- Humility	3.69	.81	3.55	.77	3.36	.64	2.06	2	.133	.18	.27	.45
Emotionality	3.10	.74	3.25	.66	3.13	.72	.57	2	.565	.21	.17	.00
Extraversion	**2.90** [a]	.75	3.13	.71	**3.32** [a]	.61	3.74	2	.027	.31	.29	.61
Agreeableness	3.28	.79	3.39	.71	3.29	.56	.33	2	.723	.15	.16	.01
Conscientiousness	3.97	.66	3.93	.54	3.77	.65	1.27	2	.285	.07	.27	.31
Openness	3.77	.79	3.57	.67	3.60	.68	.93	2	.398	.27	.04	.23
Dark Triad												
Narcissism	**2.38** [b]	1.23	2.68	1.27	**3.23** [b]	1.68	3.80	2	.025	.24	.37	.58
Machiavellanism	2.44	1.35	2.33	1.23	2.72	1.60	.87	2	.423	.09	.27	.19
Psychopathy	2.16	1.15	2.10	1.04	2.67	1.50	2.63	2	.076	.05	.44	.38
Need for Closure Scale												
Need For Closure	4.77	1.05	4.77	.81	4.79	.85	.01	2	.992	.00	.02	.02

Note. Means that differ significantly compared to at least one other mean are presented in bold. All contrasts present p-values that are Holm-corrected for three comparisons. [a]t(77)=-1.08, p=.022, d=.61; [b]t(77)=-3.14, p=.024, d=.58

Table 9
HEXACO facets of Democrats clusters

	Democrats Pro Sanders		Democrats Pro Biden		Democrats Pro All							
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*df*	*p*	*d (1-2)*	*d (2-3)*	*d (3-1)*
Honesty/Humility Facets												
Sincerity	3.50	1.08	3.48	1.05	3.46	.81	.02	2	.979	.02	.02	.04
Fairness	3.64	1.32	3.62	1.30	3.55	1.01	.06	2	.944	.02	.06	.08
Greed Avoidance	**3.43** [c]	.92	3.11	1.05	**2.77** [c]	.92	4.69	2	.011	.32	.34	.72
Modesty	**4.32** [d]	.88	**3.99** [e]	.87	**3.50** [d,e]	.94	8.37	2	.000	.38	.54	.90
Emotionality Facets												
Fearfulness	3.01	.93	3.24	.84	3.15	.83	.75	2	.475	.26	.29	.16
Anxiety	3.61	1.01	3.53	1.08	3.17	.93	2.15	2	.121	.08	.36	.45
Dependence	2.51	.98	2.93	.89	2.87	.89	2.38	2	.097	.45	.07	.38
Sentimentality	3.24	.96	3.30	.89	3.27	.92	.04	2	.960	.06	.03	.03
Extraversion Facets												
Social Self Esteem	3.55	1.14	3.67	.98	3.66	.80	.18	2	.835	.11	.01	.11
Social Boldness	**2.57**	.82	2.80	.83	**3.04** [f]	.78	3.33	2	.039	.28	.30	.59
Sociability	**2.28**	1.04	2.63	.99	**3.02** [g]	1.18	4.82	2	.010	.34	.36	.67
Liveliness	**3.04**	1.00	3.31	.94	**3.55** [h]	.74	3.17	2	.045	.27	.28	.58
Agreeableness Facets												
Forgiveness	2.89	1.17	2.95	1.04	3.02	1.05	.14	2	.869	.05	.07	.12
Gentleness	3.34	.98	3.39	.88	3.30	.76	.12	2	.886	.05	.11	.05
Flexibility	3.18	.93	3.39	.87	3.30	.81	.60	2	.549	.23	.11	.14
Patience	3.74	1.03	3.83	.87	3.52	.74	1.31	2	.273	.09	.38	.25
Conscientiousness Facets												
Organization	4.13	.90	4.16	.72	3.88	.82	1.50	2	.226	.04	.36	.29
Diligence	3.89	.86	4.02	.83	3.78	.86	.87	2	.424	.15	.28	.13
Perfectionism	3.81	.82	3.64	.68	3.76	.59	.66	2	.520	.23	.19	.07
Prudence	4.08	.77	4.02	.61	3.69	.96	2.85	2	.062	.07	.41	.45
Openness Facets												
Aesthetic Appreciation	3.76	1.20	3.47	1.04	3.60	1.09	.74	2	.482	.26	.12	.14
Inquisitveness	3.84	1.11	3.81	.86	3.78	.88	.04	2	.959	.03	.03	.06
Creativity	3.65	1.03	3.47	1.02	3.51	1.02	.33	2	.716	.18	.04	.14
Unconventionality	3.85	.75	3.57	.68	3.59	.65	2.06	2	.132	.39	.03	.37

Note. Means that differ significantly compared to at least one other mean are presented in bold. All contrasts present p-values that are Holm-corrected for three comparisons. All contrasts present p-values that are Holm-corrected for three comparisons. [c]t(77)=-3.06, p=.008, d=.61; [d]t(77)=-3.82, p<.001, d=.90; [e]t(83)=2.37, p=.026, d=.54; [f]t(77)=2.33, p=0.33, d=59; [g]t(77)=3.12, p=.007, d=.67; [h]t(77)=2.42, p=.039, d=.58

Discussion

In this study we investigated the difference between social identification and identity fusion with the two main parties (i.e., Democrats and Republicans) and three leaders (i.e., Donald Trump, Joe Biden, Bernie Sanders) in the US political scene. We found that identification and fusion are predicted by the same traits, except for certain associations, which seem to be consistent with identity fusion theory (Gomez et al., 2011). Namely, fused people score high in dependence, experience more feelings of fear, and emotionality seem to play a crucial role in fusion that we did not found for identification. All the mentioned traits relate to interpersonal relationships (Lee & Ashton, 2019), and our findings suggest that a precedent tendence of needing others may be a key antecedent of identity fusion. Additionally, need for cognitive closure showed to be a predictor of fusion with the Democrats, but not of identification. It seems that a strong need for avoiding ambiguity or cognitive complexity may be a prerequisite of fusion with specifically a leftist ideology, that is generally associated with a more open-minded mindset (Kruglanski,1990). Fusion may be a desirable coping mechanism for otherwise overwhelming feelings.

For what concerns the differences between fusion with a party or its leader, who fuses with the Republicans and Trump share more common traits than who fuses with Democrats and Bernie or Biden. However, fusion for each leader is underlain also by specific traits, that are linked to the leader's personality, or at least, political persona. Machiavellianism for fusion with Trump, Greed Avoidance for fusion with Sanders, and Modesty for fusion with Biden. Their most devoted electors seem to share some of their leaders' most distinctive traits. This finding is supported by the person-centered approach, where clusters of people who fused with leader scored higher than the other clusters in traits shared with the leader. Our results showed that fusion is not so straightforward to point out as different from

identification in terms of personality traits; although some specific fusion association may be key points to clarify the underlying mechanism of identity fusion. This first study offered some insights on the underlying traits of fusion, but the results are limited, as it only investigates the phenomenon in one context, the United States. Hence, to test whether findings generalize across countries, we aimed to replicate them in an entire new context, Italy.

Study 2

Introduction

In December 2020, Italy was still in the middle of what seemed an ungovernable wave of SARS-CoV-2 infections. The government was formed by a coalition between the populist party Movimento 5 Stelle and the left-wing Partito Democratico, led by Giuseppe Conte, chosen by the M5S. The opposition, mainly led by Matteo Salvini, leader of the far-right party Lega, was harshly criticizing the executive for the management of the pandemic.

In this study, a sample of Italian citizens answered an online survey about their personality traits and political preferences. We examined identification and identity fusion with three political parties, Movimento Cinque Stelle, Partito Democratico and Lega, and their respective representatives, Giuseppe Conte, Nicola Zingaretti and Matteo Salvini. Big Five factors, need for cognitive closure and Dark triad traits were assessed. The aim of this study was to understand and compare underlying personality factors of fusion with very diverse leaders and their parties in the Italian context.

