Gmail

Pete Hatemi <phatemi@gmail.com>

RE: Genetics to Attitudes question

2 messages

FROM NAME REDACTED
To: peter hatemi <phatemi@gmail.com>
Cc: bverhulst@notes.cc.sunysb.edu, XX@XX.edu, XX@XX.edu

Wed, Apr 16, 2008 at 2:34 PM

I don't read it quite the same way, Pete. Sure, we know that personality traits are heritable and sure, there is much on the connection (or lack thereof) between personality traits and political ideology and sure, we know that political ideology is heritable. But the proposal before the house is to investigate the possibility that the heritability of political attitudes works indirectly through ideology much as you found the heritability of vote choice works primarily through the heritability of political attitudes. So in that sense, Jost is irrelevant since he never looks at the heritability of either personality or political beliefs let alone the possibility of indirect heritability. I still don't know of anyone who has done this--but you would be in a better position to know this than I am. The problem may be that the way personality was done in the VCU data does not give a clean measure of the openness dimension??
NAME REDACTED.

"peter hatemi" <phatemi@gmail.com>

"peter hatemi" <phatemi@gmail.com>

04/16/2008 01:25 PM

To: NAME REDACTED <bverhulst@notes.cc.sunysb.edu>

cc<XX@XX.edu>, <XX@XX.edu> SubjectRE: Genetics to Attitudes question

So there's a boat load out there on personality and attitudes, and there are numerous studies which do find relationships between personality and political ideology, with the "Openness to Experience" dimension of the Five-Factor Model being the most prominent and significant negative correlations between openness and right-wing conservatism have also been reported as well as authoritarianism (Tendency to be hierarchical, conventional, and intolerant-considered to be an extreme feature of general right wing ideology). Van Hiel et al (2004) also finds that compulsiveness and disagreeableness are also related to right wing ideology; others findings suggest people with high authoritarianism scores have less love for animals and a more rightist political orientation. In 2003 Jost et al. published an extensive meta-analytical review of the literature pertaining to political ideology and personality reporting that 9 psychological characteristics are correlated to political conservatism: fear of death, system instability, dogmatism and intolerance of ambiguity, openness to experience, tolerance of uncertainty, personal needs to achieve order, structure and closure, integrative complexity, fear of threat and loss, and self-esteem.

There are some serious concerns with such "findings" the measures are often convoluted, conservatism is not a single factor, rather, there are several elements (economic, religious, familial, social, political, sexual, etc, etc) and differ types of conservatism as well as liberalism, among other issues. Other literature (see Crowson et al 2005 for one such example) finds conservatism is not synonymous with right wing Authoritarianism. Jost et al's (2007) more recent piece seems to be slowly heading in the right direction looking for broader underlying dimensions, finding uncertainty avoidance (e.g., need for order, intolerance of ambiguity, and lack of openness to experience) and threat management (e.g., death anxiety, system threat, and perceptions of a dangerous world) contributes independently to political conservatism (vs. liberalism).

In a sample size of 30,000 we found no significant correlation, genetic or other, between extraversion or impulsivity and conservatism/liberalism, and only an extremely modest correlation with psychoticism, neuroticism and social desirability – with such a large sample one would expect significance but the correlations were extremely low (<.05). On the VA30K sample we analyzed party identification as well as partisan intensity and personality and found no genetic relationship. In effect, to a larger degree personality has little to do with ideology at either the genetic or environmental level. KEEP IN MIND PEHNOTYPIC CORRELATION DOES NOT TRANSLATE IN GENETIC CORRELATION. Common mistake made, in many cases the social and environmental factors are

shared but not the genes- I can send you our piece under review if you need a read.

We do have a more recent set of about 5000 twins and parents with the TPQ, IBM, Parker, SCL and other personality measures on a 50 item version of the WP (gun control, evolu on etc etc). I haven't finished the prelim analysis (assump ons tes ng requires to run on any gene cally informed sample). We also combined the US and OZ data to make the ANZUS 75,000 data set on personality, cross cultural sample and we should have the numbers out on these in a few weeks.

