

# **THE ROLE OF POLITICAL SIMILARITY IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **CHELSEA JACQUELINE PHILLIPS: The Role of Political Similarity in Romantic Relationships**

(Under the direction of Thomas Carsey)

After 60 years of studying political behavior, political scientists have concluded that Americans are not well-informed about politics, interested in political affairs, engaged in political behavior, or constrained ideologically. Yet, psychological scholarship on interpersonal relationships shows that these same Americans seem to use explicitly political criteria when selecting social networks, picking discussion partners, and even choosing spouses. Why do Americans, who appear to be politically ignorant and disinterested when answering survey questions, use their political attitudes when doing something as fundamental as evaluating potential and actual relationship partners? I argue this is because political attitudes are “core attitudes” revealing fundamental values that are difficult to compromise on. Thus, individuals seek like-minded partners when pursuing romantic relationships.

In chapter one, I explore the role of political attitudinal similarity in the attraction process. Using an experimental technique, I show that individuals evaluate politically similar strangers more favorably than they do politically dissimilar strangers. Participants are also more attracted to politically similar others and would prefer to spend time with and pursue relationships with others who share their political attitudes.

In chapter two, I look at the role of political identity similarity in the attraction process. Using another experimental technique, I show that individuals expect relationships with politically similar others to be more satisfying and less conflictual than relationships with politically dissimilar others.

Finally, in chapter three, I consider the role of political attitudinal similarity in non-marital romantic relationships. I show that the political attitudes of couples are more similar than we would expect by chance. Couples seem to be politically similar due to choice, not coincidental selection based on other characteristics or convergence of attitudes over time. Moreover, politically similar couples are more satisfied with their romantic relationships than politically dissimilar couples.

Overall, I demonstrate that political phenomena influence the most intimate relationships humans pursue—dating and marriage. By uncovering an important role for politics in these very personal processes, I show that politics is much more fundamental to human behavior than political scientists currently assume, and that we would be wise to reconsider the way we study and measure political importance.

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## **Chapter One: The Role of Political Attitudinal Similarity in the Attraction Process**

### **Introduction**

Conventional wisdom in the field of mass political behavior accepts that Americans are not generally well-informed about politics, interested in political affairs, engaged in political behavior, or constrained ideologically (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee, 1954; Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, 1960; Zaller, 1992; Converse, 1964). Also, because of the potential for disagreement and offense, Americans do not frequently talk about political issues (Huckfeldt, Mendez, and Osborn, 2004). Simply put, politics does not seem to be even marginally important to most people most of the time.

However, married couples tend to be politically similar, which suggests a role for political preferences in human mating behavior. Husbands and wives often share party identification (Niemi, Hedges, and Jennings, 1977), they espouse similar positions on political issues (Stoker and Jennings, 2005; Alford et al., 2011), they frequently vote for the same candidates in elections (Stoker and Jennings, 2005), and they support similar political ideologies. Several recent studies offer preliminary empirical evidence linking an individual's political attitudes with his or her romantic relationship pursuits (Stoker and Jennings, 2005; Alford et al., 2011; Klostad, McDermott, and Hatemi, 2012; Huber and Malhotra, 2013). However, political science currently lacks a coherent theoretical explanation for why political similarity is linked to the formation of romantic relationships and how this process occurs, despite the longstanding assumption that politics is unimportant to most Americans.

In this chapter, I address this apparent tension in the literature, by asking: *why* and *how* do political attitudes shape romantic relationships when politics itself appears to play such a minor role in the daily lives of most people? I advance our understanding of how explicitly political phenomena influence the most intimate relationships humans pursue—dating and marriage. I integrate several theories from cognitive and behavioral psychology to explain why we should expect individuals to be more attracted to politically similar than politically dissimilar others. Finally, using an experimental technique common in the field of social psychology, I test hypotheses derived from my theory regarding the desirability of dating or marrying a politically similar versus politically dissimilar partner.

### **Cognitive Consistency and Reinforcement**

Psychologists have posited many different explanations for why individuals care about the attitudes of other individuals and why they react emotionally to the discovery of similar and dissimilar attitudes. Cognitive consistency theories predict couple similarity due to an intrinsic need for balance in relationships, while reinforcement theories predict couple similarity due to the reward-punishment aspects of social interaction.

Balance theory is a theory of cognitive consistency that posits that individuals are driven to maintain congruence within interpersonal relationships (Heider, 1958). If a person (**P**) likes an ‘other’ person (**O**), there is balance in the relationship if **O** reciprocates **P**’s feelings. In other words, if Paul likes Olivia and Olivia likes Paul then their relationship is balanced. Imbalance results when **P** likes **O**, but **O** does not like **P**, or in other words, when Paul likes Olivia but Olivia does not like Paul. Psychological imbalance can lead to cognitive dissonance, which is a sense of intrapsychic discomfort that results from simultaneously holding contradictory ideas (in this case, tension between Paul liking Olivia and Paul

believing that Paul is a generally likeable person, yet Olivia does not like Paul for some reason). People are assumed to possess a motivational drive to reduce such psychological distress (Festinger, 1957). Using the example above, if **P** likes **O**, but **O** does not like **P**, the relationship lacks balance and **P** is likely to feel dissonance that may lead **P** to change his or her attitude toward **O**.

Balance theory can also be expanded to include attitude objects (situations, events, ideas, or things) in addition to individuals (Heider, 1958; see also: Newcomb, 1956 “AB-X Theory of Social Psychology”). In an intimate relationship, an individual experiences a balanced state when his or her attitude toward an object matches the attitude of his or her relationship partner toward the same object. Imbalance results when romantic partners have differing opinions on attitude objects (Newcomb, 1956). Expanding upon the example above, if Paul likes Olivia, Olivia likes Paul, and both Paul and Olivia like living in North Carolina, the relationship is balanced. However, if Paul and Olivia like each other but feel differently about living in North Carolina, then the relationship lacks balance regarding the attitude object. When balance is not achieved in a relationship, an individual is forced to reconsider his or her feelings toward the relationship partner, the attitude object, or both.

Moving from cognitive consistency to reinforcement, learning theory uses the concepts of reinforcement and punishment to help explain attitude similarity within interpersonal relationships. In operant conditioning, reinforcement increases the likelihood of a specific behavior while punishment decreases such future behavior (Skinner, 1974). Positive reinforcement involves adding a stimulus to increase a certain response. Shared attitudes are often positively reinforced within the relationship context while dissimilar attitudes are not. Interacting with a similar partner is attractive because the partner provides

positive reinforcement. Repeated interactions with a similar partner will lead to the strengthening of an individual's attitudes over time. Positive punishment occurs when an aversive stimulus is added to decrease a certain response. This form of operant conditioning is used in relationships where partners disagree about important behaviors and attitudes (Skinner, 1974).

Sometimes individuals are motivated to view their world accurately (see: Byrne, 1971, "Effectance Arousal Model"). To do this, individuals compare their beliefs, opinions, and attitudes about the world to the beliefs, opinions, and attitudes of others (Festinger, 1954). Discovering similarity with others leads to a sense of consensual validation. Having another individual agree with your view of the world provides evidence of the "correctness" of your beliefs, opinions, and/or attitudes. Being validated in this way leads to a positive emotional response: the individual sees him- or her- self as intelligent, wise, and thoughtful. This leads the individual to like the other person who was the cause of such good feelings about the self.

Finally, the theory of enjoyable interactions posits that experiencing rewarding interactions with another individual causes attraction toward that individual (Burleson and Denton, 1992). Attitudinal similarity can facilitate enjoyable interactions. Thus, instead of being attracted to similar others because they can validate an individual's cognitions, this theory expects that an individual will be attracted to similar others because he or she expects that interacting with attitudinally similar others will be enjoyable.

### **Why We Should Expect Couples to Share Similar Political Attitudes**

Clearly, social psychologists have spent a lot of time developing many different theoretical explanations for why we should expect individuals to be attracted to others who

share their attitudes on a variety of issues. By unifying these perspectives, I develop an overarching theoretical framework regarding the importance of political similarity for interpersonal attraction and then test hypotheses derived from my theory.

I argue that political attitudes are especially important to the interpersonal attraction process because political attitudes are “core” attitudes revealing information about an individual’s general worldview (Conover, Searing, and Crewe, 2002). Political attitudes go beyond an individual’s opinion of an object to the individual’s central identity. It is difficult to compromise on or overlook “core” attitudinal discrepancies that have a moral component to them, as many political attitude issues do (Haidt, 2012). Thus, going back to our hypothetical individuals, Paul and Olivia, I assume that they will be more attracted to each other if they are politically similar than if they are politically dissimilar, for three primary reasons:

First, relationships with politically similar others exhibit balance, while relationships with politically dissimilar others are imbalanced causing cognitive dissonance (i.e., Balance Theory). If Paul likes Olivia, and Olivia likes Paul, and both individuals like the ideals and principles of the Democratic Party, then Paul and Olivia will experience a balanced relationship and will avoid experiencing cognitive dissonance. However, if Paul is a proud Democrat while Olivia strongly supports the GOP, Paul and Olivia may find it difficult to appreciate each other’s opinions and attitudes. Despite how much Paul likes Olivia, he may never understand why she would support issue positions and candidates he vehemently opposes, and vice versa. Since political attitudes often represent core values, Paul and Olivia may come to realize that their differing political opinions not only cause disagreements when

it is time to go to the ballot box, but when they are discussing many issues that involve their general worldviews or identities.

Second, sharing political attitudes with another individual leads to consensual validation and a positive view of the self (i.e., Learning Theory and the Effectance Arousal Model). Like many other Americans, Paul and Olivia have heard various pundits arguing about the potential costs and benefits of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) (i.e., Obamacare). Olivia does not believe that the ACA will benefit her directly and she feels that it may even prove harmful for the country as a whole, but she is not sure that she is well enough informed on all aspects of the issue to really take a stand against it. During a casual conversation with friends, Paul states that he thinks Obamacare is a horrible policy that will have devastating effects on the American economy, and he goes on to develop an elaborate argument explaining his position. Olivia finds herself nodding in agreement with Paul's statements. Although previously unsure of her position on the ACA, Olivia feels a sense of consensual validation as a result of Paul's remarks. She begins to believe that her initial suspicions regarding Obamacare were correct and she experiences a positive emotional response – seeing herself as an informed and thoughtful citizen. Since Paul is the cause of Olivia's positive self-regard, she begins to like Paul more than she previously did.

Finally, a third reason why Paul and Olivia are more likely to be attracted to each other if they share political attitudes is because interacting with politically similar others is more enjoyable than interacting with politically dissimilar others (i.e., the Theory of Enjoyable Interactions). Paul remembers how painful Thanksgiving dinners were as a child when his dad, an outspoken liberal, and his uncle, a staunch conservative, would inevitably get into a heated debate about the latest political issues facing Congress. Although their

“debates” started out cordially enough, they quickly devolved into shouting matches and name calling. As Paul began getting to know Olivia, he discovered that many of her political attitudes were closely aligned with his own. Instead of political discourse leading to bickering and hurt feelings, Paul begins to expect and engage in easy and enjoyable political conversations with Olivia. These rewarding interactions lead Paul to be more attracted to Olivia than he was before.

Discovering that they share politically similar attitudes, Paul and Olivia’s cognitions are balanced. Their beliefs about the world are validated, leading toward positive self-affect. Finally, they expect future interactions to be enjoyable, leading to positive feelings toward the other person. Because of these positive aspects of shared political attitudes, I predict that individuals actively seek to develop romantic relationships with politically similar others, despite politics appearing to play a minor role in the daily lives of most people.

Based on my theory, I expect individuals to be more attracted to politically similar than dissimilar others and to seek enduring relationships (e.g., dating and marriage) with politically similar others. If my theory is correct, then active assortative mating is the initial mechanism that explains couple political similarity. Assortative mating occurs when individuals choose others as romantic partners based upon their degree of resemblance on specific characteristics, like age, personality, or political views (Buss, 1984). Romantic partners will be politically similar because individuals actively seek partners based upon their degree of resemblance on specific characteristics (e.g., political views) (Alford et al., 2011). I will test the following two hypotheses using an experimental technique popular in social psychology:

**H1** Individuals will evaluate politically similar others more positively than they will evaluate politically dissimilar others on a range of outcome variables, including intelligence, morality, and knowledge of current events.

**H2** Individuals will be more romantically attracted to politically similar than politically dissimilar others. Operationally, this means that individuals will report greater interest in dating and/or marrying politically similar rather than politically dissimilar others.

### **Research Design: “Bogus Strangers”**

For the assortative mating hypothesis to be a viable explanation of romantic partner political similarity, it is necessary to determine whether individuals are more attracted to politically similar than dissimilar others. If individuals report greater attraction toward politically similar than politically dissimilar others in a laboratory setting, it is likely that they will seek out politically similar individuals in real-world romantic relationships. I test this using a common experiment from social psychology: the “bogus stranger” experiment.

### **What Does “Politically Similar” Mean?**

During the summer of 2012, I pre-tested a battery of political attitude items using a sample of undergraduate students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. My original political attitude survey included 30 items pulled from the American National Election Study (ANES), General Social Survey (GSS), and Election 2012 Presidential websites. I asked students to indicate how frequently they discussed each item with family/friends and how important each item was to them personally. I selected the top 17 responses from the pretest – the items that students indicated they discussed at least ‘Once per month’ with friends and family (score of 3 or higher, on a 6-point scale) or were at least



‘Somewhat important’ to them personally (score of 3 or higher, on a 6-point scale). I created and used a Political Attitude Survey (PAS) including these 17 political attitude items to explore political similarity.

### **The “Bogus Stranger” Method**

I tested the assortative mating hypothesis by adapting a social psychological experimental technique to determine whether undergraduate students reported greater attraction toward politically similar than politically dissimilar others. Participants were 371 undergraduate students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill taking an introductory Political Science course during the spring 2012 semester. They participated in two phases of this study.

At time 1, participants completed the Political Attitude Survey (PAS) previously described. Participants also answered a brief set of demographic questions.

At time 2, participants received a copy of the same PAS (allegedly completed by a student in another section of their class) to review.<sup>1</sup> Participants were told that they were participating in a study of interpersonal prediction. Specifically, the instructions stated that: *The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which one person can form valid judgments about another person just by knowing a few of his or her attitudes.* In reality, I manipulated the PAS given to each participant to adhere to the matching percentage information provided below in Table 1.

I used the Method of Constant Discrepancy (Byrne, 1971; Singh et al., 2008) to simulate attitude similarity and dissimilarity. A similar attitude was an attitude on the same

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<sup>1</sup> Since participants viewed the profile of an opposite-sex individual, only responses from heterosexual participants were included in the analyses.

side of the attitude item within one box from the participant's own attitude. Like Singh et al. (2008), I avoided using the most extreme responses (box 1 and box 6) when constructing similar attitude items. For example, a question regarding participant attitudes toward the death penalty looked like this:

### **Death Penalty**

- (1) In general, I strongly oppose the death penalty.
- (2) In general, I moderately oppose the death penalty.
- (3) In general, I slightly oppose the death penalty.
- (4) In general, I slightly support the death penalty.
- (5) In general, I moderately support the death penalty.
- (6) In general, I strongly support the death penalty.

A participant marking “In general, I moderately oppose the death penalty” (box 2) received a manipulated inventory with “In general, I slightly oppose the death penalty” (box 3) checked (instead of “In general, I strongly oppose the death penalty” [box 1]) to show attitude similarity. This avoided complicating the process by introducing attitude extremity. A dissimilar attitude was an attitude on the opposite side of the attitude item that is three boxes away from the participant's own attitude. For dissimilar attitudes, introducing attitude extremity was not avoided (Singh et al., 2008).<sup>2</sup> For example, a participant marking “In

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<sup>2</sup> If “similar-extreme” profiles had been used, it would have been difficult to determine whether the results were being driven by similarity or extremism. It is thought that people generally like others on the same side as them, but not others on the same side who are thought to be extreme. Thus, “similar-extreme” profiles may have been viewed by participants as dissimilar instead of similar, even though their political attitudes fell on the same side as the participant's. Since the purpose of the dissimilar category was to make the participant think that the person they were reading about was different from them, attitude extremity was not avoided. Thus, some participants may have seen profiles of individuals they classified as “dissimilar-extreme”. This does not pose a problem for my design since the

general, I slightly oppose the death penalty” (box 3) received a manipulated inventory with “In general, I strongly support the death penalty” (box 6) checked.

Using random assignment, I divided participants into one of four experimental conditions (see Table 1) based upon political similarity – Highly similar, Similar, Dissimilar, and Highly dissimilar (100% match, 67% match, 33% match, and 0% match respectively).<sup>3</sup> Students in each condition were given the following instructions (which have been modified slightly from instructions given by Byrne [1971]):

*Last semester we carried out other studies of this sort. Students wrote down several sorts of information about themselves, all identifying information was removed, and this information was given to other students. The task was to form an opinion about the stranger's intelligence, knowledge of current events, morality, and adjustment just on the basis of knowing a few bits of information about the person's past and present life. We found that students could guess these things with better than chance accuracy.*

*So, this study is an extension of the previous one, and a major change has been introduced. Instead of receiving information about the other person's life, you will be shown his or her attitudes on specific issues. You are about to receive the attitude scale of another student. All I can guarantee is that this person is the opposite sex as yourself, and to the best of our knowledge you do not know the*

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purpose was to induce participants to think of an individual whose political attitudes were different from their own – whether extreme or not.

<sup>3</sup> While these values are extreme (100% similar, 0% similar), past research using this experimental design has varied the match percentages and consistently found the same result: attraction increases as the proportion of similarity increases, regardless of which proportions are used (Byrne, 1971).

*person whose attitude scale you will receive, and it is not someone in the same [political science recitation] as yourself.*

*Please read the person's answers carefully and try to form an opinion about him or her. As soon as you have studied each of the attitudes, [click the double arrows button at the bottom of the screen] to continue to the Interpersonal Judgment Scale and indicate your best guess as to this person's intelligence, knowledge of current events, morality, and adjustment. You will also be asked to indicate how much you think you would like this person if you met him or her, how much you think you would like to work with this person as partners in an experiment, how much you think you would like to date this person, and how much you think you would like this person as a spouse.*

After forming an impression of the “bogus stranger,” participants completed Byrne’s (1971) Interpersonal Judgment Scale (IJS), two additional items from Byrne’s (1971) Computer Dating IJS, and two original items following the format of Byrne’s IJS to assess the other student’s party identification and political ideology (labeled: Worldview; liberal - conservative). Byrne’s (1971) IJS included six items: intelligence, knowledge of current events, morality, adjustment, personal feelings, and working together on a project. The two items from Byrne’s (1971) Computer Dating IJS that I included were dating and marriage. I also asked respondents to determine whether they thought the individual whose profile they had viewed was a Democrat or Republican and a liberal or conservative. All evaluations were made using 7-point scales (ranging from 1-7).

## Results

The results of several ANOVA analyses show that individuals evaluate politically similar others more positively than they evaluate politically dissimilar others across many different domains (e.g., intelligence, morality, desire to date, etc.). “Bogus stranger” evaluations that include the potential for interaction with the individual described in the profile show a linear relationship between the degree of political similarity between respondent and the profile with which they were paired and desire for interaction. Key to my study, individuals are romantically attracted to politically similar others while they are not attracted to politically dissimilar others. Thus, I find strong support for both hypotheses one and two.

In hypothesis one, I predicted that individuals would evaluate politically similar others more positively than they evaluated politically dissimilar others. I conducted one-way between subjects ANOVAs to compare the effect of the percent of political attitudes shared by the subject and the “bogus stranger” on the subject’s assessment of the “bogus stranger’s” knowledge of current events, adjustment, intelligence, and morality, respectively. I found statistically significantly different results between groups for each analysis as can be seen in Figure 1 below (See Appendix C for tabular results).

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of the percent of political attitudes shared by the subject and “bogus stranger” on the subject’s assessment of the “bogus stranger’s” knowledge of current events, in 100% matching, 67% matching, 33% matching, and 0% matching conditions. Looking at respondents’ evaluation of the “bogus stranger’s” knowledge of current events by level of political similarity, there was a statistically significant difference between groups level for the four conditions as

determined by one-way ANOVA,  $F(3,357) = 7.9, p < .001$ .<sup>4</sup> Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey-Kramer test<sup>5</sup> indicated that the mean score for the 100% match condition ( $M = 4.48, SD = 1.18$ ) was significantly different than the 0% match, 33% match, and 67% match conditions ( $M = 3.77, SD = 1.14$ ;  $M = 3.73, SD = 1.20$ ;  $M = 4.01, SD = 1.17$ , respectively; See Figure 1). However, the 0% match condition ( $M = 3.77, SD = 1.14$ ) did not significantly differ from the 33% match or the 67% match conditions ( $M = 3.73, SD = 1.20$ ;  $M = 4.01, SD = 1.17$ , respectively). Also, the 33% match condition ( $M = 3.73, SD = 1.20$ ) did not significantly differ from the 67% match condition ( $M = 4.01, SD = 1.17$ ). Putting these results together, individuals evaluate politically dissimilar strangers as less knowledgeable about current events than politically similar strangers. Specifically, individuals evaluating the profile of a stranger whose political attitudes were very similar to those of the participant, saw the stranger as very knowledgeable of current events, while very dissimilar strangers were evaluated as lacking in knowledge of current events. Individuals with moderately similar political attitudes were not viewed as more or less knowledge of current events.

Running the same type of analysis for adjustment, there was a statistically significant difference between groups for the four conditions as determined by one-way ANOVA,  $F(3,354) = 23.21, p < .001$ . The mean score for the 0% match condition ( $M = 3.67, SD = 1.07$ ) was significantly different than the 33% match, 66% match, and 100% match conditions ( $M = 4.09, SD = 0.98$ ;  $M = 4.23, SD = 1.16$ ;  $M = 4.99, SD = 1.11$ , respectively;

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<sup>4</sup> The assumption of homogeneity of variance was slightly violated according to results from Bartlett's test and Levene's test. However, the ANOVA method is fairly robust to such violations, especially when the group sample sizes are fairly equal, as they were here. Additionally, violating the equal variance assumption is primarily a problem in small samples. Since the sample here is large with fairly equal sample sizes, I am not concerned that heterogeneity of variance has biased my results.

<sup>5</sup> The Tukey-Kramer test allows for unequal cell sizes in an ANOVA.

See Figure 1). The 33% match condition ( $M = 4.09$ ,  $SD = 0.98$ ) was significantly different than the 100% match condition ( $M = 4.99$ ,  $SD = 1.11$ ). And the 67% match condition ( $M = 4.23$ ,  $SD = 1.16$ ) was significantly different than the 100% match condition ( $M = 4.99$ ,  $SD = 1.11$ ). However, the 33% match condition ( $M = 4.09$ ,  $SD = 0.98$ ) did not significantly differ from the 67% match condition ( $M = 4.23$ ,  $SD = 1.16$ ). Putting these results together shows that subjects evaluated politically similar strangers as being better adjusted than politically dissimilar strangers. This result held across all comparison groups except for the two groups who were moderately politically similar.

Again, using the ANOVA method to evaluate intelligence, I found a statistically significant difference between groups for the four conditions as determined by one-way ANOVA,  $F(3,357) = 13.88$ ,  $p < .001$ . The mean score for the 0% match condition ( $M = 4.39$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ) was significantly different than the 67% match and 100% match conditions ( $M = 4.89$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ;  $M = 5.24$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ , respectively; See Figure 1). The mean score for the 33% match condition ( $M = 4.44$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ) was significantly different than the 67% match and 100% match conditions ( $M = 4.89$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ;  $M = 5.24$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ , respectively). However, the 0% match condition ( $M = 4.39$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ) did not significantly differ from the 33% match condition ( $M = 4.44$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ) nor did the 67% match condition ( $M = 4.89$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ) significantly differ from the 100% match condition ( $M = 5.24$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ). Taken together, these results show that individuals evaluate politically similar strangers as more intelligent than politically dissimilar strangers. Specifically, subjects evaluating a stranger who shared less than half of their political attitudes viewed the stranger as relatively unintelligent compared to subjects evaluating a stranger who shared more than half of their political attitudes.

Finally, using the same type of analysis to look at morality, there was a statistically significant difference between groups for the four conditions as determined by one-way ANOVA,  $F(3,356) = 15.17, p < .001$ . The mean score for the 0% match condition ( $M = 4.29, SD = 1.23$ ) was significantly different than the 66% match and 100% match conditions ( $M = 4.90, SD = 1.04$ ;  $M = 5.31, SD = 1.00$ , respectively; See Figure 1). Also, the mean score for the 33% match condition ( $M = 4.55, SD = 1.06$ ) significantly differed from the 100% match condition ( $M = 5.31, SD = 1.00$ ). However, the 0% match condition ( $M = 4.29, SD = 1.23$ ) did not significantly differ from the 33% match condition ( $M = 4.55, SD = 1.06$ ). The 33% match condition ( $M = 4.55, SD = 1.06$ ) did not significantly differ from the 67% match condition ( $M = 4.90, SD = 1.04$ ). And the 67% match condition ( $M = 4.90, SD = 1.04$ ) did not significantly differ from the 100% match condition ( $M = 5.31, SD = 1.00$ ). Taken together, these results show that participants evaluated politically similar strangers as more moral than politically dissimilar strangers. Very politically dissimilar strangers were evaluated as especially immoral compared to very politically similar strangers.

Taking these four sets of results together, let us consider the magnitude of the effect of moving from being highly politically dissimilar to highly politically similar. All four dependent variables were measured on a 1-7 scale. The mean ratings of highly similar “bogus strangers” were between 0.71 – 1.32 points higher than were the mean ratings of highly dissimilar “bogus strangers”.

