

POLITICAL IDENTITY & ONLINE DATING: A MIXED-METHODS APPROACH TO
UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL IDENTITY EXPRESSION

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ABSTRACT

Jessica Renee Collier: Political Identity & Online Dating: A Mixed-Methods Approach to
Understanding Political Identity Expression
(Under the direction of Francesca Dillman Carpentier)

Research has highlighted the transformation of politics from ideology to identity as well as the influence of politics in nonpolitical contexts. The present thesis extends these branches of literature by examining politics as identity within a context where individuals are unaware of the political beliefs of their audience: online dating sites. Using a social identity approach, the author conducts a content analysis of 1,000 profiles from a popular online dating site to explore the content that individuals choose to disclose. The author also conducts an experiment with 144 undergraduates to measure importance of political identity and willingness to disclose information on dating sites. Results suggest that political identity is not readily expressed on online dating sites and despite the measured importance of the identity, salience cannot influence expression of political identity. Implications are important for the study of politics as a social identity as well as indirect influences on polarization.

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Political Identity & Online Dating: A Mixed-Methods Approach to Understanding

Political Identity Expression

Online dating is pervasive within today's media environment, even to those individuals who choose not to use the service. For example, the CW hit television show *The Vampire Diaries* surrounds the lives of college-age friends who happen to be vampires, witches and werewolves trying to save their hometown. With a plotline so supernatural, the audience did not expect two of the characters to share a dialogue about being members of Matchasingle.com in its most recent season. The latest Netflix reboot *Fuller House*, while less fantastical, featured an episode commenting on both the necessity and ease of online dating as well as the perceived deceit involved in the community. So while millions of Americans may choose not to use online dating sites or applications, they are certainly savvy about this ~~new~~ technology.

April 21, 2015, marked the 20th anniversary of Match.com as well as the dawn of the online dating era. Since Match.com entered the market in 1995, when only 14% of Americans had Internet access, usage of online dating sites has gone from taboo to nearly commonplace (Smith and Anderson, 2015). eHarmony's television advertising flooded consumers with the idea that long-term relationships can be found online. Other competitors such as Plenty of Fish, OK Cupid, MeetMe and Zoosk, entered the online dating space and in 2012, the popular dating application Tinder used mobility to spark an interest in online dating (or casual relationship-seeking) for college students (Bilton, 2014).

It is unclear how many successful marriages are the result of online dating sites but this saturated marketplace did succeed in erasing the idea that online dating is for the desperate and

lonely. In 2013, a Pew report found that 59% of Americans agree that online dating is a good way to meet people and that more than one-in-ten Americans reported personally using an online dating site (Smith and Duggan, 2013). With that change in perception came a flood of niche sites to claim a stake in the \$2 billion industry (Rogers, 2012). These included sites aimed at vegetarians, farmers, admirers of Ayn Rand novels, beautiful people and geeks. Forty percent of people report having used a dating site or app for people with shared interests (Smith and Duggan, 2013). Ashley Madison is probably the most (in)famous of these niche websites given its largescale hack and data release in August 2015. Hacking incidents, niche websites and a plethora of options for finding a date reveal exactly how common nontraditional forms of dating (i.e. not face-to-face) are in 2016. In twenty years, online dating websites have changed the landscape of romantic relationship-seeking and potentially, the ways in which individuals maintain and express different facets of their identity.

Modern technology such as online dating sites and social media in general has changed the nature of individuals' social networks by extending and expanding communication to broader, more diverse groups of people. Individuals are no longer restricted to homogeneous groups from proximal locations but are now unbounded by geography. This freedom to seek out more diverse relationships does not necessarily equate to a more heterogeneous network. In these expanded networks, individuals maintain a variety of identities: religious, social, ethnic, racial, etc. Research in psychology suggests that individuals migrate to spaces that share their identities (Motyl, et al., 2014; Motyl, 2014). Selective exposure provides evidence of this migratory pattern in the realm of media (Knobloch-Westerwick and Meng, 2009; Knobloch-Westerwick and Hastall, 2010). However, some identities are at times more salient than others and occasionally these identities will conflict with each other. In the modern context of identity

expression, this presents a two-fold decision-making process. Individuals must first decide which identities are most salient, or important, to their conception of self followed by a decision about whether they want their network to share a similar or dissimilar identity. With a context like online dating, this process may become quite complex.

Online dating is almost as pervasive as coverage regarding the 2016 election. There are many subjects that Americans have in common, but none of them are arguably as in-your-face as these two: romance and politics. There is currently little research exploring political identity on online dating sites and no explanation for what factors contribute to how individuals choose to express their political identity. The presence of political identity also has the potential to be antecedent to the formation of political home environments, which has implications for the ways in which conceptions of political identity are passed on to future generations. Examining the presence or absence of political identity on online dating sites is important for understanding the audience that seeks out this technology and subsequently engages with other users.

With a significant population using this media and partisanship playing a role in this equation, understanding how individuals communicate their identity should be of interest to campaigns and their candidates as well as the administrators developing algorithms for these sites. Beyond direct impacts, this work seeks to make a theoretical contribution to the ways in which political identity is understood. Currently scholars understand its importance to such processes as partisan sorting and the role of outgroup discrimination in regard to political identity (Levendusky, 2009; Iyengar and Westwood, 2014). The present study seeks to unearth potential mechanisms related to ingroup bias and perceptions of outgroup discrimination that may result in an unwillingness to disclose political identity. This study, drawn from previous research on political identity, looks at the role of political identity in the social context of online dating.

Literature Review

For the purpose of this thesis, the theoretical foundation will be social identity theory as opposed to identity theory. Identity theory suggests that individuals are motivated by identity verification or a constant need to control incoming perceptions so that their behavior is consistent with their self-meaning (Stets and Burke, 2000). On the contrary, social identity theory suggests that individuals are motivated by self-enhancement (Carter, 2013). This is the more fitting motivation to assume individuals have especially when online dating is the context of study. Previous research has found that individuals will misrepresent themselves online as their aspirational self suggesting that in this context, an individual's motivation is one of enhancement regardless of whether that enhancement is consistent with their self-meaning or not (Ellison et al., 2006; 2012).

Therefore, the following literature review examines factors influencing the expression of social identity, political identity as a piece of one's social identity, political identity as it relates to romance and lastly, the norms that govern the context of online dating.

Expression of social identity.

To understand how political identity is expressed on dating sites, it is necessary to look at the ways in which social identity as a whole varies in expression. Social identity is the psychological connection that individuals feel with a group to which they belong. Tajfel argues that social identity is driven by a need to positively distinguish one's self (1981). Individuals seek to be both authentic and validated, "finding one's true self by having it acknowledged by others" (Taylor, 1994). The perception of other groups and self-comparison with those groups is

at the crux of establishing distinctiveness as individuals increase their own self-esteem by seeing outgroups more negatively (Hogg et al., 1995; Kalkan, Layman and Uslander, 2009). This negative evaluation of outgroups is dependent upon how much individuals identify with their ingroup (Ellemers, Barreto and Spears, 1999).

All of this research provides evidence for the idea that social identity is fluid and dynamic, and ever-changing as a result of the social context that individuals perceive. These contexts and the audience norms (i.e. conventions, rules and sanctions) that accompany them are critical to the ways in which individuals express themselves. In the formation of social identity, individuals are influenced by group norms because they stereotype themselves in terms of group membership, constructing their personal identity on the basis of properties assumed by the social identification of the group as well (Postmes, Haslam and Swaab, 2005). The presence of norms either provides motivation for individuals to comply or actively reject those norms and to alter their communication on that basis as well (Huddy, 2001; Reicher and Gordjin, 1998). If individuals opt to comply, the norms of the social group are internalized and govern the individual's thoughts and actions (Postmes et al, 2005). Situations in which individuals are held accountable for their responses are unique because they increase the individuals' desire to maintain a positive identity and thus increase their likelihood of compliance with established norms (Huddy, 2001).

For example, research has shown that in cross-cutting social networks where individuals are interacting with persons of opposing political parties, even individuals with strong political identities will retreat from political participation or admission of such. Furthermore, individuals who are ambivalent about political participation will suppress that ambivalence in an effort to avoid social conflict with the group's politically involved members (Mutz, 2002). In nonpolitical

social contexts such as this one, individuals will withdraw from their political identity because of a fear of judgment or conflict from one's social environment. A study on religious identity expression showed that Dutch Muslims' religious identity was expressed when they had contact with the minority group (Turks or Moroccans) and suppressed when they had contact with the majority group (Dutch). Findings also showed that those with more minority contacts had a stronger religious identity than those with more majority contacts (Maliepaard and Phalet, 2012). The perceptions of ingroup/outgroup status significantly influence the level of comfortability individuals possess when deciding if and when to express aspects of their social identity.

In addition to being highly contextualized, social identities are also expressed on the basis of salience. Individuals possess a multitude of identities but different social situations can make one identity more salient than another (Haslam, 1992). These identities are also occasionally in direct competition with each other. Recent research has shown that when this is the case, media frames and other cues can influence which of two salient identities is ultimately chosen to be paramount (Klar, 2013). Indirectly related to this type of negotiation of identities is work on biculturalism and biracial identities (Ozyurt, 2013; Basu, 2007). Findings from this literature suggest that in order to maintain both identities, individuals must possess a "coherent self-narrative of belonging to both cultural worlds" (Ozyurt, 2013). Therefore, identity competition is not uncommon and the key to individuals' negotiation of multiple identities is not in perceiving compatibility between the identities but perceiving their self as having a stake in each.

One final factor influencing the expression of social identity is the strength of the identification. Individuals who are 'high identifiers' are much more likely to express their identity with the anticipation that their group will be perceived more positively (Ellemers, Barreto and Spears, 1999). Research has also shown that high identifiers are most likely to take

one for the proverbial team by expressing their ingroup identity even in social contexts where they might be rebuked or punished for doing so (Ellemers, Barreto and Spears, 1999). Political scientist, Leonie Huddy best sums up the factors influencing expression of social identity by saying –

“People adapt their group membership claims to the social context in which these are voiced. People’s expression of social identity will depend on the nature of the audience, on the identity that the audience makes salient and on whether they are personally accountable for responses” (2001, p. 139).

Each of these factors – audience, salient identity and accountability – will be important to the interpretation of political identity on dating sites in the present study.

Political identity.

Initially, one may assume that political identity is not as important to an individual’s conception of self as religious or ethnic identity may be. While it is true that groups form more often as a result of other identities or demographic variants, it is nonetheless important to note that politics will invariably arise within these group formations (Sinclair, 2012; Walsh, 2004). There are mixed results about where exactly political identity falls on the hierarchy of social identities. Some research suggests that partisanship always takes a back burner to religious, racial and ethnic identities (Green, Palmquist and Schickler, 2002). Other research finds that American identity ranks superior to ethnic and racial identity (Sears, Citrin, Vidanage and Valentino, 1994).

It is important to note that regarding these findings, each study conceptualized political identity in different ways. Some researchers take a more nationalistic stance with their conceptualization and see national identity as a proxy for political identity (Sears et al., 1994).

Other research conceptualizes political identity as partisan identification (Green, Palmquist and Schickler, 2002). These researchers suggest that “characterizing party attachments as social identities helps explain why they endure amid changing political conditions. One’s partisan self-conception is guided by a sense of who belongs to these groups and one’s relationship to them” (Green, Palmquist and Schickler, 2002). Even this conceptualization differs from former understandings of partisanship as simply a heuristic voters use to make decisions and transforms partisanship into a type of social identity (Fiorina, 1981; Phillips, 2014). This conception of partisanship as political identity will be utilized for the present study¹.

Political identity is a type of social identity and thus can be governed by the same theory. However, past research has been quick to acknowledge that there are some aspects particular to political identity that do not resonate well with the totality of social identity theory. For instance, political scientists have suggested that party boundaries and memberships are not as clearly drawn as necessary for applying them to social identity theory (Huddy, 2001). Social identity theory assumes that group memberships are fixed and known. It is true that the boundaries of political group membership are highly permeable with no real distinction between what exactly constitutes a liberal identity versus a moderate one. This is in contrast to group memberships like race or ethnicity where external labeling creates clearly defined and perceptible boundaries, allowing individuals to possess legitimacy when claiming group membership. Despite the inability to physically identify an individual’s political identity, identification as defined within social identity theory refers to self-perceived membership in a social group. In the case of political identity, this identification relies much more heavily on the internalization of what it

¹ Partisanship was used for the conceptualization required for the first portion of this study. Online dating sites only use political ideology descriptors. This was taken to be a proxy for partisanship and an equivalent means of expressing political identity.

means to the individual to be a liberal or a moderate as opposed to the external perception by others based on objectively defined boundaries of political ideologies.