Methods

Participants

A total of 430 participants were recruited. Due to missing values, 315 were retained for the analysis. Demographics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Sample Demographics.

	Estimate
Age	43.77 (14.78)
Gender %	
Man	47.4
Woman	50.6
Other	2
Region of origin %	
Nord	19
Centro	10.1
Sud	62.6
Isole	.3
Education %	
Middle school diploma	2
High school Diploma	23.2
Bachelor's degree	15.2
Associates degree	31
Phd	17.5
Other	2.3
Income %	
From 0 to 15.000 euro	20.1
From 15.001 to 28.000 euro	23.9
From 28.001 to 55.000 euro	29.9
From 55.001 to 75.000 euro	8
More than 75.001 euro	6.6
Political orientation %	
Lega	4.3
PD	32.8
M5S	6
Forza Italia	10.1
Fratelli D'Italia	4.3
Italia Viva	1.1
None of the above	9.2
Other	32.2

Procedure

Participants were recruited through social media, as Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. Requirements to participate were to be older than 18 and to be an Italian citizen. Due to lack of validated translations, the Leader Identification and all the Fusion variables were forward-back translated to guarantee translation equivalency. The translation process consisted in a first translation in Italian from two bilingual literature students, then compared to look for differences and merged. Subsequently, the items were back-translated to English by two different bilingual persons, compared and merged. Modification to the translation were made when necessary to ensure a correct comprehension for Italian participants.

Instruments

Italian-Ten Items Personality Inventory. Participants completed a revised Italian version of the Ten Item Personality Inventory (Di Fabio, Gori, 2016; Chiorri et al., 2014; Gosling et al., 2003). Participants needed to express their agreement with different adjectives relative to their personality, on scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree)* to 7 (*strongly agree).* The scale measures five dimensions of personality with each 4 items, following the directions of Di Fabio & Gori (2016): Extraversion (i.e., "Enthusiastic", α=.82); Agreeableness (i.e., "Sympathetic", α=.78); Conscientiousness (i.e., "Self-disciplined", α=.79); Emotional Stability (i.e., "Calm", α=.71); Openness to Experiences (i.e., "Open to new experiences", α=.74).

Dirty Dozen Scale. Participants completed the Italian version of the Dark Triad Dirty Dozen (Schimmenti et al., 2019, Jonason & Webster, 2010) on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 *(strongly agree*). The scale measures three personality traits, each with four items: Machiavellianism (i.e., "I tend to manipulate others to get my way", α=.78), Psychopathy (i.e., "I tend to exploit others towards my own end", α =.62) and Narcissism (i.e., "I tend to want others to admire me", α=.74).

Need for Closure scale. To assess participants' Need for Closure (NFC, Kruglanski, 1990), we used the Italian translation of the short version of the revised NFC scale (Roets & Van Hiel, 2011; Roets & Van Hiel, 2007; Pierro et al., 1995; Kruglanski, 1994). The scale consists of 15 items (i.e., "I don't like situations that are uncertain"; α=.83) on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree)* to 7 (*Strongly agree).*

Party Identification. To determine participants' social identification with political parties Movimento 5 Stelle, Partito Democratico and Lega, we used the Italian translation (Manuti and Bosco, 2012) of three items, adapted from Ellemers and colleagues' research (1999), (i.e., "I identify with other members of PD", α=.91; "I identify with other members of M5S", α=.91; "I Identify with other members of Lega", α=.95) Participants answered on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree)* to 7 (*strongly agree).*

Leader Identification. To assess participants' identification with leaders, participants replied to six items (i.e., "I identify with Nicola Zingaretti", α=.86; "I identify with Giuseppe Conte", α=.82; "I identify with Matteo Salvini", α=.92) translated and adapted from Doosje and colleagues (1995), on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree)* to 7 (*strongly agree).*

Party Identity Fusion. To determine identity Fusion with parties, participants were presented the translation of seven items (i.e., "The PD is me", α=.95; "The M5S is me", α=.95; "The Lega is me", α=.93) adapted from Gomez and colleagues (2011), on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree)* to 7 (*strongly agree).* The items were back-translated.

Leader Identity Fusion. For what concerns Identity Fusion with leaders, we used the an Italian translation of seven items (i.e., "I make Zingaretti strong", α= .93; "I make Conte strong", α=.92; "I make Salvini strong", α=.93) adapted from Gomez and colleagues (2011), on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree)* to 7 (*strongly agree).* The items were back-translated.

Analyses

Confirmatory Factor Analysis. To validate the difference between Identification and Fusion, we run three different Confirmatory Factor Analysis. The first CFA assessed the fit of the Partito Democratico (PD) and Zingaretti model, the second Movimento Cinque Stelle (M5S) and Conte, and the third tested the fit of the Lega and Salvini model. All the CFAs were run with the lavaan package (Yves, 2012) in R Studio (R Core Team, 2020). We used a Robust Maximum Likelihood Estimator, and the model was identified by standardizing the latent variables. Chi-square is presented for all models. However, previous research (Bentler, 1990; Bentler & Bonnett, 1980; Bollen, 1989; Mulaik et al., 1989) has shown that χ^2 fit index is highly dependent on sample size, so alternative fit indices derived from $\chi 2$ are proposed. The most frequently used in literature are Comparative Fit Index (CFI, Bentler, 1990), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI; Bentler & Bonnett, 1980), for which values above .95 are considered to indicate an acceptable fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Marsh, Balla & McDonald, 1988); and lack of fit indices, as Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA; Browne & Cudek, 1992) and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR; Hu & Bentler, 1999), for which values smaller than .08 indicate approximate fit (Hoyle, 1995).

Data transformation. Due to extreme non-normality, some variables has to be transformed before analyses. Skewness values between -2 and +2 are considered acceptable to prove normal distribution (George & Mallery, 2010), and six variables had higher values than the accepted cutoff: Movimento 5 Stelle Identification (Skewness=2.16, SE=.14; Kurtosis=4.36, SE=.27), M5S Fusion (Skewness=2.71, SE=.14; Kurtosis=7.42, SE=.27), Lega Identification (Skewness=5.63, SE=.14; Kurtosis=35.11, SE=.27), Lega Fusion (Skewness=5.60, SE=.27; Kurtosis=35.11, SE=.27), Salvini Identification (Skewness=5.86, SE=.14; Kurtosis=39.27, SE=.27) and Salvini Fusion (Skewness=.6.37, SE=14; Kurtosis=.43.08, SE=.27). To convert the distribution into a more normally shaped curve, the two M5S variable were log transformed. The Lega and Salvini variables, due to their extreme skewness, were converted into categorical predictors with two categories (i.e., “1”,

participants with the lowest score of 1 in the variable, and "2", participants who had higher scores). All the analysis were run using the transformed variables.

Variable-Centered Approach. Concerning the variable centered approach, we first run correlations among personality traits, identification and fusion variables in SPSS (IBM Corp. Released 2020). Then, we conducted a regression analysis with each of the political variables as independent variable, to test the influence of personality variables on identification and fusion with parties and leaders. Two different models were run for each variable, one with TIPI factors and Need For Closure, the other with only Dark Triad traits. The regression analysis was run with the "stats" package in R Studio (R Core Team, 2020).

Person-Centered Approach. With regard to the person-centered approach, we conducted a *k*-medoid cluster analysis with the whole sample, to identify groups of individuals who share attributes from a data-driven perspective. A *k*-medoid method was used instead of a *k*-means clustering due to the presence of mixed data (categorical and numerical variables). To run the analysis, we used the *NbClust* package (Charrad et al., 2014), which compares thirty indices to determine the best number of clusters. Once identified, the clusters were specified using the *cluster* package (Maechler et al., 2021), and were visualized with the *factoextra* package (Kassambara & Mundt, 2019) in R Studio. To better understand the clusters, political variables differences were tested with an independent sample *t*-test, except with Lega and Salvini categorical variables, which we tested with a χ^2 test for independence. We tested Personality difference between clusters with an independent samples *t*-test.