In addition to affecting assessments of the “bogus stranger’s” personal attributes, the level of political similarity predicts participants’ personal feelings toward the “bogus stranger” and participants’ feelings about working on a project with the “bogus stranger” as shown in Figure 2 (See Appendix C for tabular results). There is a linear relationship



between the percentage of political similarity shared by the participant and “bogus stranger” and both personal feelings as well as feelings about working on a project together.

Using the same method as before to look at the subject’s feelings about working together on a project with the “bogus stranger,” I found a statistically significant difference between groups for the four conditions as determined by one-way ANOVA,  $F(3,355) = 37.38, p < .001$ . The mean score for the 0% match condition ( $M = 3.15, SD = 1.19$ ) was significantly different than the 33% match, 66% match, and 100% match conditions ( $M = 3.75, SD = 1.28$ ;  $M = 4.35, SD = 1.38$ ;  $M = 5.05, SD = 1.21$ , respectively; See Figure 2). The 33% match condition ( $M = 3.75, SD = 1.28$ ) was significantly different than the 67% match and 100% match conditions ( $M = 4.35, SD = 1.38$ ;  $M = 5.05, SD = 1.21$ ). And the 67% match condition ( $M = 4.35, SD = 1.38$ ) was significantly different than the 100% match condition ( $M = 5.05, SD = 1.21$ ). Putting these results together, participants feel more positively toward working on a project with a politically similar than politically dissimilar stranger. This result held across all comparisons of different levels of political similarity.

Again, using ANOVA to study the subject’s personal feelings regarding the “bogus stranger,” there was a statistically significant difference between groups for the four conditions as determined by one-way ANOVA,  $F(3,356) = 62.75, p < .001$ . The mean score for the 0% match condition ( $M = 3.22, SD = 1.23$ ) was significantly different than the 33% match, 66% match, and 100% match conditions ( $M = 4.26, SD = 1.22$ ;  $M = 4.95, SD = 1.23$ ;  $M = 5.51, SD = 1.01$ , respectively; See Figure 2). The 33% match condition ( $M = 4.26, SD = 1.22$ ) was significantly different than the 67% match and 100% match conditions ( $M = 4.95, SD = 1.23$ ;  $M = 5.51, SD = 1.01$ ). And the 67% match condition ( $M = 4.95, SD = 1.23$ ) was significantly different than the 100% match condition ( $M = 5.51, SD = 1.01$ ). Taken together,

these results indicate that the level of political similarity between a participant and a stranger significantly affects the participant's feelings toward the stranger. Participants are more likely to report that they would like a politically similar stranger and dislike a politically dissimilar stranger.

Compared to the previous set of results where participants were asked to evaluate characteristics of the "bogus stranger" (i.e., morality, intelligence, etc.), these two questions asked participants to consider their general feelings toward the individual whose profile they had just read and how they would feel interacting with that individual. These questions require the participant to think about interacting with the individual described in the profile, not simply evaluating them on various dimensions. In addition to finding a linear relationship between degree of political similarity and participants' responses, the magnitude of the results are larger than in the previous analysis. Again, both dependent variables were measured on a 1-7 scale. For Working Together on a Project and Personal Feelings, the mean ratings of highly similar "bogus strangers" were 1.9 and 2.29 points higher than were the mean ratings of highly dissimilar "bogus strangers", respectively.

In hypothesis two, I predicted that individuals would be more romantically attracted to politically similar rather than politically dissimilar others. Specifically, I expected participants to express greater interest in dating and/or marrying politically similar rather than politically dissimilar others. Again, I conducted one-way between subjects ANOVAs to compare the effect of the percent of political attitudes shared by the subject and the "bogus stranger" on the subject's attraction toward the "bogus stranger". As with the earlier items involving interaction with the "bogus stranger" (not just assessment of personal attributes), I found a positive linear relationship between the percentage of politically similar attitudes

shared by the participant and “bogus stranger” and the participant’s desire to date or marry the “bogus stranger” whose profile they read during the experiment. The results of my final two analyses are presented below in Figure 3 below (See Appendix C for tabular results).

Looking at the subject’s feelings about dating the “bogus stranger,” I found a statistically significant difference between groups for the four conditions as determined by one-way ANOVA,  $F(3,355) = 52.08, p < .001$ . The mean score for the 0% match condition ( $M = 2.34, SD = 1.35$ ) was significantly different than the 33% match, 66% match, and 100% match conditions ( $M = 3.27, SD = 1.40$ ;  $M = 3.96, SD = 1.67$ ;  $M = 4.90, SD = 1.23$ , respectively; See Figure 3). The 33% match condition ( $M = 3.27, SD = 1.40$ ) was significantly different than the 67% match and 100% match conditions ( $M = 3.96, SD = 1.67$ ;  $M = 4.90, SD = 1.23$ ). And the 67% match condition ( $M = 3.96, SD = 1.67$ ) was significantly different than the 100% match condition ( $M = 4.90, SD = 1.23$ ). Taken together, these results show that participants are significantly more interested in dating someone who shares their political attitudes than someone who does not share their political attitudes. Even small changes in the level of political similarity (from 0% shared attitudes to 33% shared attitudes or from 67% shared attitudes to 100% shared attitudes) significantly increase participants’ interest in dating the stranger whose profile they have just read.

Finally, considering the subject’s feelings about marrying the “bogus stranger,” there was a statistically significant difference between groups for the four conditions as determined by one-way ANOVA,  $F(3,355) = 43.88, p < .001$ . The mean score for the 0% match condition ( $M = 2.21, SD = 1.39$ ) was significantly different than the 33% match, 66% match, and 100% match conditions ( $M = 3.03, SD = 1.43$ ;  $M = 3.67, SD = 1.78$ ;  $M = 4.69, SD = 1.37$ , respectively; See Figure 3). The 33% match condition ( $M = 3.03, SD = 1.43$ ) was

significantly different than the 67% match and 100% match conditions ( $M = 3.67$ ,  $SD = 1.78$ ;  $M = 4.69$ ,  $SD = 1.37$ ). And the 67% match condition ( $M = 3.67$ ,  $SD = 1.78$ ) was significantly different than the 100% match condition ( $M = 4.69$ ,  $SD = 1.37$ ). Combining these results show that individuals see marriage with a politically similar other as significantly more desirable than marriage with a politically dissimilar other. Moving from the lowest level of political similarity to a moderate level of political similarity significantly increases an individual's interest in marrying the stranger whose profile they have just evaluated. Likewise, moving from a moderate level of political similarity to a high level of political similarity further increases an individual's interest in marriage.

In comparison to the first two sets of results based upon hypothesis one, the magnitude of the results here are even more pronounced. Unlike before where the participant was asked to evaluate the personal attributes of a stranger or to consider briefly engaging with the individual whose profile they had read, these two questions (dating and marriage) required participants to consider committing to a serious, ongoing relationship with the individual from the profile. This raised the stakes and increased the gap between most and least similar evaluations. Again, both dependent variables were measured on a 1-7 scale. For Dating and Marriage, the mean ratings of highly similar "bogus strangers" were 2.56 and 2.48 points higher than were the mean ratings of highly dissimilar "bogus strangers," respectively.

### **Political Similarity → Interpersonal Attraction**

Results from this experiment provide clear support for predictions based on the assortative mating hypothesis. Politically similar strangers were evaluated as more intelligent, more knowledgeable about current events, more moral, and better adjusted than

were politically dissimilar strangers. Participants also indicated that they thought they would generally like politically similar strangers more than they would generally like politically dissimilar strangers, and that they would specifically enjoy working on a project with politically similar strangers more than working on a project with politically dissimilar strangers. Results from the analyses of these six items supported the assortative mating mechanism generally, and hypothesis one from this paper specifically. Individuals evaluated politically similar others more positively than they evaluated politically dissimilar others.

Additionally, two items from the Interpersonal Judgment Scale were used to assess interpersonal romantic attraction: dating and marriage. Results from analyses of these two items also supported the assortative mating mechanism: participants were more romantically attracted to politically similar than politically dissimilar others. Participants were more interested in dating and/or marrying politically similar rather than politically dissimilar strangers. The effect of political similarity was stronger on these two items than it was for any of the other six items. Far from being unimportant to participants, political attitudinal similarity shaped their evaluation of potential romantic partners.

Let us revisit the original puzzle: Americans are not generally well-informed about politics, interested in political affairs, engaged in political behavior, or constrained ideologically, yet married couples tend to be politically similar. This study helps reconcile the apparent tension by looking at the interpersonal attraction process. In situations like the one in this experiment, political attitudes do matter to individuals because the outcomes are tangible and personal. Who you work with, date, and/or marry can have major effects on your life. Unlike other studies that look for level of political information, interest in politics, political engagement, or constrained ideologies, this study asks whether one's political

attitudes matter in the interpersonal context. Politics may not be even marginally important to most people most of the time, but when an individual is evaluating the attributes of another individual and/or imagining interacting with that individual, they strongly prefer political similarity to dissimilarity.

Further research is needed to continue unpacking exactly why it is that political attitudes matter in interpersonal relationships. Since political attitudes are core values, holding different opinions in key domains would likely lead to conflict. Part of the answer is likely that individuals want to avoid potential disagreements in their close relationships. In addition to avoiding the negative implications of dating or marrying an individual with dissimilar political attitudes, individuals may seek close relationships with politically similar others because they expect their opinions to be reinforced and validated, instead of challenged. Finally, individuals may also anticipate enjoyable interactions with politically similar others, as opposed to politically dissimilar others. It is likely that all three of these explanations play a role in explaining why individuals are more attracted to politically similar others. Follow-up studies in this area should work to untangle the unique contributions of these elements – both avoiding negatives (cognitive dissonance and conflict) and gaining positives (belief reinforcement, validation, and enjoyable interactions).

This study demonstrates that political attitudes matter more to average Americans than political scientists generally say they do. Political attitudes are not only important when choosing who to vote for on Election Day or which political party to support. Individuals use their political attitudes to evaluate the personal characteristics of individuals and the likelihood of enjoying a relationship with such persons. Thus, political attitudes have consequences outside of explicitly political contexts.

## TABLES: BOGUS STRANGER

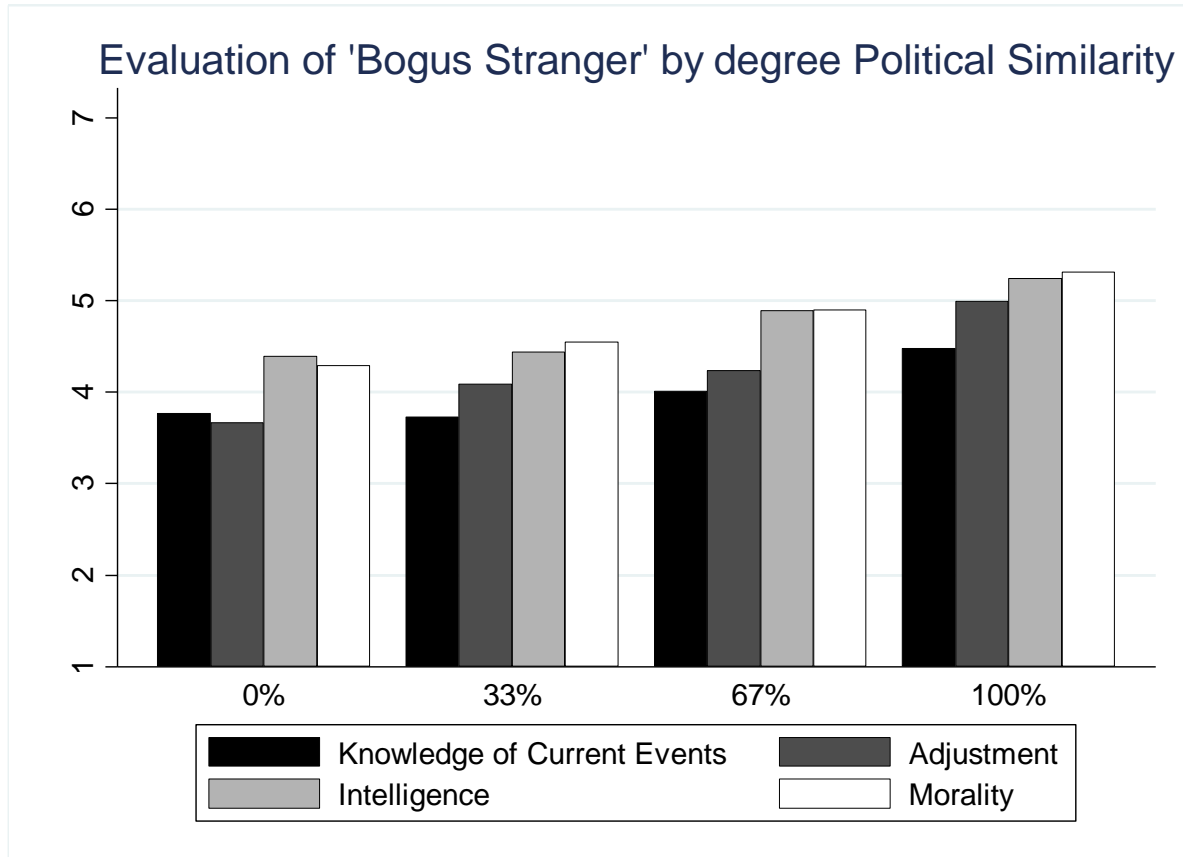
**Table 1: Conditions for “Bogus Stranger” Experiment**

<b>Level of Political Similarity</b>			
<b>Highly Similar (100%)</b>	<b>Similar (67%)</b>	<b>Dissimilar (33%)</b>	<b>Highly dissimilar (0%)</b>
N = 98	N = 93	N = 92	N = 88

*Note: Table 1 shows the four experimental conditions that participants were randomly assigned to at Time 2 of my experiment. Sample size for each condition is listed.*

## FIGURES: BOGUS STRANGER

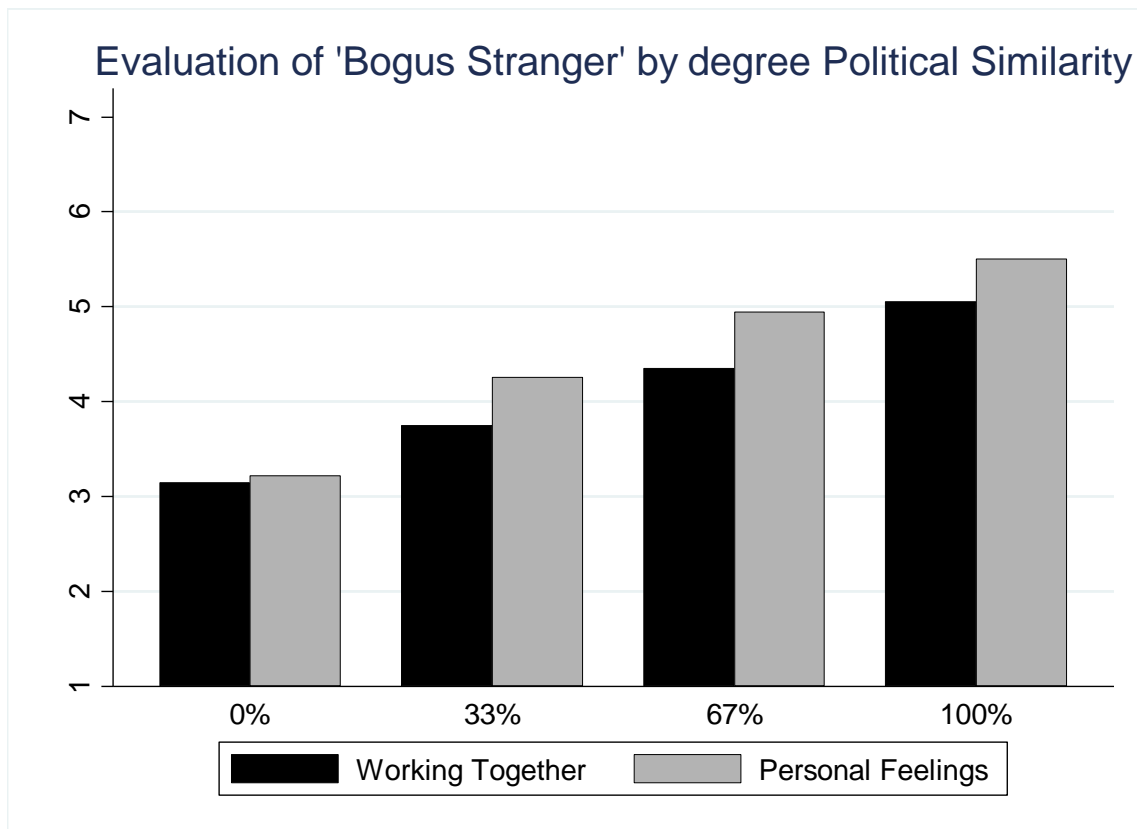
**Figure 1: Participants' Evaluation of the "Bogus Stranger's" Knowledge of Current Events, Adjustment, Intelligence, and Morality by the Percent of Politically Similar Attitudes**



*Note: There is a statistically significant difference between groups at the  $p < .001$  level for all four dependent variables.*

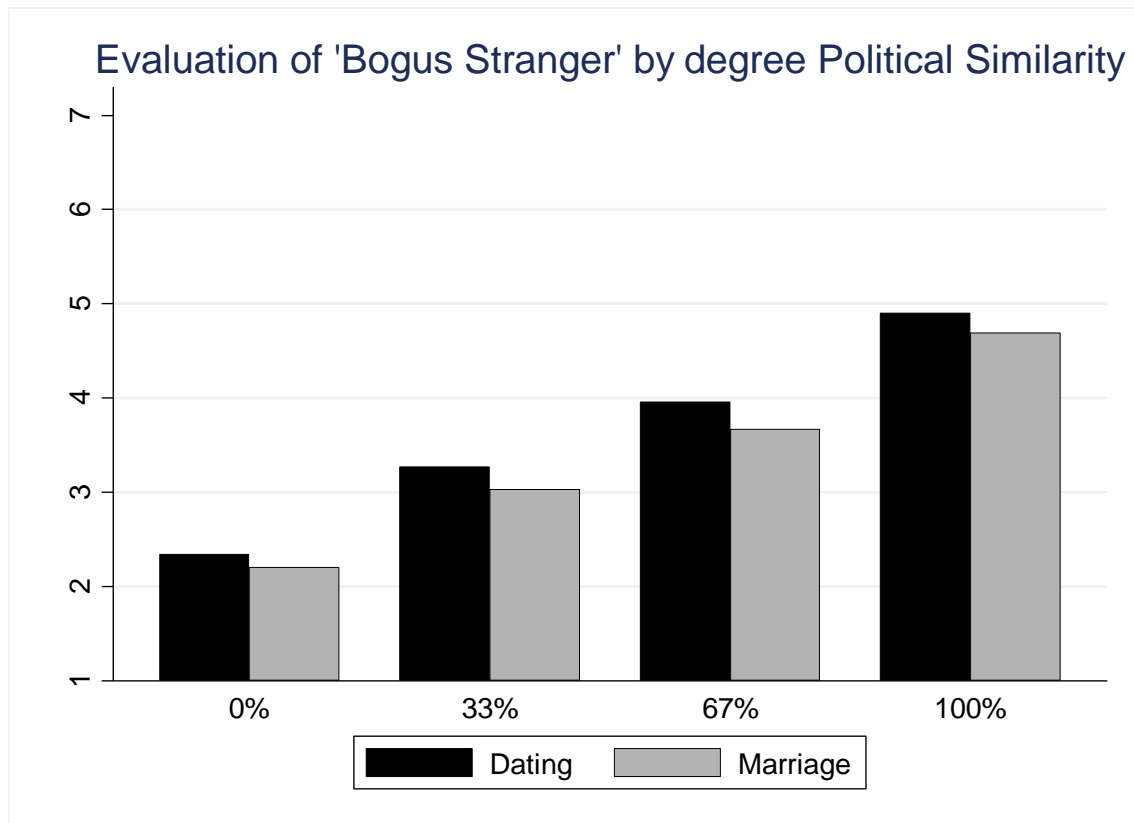


**Figure 2: Participants' Evaluation of how much they would Like Working with the "Bogus Stranger" on a Project and how much they would Like the "Bogus Stranger" as a person**



*Note: There is a statistically significant difference between groups at the  $p < .001$  level for both dependent variables.*

**Figure 3: Participants' Evaluation of how much they would Like to Date the “Bogus Stranger” or would Enjoy Being Married to the “Bogus Stranger”**



*Note: There is a statistically significant difference between groups at the  $p < .001$  level for both dependent variables.*

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## **Chapter Two: The Role of Political Identity Similarity in the Attraction Process**

### **Introduction**

Over the past few decades, identity politics scholars have attempted to explain how social identities affect political attitudes and behaviors. They have looked at the identity formation process and asked how general social identities (gender, race, class, religion, sexual orientation, etc.) become politicized, thereby, influencing our political views and opinions. Rarely have scholars reversed the causal arrow and asked how explicitly political identities might affect our social attitudes or behaviors. This is likely because conventional wisdom in the field of mass political behavior asserts that Americans are generally uninformed about politics, disinterested in political proceedings, disengaged from the political process, and ideologically unconstrained (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee, 1954; Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, 1960; Zaller, 1992; Converse, 1964). In addition, the average American does not spend much time talking about politics with others (Huckfeldt, Mendez, and Osborn, 2004). Many people might have political identities based on things like party identification, but politics is not very important for most people. The implicit assumption of scholars appears to be that political identities will not be very influential for individual's non-political decision-making.

As I will explore in more detail below, many scholars assert that party identification is a deeply held attachment to a political party that has the strength of a religious or racial group identity (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, 1960; Green, Palmquist, and

Schickler, 2002). Married couples tend to be politically similar, suggesting a role for politics in human mating behavior. Recent studies have begun linking an individual's political attitudes with his or her romantic relationship pursuits (Klofstad, McDermott, and Hatemi, 2012; Huber and Malhotra, 2013). Husbands and wives often espouse similar positions on political issues (Stoker and Jennings, 2005; Alford et al., 2011), they frequently vote for the same candidates in elections (Stoker and Jennings, 2005), and most relevant to this paper, married couples often share party identification (Niemi, Hedges, and Jennings, 1977). Instead of being irrelevant to the non-political behavior of mate choice, political identities seem to matter in the process.

I argue that political identities are deeply held attachments to a group and, as such, will be influential in both political and non-political decision-making. People use their political identities as lenses through which to filter their worlds. These identities are similar to other deeply held social identities such as religion and race (e.g. Green, Palmquist, and Schickler, 2002). Given the degree of party polarization we are currently experiencing in contemporary American society and the confrontational nature of political debate in the U.S., I expect that political identities are especially important in human mating behavior in the current time period.

In this chapter, I explore whether political identities influence romantic relationships. Using the social identity perspective, I advance our understanding of how explicitly political phenomena can (and do) influence the most intimate relationships humans pursue—dating and marriage. I use an original experimental design to test my hypothesis regarding the desirability of dating or marrying a politically similar versus politically dissimilar partner. As predicted by my theory, I find that individuals feel more favorably toward others with similar

political identities (partisanship and/or ideology) than to others with dissimilar political identities.

### **Partisanship and Ideology as Social Identities**

Party identification has often been viewed as meaningful to citizens. Originally, Campbell et al. (1960) described partisanship as a deeply held psychological attachment to a political party. They argued that this political identification was formed primarily through the early socialization process prior to adulthood. More recently, Green, Palmquist, and Schickler (2002) took Campbell et al.'s (1960) description of partisanship and moved it away from a purely psychological attachment to a social identity involving group processes. These perspectives on partisanship differ from the revisionist view of party identification as a running tally of evaluations that serves as a voting shortcut (e.g., Fiorina, 1981).

While ideological labels have been studied less frequently as social identities, I suspect that a similar mechanism may be at work. Like other scholars, I do not view policy preferences and self-identification on an ideological scale as the same thing (e.g., Carsey and Layman, 2006). Stimson (2004) and others offer strong evidence that ideological labels are not merely short-cuts for general policy preferences by showing that a large number of individuals seem to identify with an ideological label that is inconsistent with the actual policy views they hold. This finding suggests that the ideological labels that people identify with have personal meaning separate from their policy preferences.

Although it is uncommon for scholars of party identification and ideology to explore non-political outcomes, recently, Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes (2012) used this approach to look at polarization in the American mass public. They found that Democrats and Republicans increasingly hate the opposing party over time, and that partisans assign

“negative traits to the rank-and-file of the out-party” (Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes, 2012, 3).

Beyond policy-based polarization at the elite level, affective polarization appears to permeate the behaviors of the masses in American society.

Moreover, Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes (2012) looked at public opinion regarding inter-party marriage in 1960, and again five decades later in 2008 and 2010. In 1960, America was not nearly as polarized along partisan or ideological lines as it is today. At that time, few Americans objected to their children marrying someone of the opposing party (only 5% of Republicans and 4% of Democrats said they would be “displeased” with such an occurrence) (Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes, 2012). By 2008, those figures had risen dramatically – 27% of Republican and 20% of Democratic respondents indicated that they would be upset by inter-party marriage. In 2010, 49% of Republicans and 33% of Democrats polled stated that they would be unhappy with a son or daughter marrying someone from the opposite political party (Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes, 2012). Using a list experimental design, Phillips and Carsey (2013) looked at people’s feelings toward inter-ideology marriages, discovering that both conservatives and liberals are upset by the prospect of a family member marrying someone who does not share their political identity. It is clear that the political climate in America has changed during the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Party identification and ideology have become a tangible identity for many Americans who are using it to shape not only their voting decisions, but also their social attitudes, behaviors, and identities.