In this regard, the lack of a physical appearance of one's political identity makes it more akin to concealable identities such as persons with epilepsy or those with closeted sexual identities. One could argue that today's divisive political environment makes political identity, for some individuals, as difficult to disclose as these stigmatized identities for fear of social consequences such as conflict, disrespect and discrimination. Research on concealable identities suggests that individuals with these identities only hear the negative comments and opinions others have about them, negatively affecting their self-esteem (McKenna and Bargh, 1998; Flett, 2012). McKenna and Bargh (1998) conducted a survey of individuals holding nonmainstream political beliefs such as conspiracy theorists and skinheads who participate in online newsgroups focused on those beliefs. Their findings suggest that participating in an Internet group that shares one's ideology leads to perceiving that ideology as more socially acceptable and increases self-esteem. In the case of the present study, this would suggest that the unidentifiable nature of the audiences on online dating sites would prohibit self-disclosure of political identity. Self-disclosure is important for social validation and feelings of acceptance making it crucial to one's conception of self that political ideology be expressed, particularly for individuals with a strong political identity.

While political beliefs may constitute an identity, they are distinctly different from the concealable identities mentioned above because belonging to a political group is a choice. The involvement of choice creates a much different set of consequences for political identity than other social identities. As Jeneé Desmond-Harris points out, "judging someone on whether they support gay marriage...is far different than judging someone on the color of their skin" (2015).

In contrast to this philosophy, Shanto Iyengar notes that:

“Political identity is fair game for hatred. Racial identity is not. Gender identity is not. You cannot express negative sentiments about social groups in this day and age. But political identities are not protected by these constraints. A Republican is someone who *chooses* to be Republican, so I can say whatever I want about them” (2015).

Iyengar’s statement highlights one of the concerns regarding political identity which is that as it becomes more a part of social identity, the more likely it is that ingroup favoritism and outgroup discrimination will occur. This outgroup discrimination was documented in multiple studies including an Implicit Association Test (IAT) used to measure partisan bias. Results of these studies suggest that partisan bias is a stronger bias than race which extends beyond politics and may lead to discrimination on the basis of partisanship in nonpolitical contexts (Iyengar and Westwood, 2014).

Expression of political identity.

Despite some discrepancies with social identity theory, the factors that influence expression of social identity are largely at play in the expression of political identity as well. The level of identification plays a significant role in how and when individuals choose to express their political identity. Leonie Huddy suggests that there are shades to identity where the strongest forms of identity are least affected by context (2001). For example, a study of the strength of ethnic identity among Dutch and Turkish schoolchildren in the Netherlands revealed that those children with stronger levels of identity were least affected by the ratio of Dutch-Turkish students in the classroom and those children with the weakest levels of identity were most affected by the context of the classroom (Kinket & Verkuyten, 1997). In the instance of political identity, this suggests that high identifying partisans will express their identity

regardless of whether they perceive themselves to be in situations where they are in the ideological minority or majority. This supports anecdotal evidence regarding radical liberals and radical conservatives in the media and their tendency to have a no-holds-barred approach to expressing their political opinions, be those on Fox News or MSNBC.

Additionally, political identity, like social identity, is formed and shaped by situational contexts and the social cues that arise within them. Previous research points out the impact of social surroundings on the development of partisan group membership (Jennings et al., 2009). With social context playing a role in the development of political identity, it would be logical to hypothesize that context also plays a role in expression of identity. In the case of the present study, the fact that political identity is taking place in a mediated setting is principal. Individuals seek out politically like-minded others to aid them in understanding and interpreting mediated political information (Borgida, Frederico, and Sullivan, 2009; Ponder and Haridakis, 2015). Following with the conventional social identity wisdom, audience norms have an impact on how individuals discuss politics, especially in a mediated setting.

Political identity (partisanship) and romance.

Campbell referred to partisan identification as a “perceptual screen” that can alter the ways in which individuals view and interpret political information (Campbell, 1960; Klar, 2014). This suggests that the simple label of liberal or conservative could drastically impact the ways in which an individual would evaluate something completely unrelated to politics such as a potential romantic partner. Recent research has started examining the impacts of partisanship on such topics as mate attraction, inter-party marriage and dating (Klofstad, et al., 2012; Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes, 2012; Phillips, 2014). The over-arching conclusion in all of these studies has been that when all other variables are held constant, partisanship has a significant impact on

overall opinions toward marrying someone of a different partisan identification as well as individuals' evaluations of others' romantic viability.

Individuals hold strong opinions about marrying someone with dissimilar political views even if that individual is a family member and not themselves. Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes (2012) conducted a study of public opinion of inter-party marriage in the years 1960, 2008 and 2010. They found that in 1960, only about 5% of Americans would have been displeased if their children married someone of the opposing party. With the increasing polarization of the American political landscape, that number increased to 27% of Republicans and 20% of Democrats by 2008. Just two years later, 49% of Republicans and 33% of Democrats reported that they would be unhappy with a child marrying someone of the opposite party. An experiment similar to Iyengar et al.'s (2012) study examined public opinion of inter-ideology marriage and found strikingly similar results (Phillips and Carsey, 2013). All of these results emphasize the fact that regardless of whether researchers are measuring partisan identification or political ideology, individuals hold strong negative opinions about themselves or others marrying someone of a different political identity. In terms of social identity, this translates to ingroup favoritism and outgroup discrimination further supporting the idea that for Americans, politics is becoming less of an ideology and more of an identity.

Prior research has examined the role that political identity plays in the context of dating. A content analysis of online dating profiles revealed that individuals do not readily express their political identity on online dating sites (Kloftstad, McDermott and Hatemi, 2012). Kloftstad et al. suggest that the reason for this lack of disclosure is that political views are not initially important to relationship formation but they suggest that for long-term relationships, shared political

identity may become important.² This is in direct contrast with research of online dating sites that has emphasized the importance of partisanship to individuals' preferences and initial judgments of potential romantic partners (Phillips, 2014)³. In a later study using the same data set, Klofstad et al. found that individuals who *do* express partisanship on an online dating site do indeed prefer romantic partners who share that political identity which is likely because these individuals are high identifiers (2013).

An experiment where college students were instructed to evaluate online dating profiles of other students revealed that students liked, wanted to be in a relationship and felt more positive emotions overall with individuals who shared their political identity (Phillips, 2014). Another study of online dating users found that shared political identity matters to individual preferences. Results showed that individuals disliked those who did not share their political views. The authors note that only 30% of the users in their sample labeled themselves as conservative or liberal so these are likely high identifying individuals to which this finding is applicable (Hitsch, Hortascu and Ariely, 2010).

Context of online dating.

Previous research has exhibited how political identity functions as a social identity and how partisanship works to cue that identity attachment in romantic situations so it would seem logical that partisanship would be readily expressed in online dating profiles. However, the norms surrounding the context of online dating must be considered. Individuals have different motivations for seeking out online dating sites which cannot be ignored. In populations of

² The researchers only coded for explicit mentions of conservative or liberal in the profiles. The present study will move beyond a single item measure to include nuanced ways of describing political identity.

³ It is important to note that opinions toward online dating have undergone drastic transformations in the last 5 years so the landscape of identity expression, especially political identity, on those sites likely has seen some significant changes as well.

college students, women are typically searching for long-term partners on online dating sites whereas men are interested in more casual dating situations (Alam, Yeow and Loo, 2011). This discrepancy in motivations highlights the interaction of such factors as age and gender on the ways in which individuals utilize the site.

These motivations are best explained under the uses and gratifications approach where Blumler claims that individuals “maintain and strengthen their social identities through what they see, read and hear in the media” (1985). Therefore, individuals are still contributing to and interacting with online dating sites on the basis of their social identity but the particular identity driving that usage varies individually. Minority groups such as homosexual men seek out applications such as Grindr to 1) find romantic partners and 2) network with other gay men (Gudelunas, 2012). There is the initial motivation to use the dating app for its most basic purpose but also the secondary motivation of strengthening one’s sexual identity. Whether political identity has a similar set of motivations driving partisans to online dating sites is unknown but will be explored to determine if variation in political identity can be explained by motivation.

Additionally, individuals are aware of their own personal preferences which factor into the information that they provide in order to manage the impression they make upon others. These online dating preferences have been shown to include everything from superficial attributes such as height and body mass index (BMI) to attributes like occupation, income, marital status, religion and smoking status (Hitsch et al., 2010). Self-perceptions will influence identity expression but so will beliefs about how other individuals perceive that expression. In this complicated way, individuals may manage their identity in an attempt to impress, effectively suppressing particular aspects that might appear undesirable to romantic interests. Some scholars even hypothesize that receiving negative feedback about one’s online identity can lead to a

change in or re-creation of an individual's identity outside of the online space (Yurchisin, Watchravesringkan and McCabe, 2005).

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to merge the research on online dating and expression of identity to determine what factors and motivations play into who expresses political identity on online dating sites and why. Previous research has examined similar questions prior to the dawn of dating sites and applications such as Match.com, which arguably made virtual dating ubiquitous. In a media environment where online dating is commonplace, the barriers to expression are significantly reduced. Individuals have both the access to a larger dating pool and the capability to express their identities without fear of isolating potential partners. The aims of this study are to reveal the importance that political identity maintains even in nonpolitical contexts. The study is targeting individuals who possess a political identity yet opt not to express that identity in an online dating profile. Employing a social identity approach, this thesis will present two forms of quantitative data to discuss the expression of political identity and the variation in that expression on online dating sites.

Implications of such research are important both to the understanding of relationship formation as well as to the issue of partisan sorting in this country. If political identity is such an important factor in choosing a relationship partner, then inter-party marriage as well as the likelihood of children being raised in households with diverse political viewpoints is significantly lessened. Political attitudes and behaviors are affected long before voters arrive at the polls and could be intergenerational if hypotheses are supported. Additionally, the conditional suppression or expression of political views on dating sites would provide further evidence for the current theory that political affiliation in the 21st century is more related to

identity than ideology. This finding would also highlight potential consequences of conceptualizing politics as an identity such as fear of judgment, unwillingness to disclose, etc.

The following research questions will be answered with the first part of the thesis (content analysis):

RQ1: When given the choice, is political identity an aspect of identity that individuals willingly express in an online dating profile?

RQ2: Do demographic variables (e.g. age, gender) moderate the expression of political identity on online dating profiles?

The rationale for these research questions stems from the aforementioned research on partisanship, mate attraction and online dating. Research would suggest that since partisanship is such an important cue in mate attraction, ingroup/outgroup perceptions would not have an impact on expression of political identity and individuals would be driven by their motivations for using the online dating site to express themselves and their identities (Yurchisin et al., 2005; Hitsch et al., 2010). However, social identity research posits that individuals abide by established norms so depending upon the norm of the audience, political identity may not be expressed so readily (Huddy, 2001; Klofstad et al., 2012).

The present study will be exploring these users as a whole within the United States with the aim of making the sample drawn from the online dating sites representative of the pool of registered voters in this country. Demographics of interest include gender and sexual orientation, both of which will be controlled for. Age is also a demographic variable of interest, but it will only be recorded and not controlled for. The frequencies of ages among users is as, or even more, interesting than what could be observed from controlling for age to ensure equal distributions. Data analysis will categorically group the age variable in the event that there is underrepresentation of certain segments. Other demographics that will be coded for, but not

controlled for, are income and education level.

H1: Age will be correlated with expression of identity in that older individuals will be more likely to express political identity and younger individuals will be less likely to express political identity on online dating profiles.

The rationale for this hypothesis stems from the uses and gratifications perspective which suggests that individuals have different motivations for interacting with different media. The motivations for an older individual to use an online dating site are different from those of a younger person. It is hypothesized that because as one gets older, partisanship becomes stronger, older individuals will be more likely to express their political identity because it is more engrained in their own conception of self (Ponder and Haridakis, 2015). Younger individuals are also less likely to discuss politics in general than are older individuals (Shah, Kwak and Holbert, 2001).

The following research questions and hypothesis will be answered via the second part of thesis (experimental survey):

RQ3: Do individuals express political identity depending on whether political identity is salient within the online dating context?

H2: High identifying individuals will be more likely to express political identity when it is not salient and conversely, low identifying individuals will be more likely to express political identity when it is made salient.

RQ4: How do individuals without an explicit partisan affiliation express political identity?

The rationale for these research questions stem from social identity theory literature which places importance on the role salience plays in identity expression. Little research in that area examines preexisting group memberships so this research question will explore both the theoretical importance of salience to political identity. H2 and RQ4 seek to extend research on the impact of strength of identification by exploring how that relationship maintains in an online setting.