Results

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

First, a model was run that modeled each construct in a 4-factor solution: Identification with Partito Democratico (PD), Fusion with PD, Identification with Zingaretti

and Fusion with Zingaretti. The model showed an overall acceptable fit, $\chi2(164)=424.053$, $p<.001$, CFI=.913, TLI=.899, RMSEA=.072, SRMR=.04.

A second 4-factor model was specified concerning Movimento 5 Stelle (M5S) and Conte. The model reached an acceptable fit, $\chi2(164)=407.987$, ($p<.001$), CFI=.918, TLI=.905, RMSEA=.070, SRMR=.056.

We run the third model specifying a 4-factor solution: Identification with Lega, Fusion with Lega, Identification with Salvini, Fusion with Salvini. The model failed to reach an acceptable fit, $\chi2(163)=804.126$, CFI=.648, TLI=.590, RMSEA=.112, SRMR=.078.

Variable Centered Approach

Correlations and Regressions

To ease data visualization, all correlations are presented in Table2, and regression coefficients in Table 3. Identification with Zingaretti correlated positively with Conscientiousness, but this relationship failed to remain significant in the regression analysis.

While no correlations were found between Identification with Movimento 5 Stelle and any personality trait, Fusion with Movimento 5 Stelle correlated negatively with Extraversion and Openness, but only the latter remained significant in the regression model. Both Identification and Fusion with Conte correlated positively with Psychopathy, but the associations did not remain significant in the regression analysis.

Identification with Lega correlated negatively with Conscientiousness and positively with Machiavellianism, both relationships remained significant in the regression analysis. Moreover, a positive association was found between Identification with Lega and Need for Cognitive Closure. Fusion with Lega correlated negatively with Openness, while positively with Need for Cognitive Closure and Machiavellianism. Only the relationship with Machiavellianism became non-significant in the regression analysis.

Identification with Salvini correlated positively with Need for Cognitive Closure and Machiavellianism, and both relationships remained significant in the regression analysis.

Fusion with Salvini correlates negatively with Conscientiousness, and Openness, while positively with Need for Cognitive Closure and Machiavellianism. Only the association with Openness did not remain significant in the regression analysis.

Table 2.
Correlations between Political and Personality variables.

	PD Identification		PD Fusion		Zingaretti Identification		Zingaretti Fusion		M5S Identification		M5S Fusion		Conte Identification		Conte Fusion		Lega Identification		Lega Fusion		Salvini Identification		Salvini Fusion	
	r	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*
Extraversion	.00	.991	-.07	.219	-.03	.641	-.09	.123	-.06	.300	**-.12**	**.030**	-.06	.318	-.06	.288	-.04	.506	-.05	.328	-.03	.633	.01	.895
Agreeableness	.01	.899	.02	.710	.05	.411	.01	.864	-.04	.466	-.04	.462	.03	.649	.01	.847	.05	.352	-.05	.421	-.01	.797	.01	.907
Conscientiousness	.06	.320	.03	.585	**.12**	**.037**	.08	.152	-.01	.816	.03	.657	.10	.077	.03	.562	**-.12**	**.032**	-.02	.773	-.03	.564	**-.12**	**.036**
Emotional Stability	-.03	.541	-.04	.503	.05	.335	.04	.468	.03	.637	.04	.442	.02	.690	.03	.636	-.02	.785	-.04	.498	.00	.987	.01	.855
Openness	.00	.998	-.01	.857	.01	.844	-.01	.872	-.09	.114	**-.16**	**.004**	-.09	.105	-.05	.419	-.07	.191	**-.15**	**.008**	-.07	.229	**-.13**	**.019**
NFC	.03	.572	.01	.836	.04	.489	.07	.237	.02	.736	.06	.324	.09	.122	.10	.071	.10	.079	**.14**	**.014**	**.17**	**.003**	**.18**	**.001**
Machiavellanism	.08	.153	.01	.626	-.06	.682	.02	.693	.04	.434	-.01	.857	.07	.183	.09	.404	**.16**	**.003**	**.13**	**.019**	**.14**	**.012**	**.15**	**.007**
Narcissism	.06	.299	.03	.859	.02	.258	.01	.841	.10	.067	-.01	.797	.11	.053	.05	.125	.06	.288	.06	.319	.01	.817	-.01	.825
Psychopathy	.02	.759	-.02	.742	-.01	.912	.00	.951	.11	.051	.08	.158	**.12**	**.033**	**.12**	**.026**	.02	.778	.06	.247	.06	.290	.03	.607

Note. All significant correlations are presented in bold.

Table 3.

Regression Based Associations between Personality and Political Variables

	PD Identification		PD Fusion		Zingaretti Identification		Zingaretti Fusion		M5S Identification		M5S Fusion		Conte Identification		Conte Fusion		Lega Identification		Lega Fusion		Salvini Identification		Salvini Fusion	
	β^a	*p*	β^b	*p*	β^c	*p*	β^d	*p*	β^e	*p*	β^f	*p*	β^g	*p*	β^h	*p*	β^i	*p*	β^l	*p*	β^m	*p*	β^n	*p*
Extraversion	.00	.996	.19	.193	-.03	.641	-.07	.146	-.02	.623	-.05	.202	-.03	.639	-.04	.482	.00	.994	.00	.855	.01	.779	.02	.361
Agreeableness	.02	.816	.45	.453	.03	.776	-.01	.865	-.06	.419	-.05	.368	.02	.833	.00	.994	.05	.217	-.02	.624	-.01	.798	.00	.946
Conscientiousness	.07	.355	.37	.570	.13	.080	.06	.239	-.01	.842	.02	.662	.11	.139	.01	.840	-.04	**.009**	-.02	.529	-.05	.192	-.05	**.002**
Emotional Stability	-.05	.490	.37	.367	.04	.551	.03	.528	.05	.365	.05	.196	.03	.709	.04	.517	.00	.969	.00	.849	.03	.431	.02	.385
Openness	.02	.839	.82	.820	.03	.709	.03	.698	-.09	.172	-.03	**.013**	-.11	.219	-.02	.819	-.06	.155	**-.05**	**.047**	-.01	.820	-.03	.341
NFC	.05	.635	.91	**.009**	.06	.539	.06	.406	.00	.981	.01	.868	.09	.360	.14	.135	.04	**.034**	-.04	**.039**	.06	**.002**	.07	**.000**
Machiavellanism	.01	.836	.01	.836	-.11	.150	.03	.645	-.05	.358	-.04	.370	-.04	.647	.02	.697	.03	**.034**	.02	.170	.08	**.029**	.01	**.017**
Narcissism	.02	.704	.02	.704	.05	.327	.00	.970	.07	.072	.00	.998	.09	.094	.01	.774	-.01	.808	-.01	.503	-.02	.389	-.02	.156
Psychopathy	-.02	.738	.74	.738	.04	.570	.00	.947	.07	.075	.08	.092	.13	.087	.09	.094	-.03	.331	-.01	.727	.39	.953	-.01	.592

