



The role of personality in the explanation of preferences for democratic processes

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Abstract

Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) made a suggestive explanation of the *Stealth democracy* thesis. Their explanation of the preferences for *Stealth democracy* incorporated a first psychological variable: aversion to conflict. The goal of this paper is to proceed forward in the incorporation of psychological variables to explain preferences for how democratic processes should be conducted. We will use a recent Spanish survey to a representative sample of adult population (n=2450) to analyze these ideas. We use three dependent variables: the original *Stealth democracy* index, the original process scale and a new scale showing support for direct democratic processes. We show that the incorporation of the big five personality traits (especially openness to experience and neuroticism) provides a better understanding of the explanation of these democratic preferences.

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Stealth democracy (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2002) was a central contribution to our understanding of participatory dynamics. Up to that point, most research about participation was assuming that, whatever the problems participation had in practice, there was a significant citizen demand for more participatory possibilities. Hibbing and Theiss-Morse made clear that this demand was far from universal and that in fact, contradicted the wishes of many citizens that had no interest at all to be more involved in the policy process. Further research has shown that this pattern is not exclusive for the US, but also that preferences about political processes should go beyond support for a Stealth Democracy (SD) model (Bengtsson and Mattila, 2009; Donovan and Karp, 2006)

Our goal in this paper is to contribute to this debate with two main arguments. First, we will show that the measurement of preferences for different types of democratic processes does not end with the SD index. A full understanding of citizen preferences about which kind of democratic processes citizens want needs to incorporate complementary information. Second, we will show that the incorporation of psychological factors in the original research was not sufficient: Conflict aversion is only part of the story of how personality influences our preferences about the role that citizens should play in policy-making and personality traits play also a significant role.

We will develop these arguments and analyze them with the results of a survey to the Spanish adult population, developed to test the *Stealth Democracy* thesis in February 2011. Evidence of the SD thesis has been limited outside the US and, to our knowledge, the SD index has only been replicated in Finland (Bengtsson and Mattila, 2009). Spain represents a quite different type of European country, with a much shorter and quite different democratic history than the Scandinavian countries. As a result, the contextual variability that it introduces is especially interesting. Does the Southern European citizenship model that emerges as distinctive in almost every attitudinal and behavioral aspect² produce a different kind of preferences for political processes?

The results will show that personality factors are significant explanations of preferences for democratic processes. Particularly, openness to experience and neuroticism are clearly relevant to understand these preferences.

The paper will develop in five additional sections. The next section will discuss our main theoretical arguments: we will claim that a full measurement of preferences for democratic processes must go beyond the degree of support for SD and we will discuss the role that personality may play in the understanding of these preferences. Section 3 will present our data, the analytical strategy and our independent variables. Section 4 will justify our dependent variables and present some evidence about which kind of political processes do Spanish citizens want. Section five will present our results

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² See most of the chapters in Van Deth, Montero and Westholm (2007) or Morales (2009)

sis. Finally, section 6 will discuss our results and
ations.

2. The *östealth democracyö thesis and personality*

Aversion to conflict is according to Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002), one of the explanatory factors of support to SD. Then, psychological factors are not fully missing from the explanation of preferences for political processes. However, our main thesis is that a full understanding of where do preferences for democratic processes come from (how we can explain them) needs a deeper incorporation of psychological factors. For people who have aversion to others, the need to spend more time with them discussing public matters is their worst nightmare, while other citizens, more socially oriented or more prone to new experiences may be quite more attracted to processes that can be quite more pleasant to them³. Our feelings and fears about ourselves, the other citizens or the elected politicians are important factors behind these preferences and the distribution of these emotions is likely to be deeply rooted, not only in our social and political experience, but also in our personalities.

Our departure from SD comes from both sides of the original equation. First, we will discuss the reality we want to explain: how we should measure preferences for democratic processes, beyond support for SD. Second, we will argue that we need to incorporate personality in the explanation of these preferences.

2.1. SD and the measurement of preferences for political processes

SD makes three extremely suggesting contributions. First, Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) claim that citizens care about how decisions are made. Citizens are not only interested in outputs, but also have preferences on how these outputs are achieved. These preferences are independent from those about policy contents (you can be in favor of a more participatory model being a Republican or a Democrat) and they are politically relevant, because they explain political trust, support for political reforms and support to non-mainstream politicians like Ross Perot. Second, they show that support for more participatory practices is far from universal. Apparent support for reforms that diminish politicians' power is based largely on the negative perception that most citizens have about politicians. The problem is that their perception about the abilities of their fellow citizens is not much better and, in addition, they are not interested to spend more time on activities that imply conflict with others. As a result of these two attitudes, a significant number of citizens support the model that Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) have labeled *öStealth Democracyö*, that is one where

öGovernmental decision procedures are not visible to people unless they go looking; the people do not routinely play an important role in making decisions, in providing input or in monitoring decision makers. The goal in stealth democracy is for decisions to be made efficiently, objectively and without commotion and disagreement.

