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Erin Murray

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How Differences in Political Ideology Impact Close Relationships

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in  
the Department of Psychological Sciences from William & Mary

by

Erin Murray

Accepted for \_\_\_\_\_ Honors \_\_\_\_\_  
(Honors, High Honors, Highest Honors)



\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Xiaowen Xu



\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Jaclyn Moloney



\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Jorge Terukina

Williamsburg, VA  
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### **Abstract**

Previous research on close relationships highlights the importance of similarities between individuals in a relationship. Studies have shown a recent propensity to avoid individuals who differ in political opinions. In two studies, using measures of political ideology and relationship satisfaction, the present research examined how political differences related to relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships (Study 1) and friendships (Study 2). We found that participants in romantic relationships expressed decreased relationship satisfaction if they perceived larger political differences between themselves and their partners. These results remained robust even after controlling for demographics and individual differences. We also found that friendships are deemed as less satisfying if participants perceived larger political differences between themselves and their friend. The friendship effects, however, were less robust than the romantic relationship effects. These findings contribute to a greater understanding of close relationship endurance and factors that affect relationship satisfaction.

### **How Differences in Political Ideology Impact Close Relationships**

People often refer to their close relationships as the part of their life that contributes the most happiness and meaning. We spend significant energy on our social interactions and relationships to satisfy our need to belong (Perlman & Vangelisti, 2006). Relationships are crucial to our wellbeing, such that people with healthy close relationships are more likely to be emotionally regulated and socially competent, and therefore likely to have higher self-esteem (Chung, 2018; Hartup & Stevens, 1997). Close relationships are also gratifying, i.e., through shared interests, reciprocal support, self-esteem enhancement, which again promotes wellbeing (Blieszner & Adams, 1992a). Overall, social relationships are related to better mental health, physical health, and even longevity (Masarik et al., 2012; Perlman & Vangelisti, 2006). However, unhealthy relationships can negatively impact well-being (Berscheid, 1998; Hartup & Stevens, 2017; Masarik et al., 2012).

### **Formation and Maintenance of Relationships**

#### **Initiation**

Principle factors of attraction and relationship formation are familiarity and similarity. Communication during the initiation phase allows individuals to find commonalities and begin to build trust and understanding (Blieszner & Adams, 1992; Blieszner & Adams, 1992b). Familiar people are perceived as less threatening while similar people positively reinforce our self-perception and values (Berscheid, 1998; Morry, 2005; Wrzus et al., 2017). According to the attraction-similarity hypothesis, attraction itself leads people to perceive similarities between their partner and themselves on various behaviors, traits, and beliefs (Morry, 2005; Wrzus et al., 2017). In close relationships, perceived similarities lead to greater relationship satisfaction (Leikas et al., 2018; Morry, 2005).

**Maintenance**

Adults tend to rely on their friends and romantic partners for emotional needs and companionship. While these close relationships are intimate and rewarding, they are susceptible to termination because they are voluntary, unlike familial relationships (Fincham & Cui, 2011; Oswald, 2017). Individuals must attend to their relationships and serve their partners' needs to maintain a positive connection (Blieszner & Adams, 1992b; Oswald, 2017). The Investment Model is derived from the Interdependence theory and identifies four factors of relationship fulfillment: satisfaction, commitment, investment, and quality of alternatives. According to the Interdependence Theory, dependence grows as partners experience high satisfaction in their relationship. Satisfaction refers to how well an individual's most valued needs are met (Rusbult et al., 1998). In friendships, such needs include companionship and emotional intimacy while romantic relationships typically have the additional need of sexual intimacy (Blieszner & Adams, 1992a; Rusbult et al., 1998). Commitment refers to the extent to which an individual is willing to persist in a relationship and make sacrifices for the good of the relationship. A committed individual is likely to consider the effect of their behaviors on the long-term quality of their relationship (Rusbult et al., 1998). Investment is related to the size and importance of the resources devoted to a relationship. In this model, resources are considered valuable qualities that would be lost without the relationship i.e., compatible traits, time, effort (Rusbult et al., 1998). When an individual receives a high level of resources at a low or equal cost, they are likely to continue investing in the relationship (Blieszner & Adams, 1992a). Furthermore, partners who perceive equity and fairness in the resources invested in the relationship are more likely to maintain a long-term relationship (Oswald, 2017; Surra et al., 2006). Finally, quality of alternatives is the extent to which an individual feels that their needs would be better fulfilled

without the current relationship, or by a different partner. If an individual's partner fulfills their needs well, their quality of alternatives is poor and their dependence on their partner is greater (Rusbult et al., 1998).