Note. All significant relationships are presented in bold. [a]Model with TIPI and NFC as predictors: F(6,311)=.30, p=.924 R^2adj=.01; Model with Dark Triad as predictors: F(3,131)=.12, p=.949, R^2adj=.01; [b] Model with TIPI and NFC as predictors: F(6, 313)=.53, p=-76, R^2adj=.01; Model with Dark Triad as predictors: F(3,313)=.12, p=.949, R^2adj=.01; [c] Model with TIPI and NFC as predictors: F(6, 312)=.93, p=.477, R^2adj=.00; Model with Dark Triad as predictors: F(3, 313)=.75, p=.52, R^2adj=.00; [d] Model with TIPI and NFC as predictors: F(6,313)=.94, p=.469, R^2adj=.01; Model with Dark Triad as predictors: F(3,314)=.09, p=.966, R^2adj=.01; [e] Model with TIPI and NFC as predictors:F(6,313)=.54, p=.779, R^2adj=.01; Model with Dark Triad as predictors:F(3,314)=2.27, p=.081, R^2adj=.01; [f] Model with TIPI and NFC as predictors:F(6,311)=2.09, p=.054, R^2adj=.02; Model with Dark Triad as predictors:F(3,312)=1.10, p=.348, R^2adj=.00; [g] Model with TIPI and NFC as predictors: F(6,131)=1.21, p=.30, R_2adj=.00; Model with Dark Triad as predictors: F(3,314)=.2.63, p=.081, R_2adj=.01; [h] Model with TIPI and NFC as predictors: F(6,314)=.71, p=.639, R_2adj=01; Model with Dark Triad as predictors: F(3,315)=1.58, p=.190, R2adj=.01; [h] Model with TIPI and NFC as predictors:F(6,316)=1.92, p=.078, R_2adj=.02; Model with Dark Triad as predictors:F(3,317)=2.62, p=.051, R_2adj=.02; [i] Model with TIPI and NFC as predictors:F(6,316)=2.03, p=.061, R_2adj=.02; Model with Dark Triad as predictors:F(3,317)=1.98, p=.117, R^2adj=.01; [l] Model with TIPI and NFC as predictors:F(6, 314)= 2.61, p=.017, R^2adj=.03; Model with Dark Triad as predictors:F(3, 314)=2.18, p=.091, R^2adj=.01; [m] Model with TIPI and NFC as predictors:F(6,315)=4.73, p=.000, R^2adj=.07; Model with Dark Triad as predictors:F(3,315)=2.65, p=.049, R^2adj=.02

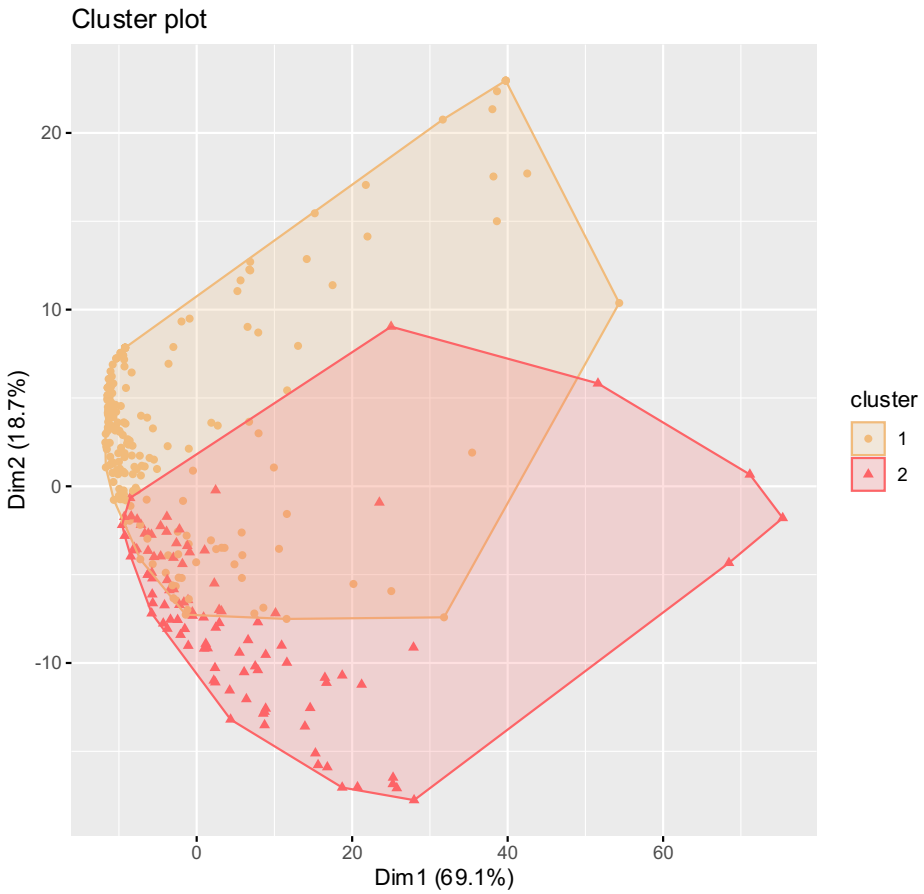
Person Centered Approach

Cluster Analysis

Two clusters were indicated as the best fit according to the majority rule (see Figure 1 and refer to appendix for R output). The first observed cluster was identified as the "Apolitical", with participants with low scores in all identification and fusion variables regardless of political party or leader. The second cluster was identified as the "Politicized" and comprised participants with generally higher scores in political variables, independently from the political orientation. We an independent sample *t*-test and a χ^2 for the categorical factors to test for differences in political variables. Independent samples *t*-test was run to test for differences in personality traits between clusters. No significant differences were found. Results are presented in Tables 4 and 5.

Figure 1.

Results of cluster analysis on the whole sample.



Note. Dimension 1 includes all Identification variables. Dimension 2 includes all Fusion variables. Cluster 1 (N=209) represents the Apolitical, Cluster 2 (N=102), the Politicized.

Table 4.

Cluster means of political variables.

	Politicized		Apolitical					
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t* ($\chi 2$)	*df*	*p*	*d (V)*
PD Identification	**3.78**	1.13	**1.52**	.78	18.17	149.83	.000	2.48
Pd Fusion	**3.05**	1.15	**1.33**	.56	14.23	125.12	.000	2.13
Zingaretti Identification	**3.39**	1.12	**1.53**	.80	14.94	153.19	.000	2.02
Zingaretti Fusion	**2.38**	1.05	**1.19**	.55	10.8	128.77	.000	1.59
M5S Identification	**.18**	.21	**.11**	.19	7.42	205.24	.000	.36
M5S Fusion	**.12**	.19	**.07**	.16	6.76	157.01	.000	.30
Conte Identification	**3.63**	1.24	**2.51**	1.27	7.35	309	.000	.89
Conte Fusion	**2.38**	1.14	**1.51**	.85	2.84	178.84	.005	.90
Lega Identification	1.05	.22	1.09	.28	1.38[a]	1	.240	.11
Lega Fusion	1.06	.24	1.08	.27	.51[b]	1	.476	.07
Salvini Identification	1.05	.22	1.09	.32	4.25[c]	2	.119	.07
Salvini Fusion	1.05	.22	1.08	.28	1.60[d]	2	.449	.04

Note. Means that differ significantly are presented in bold. [a] χ^2 results and Cramer's *V* reported.[b] χ^2 results and Cramer's *V* reported.[c] χ^2 results and Cramer's *V* reported. [d] χ^2 results and Cramer's *V* reported.

Table 5.

Cluster means of personality variables.

	Politicized		Apolitical					
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*	*d*
Extraversion	3.96	1.24	4.10	1.14	.98	309	.329	.12
Agreeableness	5.19	.74	5.16	.83	.38	309	.703	.05
Conscientiousness	5.45	1.03	5.27	.98	1.49	309	.138	.18
Emotional Stability	5.45	1.20	5.27	1.11	1.10	309	.271	.13
Openness	5.28	.94	5.31	.87	.27	309	.787	.03
NFC	4.05	.83	4.20	.87	1.47	309	.143	.18
Machiavellanism	2.03	1.03	2.03	1.15	.04	309	.972	.00
Narcissism	3.85	1.65	3.79	1.61	.29	309	.774	.04
Psychopathy	1.95	1.65	2.01	1.00	.48	309	.629	.06

Discussion

This study provided a first glance at identity fusion In the Italian context, and the personality antecedents of fusion with ideologically diverse leaders and parties. Italy is country where the politics are more leader centered than party centered. Surveys indicate that the population has more trust on the single politicians than the party they are the leader of (Tecné, 2021). Our results showed that many of the traits underlying identification predict fusion, too. Some exceptions were found, as Need for closure was a significant predictor of fusion with Partito Democratico, a centrum-left party, but not of identification. We found the same patter in the US, which suggest that need for closure is an important predictor of fusion with a leftist group across contexts. Moreover, specifically fusion with the Movimento 5 Stelle, a populist party, had a negative relationship with openness to experience. Openness is the trait that most predict political orientation (McCrae, 1996), with higher levels predicting leftist ideology association. Since they were elected at the government, the Movimento promoted more conservative policies and laws. Being in power, the M5S may have become a more attractive target to fuse with, and people with more conservative views may have fused with them. When investigating the Lega and its leader, Salvini, we found a general concordance of traits. Need for closure and Machiavellianism are predictors for both identification and fusion with both the party and the leader. In this case, it seems that the party and the leader are more strictly intertwined than the other leaders are with their parties.