### **Balance, Conflict, and Social Identities**

A social identity is “an awareness of one’s objective membership in the group *and* a psychological sense of group attachment” (Huddy and Khatib, 2007; see also: Tajfel, 1981; Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, 1960; Green, Palmquist, and Schickler, 2002).



Intergroup behavior can be explained using the social identity concept as individuals automatically categorize people in their social environments into groups (Transue, 2007). In the laboratory, experimental studies demonstrate that identifying with a group increases one's positive affect toward that group (Transue, 2007; see also: De Cremer and Van Vugt, 1999; Gaertner and Dovidio, 2000; Kramer and Brewer, 1984). This is not surprising given work in the field of cognitive consistency demonstrating that individuals have an intrinsic need for balance.

Individuals are driven to maintain congruence (balance) within interpersonal relationships (Heider, 1958). If a person (**P**) likes an 'other' person (**O**), the relationship is balanced when **O** reciprocates **P**'s feelings. In other words, if Paul likes Olivia and Olivia likes Paul then they have a balanced relationship. However, when **P** likes **O**, but **O** does not like **P**, or in other words, when Paul likes Olivia but Olivia does not like Paul, the relationship lacks balance. Psychological imbalance often produces cognitive dissonance, a sense of intrapsychic discomfort, resulting from simultaneously holding inconsistent ideas (in this situation, Paul feels pressure because Paul likes Olivia and Paul believes that Paul is a generally likeable person, yet Olivia does not like Paul for some reason). It is assumed that people possess a motivational drive to reduce such psychological distress (Festinger, 1957). Using the example above, if **P** likes **O**, but **O** does not like **P**, the relationship is not balanced and **P** is likely to feel dissonance that may lead **P** to change his or her attitude regarding **O**.

Expanding balance theory allows us to include attitude objects (situations, events, ideas, or things) in addition to individuals (Heider, 1958; see also: Newcomb, 1956 "AB-X Theory of Social Psychology"). In a close relationship, individuals experience a balanced state when their attitude toward an object is consistent with their relationship partner's

attitude toward the same object. Imbalance occurs when romantic partners have different opinions about attitude objects (Newcomb, 1956). Continuing the example above, if Paul likes Olivia, Olivia likes Paul, and both Paul and Olivia identify with the Republican Party, the relationship is balanced. However, if Paul and Olivia like each other but Paul identifies with the Republican Party while Olivia identifies with the Democratic Party, then the relationship lacks balance regarding the attitude object (political party).

Imbalanced relationships are likely to be conflictual relationships as both members of the dyad must struggle to find common ground regarding the unshared attitude object(s). To achieve balance in the relationship, compromise must occur. The individuals involved are forced to reconsider their feelings toward the relationship partner, the attitude object, or both. Disharmony often ensues as both members of the dyad are forced to decide whether the relationship or the attitude objects are more valuable to their individual identities.

Some attitude objects are easier to reevaluate than others, due to their relevance to the individual's self-concept, regardless of the importance of the interpersonal relationship. Social identity theory (SIT) is a theory of intergroup behavior that uses perceived status, legitimacy, and permeability of the intergroup environment to predict intergroup behaviors. The main idea of social identity theory is that one's sense of self – of who he or she is as an individual – depends on what groups he or she belongs to or identifies with (Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior, 2004). Most people desire to think positively of themselves. By evaluating in-groups (groups with which one identifies) positively, and out-groups (groups with which one does not identify) negatively, individuals are able to maintain a positive self-concept (Tajfel, 1981).

Building upon our example above, Paul, a Republican derives a sense of self-identity from his political party. By evaluating fellow Republicans positively and Democrats negatively, he is able to maintain a positive self-image and cognitive consistency. If Paul began feeling favorably toward some members of the Democratic Party, a political party he does not identify with and even dislikes, his self-concept would likely suffer as he experiences tension due to his identity as a Republican and his positive feelings toward Democrats. “People attempt to maintain or enhance their own self-esteem by comparing other social groups—‘outgroups’—unfavorably to their own” (Kalkan, Layman, and Uslander, 2009; see also: Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Identity salience is the basis for predicting the extent of inter-group prejudice. The more salient a group affiliation to a member, the more biased the individual’s beliefs will be regarding in-group and out-group members (Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

### **The Expected Impact of Political Identities on Interpersonal Attraction**

The definitional test of social identity theory looks for positive sentiment regarding one’s own group and in-group members as well as negative sentiment toward opposed groups and out-group members. I look at both types of sentiment in this study. Specifically, I designed an experiment where participants were asked to evaluate the alleged online dating profile of a student at their university to determine how much they liked the person described in the dating profile. Some participants viewed profiles of students who shared their political identity (partisanship or ideology), while other participants viewed profiles of students of the opposing political identity. The rest of the information provided in the dating profile was identical for all respondents.

Given the centrality of partisanship and the apparent importance of ideology, I expect that these identities will spill over into the non-political world. Individuals will desire romantic relationships with politically similar others (in-group partisans or ideologues) because such relationships will lead to an enhanced self-concept, harmonious cognitions, and a lower level of conflict. Thus:

**H1** People will like potential mates who share their political identity more than they will like potential mates of the opposing political identity.

**H2** People will prefer being in a relationship with potential mates who share their political identity rather than being in a relationship with potential mates of the opposite political identity.

**H3** People will expect dating relationships with potential mates who share their political identity to be more likely to lead to marriage than dating relationships with potential mates of the opposing political identity.

**H4** People will expect more conflict in relationships with potential mates who do not share their political identity, than in relationships with potential mates of the same political identity.

**H5** People will feel more positive emotions and fewer negative emotions when thinking about potential mates who share their political identity than they will feel when thinking about potential mates who do not share their political identity.

### **The Online Dating Experiment**

I tested my hypotheses using an original experimental design to determine whether undergraduate students reported greater attraction toward politically similar than politically

dissimilar others. I first ran this study in the spring of 2013 ( $n = 194$ ) then I replicated the study with a larger sample during the fall of 2013 ( $n = 345$ ). During both studies, subjects participated in two phases of the experimental design. This experiment is completely different from the ‘Bogus Stranger’ experiment I ran in chapter one.

At time 1, participants completed a set of demographic and political attitudes questions, as well as the standard party identification and ideological self-placement items (on a 7-point scale).<sup>6</sup> At time 2 (approximately two months after time 1), participants received an online dating profile (allegedly completed by an opposite-sex student at their university) to review.<sup>7</sup> Participants were told that they were participating in a pilot study of a new online dating website that their university was deciding whether or not to launch. Specifically, the instructions stated that:

*Recently, a handful of major U.S. universities have launched online dating networks exclusively for their students. [Your university] has begun exploring the option of creating a similar social network for its students. A preselected set of students submitted preliminary online dating profiles. In this study, you will be asked to evaluate one of these profiles. ...We need your help determining what type of written information is most likely to catch a potential date's attention and thus which questions to offer students as part of their online profiles.*

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<sup>6</sup> Participants identifying as pure Independents or Moderates ( $PID = 4$  or  $Ideology = 4$ ) were not included in the analyses. In total, there were 12 Independents and 28 Moderates dropped.

<sup>7</sup> Since participants viewed the profile of an opposite-sex individual, only responses from heterosexual participants were included in the analyses.

In reality, I manipulated the online dating profile given to each participant to adhere to the matching information provided below in Table 2. Participants were given a different contact person for each wave of the study so as to discourage students from linking the first and second waves of the study.

I used the Method of Constant Discrepancy (Byrne, 1971; Singh et al., 2008) to simulate identity similarity and dissimilarity. A similar identity was an identity on the same side of the identity scale within one box from the participant's own identity. Like Singh et al. (2008), I avoided using the most extreme responses (Strong Democrat/Republican; Very Liberal/Conservative) when constructing similar identity items for the dating profile. For example, a participant choosing Weak Democrat/Republican (Liberal/Conservative) received a manipulated profile with Independent/Lean Democrat (Republican) or Slightly Liberal/Conservative selected (instead of Strong Democrat/Republican or Very Liberal/Conservative) to show identity similarity. This avoided complicating the process by introducing identity extremity. A dissimilar identity was an identity on the opposite side of the identity item that is three boxes away from the participant's own identity. For dissimilar identities, introducing identity extremity was not avoided (Singh et al., 2008).<sup>8</sup> For example,

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<sup>8</sup> If "similar-extreme" profiles had been used, it would have been difficult to determine whether the results were being driven by similarity or extremism. It is thought that people generally like others on the same side as them, but not others on the same side who are thought to be extreme. Thus, "similar-extreme" profiles may have been viewed by participants as dissimilar instead of similar, even though their political identity fell on the same side as the participant's. Since the purpose of the dissimilar category was to make the participant think that the person they were reading about was different from them, identity extremity was not avoided. Thus, some participants saw profiles of individuals they may have classified as "dissimilar-extreme". This does not pose a problem for my design since the purpose was to induce participants to think of an individual whose political identity was different from their own – whether extreme or not. In the party identification as political identity condition, 53 of 283 participants viewed a profile of a "Strong

a participant marking Independent/Lean Democrat (Republican) for an identity item received a manipulated profile with Strong Republican (Democrat) selected.

Using random assignment, I divided participants into one of four experimental conditions (see Table 2) based upon self-reported political similarity – Similar Party Identification (PID), Dissimilar Party Identification (PID), Similar Ideology, or Dissimilar Ideology.

Students in each condition were given the following instructions:

*Please read the following online dating profile. What information catches your eye? What do you like or dislike about this individual?*

*Try to imagine yourself in a romantic relationship with the individual whose profile information you are about to read. Do your best to experience the actual feelings and thoughts you would have in this relationship.*

*Take your time and try to clearly and vividly imagine everything. From the profile information provided, do you find this individual interesting? Do your best to think of yourself as this individual's partner.*

After forming an impression of the individual whose dating profile they had just read, participants answered questions evaluating the person from the profile and their attraction toward him/her (Partner Choice Measure; see Pietromonaco and Carnelley, 1994).

Specifically, participants were asked the following four questions using a 7-point scale (responses ranging from '1 = Not at all' to '7 = Extremely'):

- 1) How much did you like the partner depicted in the profile?
- 2) How much would you enjoy being in a relationship with the individual described?

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Democrat/Republican.” In the ideology as political identity condition, 42 of 256 participants viewed a profile of someone described as “Very Liberal/Conservative”.

- 3) What is the likelihood that a relationship with this individual would result in marriage?
- 4) What is the degree of conflict or tension that you would feel in a relationship with this partner?

Participants also completed an Emotional Reactions Measure (Pietromonaco and Carnelley, 1994) indicating the feelings they experienced while reading the online dating profile and imagining being in a romantic relationship with the partner described (e.g., Did you feel... Calm? Cheerful? Contented? etc.). Each emotion was measured on a 7-point scale (responses ranged from '1 = Not at all' to '7 = Extremely').

To analyze my experimental data,<sup>9</sup> I used one-way difference of means tests. This method allowed me to determine the main effect of my independent variable (similar versus dissimilar PID/ideology) on my dependent variables (from the Partner Choice and Emotional Reactions measures). In the analyses that follow, I test whether there is a significant difference in the group means of participants randomly assigned to the “similar political identity” category compared to the “dissimilar political identity” with regard to my five hypotheses.

## **Results**

I found clear support for hypotheses one through four, and mixed support for hypothesis five. The results of difference of means tests show that individuals are more

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<sup>9</sup> I have no theoretical reason to expect significant differences between the spring 2013 and fall 2013 experiments (both samples are of undergraduate students at a major research university in the southeast who were enrolled in an introductory political science course and required to participate in the experiment for course credit). Thus, I pooled the data and present one set of results and analyses. I saw the same basic patterns of findings in both samples, but some of the effects in each sub-sample failed to cross the traditional threshold of statistical significance because of limited sample sizes.



optimistic about romantic pursuits with others who share their political identities (PID or ideology) than with others who do not share their political identities. Specifically, participants consistently reported liking politically similar others more than they liked politically dissimilar others. They expected relationships with politically similar others to be more enjoyable and more likely to lead to marriage compared to relationships with politically dissimilar others. They anticipated significantly more conflict in relationships with politically dissimilar rather than politically similar partners. Finally, participants felt more positive emotions when reading profiles of potential mates who shared their political identity than when reading profiles of potential partners of the opposing political identity.

First, we will consider the results for party identification as a political identity. Table 3 below shows the results of one-tailed difference of means tests for the dependent variables associated with hypotheses one through four, while Figure 4 graphically displays the difference in mean evaluations of the online dating partner by similar versus dissimilar PID.

My first hypothesis was that participants would like potential partners who were politically similar more than they would like potential partners who were politically dissimilar. In terms of party identification, Table 3 and Figure 4 above show that individuals who viewed profiles from potential partners of the same party identification were significantly more likely to indicate that they liked the partner described in the profile than were individuals who viewed profiles from potential partners of the opposing political party. Hypotheses two and three were also supported as individuals indicated that they expected to enjoy the relationship more and for it to lead to marriage more often when they viewed an individual of the same PID than when they viewed a potential partner of the opposing PID. Finally, in hypothesis four I expected that participants would anticipate more conflict in

cross-party relationships than in same-party relationships. I found that participants were significantly more likely to expect conflict in a relationship with someone of the opposing political party than in a relationship with someone of the same political party. Taken together, these results indicate that individuals prefer to develop relationships with other individuals who share their party identification, as they expect such relationships to be more enjoyable and enduring, as well as less conflictual.

I found the same pattern of results when looking at ideology as a political identity. Table 4 below shows the results of one-tailed difference of means tests for the dependent variables associated with hypotheses one through four looking at ideological identity, while Figure 5 graphically displays the difference in mean evaluations of the online dating partner by similar versus dissimilar ideology.

Again, we see that individuals viewing ideologically similar profiles liked the potential partner significantly more than individuals who viewed profiles from potential partners of the opposite ideology. Individuals also expected to enjoy the relationship more and for it to lead to marriage more often when they viewed a profile of a potential partner who shared their ideology rather than opposed their ideology. Finally, participants anticipated more conflict in cross-ideology relationships than in same-ideology relationships. Overall, individuals prefer developing relationships with other individuals who share their ideological identification.

To explore the substantive magnitude of the above findings, I compared my results to work in the area of adult attachment (Pietromonaco and Carnelley, 1994). Pietromonaco and Carnelley (1994) used a similar research design where undergraduate participants were asked to imagine a relationship with a partner who was depicted as either having a secure (“e.g.,

finds it easy to get close to others, trusts others, warm”), preoccupied (“e.g. worries about partner leaving, overly demanding, clinging”), or avoidant (“e.g., feels uncomfortable being close to partner, overly independent, distant”) attachment style in relationships. Instead of being given a dating profile of the imagined partner, as in my experiment, Pietromonaco and Carnelley’s (1994) participants were asked to read relationship scenarios involving a couple where the opposite-sex partner (of the participant) was described as either secure, preoccupied, or avoidant. When asked how much they would like the partner described, secure partners were preferred to preoccupied and avoidant partners by 1.5 and 1.8 points respectively, on 7-point scale. By comparison, in my study partners sharing the same party identification were preferred to partners of the opposing party identification by 0.35 points on a 7-point scale, while partners of the same ideology were preferred to partners of the opposing ideology by 0.49 points on a 7-point scale. Similar results held comparing my findings to Pietromonaco and Carnelley’s (1994) findings regarding enjoying the relationship, the relationship leading to marriage, and the degree of conflict expected in the relationship. In other words, my findings regarding political identification were generally one-fifth to one-third the size of the attachment style findings.

That my findings were substantively smaller than Pietromonaco and Carnelley’s (1994) results regarding adult attachment style is not surprising for two main reasons. First, my experimental manipulation was much more subtle than the manipulation in their study. In my study, I only altered one item (party identification or ideology) in a detailed online dating profile. Pietromonaco and Carnelley (1994) extensively described relationship scenarios involving the partner depicted (“including the couple’s first meeting, a movie date, a physically intimate experience, a 6-month anniversary dinner, a camping trip, a discussion of

being apart for the summer, and a discussion of postgraduate plans”). It is likely that their design made it easier for participants to imagine being in the relationship with the partner described, as well as to notice and focus on the key information (the manipulation) – whether the partner was secure, preoccupied, or avoidant. Second, it could be argued a potential partner’s attachment style affects many different interactions for couples. While political identities are deeply held attachments and influential in decisions regarding human mating behavior, participants likely do not expect the political identity of their partner to have as much of an impact on daily life as the attachment style of their partner. Keeping these caveats in mind, Pietromonaco and Carnelley’s (1994) work in the area of adult attachment styles provides a useful way to compare the substantive magnitude of the effects from my study.

My final hypothesis was that as participants were reading the online dating profile, they would feel more positive emotions and fewer negative emotions when reading profiles of potential mates who shared their political identity than when reading profiles of potential mates of the opposing political identity. The Emotional Reactions Measure asked participants about 24 different emotions they may have been feeling while imagining being in a romantic relationship with the partner from the dating profile. Each emotion was measured on a 1-7 scale. When looking at party identification as the type of political identification, I found significant results, in the direction expected, for 11 of the 24 emotions measured. The significant results, based on one-tailed difference of means tests, are presented below in table 5 (see Appendices G and H for the complete Emotional Reactions Measure and full results). Figure 6 graphically displays the difference between emotional responses for participants exposed to similar versus dissimilar profiles.

From Table 5 and Figure 6 we can see that participants viewing the dating profile of a potential partner who shared their party identification felt significantly less annoyed and more calm, cheerful, contented, excited, happy, joyful, loved, relaxed, secure, and stable than participants viewing the dating profile of a potential partner of the opposing political party. This finding partially supports my fifth hypothesis: participants experienced more positive emotions while viewing profiles from politically similar others than politically dissimilar others. However, participants viewing a politically dissimilar profile were generally no more likely to experience negative emotions than participants viewing a politically similar profile (annoyance was the only negative emotion that was significantly different between conditions).

Looking at ideology as a political identity, I also found significant results, in the expected direction for 11 of the 24 emotions measured, however some of the significant emotions experienced differed from the PID conditions. The significant results, based on one-tailed difference of means tests, are presented below in table 6 (see Appendices D and E for the complete Emotional Reactions Measure and full results). Figure 7 graphically displays the difference between emotional responses for participants exposed to similar versus dissimilar profiles.

Similar to party as political identity, using ideology as political identity allowed me to partially support my fifth hypothesis. For some of the emotions evaluated, participants viewing ideologically similar potential partners experienced significantly more positive and fewer negative emotions than participants viewing ideologically dissimilar potential partners. Specifically, participants felt more cheerful, contented, excited, happy, joyful, loved, secure,

and stable in the same ideology condition than in the different ideology condition, while feeling less annoyed, disgusted, and irritated.

### **Political Similarity → Interpersonal Attraction**

I began this chapter suggesting that the field of identity politics would benefit from reversing the causal arrow and investigating how political identities can and do affect nonpolitical phenomena. Using the social identity perspective to look at human mating behavior, I expected political identities to matter and hypothesized that individuals would feel more favorably toward others with similar political identities – both partisanship and ideology – than to others with dissimilar political identities.

The results of my experimental studies show that political identities have an impact on individuals' feelings and expectations in a key non-political realm – romantic relationships. People feel more positively toward potential romantic partners who share their political identity. They see romantic relationships with politically similar others as more enjoyable and more likely to lead to marriage. They fear conflict and tension in relationships with politically dissimilar partners. Additionally, they tend to experience more positive and sometimes fewer negative emotions when imagining a romantic relationship with a politically like-minded partner. Generally speaking, Americans may not be well-informed about politics, interested in political affairs, engaged in political behavior, or constrained ideologically. However, my evidence suggests that individuals do possess political identities (party identification and ideology) that they use in important areas of non-political decision-making.

These results should encourage scholars studying identity politics, partisanship, and ideology to wrestle with the current conceptualization and measurement of political

identities. While typical Americans may not be able to name the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court or thoroughly describe the provisions of the Affordable Care Act, they likely possess political identities that guide their decision-making in many different realms—both political and non-political. Political scientists need to continue exploring how explicitly political identities affect our social attitudes and behaviors, in addition to asking the traditional questions about how social identities influence our political preferences. We still have a lot to learn about the predictive potential of political identities in social domains, but the results of my study indicate that party and ideology are meaningful identities to the average American. We need to move beyond the belief that political identities rarely matter in an individual's decision-making calculus and thus do not influence social phenomena. If fundamental human activities like romantic relationships (dating and marriage) are affected by the political identities we hold, it is likely partisanship and ideological affiliation matter more than we have yet acknowledged in many other nonpolitical arenas.

## TABLES: ONLINE DATING

**Table 2: Conditions for Online Dating Experiment**

<b>Political Identity</b>	<b>Spring 2013</b>	<b>Fall 2013</b>
Similar PID	N = 44	N = 91
Dissimilar PID	N = 57	N = 91
Similar Ideology	N = 51	N = 75
Dissimilar Ideology	N = 42	N = 88

*Note: Table 1 shows the four experimental conditions that participants were randomly assigned to at Time 2 of my experiment. Sample size for each condition is listed from running the experiment in the spring and fall of 2013.*



**Table 3: DV by Similar v. Dissimilar PID (Difference of Means test)**

<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<b>PID means (std. dev.)</b>		<i>t-Value</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
	<i>Similar PID</i>	<i>Dissimilar PID</i>		
How much did you like the partner depicted in the profile?	5.10 (1.27)	4.75 (1.33)	2.232	0.013
How much would you enjoy being in a relationship with the individual described?	4.93 (1.25)	4.57 (1.43)	2.242	0.013
What is the likelihood that a relationship with this individual would result in marriage?	4.01 (1.44)	3.45 (1.49)	3.270	0.001
What is the degree of conflict or tension that you would feel in a relationship with this partner?	3.12 (1.32)	3.73 (1.38)	3.835	0.001

*Note: Table 2 displays results from two-tailed difference of means tests. Standard deviations are in parentheses.*

**Table 4: DV by Similar v. Dissimilar Ideology (Difference of Means test)**

<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Ideology means (std. dev.)</i>		<i>t-Value</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
	<i>Similar Ideology</i>	<i>Dissimilar Ideology</i>		
How much did you like the partner depicted in the profile?	5.15 (1.28)	4.66 (1.27)	3.068	0.001
How much would you enjoy being in a relationship with the individual described?	5.08 (1.32)	4.43 (1.36)	3.868	0.001
What is the likelihood that a relationship with this individual would result in marriage?	4.25 (1.41)	3.45 (1.49)	4.415	0.001
What is the degree of conflict or tension that you would feel in a relationship with this partner?	3.08 (1.26)	3.67 (1.38)	3.569	0.001

*Note: Table 3 displays results from two-tailed difference of means tests. Standard deviations are in parentheses.*

**Table 5: Emotion Experienced by Similar v. Dissimilar PID Condition**

<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Similar PID</i>	<i>Dissimilar PID</i>	<i>t-Value</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Annoyed	2.0 (1.33)	2.24 (1.64)	1.358	0.088
Calm	4.93 (1.46)	4.67 (1.68)	1.403	0.081
Cheerful	4.51 (1.55)	4.10 (1.57)	2.181	0.015
Contented	4.18 (1.79)	3.77 (1.69)	1.973	0.025
Excited	3.99 (1.72)	3.56 (1.68)	2.094	0.019
Happy	4.41 (1.48)	3.97 (1.56)	2.443	0.008
Joyful	3.82 (1.65)	3.36 (1.64)	2.324	0.010
Loved	2.98 (1.76)	2.49 (1.50)	2.562	0.006
Relaxed	4.55 (1.57)	4.25 (1.78)	1.502	0.067
Secure	4.02 (1.73)	3.60 (1.79)	2.005	0.023
Stable	4.17 (1.71)	3.78 (1.73)	1.919	0.028

*Note: Table 4 displays results from one-tailed difference of means tests. Standard deviations are in parentheses.*

