

## Study 1: Assessing Community Preferences

In Study 1, we examine what liberals and conservatives desire in their ideal community. We presented them with a list of numerous community characteristics, and asked participants to select the characteristics most important to them in an ideal community.

### Method

**Participants.** Given the exploratory nature of this study, and the sometimes small effect sizes in studies of political differences, we used data from all 3543 participants who completed the “Ideal Community Task” on YourMorals.org. During the registration process, participants completed a demographics questionnaire. Then, participants could choose to participate in various studies. All subsequent YourMorals.org studies recruited participants and gathered demographics the same way. Political orientation was assessed using a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*Very Liberal*) to 7 (*Very Conservative*). Two thousand four hundred and twenty participants chose one of the liberal options (1-3), 702 chose one of the conservative options (5-7, and 421 identified as moderate (4). The analyses are based on the continuous 7-point political orientation response. One thousand four hundred and forty-eight were women, and 2095 were men<sup>1</sup>. Participants’ ages ranged from 18 to 84 ( $M = 38.18$ ,  $SD = 16.08$ ). Participants received feedback on how their responses compared to others.

**Materials and Procedure.** For the “Ideal Community Task,” participants viewed a list of 48 community characteristics, generated mostly from Gimpel and Chinni’s (2010) data on different types of communities in the United States. The characteristics’ order was randomized. Participants picked the 10 most important characteristics that they would want in their ideal community. Once they selected 10 characteristics, they had 100 “importance points” to allocate.

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<sup>1</sup> These numbers represent the participants’ sex. The YourMorals survey did not request information on their gender.

Characteristics that were more important to them received more points, and characteristics that were less important received less points. All characteristics are displayed in Table 1.

### **Study 2: Evaluating Ideological Ambience Via Community Characteristics**

In Study 1, participants chose their top 10 characteristics, and allocated importance points to those 10 items. Study 2 includes a shorter list of the more politically-divided characteristics, and asks participants to evaluate how these characteristics would affect their evaluation of a community.

### **Method**

**Participants.** Participants in this study were 5,609 people who reside in the United States (2670 women, 2938 men, 1 unreported) and visited YourMorals.org. Our sample size consisted of all people who selected the “Community Preferences Questionnaire” and provided a political orientation. Political orientation ranged from Very Liberal to Very Conservative (1117 Very Liberal, 2019 Liberal, 829 Slightly Liberal, 709 Moderate, 349 Slightly Conservative, 414 Conservative, 172 Very Conservative).

**Materials and Procedure.** The Community Cues Questionnaire consisted of 32 different cues from Study 1, some with lightly edited working to fit with the new questionnaire design (e.g., “Most People Are Liberal” became “Majority Liberal”). The characteristics’ order was randomized. The instructions for the questionnaire were as follows:

Suppose you were offered a job that would require you to move. The job is slightly better than your current job, or any other job offer you think you could get, in terms of pay, benefits, job security, and the desirability of the work.

Suppose that it was a time in your life when you could easily move, if you wanted to, so you begin to read about the city to which the new job would take you. You

learn a lot of facts about the new city. How would each of the following facts influence your desire to move? Would it make you more or less likely to take the new job?

Please evaluate each fact separately. Just think about whether that fact makes the city more or less appealing.

Participants rated each cue on a scale ranging from 1 (*much less appealing*) to 5 (*much more appealing*). When finished, participants received feedback on how their evaluations compared to other visitors of YourMorals.org.

### **Study 3a: Overt and Ambient Cues of Community Political Composition**

Studies 1 and 2 demonstrated that liberals and conservatives value community characteristics differently. These studies were correlational and lacked mundane realism because people do not evaluate community characteristics in isolation. We constructed more natural descriptions of communities, and experimentally manipulated the presence of politically-differentiating characteristics observed in Studies 1 and 2. To determine whether people use these characteristics as cues of communities' political preferences, we also experimentally manipulated the presence of explicit indicators of how liberal or conservative communities are by stating what percentage of residents voted for each political party. Experimentally manipulating the presence of overtly political cues and more ambient characteristics preferred by people on the political left or right permits us to examine whether these ambient cues influence people's intuitions of whether they would belong and like to live in a particular community. If people evaluate communities with ambient cues of a community's politics similarly to those with explicit indicators of the community's politics, that suggests people do not need explicit knowledge about communities' politics to self-segregate.

