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Review of Martin et al. (2024)

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Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript which examined associations between psychosocial development and political orientation/ideology. There is added value from this research investigation to the corpus of literature on psychology and political orientation/extremism. Nonetheless, below I enumerate several areas where I think the manuscript could be clarified and improved.

1. In the abstract it needs clarified whether political extremism is a political orientation if it can characterize both left and right-wing behavior? It appears to me the investigators are conflating leftism with extremism, or more specifically based on how the measure of extremism is derived in this paper, Right-wing extremism. The (partial) setup of the paper as whether psychosocial development is related to conservatism vs. liberalism thus appears a bit misleading or confusing. More specifically, the 'oomph' in the findings is not all that surprising when 'extremism' is considered rather than, say, liberalism or leftism. Indeed, as extremism essentially a different construct than 'economic conservatism', one would likely anticipate a different direction of association. The direction of association with political extremism should be noted in the abstract.
2. There needs to be a clarification on whether the sample is in fact nationally representative. It does not appear from the text description of the sample this is accurate. More specifically, did everyone in the target population had an equal chance of selection? Given that there is no mention of purposeful oversampling, it would not appear that the current sample is a 'quota sample.' Further detail is needed.
3. Top p. 4: What are the two dimensions referred to here in this alternate conceptualization of political orientation? A clearer contrast with the single dimension conceptualization is needed for the reader.
4. Middle p. 4: There are reliable associations between liberalism and neuroticism; that literature should be covered for a fuller, more detailed coverage of the work examining links between the Big-5 and political ideology. Also see: Gerber et al., 2010, 2011 & Helminin et al., 2021: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ijop.12796>. The Jost et al. suggestion that conservatism is a mechanism for dealing with the fear of death

strikes me as somewhat at odds with current reported associations between liberalism and internalizing problems. See Gimbrone et al., (2022) <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666560321000438>. Counterpoise in discussing this idea would be useful for the reader and to present a more comprehensive overview of the literature.

5. Bottom p. 7: psychosocial development could be both positively related to economic conservatism and negatively related to political extremism depending on the measures one was to examine; please clarify.
6. The writing seems to conflate political extremism with leftism on p.7; It might be helpful to provide an example of right-wing extremism/terrorism or provide working prototypes of both types. More specifically, it is unclear to me throughout the manuscript how political orientation (L/R) is distinct from political extremism and how this is logically situated within the inspiration for your study which as you noted in the introduction was motivated by the finding of links between psychosocial development and economic conservatism, but not social conservatism.
7. Sample-specific reliability needs reported for all the measures. Was a CFA or something similar done to confirm the two-dimensional factor structure of the Heath et al. (1994) scale in the present sample? For the TIPI what is the correlation with the Big 5 facets that would point to convergent validity? Please provide some additional reliability and/or validity information for the 3-item measure of political orientation (e.g., associations with the main measure of political orientation).
8. What is the motivation for using an orthogonal rotation in the factor analysis of the Heath et al. (1994) scale. In the subsequent paragraph you note the dimensions are theoretically orthogonal, but more detail on this should be provided in the paragraph describing the methods undertaken for the Heath et al. (1994) scale.
9. Why wasn't a confirmatory CFA with correlated factors (or an EFA with oblique rotation) conducted on the sample data for the MEPSI? This would provide some additional support for the cross-sample stability of the measure and for averaging across the subscales as you do.
10. Please report the bivariate *rs* for the TIPI measure.
11. What rubric was used for retained items? .6? citation/justification needs provided.
12. Were the results reported based on a Fisher's *r*-to-*z* test?
13. Table 4. Please use asterisks and note sig level values in the table presentation
14. Bottom p. 17: It is not clear to me the logic/motivation of creating an extremism measure using the absolute value of Conservatism as a proxy. More detail is needed drawing on the Jost et al. (2007) citation. More generally, however, this discussion needs reconciled with the text on p. 12 that notes you squared the MEPSI global score to test the alternative hypothesis that psychosocial development was related to political extremism.
15. P. 19: I think the note that *"Although the Left-Right dimension in the current study included a preponderance of economic items, several social items were mixed in, and some economic items, particularly microeconomic concepts related to capital-labor relations, heavily loaded on the "social" factor. Nevertheless, the Left-Right dimension that served as our primary criterion variable in the current study was similar enough to economic conservatism found in college samples for us to feel comfortable concluding that the relationship between psychosocial development and conservatism we observed in college*

samples is a restriction-of-range artifact." is a major constraining factor in the interpretation of the present findings.

Empirical evidence attesting to this statement should be provided (e.g., associations with other study variables included in the earlier college samples and in this study?". As I asked earlier, why was no CFA conducted on the original Heath et al. (1994) scale? what is the reported factor structure of the Heath et al. scale? If this was completed, one would have more confidence in the statement above. From the sound of it, my sense is that a different factor structure was found in this sample, with different item-factor (cross) loading patterns. Further, given that the measure of extremism is derived from the Conservative dimension, is one justified in concluding this reflects Right-wing extremism? More discussion around these issues is needed.