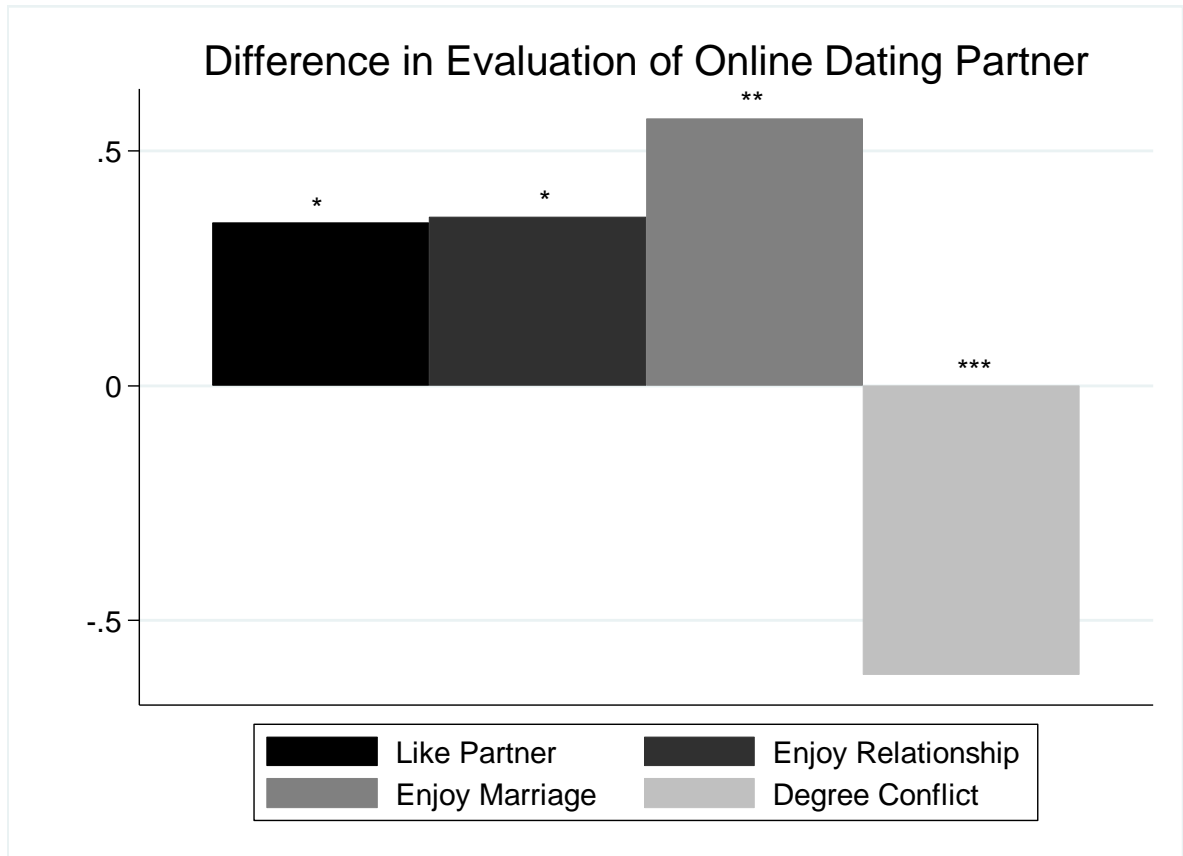
**Table 6: Emotion Experienced by Similar v. Dissimilar Ideology**

<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Similar Ideology</i>	<i>Dissimilar Ideology</i>	<i>t-Value</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Annoyed	1.90 (1.38)	2.32 (1.49)	2.336	0.010
Cheerful	4.44 (1.67)	3.95 (1.67)	2.291	0.011
Contented	4.21 (1.74)	3.75 (1.77)	2.075	0.020
Disgusted	1.52 (1.22)	1.77 (1.23)	1.580	0.058
Excited	3.94 (1.82)	3.57 (1.71)	1.684	0.047
Happy	4.46 (1.64)	3.80 (1.67)	3.187	0.001
Irritated	1.71 (1.22)	2.05 (1.40)	2.045	0.021
Joyful	3.85 (1.83)	3.16 (1.75)	3.033	0.001
Loved	2.95 (1.74)	2.62 (1.76)	1.487	0.069
Secure	3.96 (1.63)	3.52 (1.80)	2.031	0.022
Stable	4.03 (1.64)	3.63 (1.91)	1.812	0.036

*Note: Table 5 displays results from one-tailed difference of means tests. Standard deviations are in parentheses.*

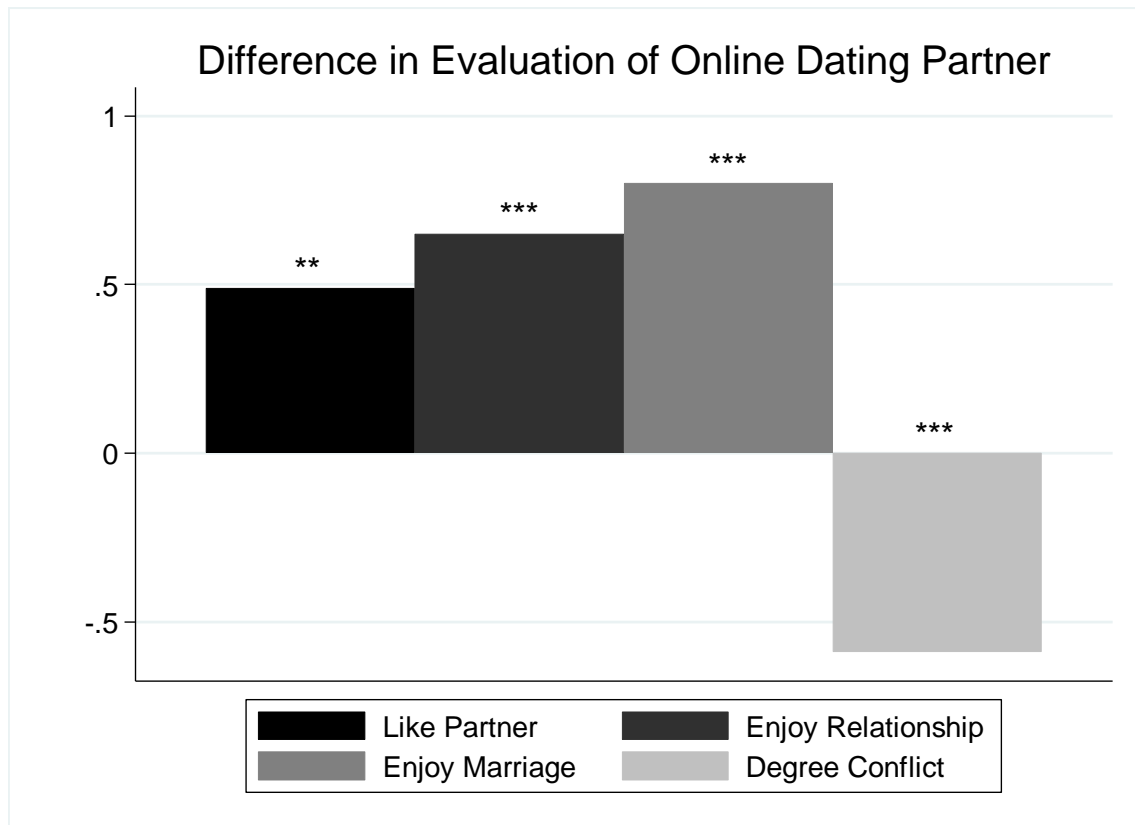
## FIGURES: ONLINE DATING

**Figure 4: Difference in Evaluation of Online Dating Partner (Mean Similar PID minus Mean Dissimilar PID)**



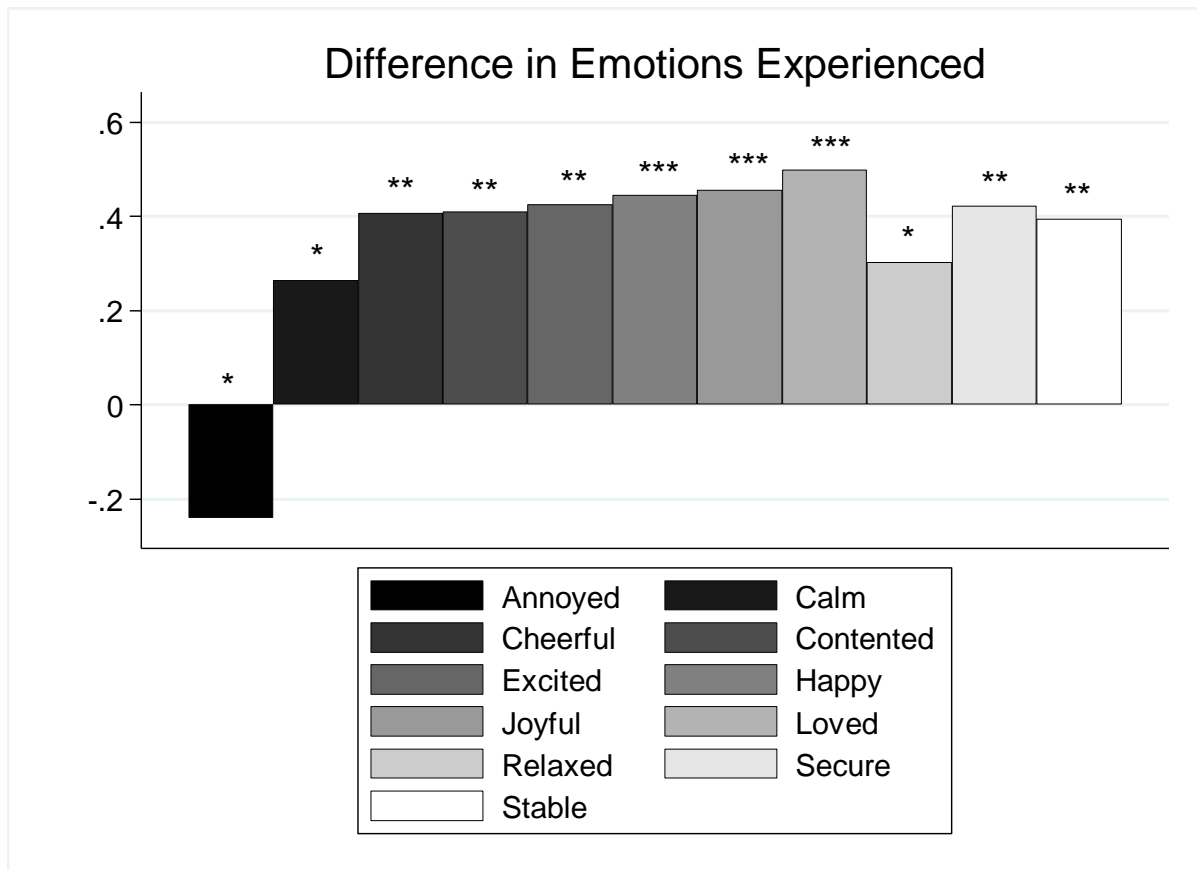
*NOTE: Significance Levels: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$*

**Figure 5: Difference in Evaluation of Online Dating Partner (Mean Similar Ideology minus Mean Dissimilar Ideology)**



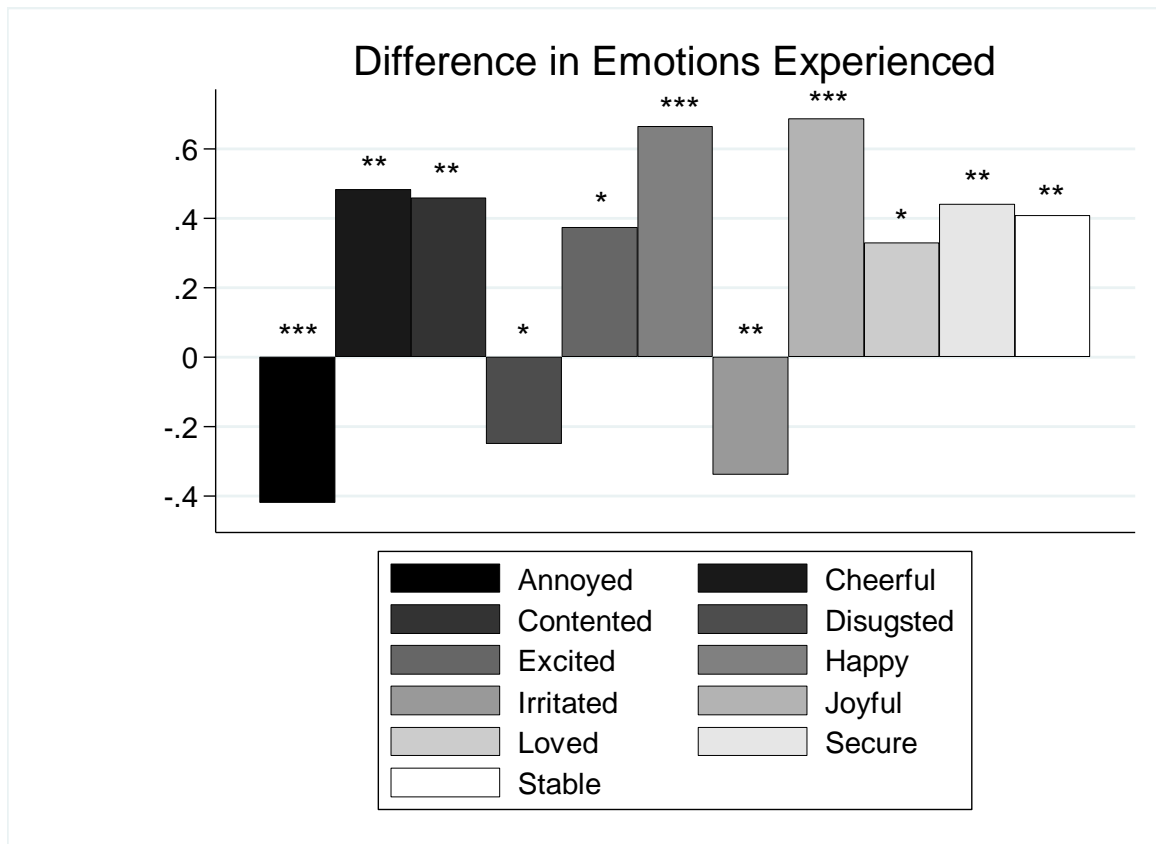
*NOTE: Significance Levels: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$*

**Figure 6: Difference in Emotional Reaction Experienced (Mean Similar PID minus Mean Dissimilar PID)**



*NOTE: Significance Levels: \* = 0.1, \*\* = 0.05, \*\*\* = 0.01*

**Figure 7: Difference in Emotional Reaction Experienced (Mean Similar Ideology minus Mean Dissimilar Ideology)**



*NOTE: Significance Levels: \* = 0.1, \*\* = 0.05, \*\*\* = 0.01*



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## **Chapter Three: The Role of Political Similarity in Non-Marital Romantic Relationships**

### **Introduction**

Political scientists generally believe that Americans are neither interested in nor engaged with politics (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee, 1954; Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, 1960; Zaller, 1992; Converse, 1964). We know that people often avoid discussing politics with others because of the potential for disagreement and offense (Huckfeldt, Mendez, and Osborn, 2004). For most people most of the time, political affairs do not seem to be even marginally important.

However, ample evidence shows that people often choose social networks that support their political attitudes and behaviors (Knoke, 1990; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook, 2001). Individuals talk more frequently with and feel closer to discussants who share their political values (Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1987; Mutz, 2002). People see political discussion with like-minded others as safer than discussion with dissimilar partners (Huckfeldt, Allen Beck, Dalton, and Levine, 1995; Conover, Searing, and Crewe, 2002). Voting patterns are similar among individuals who live together (Nickerson, 2008). Parents regularly transmit their party identification to their children (Jennings and Niemi, 1974; 1981). Finally, and most relevant to this study, spouses often share political attitudes, values, and behaviors (Niemi, Hedges, and Jennings, 1977; Stoker and Jennings, 2005; Alford, Hatemi, Hibbing, Martin, and Eaves, 2011). In this chapter, I address the apparent tension in

the literature, asking the question, why do political attitudes shape social interaction and relationship formation so strongly when politics itself appears to play such a minor role in the daily lives of most people?

Political scientists know a lot about how an individual's interpersonal environment can influence his or her politics, but we know much less about how an individual's politics can influence his or her interpersonal environment. Recently, scholars have begun studying the role of political preferences in human mating behavior (Alford, et al., 2011; Klofstad, McDermott, and Hatemi, 2012; Huber and Malhotra, 2013). These studies have offered preliminary empirical evidence linking an individual's political attitudes with his or her romantic relationship pursuits, but they have not provided a theoretical explanation for why political similarity is linked to the formation of romantic relationships, despite the longstanding assumption that politics is unimportant to most Americans.

Moreover, an important shortcoming of the existing literature is the lack of longitudinal datasets that include responses from both members of romantic dyads. Scholars from the fields of political science and social psychology have noted that longitudinal data is needed to explain relationship development (e.g., Alford et al., 2011). However, most studies looking at romantic relationships and couple satisfaction have relied on cross-sectional data because no longitudinal datasets currently exist that contain measures of political attitudes and relationship wellbeing from both partners of a romantic dyad (Luo and Klohnen, 2005; Huber and Malhotra, 2013).

In this chapter, I attempt to move the conversation forward by offering analyses from a novel dyadic panel dataset, as well as by grounding this research in a theoretical framework that connects political beliefs with intimate relationships. My theory delineates the romantic

relationship development process from initial attraction to relationship maintenance or dissolution. I consider three mechanisms that explain why we should expect couples to be politically similar: (1) Social homogamy (passive sorting on political variables), (2) Assortative mating (active sorting on political variables), and (3) Convergence (increasing similarity on political variables over time). Then I use data collected from a national longitudinal study of couples to test specific hypotheses regarding political similarity within dyads and the relationship between political similarity and relationship satisfaction.

Understanding the mechanism(s) that causes political congruency within romantic dyads should be important to political scientists for several reasons. Most importantly, discovering that romantic relationships between politically similar couples are more satisfying (than relationships between politically dissimilar couples) demands that political scientists reconsider the way we have been measuring political attention and importance. When answering survey questions, Americans may appear politically ignorant, report low interest in political affairs and infrequent political participation, and lack ideological constraint, but these same Americans use explicitly political criteria when evaluating potential and actual romantic relationship partners. Thus, politics is much more fundamental to human behavior than political scientists frequently assume.

A second reason political scientists would benefit from this knowledge is that parents they can affect their offspring's political attitudes via prenatal genetic influences and postnatal socialization (Alford, Funk, and Hibbing 2005; Settle, Dawes, and Fowler, 2009; Jennings and Niemi, 1974; 1981). Politically similar parents are more likely to pass along their political views to their offspring than politically dissimilar parents.

Finally, one's romantic partner can be a key contextual source of interpersonal influence (Stoker and Jennings, 2005; Nickerson, 2008). Unlike earlier studies that focused on a specific social setting (e.g., the neighborhood, school, or workplace), partners can influence each other's political preferences across political environments. However, our understanding of these socialization and contextual processes must be adjusted to account for the importance of politics in initiating and maintaining these relationships.

### **Why Similarity Matters in the Interpersonal Context**

I present a theory (see Figure 8) that explains why we should expect couples to be politically similar and why this similarity leads to relationship satisfaction. Starting with the latter expectation, I anticipate that politically similar couples will be more satisfied with their relationships than politically dissimilar couples. To explain this expectation, I draw from cognitive consistency and reinforcement theories. Cognitive consistency theories expect couples to be similar because individuals have an intrinsic need for balance in relationships, while reinforcement theories expect couples to be similar because of rewards and punishments inherent in social interaction.

Balance theory asserts that individuals desire congruence within their interpersonal relationships (Heider, 1958). If a person (**P**) and an 'other' person (**O**) like each other, their relationship is balanced. In other words, if Paul and Olivia like each other, then there is balance in their relationship. When **P** likes **O**, but **O** does not like **P**, or in other words, when Paul likes Olivia but Olivia does not like Paul, then the relationship lacks balance. Psychological imbalance can produce cognitive dissonance, which is a sense of intrapsychic discomfort resulting from simultaneously holding competing ideas. In this case, the tension for Paul arises because Paul likes Olivia and Paul believes that Paul is a generally likeable

person, yet Olivia does not like Paul for some reason. People possess a motivational drive to reduce psychological distress (Festinger, 1957). Using the example above, if **P** likes **O**, but **O** does not like **P**, their relationship lacks balance and **P** will likely feel dissonance that leads **P** to change his or her attitude toward **O**.

By expanding balance theory we can include attitude objects (situations, events, ideas, or things) in addition to individuals (Heider, 1958; see also: Newcomb, 1956 “AB-X Theory of Social Psychology”). In a romantic relationship, an individual experiences a balanced state when his or her attitude toward an object is the same as the attitude of his or her relationship partner with regard to the object. When romantic partners have differing opinions on attitude objects the relationship lacks balance (Newcomb, 1956). Returning to our hypothetical couple, if Paul likes Olivia, Olivia likes Paul, and both Paul and Olivia like living in the United States, their relationship is balanced. However, if Paul and Olivia like each other but feel differently about life in the U.S., then their relationship lacks balance regarding the specific attitude object (in this case, their living situation). When a relationship is imbalanced, the individuals involved are forced to reconsider their feelings toward each other, the attitude object, or both.

Transitioning from cognitive consistency to reinforcement, learning theory uses the concepts of reinforcement and punishment to predict attitude similarity within romantic dyads. Operant conditioning says that reinforcement will increase the occurrence of a specific behavior while punishment will decrease similar future behavior (Skinner, 1974). Positive reinforcement involves adding a stimulus to increase a certain behavior. Within the relationship context, similar attitudes are positively reinforced while dissimilar attitudes are not. Engaging with a similar partner is desirable because the partner provides positive



reinforcement. Repeatedly interacting with a like-minded partner leads to the strengthening of an individual's own attitudes over time. Positive<sup>10</sup> punishment involves adding an aversive stimulus to decrease certain behaviors. This form of operant conditioning can be used in romantic relationships when partners disagree about key behaviors and attitudes (Skinner, 1974).

While it can make us feel good to have others validate our opinions regardless of whether we are right or wrong, sometimes individuals are motivated to view their world accurately (see: Byrne, 1971, "Effectance Arousal Model"). To accomplish this accuracy goal, individuals compare their beliefs, opinions, and attitudes about the world to the beliefs, opinions, and attitudes of others (Festinger, 1954). Uncovering similarity with others leads to consensual validation. Having other people agree with your world view and belief system offers evidence of the "correctness" of your beliefs, opinions, and/or attitudes. This type of validation can lead to a positive emotional response: the individual doing the comparison views him- or her- self as intelligent, wise, and thoughtful. This positive self-affect causes the individual to like the other person who was the source of good feelings about the self.

Finally, the theory of enjoyable interactions predicts that the experience of gratifying interactions with another person causes attraction toward that individual (Burleson and Denton, 1992). Sharing similar attitudes facilitates enjoyable interactions. Thus, this theory expects that an individual will be attracted to similar others because he or she expects that interacting with attitudinally similar others will be enjoyable, not because such interactions validate the individual's cognitions. By combining the expectations of cognitive consistency,

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<sup>10</sup> With this terminology, "positive" does not denote "good" or "bad". Positive means that a stimulus has been added to elicit the desired response. "Negative" would mean that a stimulus has been removed.

reinforcement, and enjoyable interactions theory, I predict that relationships between similar individuals will be more satisfying and enduring than relationships between dissimilar individuals.

### **Why We Should Expect Couples to be Politically Similar**

I claim that political attitudes are particularly significant in romantic relationships because political attitudes are “core” attitudes that reveal information about an individual’s overarching worldview (Conover, Searing, and Crewe, 2002). Political attitudes are more than just an individual’s opinion of an object; they express his or her central identity. It is challenging to compromise on or overlook “core” attitudinal differences that have moral components, as many political attitude issues do (Haidt, 2012). I anticipate that individuals intentionally pursue romantic relationships with politically similar others.

Going back to our hypothetical couple, Paul and Olivia, I predict that they will be more attracted to one another if they are politically similar than if they are politically dissimilar, for three main reasons:

First, relationships with politically similar others are balanced, while relationships with politically dissimilar others lack balance, which causes cognitive dissonance (i.e., Balance Theory). If Paul likes Olivia, and Olivia likes Paul, and both individuals like the ideals and principles of conservatism, then Paul and Olivia will experience a balanced relationship and will avoid experiencing cognitive dissonance. However, if Paul is a staunch conservative while Olivia strongly supports liberal ideologies, Paul and Olivia may find it difficult to appreciate each other’s opinions and attitudes. Despite how much Paul likes Olivia, he may never understand why she would support issue positions and candidates he vehemently opposes, and vice versa. Since political attitudes often represent core values,

Paul and Olivia may come to realize that their differing political opinions not only cause disagreements when it is time to go to the ballot box, but when they are discussing many issues that involve their general worldviews or identities.

Second, sharing political attitudes with another person provides consensual validation and produces a positive view of the self (i.e., Learning Theory and the Effectance Arousal Model). Like many other Americans, Paul and Olivia lived through the government shutdown of 2013 and heard various pundits arguing about the potential costs and benefits of this action by Congress. Olivia does not believe that shutting down the government was a good idea and that it might have even been harmful for the country as a whole, but she is not sure that she is well enough informed on all aspects of the issue to really take a stand against it. During a casual conversation with friends, Paul states that he thinks that Congress made a horrible mistake by shutting down the government and that this act has had devastating effects on Americans' trust in government, and he goes on to develop an elaborate argument explaining his position. Olivia finds herself nodding in agreement with Paul's statements. Although previously unsure of her position on the government shutdown, Olivia feels a sense of consensual validation as a result of Paul's remarks. She begins to believe that her initial suspicions regarding the shutdown were correct and she experiences a positive emotional response – seeing herself as an informed and thoughtful citizen. Since Paul is the cause of Olivia's positive self-regard, she begins to like Paul more than she previously did.

Finally, a third reason why Paul and Olivia are more likely to develop a relationship with each other if they share similar political opinions is because interacting with politically like-minded others is more enjoyable than interacting with politically dissimilar others (i.e., the Theory of Enjoyable Interactions). Paul, an avid user of Facebook, remembers how

stressful it was the one time he posted a political status update. Paul's intent with his post had simply been to state his opinion and he had not anticipated the heated debate that would ensue between his various groups of Facebook friends who spanned the political spectrum from left to right. Although the initial responses were cordial enough, the Facebook posts responding to Paul's original status update quickly devolved into bitter accusations and name calling between his friends, who often did not even know each other offline. As Paul began getting to know Olivia, he discovered that many of her political attitudes were closely aligned with his own. Instead of political discourse leading to bickering and hurt feelings, Paul begins to expect and engage in easy and enjoyable political conversations with Olivia. These rewarding interactions lead Paul to be more attracted to Olivia than he was before.

Realizing that they share politically similar views, Paul and Olivia's cognitions are balanced. Their beliefs about the world are validated which leads to positive self-affect. Finally, they expect enjoyable future interactions, causing positive feelings toward the other person. Because of these positive outcomes from sharing political attitudes, I expect that individuals actively seek romantic relationships with politically similar others, even though politics appears to play a minor role in the daily lives of most people.