Concerning the second research question, instead, between who fuses with leaders and who with the party, our results showed that in Italy who fuses with the parties share few traits with who fuses with the party leaders, at least for the Partito Democratico and the M5F, where no traits were found to be predictors of fusion with Zingaretti and Conte.

The only relationships that are more consistent are between the far-right party Lega and its leader, Matteo Salvini. A difference worth noticing is the relationship between lower levels of Conscientiousness and fusion with Salvini. This finding is consistent with the figure of Salvini who, since becoming the leader of the party in 2017, made himself the cardinal figure of the Italian right and the essence of the Lega itself. The data-driven approach showed the high fragmentation of the Italian electorate, with a large part of the sample that defines themselves as apolitical or not interested in politics. In 2019, 27.6% of the population over 14 years old reported no interest in politics, which make up for more than 12 million people (Istat, 2020). Nevertheless, we found evidence of identity fusion with political targets in the Italian context, and associations with traits that are consistent with the one found in the US.

General Discussion

The aim of this research was to a) investigate the underlying personality traits of identity fusion versus social identification, and b) explore the differences, in terms of personality, between who fuses with right or left-wing parties and leaders. It did so in two contexts of high political polarization, namely the US and Italy. When it comes to the first research question, we found that many underlying traits of identification are shared with fusion. However, in the US, people who fuse with a party, independently from the political orientation, tend to score high on emotionality facets, show more feelings of fear, and have a predisposition to feel high dependence, traits that were not found among people who only identify with the same target. In terms of the second research question, while Republicans showed a more defined pattern of traits associations, consistent across identification and fusion, it is more difficult to define the Democrats in terms of personality associations. Identification and fusion with a leader were predicted by many of the same traits that predicted identification and fusion with the party. Nevertheless, some traits were involved

specifically in fusion with leaders, and they seem to be related to certain features of each leader's political persona. We found the same pattern in Italy.

Personality Traits Underlying Fusion and Social Identification

We found little support for different personality traits underlying identity fusion and social identification. Nonetheless, we found some traits that precited exclusively fusion. Specifically, we found that emotionality and some its facets seem to play an important role in fusion, but not in social identification, with political targets in the US, across political orientation. Dependence and sentimentality had a positive relationship only with fusion with Republicans, while fearfulness predicted both identification and fusion with the party. People who fused with Trump also scored high on dependence. These associations are in contrast with other findings, where emotionality and its facets have been found to have a negative association with right-wing political orientation (Griep et al., 2018; Hirsh et al., 2010). In addition, who fuses with the Democrats and Biden scores higher in dependence and fearfulness. Dependence concerns the need to receive support from others (Lee & Ashton, 2019) and together with the relationship with sentimentality those traits could be interesting reflection of fusion with a political party; sentimentality is an aspect of pro-sociality, and the scale assesses a tendency to feel strong emotional bonds with others (Lee & Ashton, 2019), how it is in the case of identity fusion. Namely, fused people see other group members as unique individuals, and tend to have personal close relationships with them. Individuals who identify, instead, do not have the same relationships; they only value other ingroup members in terms of their representativeness of the group (Swann et al., 2012). We could assume that identified people do not feel dependence towards the other group members as much as fused people do. Individuals that fuse with a political party may score higher in sentimentality due to the saliency that the group, and its members, hold in their personal selves.

On the other hand, some specific traits seem to predict fusion across specific political ideologies. For example, exclusively fusion with the Democrats shows a direct positive relationship with Need for cognitive closure. Notably, we found the same association with the Italian political counterpart of the Democrats, the Partito Democratico (PD), a centrum-left party. Usually associated with more conservative ideologies (Jost et al., 2003; Golec & Cislak, 2010), need for closure hence seems to be a factor in fusion with a left-wing party. People with a tendency for psychological conservatism rely more on their group norms and ideologies (Golec & Cislak, 2010), even when those that promote more liberal values.

Additionally, we discovered that fusion with Movimento 5 Stelle, a populist party that defines itself as neither right-wing nor left-wing, had a negative association with Openness to experience. This finding is in line with the general political stance of the Movimento in 2020, when it allied with Lega to form a government and took a more right-wing stance. Being in power, the M5S may have become a more attractive target to fuse with, and people with more conservative views may have fused with them.

In conclusion, we found that many underlying traits of identification are shared with fusion. However, there are certain traits that seem to specifically predict fusion with political targets. Some of the traits are consistent across ideologies, as emotionality in the US; and others seem to be specific of the political orientation, as need for closure in both Italy and the US. Those findings suggest that fusion is not underlain by a precise association of traits, but it is a less definite construct to point out.

Personality Traits Explaining Fusion and Identification with Group Vs. Leaders

Despite a general consistency between underlying traits of fusion with parties and their leaders, specific associations are worth noticing. For example, people who fused with Trump had high Machiavellianism, while this was not the case for fusion with Republicans. Machiavellianism is characterized by interpersonal manipulation, cynicism, and a lack of

morality (Jonason et al., 2012; Al Aïn et al., 2013); also, findings have shown that it is a trait in which Donald Trump scores very high (Nai & Toros, 2020).

Our results suggest that also his most devoted followers share one of the ex-President's most distinctive traits. Furthermore, aesthetic appreciation resulted to be a predictor of fusion with Trump. In a study from Griep and colleagues (2018), aesthetic appreciation had a significant role in predicting leftist political orientation. This Openness facet has been found to show a noticeably strong relationship with ecological attitudes and behaviors (Markowitz et al., 2012). This could explain its effect on fusion with Trump, whose administration rescinded from international and national climate agreements (e.g., Paris agreement, Clean Air Act) and focused on energy development (e.g. Dakota access pipeline, hydraulic fracturing on federal and tribal lands).

In Italy, what stood out is the relationship between lower levels of Conscientiousness and fusion with Salvini, the far-right leader of Lega. This finding is in contrast with previous literature (Caprara & Vecchione, 2017 for a review), where more conservatives individuals tended to have higher scores in Conscientiousness. This trait is negatively related to Machiavellianism (Vernon & Villani, 2008), predictor of both identification and fusion with Salvini. The leader of the Lega wants to portray himself as a new kind of politician (Diamanti & Lazar, 2019), and his more devoted followers do not relate with the old model of right-wing electorate.

When investigating the differences between left-wing parties and leaders, we found less consistent association of traits. Specifically, when investigating the traits of who fuses with Bernie Sanders and Joe Biden, we found different particularities that show the two faces of the Democratic electorate. Who fuses with Biden scores higher in sociability and social boldness, two facets of extraversion. No such associations were found for identification with the Democracts. This finding is in line with the self-expansion theory (Aron & Aron, 1986), where fusion with a political leader should increase individuals' sense of self efficacy and may influence people's social confidence (Besta et al., 2016).

The findings from the person-centered approach showed that the "Dems Pro Bernie" (i.e., cluster of the Dems who showed high fusion with Bernie Sanders) share more distinctive traits than the "Dems Pro All" (i.e., Democrats who fuses specifically with the party) and of the "Pro Biden" (i.e., Dems who showed high fusion with Bernie Sanders). Who fuses with Sanders scored high in modesty and greed avoidance, facets that both relate to the importance given to social status and wealth. Additionally, they also score less in social boldness and social self-esteem. This all seems to reflect the typical Sanders' electorate: Millennials, LGBTQIA+ members, second generation immigrants, working class and gen Z, and in general, who feel like misfits in US society (Medina & Ember, 2020).

While sharing several traits with party fusion, fusion with a leader is also predicted by traits that are associated with the specific leader's personality, both in Italy and in the US. Although, there seems to be more difference in traits associations for left-wing leaders than right-wing ones. Generally, people who fuse with a leader may already share some traits in common with the leader, and fusion may be strengthened by this similarity that they feel when expanding themselves.