³ The incorporation of psychological variables into the study of the political process citizens' want has been also prosecuted in Hibbing, Theiss-Morse and Whitaker (2009) and Mondak (2010, chapter 5).

ster on people's radar screens are preferred to the
ly associated with government" (143)

Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) are not claiming that they have fully captured the kind of democratic processes people want (158). In fact, we introduce three considerations in the discussion of their argument: First, what does the SD index really measure? Second, they use two measures (SD index and process scale) whose fit in a common model is not fully clarified. Third, the need to incorporate additional information to have an appropriate measurement of the political processes people want.

1) The existence of a desire for a SD democracy is an attractive idea, but its measurement strategies make unclear that the SD index can capture the kind of political processes people want. The third point in the 0-3 SD index is achieved through two variables that clearly support the SD ideas: experts or successful business leaders should make political decisions, so that both (corrupt) politicians and citizens could have a less important role. However, the other two indicators that form the index⁴ capture probably, more than anything else, lack of trust in politicians and/or in politics as usual⁵.

2) Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) use a different central variable in the first and second part of the book. While in the first part the crucial variable is a process scale, where respondents choose how much voice should citizens and politicians have in the policy process, in the second part the desired kind of process is specified through the SD index. The authors claim that "far from being diametrically opposed, the apparent desire to empower people often cohabits with the desire to empower entities virtually unconnected to the people" (140). On the contrary we claim that their process scale is a more appropriate measurement of the processes citizens want, whereas the SD index may be measuring something else, but not the kind of processes citizens want.

3) The interesting debate that the book has contributed to create has focused less on the SD index than in preferences for democratic processes more generally. Bowler, Donovan and Karp (2003) showed also that citizen preferences for direct democracy depend on their perceptions of citizens' abilities and on their judgments about the role of elected representatives. Their more recent contribution (2007) also shows significant support for citizens' role in policy making through referenda. Neblo et al (2010) have also made an important recent contribution showing a significant disposition to deliberate about public issues among US citizens.

The only international replication of the SD index also adds an additional measure to the original index, creating a different variable to measure support for direct democratic practices (Bengtsson and Mattila, 2009). In sum, recent research shows that

⁴ Agreement with : "Elected officials would help the country more if they would stop talking and just take action on important problems" and "What people call "compromise" in politics is just selling out on one's principles"

⁵ The goal of this paper is not to make a full assessment of the content or the validity of the SD index (see Font et al (forthcoming) for a full discussion). However, the correlation of the third and fourth item with other indicators of support to expert government (see section 3) are significant whereas the second item does not correlate at all, and the first one does with only limited significance (0,05). On the other side, the two first variables have significant correlations with three variables measuring political trust (trust in parties, judicial system and political system), whereas the other two variables have no correlation at all with them. In sum, the first two are capturing something closely related to political trust, whereas the other two probably measure more clearly support to SD solutions (full results are available from authors).

at reluctance to an enlarged citizens' role in policy-making suggested by SD; and 2) the full universe of citizens' preferences for democratic processes contains complex preferences that may need more than the SD index to be fully captured.

2.2. Psychological variables in the explanation of process preferences

Conflict aversion is an important psychological factor already present in Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002). In fact, in their interpretation, conflict aversion is one of the crucial causal mechanisms to understand why citizens would dislike participation⁶. Conflict aversion is deeply rooted in personality: while some people enjoy arguing with others more than anything else, other persons would accept many unpleasant outcomes to avoid having any explicit disagreement with others. Belonging to one or the other group tends to accompany you through your life.

Since the publication of SD, the argument that personality matters to understand political attitudes and behaviors has been much more advanced, especially among political scientists, that have incorporated personality in their research agenda in the last years (Mondak, 2010; Mondak et al, 2010a; Gerber et al, 2010). To mention just a few, personality has been shown to explain political preferences (Alford and Hibbing, 2007; Mondak, 2010), predisposition to find political information (Gerber et al, 2010; Mondak, 2010), as well as and several forms of political participation (Vecchione and Caprara, 2009; Mondak et al, 2010b, Gallego and Oberski, 2011).