Method

Overview

The research questions and hypotheses will be answered via a mixed methods approach. Study 1 will consist of a content analysis of profiles found on a popular online dating website. Study 2 will utilize the information gathered in Study 1 to construct a pretest/posttest experiment that will be conducted on a sample of college students to assess their expression of political identity in an online dating context when political identity is salient versus when it is not. Additionally, in order to measure this study's agreement with previous research, the experiment will measure perceptions of profiles of individuals similar and dissimilar in political identity.

Study 1

The goals of this study are to examine if political identity is present on online dating sites and if so, how the expression of political identity varies across different types of users. The unit of analysis is a single profile and therefore, quantitative content analysis is the most appropriate method for understanding how political identity is expressed on online dating platforms. The limitations to this design are that the context surrounding the profile is eliminated as well as the network of matches that is created within the online dating site. This means that behavioral variables such as communication across profiles cannot be coded. Despite these limitations, the study remains valuable for observing the presence (or absence) of political identity within the online dating context which will provide ecological validity for Study 2.

Sampling Procedure

The population for this content analysis is online dating profiles within the Match.com

community. Match.com, the world's largest dating site, was selected out of the top three online dating sites as the focus for this analysis. By analyzing profiles from the largest dating site, the study sought to get the most representative sample of the population of Americans who use online dating, including both heterosexuals and homosexuals. The two sites with the next highest number of users, eHarmony and Zoosk, were excluded from analysis for multiple reasons.

eHarmony was excluded from analysis because use of data would have violated its Terms & Agreement and Privacy Policy which prevents the use of user information for student research projects. For this reason, Match.com was chosen because of the importance the site places on privacy and integrity without limiting use of data. "The names and contact information of all our members are kept confidential until the member personally decides to share the information with a potential match" (Match.com, 2015). Despite being a content analysis, the data will still be treated with anonymity. Additionally, Match.com is advertised for dating and long-term relationships and accepts LGBT profiles. eHarmony is advertised for straight couples interested in strictly long-term relationships. Match.com was chosen for openness and its ability to be generalizable across a greater variety of romantic relationships.

Zoosk was excluded from the analysis because of its intensive user input process. Inputting this information aids the sites' algorithms in providing quality matches which although beneficial to the user, creates a biased or nonprobability sample. Match.com's only requirements were a birth date and a geographic region, neither of which worked to filter results.

Data will be selected via a random sample of 1,000 profiles pulled from the population of users ($N = 21.5$ million). Data will be obtained by randomly sampling 20 individuals from each state in the United States including the District of Columbia to account for proper geographic representation. Of the profiles sampled, sexuality and gender will be controlled for (for example:

20 profiles from Montana will include 5 heterosexual men, 5 heterosexual women, 5 homosexual men and 5 homosexual women).

Comparison Sites

As a means of comparison, profiles will be collected from two additional niche sites tailored to political communities: RepublicanPassions.com and DemocratSingles.com. These sites represent a conservative and a liberal dating site, respectively. In the instance of niche sites based on assembling users who share the same political identity, users are self-selecting into a site where they are aware that other users share the same ingroup. Additionally, political identity is the salient identity due to the nature of the site. Approximately 100 profiles will be collected and coded from each of these sites to serve as a comparison for the initial dataset. It is hypothesized that when political identity is made salient, individuals will be more willing to express political interests or various aspects of politics because they self-selected into a group where there is no ambiguous makeup of the audience's political ideology. The level of comfortability is high and therefore barriers to expression should be lowered.

Data Collection

The content of interest in this study are individual dating profiles. A sample of 1,000 profiles was screen scraped from January 1, 2016 to January 10, 2016. There were no inclusion criteria for profiles to be admitted to the sample⁴. The content categories for this study are age, gender, sexual orientation, faith, income, education, salience, partisanship, political interests and political ideology. The independent variables are the demographic items: age, gender, sexual orientation and faith. Age is the only ratio level measurement in that list; the others will be

⁴ Three profiles were excluded from the sampling due to explicit text within the profile that stated "Any institutions or individuals using this site or any of its associated sites for studies, projects, advertising, sales or any other reason – you DO NOT have permission to use any of my profile or pictures in any form or forum, both current and future. If you have or do, it will be considered a violation of my privacy and will be subject to legal ramifications."

nominally coded. Salience, the primary dependent variable, is a nominal variable that refers to whether there is a political views section present on the individual's profile or not. The secondary dependent variables, partisanship and political ideology, are nominal as well and identify any party affiliation or ideology mentions. An additional indicator of political identity will be nominally coded for as well: political interests. This refers to whether individuals explicitly choose to list "political interests" within the interests and hobbies portion of their profile, another indicator of the degree to which political identity is salient to a user.

Several other variables that are not directly related to the research questions but could potentially contribute to the relationship between the independent and dependent variables are: issue mentions, political figures, cynicism, apathy and negativism. Each of these constructs is nominally coded for and if present, could illuminate any nuances in a profile's expression of political identity, or lack thereof. The coding protocol for issue mentions is adapted from the coding procedure of Druckman et al. (2010) and their study of candidate websites, providing some validity for those issues chosen to be included in the analysis.

Other social identities that will be coded for presence or absence are religious, ethnic and national, relational and stigmatized identity. These identities were chosen based on their identification as 'identity types' (Deaux, 1996). Religious identity is present if a faith or deity is explicitly mentioned. Ethnic and national identity refers to the mention of an ethnicity or national identity (e.g. Jewish, American) including multicultural and biracial identifiers. Relational identity is present if the profile mentions such relationship words as mother, father or widow. The last category, stigmatized identity, refers to the mention of a stigmatized group using words such as obese, alcoholic, homeless or unemployed.

Intercoder Reliability

Coders were trained using the coding protocol developed for the study (See Appendix A). Three independent coders (including the primary investigator) coded 100 profiles, or 10% of the sample, to establish intercoder reliability (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2014). This subset comprised part of the overall sample of study. Training was repeated until Krippendorff's alpha reached the acceptable level of .8 or higher for each of the primary independent and dependent variables in the study (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2014). Reliability coefficients for each variable are as follows: political ideology ($\alpha=0.96$), relational identity ($\alpha=0.97$), stigmatized identity ($\alpha=0.70$), faith ($\alpha=0.95$), race ($\alpha=0.95$) and political interests ($\alpha=0.85$). The reliability coefficients for religious identity, ethnic/national identity, gender, income, education, sexual orientation and salience were 1.0 with 100% simple agreement.

Methodological Limitations

The methodology for this study provides high validity with few issues of concern. Random sampling allows for high external validity. A majority of the measures used in the study have been applied and adapted from previous research providing support for construct validity. This study has social validity in that it could be important to understanding democratic processes and political behavior, providing additional support for its external validity (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2014).

Study 2

Overview

This study utilized a 2 (political identity salient, political identity not salient) x 3 (high identifier, low identifier, non-identifier) between-participants, pretest-posttest design ($N = 144$). Participants completed a pretest questionnaire at Time 1 to assess the importance that they assign

politics relative to other identities. The questionnaire also measured partisanship, political ideology, media use related to dating, perceptions of online dating and basic demographic information. Most important to the pretest is the political ideology variable because it served as the categorization variable, determining whether participants were labeled at Time 2 as high identifying (Strong Democrat, Strong Republican), low identifying (Lean Democrat, Lean Republican) or non-identifying (Independent, No Affiliation).

At Time 2 (approximately one week after Time 1), individuals were randomly assigned to one of six experimental conditions (PID salient, high identifier; PID not salient, high identifier; PID salient, low identifier; PID not salient, low identifier; PID salient, non-identifier; PID not salient, non-identifier). Participants received a link to Qualtrics to complete the experimental assessment of how they fill out an online dating questionnaire. They were also given a dummy profile and instructed to rate this potential match on whether he/she was a good fit/not a good fit. After completing the experimental manipulation, participants completed a posttest questionnaire assessing some of the same measures from Time 1 as well as why they were/were not attracted to the dummy profile presented to them. The posttest also contained questions related to self-monitoring and self-esteem. Upon completion of the questionnaire, the study concluded and participants were debriefed.

Participants

Participants comprise a convenience sample of 144 undergraduates from a large southeastern university enrolled in journalism or media-related courses. Students provided informed consent prior to completing each portion of the study and received course credit in return for completion.

Materials

The materials used for this study include a pretest questionnaire measuring various items related to political identity and ideology as well as opinions toward and usage of various online dating platforms (see Appendix B). Also included in the materials is a prompt sent to participants instructing them that they have been chosen to participate in a study of online dating within the UNC network. The prompt for the experimental condition contains a manipulation sentence, italicized below. The control condition does not receive that sentence in its prompt. The instructions state that:

“The University of North Carolina network has begun exploring the option of creating an online dating network for its students. *[Manipulation sentence: We know how important it is to find dates who share your beliefs especially on important items such as politics.]* You have been selected as part of an elite group of students to submit a preliminary online dating profile. In this study, you will enter answers for the online dating profile as well as evaluate the profile of another student that we match you with. We need your help in fine-tuning our algorithms and determining what type of information is most likely to catch a potential date’s attention and thus which questions to offer students as part of their profiles. As part of our preliminary testing, photos of you and your matches will not be included.”

This prompt is followed by the experimental manipulation or the online dating form (see Appendix C). At the end of the online dating form, a dummy profile is presented to participants for evaluation (see Appendix D). This is followed by a posttest questionnaire that contains the strength of identities and political identity measures from the pretest questionnaire (see Appendix E).

Additionally, the posttest questionnaire contains a 5 point, 10-item scale measure of self-

esteem, which according to social identity theory should be high after expressing one's identity. The posttest also contains a 22-item self-monitoring scale to account for any impression management participants may have used when filling out their profile. Administering these questions after filling out the profile creates less of an instance for social desirability to occur. If individuals misrepresented themselves, answering these questions falsely could create cognitive dissonance suggesting that answers can be expected to be truthful.

Design

The large sample size ($N = 144$) was used to assign an adequate number of participants to each experimental condition. Random assignment of the salience variable was used to attempt to maintain equal numbers of participants within conditions. The experimenter manipulated salience of political identity in a sample of college students. The experimental group received a prompt highlighting the importance of political identity while the control group received a generic prompt.

The dependent measure is expression of political identity. To assess expression, students selected a partisan identification as well as a political ideology to display on their profiles. They will also be presented an open-ended question to explain their political perspectives. These open-ended responses were coded similarly to the profiles that were coded for the content analysis in Study 1, utilizing the same protocol. The responses were coded for mentions of voting behavior, political party, polarized issues, political figures as well as comments related to cynicism, apathy and negativism. Though negative, these items comprise a type of political identity and contribute to the overall score.

Control measures

This study controlled for a host of variables primarily through the pretest questionnaire.

These include basic questions related to political identity and use of online dating sites such as partisanship, political ideology, dating platform use, relationship status and demographic information (age, gender, and race). In addition to self-report measures of political identity, a 5 point, 7-item Likert scale measured respondents' position on the conservative-liberal spectrum (Mehrabian, 1996). A 5 point, 5-item Likert scale, directly measured political identity as a function of the importance of political engagement to their conception of self (adopted and adapted from Wann, 2002; Pfetzer, 2013). Sports fan identity was measured as well to obfuscate the importance of political identity to the study.

Additionally, the study controlled for personality variables related to one's motivations to use an online dating site as opposed to in-person dating. These variables include brief fear of negative evaluation (Leary, 1983), openness to experience (taken from the NEO personality inventory) and loneliness (Russell et al, 1978). Sexuality was also controlled for in this study in order to combat any heteronormativity criticisms. A question in the faux online dating form asked participants to choose whether they are interested in men or women. This answer incorporated a logic function that determined whether the dummy profile the participants receive after filling out the form is a male or female profile regardless of the gender identity of the participant. The post-test also controlled for such variables as self-monitoring (Snyder, 1974) and self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965).

Manipulation check

Political identity may not be important to some students regardless of whether it is made salient or not. To account for this discrepancy, participants ranked a host of identities that comprise their conception of self from most important to least important to account for any instances where salience might be futile.

Procedure

Participants were presented with a pre-test questionnaire at Time 1. Once they completed the pretest, they received a link to an online experiment at Time 2 (one week after completing the pretest). They received a prompt to participate in an online dating study on their campus that either mentions political identity or does not. The manipulation prompt was randomized across individuals who are high identifying, low identifying and do not identify with a political party. Participants were instructed to fill out the online dating form and evaluate the dummy profile that their form “generated”. Afterward, the participants were instructed to complete a posttest questionnaire to evaluate their match, the dating site and to answer several follow up questions. Once participants finished the posttest, the study concluded and they were debriefed about the actual goals and aims of the study.