### **Dissolution**

Various processes can cause commitment to deteriorate and ultimately result in relationship dissolution. First, commitment can deteriorate due to declining satisfaction levels or ability to invest in the relationship (Blieszner & Adams, 1992b). For example, a person may change and no longer be able to satisfy their partner's needs. Commitment can also deteriorate if an individual encounters an alternative partner who is more likely to fulfill their needs (Blieszner & Adams, 1992b; Rusbult et al., 2006). Furthermore, a couple may discover an incompatibility that cannot be remedied (i.e., one wants to have children, the other does not). Next, partners may fail to recognize one another's effortful, prosocial acts and perceive their relationship as unsatisfactory. Finally, ruptured trust is a likely factor of commitment deterioration and relationship dissolution (Blieszner & Adams, 1992b; Rusbult et al., 2006).

## **Factors that Affect Relationship Quality**

### **Individual Differences**

Individual differences factors such as self-esteem, attachment style, and personality also affect individuals' happiness in their relationships. Personality traits characterize how individuals perceive and interact with themselves, others, and their environment. Certain personality traits have been found to affect relationship satisfaction (Schaffhuser et al., 2014). For example, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness are associated with greater relationship satisfaction. Agreeable individuals tend to facilitate intimate relationships with positive social exchange and conscientious individuals are good at regulating their impulses and following norms (Schaffhuser

et al., 2014). Neuroticism is related to relationship dissatisfaction because neurotic individuals tend to have lower self-esteem and greater self-judgement which leads to less positive social interactions. Partners of neurotic individuals report less satisfaction, greater conflict, and greater ambivalence (Luginbuehl & Schoebi, 2020; Masarik et al., 2012; Murray et al., 1998). Insecure attachment is also related to lower relationship satisfaction. Avoidant attachment is characterized by a reluctance to be emotionally intimate with others. On the other hand, anxiously attached individuals are known to exhibit clinging behaviors and request greater attention (Vollman et al., 2019). Relationship quality is also affected by factors like poor mental health, stress, and minimal social support (Rauer et al., 2008).

### **Social Factors**

Since similarity is an important factor in relationship initiation, ideology and values may play important roles in relationship decision-making. In previous generations, racial and religious factors were considered to be more important in relationships (Tsunokai et al., 2009). Older individuals tend to be less approving of intercultural relationships than younger individuals (Shenhav et al., 2017). However, from 1980 to 2015, the number of interracial marriages increased by 10% (Livingston & Brown, 2017). Thus, it appears that racial and religious differences may begin to become less of a concern when making relationship decisions. These generational differences may be due to increased social contact with individuals of different backgrounds (Shenhav et al., 2017).

However, as individuals are increasingly exposed to different opinions, it is now becoming increasingly common to not consider dating someone with different political opinions. In 2020, 43% of single Democrats reported that they would not consider being in a relationship with a Republican, and 24% of Republicans reported the same about dating a Democrat (Brown,

2020). The key to these decision-making factors is the ability to make snap-judgments about an individual. Knowing a potential partner's political preferences, for example, could tell a person a lot about the partner's other values, personality traits, habits, etc., as political ideology has been shown to be related to many social processes and outcomes outside the realm of politics (e.g., Carney et al., 2008; Sibley et al, 2012; Haidt & Graham, 2007). In fact, implicit partisan biases encourage discriminatory decisions even more frequently than racial or gender biases (Chen & Rohla, 2018).

### **Role of Ideology in Daily Life**

Over the last 60 years in the United States, increased political polarization and conflict in the media has led to the increase of political ideology as a factor in relationship decision-making (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2006; Chen & Rohla, 2018). Between 1972 and 1996, Americans became 20% more capable of placing themselves and the two major parties on a liberal-conservative scale (Abramowitz & Saunders 2006). Today, that percentage is likely much higher since the average person spends 12 hours a day consuming media (Coyne et al., 2013). It is nearly impossible to escape current events and the opinions of others, especially concerning politics. Public awareness of party ideology and political and social policy allows citizens to understand how political decisions affect themselves and their communities (Gil de Zuñiga, 2012). However, this awareness has also contributed to polarization. Increased media exposure has encouraged polarization through its tendency to relay bias and depict only the two extremes to an argument. In the mid-1990s, only 21% of Democrats and Republicans suggested that they had "very unfavorable" feelings toward the opposing party. In 2016, this number was more than 55% (Chen & Rohla, 2018).