The central idea of this approach is that enduring psychological characteristics (differences in personality) have an effect in the construction of our political preferences. Obviously, this does not mean that people cannot change and adopt changing behaviors in new environments, but it emphasizes the idea that there are some deeply rooted tendencies (personality) that make people more or less likely to adopt certain types of behaviors and values.

The measurement of personality is a complex task that has generated quite long controversies. However, over the last decades, a considerable level of agreement has been reached accepting that the Big Five traits are an appropriate summary of some of the most relevant aspects of personality (Costa and McCrae, 1994; Goldberg et al, 2006). Clearly, there is no claim that these five factors can appropriately capture every aspect of personality, but in the need to look for parsimonious and operational measurements of personality that can be used in interdisciplinary research, the Big Five factor appears as a useful solution.

How can these five factors affect preferences for democratic processes? *Openness to experience* is one of the five factors that have created more controversy, but also one that is especially likely to affect the desire for a larger role of citizens in collective life. In fact, Goldberg (1990) prefers to define this factor as "intellect" and most accounts accept that intellectual curiosity and attraction to new experiences is one

⁶ In the development of their argument Hibbing and Theiss-Morse often talk about conflict aversion (2002: 7), even if the variable they use to measure it is called "negative view of disagreement" and is formed through a combination of responses to quite different questions like interest in politics, a perception of basic consensus among citizens and a variable capturing discomfort with conflict (145).

The larger effort that a more participatory model requires, but not for those that are always willing to learn more and to develop intellectually attractive new experiences.

*Neuroticism*⁸ is the second factor where we can find good reasons to expect a significant effect in this context, since citizens with more neurotic traits could follow a perfect SD logic: On one side, their smaller sense of community and, as a result, their diminished willingness to get involved in collective action⁹, should predict lower support to a large citizen role. On the other side, these citizens are also likely to be less trustful for political leaders and suspicious of their potential behavior. As a result, if we only ask them for the advantages of a process that concentrates less power in politicians' hands and not about their real willingness to participate, they are likely to support it.

Expectations could be more mixed for the other traits. For example, *agreeableness* incorporates a strong pro-social aspect that would make this factor a likely candidate to expect a positive contribution to participatory attitudes. However, precisely because this people value so much positive relationships with others, agreeableness has been shown to be strongly correlated with conflict aversion: people who score high in this dimension prefer to avoid political disagreement to facilitate easy going relationships with others¹⁰. Similarly, the outgoing people that score high on *extraversion* should be expected to be more favorable to collective decision making procedures that involve direct relationship with others. However, Mondak (2010, 143) has shown that the effects of extraversion on the desired political processes are far from clear and depend highly on other demographic aspects. Finally, Mondak (2010) has also show that the effects of conscientiousness on these preferences could be not linear. The task of having to make collective decisions would be less demanding for people who score high on this dimension, but since this is a trait that has also been related to risk aversion, these citizens may prefer the most well-known procedures of representative democracies to the unknowns of more participatory democracies.

In sum, we expect a more consistent positive effect of openness to experience and neuroticism on attitudes measuring support for more participatory practices, whereas we the effects of the other 3 personality traits are more difficult to predict in a context of limited development of the theory.

3. Data and methodology

To address these questions we use a national survey, representative of the Spanish adult population, with a sample size of 2450 personal interviews. The survey was conducted by CIS¹¹ in February 2011. The sample was stratified to region and size

⁷ For example, Gallego and Oberski (2011) have shown that it predicts especially the tendency to use new forms of participation like boycotts.

⁸ This second factor has also been framed in positive as *emotional stability*.

⁹ On the relationship between neuroticism and sense of community, see for example Lounsbury, Loveland and Gibson (2003).

¹⁰ Both Mondak et al (2010b) and Gallego and Oberski (2011) find no significant effects of agreeableness on the likelihood to participate in Uruguay, Venezuela and Spain.

¹¹ CIS is a public opinion survey institute that conducts social and political surveys for the Spanish public administration and research institutions.

selected randomly as primary sampling units, and were selected with probability proportional to size. In the final stage a person was selected by performing a random walk through the section with age and sex quotas¹². The survey included the Spanish translation of many of the most important *Stealth Democracy* survey variables¹³, as well as additional measures of preferences for democratic processes¹⁴.

