

Chameleon Personality: Sources of Cross-Situational Inconsistency

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BACKGROUND

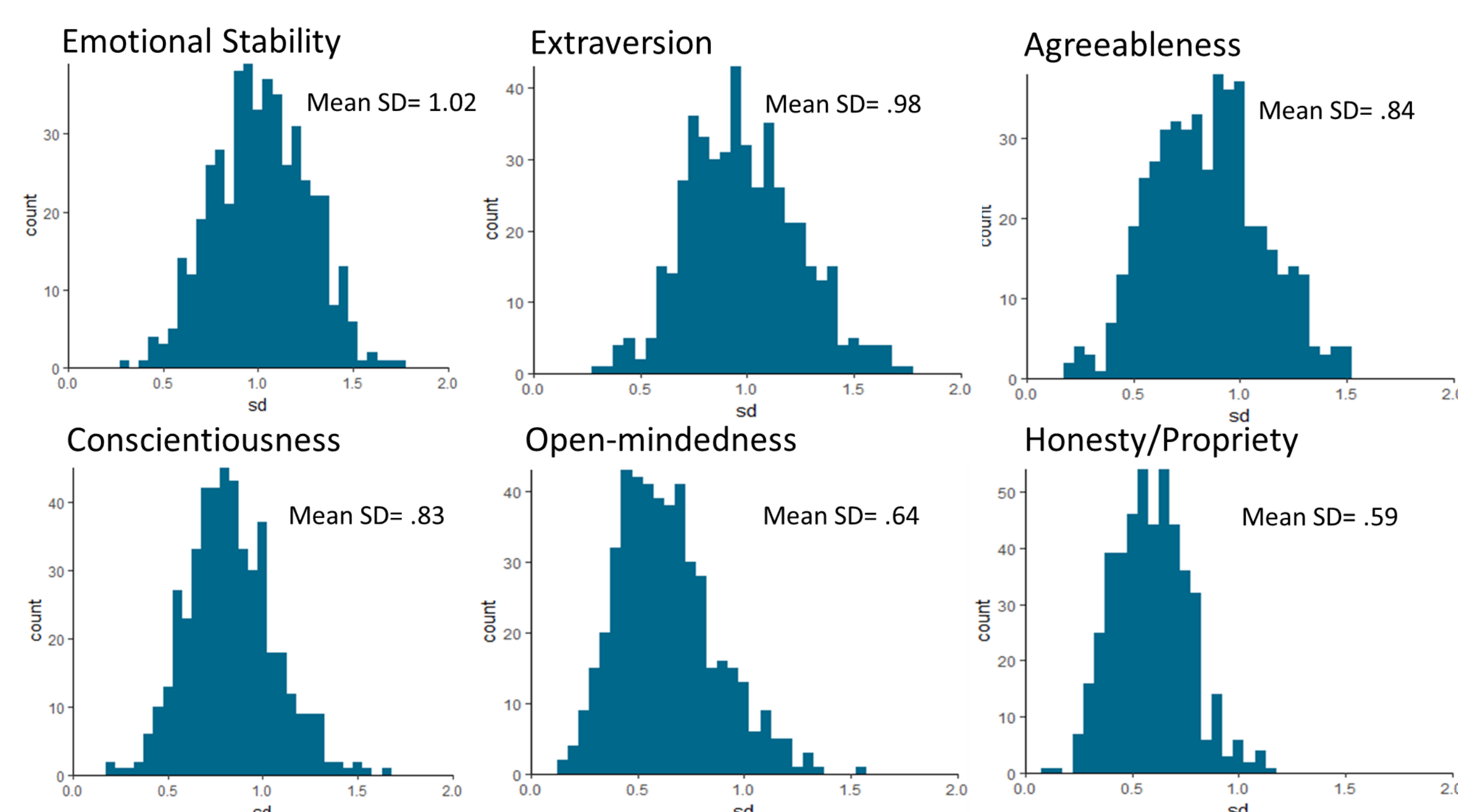
- Past research has shown that average cross-situational consistency varies by personality trait (Conley & Saucier, 2017)
- However, little is known about what motivates personality to change across situations
- We explore the possibility of personality **fault lines** - a pair of distinct patterns of personality expression that people switch between depending on the influential features present in the situation
- We tested four fault-line contrasts commonly found in psychological literature: Positive Affect vs. Negative Affect, Threat vs. Reward, Agency vs. No Agency, and Private vs. Public