Methodological Limitations

There are several methodological limitations to this study. First, instructing students to complete an online dating profile as part of a school-sanctioned study may lead to some results attributable to social desirability. It is the expectation of the researcher that this bias would be important if the study were focusing on hobbies and recreational activities but will likely not affect descriptions of political orientation. The web-based nature of the study hopes to mitigate any effects of social desirability by placing maximum physical distance between the researcher and the participant. Future research would analyze other aspects of online dating profiles beyond political perspectives for which this distance may be important to obtaining reliable results.

Additionally, the sample is limited to college-age students while the average dating site user is about 40 years old. It is also sampling strictly from one discipline: journalism. This sample is more representative than one comprised of strictly political science students, but it is

limited nonetheless. Therefore the data is not generalizable to the broader population of users but the study does serve as a foundational approach to understanding the factors that play into use of and expression on dating sites. A research agenda at a later time would consider replicating this study with an older population, perhaps through Mechanical Turk, to observe potential changes in those motivations. The content analysis from Study 1 would provide interesting questions for such research.

Lastly, the present study seeks to explore the variation in expression of political identity. However, there is no baseline for how these same individuals express their identity in contexts beyond an experimentally simulated online dating site. Future research would consider using a within-participants design to explore individuals' Facebook, Twitter and online dating profiles in combination to discover variation and discrepancies between how individuals communicate their identities to their known audiences as compared to unknown audiences.

Results: Study 1

Descriptive statistics reveal that 34.9% of individuals disclose political identity on their profiles. Of those profiles, 14.3% identify as liberal, 13.6% as middle of the road, 4.9% as conservative, 2.8% as some other viewpoint and 1.3% identify as non-conformist (see Table 1). Religious identity and ethnic identity are expressed at a higher frequency than political identity, being present in 72.4% and 61.6% of profiles, respectively. Demographic variables reveal a very diverse sample (see Table 2). The average age of profiles is 38 years old ($M = 38.27$, $SD = 12.63$). The religious makeup of the sample is primarily Christian (41.8%) and individuals choosing not to disclose a religious identity (27.0%). The vast majority of profiles chose not to disclose their income, but of those opting to include that information, the mode of the sample is in the \$50,000-\$75,001 income bracket. Level of education is dispersed across all categories with 44% of profiles reporting having a Bachelor's degree or higher. As noted previously, sexual orientation was controlled for so the sample is 50.1% heterosexual and 49.9% homosexual. Additionally, the gender makeup is even with 50.1% of profiles coded as female and 49.9% coded as male. Racial diversity was not controlled for but the race category revealed 48.1% of the profiles to be white, 37.5% to be non-white and 14.4% did not disclose an ethnicity.

The descriptive statistics will be used to assess RQ1 regarding the presence of political identity on online dating sites. Results revealed that 61.8% of online dating profiles do not express political identity. An additional 3% of profiles indicate "political interests" but do not include a political views section in the profile as well. Therefore, the answer to RQ1 is that

political identity is *not* an aspect of social identity that is frequently expressed in online dating profiles.

Relationships within the data are assessed for statistical significance at an alpha level of .05. To assess RQ2 regarding the role of demographic variables as moderators of expression of political identity, several chi-square tests and correlational analyses were conducted. First, the relationship between gender and salient political identity was evaluated. A chi-square test revealed no significant differences between male profiles expressing political identity and female profiles expressing political identity, $X^2 = 1.22$, 1 *d.f.*, $p = .269$ (see Table 3).

A second chi-square test was used to analyze the relationship between age and salience of political identity. Results from this analysis revealed a significant difference between age categories and the expression or lack of expression of political identity, $X^2 = 53.45$, 4 *d.f.*, $p < .001$ (see Table 4). Within the youngest category, 18-25 year olds, 16.9% of profiles express political identity whereas 83.1% of profiles in that age range choose not to express political identity. Of the oldest category, 55 years and older, 43.6% of profiles do not express political identity whereas 56.4% do. This trend of younger profiles expressing political identity at a lower frequency can be seen in the following table:

Table 5. *Differences in Expression of Political Identity by Age*

Age	<i>N</i>	Frequency difference*
18-25	160	-10.6
26-34	291	-10.7
35-44	221	-7.1
45-54	214	-2.8
55 and up	110	1.4

*Calculated by: % of salient profiles - % of not salient profiles

The social identities that profiles expressed were combined to create a composite measure of social identity expression. This included relational, religious, ethnic and stigmatized identity. A chi-square test was conducted to assess the relationship between being more expressive overall and the expression of political identity (see Table 6). Results from this analysis revealed a significant difference between levels of overall expressiveness and expression of political identity, $X^2 = 64.271$, 4 *d.f.*, $p < .001$. Individuals with the most moderate score on composite identity expressed political identity at the highest frequency.

The comparison analysis revealed that 100% of the profiles on these political niche sites expressed political identity (see Table 4 for descriptives). These are primarily liberal (48.7%) and conservative (49.2%) ideologies. Additionally, 35.7% of the profiles mention political interests compared to the 9.2% of dating profiles from the general site. Religious identity and ethnic identity are both expressed in a majority of profiles, being coded in 81.9% and 62.3% of profiles, respectively. The average age on the niche sites is 48 years old ($M = 17.97$, $SD = 14.11$). Profiles on the niche sites are predominantly Christian (44.2%) and white (82.9%). Most profiles choose not to disclose income. Lastly, the profiles on these sites are highly educated with 53.7% of profiles reporting having a bachelor's degree or higher.

A chi square test was conducted to examine the differences in salience of political identity between the niche sites and the general site (see Table 8). Due to 100% of the niche sites expressing salience by virtue of the profile being part of an ideologically-based provider, the political interests variable was used as a proxy for salience. Results revealed that there are no significant differences between salience of political identity on the general dating site profiles versus the comparison niche sites, $X^2 = 0.03$, 1 *d.f.*, $p = .856$.

Results: Study 2

Descriptive statistics from Study 2 reveal that 2.1% of the sample uses online dating sites where 48.6% of the sample is familiar with an online dating mobile application (for full descriptives, see Table 9). The totality (100%) of this 48.6% currently uses or has used the dating application, Tinder. A participant's average length of membership on these sites is less than one month. Users of dating applications report spending an average of 6 minutes per day with the app ($M = 5.77$, $SD = 9.98$). Regarding dating more generally, 69% of participants are not in a committed relationship with 50% of respondents actively looking for a romantic relationship. 70% of participants report finding it difficult to meet new people. Methods most popular for asking someone out include face-to-face communication (61.1%) and text messaging (59%). Regarding online dating specifically, 37% of participants agree that online dating is a good way to meet people and 25.5% agree that online dating allows people to find better matches. On a scale of 1 to 10, individuals rank the overall success of online dating at 4.24 ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 1.62$). Regarding political identity, the sample self-identifies as primarily liberal and moderate. 11.1% of participants chose the "political junkie" label when describing themselves. For self-reported partisanship, 51.4% of participants identify as a Democrat. A scale to measure conservatism places the sample slightly right of the self-reported ideology and partisanship ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 0.98$). Reliability for the conservatism scale is high ($\alpha = .91$).

Relationships within the data are assessed for statistical significance at an alpha level of .05. To address RQ3 regarding the importance of salience to the expression of political identity, several chi-square tests were conducted. First, the relationship between partisanship and salience

was evaluated. A chi-square test revealed no significant differences between partisanship in the control condition and partisanship in the condition where political identity (PID) was made salient, $X^2 = 0.10$, 3 *d.f.*, $p = .992$ (see Table 10). To further test the expression of political identity, a chi-square test was conducted to examine the relationship between political ideology and salience. This test also revealed no significant differences between political views expressed in the control condition and political views expressed in the condition where political identity was made salient, $X^2 = 1.62$, 7 *d.f.*, $p = .978$ (see Table 11). Therefore, the answer to RQ3 is that salience does *not* impact expression of political identity on online dating sites.

Multiple chi-square tests were conducted to assess H2 regarding the importance of strength of partisanship in addition to salience for political identity expression (see Table 12). First, the relationship between partisanship and salience was tested for high-identifying partisans.⁵ A chi-square test revealed no significant differences between partisanship in the control condition and partisanship in the PID-salient condition for high-identifiers, $X^2 = 0.84$, 1 *d.f.*, $p = .843$. Second, the relationship between partisanship and salience was tested for low-identifying partisans.⁶ A chi-square test revealed no significant differences between partisanship in the control condition and partisanship in the PID-salient condition for low identifiers, $X^2 = 0.248$, 1 *d.f.*, $p = .970$. Lastly, the relationship between partisanship and salience was tested for the non-identifiers.⁷ A chi-square test again revealed no significant differences between partisanship in the control condition and partisanship in the PID-salient condition for non-identifiers, $X^2 = 0.64$, 1 *d.f.*, $p = .726$. Therefore, H2 is not supported.

⁵ These participants are those who identified themselves as Strong, Republican or Strong Democrat in the pretest.

⁶ These participants identified themselves as Leaning Republican or Leaning Democrat in the pretest.

⁷ These participants identified themselves as Independent or No Affiliation in the pretest.

To explore the influence of strength of partisanship further, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the difference of means for the political identity ranking between strong-, weak- and non-identifying partisan participants. A one-way ANOVA revealed significant differences between the strength of political identity for each of these groups for both the pretest, $F(2,133) = 19.93, p < .001$, and the posttest, $F(2,112) = 24.38, p < .001$ (see Table 13). A paired samples t-test revealed no significant differences between the mean of the political identity ranking in the pretest and the mean of the political identity ranking in the posttest, $t(112) = 0.48, p = .633$ (see Table 14). While strength of partisanship did have an effect on the means of the rankings, this did not lead to a significant change in the ranking scores after the manipulation.

Lastly, descriptive statistics were used to assess RQ4 regarding how individuals with no political affiliation express political identity. Of the 16 participants who identified as having no political affiliation in the pretest, only one chose to express a political affiliation in the posttest. In the posttest, 10 participants identified as Independent, 1 identified as Democrat and 5 chose not to answer when expressing partisanship in their online dating profile. None of the non-identifiers chose “political junkie” as one of their hobbies or interests. The following table represents the political view they chose to express in their online dating profile:

Table 15. *Political Views Expressed by Non-Identifiers*

Political viewpoint	Frequency
Middle of the road	10
Liberal	2
Non-conformist	1
Some other viewpoint	1
No answer	2

Therefore, the answer to RQ4 is that those with no political party affiliation choose to express their identity as such, for the most part. Though the sample size is small, it is worth noting that 11% of the non-affiliated chose to identify as liberal when expressing their beliefs to an outside audience.

In addition to assessing research questions and hypotheses, the researcher used the political identity questionnaire as a measure of change in strength of identity between the pretest and posttest. Two paired samples t-tests were conducted to examine this relationship between the control and stimulus conditions (see Table 14). The paired samples t-test for the control condition revealed no significant differences between the mean of the political identity questionnaire in the pretest and the mean of the political identity questionnaire in the posttest, $t(56) = -1.51, p = .137$. The paired samples t-test for the stimulus condition revealed significant differences between the mean of the PID questionnaire in the pretest and the mean of the PID questionnaire in the posttest, $t(63) = -2.59, p < .05$. As an additional measure of change in strength of identity, the following represents the changes in rankings of the 10-item strengths of social identities measure (see Table 16).

Lastly, to compare the findings to previous studies, a series of one-way ANOVAs were conducted to measure participants' satisfaction with the profile they were "matched" with. A one-way ANOVA revealed significant differences in mean scores for the item "would be likely to message" for participants whose political ideology was similar to the fake profile ($M = 4.61, SD = 2.55$) compared to those participants whose political ideology was dissimilar to the fake profile ($M = 3.06, SD = 2.04$), $F(1,111) = 12.79, p < .01$. A second one-way ANOVA revealed significant differences in mean scores for the item "would respond to a message" for participants whose political ideology was similar to the fake profile ($M = 7.18, SD = 2.30$) compared to those

participants whose political ideology was dissimilar to the fake profile ($M = 5.65$, $SD = 2.68$), $F(1,108) = 9.66$, $p < .01$. A third one-way ANOVA revealed significant differences in mean scores in overall satisfaction with the dating site for participants whose political ideology was similar to the fake profile ($M = 6.33$, $SD = 2.39$) compared to those participants whose political ideology was dissimilar to the fake profile ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 2.32$), $F(1,118) = 19.06$, $p < .001$.