As we have seen in section 2, comparative research about preferences for political processes is limited and specific research reproducing the SD model is even scarcer. This limited comparative evidence makes quite crucial to know whether the patterns analyzed in the previous literature are exclusive from the US (and Finland) or they also hold in other national scenarios. The Spanish case is particularly relevant, because Spain's democratic history and, probably as a result, its attitudinal and behavioral patterns are quite different from those of older democracies. Spain shares with other Southern European countries a quite distinctive cultural and participatory tradition, with quite lower levels of political interest (Martin and Van Deth, 2007), participation in social networks (Iglie and Font, 2007), membership in organizations (Morales, 2009) and lower levels in general of almost any kind of social participation, with some possible exception in protest activities (Teorell, Torcal and Montero, 2007). Since representative democracy is a more recent achievement, the desire to go beyond it and to incorporate political processes that allow for a larger role of citizens in its political life could be less fully developed than in older democracies.

Our most important independent variable is personality, captured through the big five factors. The Five Factor model has been previously empirically studied in Spain. Initial research was more skeptical about its adequacy to the Spanish context (Benet-Martinez and Waller 1995; Benet-Martinez and Waller 1997). However, more recent research has shown an appropriate fit with the Spanish data (Benet-Martinez and John 1998; Gallego and Oberski, 2011) that shows that the Five Factor model is valid for the Spanish case.

The questionnaire included 10 items to measure the 5 usual traits: agreeableness, openness to experience, extraversion, neuroticism, and conscientiousness, with two items for each of them. We departed from the translation done by CIS for a previous survey (Gallego and Oberski, 2011) of the 10 Item Big-Five Inventory (BFI-10) that had been developed by Rammstedt and John (2007). Since Gallego and Oberski (2011) show that one of the items expected to measure agreeableness did not appropriately measure it, we substituted it by another of BFI-44 items designed to capture this same dimension. Obviously, a longer version of the battery is preferable, but the BFI-10 was developed to measure personality in a very short time and is an appropriate solution for surveys dealing with social and political issues, with limited tradition of including psychological variables.

¹² The full details of the sampling method and the survey can be found at www.cis.es (study number 2860).

¹³ We thank John Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse for making available the full original questionnaire.

¹⁴ A pilot study to test the questionnaire was developed during December 2010. Focus groups and a supplementary local survey are also being developed as part of the project, but their results are not going to be used through this paper.

ness are the only ones that (again) do not fit well
rtial correlations are also the only ones that are not
positive and significant, among the pairs of items designed to capture each of the
dimensions (table 1). A rotated factor analyses with five factors places each of the pair
of items in a clearly differentiated dimension that fit well with theoretical expectations,
except for the two items expected to measure agreeableness. "I have no difficulty to
feel others' emotions" is a sentence that quite clearly captures the central idea of
agreeableness (a pro-social orientation), more clearly than in the case of our second
item: "I see myself as someone who tends to find fault with others"¹⁵. As a result, we
decided to keep the two items for the other four factors, but only the sentence "I have no
difficulty to feel others' emotions" for agreeableness. The final factor analysis
including the 9 variables shows that they fit neatly in a five factors frame, where each of
the variables goes clearly into the corresponding big five traits (table 2). We use the five
factor scores produced by this analysis as our main independent variables to be used in
the rest of the paper¹⁶.

Tables 1 and 2 about here

The next section will discuss and present our dependent variables.

4. How to measure preferences for democratic processes

As we argued in section 2, support for the SD model may be part of the story on
how to measure which kind of political processes citizens want, but it does not capture
the whole picture. As a result, we will use as our first dependent variable the SD index,
measured exactly as in Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002), but we will use two more
variables. First, we will use the same process scale, where respondents place themselves
(in our case in a 0-10 scale) between the two poles represented by a situation where
citizens would take all decisions (0) and a situation where elected politicians would take
all decisions (10). Graph 1 represents the distribution of the scale.

The results of the scale are not terribly different from those from the US: most
people choose moderate central positions, with a few more preferring the participatory
than the institutional side, exactly as in the US case. On the SD index, Spain stands as
the most pro-SD country (compared to the US and Finland) with only 1% of the
population having no SD traits and 40% having the three of them (compared to 26-27%
in the other two countries)¹⁷. In sum, we have a scenario where the demand for more
participatory processes is similar to other countries, but where criticisms to politics as
usual appear to be very high.

Graph 1 about here

¹⁵ We want to thank Aina Gallego for all her suggestions about possible measurements of agreeableness.

¹⁶ Annex 1 includes the graphic representation of these variables if they were measured through an additive index. The correlation with our factor scores are very high (four of them above 0,9; the other 0,86) and the results do not change if we used the additive index. However, the factor scores are a more reliable measure than an additive index created with only two variables.

