Political Ideology, Morality, Interests, and Willingness to Interact

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Abstract

Studies have shown that political ideology is often misunderstood and categorized into simplistic ideas. Morality is intricately connected with political ideology in the sense that it contains a vast array of views. Simplistic views promote division, when in reality, there are more experiences, values, and interests that unite, rather than divide us. Investigating ways people draw upon to find commonality is critical both for researchers and those desiring to forge bonds among individuals. It was hypothesized that participants with different political ideologies would score differently on moral stances, liberals would score higher on moral stances relating to the well-being of individuals, conservatives would have different scores across the five foundations of morality, participants would be more willing to interact with profiles that disclosed their interests rather than a moral stance, and that participants would be more willing to interact with someone of a similar political ideology as themselves. Participants (N=55) volunteered to take a survey through Qualtrics; they disclosed demographic information, political ideology, moral stances, interests, and willingness to interact. All hypotheses were partially or fully supported. Results showed that participants with different political ideologies score differently on moral stances. Results also showed participants were more willing to interact with someone who shared their interests rather than a moral stance. These results highlight differences based on political ideology and moral values, while pinpointing similarities based on shared characteristics (Interests, moral stances). These results provide hope for fostering future relationships based on commonality that lead to respect of opposing ideologies.

Keywords: Political Ideology, Morality, Interests, Willingness to Interact

American society is influenced by the ideologies of people with political power who determine how resources, rights, and opportunities are distributed. This often means, in the realm of politics, a crude division between democrats and republicans (political affiliation). However, the Pew Research Center (2021) points out that this simplistic split obscures the diversity of views existing within each group (it doesn't account either for the fact that many Americans do not fit easily into either one). Political ideology can be defined as a "set of beliefs about the proper order of society and how it can be achieved" (Erikson & Tedin, 2003, 64). Our political ideology is not only dependent upon other people, but upon our own experience with reality. Morality is shaped in a similar way, but the roots of what one values as right or wrong are beyond the social and human experience. It runs to what is natural within every human; that which is innately understood as right and wrong (Haidt & Joseph, 2004). A part of what one holds to be as right and as the best experience of reality can be experienced in the form of activities or hobbies. These interests evoke emotions of satisfaction and capture one's attention. This study investigates the value people place on their political ideology, morality, and interests to see the correlation that these have with one another on influencing one's willingness to interact.

Adaval and Wyer (2022) study the different factors that influence political ideology, such as evolution, genetics, and personality. By studying these three factors, the researchers conclude that liberals and conservatives are influenced by experience, emotion, and reason. The spectrum upon which people land between liberal and conservative is vast, and while the endpoints can generally be associated with democrat and republican, party identity is not always consistent with stances on an issue. The researchers conclude that out of evolution, genetics, and personality, conservatives are more likely to resist change in the social system because of the

sensitivity to threat that changes could bring. This leads conservatives to rely on their intuition, emotion, and fixed patterns of behavior that have been observed throughout history to either work or cause a threat. On the other hand, liberals are open to change and diversity, using reason and logical analysis of a situation to place importance on social equality so that those in need are taken care of. The important takeaway from this article is that the liberal to conservative spectrum which people place themselves on is not defining their party affiliation (democrat, republican) or stance on a specific issue, but rather allows for a wide range of stances on multiple issues, while explaining a more broad stance of society and how it should run.

Puryear et al. (2024) studied the political divide that exists between democrats and republicans. By studying tweets online, Puryear et al. were able to show how media influences the views of a group of people toward another group of people. The researchers additionally found that people think that their political opponents are willing to accept blatant moral wrongs. Puryear et al. sought to correct this skewed view by showing participants that their political opponents had rated certain actions or ideas as immoral, which was similar to the participant rating. This resulted in participants being more willing to engage with their political opponents (Puryear et al., 2024). Hence, as intended to achieve in the present study, there is hope that the political divide can be bridged if people are willing to communicate beyond their disagreement.

Landy et al. (2023) studied how social stimuli, such as one's political ideology or party affiliation, can influence physical reactions of disgust. To examine this, the researchers gathered Republicans and Democrats, then, using pictures of faces connected with basic descriptions such as names, likes, and voting patterns; participants rated six characteristics: gross, attractive, healthy, intelligent, moral, and trustworthy. The results showed that the faces given different political affiliations than the participants were rated as more “gross” than those who had the

same political affiliations, even though there were other characteristics where one could express dislike of the members (Landy, et al., 2023). This study shows how polarization can influence people to the point of eliciting physical disgust when seeing that someone is of a different political party. This furthers the need for research investigating what connects humans despite their differences.