### **Role of Ideology in Relationships**

The majority of research about politics and polarization focuses on public institutions and political processes rather than private effects (Chen & Rohla, 2018). However, there is evidence that political orientation does significantly relate to relationship satisfaction. Married couples who are highly similar in political attitudes have reported greater relationship satisfaction (Leikas et al., 2017). Other evidence suggests that after the 2016 election, many families reduced their time together or canceled plans for Thanksgiving with relatives due to opposing political beliefs (Chen & Rohla, 2018). Specifically, families that were likely to have voted for different presidential candidates in 2016 spent about 30 to 50 fewer minutes together at Thanksgiving than families who voted for the same candidate. This avoidant behavior can likely be attributed to certain cognitive biases related to avoidance of contradictory opinions. This cognition may lead individuals to consider others as biased and irrational rather than accept differences in experience or viewpoint (Chen & Rohla, 2018). An inability to accept differences can manifest in the application of negative traits to the opposer. A recent Pew Research Center survey, for instance, found that individuals are likely to impose negative traits (i.e., “close-mindedness,” “immoral”) onto members of the opposite political party (Brown, 2020).

### **Present Study**

Although there exists a plethora of research on relationship satisfaction and political ideology separately, less work has focused on the relationship between the two. However, given the increasing importance of political ideology in people’s daily lives, it is worthwhile to examine whether political ideology and differences may also affect people’s close relationships. In two studies, we aimed to examine how political differences may be related to relationship satisfaction in close relationships. Study 1 explored romantic relationships, while Study 2

examined friendships. Participants were asked to provide ratings for their own political ideology, as well as for their romantic partner or friend. Participants also rated their relationship/friendship satisfaction.

Across both studies, we predict that smaller political differences between pairs will predict greater relationship satisfaction. These studies can help provide insight into how close relationships function, as well as whether political differences differently impact romantic relationships versus friendships.

### **Study 1**

Study 1 aimed to examine how political differences between romantic partners may contribute to relationship fulfillment.

### **Method**

#### **Participants**

We report aggregated analyses of datasets collected from two samples. Participants in the aggregated sample ranged from 18 to 66 years in age ( $M = 28.98$ ,  $SD = 11.42$ ). The average relationship length was 81 months ( $SD = 113.01$ ).

#### ***Sample 1***

A total of 201 (84 males, 2 undisclosed) participants completed Study 1 through the Prolific online research platform. All data was collected during Spring 2021, and participants were compensated \$4.00. Participants ranged from 18 to 66 years in age ( $M = 35.72$ ,  $SD = 10.39$ ).

#### ***Sample 2***

A total of 139 (45 males) completed the study through the SONA undergraduate participant pool from the Psychological Sciences department at the College of William & Mary.

The data was collected during the Fall of 2020 and Spring of 2021 semesters. Participants were compensated 0.5 SONA course credits. Participants ranged from 18 to 27 years in age ( $M = 19.22$ ,  $SD = 1.26$ ).

## **Materials**

### ***Political orientation for self and partner***

Participants' political orientation was assessed using the IPIP Liberalism scale (Goldberg, 1999), three general political orientation ratings, and ratings of the two main US political parties. The IPIP Liberalism scale consists of 10 items (i.e. "I believe that we coddle criminals too much"), which were rated using a 5-point Likert scale ("Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree").

General political orientation was measured using three items. First, participants rated their overall political orientation using a 7-point one-item measure ranging from "Very conservative" to "Very liberal". They also rated their level of social and economic conservatism on one item each (i.e., "When it comes to social issues, I typically consider myself...") using a 7-point Likert scale from "Very conservative" to "Very liberal".

Finally, we assessed party preference by asking participants to rate their preference for both the Democratic and Republican parties using a 5-point ("Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree") scale (i.e., "Politically, I favor the Republican party").

Participants also rated their romantic partner on these same political orientation measures.

### ***Romantic relationship fulfillment***

Romantic relationship fulfillment was assessed using the Investment Model Scale (Rusbult et al., 1998), which measures commitment level, satisfaction level, quality of alternatives, and investment size. Satisfaction, quality of alternatives, and investment are measured on both facet (i.e. concrete examples) and global (i.e. general measures) items. Global

items used a 4-point Likert scale (“Don’t agree at all” to “Agree completely”). Facet items used an 8-point Likert scale (“Don’t agree at all” to “Agree completely”). A global item for relationship satisfaction is “My relationship is close to ideal”.