¹⁷ The strikingly high result is mostly due to the almost unanimous (95%) support to the idea that politicians should stop talking and take actions. This idea would probably be highly supported in many other years of recent Spanish history, but this support may be even enhanced in a context of a deep economic crisis that led to extremely bad perceptions of the economy and of all politicians in general.

ements of the processes citizens want, our survey included two batteries where respondents were asked about their evaluation of four different models of making collective decisions: consultations to citizens, expert democracy, assembly democracy and representative democracy. One of the batteries collected support to more general principles (e.g., regular consultations to citizens) and the other to specific mechanisms to apply these principles (e.g., referenda).

Table 3 shows the correlations among these sets of variables and table 4 shows the results of a factor analysis that incorporates all of them. Both tables point in a similar direction. The variables showing support for referenda democracy and for assembly democracy have all high correlations among them and they all load highly in a single factor that measures support for a more direct democracy. On the other hand, three of the other variables, showing support for a significant role of experts and for a representative democracy, also show high correlations and load highly in the second factor, but one of them does not. This second factor could be measuring support for a democratic model where politicians play a central role, but experts also contribute to the decision making process. However, since the specific meaning of this second potential factor is less clear cut¹⁸, we will concentrate on the idea captured by the first factor, support to direct democracy. In sum, we will add to the discussion of preferences to democratic processes a specific measure of support for direct democratic options, as has done most of the recent literature (Donovan and Karp, 2006; Bengtsson and Mattila, 2009), but we will use a complex additive index¹⁹ that can produce more reliable measurements than single indicators.

Tables 3 and 4 about here

How do our 3 final variables relate with each other? Table 5 shows their correlations. As in Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) the SD index shows no correlation with the scales measuring support for different democratic processes. On the contrary, these two scales show a significant correlation among them, as we should expect since they provide two alternative measurements of these preferences. Basically, they differ because one is based on a unipolar scale and the other in a bipolar scale: the original SD process scale forces citizens to choose between two sides, whereas the support for direct democracy scale shows the intensity of support to these ideas and practices.

Table 5 about here

The next section will develop the analysis to see the explanatory factors of each of them. The analytical strategy will be the following. First, in order to show the similarities and differences between the Spanish and US context, we will replicate the exact²⁰ explanatory model used in Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) for Stealth

¹⁸ An additive scale using the four questions would produce a Cronbach alfa of 0,55. Excluding the fourth, more problematic item, it would increase to 0,60.

¹⁹ The Cronbach alfa of the additive index formed by the four questions measuring support for direct democratic options is 0,78.

²⁰ We have used exactly the same independent variables, except in 3 cases. First, we have not introduced race which is not relevant in the Spanish context. Second, we have substituted income by a subjective perception of family income. Previous experiments have shown this variable to correlate very highly with real income (Mónica Méndez, CIS former research director, personal communication), but avoiding the

ent variables. Second, for each of these dependent analysis incorporating the big five personality

5. Analysis: The role of personality in the explanation of preferences for democratic processes

Table 6 shows the six models used to explain our three dependent variables, three excluding personality variables and three incorporating them. The six models use linear regression analysis and incorporate the B coefficients to facilitate their comparisons. We have used almost identical models than Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) in their explanation of preferences for SD²¹. For each of the three dependent variables, the model incorporating psychological variables increases the R² (not impressively) and produces some changes in the explanatory capacities of other variables.

The result of our first model is, in fact, quite similar to the US one: in the US only conflict aversion, ideology and democratic identification were important to understand support for SD. In Spain, only education gets added to this very similar picture: conflict aversion has the largest explanatory power (the more you have a negative view of disagreement, the more you support SD), followed by identification with the left wing party, IU (model 0).

The inclusion of the big five variables in the analysis (model 1) shows that one of them has a significant effect, openness to experience: scoring high in this variable produces diminished support to a SD model. The inclusion of the personality variables also produces some changes in other variables, modestly reducing the effect of conflict aversion and of identification with IU, and making clear that age also plays a role, so that older people tend to support less the SD idea.

The second original SD variable, the process scale, shows some similar results, but most of them are different: older and low income people prefer a more representative democratic model (model 2). Political variables are also important, so that people who identify with the two majoritarian parties also show enlarged support for this model, exactly the opposite that happens with left-wing people that favor more direct democratic processes.

In this case, the inclusion of the personality variables uncovers also a role for education, so that citizens with higher educational levels will tend also to favor a more

45% non-response typical for the income question in Spain. Third, we have used a more direct measurement of conflict aversion (agreement with the Spanish translation of "When people argue about political issues you feel uneasy and uncomfortable", the conflict aversion variable used in SD), instead of the original variable that mixes political interest, conflict aversion and perception of agenda consensus.