Haidt and Joseph (2004) studied how different cultures across time hold virtues that are similar. Virtues such as, exchanging things for mutual benefit (reciprocity), showing some sort of loyalty to a certain group, having respect for some authority, limiting physical harm, and regulating eating habits and sexuality, seem to show up across all cultures in some way. Haidt and Joseph found that, while cultures vary on the value they place on certain virtues, their universal existence suggests that morality is both innately and socially constructed (Haidt & Joseph, 2004). Generally speaking these virtues determine what is the “right” and “wrong” way to behave and are referred to as "morality" (Ellemers et al., 2019).

Five main categories of morality were derived in Haidt and Graham’s (2007) study: Harm/Care (limiting human suffering), Fairness/Reciprocity (exchange of something for mutual benefit), Ingroup/Loyalty (loyalty to a group that one is close with), Authority/Respect (holding respect for authority figures), and Purity/Sanctity (regulating social habits such as dress codes and eating). Haidt and Graham hypothesized that those who have a liberal political ideology will value virtues based on the first two foundations more than the others, which deal directly with how humans are treated and relates more to social justice, while those who have a conservative political ideology will value virtues across all foundations pretty equally, which shows a value for social justice, but also a value for authority and law (Haidt & Graham, 2007).

Graham et al. (2009) use the moral foundations theory to further the work of Haidt and Graham (2007) by analyzing political ideology in relation to the five categories of morality. In one study, participants were asked questions about the relevance of certain principles of something being right or wrong. Participants also had to rate their political party affiliation on a 7 point scale. This study's results found that those who identified as liberal held the Harm/Care and Fairness/Reciprocity as a higher importance than the rest of the moral foundations. Those who identified as conservative held all five foundations on an equal level of importance (Graham et al., 2009). The present study intends to further the work of Haidt, Graham, Joseph, and other researchers involved with the moral foundations theory as well as use the same questionnaire as the first study of Graham et al. (2009).

Balliet et al. (2016) studied how cooperation works between two people of different political ideologies. The researchers focused on what the participants were willing to sacrifice for cooperation and trust. Balliet et al. had their participants engage in the prisoner's dilemma where participants would receive 100 points for making certain decisions and their partner (someone of the opposite political party) would receive the same. Then, participants would have the choice to give points to their partner, which would double when given over, but if they kept their points, they would retain the same value. The researchers found that liberals, compared to conservatives, would show greater concern for others' outcomes (Balliet et al., 2016). Hence, Balliet et al.'s results revealed that people with different political ideologies value different virtues.

Balietti et al. (2021) examined how sharing biographical information such as place of origin, a birthday, hobbies, etc. influences open-mindedness to someone with a different political viewpoint. Balietti et al. surveyed participants to gather basic information about their lives as well as personalities and also had them write an essay on a specific political issue; these essays

were intended to be used in profiles to be shared in the second phase of the study. In the second survey, participants were matched with a profile based on similarity in personalities, hobbies, and lives. Some participants got profiles with an essay containing a view different from theirs. When participants were matched with a profile that had similar traits to the participant, there were significant correlations in the participant changing their view based on the essay they read in the profile (Balietti et al., 2021). The work of Balietti et al. shows that despite having different views on a topic, people can share similar traits and be open-minded to the opposing view. This is something the present study intends to replicate.

The review of these studies deal with topics (political ideology, morality, interests, willingness to communicate) relevant to every human being. Topics such as morality and political ideology can bring tension or unite a group of people together. Whether or not humans share the same belief system, humans have many other things in common, such as hobbies, culture, and the shared experience of humanity. Common ground allows for deeper relationships and understanding with others, the tendency for individuals to associate in this way is referred to as homophily (Launay & Dunbar, 2015). These shared interests and experiences influence one's willingness to interact with others. Political ideology and morality are often misunderstood between humans, and often, one statement doesn't define a whole person. If people seek to interact beyond perceived differences, humanity can unite on common interests or experiences. This sort of unity could allow for respectful interactions among people with different ideologies. This study desires to demonstrate that beyond core beliefs and political ideology upon which people might disagree, there is the hope that additional factors have the potential to unite humanity. Therefore, this study posits two main hypotheses aiming to understand human nature in regard to several variables.

- H1: Participants with different political ideologies will rate moral concepts differently.
    - H1a: Individuals who identify themselves as liberal are more likely to score higher on moral concepts relating to the individual (Harm/Care and Fairness/Reciprocity).
    - H1b: Individuals who identify themselves as conservative will score differently across the five moral foundations.
- H2: There will be a difference in willingness to interact when interests are communicated compared to when moral stance is communicated.
    - H2a: Participants will score higher on willingness to interact when there is a shared political ideology compared to when there is not.

Method

Participants

A total of N=65 participants took the survey, with 1 person responding "no" at the beginning of the survey, indicating they weren't willing to participate, 7 people did not respond to most questions, and 2 people had multiple points of incomplete data. The study analyzed information from participants (N=55) who volunteered and were not compensated, with 32 identifying themselves as conservative (16 men and 16 women) and 23 identifying themselves as liberal (10 men and 13 women). Participants had to be at least 18 years or older, participant ages ranged from 18-75 (M = 41.38, SD = 20.32). Participants disclosed their political ideology, moral stances, interests, and willingness to communicate. The study was given via Qualtrics and shared by convenience sampling through Facebook, GroupMe, and through faculty of IUS who shared the link with their students.