Limitations and Future Directions

In this research there are several limitations that may be addressed in future work. In both studies we relied on non-representative samples, which hampers the generalizability of the findings to the general population. Future studies should use larger samples, to gain representative data and improve the validity of the study. In Study 1, our participants were recruited through Amazon MTurk, a popular instrument for research, but that has shown to have some bias in terms of representativeness of the population (Mortensen & Hughes, 2018). Further research may recruit participants through other channels to replicate the results.

In Study 2, only few participants reported high scores on identification and fusion with Salvini, and this hindered the validity of the results. Future studies need to investigate fusion with Lega and Salvini with a more representative sample or by oversampling followers from these parties. Additionally, only a short measure of the Big Five personality traits was used in Italy, while it may be worthwhile to investigate identity fusion in Italian politics with the HEXACO scale and its facets.

Future studies should try to replicate those findings, to see if those feelings of dependence and fear remain stable also after the pandemic. The strong fusion relationships with fearfulness and dependence could be evidence of the historic period in which data was collected. Covid infections in the US were reaching a grim peak, and Trump's response to the emergency was judged widely inadequate, mainly by the Democrats. The US population in general was expressing more feelings of fear, and that may have been particularly true for the Dems, for whom the incoming elections also were a source of agitation. Democrats with an already high score in fearfulness may have enhanced their fusion to protect themselves from overwhelming emotions and the perceptions of threat. Moreover, it may be worthwhile to investigate the moderating effect of other variables (e.g., values) in fusion with a leader.

Conclusions

In conclusion, there does not seem to be some universal traits that define who fuse across political ideologies and contexts. However, there are general trends of traits that suggest that fusion has different underlying traits than identification, and that there seems to be a synergistic relationship between the traits of who fuses and the traits of the target, specifically with leaders. Machiavellianism for Trump, Greed Avoidance for Sanders, and Modesty for Biden; all the fusion traits with different leaders reflect an important part of the image that those politicians want to portray. Our study provided a first framework of how some personality traits involved in fusion differ from the ones involved in social

identification, and our findings call for future more in-depth research to shed more lights on the complex relationship between personality and political fusion.

References

Agnew, C. R., Van Lange, P. A. M., Rusbult, C. E. & Langston, C. A. Cognitive interdependence: Commitment and the mental representation of close relationships. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* **74**, 939–954 (1998).

Al Aïn, S., Carré, A., Fantini-Hauwel, C., Baudouin, J.-Y., & Besche-Richard, C. (2013). What is the emotional core of the multidimensional Machiavellian personality trait? *Frontiers in Psychology*, *4*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2013.00454

Aron, A. & Aron, E. N. (1986) *Love and the Expansion of Self: Understanding Attraction and Satisfaction* (Hemisphere Publishing Corp.

Aron, A. et Aeon, E.N. (2004). Including others in the self. *Eur. Rev. Soc. Psychol.* **15**, 101–132

Aron, A., Aron, E. N., Tudor, M. & Nelson, G. (1991). Close relationships as including other in the self. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* **60**, 241–253

Ashton, M. C., & Lee, K. (2009). The HEXACO-60: A short measure of the major dimensions of personality. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 91*, 340-345.

Barbaranelli, C., Caprara, G. V., Vecchione, M., & Fraley, R. C. (2007). Voters' per- sonality traits in presidential elections. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *42*, 1199–1208.

Bardeen, J. R., & Michel, J. S. (2019). Associations among dimensions of political ideology and Dark Tetrad personality features. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, *7*(1), 290–309. https://doi.org/10.5964/jspp.v7i1.1071

Bentler, P. M. (1990). Comparative fit indexes in structural models. Psychological Bulletin, 107, 238–246.

Bentler, P. M., & Bonnett, D. G. (1980). Significance tests and goodness of fit in the analysis of covariance structures. Psychological Bulletin, 88, 588–606.

Berenbaum, H., Bredemeier, K., & Thompson, R. J. (2008). Intolerance of uncertainty: Exploring its dimensionality and associations with need for cognitive closure,

psychopathology, and personality. *Journal of anxiety disorders*, *22*(1), 117–125. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.janxdis.2007.01.004

Besta, T., Gómez, Á., & Vázquez, A. (2014). Original article Readiness to deny group's wrongdoing and willingness to fight for its members: The role of Poles' identity fusion with the country and religious group. *Current Issues in Personality Psychology*, *1*, 49–55. https://doi.org/10.5114/cipp.2014.43101

Besta, T., Jaśkiewicz, M., Kosakowska-Berezecka, N., Lawendowski, R. & Zawadzka, A. M. (2018) What do I gain from joining crowds? Does self-expansion help to explain the relationship between identity fusion, group efficacy and collective action? *Eur. J. Soc. Psychol.* **48**, O152–O167.

Besta, T., Mattingly, B. & Błażek, M. When membership gives strength to act: Inclusion of the group into the self and feeling of personal agency. *J. Soc. Psychol.* **156**, 56–73 (2016).

Besta, T., Szulc, M., & Jaśkiewicz, M. (2015). Political extremism, group membership and personality traits: Who accepts violence? / Extremismo político, pertenencia al grupo y rasgos de personalidad: ¿Quién acepta la violencia? *Revista de Psicología Social*, *30*(3), 563–585. https://doi.org/10.1080/02134748.2015.1065085

Bollen, K. A. (1989). Structural equations with latent variables. New York: Wiley

Browne, M. W., & Cudeck, R. (1992). Alternative ways of assessing model fit. Sociological Methods and Research, 21, 230–258.

Buhrmester, M. D., Gómez, Á., Brooks, M. L., Morales, J. F., Fernández, S., & Swann, W. B. (2012). My Group's Fate Is My Fate: Identity-Fused Americans and Spaniards Link Personal Life Quality to Outcome of 2008 Elections. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, *34*(6), 527–533. https://doi.org/10.1080/01973533.2012.732825

Caprara, G. V., & Vecchione, M. (2017). *Personalizing Politics and Realizing Democracy*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199982868.001.0001

Caprara, G. V., & Zimbardo, P. G. (2004). Personalizing politics. American Psychologist, 59, 581–594.

Caprara, G. V., Barbaranelli, C., & Zimbardo, P. G. (1999). Personality profiles and political parties. Political Psychology, 20, 175–197.

Caprara, G. V., Barbaranelli, C., Consiglio, C., Picconi, L., & Zimbardo, P. G. (2003). Personalities of politicians and voters: Unique and synergistic relationships. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84, 849–856.

Caprara, G. V., Schwartz, S. H., Vecchione, M., & Barbaranelli, C. (2008). The personalization of politics: Lessons from the Italian case. *European Psychologist*, *13*, 157–172.

Carney, D. R., Jost, J. T., Gosling, S. D., Niederhoffer, K., & Potter, J. (2008). The secret lives of liberals and conservatives: Personality profiles, interaction styles, and the things they leave behind. *Political Psychology*, *29*, 807–840

Charrad, M., Ghazzali N., Boiteau, V., Niknas, A. (2014). NbClust: An R Package for Determining the Relevant Number of Clusters in a Data Set. Journal of Statistical Software, 61(6), 1-36. URL http://www.jstatsoft.org/v61/i06/.

Chiorri, C., Bracco, F., Piccinno, T., Modafferi, C., & Battini, V. (2015). Psychometric Properties of a Revised Version of the Ten Item Personality Inventory. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, *31*(2), 109–119. https://doi.org/10.1027/1015-5759/a000215

Chirumbolo, A., & Leone, L. (2010). Personality and politics: The role of the HEXACO model of personality in predicting ideology and voting. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *49*(1), 43–48. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2010.03.004

Chirumbolo, A., Areni, A., Sensales, G. (2004). Need for cognitive closure and politics: Voting, political attitudes, and attributional style. International Journal of Psychology, 39, 245-253.