²¹ We have used different codings for two variables to adapt to the different the national and party system contexts. In the left-right scale, to avoid losing the 20% of respondents that do not answer the question, we have used no answers as the baseline category and introduced three dummies measuring identification with left (0-3), center (4-6) and right (7-10). With party identification we have also used people who do not identify as the baseline category (as in the US), and introduced four dummies for each of the three national parties (PP, conservative; PSOE, socialdemocrat; IU, left) and for the rest of them (others, including mostly regional parties from both right and left).

3). Three personality traits will have significant case of openness to experience (the more open, the more support for direct democratic practices), but being also significant for neuroticism and agreeableness.

Finally, the new unipolar scale of support to direct democratic practices (model 4) shows a larger role for socio-demographic than for political variables: the role of income, education and age is consistent with models 2 and 3 and gender appears to have an effect, that disappears once we introduce the personality variables in model 5.

Their introduction also contributes to see that party identification with PSOE produces a more negative view of direct democratic practices, but reduces to below the significance level the role of identifying with the left. In this case, four personality dimensions reach statistical significance, all except agreeableness. They also point in all cases in the same direction than in model 3, giving more credence to the idea that the role that personality plays in the explanation of the preferred democratic model is not a statistical artifact, but a robust result that is achieved with different measurements of these preferences.

Table 6 about here

6. Discussion

The previous results show that the idea to incorporate personality variables in the explanation of preferences for democratic processes is useful. The previous contributions by Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002), Hibbing, Theiss-Morse and Whitaker (2009) and Mondak (2010) had already shown that these variables had a role in this explanation and our results have proven that our understanding of the foundations of these preferences gets clarified once we introduce the personality variables. Truly, the overall explanatory power of the models gets only modestly enhanced, but we need to consider that we are only measuring direct effects, when previous research has shown that the effect of personality variables is both direct and indirect, through other attitudes (Gallego and Oberski, 2011).

Two of the personality traits have a more constant and clear effect: openness to experience and neuroticism. Openness to experience is the only factor that has a significant effect in the three dependent variables we have used and these effects are quite consistent among them: these citizens will clearly support a larger role for citizens in the political processes, whatever the measure we use and consequently, they will support less often than others a SD model. Neuroticism has a similar (but more modest effect), but probably for quite different reasons. Models 3 and 5 show how larger levels of neuroticism enhance support for direct democratic practices, but model 1 shows that it also enhances support for SD, a clear symptom that the underlying causal mechanism is related to political trust. The crucial role of these two traits to explain preferences for political processes is quite similar to the findings of Hibbing, Theiss-Morse and Whitaker (2009) that point particularly to the role of the same two factors.

The best news for the other three personality traits is that in the two most similar dependent variables their results are at least partially consistent, since the coefficients

models. Why these effects are larger and significant
the other is one of the open questions that deserves

Further future attention.

The role that personality factors play in the explanation of support for a SD model is a different story. If our three dependent variables would measure different aspects of the same story, we should expect at least consistent signs in the effects played by personality (and other independent) variables, but this is the case only for openness to conflict and extraversion. As argued, we claim that this result is mostly due to the fact that the SD index is really measuring something more similar to political trust than a consistent preference for a given democratic model. In fact, the different role of psychological variables also emerges in the case of original SD variable, the negative view of disagreement, that is important to explain SD, but not for the other two scales, where results point in the appropriate direction (the more conflict aversion, the lesser support for a participatory model) but do not reach statistical significance.

In sum, we can reach two implications from these different roles of psychological variables. First, if the problem was the societal prevalence of a negative view of disagreement, this would only matter for support to SD, but not for other preferences about the desired democratic processes. Second, support for SD may be a quite interesting factor that explains support for political reforms or for certain anti-establishment candidates, but it is not probably the best measure to capture the kind of democratic processes citizens want. Instead, the process scale proposed by Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, shows quite similar patterns of distribution and points to quite similar explanatory factors that an alternative (unipolar) scale built from responses to several items. The virtues, limits and differences between these two measures should be more thoroughly explored in future research.