Materials

A short demographics page was given first, asking the participants' age in years, asking gender as male, female, or to fill in the blank. Then participants completed the scale on political ideology, where participants first read "we hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Liberals believe that the government should play an active role in supporting social and political change, and support a strong role for the government in economic and social matters. Conservatives believe that the government should uphold traditional values, and that government intervention in economic and social matters should be as little as possible (Lowi et al., 2019)." Participants were asked to consider a six-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative (Yeung & Quek, 2024). The scale ranges from 0 (extremely liberal) to 5 (extremely conservative). The scale on political ideology helped assess hypotheses 1, 1a, and 1b.

Morality was then assessed using the work of Haidt and Joseph (2004) on the moral foundations theory where they defined morality as values innately and socially constructed as right or wrong. Participants were asked "When you decide whether something is right or wrong, to what extent are the following considerations relevant to your thinking?" The 15 items from Appendix A used in study 1 of Graham et al. (2009) were shown and participants rated each item on a six-point scale from never relevant to always relevant. These items are categorized by their corresponding moral foundation: *Harm/Care* (whether or not someone was harmed, whether or not someone suffered emotionally, whether or not someone used violence), *Fairness/Reciprocity* (whether or not some people were treated differently than others, whether or not someone was denied his or her rights, whether or not someone acted unfairly), *Ingroup/Loyalty* (whether or not someone did something to betray his/her group, whether or not the action was done by a friend or

relative of yours, whether or not someone showed a lack of loyalty), *Authority/Respect* (whether or not the people involved were of the same rank or status, whether or not someone failed to fulfill the duties of his or her role, whether or not someone showed a lack of respect for legitimate authority), *Purity/Sanctity* (whether or not someone did something disgusting, whether or not someone violated standards of purity and decency, whether or not someone did something unnatural or degrading) (Graham et al., 2009). These questions help to assess hypotheses 1, 1a, and 1b.

From there, participants will identify what interests them and how frequently they get involved in their interests. Participants will read "Keeping in mind the definition 'Observable activity that occupies attention and kindles motivation to pursue the activity in such a way that evokes emotions of satisfaction, (Berlyne, 1949)' how frequently have you been involved in these activities of interest in the last month?" Participants used a five-point scale from never to every day (Pressman et al., 2009). Participants were given the choice of 9 observable activities; listening to music, being in nature, making friends, traveling, visiting friends/relatives, going out for meals with friends/relatives, involvement with hobbies, spending quiet time alone, spending time unwinding at the end of the day. The first four of these were derived from a list from Guilford et al. (1954). The final five were taken from Pressman et al. (2009). This helped assess hypotheses 2 and 2a.

Finally the participants were given six different scenarios that include a gender neutral name of a person and information on either their political ideology, stance on a moral issue, or their interests. The names were intentionally chosen to be gender neutral to try and avoid any confound variables. These are the scenarios: Jayden is frequently involved in going out for meals with friends/relatives, traveling, and listening to music. Jesse is frequently involved in being in

nature, making friends, and visiting friends/relatives. Adrian reported that, when considering whether something is right or wrong, it is very rarely relevant to take into consideration whether or not someone acted unfairly. Bailey reported that, when considering whether something is right or wrong, it is always relevant to take into consideration whether or not someone failed to fulfill the duties of his or her role. Cameron reported their political ideology as liberal. Sam reported their political ideology as conservative. After reading each scenario, participants were asked to rate on a six point scale, from not willing at all to extremely willing, to how willing they would be to have future interaction with each person in each of the following ways; have ____ as a close friend, confide in ____, have ____ visit your home, and visit ____'s home (Esses & Dovidio, 2002). This helped assess hypotheses 2 and 2a.

Procedure

Participants were contacted through Qualtrics, the online questionnaire platform. Participants were given instructions and a brief overview that explained to participants that they were being asked to participate in a research study:

Scientists do research to answer important questions that might help change or improve the way we do things in the future. This document will give you information about the study to help you decide whether you want to participate. Please read this form, and ask any questions you have, before agreeing to be in the study. All research is voluntary. You can choose not to take part in this study. If you decide to participate, you can change your mind later and leave the study at any time. This research is intended for individuals who are at least 18 years old. If you are under the age of 18, do not complete the survey. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationships between political ideology, morality, interests, and willingness to communicate. The study is being conducted by Jackson Parr (senior seminar student) under the supervision of