Christie, R., & Geis, F. L. (1970). *Studies in Machiavellianism.* New York, NY: Academic Press

De Cremer, D., Tyler, T. R. & den Ouden, N (2005). Managing cooperation via procedural fairness: The mediating influence of self-other merging. *J. Econ. Psychol.* **26**, 393–406

De Cremer, D., Tyler, T. R. & den Ouden, N. Managing cooperation via procedural fairness: The mediating influence of self-other merging. *J. Econ. Psychol.* **26**, 393–406 (2005)

De Zavala, A. G., Cislak, A., & Wesolowska, E. (2010). Political Conservatism, Need for Cognitive Closure, and Intergroup Hostility: Need for Cognitive Closure, Conservatism and Aggressiveness. *Political Psychology*, *31*(4), 521–541. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2010.00767.x

Diamanti I., Lazar M. (2019). Peuplecratie. La métamorphose de nos démocraties. Paris, Gallimard

Doosje, B., Ellemers, N., & Spears, R. (1995). Perceived intragroup variability as a function of group status and identification. Journal of Experimental So- cial Psychology, 31, 410–436.

Downs, A. (1957). An economic theory of democracy. New York: Harper Collins.

Ellemers, N., Kortekaas, P. & Ouwerkerk, J. W. Self-categorisation, commitment to the group and group self-esteem as related but distinct aspects of social identity. *Eur. J. Soc. Psychol.* **29**, 371–389 (1999).

Fabio, A. & Gori, A. (2016). Developing a New Instrument for Assessing Acceptance of Change. Frontiers in psychology. 7. 802. 10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00802.

Fazio, M. (January 10, 2021). "Notable Arrests After the Riot at the Capitol". *The New York Times*. Retrieved January 11, 2021.

Fredman, L. A., Bastian, B. & Swann, W. B. God or country? Fusion with Judaism predicts desire for retaliation following Palestinian stabbing Intifada. *Soc. Psychol. Personal Sci.* **8**, 882–887 (2017)

Fredman, L. A., Buhrmester, M. D., Gomez, A., Fraser, W. T., Talaifar, S., Brannon, S. M., & Swann, W. B. (2015). Identity Fusion, Extreme Pro-Group Behavior, and the Path to Defusion: Identity Fusion and Extreme Behavior. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *9*(9), 468–480. https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12193.

Gardner, W. L. & Avolio, B. J. The charismatic relationship: A dramaturgical perspective. *Acad. Manage. Rev.* **23**, 32–58 (1998).

Gardner, W. L. & Avolio, B. J. The charismatic relationship: A dramaturgical perspective. *Acad. Manage. Rev.* **23**, 32–58 (1998).

George, D., & Mallery, M. (2010). SPSS for Windows Step by Step: A Simple Guide and Reference, 17.0 update (10a ed.) Boston: Pearson.

George, D., & Mallery, M. (2010). SPSS for Windows Step by Step: A Simple Guide and Reference, 17.0 update (10a ed.) Boston: Pearson.

Gerber, A. S, Huber, G., Doherty, D., Dowling, C., & Ha, S. (2010). Personality and political attitudes: Relationships across issue domains and political contexts. *American Political Science Review*, *104*, 111–133.

Gino, F. & Galinsky, A. D. Vicarious dishonesty: When psychological closeness creates distance from one's moral compass. *Organ. Behav. Hum. Decis. Process.* **119**, 15–26 (2012)

Gómez, Á, Brooks, M.L., Buhrmester, M. D., Vázquez, A., Jetten, J. & Swann, W. B., Jr. (2011). On the nature of identity fusion: Insights into the construct and a new measure. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 100, 918- 933.

Gosling, S. D., Rentfrow, P. J., & Swann, W. B. (2003). A very brief measure of the Big Five personality domains. Journal of Research in Personality, 37, 504–528.

Gøtzsche-Astrup, O. (2019). *Situation and Disposition: Who Radicalizes and How?: PhD Dissertation*. Forlaget Politica.

Hirsh, Jacob. (2010). Personality and environmental concern. Journal of Environmental Psychology. 30. 245-248. 10.1016/j.jenvp.2010.01.004.

Hodson, G., Hogg, S. M., & MacInnis, C. C. (2009). The role of "dark personalities" (narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy), Big Five personality factors, and ideology in explaining prejudice. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *43*(4), 686–690. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2009.02.005

Hogg, M. A. (1993). Group cohesiveness: A critical review and some new directions. *European Review of Social Psychology, 4,* 85-111. doi: 10.1080/14792779343000031

Hogg, M. A., & Hains, S. C. (1996). Intergroup relations and group solidarity: Effects of group identification and social beliefs on deper- sonalized attraction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 70,* 295-309. doi: i 0.1037/0022-3514.70.2.295

Hogg, M. A., Terry, D. J. & White, K. M. (1995). A tale of two theories: A critical comparison of identity theory with social identity theory. *Soc. Psychol. Q.* **58**, 255–269

Hoyle, R. H. (Ed.). (1995). *Structural equation modeling: Concepts, issues, and applications.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hu, L., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cut off criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. Structural Equation Modeling, 6, 1–55.

IBM Corp. Released 2020. IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 27.0. Armonk, NY: IBM Corp

Jonason, P. K. (2014). Personality and politics. *Personality and Individual Differences, 71*, 181-184. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2014.08.002

Jonason, P. K., & Webster, G. D. (2010). The dirty dozen: A concise measure of the Dark Triad. *Psychological Assessment, 22,* 420–432. doi:10.1037/a0019265

Jonason, P. K., & Webster, G. D. (2010). The dirty dozen: A concise measure of the dark triad. *Psychological Assessment, 22*(2), 420–432. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0019265

Jones, D. N., & Paulhus, D. L. (2014). Introducing the Short Dark Triad (SD3): A brief measure of dark personality traits. *Assessment, 21*, 28-41. https://doi.org/10.1177/1073191113514105

Jost, J. T., Glaser, J., Kruglanski, A. W., Sulloway, F. (2003). Political conservatism as motivated social cognition. Psychological Bulletin, 129, 339-375

Kark, R., Shamir, B. & Chen, G. The two faces of transformational leadership: Empowerment and dependency. *J. Appl. Psychol.* **88**, 246–255 (2003).

Kassambara, A. and Mundt, F. "factoextra: Extract and Visualize the Results of Multivariate Data Analyses." R package version 1.0.5 (2017).

Kemmelmeier, M. (1997). Need for closure and political orientation among German university students. Journal of Social Psychology, 137, 787–789.

Kruglanski, A. W. (1990). Motivations for judging and knowing: Implications for causal attribution. In E. T. Higgins, & R. M. Sorrentino (Eds.), The handbook of motivation and cognition: Foundation of social behavior: Vol. 2 (pp. 333–368). New York: Guilford Press.

Kunst, J. R. et al. Engaging in extreme activism in support of others' political struggles: The role of politically motivated fusion with out-groups. *PLoS One* **13**, e0190639 (2018).

Kunst, J.R., Boos B, Kimel S.Y., Obaidi M, Shani M, Thomsen L (2018) Engaging in extreme activism in support of others' political struggles: The role of politically motivated fusion with out- groups. PLoS ONE 13(1): e0190639.

Laugesen, N., Dugas, M. J., & Bukowitz, W. M. (2003). Under- standing adolescent worry: the application of a cognitive model. Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 31, 55–64.

Lee, K., Ashton, M. C., Griep, Y., & Edmonds, M. (2018). Personality, Religion, and Politics: An Investigation in 33 Countries. *European Journal of Personality*, *32*(2), 100–115. https://doi.org/10.1002/per.2142

Nai, A., & Toros, E. (2020). The peculiar personality of strongmen: Comparing the Big Five and Dark Triad traits of autocrats and non-autocrats. *Political Research Exchange*, *2*(1), 1707697. https://doi.org/10.1080/2474736X.2019.1707697

Maechler M, Rousseeuw P, Struyf A, Hubert M, Hornik K (2021). *cluster: Cluster Analysis Basics and Extensions*. R package version 2.1.2

Magnusson, D. (2003). The person approach: Concepts, measurement models, and research strategy. In S. C. Peck & R. W. Roeser (Eds.), *New directions for Child and Adolescent development. Person-centered approaches to studying devel- opment in context* (No. 101, pp. 3–23). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Manuti, A., & Bosco, A. (2012). Identificazione organizzativa: Un contributo alla verifica delle proprietà psicometriche di due strumenti di misura. *Giornale Italiano di Psicologia*.