Discussion

Individuals do not readily express political identity to unknown others via an online dating profile. Individuals are more likely to express religious identities or even relational identities such as divorcee, widow/er or parent. Scoring individual profiles on the basis of no, low, moderate and high social identity expression revealed that individuals in the no expression and high expression condition were less likely to express political identity. Individuals are even more likely to disclose their financial status in the form of a dollar amount than they are to reveal their political ideology. Additionally, 10.2% of profiles report a stigmatized identity (overweight, alcoholic, unemployed) which is notably greater than the number of profiles choosing to identify as conservative. Of the individuals who choose to disclose their political ideology, 13.6% report being part of the “middle of the road” ideology which is arguably the best option for individuals that want to avoid being apathetic as well as avoid isolating potential romantic partners who may share dissimilar political views. These findings support previous research on the lack of political identity on online dating sites for reasons that may be influenced by expected perceptions of others (Hitsch, Hortascu & Ariely, 2010).

Expression of political identity does not vary across genders. However, it does vary with age. Younger individuals are especially less likely to express their political identity. Individuals between the ages of twenty-six and forty-five express political identity at similar rates, yet the majority of those individuals do not express political identity. Individuals age 18 to 25 express political identity at the lowest rates, but also represent the age group that, psychologically speaking, is still defining parameters of identity. Individuals ages 55 and older express political

identity more often than not. This suggests that as individuals get older, they are more likely to express political identity. This follows with previous research that suggests that political identity becomes more rooted in individuals' conception of self as they age and thus would understandably be more present in profiles meant to convey one's self to an online audience (Ponder & Haridakis, 2015; Shah et al, 2001).

Expression of political identity is not higher for individuals who disclose more information on online dating sites. Individuals who received a moderate composite social identity score (disclosed 2 types of social identity) were more likely to disclose their political identity. However, the individuals who chose to disclose all of the religious, ethnic, relational and stigmatized identities were just as likely to disclose political identity as those individuals who disclosed none of those identities. These findings are inconclusive in that they do not fit any previous research and only suggest that political identity may fit into a sort of "happy medium" of social identity expression where individuals see it as important but not so private as to withhold disclosure.

The comparison political niche sites revealed there to be no statistically significant differences between the levels of salient political identity on those sites as compared to the generic site. This suggests that although individuals are drawn to those sites for the purpose of sharing a similar set of beliefs or values, they are still just as likely, or unlikely, to express an interest in politics. Despite being focused on partisanship, the niche sites also lacked the demographic diversity that existed on the generic site. Profiles were very heavily white, Christian, highly educated and had a mean age nearly 10 years older than the generic site. Previous research suggests that high identifying partisans are those who choose to express political identity (Huddy, 2001; Hitsch et al, 2010). Given that even the demographic makeup of

the samples is completely different, differences in expression of political identity may be attributable to variables such as differences in identification levels or personal salience of political identity.

The comparison niche sites revealed qualitatively different content within profiles. Figure 1 represents a profile from the general online dating site while Figure 2 represents a profile from one of the niche sites.

Figure 1. Biography section from a general online dating site.

"I am a serial entrepreneur, a contrarian and a humanitarian. I am intensely passionate about many aspect of life, and drawn to those sharing such passions. In enjoy the simpler things in life and do not impress that easily. For example, I think "fine dining" is highly overrated, and besides, I can prepare a better meal at home, I have a kitchen to die for and I have you all to myself, uninterrupted. That is far more appealing.

What do I like to do? Fly, long rides [motorcycle], build/create things (I love real estate), solve problems, help people, ski, hiking, tennis, passionate debates, intellectual discussions, travel, theater, socializing, and of course explore your naked body where ever we decide to explore.

Finally, trust, integrity and respect are cornerstones for which I judge and gauge most everything. All can only be earned and never given. You can expect high standards from me and I will expect the same"

Figure 2. Biography section from a niche online dating site.

Can you believe we're almost to the end of the Obamanation? PRAISE BE! Who am I? Well, in short, an LDS animal lover involved in rescue, rehab and adoption. Dyed-in-the-wool patriot who still believes the Constitution can be saved and restored --- somehow! The freedom we enjoy -- which is the same freedom the haters enjoy, too -- was paid for with a price for which I am endlessly thankful. I don't talk politics but I do know what's right and wrong. Any free country who would actually tout a self-proclaimed socialist running for president should be ashamed. Bring back freedom and sanity!

Qualitative analysis was not within the realm of the present study, but the two figures do provide an idea of what biographical sections typically look like on each of the two types of site.

Importantly to note is that despite the obvious differences in character of each of the two profiles, political identity expression on the two sites is not statistically significantly different.

Given prior research regarding the importance of political identity to relationship-seeking and marital viability, the results of the content analysis would suggest that individuals actively

choose not to express their political identity when they are unaware of their ingroup/outgroup status in relation to their audience. This raises the question of why individuals would choose not to express political identity especially if they are willing to disclose such personal information as their weight and income. This discrepancy would suggest that individuals might possess a political identity but purposively choose not to express it.

After analyzing all of the actual online dating profiles, results suggested that important to understanding this data were individuals' motivations for using dating sites, the importance of political identity to the average American's conception of self as well as the importance of salience and strength of partisanship to political identity expression. Study 2 attempted to control or account for each of these variables. Given the convenience sample of Study 2, the demographic variables skewed younger and more female than the sample of actual dating profiles. Additionally, the fact that the study was completed for course credit likely led to the high expression of political identity with only 2.8% of participants not answering the question.⁸

There are no significant differences in political identity expression in conditions where political identity is made salient versus conditions where it is not made salient. This runs contrary to social identity research which states that salience is one of the primary factors to induce identity expression (Huddy, 2001; Haslam, 1992). It also suggests that in the context of online dating, there are other factors possibly important to the medium that supersede expression of political identity. As noted earlier, the high expression of political identity across conditions makes it difficult to tease apart nuances in the data.

To be sure that there were no significant differences in political identity expression, differences in political ideology were measured as well. These tests also yielded no significant

⁸ This high rate of expression complicates findings among the primary variables of interest throughout the analysis.

differences across conditions of salience. Instead, the percentages of profiles expressing each ideology was nearly the same for the control and stimulus conditions. This again suggests that by virtue of delivering the survey to a student population, the participants were inclined to disclose their political identity without consideration of context or potential audience. In addition, participants were under the impression that their profiles would be viewed by other students. It is possible that this creates a perception of shared interests and beliefs similar to that of the comparison niche sites in Study 1. By instructing students to participate in a dating site that taps into shared academic identity, it is possible that they disclosed more information due to comfortability and perceived similarity.

In addition to salience, the other independent variable was strength of partisanship. There were no significant differences in expression of political identity for different strengths of partisanship. Although there were no statistical differences in this data, it is of descriptive interest that individuals who classified themselves as either Leaning Republican or Leaning Democrat in the pretest expressed themselves differently in their online dating profile. 28% of these weak identifiers labeled themselves as Independent and 7.9% reported No Affiliation. Of the participants who were non-identifying in the pretest, 6.3% identified as Democrat in their online dating profile. Although not statistically robust, this data suggests that with a larger, less impressionable sample, there might exist more discrepancy between the partisan affiliation that individuals report to a researcher and what they choose to disclose in an online dating profile, especially those individuals with weak or nonexistent partisan identifications.

Strength of identification does matter to how important individuals rank political identity compared to other social identities. Those with stronger partisan identifications rank political identity more highly than those with weak or no partisan identification. Even further, stronger

partisans ranked political identity more highly after completing the online dating profile than they did in the pretest. Weak partisans ranked political identity higher as well, but individuals with no partisan affiliation ranked political identity lower after completing the online dating profile than they did in the pretest. This suggests that although the control and stimulus conditions reflected no significant differences for strength of partisanship, the act of completing an online dating profile did lead to an increase in the importance that individuals with strong and weak partisan identifications give to political identity. Furthermore, the contrasting effect that completion of an online dating profile had on individuals with no partisan affiliation suggests that completing a dating profile makes political identity salient for those individuals that political identity already matters to and makes other social identities salient for those individuals who could care less about politics.

Beyond salience and strength of identification, pretest-posttest comparisons of several other variables suggest that completion of the online dating profile increases the importance or rank of political identity (and potentially, its salience). After completing an online dating profile, individuals scored more highly on a political identity questionnaire measuring the importance they place on being politically engaged. For both the control and stimulus conditions, the mean scores for the questionnaire increased from Time 1 to Time 2. The mean political identity rank increased from Time 1 to Time 2 as well. Together, these findings suggest that even though salience and strength of identification did not have significant impacts on political identity expression, the experiment as a whole did impact the importance that individuals attribute to political identity and their own status as politically engaged individuals.

The final finding that indicates the influence of the experimental survey on perceived importance of political identity is the change in rank for each of the social identities. Political

identity and sports fan identity both moved up two positions in the ranks from Time 1 to Time 2. The only identities that decreased in rank were socioeconomic identity and ethnicity. The top 6 identities (gender, academics, sexual, extracurricular, religious and nationality) did not fluctuate from the pretest to the posttest, suggesting that these identities are stable for the population studied (i.e. college students). Therefore, the identities that fluctuate in importance are political, sports fan, socioeconomic and ethnicity. The fluidity of these identities suggests that they are not immediately critical to the participants' conception of self, but that when activated, they receive greater importance (e.g. political identity increases 2 rank positions).

Overall, the two studies combined produce two important findings which are: 1) political identity is not readily expressed on online dating sites and 2) completion of an online dating profile increases perceived importance of political identity. Outside of a laboratory setting, individuals are more likely to disclose their weight and income than they are to label themselves a conservative. In an experimental setting, participants will rank political identity higher and report a greater emphasis on political engagement after completing an online dating profile. These findings seem slightly contradictory but merely reflect differences in external and internal validity for each study.

There are several limitations to this study. One important shortcoming of the content analysis is that it reduces an individual's entire romantic endeavor to find a partner down to a profile as its unit of analysis. The experiment seeks to curtail this issue by measuring attitudes in addition to gathering information for profiles, but it still fails to incorporate interactions with other users beyond first impressions. While taking contextual factors into account is outside the parameters of this study, future research should consider exploring ways to examine the fluidity

and continuation involved in online dating from the process of matching through to messaging and possibly face-to-face interaction.

The most important limitation of this thesis is the sample used for Study 2. The lack of experience with online dating sites coupled with the expectation of anonymity when completing a university-sponsored survey likely inflated the rates of political identity expression and created very low external validity. Fortunately, the content analysis suggests that the age group surveyed would report very low levels of political identity expression so this shortcoming is a valid one. Although it negates any effects of the independent variable, salience, by shrouding all variation in the political identity expression variable, the study still provides several pretest-posttest measures that suggest a change in importance of political identity from the beginning of the study to its end.

Another limitation is that the study primarily utilized self-report measures of partisanship and political ideology. Fortunately, the measures of political identity rank and political engagement provided some diversity and added validity to the measures, but a scale of policy items would have helped to better tease apart whether participants see politics as ideology or identity. Future research should incorporate this type of measure to better incorporate current theories in political science.

The implications for this study are broad. First, the study contributes to the body of research exploring the importance of partisanship to mate selection and relationship formation (Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes, 2012; Phillips, 2014). Essentially, these results suggest that partisanship might be such a critical variable that it is safer to exclude it from one's profile altogether as opposed to risk potential romantic partners by expressing a political identity.

Second, the study contributes to the literature on social identity expression by suggesting that there is some mechanism suppressing expression of political identity. The present study sought to eliminate salience as a potential factor and although those hypotheses tests were somewhat flawed, the results point to audience norms as a potentially more important factor. When students were under the impression that they would only be matched with other students, they overwhelmingly express political identity. This could be an issue with internal validity or an indication of the importance of audience norms.

Lastly, the study falls squarely into the current discussion about affective polarization within the United States. The transformation of political ideology to identity has been cited to have consequences such as ingroup favoritism and outgroup discrimination. The present thesis might suggest that suppression of political identity in contexts with an indiscernible ingroup and outgroup would be a consequence of the increasing hostility that individuals feel toward members of opposite parties. Future research should settle on this notion of consequences of affective polarization and tease out the role that animus toward opposing partisans has on the ways in which individuals treat political outgroups, but also the ways in which they censor or regulate their own discussion or expression of political identity.

Appendix A: Coding Protocol and Coding Sheet

V1. Coder ID (nominal): Record your initials.

V2. Profile ID Number (nominal): This number is located in the file name.

V3. Salience (nominal): This variable denotes the presence or absence of a “political views” section.

- 1 = present (salient)
- 0 = absent (not salient)

V4. Partisanship (nominal): Identify the partisanship of the profile. This will likely be located in the “Political views” section of the profile but may be listed elsewhere such as the “in his/her own words” section. This should be an explicit mention of a party name.