## Method

**Participants.** Participants in this study were 1643 people residing in the United States (827 women, 816 men) who registered with YourMorals.org and completed the “Community Comparisons Task.” Participants ranged in age from 18 to 88 ( $M = 46.73$ ,  $SD = 16.00$ ). Of these, 242 identified as conservative, and 1401 identified as liberal. Participants received feedback on how their scores compared to other liberals and conservatives.

**Materials and Procedure.** Participants read three counterbalanced descriptions of communities that were either all described with explicit information about the politics of the community (e.g., 85% of the residents voted for Barack Obama) or ambient cues from Studies 1 and 2 that correlate with ideology (e.g., the prevalence of hybrid cars, sport utility vehicles, specific religious organizations, gun stores). All communities were roughly matched in population (376,000 +/- 1,512), crime rate (low), and quality of public schools (very high). For the full text of these descriptions, see the Supplementary Materials.

After reading each description, participants were asked, “How much would you like living in a community like this?” on a scale ranging from 1 (*I would not want to live in a community like this*) to 6 (*I would very much like to live in a community like this*). Participants were also provided with a free-response textbox to explain what contributed to their evaluation.<sup>2</sup>

### Study 3b: Evaluating Different Communities Via Political Ambience

In Study 3b we sought to replicate the findings from Study 3a, while adjusting our community descriptions to account for participant feedback. Specifically, Study 3b was nearly identical to Study 3a except for three changes: (a) the population size of the communities was reduced, (b) we stated the cost-of-living was relatively low, and (c) we dropped the cue type

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<sup>2</sup> See supplemental materials for word clouds of free response data.

manipulation. Study 3b is a close replication and these changes were not expected to change the main pattern of results in Study 3a.

## **Method**

**Participants.** Participants in this study were 1840 people residing in the United States (826 women, 1014 men) who registered with YourMorals.org. After registering, participants who completed the “Community Comparisons Task” were directed to the present study. Of these, 392 identified as conservative, and 1448 identified as liberal. As in previous studies, sample size was determined by including all participants who completed the relevant measures.

**Materials and Procedure.** The community descriptions from Study 3a were revised in response to participants’ feedback. Participants suggested that cities described were too large, so we decreased the population by 300,000 for each community. The new community populations ranged from 74,488 to 78,512. Participants also expressed concerns that the cities described in Study 3a might be prohibitively expensive, so we added information suggesting that the cities had a low unemployment rate, a median income on par with the national average, and a cost-of-living slightly below the national average.

As in Study 3a, participants indicated how much they would like to live in a community like the one described on a 6-point scale and could explain what contributed to their evaluations. After evaluating each community, participants were debriefed.

To replicate our results from Study 2 and 3a, we conducted a 2 (between subjects; participant political orientation: liberal or conservative) x 3 (within subjects; community politics: liberal, neutral, or conservative community) mixed ANOVA. All follow-up tests are FDR-corrected planned contrasts.

## **Study 4: People Infer Community Political Leanings Using Ambient Cues**

Studies 3a and 3b provide converging evidence that people prefer the communities with ambient cues congruent with their political identity. Study 3a demonstrates that participants differentiate between the liberal and conservative communities, even in the absence of explicit information about the community's political preferences. Study 3b replicates the preferences expressed in Study 3a. However, these studies do not provide direct evidence of why ambient political cues elicit discrepant evaluations, and whether these discrepant evaluations contribute to people's tendency to gravitate towards politically congenial communities. Study 4 provides a test of this.

In Study 4, participants imagined living in the liberal or conservative community used in Study 3b, and estimated the degree to which people in those communities shared their political and moral values, educational achievement, racial and ethnic background, personality, and religious affiliation. While participants prefer certain community characteristics, and these preferences correlate with political orientation, liberals and conservatives may not be driven by an urge to be around politically similar others. Liberals may gravitate to communities with more ethnic diversity, while conservatives may gravitate to communities with less. This study aimed to determine if different preferences along ideological lines are facilitated by perceived political and moral consensus, or for other reasons.