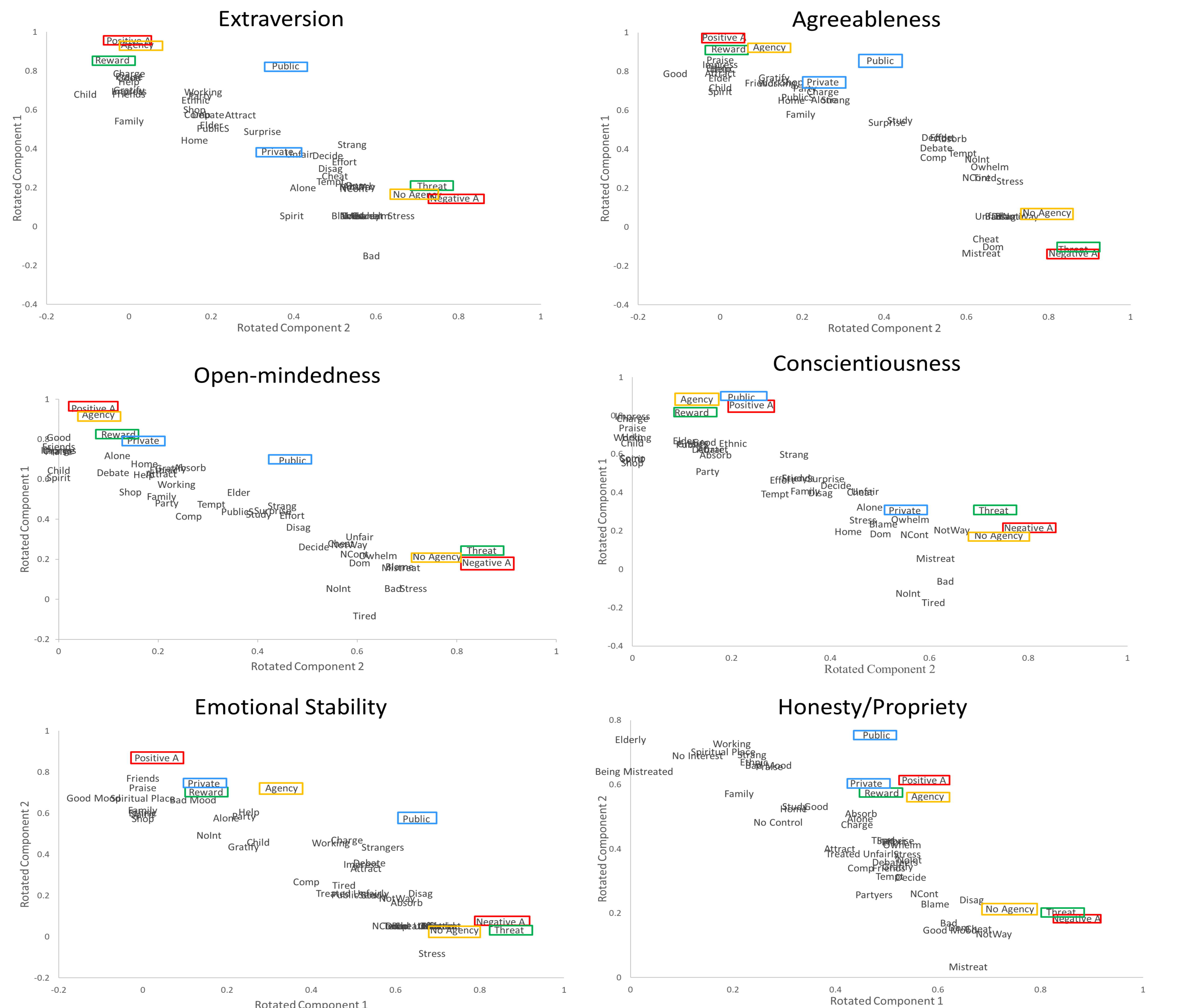
METHOD

- 474 University of Oregon undergraduate students
- Self-report of Big Five Personality traits plus Honesty/Propriety juxtaposed with each of 41 differing situations
- The mean was taken across participants' standard deviations to determine cross-situational consistency by trait
- Ratings from eight coders were used to determine four sets of situations that comprised our fault-line contrasts
- Principal Components Analysis was run on six subsets of data
 - Once for each trait with 41 situations as variables
- Component scores were correlated with our fault-line contrasts

Distribution of Standard Deviations By Trait



Two-Dimensional Structure of Situations By Trait



RESULTS

- Consistent with previous results, average cross-situational consistency varied by personality trait
- Mean SD was highest for **Emotional Stability (1.02)** and lowest for **Honesty/Propriety (.59)**
- Fault-line patterns were consistently displayed for the contrasts of Threat vs. Reward, Positive Affect vs. Negative Affect, and Agency vs. No Agency
- Private vs. Public contrast did not display a fault-line pattern in a two-dimensional space

CONCLUSIONS

- Replicated evidence that personality varies across situations
- Expression of Emotional Stability and Extraversion varied the most across situations
- Expression of Honesty/Propriety varied the least across situations
- Exploratory steps demonstrate three sources of cross-situational inconsistency
- Future research will explore the role culture plays in expression of personality across situations