### **The Process: From Initial Attraction to Relationship Maintenance or Dissolution**

Having delineated why politically similar couples should find their relationships more satisfying and enduring than politically dissimilar couples, I take a step backwards to explain the phases of relationship development and specifically how couples "become" politically similar. Figure 8 is a diagram of my entire theoretical framework for the study. I unpack the model in the remainder of the paragraphs in this section.

The first step in the process (see Figure 8: Initial Attraction), initial attraction to an individual, is generally due to non-political criteria (e.g., physical characteristics, shared interests). As romantic relationships develop, individuals begin discovering the political attitudes of their partners (see Figure 8: Discovering of partner's political views). Political preferences are core attitudes that “say something about who we are—about our basic values, our character and our identities” (Conover, Searing, and Crewe, 2002). Individuals will then compare their political views to the views of their partner (see Figure 8: Social Comparison). If political similarity is discovered, the relationship is balanced, which leads to continued attraction and relationship maintenance (see Figure 8: Similarity/Balance). Discovering political dissimilarity puts stress on the relationship as individuals are often surprised to learn that their partners do not share their attitudes on key issues (see Figure 8: Dissimilarity/Imbalance). This surprise can lead to disappointment and a sense of deception and disingenuousness that may undermine the health and stability of the relationship (Montoya, Horton, and Kirchner, 2008).

Upon discovering political dissimilarity, individuals are forced to decide what matters more to them: their relationship or their political attitudes. If they select the latter, the romantic relationship will dissolve due to imbalanced political preferences (see Figure 8: Political attitudes matter more; Repulsion/Relationship Dissolution). However, if they choose the former, individuals have two new options to reduce the stress caused by holding divergent attitudes from their romantic partner (see Figure 8: Relationship matters more). Individuals can either devalue their own political attitudes (see Figure 8: Devalue own political attitudes) or they can change their political attitudes to align more closely with the attitudes of their romantic partner (see Figure 8: Change political attitudes to match partners).

Choosing either method will allow the couple to achieve balance, which leads to continued attraction and relationship maintenance (see Figure 8: Continued Attraction/Relationship Maintenance).

Overall, I expect that individuals prefer to engage in romantic relationships with politically similar others who reinforce their attitudes, values, and behaviors. I predict that when pursuing a long-term romantic relationship, individuals both passively and actively seek partners who share their political worldview. Moreover, if partners discover political dissimilarities, but desire to maintain the relationship, they will attempt to bring their discordant attitudes into alignment, to minimize intrapsychic discomfort and promote relationship stability and health.

Based on my theory, there are three primary mechanisms that could explain why we find political similarity in romantic dyads: (1) social homogamy, (2) assortative mating, and (3) convergence. The first mechanism, Social Homogamy, explains that individuals passively end up in romantic relationships with politically similar partners because their pool of eligible mates is composed of others with similar geographic and social backgrounds (see Figure 8: M1: Social Homogamy). Sharing such broad characteristics can lead partners to share specific traits as well. This explanation expects romantic partners to be politically similar due to shared backgrounds, not active selection for expressly political traits.

Contrary to Social Homogamy, the second mechanism, Assortative Mating, expects individuals to choose others as romantic partners based upon their degree of resemblance on specific characteristics, like age, personality, or political views (see Figure 8: M2: Assortative Mating). Thus, romantic partners will be politically similar because individuals

actively seek partners based upon their degree of resemblance on specific characteristics (e.g., political views).

Finally, the third mechanism, Convergence, assumes members of romantic dyads will become more alike over time due to mutual influence and shared experiences (see Figure 8: M3: Convergence). As partners spend time together and experience life events as a pair, their attitudes and beliefs will converge. The longer a couple is together, the more politically similar they will become. It is important to note that all three of these similarity-inducing mechanisms could be at play and they are not inherently mutually exclusive.

I have now explained how couples become politically similar and why being in a politically similar couple is beneficial. From this theoretical framework, I derive the following hypotheses:

- H1** Couples will have politically similar attitudes on a range of issues spanning social, economic, and foreign policy, and will be more politically similar overall than non-couple dyads.
- H2** Social Homogamy: A couple's level of political similarity is due to passive assortment on political attitudes and can be fully explained by controlling for similarities in the couple's background characteristics.
- H3** Assortative Mating: A couple's level of political similarity is due to active assortment on political attitudes and cannot be fully explained by controlling for similarities in the couple's background characteristics.
- H4** Assumed Convergence: The longer a couple is together, the more politically similar they will be.
- H5** Observed Convergence: Over time, couples will become more politically similar.

**H6** The more politically similar a couple is the more satisfied they will be with their relationship.

## **Research Design**

To test these hypotheses, I designed a multi-wave survey and administered it to couples in romantic relationships. Initial participants were recruited by Qualtrics Panels<sup>11</sup> and were U.S. adult respondents who indicated that they were currently involved in non-marital romantic relationships (dating or engaged). Initial participants (who were panel members) asked their partners (who were not panel members) to participate in the study as well. All participants completed an electronic survey, distributed by a third-party vendor, on three separate occasions. Participants were paid \$12.60 for completing each wave of the study.<sup>12</sup> My panel study included three waves of data collected in June 2013, September 2013, and January 2014 (from here on referred to as: Wave 1, Wave 2, and Wave 3, respectively). During Wave 1, the questionnaire participants completed was longer (approximately 20 minutes in length) and involved more scales than the two follow-up surveys (which were each approximately 10 minutes in length). All three survey instruments and the variables measured during each wave of the study are described in detail below.

## **Political Attitudes Survey (PAS)**

During the summer of 2012, I pre-tested a battery of political attitude items using a sample of undergraduate students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. My

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<sup>11</sup> Qualtrics Labs, Inc. (<https://qualtrics.com/>).

<sup>12</sup> This study was primarily funded by a National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant (NSF Award ID 1263907; Carsey, PI; Phillips, Co-PI). Additional funding for the study came from the UNC Department of Political Science Pearsall Fund.



original political attitude survey included 30 items pulled from the American National Election Study (ANES), General Social Survey (GSS), and Election 2012 Presidential websites. I asked students to indicate how frequently they discussed each item with family/friends and how important each item was to them personally. I selected the top 17 responses from the pretest: the items that students indicated they discussed at least ‘Once per month’ with friends and family (score of 3 or higher, on a 6-point scale) or were at least ‘Somewhat important’ to them personally (score of 3 or higher, on a 6-point scale). Then I created a Political Attitude Survey (PAS) that included these 17 political attitude items. I included this survey in my dyadic panel study to measure political similarity between couples.

In addition to completing this battery of political attitude items, participants also answered a series of demographic items, questions regarding the role of politics and religion in their lives, and a relationship satisfaction inventory (see Table 7 below).

Wave 1 participants completed an electronic survey questionnaire with the background questions and PAS (described above) plus a modified version of Acitelli, Douvan, and Veroff’s (1993) Measure of Martial Well-Being (MMMWB). The inventory contained six items that I modified to apply to pre-marital romantic relationships. During Wave 1, 173 couples completed surveys.

Three months after Wave 1, participants were re-contacted and asked to participate in Wave 2 of the study. During Wave 2, participants who were still in a relationship with the same partner from Wave 1 continued to the next part of the study and again completed a shortened set of background questions, the PAS, and the MMMWB. Participants who were no longer in a relationship with the same partner from Wave 1 completed a relationship

dissolution evaluation questionnaire probing them for reasons why their previous relationship ended (in reality, all of the participants who participated in Wave 2 were still in romantic relationships with the partners from Wave 1; thus, no one completed the relationship dissolution evaluation questionnaire during Wave 2). Of the initial 173 couples who completed surveys during Wave 1, 60 couples also completed surveys during Wave 2, for a 35% retention rate.

Four months after Wave 2, I collected data for Wave 3 of the study. During Wave 3, participants who were still in a relationship with the same partner from Wave 2 continued to the next part of the study and again completed a shortened set of background questions, the PAS, and the MMMW-b. Participants who were no longer in a relationship with the same partner from Wave 2 completed a relationship dissolution evaluation questionnaire probing them for reasons why their previous relationship ended (only one individual reported their relationship ending between Wave 2 and Wave 3; thus, the data collected from the relationship dissolution evaluation questionnaire will not be considered in the following analyses). Of the 60 couples who completed surveys during both Waves 1 and Wave 2, 20 couples completed the third and final surveys during Wave 3, for a 33% retention rate between Waves 2 and 3, and a 12% overall retention rate through all three waves of the study.

### **Analytic Procedures**

After collecting individual-level data from respondents, I created couple level variables for age similarity, race similarity, Hispanic status similarity, socio-economic status similarity, hometown region similarity, religion similarity, religiosity similarity, political similarity, and overall relationship satisfaction. The demographic variables will be used to

analyze my second and third hypotheses specifically, while the relationship satisfaction measure will be used to test my sixth hypothesis. The political similarity measure will be used in all of my analyses. I created dummy variables for seven background characteristics to represent couple level similarity. My coding instructions are displayed below in Table 8.

I used the following five questions from the Modified Measure of Marital Well-being (see Acitelli, Douvan, and Veroff, 1993) for my measure of overall relationship satisfaction:

1. Taking things together, how would you describe your relationship with your romantic partner/significant other? Would you say your relationship is...
2. When you think about your relationship with your romantic partner/significant other – what each of you puts into it and gets out of it – how happy do you feel? Would you say...
3. How stable do you feel your relationship with your romantic partner/significant other is? Would you say...
4. In the last few months how often have you considered breaking up with your romantic partner/significant other? Would you say...
5. All in all, how satisfied are you with your relationship with your romantic partner/significant other? Would you say...

Responses to each question were measured on a four-point scale with higher values indicating greater relationship satisfaction for each question except for the question regarding breaking up with your partner (which I reversed scored before including in my analyses [see Appendix A for full text of question items and response options]). I took the mean response to each question from each couple and added the five means together to create a scale of overall relationship satisfaction that could theoretically range from 5-20 where higher values indicated greater overall relationship satisfaction. The actual range was from 8-20 with the mean level of overall couple satisfaction being 17.77 (standard deviation = 2.536).

Finally, to create a measure of couple political similarity, I used the 17 attitude items from the PAS described above [see Appendix A for full text of question items with response options]. Each PAS item was measured on a 6-point scale (ranging from 1-6). I began by

finding the difference between each member of the couple's answer for each PAS item, always subtracting the lower score from the higher score. Then I summed over these 17 difference scores to find an overall measure of couple political dissimilarity. Theoretically, this variable could range from 0 (all shared political attitudes) to 85 (no shared political attitudes). The actual observed range was from 0-40. However, since I wanted a measure of couple political similarity instead of couple political dissimilarity, the final step in the process was to reverse score this item, meaning that if a couple had originally been a 0 (all shared political attitudes), I assigned them a score of 85. Likewise, if a couple had been an 85 (no shared political attitudes), I assigned them a score of 0 (and I repeated this process for every value between 0-85). My new measure of couple political similarity ranged from 45-85, with a mean level of couple political similarity being 71.566 (standard deviation = 7.913).

## **Results**

### **Hypothesis 1: Political Similarity**

To test the first part of H1, that couples are politically similar across political attitude domains, I calculated the Pearson's correlation for each political attitude item for the couples in my data set.

The results of my Pearson's correlations show that the political attitudes of couples are highly correlated (see Table 9 below). This finding supports my first hypothesis that couples will have similar political attitudes on a range of issues related to social, economic, and foreign policy.

Table 9 shows that the political attitudes of couples in non-marital romantic relationships (dating or engaged) are very similar. Perhaps surprisingly, couples' attitudes on the issue of abortion had the lowest correlation, but even so, this correlation was quite strong

( $r = 0.690$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Couples' attitudes on the issue of tax policy had the highest correlation ( $r = 0.869$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). My findings regarding pre-marital couple similarity supports and extends earlier findings from the literature of political similarity within married dyads.

To think about the relative strength of these correlations, Stoker and Jennings (2005) used intraclass correlation coefficients and found that husband-wife similarity on abortion was around 0.50 (in 1982 and 1997) and husband-wife similarity on legalization of marijuana ranged between 0.34 to 0.46 (using data from 1973, 1982, and 1997). Similarly, Alford et al. (2011), using a composite measure that included 28 political and social attitude items, found that the married couples in their sample were correlated at 0.647 ( $n = 3,984$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). The level of couple political similarity on specific attitude items that I found in my study is much stronger than the findings from Stoker and Jennings's (2005) study of married couples and is more consistent with Alford et al.'s (2011) recent results.

To test the second part of H1, that couples are more politically similar overall than non-couple dyads, I ran a randomization test to compare the observed level of couple political similarity in my data to the level of political similarity between pairs of randomly drawn non-couple dyads. To do this, I set up a simulation that allowed me to draw 10,000 iterations of random dyads from my data set. As I ran each iteration of the simulation, I calculated the mean level of dyadic political similarity. After running the entire simulation, I calculated the overall mean value of random dyadic similarity across 10,000 reshuffles of the data to be 55.4 with a standard deviation of 0.6 (95% confidence interval = 54.2 to 56.6). Comparing this result to my observed mean level of couple political similarity ( $M = 71.6$ ) it is extremely unlikely that the level of couple political similarity in my data is due strictly to

random chance. Instead, the couples in my study are statistically significantly more politically similar than non-couple dyads.

### **Hypothesis 2 (Social Homogamy) v. Hypothesis 3 (Assortative Mating)**

To test H2 (Social Homogamy) against H3 (Assortative Mating), I ran a multiple regression analysis, using Wave 1 data, with couple political similarity as my dependent variable and several key demographic items thought to be correlated with political attitudes as my independent variables. Running an analysis where I control for whether the couple's background characteristics were similar or not allows me to determine whether the political similarity of couples could be fully explained using demographic and social criteria or whether couples were more politically similar than we would expect even with these variables in the model.

The results of my multiple regression analysis showed that background characteristics, like couple similarity in race, SES, and/or religion, do a poor job of explaining couple political similarity (see Table 10 below). I ran a model with couple political similarity as my dependent variable and couple similarity on age, race, Hispanic status, SES, hometown region, religion, and religiosity as my independent variables. None of the demographic variables I included in the model were statistically significant and the adjusted  $R^2$  for the model was actually negative.

The Social Homogamy hypothesis predicts that individuals passively end up in romantic relationships with politically similar partners because they sort themselves into relationships based on similarity in other domains – geography and social background – that are associated with political attitudes. In other words, a couple that is very similar in terms of their geographic and social background would be predicted to be very politically similar as

well. However, my data show no support for this hypothesis. While we know that social characteristics (race, religion, SES, region, etc.) can influence individuals' political attitudes and vote choice, couple demographic similarity does not explain couple political similarity.

Since the Social Homogamy hypothesis does not seem to explain how couples come to be politically similar, it is more likely that the Assortative Mating hypothesis is correct. Results from the experiments conducted for Chapter 1 and 2 of this dissertation provide additional support for this alternative hypothesis. In the context of survey experiments, participants were more romantically attracted to strangers with similar political attitudes (Chapter 1) and participants expected more positive results from a relationship with someone of the same political identity – party or ideology (Chapter 2). Moreover, Alford et al. (2011) also found support for assortative mating when studying married couples in the United States.

#### **Hypothesis 4: Assumed Convergence**

To test H4 (Assumed Convergence), first, I ran a bivariate regression analysis, using Wave 1 data, with couple political similarity as my dependent variable and the length of the relationship in years as my independent variable. This test allowed me to determine whether the longer a couple had been in a romantic relationship together affected how politically similar they were. Then I ran a multiple regression model, using Wave 1 data, with couple political similarity as my dependent variables, the length of the relationship in years as my key independent variable, and the demographic/background variables I used to test hypotheses 2 and 3 as my control variables.

The results of my regression analyses, displayed in Table 11 below, show that the duration of a couple's relationship does affect how politically similar the couple is. This

finding lends support to my fourth hypothesis. I call this hypothesis “Assumed Convergence” because the cross-sectional design of the data and analysis does not let me test for true convergence. The interpretation of my results could be that couples become more politically similar over time or it might be that the relationships of politically similar couples are more likely to last, while politically dissimilar couples end their relationships sooner. To show that a couple is actually becoming more politically similar over time, I need a longitudinal measure. This type of analysis will be used to test hypothesis 5 below.

With the bivariate regression model that uses data from Wave 1 (Model 1), I can determine that for every additional year of a couple’s relationship, there is a 0.121 increase in the expected value of couple political similarity, which in my sample ranged from 45-85. While this is a small change, it means that for every nine years that a couple is romantically involved they are about one step closer in terms of political similarity. The adjusted  $R^2$  for this model is fairly low showing that the duration of a couple’s relationship explains less than 2% of the overall variance in couple political similarity.

With the multiple regression model (Model 2), I can determine that for every additional year of a couple’s relationship, there is a 0.128 increase in the expected value of couple political similarity. The only control variable that was statistically significant was religion. Couples who share the same religious affiliation are 1.676 points more politically similar than those of differing religious affiliations. None of the other control variables affected how politically similar couples were. The adjusted  $R^2$  for Model 2 was the same as for Model 1. Again, we see that couple demographic similarity does not help us explain couple political similarity.



### **Hypothesis 5: Observed Convergence**

To test H5 (Observed Convergence), I ran three difference of means tests to determine whether couples became more politically similar over time.<sup>13</sup> I compared mean couple political similarity at Wave 1 to mean couple political similarity at Wave 2. Similarly, I compared mean couple political similarity at Wave 2 with mean couple political similarity at Wave 3. Finally, I compared mean couple political similarity at Wave 1 with mean couple political similarity at Wave 3.

While I could not test true convergence using cross-sectional data, I can test my fifth hypothesis given the longitudinal design of my study. The results of my difference of means tests provide no support for the observed convergence hypothesis (see Tables 12-14 below).

As seen in Tables 6-8 above, couples did not become statistically significantly more similar between Waves 1 and 2, Waves 2 and 3, or during the entire course of the study from Wave 1 to Wave 3. Granted the duration of my study was fairly limited (about seven months). It could be that couples do become more politically similar over extended periods of time (years or decades even). However, my data show no signs of such movement in the short term.

### **Hypothesis 6: Relationship Satisfaction**

To test H6, that the more politically similar a couple is the more satisfied they will be with their relationship, first, I ran a bivariate regression analysis, using Wave 1 data, with

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<sup>13</sup> I used two methods to check to see if there were systematic differences (in length of relationship, couple political similarity, and couple satisfaction) between respondents who completed Wave 2 and those who did not complete Wave 2. First, I ran a logit model and none of the coefficient estimates were statistically significant. Second, I looked at differences in means, and only couple political similarity approached statistical significance. See Appendix L.

overall couple satisfaction as my dependent variable and couple political similarity as my independent variable. Then, I ran a multivariate regression analysis, using Wave 1 data, with overall couple satisfaction as my dependent variable, couple political similarity as my key independent variable, and the demographic/background variables I used to test hypotheses 2 and 3 as my control variables. Finally, I repeated the bivariate regression analysis using data from waves 2 and 3 of the study.<sup>14</sup>

The results of my regression analyses using data from Wave 1 show that couple political similarity is marginally important to overall couple satisfaction.

Looking at the bivariate analysis in Model 1 (see Table 15), a one-unit change in the level of couple political similarity produces a 0.038 increase in the expected value of overall couple satisfaction. Remembering that couple political similarity ranged from 45-85 and overall couple satisfaction ranged from 8-20, when we move from the least politically similar couples (45) to the most politically similar couples (85), my model predicts almost a one point improvement in overall couple satisfaction. Like with the previous analysis, the adjusted  $R^2$  of this model is fairly low. The level of couple political similarity explains less than 1% of the variance in overall couple satisfaction.

Considering the multiple regression analysis in Model 2 (see Table 15), a one-unit change in the level of couple political similarity produces a 0.039 increase in the expected value of overall couple satisfaction. None of the control variables affected how satisfied couples were with their relationships. The adjusted  $R^2$  for Model 2 was actually lower than

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<sup>14</sup> I also looked at whether change in political similarity caused change in relationship satisfaction over time (from Wave 1 to Wave 2). The results of my regression model were inconclusive. This is most likely because of the average length of relationship at Wave 1 (about nine years). Any changes in relationship satisfaction due to changes in political similarity had likely already happened at an earlier stage in the relationship or would require a longer period of observation than three months (the time between Waves 1 and 2).

for Model 1. While couple political similarity helps us explain a small amount of the variation in couple satisfaction, couple demographic similarity does not enhance our understanding of relationship satisfaction.

Since adding demographic variables did not improve model fit or help explain couple satisfaction (as seen in Table 15), I only include the results from bivariate analyses using data from Waves 2 and 3. The results of my regression analyses using data from Wave 2 again show that couple political similarity is statistically significantly important to overall couple satisfaction.

A one-unit change in the level of couple political similarity produces a 0.090 increase in the expected value of overall couple satisfaction. This is larger than the 0.038 increase in the expected value of overall couple satisfaction I found when using Wave 1 data. The  $R^2$  is also slightly larger in this model using Wave 2 data than it was in my model using Wave 1 data (4% variance explained v. 1% variance explained, respectively).

The results of my regression analyses using data from Wave 3 again show that couple political similarity is statistically significantly important to overall couple satisfaction. A one-unit change in the level of couple political similarity produces a 0.194 increase in the expected value of overall couple satisfaction. This is five times larger than the affect I found using Wave 1 data and more than twice as larger as the affect I found using Wave 2 data. Also, the  $R^2$  for this model is much larger than for either of the previous models (13% variance explained using Wave 3 data, compared to 4% variance explained [Wave 2] and 1% variance explained [Wave 1]).

It is not clear why couple political similarity had a greater effect on overall couple satisfaction and explained more variance in the models during later waves of my study.

However, there are a couple reasons why this might be the case. First, it could be that politically dissimilar and dissatisfied couples ended their relationships after Wave 1 and before Waves 2 or 3 and thus did not complete my follow-up surveys, leaving couples in the sample whose satisfaction level was related to their political similarity. It could also be that couples who knew they were politically dissimilar were less interested in taking an inventory that specifically asked them about their political views since they knew this was an area of contention in their relationship. After completing Wave 1, these couples may have intentionally opted out of the follow-up surveys during Waves 2 and 3.

### **Politics and Romance**

We have known for a while that married couples tend to be politically similar. There is a strong theoretical explanation for this finding. Similarity in interpersonal contexts causes belief validation, produces positive-self affect, and leads to the expectation of positive future interactions. Since political attitudes are core attitudes and romantic relationships are intimate interpersonal contexts it is logical that married couples would share similar political opinions. The results of my study extend earlier research, showing that non-married couples (those who are dating or engaged) also have very similar political attitudes.

Through a series of analyses I explored several explanations for *how* couples come to be politically similar. I found no support for social homogamy as the correct mechanism underlying couple political similarity. Couple similarity on geographic and background characteristics do not predict couple political similarity. Likewise, I found no support for the true convergence hypothesis. Couples do not seem to become more politically similar over time; at least they did not become more similar during the timeframe of my study.

It seems more likely that assortative mating is the mechanism responsible for producing like-minded couples. Individuals report greater attraction toward politically similar potential mates. Results from this study and Chapters 1 and 2 suggest that individuals may be actively seeking partners who share their political attitudes. Moreover, when individuals develop relationships with politically similar others, those relationships tend to be more satisfying.

It is essential that political scientists take these findings seriously and begin reevaluating how we conceptualize the importance of politics for the electorate. Our foundational studies in the field of political behavior have told us for decades that Americans are generally uninformed about and uninterested in politics. We have come to the unfortunate conclusion that the average American has little understanding of ideological labels, low levels of constraint over time or between issues domains, and rarely discusses political topics with others. While to some degree these findings may still be true, individuals are using political attitudes as a decision-making mechanism in a key area of their lives – their romantic relationships.

Perhaps most people most of the time would prefer to talk about anything other than politics, and maybe they do not really understand what differentiates a liberal from a conservative, but these same individuals are sorting themselves into politically like-minded couples in romantic relationships. At a gut level, Americans seem to understand that the political attitudes someone else holds do matter and they do have implications for interpersonal interactions. You may not believe that the party of the President of the United States will greatly impact your daily life, but who you are romantically involved with

certainly will. Dating and marrying politically similar individuals has become the norm and for good reason: these relationships are marked by greater overall couple satisfaction.

## TABLES: DYADIC PANEL

**Table 7: Operationalization of Variables**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Scale</b>	<b>Scale boundaries</b>	<b>Example items</b>
<b><i>Individual Variables</i></b>			
Discussion	6 point scale	‘Never’ to ‘Every day’	Religion; Politics
Religiosity	6 point scale	‘Never’ to ‘Every week/More than once per week’	
Interest in politics	3 point scale	‘Not much interested’ to ‘Very much interested’	
Attention to politics	3 point scale	‘None at all’ to ‘A lot’	
Party Identification	7 point scale*	‘Strong Democrat’ to ‘Strong Republican’ *Two additional choices: ‘Libertarian’ and ‘Other (text entry allowed)’	
Ideological preference	7 point scale	‘Very Liberal’ to ‘Very Conservative’	Ideological preference overall; Ideological preference on economic issues
<b><i>Inventories</i></b>			
Political Attitudes Survey (PAS)	6 point Likert-item	‘Strongly disagree’ to ‘Strongly agree’	Abortion; Same-Sex Marriage
Modified Measure of Marital Well-being (MMMWB)	4 point scale	Varies depending on question	Taking things together, how would you describe your relationship?; All in all, how satisfied are you with your relationship?

