

# Mapping political trust and involvement in the personality space—A meta-analysis and new evidence

Laurits Bromme<sup>1</sup>  | Tobias Rothmund<sup>2</sup>  | Flávio Azevedo<sup>2</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>Department of Psychology, University of Koblenz–Landau, Landau, Germany

<sup>2</sup>Institute of Communication Science, Friedrich Schiller University Jena, Jena, Germany

## Correspondence

Laurits Bromme, Department of Psychology, University of Koblenz–Landau, Fortstr. 7, 76829 Landau i. d. Pfalz, Landau, Germany.  
Email: bromme@uni-landau.de

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## Abstract

**Objective:** Relations between the Big Five personality dispositions and individual differences in *political trust* and *involvement in politics* have been investigated in many studies. We aimed to systematically integrate these findings and further explore the correlations at different hierarchical levels of the Big Five and political trust and involvement.

**Method:** We conducted a meta-analysis of 43 publications ( $N_1 = 207,360$  participants) and estimated latent correlations at different hierarchical levels using two additional samples ( $N_2 = 988$  and  $N_3 = 795$ ).

**Results:** The meta-analysis revealed substantial correlations between involvement and openness (+), extraversion (+), and neuroticism (–), but only small correlations between trust and the Big Five. We also found a substantial amount of inconsistency in findings across studies. Our additional analyses showed that (a) correlations with the Big Five were larger for higher-order factors of *general political trust* (as opposed to subdimensions such as *trust in politicians*) and *general political involvement* (as opposed to subdimensions such as *political interest*) and (b) correlational patterns within each Big Five domain differed across facets.

**Conclusion:** Our analyses indicate that political involvement is more strongly linked to the Big Five than political trust. We discuss the theoretical and empirical relevance of hierarchical constructs.

## KEYWORDS

Big Five, personality facets, personality traits, political attitudes, political involvement

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Political research on the Big Five traits is only in its initial stages.

Gerber et al. (2011b, p. 284)

In the last 10 years, an impressive body of research has investigated the association between basic personality traits and political attitudes or behavior (e.g., Arzheimer, 2005; Bakker et al., 2021; Chang et al., 2020; Freitag & Ackermann, 2016; Gerber et al., 2011a, 2011b; Mondak & Halperin, 2008; Mondak et al., 2010; Osborne et al., 2021; Rasmussen & Nørgaard, 2018; Riemann et al., 1993;