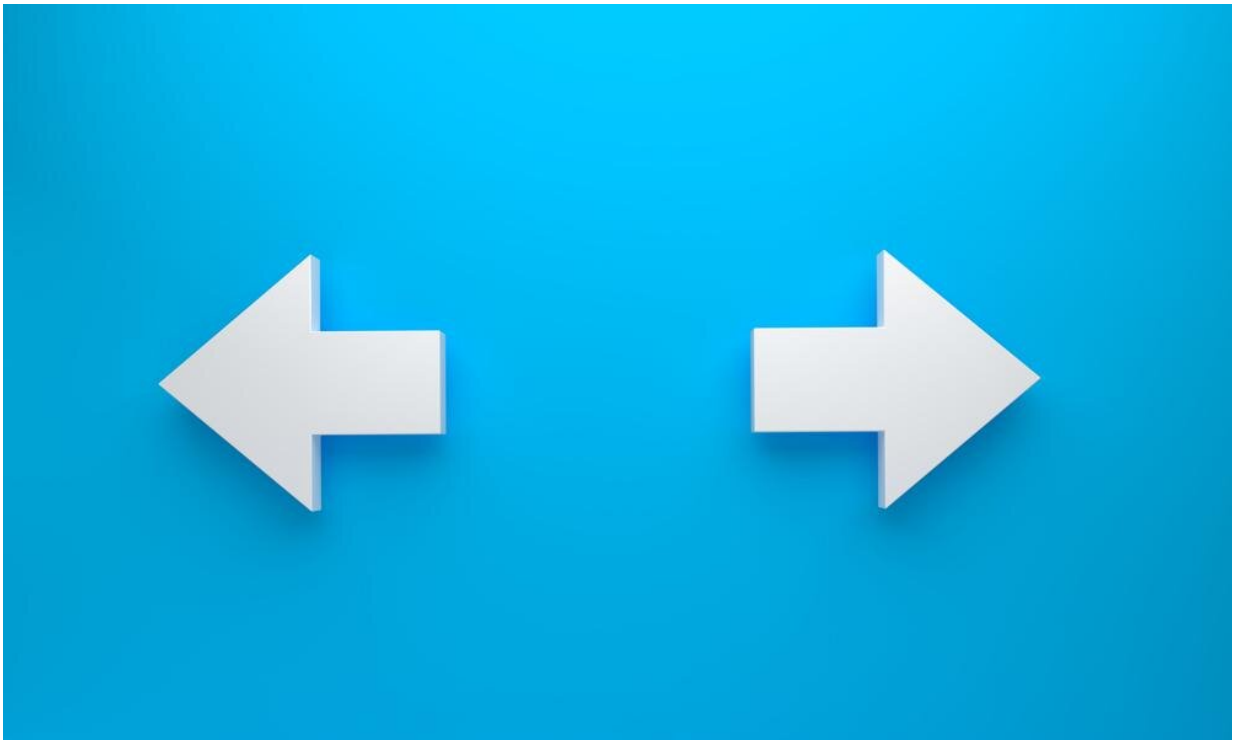


A study analyzes the influence of political affinities in the processes of socialization

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Credit: UC3M

A study in which the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid participated (UC3M) has concluded that most people prefer not to have much to do with those who have political sympathies which are different from their own. Moreover, a substantial proportion of Spaniards are hostile towards those who do not have the same political preferences as them. The

research appears in the latest issue of PLOS ONE.

In the opinion of the study's main author, Hugo Viciano, a researcher at the Social Sciences Research Institute (IESA) - a joint centre of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) and the Junta de Andalucía (Regional Government of Andalusia) - during the study and currently associated with the Universidad de Málaga, "the partisanship of political life permeates [everyday life](#) and encourages discrimination based on political sympathies."

The research is based on the hypothesis that everyday [moral beliefs](#) are used in a tribal manner to define "what our group is and with what individuals we do not wish to join up." The study, which also involved the researchers Antonio Gaitán Torres, from the UC3M, and Ivar Rodríguez-Hannikainen, from the Pontifical University of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), was based on a survey conducted in Spain between the 23rd of October and the 13th of November, 2018. By the end of that period, 1055 panellists had responded to the survey.

The survey included questions concerning the participants' identification with the main political parties, as well as blocks of questions relating to various issues on the public agenda. It also included a series of questions concerning the extent to which they would like to have someone who sympathised with parties they felt more or less of a kinship with as a neighbour, as a teacher of their children, as the spouse of a relative or as a boss in their workplace.

According to the results of the [survey](#), those who believe that their moral opinions are objectively correct tend to discriminate more against those who have different political sympathies. This "moral absolutism," as defined by the authors, causes a significant sector of the population to assume that in the matter of moral or political disagreements only one of the parties can be right. "There is a significant correlation between those

who believe that their moral opinions are objective or absolute and those who are most intolerant of the members of the political [party](#) with which they sympathise the least. It would be desirable to promote activities that would help to minimise these trends, although this is an area which still needs to be explored," explains Antonio Gaitán, lecturer in the Department of Humanities: Philosophy, Language and Literature at the UC3M.

The study also found that there is a disconnect between how we perceive our disagreements with those who have different political sympathies. "We imagine our political opponents more radical and dogmatic than they are. Perhaps, by combating this exaggerated perception of our differences we can alleviate the tension in which we live," says from the Pontifical University of Rio de Janeiro.

More information: Hugo Viciana et al. The dual nature of partisan prejudice: Morality and identity in a multiparty system, *PLOS ONE* (2019). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0219509](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0219509)

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