- 1 = Republican
- 2 = Democrat
- 3 = Other
- 4 = Ambiguous

V5. Political Ideology (nominal): Identify the political ideology of the profile. This will also likely be located in the “political views” section of the profile but just as partisanship, may be listed elsewhere. This should be an explicit mention of an ideology.

- 1 = conservative
- 2 = liberal
- 3 = some other viewpoint
- 4 = no answer
- 5 = middle of the road
- 6 = non-conformist

V6. Issue Count (ratio): Carefully read the entire profile and determine if there are any political issues mentioned in the text. These include (but are not limited to) words such as: abortion, pro-life, pro-choice, Planned Parenthood, gun rights, gun control, Black Lives Matter, climate change, feminism, gay marriage, prayer in schools, taxes, government spending, education.

V7. Issue Mention (nominal): Identify which issue category those identified in V6 fall under.

- 1 = defense: words related to homeland security and foreign affairs
- 2 = jobs and the economy: words related to un/employment, the stock market
- 3 = health care: words like Obamacare, Affordable Care Act
- 4 = education: words related to teachers, Common Core
- 5 = group advocacy: support for children, minority communities, feminist movement
- 6 = environment and energy: words like climate change
- 7 = government reform: words like term limits, overhaul
- 8 = immigration: words like “Trump’s wall”, illegal immigrants
- 9 = crime: words related to criminal acts
- 10 = moral and ethical issues: gay marriage, abortion, Planned Parenthood, gun control

- 11 = social security: specifically references Social Security
- 12 = taxes: tax cuts or tax increases
- 13 = government spending

V8. Political Figures (nominal): Identify whether there is a politician or political figure. (This is not likely to be mentioned but given the 2016 election, there could be candidate endorsements.)

- 1 = present (politician mentioned)
- 0 = absent (no politician mentioned)

V9. Cynicism (nominal): A cynical profile contains comments about the immorality of politics. This will likely be in the “political views” section and will contain a statement such as “politicians are not trustworthy, will saying anything lie or play dirty.”

- 1 = present (cynical)
- 0 = absent (not cynical)

V10. Apathy (nominal): An apathetic profile contains information about not voting, not participating in politics or other commentary related to not being involved or engaged.

- 1 = present (apathetic)
- 0 = absent (not apathetic)

V11. Negativism (nominal): A negative (toward politics) profile contains negative comments about the president, the legislature, or some other political person or institution.

- 1 = present (negative)
- 0 = absent (not negative)

V12-V15. Other Social Identities (nominal): These variables are crucial to understanding which identities are most important to individuals on online dating sites.

V12. Religious Identity: Code for presence if the profile explicitly mentions a faith or deity.

- 1 = present
- 0 = absent

V13. Ethnic and National Identity: Code for presence if the profile explicitly mentions an ethnic/national identity including multicultural and biracial identifiers.

- 1 = present
- 0 = absent

V14. Relational Identity: Code for presence if the profile mentions relationship words such as mother, father, parent, widow/er.

- 1 = present
- 0 = absent

V15. Stigmatized Identity: Code for presence or absence of mention of a stigmatized identity. This includes words such as obese, alcoholic, homeless or unemployed.

- 1 = present
- 0 = absent

V16. Age (ratio): Record the age listed on the profile.

V17. Gender (nominal): Record the gender listed on the profile.

- 0 = male
- 1 = female

V18. Sexual Orientation (nominal): Record the sexual orientation listed on the profile.

- 1 = heterosexual
- 2 = homosexual
- 3 = bisexual
- 4 = other

V19: Faith (nominal): Record the spiritual or religious faith listed on the profile.

V20: Race (nominal): Record the race that the individual self-identifies as.

V21: Income (ordinal): Record the income level listed on the profile.

- 0 = No answer
- 1 = less than \$25,000
- 2 = \$25,000 - 34,999
- 3 = \$35,000 - 49,999
- 4 = \$50,000 – 74,999
- 5 = \$75,000 – 100,999
- 6 = \$101,000 – 149,999
- 7 = \$150,000+

V22: Education (nominal):

- 0 = No answer
- 1 = High school
- 2 = Some college
- 3 = Associates degree
- 4 = Bachelor's degree
- 5 = Graduate degree
- 6 = PhD

V23: Political Interests (nominal): Record whether the profile lists “political interests” in the hobbies and interests section.

- 0 = absent
- 1 = present

Online Dating Coding Sheet

1. Coder Initials: _____
2. Profile ID No.: _____
3. Is there a 'political views' section? (circle one) Yes No
4. What is the partisanship? Republican Democrat Other Don't know
5. What is the political ideology? Conservative Liberal Other Don't know
6. How many issues are mentioned? _____
7. What category (categories) do the issues fall under?

_____ (1) Defense	_____ (8) Immigration
_____ (2) Jobs and the Economy	_____ (9) Crime
_____ (3) Healthcare	_____ (10) Moral and Ethical Issues
_____ (4) Education	_____ (11) Social Security
_____ (5) Group Advocacy	_____ (12) Taxes
_____ (6) Environment and Energy	_____ (13) Government Spending
_____ (7) Government Reform	
8. Are political figures mentioned? Yes No
9. Is the profile cynical? Yes No
10. Is the profile apathetic? Yes No
11. Is the profile negative about politics? Yes No
12. Is there a religious identity present? Yes No
13. Is there an ethnic/national identity present? Yes No
14. Is there a relational identity present? Yes No
15. Is there a stigmatized identity present? Yes No
16. Age: _____
17. Gender: M F
18. Sexual orientation: Heterosexual Homosexual Bisexual Other
19. Faith: _____

0 = No Answer
1 = Agnostic

- 2 = Atheist
- 3 = Buddhist/Taoist
- 4 = Christian/Catholic
- 5 = Christian/LDS
- 6 = Christian/Protestant
- 7 = Hindu
- 8 = Jewish
- 9 = Muslim/Islam
- 10 = Spiritual but not religious
- 11 = Other
- 12 = Christian/Other
- 13 = Adventist

20. Ethnicity: _____

- 0 = No answer
- 1 = Asian
- 2 = Black/African descent
- 3 = East Indian
- 4 = Latino/Hispanic
- 5 = Middle Eastern
- 6 = Native American
- 7 = Pacific Islander
- 8 = White/Caucasian
- 9 = Other

21. Income

- 0 = No answer
- 1 = less than \$25,000
- 2 = \$25,000 - 34,999
- 3 = \$35,000 - 49,999
- 4 = \$50,000 – 74,999
- 5 = \$75,000 – 100,999
- 6 = \$101,000 – 149,999
- 7 = \$150,000+

22. Education

- 0 = No answer
- 1 = High school
- 2 = Some college
- 3 = Associates degree
- 4 = Bachelor's degree
- 5 = Graduate degree
- 6 = PhD

23. Political interests? Yes No

Appendix B: Pretest Questionnaire

Research Study Introduction and Consent

Study Title: Identity and Attitudes toward Relationships

UNC-CH Department: School of Media and Journalism

Primary Investigator: Jessica Collier, MA Student

Email: jesscoll@live.unc.edu

Phone: 540.244.5433

Faculty Advisor: Francesca Dillman Carpentier, PhD

Email: francesca@email.unc.edu

Phone: 919.843.8292

What are some general things you should know about research studies? You are being asked to take part in a research study. To join the study is voluntary. You may refuse to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty. Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study.

What is the purpose of this study? The purpose of this research study is to collect data about college students' personalities and their attitudes toward dating in general.

How many people will take part in this study? If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of approximately 150 people in this research study.

What will happen if you take part in the study? Your part in this study will last approximately 30 minutes. During this study, you will complete an online questionnaire. The questionnaire will ask you to describe your dating habits as well as to complete some questions about your personality.

What are the possible benefits from being in this study? Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge. You may not benefit personally from being in this research study.

What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this study? We anticipate few risks in this study.

How will your privacy be protected? All of the data you provide will be stored confidentially. This means that your personal responses will not be shared with anyone at any time.

What if you want to stop before your part in the study is complete? You can withdraw from this study at any time, without penalty and skip any question for any reason. The investigators also have the right to stop your participation if you have an unexpected reaction, have failed to follow instructions, etc.

Will you receive anything for being in this study? Will it cost anything? You will receive one hour of research credit for participating in both parts of this study.

What if you have questions about this study? You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. Contact the principal investigator listed above with any questions, complaints, or concerns you may have.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant? All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns, or if you would like to obtain information or offer input, please contact the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB_subjects@unc.edu. If you contact the IRB, please refer to study 16-0020.

[Relationships Online/Offline]

First, I'd like to know about your behaviors regarding dating.

1. Are you currently in a committed romantic relationship?

Yes, in a committed romantic relationship

In a relationship, but not committed

No

Don't Know

2. Would you say you are currently looking for a romantic partner?

Yes, looking

No, not looking

3. Overall, would you say it is easy or difficult to meet people?

Easy to meet people

Difficult to meet people

4. Have you ever done any of the following things online? (Yes/No)

Searched for information online about someone you dated in the past

Flirted with someone online

Searched for information online about someone you were currently dating or were asked about to meet for a first date

Asked someone out online or via email for a first date

Used the internet or email to maintain a long-distance romantic relationship

5. Have you ever done any of the following things offline? (Yes/No)

Asked someone out on a date by calling them on the phone

Asked someone out on a date by sending them a text from your phone

Asked someone out on a date in person (face-to-face)

Broken up with someone you were dating by text

Had someone break up with *you* by text

For this next set of questions, think about the different ways people might have met their current partner or the ways people might meet someone they'd be interested in dating.

6. Have you personally ever used an online dating site such as Match.com, eHarmony or OK Cupid?

Yes

No

[if yes to Question 6]

7. Please select the sites you have used for dating purposes.

Match.com

eHarmony

OK Cupid

Plenty of Fish

Christian Mingle

Farmers Only

Zoosk

J Date

Meetup

Facebook

Twitter

Craigslist

Other (please specify): _____

8. Have you ever used a dating app (downloaded on your phone or tablet)?

Yes

No

[if yes to Question 8]

9. Please select the dating apps you have used.

Tinder

Grindr

Happn

Bumble

Coffee Meets Bagel

Hinge

OK Cupid

Other (please specify): _____

[Q10-Q13, if yes to questions 6 and 8]

10. Thinking about your experiences with these sites and applications, have you ever... (Yes/No)

Paid to use an online dating site

Used an online dating site or app designed for people with shared interests or backgrounds

Attended a group event organized by an online dating site

Gone on a date with someone you met through an online dating site or app

Been in a long-term relationship with someone you met through an online dating site or app

Been contacted by someone through an online dating site or app in a way that made you feel harassed or uncomfortable

Felt like someone else misrepresented themselves in an online dating profile

Asked someone to help you create or review your online dating profile
Been matched with or come across the profile of someone you already know on an online dating site or app

11. How much time per day would you estimate you spend on online dating sites? _____ minutes

12. How much time per day would you estimate you spend on dating apps? _____ minutes

13. How long have you been a member of an online dating site or app? _____ months

14. The following question is a list of reasons why someone might use an online dating site. Please indicate how important each of these items is when *you* decide to use an online dating site.

1 = not at all important, 5 = extremely important

Meeting people who share similar interests or hobbies

Finding someone for a long-term relationship

Meeting people who share my beliefs or values

Meeting people who just want to have fun without being in a serious relationship

Having a schedule that makes it hard to meet interesting people in other ways

15. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements about online dating.

1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree

Online dating is a good way to meet people.

Online dating allows me [people] to find a better match for myself [themselves] because they can get to know a lot more people.

Online dating keeps me [people] from getting in a serious relationship because I [they] always have options for people to date.

16. How successful do you believe dating sites/apps are at providing individuals with suitable matches?

1 = not at all successful, 10 = extremely successful

Next, the following sets of questions are aimed at understanding your personality.

[Strength of Identities]

17. There are many identities that make you who you are. Below is a list of some identities that may or may not be important to you. Please rank the following identities based on their importance to how you see yourself.

1 = MOST important, 9 = LEAST important

Example: *If you rank 'gender' as #1, it is the characteristic most important to how you see yourself.*

___ Gender identity (e.g. male, female)

- ___ Sexual identity (e.g. homosexual, etc.)
- ___ Sports fan identity (e.g. Panthers fan)
- ___ Socioeconomic status (e.g. middle class)
- ___ Nationality (e.g. American)
- ___ Political affiliation (e.g. Libertarian)
- ___ Grade point average (GPA)
- ___ Religious views (e.g. Protestant)
- ___ Ethnicity (e.g. Arabic)

[Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale]

17. Read each of the following statements carefully and indicate how characteristic it is of you according to the following scale:

1 = Not at all characteristic of me, 5 = extremely characteristic of me

I worry about what other people will think of me even when I know it doesn't make any difference.