The role of other explanatory variables shows also interesting similarities with other countries. Education and age increase support for a representative model and diminish support for SD, whereas income is not related to SD but has the opposite effect, decreasing support for representative government. The full understanding of the meaning of these results should be fully explored, but the paper has shown that some of them become more apparent once we control for personality factors (the vanishing of the role of gender in model 5 or the significance of age in model 1). Regarding the political variables, party identifications have emerged as more important than ideology. The significant relationship between both variables and its potential effect in the models should be more fully explored, but these results point in an interesting direction, showing that the difference between mainstream/majoritarian parties and small ones could be more important than the left-right divide: people who identify with the two large parties are the largest supporters of representative democracy, whereas those citizens that identify with the smaller IU are those that show less enthusiasm for SD²². In any case, only comparative research that introduces variability in the party systems can fully clarify this question.

²² The fact that the largest difference appears between IU in one side and the two large parties in the other is consistent with programmatic proposals from the parties themselves, where IU has consistently differentiated from other parties, showing a clear support to policies favoring a more direct involvement of citizens in political processes (Vergé, 2007).



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not emerged as fully extraordinary. Support for SD, appears to be especially high in Spain, but this is mostly due to one of the sentences that form the index and points fully to the political trust component of the index. On the other hand, the process scale shows a distribution quite similar to the US one and the lack of correlation between both measures shows also more similarities than differences with the US case. The explanatory variables of these preferences are also remarkably similar and some of the differences (for example, in the role played by political variables) are mostly due to the very different configuration of the party systems, more than to the different degrees of consolidation of the democratic systems.

ive Inventory

variables	Dimension Big 5	Correlation	Significance	N
Tends to be reserved	Extraversion	0,429	0,000	2331
Is outgoing				
Has no difficulty to feel others' emotions	Agreeableness	0,002	0,941	2335
Tends to find fault with others				
Tends to be lazy	Conscientiousness	0,250	0,000	2401
Someone who does a thorough job				
Handles stress bad	Neuroticism	0,352	0,000	2367
Gets nervous easily				
Has few artistic interests	Openness to Experience	0,288	0,000	2277
Has an active imagination				

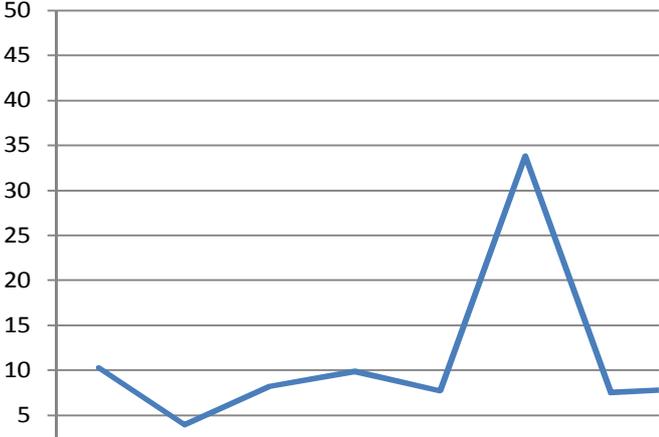
Table 2. Factor analysis of the psychological variables: matrix of rotated components*

	Components				
	Extraversion	Neuroticism	Conscientiousness	Openness to Experience	Agreeableness
Total variance explained	72,81%				
Variance explained by factor	16,25%	15,45%	14,10%	13,95%	13,07%
Tends to be reserved	0,865	-0,084	0,046	0,063	-0,044
Tends to be lazy	0,210	-0,188	0,797	0,047	-0,169
Handles stress bad	0,035	0,770	-0,292	-0,062	0,004
Has no difficulty to feel others' emotions	0,140	-0,051	0,040	0,098	0,860
Has few artistic interests	0,094	-0,070	0,106	0,885	-0,060
Is outgoing	0,779	0,049	0,061	0,141	0,240
Someone who does a thorough job	-0,104	0,102	0,715	0,074	0,429
Gets nervous easily	-0,072	0,853	0,138	0,048	-0,022
Has an active imagination	0,120	0,088	-0,018	0,652	0,399

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scale



Comparisons of alternative decision-making procedures

	Regularly consult citizens	Experts make decisions	People participate and discuss	Elect politicians	Organize referendums	Decisions based on consultations with experts	Organize assemblies and meetings	Government leaders make decisions
Regularly consult citizens	1	0,181*	0,644*	0,062*	0,440*	0,088*	0,380*	-0,231*
Experts make decisions	0,181*	1	0,227*	0,340*	-0,002	0,449*	0,094*	0,111*
People participate and discuss	0,644*	0,227*	1	0,138*	0,362*	0,135*	0,451*	-0,259*
Elect politicians	0,062*	0,340*	0,138*	1	-0,057*	0,228*	0,017	0,248*
Organize referendums	0,440*	-0,002	0,362*	-0,057*	1	0,245*	0,503*	-0,229*
Decisions based on consultations with experts	0,088*	0,449*	0,135*	0,228*	0,245*	1	0,285*	0,081*
Organize assemblies and meetings	0,380*	0,094*	0,451*	0,017	0,503*	0,285*	1	-0,267*
Government leaders make decisions	-0,231*	0,111*	-0,259*	0,248*	-0,229*	0,081*	-0,267*	1