Dr. Valerie Scott at Indiana University Southeast. You are being invited to participate because you are over the age of 18 and you are impacted by the relationships of these variables. If you agree to participate, you will do the following: complete the survey within 15-20 minutes, answer questions about your demographic information (age, gender), political ideology (liberal, conservative), morality, interests, and willingness to communicate. No identifying information will be collected and data will be kept confidential. Before agreeing to participate in this study, please consider the potential risks and benefits. There are no physical risks associated with participating in this study. However, some questions on the survey may be sensitive or personal, and you may feel uncomfortable answering them. You are free to skip any questions you do not wish to answer. We hope that the information gathered from this study will help researchers understand the relationship between political ideology, morality, interests, and willingness to communicate. There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study. You will not be paid for participating in this study. There is no cost to participate in this study. Your participation in this study is anonymous, and all data collected will be kept confidential. We will make every effort to keep your personal information secure, but we cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. No information that could identify you will be shared in any publications about this study. Your personal information may be shared outside the research study if required by law. We also may need to share your research records with other groups for quality assurance or data analysis. These groups include the Indiana University Institutional Review Board or its designees, and state or federal agencies who may need to access the research records (as allowed by law). If you have questions about the study or encounter a problem with the research, contact the researcher, Jackson Parr at jhparr@iu.edu or the supervising faculty Dr. Valerie Scott, at vbscott@iu.edu. For questions about your rights as a research participant, to discuss problems, complaints, or

concerns about a research study, or to obtain information or to offer input, please contact the IU Human Research Protection Program office at 800-696-2949.

Then the questions mentioned above were available, there would be around 45 total. It took on average 15-20 minutes to complete. At the end of the survey, participants were thanked for their participation.

Results

Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis tested differences in each of the morality foundations based on participants' self reported political ideology (liberal vs conservative). A repeated-measures ANOVA determined that mean morality scores differed significantly across the five foundations, $F(4, 208) = 34.88$, $p < .001$. A post-hoc pairwise comparison using the Bonferroni correction showed a significant difference (p = .002) in the Harm/Care foundation of morality between liberals (*M = 5.67, SD = 0.49*) and conservatives (*M* = 5.03*, SD* = 0.88); similarly a significant difference ($p < .001$) in the Fairness/Reciprocity foundation was found between liberals (*M* = 5.52*, SD* = 0.55) and conservatives (*M* = 4.76*, SD* = 0.79); no significant difference ($p = 0.61$) was shown in the Ingroup/Loyalty foundation between liberals (*M* = 4.01*, SD* = 1.398) and conservatives (*M* = 3.78*, SD* = 1.14); similarly, no significant difference was found in the Authority/Respect foundation ($p = 0.15$) between liberals (*M* = 4.05*, SD* = 0.796) and conservatives (*M* = 3.72*, SD* = 0.93); there was no significant difference found in the Purity/Sanctity foundation ($p = .073$) between liberals (*M* = 4.26*, SD* = 1.396) and conservatives (*M* = 4.85*, SD* = 0.87). Therefore, we can conclude that the results for the ANOVA indicate a significant difference in some of the morality foundations between liberals and conservatives, supporting hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 1a tested the scores of liberals on the first two foundations using an independent sample t-test. There were significant differences in the Harm/Care foundation of morality between liberals (*M = 5.67, SD = 0.49*) and conservatives (*M* = 5.03*, SD* = 0.88), *t*(53) = 3.12*, p* = 0.003; similarly a significant difference in the Fairness/Reciprocity foundation was found between liberals (*M* = 5.52*, SD* = 0.55) and conservatives (*M* = 4.76*, SD* = 0.79), *t*(52) = 3.93*, p* < 0.001. We can conclude that liberals scored higher on the first two foundations, supporting hypothesis 1a.

Hypothesis 1b tested the scores of conservatives across the different moral foundations. A paired sample t-test showed:

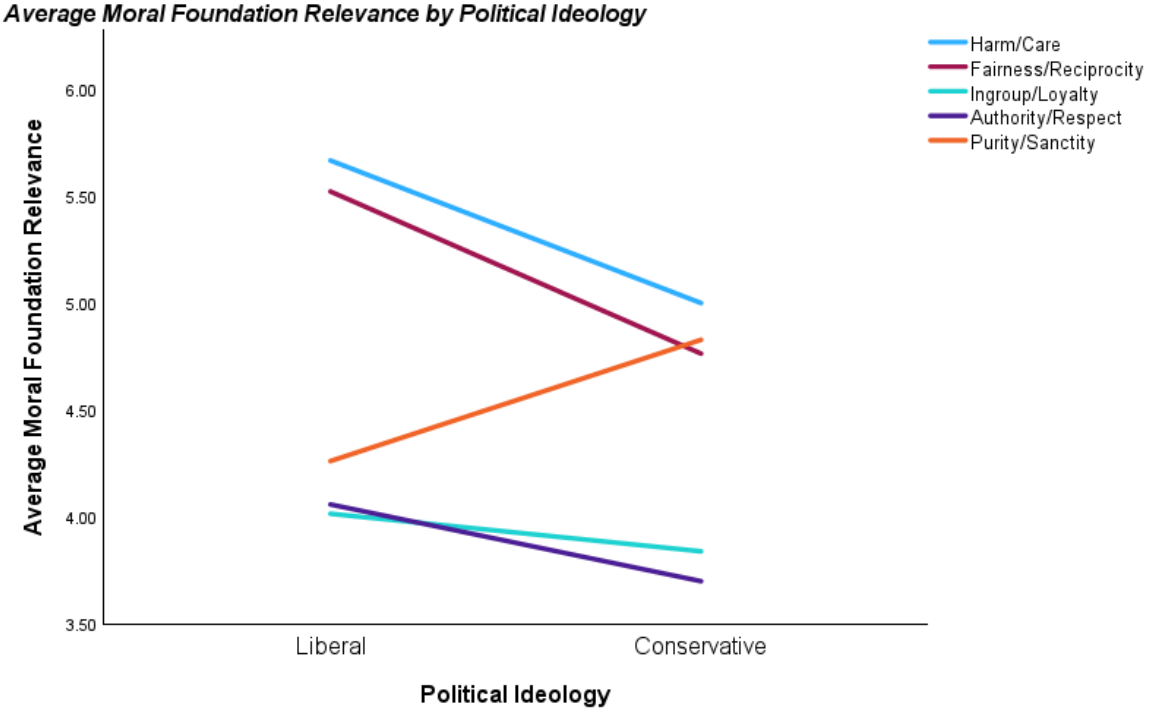
- There was no significant difference between the Harm/Care (*M* = 5.03, *SD* = 0.88) and Fairness/Reciprocity (*M* = 4.76, *SD* = 0.79) foundations, *t*(31) = 1.32, *p* > 0.05;
- Similarly there was no significant difference between Harm/Care (*M* = 5.03, *SD* = 0.88) and Purity/Sanctity (*M* = 4.85, *SD* = 0.87), *t*(31) = 0.97, *p* > 0.05;
- However, there were significant differences between the Harm/Care (*M* = 5.03, *SD* = 0.88) and Ingroup/Loyalty (*M* = 3.78, *SD* = 1.14) foundations, *t*(31) = 6.28, *p* < 0.001;
- Similarly, there were significant differences between the Harm/Care (*M* = 5.03, *SD* = 0.88) and Authority/Respect (*M* = 3.72, *SD* = 0.93) foundations, *t*(31) = 5.95, *p* < 0.001.
- There were significant differences between Fairness/Reciprocity (*M* = 4.76, *SD* = 0.79) and Ingroup/Loyalty (*M* = 3.78, *SD* = 1.14), *t*(31) = 4.43, *p* < 0.001;
- Similarly, there were significant differences between Fairness/Reciprocity (*M* = 4.76, *SD* = 0.79) and Authority/Respect (*M* = 3.72, *SD* = 0.93), *t*(31) = 5.88, *p* < 0.001;
- However, there were no significant differences between Fairness/Reciprocity (*M* = 4.76, *SD* = 0.79) and Purity/Sanctity (*M* = 4.85, *SD* = 0.87), *t*(31) = -0.33, *p* > 0.05.

- There were no significant differences between Ingroup/Loyalty ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.14$) and Authority/Respect ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.93$), $t(31) = 0.27$, $p > 0.05$;
- However, there were significant differences between Ingroup/Loyalty ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.14$) and Purity/Sanctity ($M = 4.85$, $SD = 0.87$), $t(31) = -4.74$, $p < 0.001$;
- There was a significant difference between Authority/Respect ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.93$) and Purity/Sanctity ($M = 4.85$, $SD = 0.87$), $t(31) = -5.58$, $p < 0.001$.

Therefore, hypothesis 1b is partially supported, showing that there are differences between conservatives on the moral foundations.