I am unconcerned even if I know people are forming an unfavorable impression of me. (reverse)

I am frequently afraid of other people noticing my shortcomings.

I rarely worry about what kind of impression I am making on someone. (reverse)

I am afraid others will not approve of me.

I am afraid people will find fault with me.

Other people's opinions of me do not bother me. (reverse)

When I am talking to someone, I worry about what they may be thinking about me.

I am usually worried about what kind of impression I make.

If I know someone is judging me, it has little effect on me. (reverse)

Sometimes I think I am too concerned with what other people think of me.

I often worry that I will say or do the wrong things.

[Openness to Experience]

18. Read each of the following statements carefully and indicate how characteristic it is of you according to the following scale:

1 = not at all characteristic of me, 5 = extremely characteristic of me

I believe in the importance of art.

I have a vivid imagination.

I carry the conversation to a higher level.

I enjoy hearing new ideas.

I enjoy thinking about things.

I am not interested in abstract ideas (reverse)

I do not like art (reverse)

I avoid philosophical discussions (reverse)

I do not enjoy going to art museums (reverse)

I do not like poetry (reverse)

[Conservatism-Liberalism Scale]

19. Read each of the following statements carefully and indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree

I am politically more liberal than conservative. (reverse)

In any election, given a choice between a Republican and a Democratic candidate, I will select the Republican over the Democrat.

Communism has been proven to be a failed political ideology.

I cannot see myself ever voting to elect conservative candidates. (reverse)

The major national media are too left-wing for my taste.

Socialism has many advantages over capitalism. (reverse)

On balance, I lean politically more to the left than to the right. (reverse)

[UCLA Loneliness Scale]

20. Indicate how often each of the statements below is descriptive of you.

O indicates "I often feel this way"

S indicates "I sometimes feel this way"

R indicates "I rarely feel this way"

N indicates "I never feel this way"

I am unhappy doing so many things alone	O S R N
I have nobody to talk to	O S R N
I cannot tolerate being so alone	O S R N
I lack companionship	O S R N
I feel as if nobody really understands me	O S R N
I find myself waiting for people to call or write	O S R N
There is no one I can turn to	O S R N
I am no longer close to anyone	O S R N
My interests and ideas are not shared by those around me	O S R N
I feel left out	O S R N
I feel completely alone	O S R N
I am unable to reach out and communicate with those around me	O S R N
My social relationships are superficial	O S R N
I feel starved for company	O S R N
No one really knows me well	O S R N
I feel isolated from others	O S R N
I am unhappy being so withdrawn	O S R N
It is difficult for me to make friends	O S R N
I feel shut out and excluded by others	O S R N
People are around me but not with me	O S R N

[Sports Fan Questionnaire + adaptation for political identity]

21. This next set of questions is about your interests in politics and sports.

1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree

I consider myself politically engaged.
My friends see me as politically engaged.
I believe that following politics is the most enjoyable way I spend my time.
My life would be less enjoyable if I were not allowed to follow politics.
Being politically engaged is important to me.

I consider myself a sports fan.
My friends see me as a sports fan.
I believe that following sports is the most enjoyable way I spend my time.
My life would be less enjoyable if I were not allowed to follow sports.
Being a sports fan is important to me.

[Demographic Information]

Almost finished! This last section is some basic personal information. Remember, all responses are confidential and not linked to you!

22. How would you describe your overall views on politics in general?

- 0 = I don't know
- 1 = Very Liberal
- 2 = Liberal
- 3 = Moderate
- 4 = Conservative
- 5 = Very Conservative

23. How would you describe the dominant political environment of the household where you grew up?

- 0 = I don't know
- 1 = Very Liberal
- 2 = Liberal
- 3 = Moderate
- 4 = Conservative
- 5 = Very conservative

24. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as being closer to the Democratic Party or the Republican Party?

- 1 = Strong Democrat
- 2 = Leaning Democrat
- 3 = Independent
- 4 = Leaning Republican
- 5 = Strong Republican

25. What is your age? ____

26. Please indicate your sex.

Male
Female

27. Please indicate your sexual orientation.

Heterosexual

Gay [Lesbian]

Bisexual

Other (please specify): _____

28. What is your race?

Asian or Pacific Islander

Black or African American

Mixed race

Native American/American Indian

White

I'd prefer not to answer

Other (please specify): _____

29. What is your academic rank?

Freshman

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

Appendix C: Online Dating Form

Research Study Introduction and Consent

Study Title: Identity and Attitudes toward Relationships

UNC-CH Department: School of Media and Journalism

Primary Investigator: Jessica Collier, MA Student

Email: jesscoll@live.unc.edu

Phone: 540.244.5433

Faculty Advisor: Francesca Dillman Carpentier, PhD

Email: francesca@email.unc.edu

Phone: 919.843.8292

What are some general things you should know about research studies? You are being asked to take part in a research study. To join the study is voluntary. You may refuse to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty. Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study.

What is the purpose of this study? The purpose of this research study is to collect data about college students' personalities and their attitudes toward dating in general.

How many people will take part in this study? If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of approximately 150 people in this research study.

What will happen if you take part in the study? Your part in this study will last approximately 20 minutes. During this study, you will complete an online questionnaire. The questionnaire will ask you to describe your dating habits as well as to complete some questions about your personality.

What are the possible benefits from being in this study? Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge. You may not benefit personally from being in this research study.

What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this study? We anticipate few risks in this study.

How will your privacy be protected? All of the data you provide will be stored confidentially. This means that your personal responses will not be shared with anyone at any time.

What if you want to stop before your part in the study is complete? You can withdraw from this study at any time, without penalty and skip any question for any reason. The investigators also have the right to stop your participation if you have an unexpected reaction, have failed to follow instructions, etc.

Will you receive anything for being in this study? Will it cost anything? You will receive one hour of research credit for participating in both parts of this study.

What if you have questions about this study? You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. Contact the principal investigator listed above with any questions, complaints, or concerns you may have.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant? All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns, or if you would like to obtain information or offer input, please contact the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB_subjects@unc.edu. If you contact the IRB, please refer to study 16-0020.

HeelMatch

The University of North Carolina has begun exploring the option of creating an online dating network for its students. [*Manipulation sentence: We know how important it is to find dates who share your beliefs especially on important items such as politics.*] You have been selected as part of an elite group of students to submit a preliminary online dating profile. In this study, you will enter answers for the online dating profile as well as evaluate the profile of another student that we match you with. We need your help in fine-tuning our algorithms and determining what type of information is most likely to catch a potential date's attention and thus which questions to offer students as part of their profiles.

Headline: [write up to 140 characters about yourself]

Seeking:

Women
Men
Both

Relationship status: (choose one)

Single
In a relationship
In an open relationship
Engaged
Married
Divorced
No answer

Ethnicity: (choose one)

Asian
Black/African descent
East Indian
Latino/Hispanic
Middle Eastern
Native American

Pacific Islander
White/Caucasian
Mixed
Other
No answer

Body type: (choose one)

Slender
Big and beautiful
Curvy
About average
Athletic and toned

Full figured
Heavyset
A few extra pounds
Stocky
No answer

Age:

Height:

Faith:

Agnostic
Atheist
Buddhist/Taoist
Christian/Catholic
Christian/LDS
Christian/Protestant
Hindu

Jewish
Muslim/Islam
Spiritual but not religious
Other
Christian/Other
Adventist
No answer

In my own words...

[Type a brief bio about yourself]

Hobbies and Interest Tags (select 1 or more)

Foodie
Wine Lover
Beer Snob
World Traveler
Early bird
Night owl
Card shark
Musician
Illusionist
Shutterbug
Theatre goer
Writer
Artist
Film fanatic
History buff
Science nerd
Bookworm
Country clubber
After partier

Dance machine
Leisure diver
Sports fan
Rec league all-star
Lawn game champion
Marathoner
Cyclist
Beach bum
Ski bum
Adrenaline junkie
Sailor
Outdoor adventurer
Zombie survivalist
Road tripper
Political junkie
Satirical news fan
Armed services member
Health nut
Animal lover

Tree hugger
Goody two-shoes
Joker
Smoker
Midnight toker
Overachiever

Yogi
Vegan
Vegetarian
Die-hard carnivore
Conflicted omnivore
Secret agent

Exercise habits: (choose one)

I exercise regularly.
I exercise 1-2 times per week.
I exercise 3-4 times per week.
I exercise 5 or more times per week.
No answer

Political views: (choose one)

Very conservative
Conservative
Middle of the road
Liberal
Very liberal
Non-conformist
Some other viewpoint
No answer

Partisanship: (choose one)

Republican
Independent
Democrat
No answer

Major or intended major:

Favorite spots on or near campus: [list some of you favorite places in 250 characters]

Favorite things: [share your favorite music, TV shows, food, etc. in 250 characters or less]

Appendix D: Similar/Dissimilar Online Dating Profile & Evaluation

HeelMatch Result: Sam

Headline: Just looking for a fellow Tar Heel with similar interests.

Seeking: [varied based on sexual orientation of participant]

Relationship status: Single

Ethnicity: White/Caucasian

Body type: About average

Age: 20

Height: 5' 10"

Faith: Other

In my own words...

I'm a sophomore in the Journalism School. I grew up in Wilmington so I love the beach. I spend most of my time in Davis or on Franklin. I like working out, going to sporting events and spending time with friends & family.

Hobbies and Interests:

Night owl, bookworm, sports fan, animal lover

Exercise habits: I exercise regularly.

Political views: [Randomly assigned as very conservative or very liberal]

Partisanship: [Randomly assigned as Republican or Democrat]

Major or intended major: Advertising

Favorite spots on or near campus: Dean Dome, Carroll Hall, Spicy 9, Chipotle

Favorite things: Game of Thrones, Modern Family, Drake, The Weeknd

Evaluation Questions

1. How likely would you be to message this match?
1 = not at all likely, 10 = absolutely certain
2. How likely would you be to respond to a message from this match?
1 = not at all likely, 10 = absolutely certain
3. Are there any features about this profile that make the person an inappropriate match for you?
Yes
(If yes, please specify)
No
4. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the HeelMatch program.
1 = not at all satisfied, 10 = extremely satisfied
5. Use the following space to indicate what qualities of this dating site that you liked.
[open-ended response]
6. Use the following space to indicate what qualities of this dating site that you disliked.
[open-ended response]
7. How successful do you think this site will be at providing UNC students with suitable matches?
1 = not at all successful, 10 = extremely successful

Appendix E: Posttest Questionnaire

Thank you for completing the dating form and evaluating your match! Below are a few follow-up questions to conclude the study.

1. There are many identities that make you who you are. Below is a list of some identities that may or may not be important to you. Please rank the following identities based on their importance to how you see yourself.

1 = MOST important, 9 = LEAST important

Example: *If you rank 'gender' as #1, it is the characteristic most important to how you see yourself.*

- ___ Gender identity (e.g. male, female)
- ___ Sexual identity (e.g. homosexual, etc.)
- ___ Sports fan identity (e.g. Panthers fan)
- ___ Socioeconomic status (e.g. middle class)
- ___ Nationality (e.g. American)
- ___ Political affiliation (e.g. Libertarian)
- ___ Grade point average (GPA)
- ___ Religious views (e.g. Protestant)
- ___ Ethnicity (e.g. Arabic)

[Sports Fan Questionnaire + adaptation for political identity]

2. This next set of questions is about your interests in politics and sports.

1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree

I consider myself politically engaged.

My friends see me as politically engaged.

I believe that following politics is the most enjoyable way I spend my time.

My life would be less enjoyable if I were not allowed to follow politics.

Being politically engaged is important to me.

I consider myself a sports fan.

My friends see me as a sports fan.

I believe that following sports is the most enjoyable way I spend my time.

My life would be less enjoyable if I were not allowed to follow sports.

Being a sports fan is important to me.

[Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale]

3. Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree

On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

At times I think I am no good at all. (reverse)

I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
I am able to do things as well as most other people.
I feel I do not have much to be proud of. (reverse)
I certainly feel useless at times. (reverse)
I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.
I wish I could have more respect for myself. (reverse)
All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure. (reverse)
I take a positive attitude toward myself.