* Significant at 0, 01 level

ns of decision making procedures: matrix of rotated components*

	Components	
	Support direct democracy	Support technocratic democracy
Total variance explained	54,870%	
Variance explained by factor	32,617%	22,253%
Frequent consultations	0,773	0,075
Experts make decisions	0,102	0,787
People participate and discuss	0,770	0,158
Elect politicians	-0,058	0,690
Organize referenda	0,735	-0,010
Decisions through experts	0,242	0,673
Decisions through assemblies	0,747	0,106
Elected politicians make decisions	-0,497	0,436

Method of extraction: Analysis of principal components.

Method of rotation: Varimax with Kaiser.

*The rotation has converged in three iterations.

dependent variables

		Support for direct democracy scale	SD process scale	SD index
Support for direct democracy scale	Pearson's correlation	1	-0,367**	0,037
	N	2062	2035	1578
SD process scale	Pearson's correlation	0,367**	1	-0,078**
	N	2035	2340	1673
SD index	Pearson's correlation	0,037	-0,078**	1
	N	1578	1673	1695

** Significant at 0,01 level (bilateral)

ocratic process preferences (with and without

Variable	Model 0. Explanatory factor of support for SD (no personality)		Model 1. Explanatory factor of support for SD (with personality)		Model 2. Explanatory factors of process scale (no personality)		Model 3. Explanatory factors of process scale (with personality)		Model 4. Explanatory factors of support for direct democracy (no personality)		Model 5. Explanatory factors of support for direct democracy (with personality)	
	B	p	B	p	B	p	B	p	B	p	B	p
Gender	-0,034	0,169	-0,029	0,269	0,002	0,909	0,023	0,308	0,055	*	0,018	0,465
Age	-0,046	0,076	-0,054	*	0,136	**	0,121	**	-0,091	**	-0,077	**
Income	-0,017	0,521	-0,020	0,457	-0,057	*	-0,055	*	0,103	**	0,104	**
Education	-0,152	**	-0,157	**	0,039	0,117	0,063	*	-0,076	**	-0,088	**
Negative view of disagreement	0,114	**	0,105	**	0,022	0,322	0,031	0,174	-0,015	0,512	-0,023	0,351
PSOE	-0,034	0,204	-0,026	0,346	0,128	**	0,137	**	-0,045	0,072	-0,053	*
PP	0,013	0,653	0,019	0,514	0,058	*	0,069	**	-0,033	0,211	-0,033	0,232
IU	-0,069	**	-0,064	*	0,014	0,542	0,024	0,311	0,032	0,177	0,018	0,456
Other parties	0,022	0,393	0,024	0,358	0,019	0,387	0,018	0,436	0,032	0,168	0,027	0,264
Left	0,004	0,930	0,001	0,974	-0,112	**	-0,098	**	0,077	*	0,059	0,128
Right	0,043	0,229	0,040	0,280	0,001	0,968	0,005	0,872	-0,014	0,659	-0,024	0,474
Center	0,049	0,224	0,050	0,247	0,004	0,889	0,023	0,491	-0,011	0,750	-0,036	0,333
Extraversion	-	-	-0,036	0,165	-	-	-0,001	0,973	-	-	0,049	*
Neuroticism	-	-	0,019	0,463	-	-	-0,055	*	-	-	0,063	**
Conscientiousness	-	-	0,028	0,282	-	-	-0,043	0,052	-	-	0,053	*
Openness to Experience	-	-	-0,058	*	-	-	-0,106	**	-	-	0,053	*
Agreeableness	-	-	0,023	0,379	-	-	-0,044	*	-	-	0,043	0,068
Constant	2,414	**	2,465	**	4,078	**	3,465	**	25,565	**	26,844	**
F	7,292	**	5,766	**	8,451	**	7,602	**	6,396	**	5,653	**
Adj. R ²	0,045	-	0,051	-	0,039	-	0,054	-	0,032	-	0,042	-
N	1622	-	1508	-	2197	-	1978	-	1958	-	1807	-

*<0,05

**<0,01

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