Figure 1

Average Moral Foundation Relevance by Political Ideology



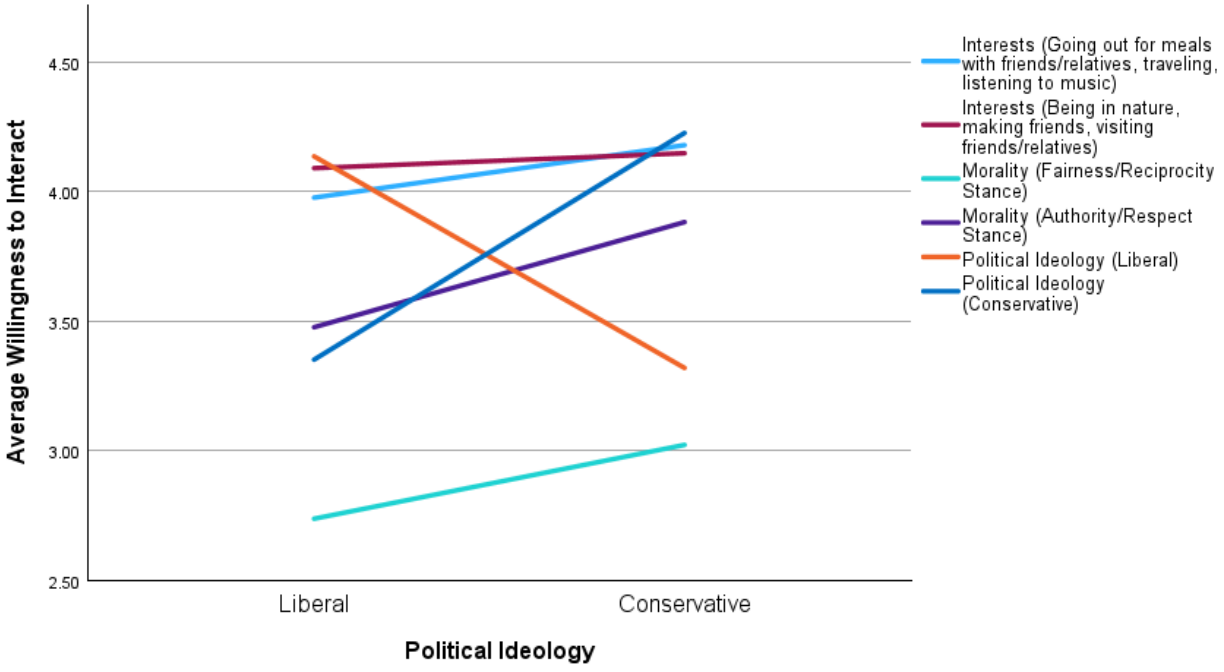
Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis regarding the relationship between interests, morality, and willingness to interact was tested using a paired samples t-test. There was a significant difference between participants' willingness to interact with the fake profile communicating Interests

(going out for meals with friends/relatives, traveling, listening to music) (M = 4.1, SD = 0.99), and participants' willingness to interact with the fake profile communicating morality (fairness/reciprocity stance) (M = 2.89, SD = 0.97), $t(54) = 8.57$, $p < 0.001$. There was a significant difference between participants' willingness to interact with the fake profile communicating Interests (going out for meals with friends/relatives, traveling, listening to music) (M = 4.1, SD = 0.99), and participants' willingness to interact with the fake profile communicating morality (authority/respect stance) (M = 3.72, SD = 0.95), $t(54) = 3.01$, $p = 0.004$. There was a significant difference between participants' willingness to interact with the fake profile communicating Interests (being in nature, making friends, visiting friends/relatives) (M = 4.12, SD = 0.94), and participants' willingness to interact with the fake profile communicating morality (authority/respect stance) (M = 3.72, SD = 0.95), $t(54) = 3.42$, $p = 0.001$. There was a significant difference between participants' willingness to interact with the fake profile communicating Interests (being in nature, making friends, visiting friends/relatives) (M = 4.12, SD = 0.94), and participants' willingness to interact with the fake profile communicating morality (fairness/reciprocity stance) (M = 2.89, SD = 0.97), $t(54) = 8.704$, $p < 0.001$. Therefore, hypothesis 2 was supported.

Figure 2

Willingness to Interact Based on Different Variables between Political Ideology



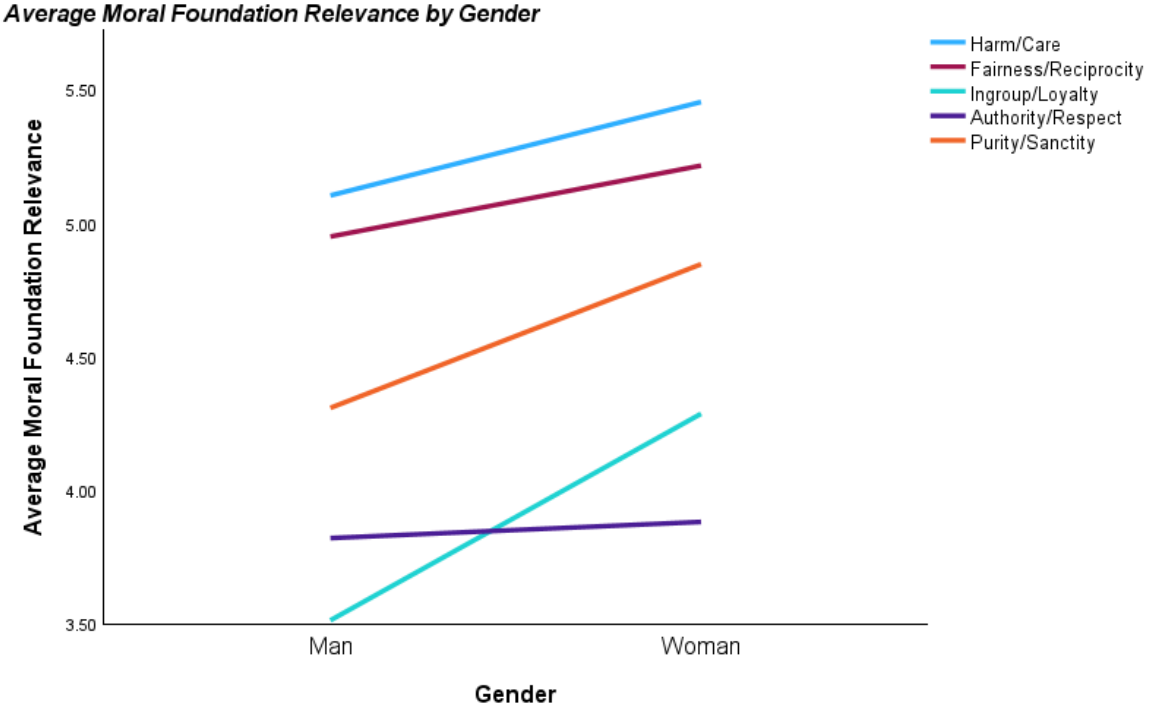
Hypothesis 2a tested the relationship between willingness to interact and political ideology using an independent sample t-test. There was a significant difference between liberals (M = 3.35, SD = 1.36) and conservatives (M = 4.23, SD = 0.79) on willingness to interact with a conservative; $t(53) = -2.99$, $p = 0.002$. There was a significant difference between liberals (M = 4.13, SD = 1.09) and conservatives (M = 3.32, SD = 0.94) on willingness to interact with a liberal; $t(53) = 2.953$, $p = 0.002$. Therefore, hypothesis 2c is supported, showing that participants were more willing to interact with someone of matched political ideology.