**Table 8: Coding Instructions for Demographic/Background Variables**

<i>Background Variable</i>	<i>Similar [coded 1]</i>	<i>Dissimilar [coded 0]</i>
Age	< 10 years apart	>= 10 years apart
Race	Same	Different
Hispanic-status	Same	Different
SES	Within 1 bracket	More than 1 bracket apart
Hometown Region	Same	Different
Religion	Same	Different
Religiosity	Within 1 bracket	More than 1 bracket apart

*Note: While I also measured current hometown region there was no variance on this variable and thus it was omitted from analysis.*



**Table 9: Couple Concordance on 17 Political Attitude Items, Pearson's r**

<b>Political Attitude Item<sup>15</sup></b>	<b>Pearson's r</b>	<b>Significance level</b>
Abortion	0.690	0.001
Contraceptive Policy	0.728	0.001
Same Sex Marriage	0.732	0.001
LGBT Rights	0.783	0.001
Legalization of Marijuana	0.725	0.001
Death Penalty	0.785	0.001
Preventing Climate Change	0.781	0.001
Universal Health Insurance	0.850	0.001
Flat Income Tax	0.869	0.001
Reducing Unemployment	0.728	0.001
Eliminating the Debt	0.818	0.001
Size and Power of Federal Government	0.767	0.001
Energy Independence	0.706	0.001
Open Immigration	0.753	0.001
DREAM Act	0.822	0.001
The War in Afghanistan	0.786	0.001
America's Image	0.751	0.001

*Note: The reported correlations are Pearson's r's. There are 173 couple pairs for each analysis.*

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<sup>15</sup> See appendix I for full-text of political attitude item questions.

**Table 10: OLS Regression Results for Couple Political Similarity controlling for Background Characteristics**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient (standard error)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Intercept	68.901 (3.656)***	6.54	0.001
Age	0.747 (1.621)	0.46	0.323
Race	-3.494 (1.901)	1.83	0.965
Hispanic	0.941 (2.219)	0.42	0.336
SES	2.922 (2.219)	1.26	0.105
Hometown Region	-0.244 (1.402)	0.17	0.785
Religion	1.580 (1.246)	1.27	0.104
Religiosity	0.935 (1.998)	0.47	0.320
Adjusted R2	-0.003		
N	172		

*Note: \*  $p < .10$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*\*  $p < .01$ . One-tailed test.*

**Table 11: OLS Regression Results for Couple Political Similarity**

<i>Variable</i>	Model 1		Model 2	
	<i>Coefficient</i> ( <i>standard error</i> )	<i>t (p-value)</i>	<i>Coefficient</i> ( <i>standard error</i> )	<i>t (p-value)</i>
Intercept	70.456 (0.816)***	31.19 (0.001)	68.563 (3.624)***	18.92 (0.001)
Duration of Relationship (in years)	0.121 (0.061)**	1.99 (0.024)	0.128 (0.062)**	2.06 (0.021)
Age	-	-	0.672 (1.605)	0.42 (0.338)
Race	-	-	-3.592 (1.892)	1.90 (0.971)
Hispanic	-	-	0.413 (2.213)	0.19 (0.426)
SES	-	-	2.686 (2.303)	1.17 (0.123)
Hometown	-	-	0.021 (1.395)	0.01 (0.494)
Religion	-	-	1.676 (1.235)*	1.36 (0.089)
Religiosity	-	-	0.660 (1.983)	0.33 (0.370)
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.017		0.017	
N	173		172	

*Note: \*  $p < .10$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*\*  $p < .01$ . One-tailed test.*

**Table 12: Difference of Means Test, Couple Political Similarity Wave 1 v. Wave 2**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Observation</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
Wave 1	60	57.317	7.628
Wave 2	60	56.8	7.462
T	0.778		
p-value	0.220		

*Note: One-tailed test.*

**Table 13: Difference of Means Test, Couple Political Similarity Wave 2 v. Wave 3**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Observations</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
Wave 2	20	58.65	4.913
Wave 3	20	58.75	6.512
T	0.068		
p-value	0.527		

*Note: One-tailed test.*

**Table 14: Difference of Means Test, Couple Political Similarity Wave 1 v. Wave 3**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Observations</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
Wave 1	20	58.65	6.285
Wave 3	20	58.75	6.512
T	0.066		
p-value	0.526		

*Note: One-tailed test.*

**Table 15: OLS Regression Results for Overall Couple Satisfaction (Wave 1)**

<i>Variable</i>	Model 1		Model 2	
	<i>Coefficient</i> ( <i>standard error</i> )	<i>t (p-value)</i>	<i>Coefficient</i> ( <i>standard error</i> )	<i>t (p-value)</i>
Intercept	15.053 (1.752)***	8.59 (0.001)	15.756 (2.062)***	7.64 (0.001)
Couple Political Similarity	0.038 (0.024)*	1.56 (0.060)	0.039 (0.025)**	1.57 (0.060)
Age	-	-	-0.478 (0.514)	0.93 (0.823)
Race	-	-	-0.059 (0.611)	0.10 (0.539)
Hispanic	-	-	-0.069 (0.704)	0.10 (0.539)
SES	-	-	-0.614 (0.740)	0.83 (0.796)
Hometown	-	-	-0.563 (0.445)	1.27 (0.897)
Religion	-	-	0.280 (0.397)	0.71 (0.241)
Religiosity	-	-	0.657 (0.634)	1.04 (0.151)
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.008		0.003	
N	173		172	

*Note: \*  $p < .10$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*\*  $p < .01$ . One-tailed test.*

**Table 16: OLS Regression Results for Overall Couple Satisfaction (Wave 2)**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Intercept	11.051***	3.687	3.00	0.002
Couple Political Similarity	0.090**	0.050	1.80	0.039
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	60			
N	0.037			

*Note: \*  $p < .10$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*\*  $p < .01$ . One-tailed test.*



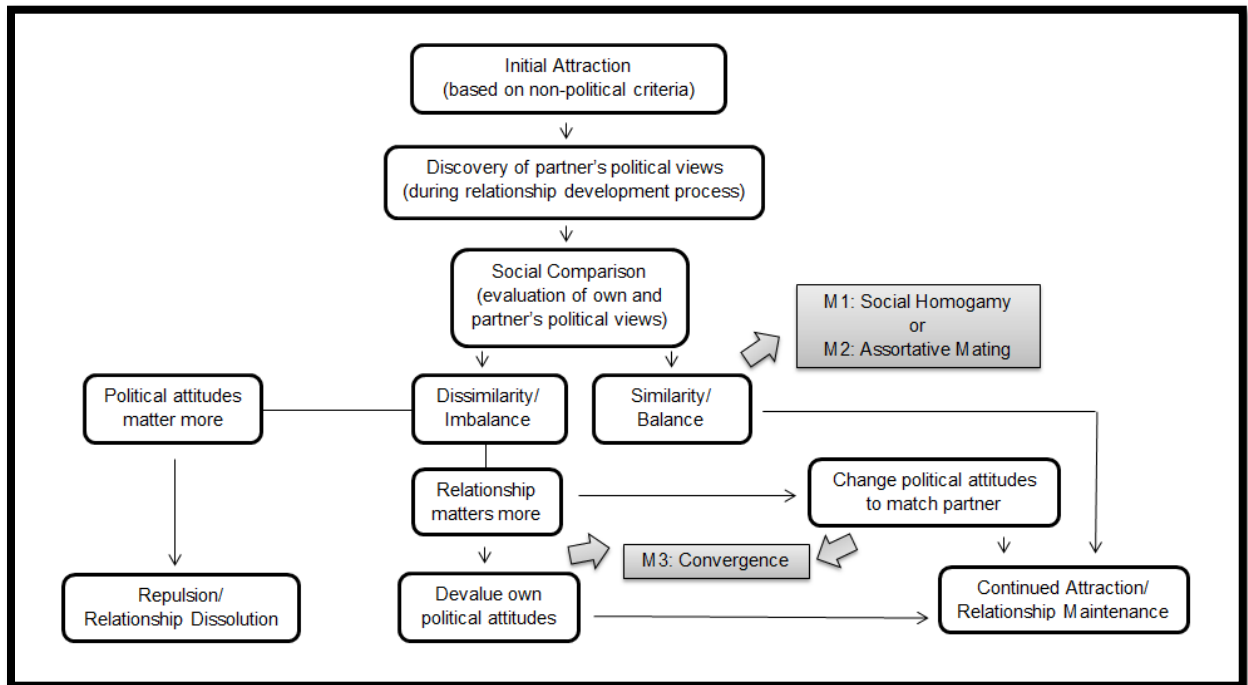
**Table 17: OLS Regression Results for Overall Couple Satisfaction (Wave 3)**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Intercept	3.333	7.146	0.47	0.323
Couple Political Similarity	0.194**	0.100	1.94	0.034
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.127			
N	20			

*Note: \*  $p < .10$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*\*  $p < .01$ . One-tailed test.*

## FIGURES: DYADIC PANEL

**Figure 8: Theory Diagram – From Initial Attraction to Relationship Maintenance or Dissolution**



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## APPENDICES

### A. Bogus Stranger: Political Attitudes Survey (*Instrument administered at Time 1*)

What is your age?

What is your academic year at \_\_\_\_?

Freshman (1)

Sophomore (2)

Junior (3)

Senior (4)

Other (5)

What is your sex?

Male (0)

Female (1)

Do you consider yourself to be:

Heterosexual or Straight (1)

Gay or Lesbian (2)

Bi-sexual (3)

Other (4) \_\_\_\_\_

What term best describes your race?

White/Caucasian (1)

Black/African American (2)

Asian/Pacific Islander (3)

Arabic/Middle Eastern (4)

Native American/American Indian (5)

Other (6)

Are you Hispanic/Latino(a)?

Yes (1)

No (0)

How would you describe your immediate family's economic status?

Working class (1)

Lower middle class (2)

Middle class (3)

Upper middle class (4)

Upper class (5)

In which state have you spent the majority of your life? (If you are not from the United States originally: In what country have you spent the majority of your life?)

What is your relationship status?

- Single/Never Married (1)
- Dating/In a Relationship (2)
- Engaged (3)
- Married (4)
- Separated/Divorced (5)
- Widowed (6)

What term best describes your religious preference?

- Catholic (1)
- Christian - Protestant (2)
- Christian - Evangelical (3)
- Mormon (4)
- Jewish (5)
- Muslim (6)
- Buddhist (7)
- Other (8)
- No religious preference, atheist, or agnostic (9)

Thinking about your life these days, how often do you attend religious services, apart from social obligations such as weddings or funerals?

- Never (1)
- Once a year or less (2)
- A few times a year (3)
- Once or twice a month (4)
- Almost every week (5)
- Every week or more than once a week (6)

On average, how often do you talk about religion/faith/spirituality with family or friends?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Once a month (3)
- Once a week (4)
- A few days per week (5)
- Every day (6)

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a REPUBLICAN, a DEMOCRAT, an INDEPENDENT, or what?

- Strong Democrat (1)
- Weak Democrat (2)
- Independent/Lean Democrat (3)
- Independent (4)
- Independent/Lean Republican (5)
- Weak Republican (6)
- Strong Republican (7)
- Other (8) \_\_\_\_\_

Some people aren't that interested in politics. How about you? Would you say that you are:

- Not much interested (1)
- Somewhat interested (2)
- Very much interested (3)

Some people don't pay much attention to politics, and some people do. In general, how much attention do you pay to politics?

- None at all (1)
- Not much (2)
- Some (3)
- A lot (4)

On average, how often do you talk about politics with family or friends?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Once a month (3)
- Once a week (4)
- A few days per week (5)
- Every day (6)

When it comes to politics, do you usually think of yourself as liberal, moderate, conservative, or something else?

- Very Liberal (1)
- Liberal (2)
- Slightly Liberal (3)
- Moderate/middle-of-the-road (4)
- Slightly Conservative (5)
- Conservative (6)
- Very Conservative (7)
- Other (8) \_\_\_\_\_

In general, how liberal (left-wing) or conservative (right-wing) are you on economic issues?

- Very Liberal (1)
- Liberal (2)
- Slightly Liberal (3)
- Moderate/middle-of-the-road (4)
- Slightly Conservative (5)
- Conservative (6)
- Very Conservative (7)
- Other (8) \_\_\_\_\_



In general, how liberal (left-wing) or conservative (right-wing) are you on social issues?

Very Liberal (1)

Liberal (2)

Slightly Liberal (3)

Moderate/middle-of-the-road (4)

Slightly Conservative (5)

Conservative (6)

Very Conservative (7)

Other (8) \_\_\_\_\_

#### Abortion

I strongly believe that abortion should not be legal. (1)

I believe that abortion should not be legal. (2)

I feel that perhaps abortion should not be legal. (3)

I feel that perhaps abortion should be legal. (4)

I believe abortion should be legal. (5)

I strongly believe that abortion should be legal. (6)

#### Same-Sex Marriage

I strongly support the legalization of same-sex marriage at the federal level. (1)

I support the legalization of same-sex marriage at the federal level. (2)

I slightly support the legalization of same-sex marriage at the federal level. (3)

I slightly oppose the legalization of same-sex marriage at the federal level. (4)

I oppose the legalization of same-sex marriage at the federal level. (5)

I strongly oppose the legalization of same-sex marriage at the federal level. (6)

#### Open Immigration

I am very much against open immigration policies; I believe the U.S. has the right and responsibility to restrict migration from other countries. (1)

I am moderately against open immigration policies; I believe the U.S. has the right to restrict migration from other countries. (2)

I am slightly against open immigration policies. (3)

I am slightly for open immigration policies. (4)

I am moderately for open immigration policies; I believe people should be able to migrate to whatever country they choose, with minimal barriers. (5)

I am very much for open immigration policies; I believe people should be able to migrate to whatever country they choose, without restrictions. (6)

### Federal Government's Role in Preventing Climate Change

I strongly believe the federal government should be doing more to control climate change.

(1)

I believe the federal government should be doing more to control climate change. (2)

I feel that perhaps the federal government should be doing more to control climate change.

(3)

I feel that perhaps the federal government is doing enough to control climate change. (4)

I believe the federal government should is doing enough to control climate change. (5)

I strongly believe the federal government is doing enough to control climate change. (6)

### Death Penalty

In general, I strongly oppose the death penalty. (1)

In general, I moderately oppose the death penalty. (2)

In general, I slightly oppose the death penalty. (3)

In general, I slightly support the death penalty. (4)

In general, I moderately support the death penalty. (5)

In general, I strongly support the death penalty. (6)

### Flat Income Tax System

I strongly support implementing a flat tax system, where all people pay the same tax rate regardless of their income bracket. (1)

I moderately support implementing a flat tax system, where all people pay the same tax rate regardless of their income bracket. (2)

I slightly support implementing a flat tax system, where all people pay the same tax rate regardless of their income bracket. (3)

I slightly oppose implementing a flat tax system, where all people pay the same tax rate regardless of their income bracket. (4)

I moderately oppose implementing a flat tax system, where all people pay the same tax rate regardless of their income bracket. (5)

I strongly oppose implementing a flat tax system, where all people pay the same tax rate regardless of their income bracket. (6)

### Universal Health Insurance

I strongly oppose universal health insurance plans. The government should leave health care to the private sector. (1)

I moderately oppose universal health insurance plans. The government should leave health care to the private sector. (2)

I slightly oppose universal health insurance plans. (3)

I slightly support universal health insurance plans. (4)

I moderately support universal health insurance plans. The government should be required to provide health coverage to all Americans. (5)

I strongly support universal health insurance plans. The government should be required to provide health coverage to all Americans. (6)

### America's Image in the International Community

I strongly support efforts to improve America's image in the international community, and feel the U.S. should cooperate with international organizations like the U.N. more often. (1)

I moderately support efforts to improve America's image in the international community, and feel the U.S. should cooperate with international organizations like the U.N. more often. (2)

I slightly support efforts to improve America's image in the international community, and feel the U.S. should cooperate with international organizations like the U.N. more often. (3)

I slightly oppose efforts to improve America's image in the international community if they require deferring to international organizations like the U.N. more often. (4)

I moderately oppose efforts to improve America's image in the international community if they require deferring to international organizations like the U.N. more often. (5)

I strongly oppose efforts to improve America's image in the international community if they require deferring to international organizations like the U.N. more often. (6)

### Federal Government's Role in Reducing Unemployment and Creating Jobs

I strongly believe the federal government should do everything possible to reduce the unemployment rate and create new jobs. (1)

I believe the federal government should do everything possible to reduce the unemployment rate and create new jobs. (2)

I think that perhaps the federal government should work to reduce the unemployment rate and create new jobs. (3)

I think that perhaps reducing the unemployment rate and creating new jobs should be left to the private sector. (4)

I believe that reducing the unemployment rate and creating new jobs can be better handled by the private sector than the federal government. (5)

I strongly believe that reducing the unemployment rate and creating new jobs can be better handled by the private sector than the federal government. (6)

### Size and Power of the Federal Government

I strongly believe the federal government has gotten too big and powerful, and efforts should be made to return power to the states. (1)

I believe the federal government has gotten too big and powerful, and efforts should be made to return power to the states. (2)

I feel that perhaps the federal government has gotten too big and powerful, and efforts should be made to return power to the states. (3)

I feel that perhaps the federal government is best able to handle America's problems and should maintain its size and power. (4)

I believe the federal government is best able to handle America's problems and should maintain its size and power. (5)

I strongly believe the federal government is best able to handle America's problems and should maintain its size and power. (6)

Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender rights

In general, I strongly support efforts to expand LGBT rights. (1)

In general, I moderately support efforts to expand LGBT rights. (2)

In general, I slightly support efforts to expand LGBT rights. (3)

In general, I slightly oppose efforts to expand LGBT rights. (4)

In general, I moderately oppose efforts to expand LGBT rights. (5)

In general, I strongly oppose efforts to expand LGBT rights. (6)

DREAM Act (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors)

I am very much against the DREAM Act because it is an amnesty program that will encourage illegal immigration. (1)

I am moderately against the DREAM Act and believe it as an amnesty program that may encourage illegal immigration. (2)

I am slightly against the DREAM Act because it may encourage illegal immigration. (3)

I am slightly for the DREAM Act and because it may produce social and economic benefits. (4)

I am moderately for the DREAM Act and believe it will produce a variety of social and economic benefits. (5)

I am very much for the DREAM Act and because it will produce many social and economic benefits. (6)

Energy Independence and Alternative Energy

I strongly believe energy independence should be a top priority; the U.S. must reduce its dependence on foreign oil and develop alternative energy options. (1)

I believe energy independence should be a top priority; the U.S. should reduce its dependence on foreign oil and develop alternative energy options. (2)

I feel that perhaps energy independence should be a top priority. (3)

I feel that perhaps energy independence should not be a top priority. (4)

I believe energy independence should not be a top priority; the U.S. has other more important issues to deal with right now. (5)

I strongly believe energy independence should not be a top priority; the U.S. has other more important issues to deal with right now. (6)

The War in Iraq

In general, I strongly oppose the War in Iraq and believe the U.S. should bring all troops home now. (1)

In general, I moderately oppose the War in Iraq and believe the U.S. should reduce the number of troops in the region. (2)

In general, I slightly oppose the War in Iraq. (3)

In general, I slightly support the War in Iraq. (4)

In general, I moderately support the War in Iraq and believe the U.S. should maintain the number of troops in the region. (5)

In general, I strongly support the War in Iraq; I believe the war effort is going well and the U.S. should maintain the number of troops in the region. (6)

### Contraceptive Policy

I strongly believe health insurance companies should be required to cover contraceptives for women. (1)

I believe health insurance companies should be required to cover contraceptives for women. (2)

I feel that perhaps health insurance companies should be required to cover contraceptives for women. (3)

I feel that perhaps health insurance companies should not be required to cover contraceptives for women. (4)

I believe health insurance companies should not be required to cover contraceptives for women. (5)

I strongly believe health insurance companies should not be required to cover contraceptives for women. (6)

## **B. Bogus Stranger: “Bogus Stranger” Procedure** (*Instrument administered at Time 2*)

Thank you for participating in this study of interpersonal perception.

Instructions (please read): The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which one person can form valid judgments about another person just by knowing a few of his or her attitudes. Last semester we carried out other studies of this sort. Students wrote down several sorts of information about themselves, all identifying information was removed, and this information was given to other students. The task was to form an opinion about the stranger's intelligence, knowledge of current events, political views, morality, and adjustment, just on the basis of knowing a few bits of information about the person's past and present life. We found that students could guess these things with better than chance accuracy. So, this study is an extension of the previous one, and a major change has been introduced. Instead of receiving information about the other person's life, you will be shown his or her attitudes on specific issues. You are about to receive the attitude scale of another student. All I can guarantee is that this person is the opposite sex as yourself, and to the best of our knowledge, you do not know the person whose attitude scale you will receive, and it is not someone in the same political science class as yourself.

Please read the person's answers carefully (they are highlighted in yellow) and try to form an opinion about him/her. As soon as you have studied each of the attitudes, click the double arrows button at the bottom of the screen to continue to the Interpersonal Judgment Scale and indicate your best guess as to this person's intelligence, knowledge of current events, political views, morality, and adjustment. You will also be asked to indicate how much you think you would like this person if you met him/her, how much you think you would like to work with this person as partners in an experiment, how much you think you would like to date this person, and how much you think you would like this person as a spouse.

Profile Information inserted here. Varies by participant.

Thinking about the individual whose profile you just read, please answer the following 10 questions.

Intelligence (check one)

I believe that this person is very much above average in intelligence (1)

I believe that this person is above average in intelligence (2)

I believe that this person is slightly above average in intelligence (3)

I believe that this person is average in intelligence (4)

I believe that this person is slightly below average in intelligence (5)

I believe that this person is below average in intelligence (6)

I believe that this person is very much below average in intelligence (7)

Knowledge of Current Events (check one)

I believe that this person is very much below average in knowledge of current events (1)

I believe that this person is below average in knowledge of current events (2)

I believe that this person is slightly below average in knowledge of current events (3)

I believe that this person is average in knowledge of current events (4)

I believe that this person is slightly above average in knowledge of current events (5)

I believe that this person is above average in knowledge of current events (6)

I believe that this person is very much above average in knowledge of current events (7)

Party Identification (check one)

I feel that this person would strongly support the Democratic Party (1)

I feel that this person would likely support with the Democratic Party (2)

I feel that this person would lean toward the Democratic Party (3)

I feel that this person would not support the Democratic Party or the Republican Party (4)

I feel that this person would lead toward the Republican Party (5)

I feel that this person would likely support the Republican Party (6)

I feel that this person would strongly support the Republican Party (7)

Morality (check one)

This person impresses me as being extremely moral (1)

This person impresses me as being moral (2)

This person impresses me as being moral to a slight degree (3)

This person impresses me as being neither particularly moral nor particularly immoral (4)

This person impresses me as being immoral to a slight degree (5)

This person impresses me as being immoral (6)

This person impresses me as being extremely immoral (7)

Worldview (check one)

I believe that this person is extremely liberal (1)

I believe that this person is rather liberal (2)

I believe that this person is somewhat liberal (3)

I believe that this person is neither particularly liberal nor particularly conservative (4)

I believe that this person is somewhat conservative (5)

I believe that this person is rather conservative (6)

I believe that this person is extremely conservative (7)

Adjustment (check one)

I believe that this person is extremely maladjusted (1)

I believe that this person is maladjusted (2)

I believe that this person is maladjusted to a slight degree (3)

I believe that this person is neither particularly maladjusted nor particularly well adjusted (4)

I believe that this person is well adjusted to a slight degree (5)

I believe that this person is well adjusted (6)

I believe that this person is extremely well adjusted (7)

Personal Feelings (check one)

- I feel that I would probably like this person very much (1)
- I feel that I would probably like this person (2)
- I feel that I would probably like this person to a slight degree (3)
- I feel that I would probably neither particularly like nor particularly dislike this person (4)
- I feel that I would probably dislike this person to a slight degree (5)
- I feel that I would probably dislike this person (6)
- I feel that I would probably dislike this person very much (7)

Working Together on a Project (check one)

- I believe that I would very much dislike working with this person on a project (1)
- I believe that I would dislike working with this person on a project (2)
- I believe that I would dislike working with this person on a project to a slight degree (3)
- I believe that I would neither particularly dislike nor particularly like working with this person on a project (4)
- I believe that I would enjoy working with this person on a project to a slight degree (5)
- I believe that I would enjoy working with this person on a project (6)
- I believe that I would very much enjoy working with this person on a project (7)

Dating (check one)

- I believe that I would probably like to date this person very much (1)
- I believe that I would probably like to date this person (2)
- I believe that I would probably like to date this person to a slight degree (3)
- I believe that I would neither particularly like nor particularly dislike dating this person (4)
- I believe that I would probably dislike dating this person to a slight degree (5)
- I believe that I would probably dislike dating this person (6)
- I believe that I would probably dislike dating this person very much (7)

Marriage (check one)

- I believe that I would very much dislike this person as a spouse (1)
- I believe that I would dislike this person as a spouse (2)
- I believe that I would dislike this person as a spouse to a slight degree (3)
- I believe that I would neither particularly dislike nor particularly enjoy this person as a spouse (4)
- I believe that I would enjoy this person as a spouse to a slight degree (5)
- I believe that I would enjoy this person as a spouse (6)
- I believe that I would very much enjoy this person as a spouse (7)

Thank you for completing this study! The purpose of this study was not only to determine the extent to which one person can form valid judgments about another person just by knowing a few of his or her attitudes, but also to determine whether individuals are more attracted to politically similar others. The profile you read and evaluated is not from an actual [name of university] student, it is entirely made-up by the researcher. Previous studies have found a relationship between similarity of various types of attitudes and inter-personal attraction. The primary hypothesis in this study is that individuals will be more romantically attracted to other individuals who share their political preferences and attitudes.