Markowitz, E. M., Goldberg, L. R., Ashton, M. C., & Lee, K. (2012). Profiling the "pro-environmental individual": A personal- ity perspective. Journal of Personality, 80, 81–111. https://doi. org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2011.00721.x.

Marsh, H. W., Lüdtke, O., Trautwein, U., & Morin, A. J. S. (2009). Classical Latent Profile Analysis of Academic Self-Concept Dimensions: Synergy of Person- and Variable-Centered Approaches to Theoretical Models of Self-Concept. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, *16*(2), 191–225. https://doi.org/10.1080/10705510902751010

Marsh, H. W., Balla, J. R., & McDonald, R. P. (1988). Goodness-of-Fit Indexes in Confirmatory Factor Analysis: The Effect of Sample Size. Psychological Bulletin, 103, 391-410.http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.103.3.391

Mattingly, B. A., & Lewandowski, G. W., Jr. (2013). An expanded Self is a more capable Self: the association between Self-concept size and Self-efficacy. Self and Identity, 12(6), 621-634. doi:10.1080/15298868.2012.718863

McCrae, R. R. (1996). Social consequences of experiential openness. Psychological Bulletin, 120, 323–337.

McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T. (1999). A Five-Factor Theory of personality. In L. A. Pervin & O. P. John (Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (2nd ed., pp. 139–153). New York: Guilford.

Meyer, J. P., Stanley, L. J., & Vandenberg, R. J. (2013). A person-centered approach to the study of commitment. *Human Resource Management Review*, *23*(2), 190–202. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2012.07.007

Mondak, J. J., & Halperin, K. D. (2008). A framework for the study of personality and political behaviour. *British Journal of Political Science*, *38*, 335–362.

Mondak, J. J., Hibbing, M. V., Canache, D., Seligson, M. A., & Anderson, M. R. (2010). Personality and civic engagement: An integrative framework for the study of trait effects on political behaviour. *American Political Science Review*, *104*, 85–110.

Mortensen, K., & Hughes, T. L. (2018). Comparing Amazon's Mechanical Turk Platform to Conventional Data Collection Methods in the Health and Medical Research Literature. *Journal of general internal medicine*, *33*(4), 533–538. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-017-4246-0

Mortensen, K., & Hughes, T. L. (2018). Comparing Amazon's Mechanical Turk Platform to Conventional Data Collection Methods in the Health and Medical Research Literature. *Journal of general internal medicine*, *33*(4), 533–538. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-017-4246-0

Mortensen, K., & Hughes, T. L. (2018). Comparing Amazon's Mechanical Turk Platform to Conventional Data Collection Methods in the Health and Medical Research Literature. *Journal of general internal medicine*, *33*(4), 533–538. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-017-4246-0

Mortensen, K., & Hughes, T. L. (2018). Comparing Amazon's Mechanical Turk Platform to Conventional Data Collection Methods in the Health and Medical Research Literature. *Journal of general internal medicine*, *33*(4), 533–538. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-017-4246-0

Mulaik, S. A., James, L. R., Van Alstine, J., Bennett, N., Lind, S., & Stilwell, C. D. (1989). Evaluation of goodness of fit indices for structural equation models. Psychological Bulletin, 105, 430–445.

Paulhus, D. L., & Williams, K. M. (2002). The dark triad of personality: Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. *Journal of Research in Personality, 36*, 556-563.

Pierro, A., Mannetti, L., Converso, D., Garsia, V., Miglietta, A. M., Ravenna, M. & Rubini, M. (1995). Caratteristiche strutturali della versione italiana della scala di bisogno di chiusura cognitiva (di Webster & Kruglanski) [Structural features of the Italian version of Webster and Kruglanski's Need for Cognitive Closure Scale]. *Testing Psicometria Metodologia, 3–4,* 125–141.

Popkin, S. (1991). *The reasoning voter.* Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Roets, A. & Van Hiel, A. (2011). Item selection and validation of a brief, 15-item version of the need for closure scale. *Personality and Individual Differences, 50,* 90-94.

Roets, A., & Hiel, A. V. (2008). Why some hate to dilly-dally and others do not: The arousal-invoking capacity of decision-making for low-and high-scoring need for closure individuals. *Social Cognition, 26*(3), 333–346. https://doi.org/10.1521/soco.2008.26.3.333.

Roets, A., & Van Hiel, A. (2007). Separating ability from need: Clarifying the dimensional structure of the need for closure scale. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 33, 266–280.

Rosseel Y (2012). "lavaan: An R Package for Structural Equation Modeling." *Journal of Statistical Software*, **48**(2), 1–36. http://www.jstatsoft.org/v48/i02/.

RStudio Team (2020). RStudio: Integrated Development for R. RStudio, PBC, Boston, MA URL *http://www.rstudio.com/*.

Schimmenti, A., Jonason, P. K., Passanisi, A., La Marca, L., Di Dio, N., & Gervasi, A. M. (2019). Exploring the Dark Side of Personality: Emotional Awareness, Empathy, and

the Dark Triad Traits in an Italian Sample. *Current Psychology*, *38*(1), 100–109. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-017-9588-6

Schoen, H., & Schumann, S. (2007) Personality traits, partisan attitudes, and vot- ing behavior: Evidence from Germany. *Political Psychology*, *28*, 471–498.

Simon, B. (2004). *Identity in modern society: A social psychological perspective.* Oxford, England: Blackwell

Simon, B. & Klandermans, B. Politicized collective identity: A social psychological analysis. *Am. Psychol.* **56**, 319–331 (2001).

Steffens, N. K., Schuh, S. C., Haslam, S. A., Pérez, A. & Dick, R. 'Of the group' and 'for the group': How followership is shaped by leaders' prototypicality and group identification. *Eur. J. Soc. Psychol.* **45**, 180–190 (2015

Swann, W. B., Gómez, Á., Seyle, D. C., Morales, J. F., & Huici, C. (2009). Identity fusion: The interplay of personal and social identities in extreme group behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *96*(5), 995–1011. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013668

Swann, W. B., Jetten, J., Gómez, Á., Whitehouse, H., & Bastian, B. (2012). When group membership gets personal: A theory of identity fusion. *Psychological Review*, *119*(3), 441–456. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0028589

Swann, W. B., Jr., Go´mez, A´., Dovidio, J. F., Hart, S., & Jetten, J. (2010). Dying and killing for one's group: Identity fusion moderates responses to intergroup versions of the trolley problem. Psychologi- cal Science, 21, 1176–1183.

Tajfel, H. & Turner, J. C., (1986) in *Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (eds Worchel, S. & Austin, W. 7–24.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin, & S. Worchel (Eds.), The social psychology of intergroup relations (pp. 33-37). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Van Hiel, A., Kossowska, M., & Mervielde, I. (2000). The relationship between openness to experience and political ideology. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *28*, 741–751.

Vázquez, A., Gómez, Á., Ordoñana, J. R., Swann, W. B. & Whitehouse, H. Sharing genes fosters identity fusion and altruism. *Self Identity* **16**, 684–702 (2017)

Vázquez, A., Gómez, Á., Ordoñana, J. R., Swann, W. B. & Whitehouse, H. Sharing genes fosters identity fusion and altruism. *Self Identity* **16**, 684–702 (2017).

Vernon P. A., Villani V. C., Vickers L. C., Harris J. A. (2008). A behavioral genetic investigation of the Dark Triad and the Big 5. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 44, 445–452

Vernon, P. A., Villani, V. C., Vickers, L. C., & Harris, J. A. (2008). A behavioral genetic investigation of the Dark Triad and the Big 5. *Personality and Individual Differences, 44*(2), 445–452.

Webster, D. M., & Kruglanski, A. W. (1994). Individual differences in need for cognitive closure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 67*(6), 1049–1062

Appendix

For R outputs, scripts and datasets, please visit: https://osf.io/t6u83/
DOI 10.17605/OSF.IO/T6U83