Further investigated were the correlations between gender and moral stance. A repeated-measures ANOVA determined that mean morality scores differed significantly across the five foundations, $F(4, 208) = 31.66$, $p < .001$. Further independent sample t-tests were ran to show that women (M = 5.45, SD = 0.15) scored significantly higher than men (M = 5.10, SD = 0.16) on harm/care, $t(53) = -1.73$, $p < 0.05$.Women (M = 4.29, SD = 0.22) scored significantly

higher than men (M = 3.51, SD = 0.23) on ingroup/loyalty, $t(53) = -2.13$, $p < 0.05$. Women (M = 4.85, SD = 0.21) scored significantly higher than men (M = 4.31, SD = 0.22) on purity/sanctity, $t(53) = -1.87$, $p < 0.05$. No other significant differences were found between women and men on the moral foundations. These results show that women participants, in general, valued certain moral foundations significantly more than men participants.

Figure 3

Average Moral Foundation Relevance by Gender



Discussion

The first hypothesis, which focused on political ideology and moral foundation dimensions, was partially supported. As expected (H1a), found significant differences between liberals and conservatives in two of the five moral foundations (Harm/Care and Fairness/Reciprocity); a third dimension (Purity/Sanctity) approached significance. However, there were no significant differences in the Ingroup/Loyalty nor Authority/Respect foundations. These results show that while people with different political ideologies will differ significantly

on certain moral values, they can still find common ground on other moral topics. H1b posited that among participants who identified as conservatives, differences would be found across all five moral foundations. However, conservatives did score almost equally on three of the five moral foundations (Harm/Care, Fairness/Reciprocity, Purity/Sanctity). There were differences between Harm/Care and Ingroup/Loyalty and Authority/Respect; differences between Fairness/Reciprocity and Ingroup/Loyalty and Authority/Respect; and differences between Purity/Sanctity and Authority/Respect. These results show that political ideology and morality can be correlated with one another and that people with certain political ideologies can be likely to hold certain moral values higher than other ones.

The second hypothesis was supported as participants were more willing to interact with fake profiles that stated interests rather than a moral stance. Hence, shared interests rather than shared moral stances are more likely to promote interaction (willingness to interact) with strangers (fake profiles). Hypothesis 2a, which indicated that participants were more willing to interact with the fake profile that shared the same political ideology as them rather than the profile that didn't, was also supported. Thus similarity, political ideology promotes participants' willingness to interact with a stranger (fake profile).

The results for hypothesis one (H1a and H1b) partially aligns with the previous work done by Graham et al. (2009) who found that there were patterns for how participants scored on each moral foundation in relation to their political ideology. As with our research, Graham et al. (2009) participants who identified as liberal scored higher on the first two foundations (Harm/Care and Fairness/Reciprocity), while those who identified as conservative would generally score almost equally across all five moral foundations. While the current study concurred with the results of Graham et al. (2009) regarding participants who identified as liberal

(scores higher on the first two moral foundations); our study showed more divergence among conservative participants; scored equally only across three and not five of the moral foundations. This could be because the current study's sample size (N=55) was significantly smaller, or this could highlight a more fundamental shift in moral stances for this particular group. Whatever the reason, the results do show that both liberals and conservatives scored higher in the first two foundations, liberals moreso, but it shows the value that the sample population places on social aspects of how people are treated. This can be a common ground for people of different political ideologies to unite on. The results also concur with the work of Balliet et al. (2016) showing that liberals, compared to conservatives, display greater concern for others' outcomes, while conservatives were more concerned about themselves and their own group. The results show that participants with different political ideologies valued different virtues to varying degrees, but there were some virtues which seemed to be agreed upon between the two groups (Ingroup/Loyalty and Authority/Respect).