### C. Bogus Stranger: Additional Tables of Results

**Table 2: DV by % Political Similarity (One-way ANOVA results)**

<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Mean Square Error</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Intelligence	Groups	44.67	3	14.89	13.88	0.00
	Residual	382.90	357	1.07		
Knowledge of Current Events	Groups	32.61	3	10.87	7.90	0.00
	Residual	491.38	357	1.38		
Morality	Groups	53.42	3	17.81	15.17	0.00
	Residual	417.91	356	1.17		
Adjustment	Groups	82.17	3	27.39	23.21	0.00
	Residual	417.70	354	1.18		

**Table 3: DV by % Political Similarity (One-way ANOVA results)**

<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Mean Square Error</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Personal Feelings	Groups	260.12	3	86.71	62.75	0.00
	Residual	491.88	356	1.38		
Working Together on a Project	Groups	179.74	3	59.91	37.38	0.00
	Residual	569.04	355	1.60		

**Table 4: DV by % Political Similarity (One-way ANOVA results)**

<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Mean Square Error</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Dating	Groups	315.64	3	105.21	52.08	0.00
	Residual	719.14	356	2.02		
Marriage	Groups	296.40	3	98.80	43.88	0.00
	Residual	799.24	355	2.25		

**D. Online Dating: Political Attitudes Survey** (*Instrument administered at Time 1*)

What is your age?

What is your academic year at [name of University]?

Freshman (1)

Sophomore (2)

Junior (3)

Senior (4)

Other (5)

What is your sex?

Male (0)

Female (1)

Do you consider yourself to be:

Heterosexual or Straight (1)

Gay or Lesbian (2)

Bi-sexual (3)

Other (4) \_\_\_\_\_

What term best describes your race?

White/Caucasian (1)

Black/African American (2)

Asian/Pacific Islander (3)

Arabic/Middle Eastern (4)

Native American/American Indian (5)

Other (6)

Are you Hispanic/Latino(a)?

Yes (1)

No (0)

How would you describe your immediate family's economic status?

Working class (1)

Lower middle class (2)

Middle class (3)

Upper middle class (4)

Upper class (5)

In which state have you spent the majority of your life? (If you are not from the United States originally: In what country have you spent the majority of your life?)

What is your relationship status?

Single/Never Married (1)

Dating/In a Relationship (2)

Engaged (3)

Married (4)

Separated/Divorced (5)

Widowed (6)

What term best describes your religious preference?

Catholic (1)

Christian - Protestant (2)

Christian - Evangelical (3)

Mormon (4)

Jewish (5)

Muslim (6)

Buddhist (7)

Other (8)

No religious preference, atheist, or agnostic (9)

Thinking about your life these days, how often do you attend religious services, apart from social obligations such as weddings or funerals?

Never (1)

Once a year or less (2)

A few times a year (3)

Once or twice a month (4)

Almost every week (5)

Every week or more than once a week (6)

On average, how often do you talk about religion/faith/spirituality with family or friends?

Never (1)

Rarely (2)

Once a month (3)

Once a week (4)

A few days per week (5)

Every day (6)

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a REPUBLICAN, a DEMOCRAT, an INDEPENDENT, or what?

Strong Democrat (1)

Weak Democrat (2)

Independent/Lean Democrat (3)

Independent (4)

Independent/Lean Republican (5)

Weak Republican (6)

Strong Republican (7)

Other (8) \_\_\_\_\_

Some people aren't that interested in politics. How about you? Would you say that you are:

- Not much interested (1)
- Somewhat interested (2)
- Very much interested (3)

Some people don't pay much attention to politics, and some people do. In general, how much attention do you pay to politics?

- None at all (1)
- Not much (2)
- Some (3)
- A lot (4)

On average, how often do you talk about politics with family or friends?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Once a month (3)
- Once a week (4)
- A few days per week (5)
- Every day (6)

When it comes to politics, do you usually think of yourself as liberal, moderate, conservative, or something else?

- Very Liberal (1)
- Liberal (2)
- Slightly Liberal (3)
- Moderate/middle-of-the-road (4)
- Slightly Conservative (5)
- Conservative (6)
- Very Conservative (7)
- Other (8) \_\_\_\_\_

In general, how liberal (left-wing) or conservative (right-wing) are you on economic issues?

- Very Liberal (1)
- Liberal (2)
- Slightly Liberal (3)
- Moderate/middle-of-the-road (4)
- Slightly Conservative (5)
- Conservative (6)
- Very Conservative (7)
- Other (8) \_\_\_\_\_

In general, how liberal (left-wing) or conservative (right-wing) are you on social issues?

Very Liberal (1)

Liberal (2)

Slightly Liberal (3)

Moderate/middle-of-the-road (4)

Slightly Conservative (5)

Conservative (6)

Very Conservative (7)

Other (8) \_\_\_\_\_

### **E. Online Dating: Dating Profile Instructions** (*Instrument administered at Time 2*)

Thank you for participating in this research study on online dating! Recently, a handful of major U.S. universities have launched online dating networks exclusively for their students. UNC has begun exploring the option of creating a similar social network for its students. A preselected set of students submitted preliminary online dating profiles. In this study, you will be asked to evaluate one of these profiles. Currently, there are no photos attached to the dating profiles. In the future, students will submit photos, in addition to personal information about themselves. While we realize that appearance is important, right now we need your help determining what type of written information is most likely to catch a potential date's attention and thus which questions to offer students as part of their online profiles.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated. Your answers will be kept completely confidential. Please answer the questions carefully and to the best of your ability. If you are unsure of an answer, your best guess is good enough. While you may leave questions blank, it is most helpful if you answer each question truthfully.

Please read the following online dating profile. What information catches your eye? What do you like or dislike about this individual?

Try to imagine yourself in a romantic relationship with the individual whose profile information you are about to read. Do your best to experience the actual feelings and thoughts you would have in this relationship.

Take your time and try to clearly and vividly imagine everything. From the profile information provided, do you find this individual interesting? Do your best to think of yourself as this individual's partner.

**E2. Dating Profile Female** (*shown to heterosexual male participants; administered at Time 2*)

**19 year old woman**

**Chapel Hill, North Carolina, United States**

**Seeking:** men 18-22

**Within:** 5 Miles of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, United States

**ABOUT HER**

**Interests:** Cooking, Concerts, Exploring new areas, Going out to eat, Movies,

Nightclubs/Dancing, Travel/Sightseeing, Watching sports, Wine tasting

**Sports and exercise:** Aerobics, Basketball, Dancing, Running, Soccer, Swimming, Yoga

**Exercise habits:** 3-4 times per week

**Pets:** I like Dogs, Cats, Horses

**College:** University of North Carolina, at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC

**APPEARANCE**

**Height:** 5'4"

**Body type:** Slender

**Eyes:** Blue

**Hair:** Dark brown

**LIFESTYLE**

**Smoke:** No Way

**Drink:** I'll tell you later

**Occupation:** Student

**Income:** I'll tell you later

**Relationship:** Never Married

**Have kids:** No

**Want kids:** Someday

**BACKGROUND/VALUES**

**Ethnicity:** White/Caucasian

**Faith:** Christian/Protestant

**Political views:** [Answer displayed dependent on random assignment to treatment.]

**Languages:** English

**Education:** Some college

**E3. Dating Profile Male** (*shown to heterosexual female participants; administered at Time 2*)

**21 year old man**

**Chapel Hill, North Carolina, United States**

**Seeking:** women 18-22

**Within:** 5 Miles of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, United States

**ABOUT HIM**

**Interests:** Cooking, Concerts, Exploring new areas, Going out to eat, Movies, Nightclubs/Dancing, Travel/Sightseeing, Watching sports, Wine tasting

**Sports and exercise:** Baseball, Basketball, Football, Weights / Machines, Hockey

**Exercise habits:** 3-4 times per week

**Pets:** I like Dogs, Cats

**College:** University of North Carolina, at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC

**APPEARANCE**

**Height:** 6'0"

**Body type:** Athletic and toned

**Eyes:** Blue

**Hair:** Dark brown

**LIFESTYLE**

**Smoke:** No Way

**Drink:** Social Drinker

**Occupation:** Student

**Income:** I'll tell you later

**Relationship:** Never Married

**Have kids:** No

**Want kids:** Someday

**BACKGROUND/VALUES**

**Ethnicity:** White/Caucasian

**Faith:** Christian/Protestant

**Political views:** [Answer displayed dependent on random assignment to treatment.]

**Languages:** English

**Education:** Some college



**F. Online Dating: Partner Choice Measure**

Thinking about the individual described in the profile you just read, please answer the following questions.

How much would you enjoy being in a relationship with the individual described?

Not at all (1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

Extremely (7)

How much did you like the partner depicted in the profile?

Not at all (1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

Extremely (7)

What is the degree of conflict or tension that you would feel in a relationship with this partner?

Not at all (1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

Extremely (7)

What is the likelihood that a relationship with this individual would result in marriage?

Not at all (1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

Extremely (7)

**G. Online Dating: Emotional Reactions Measure**

As you were reading the online dating profile information and imagining being in a romantic relationship with this partner, did you feel:

	<b>Not at all (1)</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>(5)</b>	<b>(6)</b>	<b>Extremely (7)</b>
<b>Afraid (1)</b>							
<b>Angry (2)</b>							
<b>Annoyed (3)</b>							
<b>Anxious (4)</b>							
<b>Calm (5)</b>							
<b>Cheerful (6)</b>							
<b>Contented (7)</b>							
<b>Depressed (8)</b>							
<b>Disgusted (9)</b>							
<b>Excited (10)</b>							
<b>Frustrated (11)</b>							
<b>Guilty (12)</b>							
<b>Happy (13)</b>							
<b>Irritated (14)</b>							
<b>Jealous (15)</b>							
<b>Joyful (16)</b>							
<b>Lonely (17)</b>							
<b>Loved (18)</b>							
<b>Relaxed (19)</b>							
<b>Sad (20)</b>							
<b>Scared (21)</b>							
<b>Secure (22)</b>							
<b>Stable (23)</b>							
<b>Worried (24)</b>							

## H. Online Dating: Full Results from Analysis of Emotional Reactions Measure

### H1. Emotion Experienced by Similar v. Dissimilar PID Condition

<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Similar PID</i>	<i>Dissimilar PID</i>	<i>t-Value</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<b>Afraid</b>	1.58 (1.11)	1.57 (1.08)	0.060	0.524
<b>Angry</b>	1.54 (1.04)	1.57 (1.12)	0.229	0.410
<b>Annoyed</b>	2.0 (1.33)	2.24 (1.64)	1.358	0.088*
<b>Anxious</b>	2.02 (1.30)	1.85 (1.21)	1.093	0.862
<b>Calm</b>	4.93 (1.46)	4.67 (1.68)	1.403	0.081*
<b>Cheerful</b>	4.51 (1.55)	4.10 (1.57)	2.181	0.015**
<b>Contented</b>	4.18 (1.79)	3.77 (1.69)	1.973	0.025**
<b>Depressed</b>	1.54 (1.05)	1.51 (1.04)	0.246	0.597
<b>Disgusted</b>	1.56 (1.12)	1.57 (1.12)	0.084	0.467
<b>Excited</b>	3.99 (1.72)	3.56 (1.68)	2.094	0.019**
<b>Frustrated</b>	1.80 (1.26)	1.79 (1.28)	0.053	0.521
<b>Guilty</b>	1.57 (1.08)	1.38 (0.94)	1.635	0.949
<b>Happy</b>	4.41 (1.48)	3.97 (1.56)	2.443	0.008***
<b>Irritated</b>	1.82 (1.23)	1.97 (1.50)	0.881	0.190
<b>Jealous</b>	1.90 (1.32)	1.70 (1.23)	1.273	0.898
<b>Joyful</b>	3.82 (1.65)	3.36 (1.64)	2.324	0.010***
<b>Lonely</b>	2.31 (1.66)	2.24 (1.56)	0.362	0.641
<b>Loved</b>	2.98 (1.76)	2.49 (1.50)	2.562	0.006***
<b>Relaxed</b>	4.55 (1.57)	4.25 (1.78)	1.502	0.067*
<b>Sad</b>	1.67 (1.21)	1.63 (1.14)	0.310	0.622
<b>Scared</b>	1.56 (1.03)	1.52 (1.05)	0.262	0.603
<b>Secure</b>	4.02 (1.73)	3.60 (1.79)	2.005	0.023**
<b>Stable</b>	4.17 (1.71)	3.78 (1.73)	1.919	0.028**
<b>Worried</b>	1.96 (1.34)	1.74 (1.22)	1.433	0.924

*Note: Table displays results from one-tailed difference of means tests. Standard deviations are in parentheses. Significance Levels: \* = 0.1, \*\* = 0.05, \*\*\* = 0.01*

**H2. Emotion Experienced by Similar v. Dissimilar Ideology**

<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Similar Ideology</i>	<i>Dissimilar Ideology</i>	<i>t-Value</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<b>Afraid</b>	1.73 (1.29)	1.59 (1.10)	0.923	0.822
<b>Angry</b>	1.57 (1.19)	1.64 (1.16)	0.510	0.305
<b>Annoyed</b>	1.90 (1.38)	2.32 (1.49)	2.336	0.010***
<b>Anxious</b>	1.90 (1.36)	1.99 (1.39)	0.508	0.306
<b>Calm</b>	4.74 (1.54)	4.80 (1.58)	0.298	0.617
<b>Cheerful</b>	4.44 (1.67)	3.95 (1.67)	2.291	0.011**
<b>Contented</b>	4.21 (1.74)	3.75 (1.77)	2.075	0.020**
<b>Depressed</b>	1.57 (1.12)	1.50 (0.93)	0.496	0.690
<b>Disgusted</b>	1.52 (1.22)	1.77 (1.23)	1.580	0.058*
<b>Excited</b>	3.94 (1.82)	3.57 (1.71)	1.684	0.047*
<b>Frustrated</b>	1.73 (1.34)	1.92 (1.46)	1.072	0.142
<b>Guilty</b>	1.49 (1.07)	1.60 (1.20)	0.761	0.224
<b>Happy</b>	4.46 (1.64)	3.80 (1.67)	3.187	0.001***
<b>Irritated</b>	1.71 (1.22)	2.05 (1.40)	2.045	0.021**
<b>Jealous</b>	1.78 (1.41)	1.66 (1.16)	0.751	0.773
<b>Joyful</b>	3.85 (1.83)	3.16 (1.75)	3.033	0.001***
<b>Lonely</b>	2.15 (1.65)	1.95 (1.44)	1.031	0.848
<b>Loved</b>	2.95 (1.74)	2.62 (1.76)	1.487	0.069*
<b>Relaxed</b>	4.60 (1.72)	4.50 (1.67)	0.476	0.317
<b>Sad</b>	1.53 (0.88)	1.63 (1.05)	0.811	0.209
<b>Scared</b>	1.49 (1.01)	1.55 (1.01)	0.432	0.333
<b>Secure</b>	3.96 (1.63)	3.52 (1.80)	2.031	0.022**
<b>Stable</b>	4.03 (1.64)	3.63 (1.91)	1.812	0.036**
<b>Worried</b>	1.85 (1.41)	1.67 (1.06)	1.194	0.883

*Note: Table displays results from one-tailed difference of means tests. Standard deviations are in parentheses. Significance Levels: \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$*

## **I. Dyadic Panel: Wave 1 Survey Instrument**

What is your sex?

Male (0)

Female (1)

What is your age?

\_\_\_\_\_ Move the slider to select (1)

Do you consider yourself to be:

Heterosexual or Straight (1)

Gay or Lesbian (2)

Bi-sexual (3)

Other (4) \_\_\_\_\_

What term best describes your race?

White/Caucasian (1)

Black/African American (2)

Asian/Pacific Islander (3)

Arabic/Middle Eastern (4)

Native American/American Indian (5)

Other (6)

Are you Hispanic/Latino(a)?

Yes (1)

No (2)

How would you describe your immediate family's economic status?

Working class (1)

Lower middle class (2)

Middle class (3)

Upper middle class (4)

Upper class (5)

What is your hometown/where did you grow up?

Where do you currently live?

What is your current relationship status?

Single/Never Married (1)

Dating/In a Relationship (2)

Engaged (4)

Married (5)

Separated/Divorced (6)

Widowed (7)

How long did you know your current partner/significant other before you began dating him/her?

\_\_\_\_\_ Months (1)

\_\_\_\_\_ Years (2)

How did you meet your current partner/significant other? You may select more than one response.

By chance/In public randomly (i.e., at a grocery store, library, bar, club, sporting event) (1)

Through a friend (2)

Through a family member (3)

Through a class in high school (4)

Through a class in college (5)

Through a class in graduate school (6)

Through shared living space (i.e., dorm, apartment, neighborhood, etc.) (7)

Through a religious organization/club (8)

Through a political organization/club (9)

Through an athletic organization/club (10)

Through a volunteer organization/club (11)

Through another type of organization/club (please explain) (12) \_\_\_\_\_

Through a job (13)

Through a speed-dating or other singles' mixer event (14)

Through an online dating site (15)

Through an online forum (non-dating) (16)

Other (please explain) (17) \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been romantically involved with your current partner/significant other?

\_\_\_\_\_ Months (1)

\_\_\_\_\_ Years (2)

Are you currently, or have you previously, cohabited (lived) with your partner/significant other?

Currently cohabiting (1)

Previously cohabited, but currently living apart (2)

Never cohabited with current partner (3)

What term best describes your religious preference?

Catholic (1)

Christian - Protestant (2)

Christian - Evangelical (3)

Mormon (4)

Jewish (5)

Muslim (6)

Buddhist (7)

Other (8)

No religious preference, atheist, or agnostic (9)

Thinking about your life these days, how often do you attend religious services, apart from social obligations such as weddings or funerals?

Never (1)

Once a year or less (2)

A few times a year (3)

Once or twice a month (4)

Almost every week (5)

Every week or more than once a week (6)

On average, how often do you talk about religion/faith/spirituality with family or friends?

Never (1)

Rarely (2)

Once a month (3)

Once a week (4)

A few days per week (5)

Every day (6)

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a REPUBLICAN, a DEMOCRAT, an INDEPENDENT, or what?

Strong Democrat (1)

Weak Democrat (2)

Independent/Lean Democrat (3)

Independent (4)

Independent/Lean Republican (5)

Weak Republican (6)

Strong Republican (7)

Other (8) \_\_\_\_\_

Some people aren't that interested in politics. How about you? Would you say that you are:

Not much interested (1)

Somewhat interested (2)

Very much interested (3)

Some people don't pay much attention to politics, and some people do. In general, how much attention do you pay to politics?

None at all (1)

Not much (2)

Some (3)

A lot (4)

On average, how often do you talk about politics with family or friends?

Never (1)

Rarely (2)

Once a month (3)

Once a week (4)

A few days per week (5)

Every day (6)



When it comes to politics, do you usually think of yourself as liberal, moderate, conservative, or something else?

Very Liberal (1)

Liberal (2)

Slightly Liberal (3)

Moderate/middle-of-the-road (4)

Slightly Conservative (5)

Conservative (6)

Very Conservative (7)

Don't know/Not political (8)

Other (9) \_\_\_\_\_

In general, how liberal (left-wing) or conservative (right-wing) are you on economic issues?

Very Liberal (1)

Liberal (2)

Slightly Liberal (3)

Moderate/middle-of-the-road (4)

Slightly Conservative (5)

Conservative (6)

Very Conservative (7)

Don't know/Not olitical (8)

Other (9) \_\_\_\_\_

In general, how liberal (left-wing) or conservative (right-wing) are you on social issues?

Very Liberal (1)

Liberal (2)

Slightly Liberal (3)

Moderate/middle-of-the-road (4)

Slightly Conservative (5)

Conservative (6)

Very Conservative (7)

Don't know/Not political (8)

Other (9) \_\_\_\_\_

You are about to complete an attitude questionnaire called the Political Attitudes Survey. Please carefully consider each statement. Please select the answer that most closely matches YOUR attitude on the given issue. Remember, if you are unsure of an answer, your best guess is good enough.

### Abortion

I strongly believe that abortion should not be legal. (1)

I believe that abortion should not be legal. (2)

I feel that perhaps abortion should not be legal. (3)

I feel that perhaps abortion should be legal. (4)

I believe abortion should be legal. (5)

I strongly believe that abortion should be legal. (6)

### Legalization of Marijuana

I am very much for the legalization of marijuana. (1)

I am moderately for the legalization of marijuana. (2)

I am slightly for the legalization of marijuana. (3)

I am slightly against the legalization of marijuana. (4)

I am moderately against the legalization of marijuana. (5)

I am very much against the legalization of marijuana. (6)

### Same-Sex Marriage

I strongly approve of the legalization of same-sex marriage. (1)

I approve of the legalization of same-sex marriage. (2)

I slightly approve of the legalization of same-sex marriage. (3)

I slightly disapprove of the legalization of same-sex marriage. (4)

I disapprove of the legalization of same-sex marriage. (5)

I strongly disapprove of the legalization of same-sex marriage. (6)

### Open Immigration

I am very much against open immigration policies; I believe the U.S. has the right and responsibility to restrict migration from other countries. (1)

I am moderately against open immigration policies; I believe the U.S. has the right to restrict migration from other countries. (2)

I am slightly against open immigration policies. (3)

I am slightly for open immigration policies. (4)

I am moderately for open immigration policies; I believe people should be able to migrate to whatever country they choose. (5)

I am very much for open immigration policies; I believe people should be able to migrate to whatever country they choose, free of substantial barriers. (6)

### Federal Government's Role in Preventing Climate Change

I strongly believe the federal government should be doing more to control climate change.

(1)

I believe the federal government should be doing more to control climate change. (2)

I feel that perhaps the federal government should be doing more to control climate change.

(3)

I feel that perhaps the federal government is doing enough to control climate change. (4)

I believe the federal government is doing enough to control climate change. (5)

I strongly believe the federal government is doing enough to control climate change. (6)

### Death Penalty

I strongly oppose the death penalty. (1)

I moderately oppose the death penalty. (2)

I slightly oppose the death penalty. (3)

I slightly support the death penalty. (4)

I moderately support the death penalty. (5)

I strongly support the death penalty. (6)

### Flat Income Tax System

I strongly support implementing a flat tax system, where all people pay the same tax rate regardless of their income bracket. (1)

I moderately support implementing a flat tax system, where all people pay the same tax rate regardless of their income bracket. (2)

I slightly support implementing a flat tax system, where all people pay the same tax rate regardless of their income bracket. (3)

I slightly oppose implementing a flat tax system, where all people pay the same tax rate regardless of their income bracket. (4)

I moderately oppose implementing a flat tax system, where all people pay the same tax rate regardless of their income bracket. (5)

I strongly oppose implementing a flat tax system, where all people pay the same tax rate regardless of their income bracket. (6)

### Universal Health Insurance

I strongly oppose universal health insurance plans. The government should leave health care to the private sector. (1)

I moderately oppose universal health insurance plans. The government should leave health care to the private sector. (2)

I slightly oppose universal health insurance plans. (3)

I slightly support universal health insurance plans. (4)

I moderately support universal health insurance plans. The government should be required to provide health coverage to all Americans. (5)

I strongly support universal health insurance plans. The government should be required to provide health coverage to all Americans. (6)

### America's Image in the International Community

I strongly support efforts to improve America's image in the international community, even if they require deferring to international organizations like the U.N. more often. (1)

I moderately support efforts to improve America's image in the international community, even if they require deferring to international organizations like the U.N. more often. (2)

I slightly support efforts to improve America's image in the international community, even if they require deferring to international organizations like the U.N. more often. (3)

I slightly oppose efforts to improve America's image in the international community if they require deferring to international organizations like the U.N. more often. (4)

I moderately oppose efforts to improve America's image in the international community if they require deferring to international organizations like the U.N. more often. (5)

I strongly oppose efforts to improve America's image in the international community if they require deferring to international organizations like the U.N. more often. (6)

### Federal Government's Role in Reducing Unemployment and Creating Jobs

I strongly believe the federal government should do everything possible to reduce the unemployment rate and create new jobs. (1)

I believe the federal government should do everything possible to reduce the unemployment rate and create new jobs. (2)

I think that perhaps the federal government should work to reduce the unemployment rate and create new jobs. (3)

I think that perhaps reducing the unemployment rate and creating new jobs should be left to the private sector. (4)

I believe that reducing the unemployment rate and creating new jobs can be better handled by the private sector than the federal government. (5)

I strongly believe that reducing the unemployment rate and creating new jobs can be better handled by the private sector than the federal government. (6)

### Federal Government's Role in Eliminating the National Debt and Balancing the Budget

I strongly believe the federal government should do everything possible to eliminate the national debt and balance the budget. (1)

I believe the federal government should work toward eliminating the national debt and balancing the budget. (2)

I feel that perhaps the federal government should work toward eliminating the national debt and balancing the budget. (3)

I feel that perhaps the U.S. national debt is not a pressing issue and the federal government should focus on other concerns. (4)

I believe the U.S. national debt is not a pressing issue and the federal government shouldn't worry about balancing the budget. (5)

I strongly believe the U.S. national debt is not a pressing issue and the federal government shouldn't worry about balancing the budget. (6)

### Size and Power of the Federal Government

I strongly believe the federal government has gotten too big and powerful, and efforts should be made to return power to the states. (1)

I believe the federal government has gotten too big and powerful, and efforts should be made to return power to the states. (2)

I feel that perhaps the federal government has gotten too big and powerful, and efforts should be made to return power to the states. (3)

I feel that perhaps the federal government is best able to handle America's problems and should maintain its size and power. (4)

I believe the federal government is best able to handle America's problems and should maintain its size and power. (5)

I strongly believe the federal government is best able to handle America's problems and should maintain its size and power. (6)

### Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender rights

I strongly support efforts to expand LGBT rights. (1)

I moderately support efforts to expand LGBT rights. (2)

I slightly support efforts to expand LGBT rights. (3)

I slightly oppose efforts to expand LGBT rights. (4)

I moderately oppose efforts to expand LGBT rights. (5)

I strongly oppose efforts to expand LGBT rights. (6)

#### DREAM Act (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors)

I am very much against the DREAM Act and view it as an amnesty program that will encourage illegal immigration. (1)

I am moderately against the DREAM Act. (2)

I am slightly against the DREAM Act. (3)

I am slightly for the DREAM Act. (4)

I am moderately for the DREAM Act. (5)

I am very much for the DREAM Act and believe it will produce a variety of social and economic benefits. (6)

#### Energy Independence and Alternative Energy

I strongly believe energy independence should be a top priority; the U.S. must reduce its dependence on foreign oil and develop alternative energy options. (1)

I believe energy independence should be a top priority; the U.S. should reduce its dependence on foreign oil and develop alternative energy options. (2)

I feel that perhaps energy independence should be a top priority. (3)

I feel that perhaps energy independence should not be a top priority. (4)

I believe energy independence should not be a top priority; the U.S. has other more important issues to deal with right now. (5)

I strongly believe energy independence should not be a top priority; the U.S. has other more important issues to deal with right now. (6)

#### The War in Afghanistan

I strongly oppose the War in Afghanistan and believe the U.S. should bring all troops home now. (1)

I moderately oppose the War in Afghanistan and believe the U.S. should reduce the number of troops in the region. (2)

I slightly oppose the War in Afghanistan. (3)

I slightly support the War in Afghanistan. (4)

I moderately support the War in Afghanistan and believe the U.S. should maintain the number of troops in the region. (5)

I strongly support the War in Afghanistan; I believe the war effort is going well and the U.S. should maintain the number of troops in the region. (6)

### Contraceptive Policy

I strongly believe health insurance companies should be required to cover contraceptives for women. (1)

I believe health insurance companies should be required to cover contraceptives for women. (2)

I feel that perhaps health insurance companies should be required to cover contraceptives for women. (3)

I feel that perhaps health insurance companies should not be required to cover contraceptives for women. (4)

I believe health insurance companies should not be required to cover contraceptives for women. (5)

I strongly believe health insurance companies should not be required to cover contraceptives for women. (6)

The following six questions ask you to think about your current relationship with your romantic partner/significant other. Remember, all of your responses are confidential. Please answer as honestly as you can.