This study also looked at some of the psychological responses to living in these politically congenial or uncongenial communities. Participants indicated how much they thought they would feel a sense of belonging in that community, and how much they thought they would like to continue living in that community, or how much they would like to migrate to a different community.

## **Method**

**Participants.** Participants in this study consisted of 282 US residents (76 women, 206 men), from Amazon Mechanical Turk (mTurk). Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 71, with an average of 27.77 ( $SD = 8.99$ ). Of these, 56 identified as conservatives, and 226 identified as liberals. A priori power analysis based on the effect size difference between liberals and conservatives' evaluations of these specific communities in Study 3b ( $d = 1.69$ ) suggested that a sample size of 28 would be sufficient to achieve 80% power.

**Materials and Procedure.** Participants were randomly assigned to read the liberal or conservative community description from Study 3b. After they read the description, they estimated the percentage of people in the community that shared their moral and political values, their ethnic or racial background, their level of education, their religious affiliation, and their personality. They then answered four questions to assess how much they felt they belonged in that community (e.g. "I generally feel like I would belong in this community"), and their desire to migrate away from that community (e.g. "I would like to live somewhere else."). We took the mean of each of these measures to get a score that represented feelings of belonging, and a score that represented desire to migrate.

### **Study 5: People Selectively Navigate their Communities**

Building upon the self-reported community preferences of liberals and conservatives in Studies 1-4, we conducted a behavioral study to determine whether self-reported preferences map onto actual behavior. Specifically, liberals and conservatives can be found in most, if not all, communities, regardless of whether they want to live in those communities. Therefore, in Study 5, we examined whether liberals and conservatives navigate their real communities in selective ways where they are more likely to visit parts of communities that are more appealing to people with their political leanings. To do so, we visited the parking lots attached to places

that liberals and conservatives showed a preference for/against in Studies 1 and 2. If liberals' and conservatives' preferences led them to different spaces, cars with liberal or conservative bumper stickers should be disproportionately found in different spaces with politically congenial cues within communities. For example, more liberal bumper stickers and fewer conservative bumper stickers should be found at Whole Foods and Unitarian Universalist churches than at Wal-Marts and Evangelical churches, regardless of how liberal or conservative that specific community is. This study will allow us to see whether people act on their stated preferences and gravitate more towards the features of communities that their liberal and conservative brethren previously defined as congenial to those on the left or right.

## **Methods**

**Materials and Procedure.** We coded political bumper stickers on cars parked in several locations in central Virginia (Staunton, Waynesboro, Charlottesville-proper, and Albemarle). Bumper stickers were coded for their political message, and whether they were supporting or attacking this liberals or conservatives. Stickers were placed in one of four categories: pro-liberal, pro-conservative, anti-liberal, and anti-conservative. A pro-liberal sticker might say "proud liberal," while an anti-liberal sticker might say "Annoy a liberal: Use facts and logic." A pro-conservative sticker might say "Remember in November: Vote Conservative," while an anti-conservative sticker might say "Annoy a conservative: Think for yourself." Because past research shows that liking for one's own political group is correlated with hatred for politically dissimilar others (Crawford et al., 2013; Crawford & Botchwey, 2017; Iyengar & Westwood, 2015), we categorized bumper stickers attacking liberals or affirming conservatives as "conservative", and stickers attacking conservatives or affirming liberals as "liberal."

We coded 372 bumper stickers from cars in parking lots in four different communities which varied in their political liberalism, as approximated from the vote percentage for President Obama in 2012, from 28% to 76%.

We coded the locations where these bumper stickers were found, including parking lots of retail stores (e.g. Wal-Mart, Target), religious buildings (e.g., Evangelical Churches, Unitarian Universalist Churches), coffee shops (e.g., Starbucks, Milli Joe's), grocery stores (e.g. Whole Foods, Kroger), and more.

These locations were divided into three categories based upon the preferences expressed in Studies 1 and 2: liberal, conservative, or neutral. Liberal locations were locations that liberals rated higher in Studies 1 and 2 (organic food stores and bookstores), and conservative locations the conservatives rated higher in Studies 1 and 2 (Wal-Mart and conservative churches).