I have some write ups on this (I sorta hacked out part of my lit review above).

If you're interested, you can either ring me or email me, but I would check out the Jost literature first, as from the sound of it what you want to do is well done. But if you have a new twist that would help. The personality guys have been drilling this out quite a bit, Bouchard, McGue, Olson, Jost, Crowson, Van Hiel, Merwelde blah blah blah. We're pretty open to working with anyone, so long as they are willing to be part of a larger team, and all that goes with it. Not as bad as the "this thing of ours", you don't have to whack anyone, but we play by the rules of science, so it is a different world.
Cheers

Pete Hatemi Ph.D.
Virginia Institute for Psychiatric and Behavioral Genetics
Virginia Commonwealth University
800 East Leigh Street
Biotech 1, office 130-F
Richmond, VA 23298-0126
W: (804) 828-3782
C: (804) 564-5377

From: NAME REDACTED
Sent: Wednesday, April 16, 2008 1:59 PM
To: bverhulst@notes.cc.sunysb.edu
Cc: phatemi@gmail.com; **REDACTED**
Subject: Re: Genetics to Attitudes question

Brad--
I think you are right on target about the possibility that some of the genetic basis for political attitudes works through personality--since opennes is the personality facet that has tradtionally had the most to do with political beliefs. Unfortunately, openness is also the most amorphous and controversial of the Big 5 facets. In any event, looking at the indirect heritability of political attitudes through attitudes toward openness is a good idea. How best to proceed? I see two possibilities. If you and [Redacted] want to move on this soon, you will need to work with the people at [Redacted]. They have the data that we used for our article and that data set contains a large personality battery in addition to the Wilson-Patterson Inventory of political and social attitudes. [Redacted] and I are not at liberty to give out their data (behvioral geneticists tend to have a somewhat different attitude toward data sets than political scientists do). But I have copied Pete Hatemi into this email since Pete [Redacted] is currently doing a postdoc at VCU with Lindon Eaves and others. I would think Pete would be more than amenable to working on something like this. The other option is to wait for a year or so. Thanks to NSF funding, we are doing a survey of approximately 1100 twins listed in [Redacted]. The instrument contains both political and personality items and, after the PIs take a few months to play with the data, the entire data set will be made available to the greater research community. The N is not nearly as large as the VCU data set but at least the data set will have a full battery of political items and will not be proprietary at all. We have hopes that it will be widely used--and your idea fits the data perfectly. We would be happy to work on the

project with you or merely to get you the data as early as possible so that you could do it yourselves. Regardless, I very much hope your good idea will be tested.
NAME REDACTED

bverhulst@notes.cc.sunysb.edu

bverhulst@notes.cc.sunysb.edu
04/15/2008 01:43 PM

To REDACTED
cc
Subject Genetics to Attitudes question

Dear Professor NAME REDACTED:

NAME REDACTEDand I were hoping that you would be willing to share some of your data with us that would (hopefully) allow us to trace out the relationship in political attitudes that could be accounted for by personality factors like openness to experience. More specifically, we hope to test whether there is a direct effect of heredity on political attitudes that remains after controlling for openness (if this has not already been done by someone else in the behavior genetics field). Looking at mediational models (a la Baron and Kenny, 1986) may be an effective way to examine the process though which genetic factors or predispositions influence political attitudes. Because the proposition that personality characteristics are hereditable is not overly controversial, it is possible that people (like Charney) will be more comfortable with this style of stepwise progression from genetics to social and political attitudes. If you are interested in working on something like this as well, we would be thrilled to include you in the project.

Any help/advice that you may be able to provide on this topic would be greatly appreciated.

Best,

Brad Verhulst and XX

Stony Brook Univeristy

Tue, Jun 18, 2019 at 5:28 PM