Taking things together, how would you describe your relationship with your romantic partner/significant other? Would you say your relationship is

Not too happy (1)

Just about average (2)

A little happier than average (3)

Very happy (4)

When you think about your relationship with your romantic partner/significant other – what each of you puts into it and gets out of it – how happy do you feel? Would you say

Not at all happy (1)

Not too happy (2)

Fairly happy (3)

Very happy (4)

How certain would you say you are that you and your romantic partner/significant other will be married five years from now? Would you say

Not at all certain (1)

Not too certain (2)

Fairly certain (3)

Very certain (4)

How stable do you feel your relationship with your romantic partner/significant other is?

Would you say

Not at all stable (1)

Not too stable (2)

Fairly stable (3)

Very stable (4)

In the last few months how often have you considered breaking up with your romantic partner/significant other? Would you say

Never (1)

Rarely (2)

Sometimes (3)

Often (4)

All in all, how satisfied are you with your relationship with your romantic partner/significant other? Would you say

Very dissatisfied (1)

Somewhat dissatisfied (2)

Somewhat satisfied (3)

Very satisfied (4)



## **J. Dyadic Panel: Wave 2 Survey Instrument**

When you completed the original questionnaire in June, you indicated that you were currently in a non-marital romantic relationships (either dating or engaged). Are you still in a relationship with the same individual you were seeing in June (who also completed the questionnaire)?

Yes (1)

No (2)

What is your current relationship status:

Dating/In a relationship (1)

Engaged (2)

Married (3)

Are you currently, or have you previously, cohabited (lived) with your partner/significant other?

Currently cohabiting (1)

Previously cohabited, but currently living apart (2)

Never cohabited with current partner (3)

Are you and your partner/significant other currently raising a child(ren) together?

No (1)

Yes, we have a biological child(ren) together (2)

Yes, I have a child(ren) from a previous relationship (3)

Yes, my partner has a child(ren) from a previous relationship (4)

Yes, we both have children from previous relationships (5)

Yes, we adopted a child(ren) together (6)

Other (please explain) (7) \_\_\_\_\_

In June, you completed the Political Attitudes Survey. However, people can change their opinions of political issues for many different reasons -- including learning more about the topic and the changing public policy atmosphere. Because of this, you are about to complete the Political Attitudes Survey, again. Please carefully consider each statement. Please select the answer that most closely matches YOUR attitude on the given issue. Remember, if you are unsure of an answer, your best guess is good enough.

### Abortion

I strongly believe that abortion should not be legal. (1)

I believe that abortion should not be legal. (2)

I feel that perhaps abortion should not be legal. (3)

I feel that perhaps abortion should be legal. (4)

I believe abortion should be legal. (5)

I strongly believe that abortion should be legal. (6)

### Legalization of Marijuana

I am very much for the legalization of marijuana. (1)

I am moderately for the legalization of marijuana. (2)

I am slightly for the legalization of marijuana. (3)

I am slightly against the legalization of marijuana. (4)

I am moderately against the legalization of marijuana. (5)

I am very much against the legalization of marijuana. (6)

### Same-Sex Marriage

I strongly approve of the legalization of same-sex marriage. (1)

I approve of the legalization of same-sex marriage. (2)

I slightly approve of the legalization of same-sex marriage. (3)

I slightly disapprove of the legalization of same-sex marriage. (4)

I disapprove of the legalization of same-sex marriage. (5)

I strongly disapprove of the legalization of same-sex marriage. (6)

### Open Immigration

I am very much against open immigration policies; I believe the U.S. has the right and responsibility to restrict migration from other countries. (1)

I am moderately against open immigration policies; I believe the U.S. has the right to restrict migration from other countries. (2)

I am slightly against open immigration policies. (3)

I am slightly for open immigration policies. (4)

I am moderately for open immigration policies; I believe people should be able to migrate to whatever country they choose. (5)

I am very much for open immigration policies; I believe people should be able to migrate to whatever country they choose, free of substantial barriers. (6)

### Federal Government's Role in Preventing Climate Change

I strongly believe the federal government should be doing more to control climate change. (1)

I believe the federal government should be doing more to control climate change. (2)

I feel that perhaps the federal government should be doing more to control climate change. (3)

I feel that perhaps the federal government is doing enough to control climate change. (4)

I believe the federal government is doing enough to control climate change. (5)

I strongly believe the federal government is doing enough to control climate change. (6)

### Death Penalty

I strongly oppose the death penalty. (1)

I moderately oppose the death penalty. (2)

I slightly oppose the death penalty. (3)

I slightly support the death penalty. (4)

I moderately support the death penalty. (5)

I strongly support the death penalty. (6)

### Flat Income Tax System

I strongly support implementing a flat tax system, where all people pay the same tax rate regardless of their income bracket. (1)

I moderately support implementing a flat tax system, where all people pay the same tax rate regardless of their income bracket. (2)

I slightly support implementing a flat tax system, where all people pay the same tax rate regardless of their income bracket. (3)

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I strongly oppose implementing a flat tax system, where all people pay the same tax rate regardless of their income bracket. (6)

### Universal Health Insurance

I strongly oppose universal health insurance plans. The government should leave health care to the private sector. (1)

I moderately oppose universal health insurance plans. The government should leave health care to the private sector. (2)

I slightly oppose universal health insurance plans. (3)

I slightly support universal health insurance plans. (4)

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I strongly support universal health insurance plans. The government should be required to provide health coverage to all Americans. (6)

### America's Image in the International Community

I strongly support efforts to improve America's image in the international community, even if they require deferring to international organizations like the U.N. more often. (1)

I moderately support efforts to improve America's image in the international community, even if they require deferring to international organizations like the U.N. more often. (2)

I slightly support efforts to improve America's image in the international community, even if they require deferring to international organizations like the U.N. more often. (3)

I slightly oppose efforts to improve America's image in the international community if they require deferring to international organizations like the U.N. more often. (4)

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### Federal Government's Role in Reducing Unemployment and Creating Jobs

I strongly believe the federal government should do everything possible to reduce the unemployment rate and create new jobs. (1)

I believe the federal government should do everything possible to reduce the unemployment rate and create new jobs. (2)

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I believe that reducing the unemployment rate and creating new jobs can be better handled by the private sector than the federal government. (5)

I strongly believe that reducing the unemployment rate and creating new jobs can be better handled by the private sector than the federal government. (6)

### Federal Government's Role in Eliminating the National Debt and Balancing the Budget

I strongly believe the federal government should do everything possible to eliminate the national debt and balance the budget. (1)

I believe the federal government should work toward eliminating the national debt and balancing the budget. (2)

I feel that perhaps the federal government should work toward eliminating the national debt and balancing the budget. (3)

I feel that perhaps the U.S. national debt is not a pressing issue and the federal government should focus on other concerns. (4)

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### Size and Power of the Federal Government

I strongly believe the federal government has gotten too big and powerful, and efforts should be made to return power to the states. (1)

I believe the federal government has gotten too big and powerful, and efforts should be made to return power to the states. (2)

I feel that perhaps the federal government has gotten too big and powerful, and efforts should be made to return power to the states. (3)

I feel that perhaps the federal government is best able to handle America's problems and should maintain its size and power. (4)

I believe the federal government is best able to handle America's problems and should maintain its size and power. (5)

I strongly believe the federal government is best able to handle America's problems and should maintain its size and power. (6)

### Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender rights

I strongly support efforts to expand LGBT rights. (1)

I moderately support efforts to expand LGBT rights. (2)

I slightly support efforts to expand LGBT rights. (3)

I slightly oppose efforts to expand LGBT rights. (4)

I moderately oppose efforts to expand LGBT rights. (5)

I strongly oppose efforts to expand LGBT rights. (6)

#### DREAM Act (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors)

I am very much against the DREAM Act and view it as an amnesty program that will encourage illegal immigration. (1)

I am moderately against the DREAM Act. (2)

I am slightly against the DREAM Act. (3)

I am slightly for the DREAM Act. (4)

I am moderately for the DREAM Act. (5)

I am very much for the DREAM Act and believe it will produce a variety of social and economic benefits. (6)

#### Energy Independence and Alternative Energy

I strongly believe energy independence should be a top priority; the U.S. must reduce its dependence on foreign oil and develop alternative energy options. (1)

I believe energy independence should be a top priority; the U.S. should reduce its dependence on foreign oil and develop alternative energy options. (2)

I feel that perhaps energy independence should be a top priority. (3)

I feel that perhaps energy independence should not be a top priority. (4)

I believe energy independence should not be a top priority; the U.S. has other more important issues to deal with right now. (5)

I strongly believe energy independence should not be a top priority; the U.S. has other more important issues to deal with right now. (6)

#### The War in Afghanistan

I strongly oppose the War in Afghanistan and believe the U.S. should bring all troops home now. (1)

I moderately oppose the War in Afghanistan and believe the U.S. should reduce the number of troops in the region. (2)

I slightly oppose the War in Afghanistan. (3)

I slightly support the War in Afghanistan. (4)

I moderately support the War in Afghanistan and believe the U.S. should maintain the number of troops in the region. (5)

I strongly support the War in Afghanistan; I believe the war effort is going well and the U.S. should maintain the number of troops in the region. (6)

### Contraceptive Policy

I strongly believe health insurance companies should be required to cover contraceptives for women. (1)

I believe health insurance companies should be required to cover contraceptives for women. (2)

I feel that perhaps health insurance companies should be required to cover contraceptives for women. (3)

I feel that perhaps health insurance companies should not be required to cover contraceptives for women. (4)

I believe health insurance companies should not be required to cover contraceptives for women. (5)

I strongly believe health insurance companies should not be required to cover contraceptives for women. (6)

The following six questions ask you to think about your current relationship with your romantic partner/significant other. Remember, all of your responses are confidential. Please answer as honestly as you can.

Taking things together, how would you describe your relationship with your romantic partner/significant other? Would you say your relationship is

Not too happy (1)

Just about average (2)

A little happier than average (3)

Very happy (4)

When you think about your relationship with your romantic partner/significant other – what each of you puts into it and gets out of it – how happy do you feel? Would you say

Not at all happy (1)

Not too happy (2)

Fairly happy (3)

Very happy (4)

How certain would you say you are that you and your romantic partner/significant other will be married five years from now? Would you say

Not at all certain (1)

Not too certain (2)

Fairly certain (3)

Very certain (4)

How stable do you feel your relationship with your romantic partner/significant other is?

Would you say

Not at all stable (1)

Not too stable (2)

Fairly stable (3)

Very stable (4)

In the last few months how often have you considered breaking up with your romantic partner/significant other? Would you say

Never (1)

Rarely (2)

Sometimes (3)

Often (4)

All in all, how satisfied are you with your relationship with your romantic partner/significant other? Would you say

Very dissatisfied (1)

Somewhat dissatisfied (2)

Somewhat satisfied (3)

Very satisfied (4)



### **K. Dyadic Panel: Wave 3 Survey Instrument**

When you completed the last wave of this questionnaire in September, you indicated that you were currently in a non-marital romantic relationships (either dating or engaged). Are you still in a relationship with the same individual you were seeing in September (who also completed the questionnaire)?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Have you ever been married to someone other than your current relationship partner?

Yes (1)

No (2)

How many times have you been married previously? (to someone other than your current partner)

Once (1)

Twice (2)

More than twice (3)

How did your previous marriage(s) end?

Divorced (1)

Widowed (2)

Other (3) \_\_\_\_\_

What is your current relationship status:

Dating/In a relationship (1)

Engaged (2)

Married (3)

Are you currently, or have you previously, cohabited (lived) with your partner/significant other?

Currently cohabiting (1)

Previously cohabited with current partner, but living apart now (2)

Never cohabited with current partner (3)

Are you and your partner/significant other currently raising a child(ren) together?

No (1)

Yes, we have a biological child(ren) together (2)

Yes, I have a child(ren) from a previous relationship (3)

Yes, my partner has a child(ren) from a previous relationship (4)

Yes, we both have children from previous relationships (5)

Yes, we adopted a child(ren) together (6)

Other (please explain) (7) \_\_\_\_\_

In September, you completed the Political Attitudes Survey. However, people can change their opinions of political issues for many different reasons -- including learning more about the topic and the changing public policy atmosphere. Because of this, you are about to complete the Political Attitudes Survey, again. Please carefully consider each statement. Please select the answer that most closely matches YOUR attitude on the given issue. Remember, if you are unsure of an answer, your best guess is good enough.

#### Abortion

I strongly believe that abortion should not be legal. (1)

I believe that abortion should not be legal. (2)

I feel that perhaps abortion should not be legal. (3)

I feel that perhaps abortion should be legal. (4)

I believe abortion should be legal. (5)

I strongly believe that abortion should be legal. (6)

#### Legalization of Marijuana

I am very much for the legalization of marijuana. (1)

I am moderately for the legalization of marijuana. (2)

I am slightly for the legalization of marijuana. (3)

I am slightly against the legalization of marijuana. (4)

I am moderately against the legalization of marijuana. (5)

I am very much against the legalization of marijuana. (6)

#### Same-Sex Marriage

I strongly approve of the legalization of same-sex marriage. (1)

I approve of the legalization of same-sex marriage. (2)

I slightly approve of the legalization of same-sex marriage. (3)

I slightly disapprove of the legalization of same-sex marriage. (4)

I disapprove of the legalization of same-sex marriage. (5)

I strongly disapprove of the legalization of same-sex marriage. (6)

### Open Immigration

I am very much against open immigration policies; I believe the U.S. has the right and responsibility to restrict migration from other countries. (1)

I am moderately against open immigration policies; I believe the U.S. has the right to restrict migration from other countries. (2)

I am slightly against open immigration policies. (3)

I am slightly for open immigration policies. (4)

I am moderately for open immigration policies; I believe people should be able to migrate to whatever country they choose. (5)

I am very much for open immigration policies; I believe people should be able to migrate to whatever country they choose, free of substantial barriers. (6)

### Federal Government's Role in Preventing Climate Change

I strongly believe the federal government should be doing more to control climate change. (1)

I believe the federal government should be doing more to control climate change. (2)

I feel that perhaps the federal government should be doing more to control climate change. (3)

I feel that perhaps the federal government is doing enough to control climate change. (4)

I believe the federal government is doing enough to control climate change. (5)

I strongly believe the federal government is doing enough to control climate change. (6)

### Death Penalty

I strongly oppose the death penalty. (1)

I moderately oppose the death penalty. (2)

I slightly oppose the death penalty. (3)

I slightly support the death penalty. (4)

I moderately support the death penalty. (5)

I strongly support the death penalty. (6)

### Flat Income Tax System

I strongly support implementing a flat tax system, where all people pay the same tax rate regardless of their income bracket. (1)

I moderately support implementing a flat tax system, where all people pay the same tax rate regardless of their income bracket. (2)

I slightly support implementing a flat tax system, where all people pay the same tax rate regardless of their income bracket. (3)

I slightly oppose implementing a flat tax system, where all people pay the same tax rate regardless of their income bracket. (4)

I moderately oppose implementing a flat tax system, where all people pay the same tax rate regardless of their income bracket. (5)

I strongly oppose implementing a flat tax system, where all people pay the same tax rate regardless of their income bracket. (6)

### Universal Health Insurance

I strongly oppose universal health insurance plans. The government should leave health care to the private sector. (1)

I moderately oppose universal health insurance plans. The government should leave health care to the private sector. (2)

I slightly oppose universal health insurance plans. (3)

I slightly support universal health insurance plans. (4)

I moderately support universal health insurance plans. The government should be required to provide health coverage to all Americans. (5)

I strongly support universal health insurance plans. The government should be required to provide health coverage to all Americans. (6)

### America's Image in the International Community

I strongly support efforts to improve America's image in the international community, even if they require deferring to international organizations like the U.N. more often. (1)

I moderately support efforts to improve America's image in the international community, even if they require deferring to international organizations like the U.N. more often. (2)

I slightly support efforts to improve America's image in the international community, even if they require deferring to international organizations like the U.N. more often. (3)

I slightly oppose efforts to improve America's image in the international community if they require deferring to international organizations like the U.N. more often. (4)

I moderately oppose efforts to improve America's image in the international community if they require deferring to international organizations like the U.N. more often. (5)

I strongly oppose efforts to improve America's image in the international community if they require deferring to international organizations like the U.N. more often. (6)

### Federal Government's Role in Reducing Unemployment and Creating Jobs

I strongly believe the federal government should do everything possible to reduce the unemployment rate and create new jobs. (1)

I believe the federal government should do everything possible to reduce the unemployment rate and create new jobs. (2)

I think that perhaps the federal government should work to reduce the unemployment rate and create new jobs. (3)

I think that perhaps reducing the unemployment rate and creating new jobs should be left to the private sector. (4)

I believe that reducing the unemployment rate and creating new jobs can be better handled by the private sector than the federal government. (5)

I strongly believe that reducing the unemployment rate and creating new jobs can be better handled by the private sector than the federal government. (6)

### Federal Government's Role in Eliminating the National Debt and Balancing the Budget

I strongly believe the federal government should do everything possible to eliminate the national debt and balance the budget. (1)

I believe the federal government should work toward eliminating the national debt and balancing the budget. (2)

I feel that perhaps the federal government should work toward eliminating the national debt and balancing the budget. (3)

I feel that perhaps the U.S. national debt is not a pressing issue and the federal government should focus on other concerns. (4)

I believe the U.S. national debt is not a pressing issue and the federal government shouldn't worry about balancing the budget. (5)

I strongly believe the U.S. national debt is not a pressing issue and the federal government shouldn't worry about balancing the budget. (6)

### Size and Power of the Federal Government

I strongly believe the federal government has gotten too big and powerful, and efforts should be made to return power to the states. (1)

I believe the federal government has gotten too big and powerful, and efforts should be made to return power to the states. (2)

I feel that perhaps the federal government has gotten too big and powerful, and efforts should be made to return power to the states. (3)

I feel that perhaps the federal government is best able to handle America's problems and should maintain its size and power. (4)

I believe the federal government is best able to handle America's problems and should maintain its size and power. (5)

I strongly believe the federal government is best able to handle America's problems and should maintain its size and power. (6)

### Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender rights

I strongly support efforts to expand LGBT rights. (1)

I moderately support efforts to expand LGBT rights. (2)

I slightly support efforts to expand LGBT rights. (3)

I slightly oppose efforts to expand LGBT rights. (4)

I moderately oppose efforts to expand LGBT rights. (5)

I strongly oppose efforts to expand LGBT rights. (6)

### DREAM Act (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors)

I am very much against the DREAM Act and view it as an amnesty program that will encourage illegal immigration. (1)

I am moderately against the DREAM Act. (2)

I am slightly against the DREAM Act. (3)

I am slightly for the DREAM Act. (4)

I am moderately for the DREAM Act. (5)

I am very much for the DREAM Act and believe it will produce a variety of social and economic benefits. (6)

### Energy Independence and Alternative Energy

I strongly believe energy independence should be a top priority; the U.S. must reduce its dependence on foreign oil and develop alternative energy options. (1)

I believe energy independence should be a top priority; the U.S. should reduce its dependence on foreign oil and develop alternative energy options. (2)

I feel that perhaps energy independence should be a top priority. (3)

I feel that perhaps energy independence should not be a top priority. (4)

I believe energy independence should not be a top priority; the U.S. has other more important issues to deal with right now. (5)

I strongly believe energy independence should not be a top priority; the U.S. has other more important issues to deal with right now. (6)

### The War in Afghanistan

I strongly oppose the War in Afghanistan and believe the U.S. should bring all troops home now. (1)

I moderately oppose the War in Afghanistan and believe the U.S. should reduce the number of troops in the region. (2)

I slightly oppose the War in Afghanistan. (3)

I slightly support the War in Afghanistan. (4)

I moderately support the War in Afghanistan and believe the U.S. should maintain the number of troops in the region. (5)

I strongly support the War in Afghanistan; I believe the war effort is going well and the U.S. should maintain the number of troops in the region. (6)

### Contraceptive Policy

I strongly believe health insurance companies should be required to cover contraceptives for women. (1)

I believe health insurance companies should be required to cover contraceptives for women. (2)

I feel that perhaps health insurance companies should be required to cover contraceptives for women. (3)

I feel that perhaps health insurance companies should not be required to cover contraceptives for women. (4)

I believe health insurance companies should not be required to cover contraceptives for women. (5)

I strongly believe health insurance companies should not be required to cover contraceptives for women. (6)

The following six questions ask you to think about your current relationship with your romantic partner/significant other. Remember, all of your responses are confidential. Please answer as honestly as you can.

Taking things together, how would you describe your relationship with your romantic partner/significant other? Would you say your relationship is

Not too happy (1)

Just about average (2)

A little happier than average (3)

Very happy (4)

When you think about your relationship with your romantic partner/significant other – what each of you puts into it and gets out of it – how happy do you feel? Would you say

Not at all happy (1)

Not too happy (2)

Fairly happy (3)

Very happy (4)

How certain would you say you are that you and your romantic partner/significant other will be married five years from now? Would you say

Not at all certain (1)

Not too certain (2)

Fairly certain (3)

Very certain (4)

How stable do you feel your relationship with your romantic partner/significant other is? Would you say

Not at all stable (1)

Not too stable (2)

Fairly stable (3)

Very stable (4)

In the last few months how often have you considered breaking up with your romantic partner/significant other? Would you say

Never (1)

Rarely (2)

Sometimes (3)

Often (4)



All in all, how satisfied are you with your relationship with your romantic partner/significant other? Would you say

Very dissatisfied (1)

Somewhat dissatisfied (2)

Somewhat satisfied (3)

Very satisfied (4)

## L. Panel Study: Results from Logistic Regression and Difference of Means Tests

### Logistic Regression Model for Couples Completing Wave 2 [0 = Did Not Complete Wave 2; 1 = Completed Wave 2]

Independent Variables	Coefficient (Std. Error)	z-score	p-value
Length of Relationship	0.015 (0.016)	0.91	0.361
Political Similarity	0.029 (0.022)	1.32	0.186
Couple Satisfaction	-0.069 (0.064)	1.08	0.279
Constant	-1.642 (1.794)	0.92	0.360
N	173		
X <sup>2</sup>	3.79		
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.017		

### Difference of Means tests: Relationship Variables by Couples who Completed Wave 2 versus Couples who Did Not Complete Wave 2

<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Completed Wave 2</i>	<i>Did Not Complete Wave 2</i>	<i>t-Value</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Length of Relationship	10.28 (10.00)	8.60 (9.78)	1.068	0.144
Political Similarity	72.68 (7.63)	70.97 (8.03)	1.356	0.088
Couple Satisfaction	17.55 (2.65)	17.89 (2.47)	0.848	0.801

*Note: Table displays results from one-tailed difference of means tests. Standard deviations are in parentheses.*