The results for hypothesis two support the previous work of Qin et al. (2021) who found that positive-self disclosure leads to good first impressions. While the current study does not deal with trustworthiness, the fake profiles of Jayden and Jesse share more positive things about themselves (interests), while the other profiles of Adrian and Bailey shared about their moral stance, which can lead one to form any sort of first impression about their personality. Therefore, since our results showed that participants were more willing to interact with the fake profiles of Jayden and Jesse (who disclosed interests) rather than Adrian and Bailey (who disclosed a moral stance), these results support Qin et al, and show that a more personal and positive self-disclosure leads to higher willingness to interact. An implication this could have is that sharing personal experience on moral topics or political stances could unite people even if they

disagree. This implication is supported by the work of Kubin et al. (2021), where it was studied what factors influence perceptions of rationality and foster respect. The researchers found that when personal experiences were shared about one's stance on a specific moral or political issue, participants who disagreed with the stance would rate having more respect and viewing the person as more rational than someone who shared factual information about their stance on a moral or political topic.

The results for hypothesis 2c further support research of Qin et al. (2021). The results also support the findings of See et al. (2020), where the researchers studied how values that one holds will influence their willingness to interact with someone that is different from them or someone that they view as threatening to their values. The researchers did find that knowing one's values could predict their willingness to interact with someone that was different from them or someone who seemed like a threat to their values, and that they would be less likely to interact with someone based on that.The results of this current study show that participants that identified as liberals were more willing to interact with the fake profile of Cameron, who identified as liberal and that participants that identified as conservative were more willing to interact with the fake profile of Sam, who identified as conservative. These results show that people are more willing to interact with others that they perceive as similar to them.

While there were multiple significant findings in this study, some limitations should be noted:

- Participant disclosure of political ideology could be skewed. Although definitions were provided for the terms liberal and conservative, people may have underlying beliefs about these terms and may closely relate them to the terms democrat and republican. As mentioned, most political ideology can be explained on the liberal to conservative

spectrum and doesn't necessarily mean that one is democrat or republican if they identify as liberal or conservative, but this is most likely not the overall consensus.

- While participants had six options to choose from for where they place themselves on the spectrum of liberal to conservative, there was no choice for moderates. That possibility was not included for data collection and analysis reasons. While most people will lean a little more liberal or conservative, some people may just identify as moderate.
- The next big limitation lies within the section on willingness to interact. The six profiles of people that disclose either interests, morality, or political ideology, are fake profiles and do not represent real people. This could have made the section less personable.
- In these profiles, age and gender were not included so that the scores of willingness to interact would be purely based on the information that was shared about the profile. This could have also made the section less personable.
- The names of the fake profiles are gender neutral, while this would help to control gender not being a bias in participants' willingness to interact, people may make assumptions in their own heads of the gender or may have baggage with another person that carries one of those names. This could have skewed one's willingness to interact.
- The questions that analyze participants' willingness to interact dealt with ways one would interact with a good friend, and just because a participant may not want to interact in those ways with some stranger does not mean that they are completely unwilling to have some sort of interaction with another person.
- A final limitation to recognize from this study is that it used convenience sampling and gathered usable data from just 55 participants. This can compromise the generalizability and external validity of our results.

The results of this study imply that there are ways to unite people beyond differing political and moral stances. People express a willingness to interact with others despite having dissimilar interests, and we can imply that the sharing of personal experience could lead people to initiate or even deepen relationships where they could discuss the topics of morality and political ideology in a respectful manner. If respectful relationships are fostered, the sharing of personal experiences and having respectful conversations can lead people to realize that humans are more similar than they are different.

In the future, rather than simply divide participants into Liberals vs Conservatives, they could be split into three groups (liberal, Moderate, Conservative). This might actually be more reflective of research that shows that there is a large amount of people who are not as involved in politics and are more in the middle on certain issues (Pew Research Center, 2021). Interests could be assessed more systematically. A separate study could be conducted before the main study, assessing what types of activities or hobbies people are interested in, then a list could be formed, which is included in the main study. This pre-study could also help to gather other information for the profiles that are used on willingness to interact. Having multiple profiles that could randomly appear to any participant would allow for variables like gender, age, in addition to the present variables (interests, moral stance, and political ideology) to be studied as they are likely to reflect the complexity of human beings and factors involved in their willingness to interact with others (Balietti et al., 2021). Future research has a lot of potential to study multiple variables that influence each person. These studies, if done properly, could be telling of ways to interact that are important in leading towards unity.

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