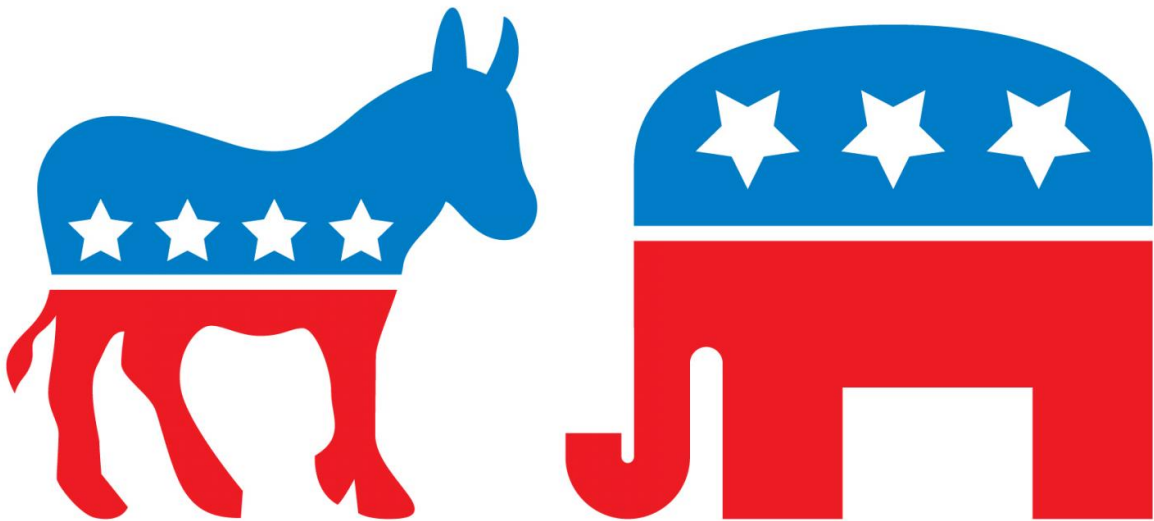


Political left, right similarly motivated to avoid rival views

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A new report from social psychologists at the University of Illinois at Chicago and the University of Winnipeg suggests people on both sides of the political aisle are similarly motivated to dismiss monetary enticements in order to distance themselves from hearing or reading opposing ideals and information. Credit: UIC

A new report from social psychologists at the University of Illinois at Chicago and the University of Winnipeg suggests people on both sides of the political aisle are similarly motivated to dismiss monetary enticements in order to distance themselves from hearing or reading opposing ideals and information.

The research, published online by the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, details the findings from five studies involving liberals and conservatives who were presented with statements on issues such as [same-sex marriage](#), U.S. and Canada elections, marijuana, climate change, guns and abortion.

Approximately two-thirds of respondents declined a chance to win extra money in order to avoid reading statements that didn't support their position, say report co-authors Linda Skitka, UIC professor of psychology, and Matt Motyl, UIC assistant professor of psychology.

The UIC researchers and Jeremy A. Frimer, a corresponding author from the University of Winnipeg, indicate the divide goes beyond political topics.

Respondents also had a "greater desire to hear from like- versus unlike-minded others on questions such as preferred beverages (Coke vs. Pepsi), seasons (spring vs. autumn), airplane seats (aisle vs. window), and sports leagues (NFL vs. NBA)," they wrote.

The aversion to hearing or learning about the views of their ideological opponents is not a product of people already being or feeling knowledgeable, or attributable to election fatigue in the case of political issues, according to the researchers.

"Rather, people on both sides indicated that they anticipated that hearing from the other side would induce cognitive dissonance," such that would

require effort or cause frustration, and "undermine a sense of shared reality with the person expressing disparate views" that would harm relationships, they reported.

The researchers note the drawback of liberals and conservatives retreating to ideological information bubbles.

"What could ultimately be a contest of ideas is being replaced by two, non-interacting monopolies," they said.

Provided by University of Illinois at Chicago

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