[Self-Monitoring Scale]

4. The statements below concern your personal reactions to a number of situations. No two statements are exactly alike so consider each statement carefully before answering. If a statement is mostly true as applied to you, select true. If a statement is false or not usually true of you, select false. It is important that you answer as frankly and honestly as you can. (True/False)

I find it hard to imitate the behavior of other people. (False)
My behavior is usually an expression of my true inner feelings, attitudes and beliefs. (False)
At parties and social gatherings, I do not attempt to do or say things that others will like. (False)
I can only argue for ideas I already believe. (False)
I can make impromptu speeches even on topics about which I have almost no information. (True)
I guess I put on a show to impress or entertain people. (True)
When I am uncertain how to act in a social situation, I look to the behavior of others for cues. (True)
I would probably make a good actor. (True)
I rarely need the advice of my friends to choose movies, books, or music. (False)
I sometimes appear to others to be experiencing deeper emotions than I actually am. (True)
I laugh more when I watch a comedy with others than when alone. (True)
In a group of people I am rarely the center of attention. (False)
In different situations and with different people, I often act like very different persons. (True)
I am not particularly good at making other people like me. (False)
Even if I am not enjoying myself, I often pretend to be having a good time. (True)
I'm not always the person I appear to be. (True)
I would not change my opinions (or the way I do things) in order to please someone else or win their favor. (False)
I have considered being an entertainer. (True)
In order to get along and be liked, I tend to be what people expect me to be rather than anything else. (True)
I have never been good at games like charades or improvisational acting. (False)
I have trouble changing my behaviors to suit different people and different situations. (False)
At a party, I let others keep the jokes and stories going. (False)
I feel a bit awkward in company and do not show up quite as often as I should. (False)
I can look anyone in the eye and tell a lie with a straight face (if for a right end). (True)
I may deceive people by being friendly when I really dislike them. (True)

**[Scoring: number of correct responses = total score on self-monitoring scale;
interpretation: 15-22 high; 9-14 intermediate; 0-8 low]**

Thank you for your participation!

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics for Key Variables.*

	N = 1000	%
Political Identity Salience	349	34.9
Political Ideology		
No Answer	647	64.8
Very liberal	22	2.2
Liberal	121	12.1
Middle of the road	136	13.6
Conservative	27	2.7
Ultra conservative	3	0.3
Some other viewpoint	28	2.8
Non-conformist	13	1.3
Religious Identity Salience	724	72.5
Ethnic/National Identity Salience	616	61.5
Relational Identity Salience	311	31.1
Stigmatized Identity Salience	102	10.2
Political Interests	92	9.2

Table 2. *Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Variables.*

	N = 1000	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sexual Orientation				
Heterosexual	500	50.0		
Homosexual	498	49.8		
Gender				
Male	500	50.1		
Female	499	49.9		
Faith				
No Answer	270	27.0		
Agnostic	40	4.0		
Atheist	15	1.5		
Buddhist/Taoist	15	1.5		
Christian	418	41.8		
Hindu	5	0.5		
Jewish	20	2.0		
Muslim/Islam	8	0.8		
Spiritual but not religious	163	16.3		
Other	43	4.3		
Income				
No Answer	556	55.7		
Less than \$25,000	70	7.0		
\$25,000 - \$35,000	68	6.8		
\$35,001 - \$50,000	72	7.2		
\$50,001 - \$75,000	105	10.5		
\$75,001 - \$100,000	50	5.0		
\$100,001 - \$150,000	38	3.8		
\$150,001 and up	38	3.8		
Education				
No Answer	156	15.6		
High school	116	11.6		
Some college	186	18.6		
Associates degree	99	9.9		
Bachelor's degree	241	24.1		
Graduate degree	167	16.7		
PhD	32	3.2		
Race				
No Answer	144	14.4		
Asian	33	3.3		
Black/African descent	106	10.6		
East Indian	7	0.7		
Latino/Hispanic	111	11.1		
Middle Eastern	4	0.4		
Native American	12	1.2		
Pacific Islander	2	0.2		
White	481	48.1		
Other	33	3.3		
Mixed	64	6.4		
Age			38.27	12.63

Table 3. *Dating profiles expressing/not expressing political identity by gender*

	Male	Female	Total
Salient political identity	33.2%	31.6%	64.8%
Political identity not salient	16.6%	18.3%	34.9%
Total (N)	49.8% (498)	49.9% (499)	100.0% (309)

$X^2 = 1.22$, 1 *d.f.*, $p = .269$

Cramer's $V = .035$

Table 4. *Percentages of dating profiles expressing/not expressing political identity by age*

	18-25	26-34	34-44	45-54	55 and up	Total N
Not salient	13.4 _a	20.0 _b	14.7 _b	12.1 _c	4.8 _d	647
Salient	2.7 _a	9.2 _b	7.5 _b	9.3 _c	6.2 _d	349
Total N	160	291	221	214	110	996
(%)	(16.1)	(29.2)	(22.2)	(21.5)	(11.0)	(100%)

$X^2 = 53.45$, 4 *d.f.*, $p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .232$

Differing subscripts within rows are significantly different at $p < .05$.

Table 6. *Salience of political identity based on composite identity expression level*

	Not salient	Salient	Total
No composite identity	10.3%	1.1%	11.4%
Low composite identity	18.5%	6.4%	24.9%
Moderate composite identity	24.0%	18.6%	42.5%
High composite identity	10.1%	8.2%	18.4%
Very high composite identity	2.1%	0.7%	2.8%
Total (N)	65.0% (648)	35.0% (349)	100.0% (997)

$X^2 = 64.27, 4 \text{ d.f.}, p < .001$
Cramer's $V = .254$

Table 7. *Descriptive Statistics for Key Variables for Comparison Sites*

	N	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Political Ideology				
Conservative	98	49.2		
Liberal	97	48.7		
Other	2	1.0		
Middle of the road	2	1.0		
Political Interests	71	35.7		
Religious Identity Salience	163	81.9		
Ethnic/National Identity Salience	124	62.3		
Relational Identity Salience	92	46.2		
Stigmatized Identity Salience	64	32.2		
Faith				
No Answer	38	19.1		
Agnostic	17	8.5		
Atheist	1	0.5		
Christian	88	44.2		
Jewish	3	1.5		
Spiritual but not religious	40	20.1		
Other	12	6.0		
Income				
No Answer	151	75.9		
Less than \$25,000	16	8.0		
\$25,000 - \$35,000	17	8.5		
\$35,001 - \$50,000				
\$50,001 - \$75,000	10	5.0		
\$75,001 - \$100,000				
\$100,001 - \$150,000	4	2.0		
\$150,001 and up	1	0.5		
Education				
No Answer	18	9.0		
High school	18	9.0		
Some college	53	26.6		
Associates degree	2	1.0		
Bachelor's degree	51	25.6		
Graduate degree	44	22.1		
PhD	12	6.0		
Gender				
Male	100	50.3		
Female	99	49.7		
Race				
White	165	82.9		
Non-white	34	17.1		
Age			47.97	14.11

Table 8. *Salience of political identity: general site versus niche sites*

	General site	Niche site	Total
Salient political identity	29.2%	5.9%	35.1%
Political identity not salient	54.2%	10.7%	64.9%
Total (N)	83.4% (997)	16.6% (199)	100% (1196)

$X^2 = 0.03$, 1 *d.f.*, $p = .856$

Cramer's $V = .005$

Table 9. *Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Variables.*

	N = 144	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sexual Orientation				
Heterosexual	137	95.1		
Homosexual	3	2.1		
Bisexual	1	0.7		
Pansexual	1	0.7		
Gender				
Male	26	18.1		
Female	116	80.6		
Race				
Asian	7	4.9		
Black/African descent	7	4.9		
Latino/Hispanic	3	2.1		
Mixed	4	2.8		
Native American	1	0.7		
White	119	82.6		
Age			20.36	0.88
Academic Rank				
Freshman	2	1.4		
Sophomore	48	33.3		
Junior	63	43.8		
Senior	29	20.1		
Partisanship				
Strong Democrat	35	24.3		
Leaning Democrat	39	27.1		
Independent	13	9.0		
Leaning Republican	36	25.0		
Strong Republican	14	9.7		
No Affiliation	5	3.5		
Political Ideology				
Don't know	4	2.8		
Very liberal	20	13.9		
Liberal	40	27.8		
Moderate	49	34.0		
Conservative	27	18.8		
Very conservative	2	1.4		
Political Home Environment				
Don't know	1	0.7		
Very liberal	7	4.9		
Liberal	27	18.8		
Moderate	38	26.4		
Conservative	52	36.1		
Very conservative	17	11.8		

Table 10. *Dating profiles expressing/not expressing partisanship by condition*

	Rep.	Ind.	Dem.	N.A.	Total
Salient political identity (Stimulus)	14.9%	12.4%	22.3%	4.1%	53.7%
Political identity not salient (Control)	13.2%	10.7%	18.2%	4.1%	46.2%
Total	28.1%	23.1%	40.5%	8.2%	100%

$X^2 = 0.10, 3 \text{ d.f.}, p = .992$

Cramer's $V = 0.03$

Table 11. *Percentages of dating profiles expressing/not expressing political ideology by condition*

	1*	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Salient political identity (Stimulus)	0.8	12.5	15.8	13.3	7.5	0.8	0.8	1.7	53.2%
Political identity not salient (Control)	0.0	10.0	11.7	13.3	8.3	0.8	0.8	1.7	46.6%
Total	0.8	22.5	27.5	26.6	15.8	1.6	1.6	3.4	100.0%

1 = very conservative; 2 = conservative; 3 = middle of the road; 4 = liberal; 5 = very liberal; 6 = non-conformist; 7 = some other viewpoint;
8 = no answer
 $X^2 = 1.62, 7 \text{ d.f.}, p = .978$
 Cramer's $V = 0.12$

Table 12. *Dating profiles expressing/not expressing partisanship by condition and strength of partisanship*

Strong Identifiers ^a					
	Rep.	Ind.	Dem.	N.A.	Total
Salient PID (Stimulus)	17.1%		39.0%		56.1%
PID not salient (Control)	14.6%		29.3%		43.9%
Total	31.7%		68.3%		100%
Weak Identifiers ^b					
	Rep.	Ind.	Dem.	N.A.	Total
Salient PID (Stimulus)	17.2%	14.1%	15.6%	3.1%	50.0%
PID not salient (Control)	15.6%	14.1%	15.6%	4.7%	50.0%
Total	32.8%	28.2%	31.2%	7.9%	100%
Non-Identifiers ^c					
	Rep.	Ind.	Dem.	N.A.	Total
Salient PID (Stimulus)		37.5%	6.3%	18.8%	62.6%
PID not salient (Control)		25.0%	0.0	12.5%	37.5%
Total		62.5%	6.3%	31.3%	100%

^a $X^2 = 0.04$, 1 *df.*, $p = .843$

Cramer's $V = 0.03$

^b $X^2 = 0.25$, 3 *df.*, $p = .970$

Cramer's $V = 0.06$

^c $X^2 = 0.64$, 2 *df.*, $p = .726$

Cramer's $V = 0.20$

Table 13. *Mean political identity rank across strength of partisanship conditions*

Political identity	Strength of Partisanship			<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	Strong PID	Weak PID	No PID		
Pretest ranking	4.79(2.26)	6.96(2.17)	8.06(2.08)	19.93	<.001
Posttest ranking	4.62(2.39)	6.86(2.34)	9.13(0.92)	24.38	<.001

Table 14. *Paired t-test comparisons of political identity measures at Time 1 and Time 2*

	<i>Time 1</i>	<i>Time 2</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Political identity rank	6.51(2.46)	6.41(2.65)	113	112	0.48	0.633
Political identity questionnaire	2.92(0.85)	3.02(0.86)	121	120	-2.94	0.004
Control condition	2.80(0.89)	2.87(0.93)	57	56	-1.51	0.137
Stimulus condition	3.03(0.80)	3.15(0.77)	64	63	-2.59	0.012

Table 16. *Means for strength of identities measure across Time 1 and Time 2*

Rank at Time 2	Social Identity	<i>Time 1</i>	<i>Time 2</i>	Rank Difference from Time 1 to Time 2
1	Gender identity	2.63(2.14)	2.63(2.23)	0
2	Academic identity	4.33(2.53)	4.39(2.36)	0
3	Sexual identity	4.91(2.93)	4.57(2.64)	0
4	Extracurricular identity	5.43(2.72)	5.40(2.68)	0
5	Religious identity	5.71(3.20)	5.82(3.39)	0
6	Nationality	6.04(2.49)	6.02(2.48)	0
7	Political identity	6.35(2.48)	6.43(2.65)	+2
8	Sports fan identity	6.93(2.54)	6.44(2.55)	+2
9	Socioeconomic identity	6.25(2.35)	6.60(2.35)	-2
10	Ethnicity	6.42(2.66)	6.70(2.57)	-1

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