### ***Big Five personality***

Trait personality was assessed using the Big Five Inventory-2 (Soto & John, 2017), a reliable and valid revision of the Big Five Inventory (John & Srivastava, 1999). The BFI-2 consists of 60 self-descriptive statements (i.e., “I am someone who worries a lot”). Participants indicated their agreement with each statement using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “Disagree strongly” to “Agree strongly”.

### ***Self-esteem***

Self-esteem was assessed using Rosenberg’s Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), which consists of 10 self-descriptive statements (i.e. “I take a positive attitude toward myself”). Participants rated their agreement with each statement using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly agree” to “Strongly disagree”.

### ***Attachment***

Participants’ attachment styles were measured using the 13-item Attachment Styles Questionnaire (Feeney et al., 1994). Items (i.e. “I find it easy to trust others”) were rated on a 6-point Likert scale from “Totally disagree” to “Totally agree”.

### **Procedure**

Participants were directed to the study materials online. To qualify for the study participants had to be at least 18 years old and in a romantic relationship of at least 2 months. Participants completed an online consent form, followed by the study materials online. At the end of the study, participants were debriefed and compensated online.

## Results

We first calculated separate political orientation scores for the participant and their partner for each IPIP Liberalism, general political orientation, and party preferences. For Liberalism, we created the mean score following coding instructions from Goldberg (1999). For general political orientation, we averaged the scores for overall political orientation, social conservatism, and economic conservatism ratings. Mean score for party preferences was calculated by averaging preference for the Democratic party and the reverse-coded preference for the Republican party.

Next, we created political difference scores between the participants and their romantic partners for the three types of political orientation measures used. For each political orientation measure, we subtracted the partner's political orientation score from their own rating. Next, we created an absolute difference score by taking the absolute value of these political difference scores. This is because we were primarily interested in examining how greater political differences between partners in general (as opposed to whether one is more liberal or more conservative) related to relationship satisfaction.

### Correlation analyses

We first conducted correlation analyses to examine the bivariate relationships between relationship satisfaction and political orientation (see Table 1 for descriptives, Table 2 for correlation matrix). We found that higher differences in liberalism ( $r = -.23, p < .001$ ) and general political orientation ( $r = -.17, p = .001$ ) between partners were correlated with lower relationship satisfaction. Higher liberalism differences correlated with lower relationship commitment ( $r = -.13, p = .02$ ). Higher party preference differences were correlated with lower relationship investment ( $r = -.13, p = .02$ ).

### **Regression analyses**

We next conducted hierarchical regression analyses to test the degree to which political differences predicted relationship fulfillment after controlling for relevant demographics and individual differences. Separate analyses were conducted for each relationship commitment, satisfaction, quality of alternatives, and investment, as well as each political orientation difference measure (liberalism, general political orientation, party preference) (a total of 12 regression models were conducted). In all analyses, we entered age, gender, and relationship length in Step 1; personality traits, attachment style, and self-esteem in Step 2; and political difference in Step 3 (Table 3).

Differences in political orientation ( $\beta = -.114$ ,  $p = .028$ ) and liberalism ( $\beta = -.184$ ,  $p < .001$ ) were significantly related to lower levels of romantic relationship satisfaction, even after controlling for demographics and individual differences. However, differences in party preference did not reliably predict relationship satisfaction. None of the three measures of political differences predicted levels of commitment, investment, or likelihood to seek alternative partners. Thus, it appears that higher differences in political ideology between romantic partners contributed to lower levels of relationship satisfaction, and this effect remains robust above and beyond the impact of demographics and individual differences.

### **Study 2**

In Study 2, we wanted to investigate whether political differences related to fulfillment in a different, but still important, type of close relationship – friendships.

### **Method**

#### **Participants**

We report aggregated analyses of two samples. Participants in the aggregated sample ranged from 18 to 79 years in age ( $M = 28.78$ ,  $SD = 13.69$ ). The average friendship length was 10.6 years ( $SD = 9.13$ ).

### ***Sample 1***

A total of 200 (78 males, 7 undisclosed) individuals completed the study through Prolific. All data was collected during Spring 2021, and participants were compensated \$4.00. Participants from 18 to 79 years in age ( $M = 38.10$ ,  $SD = 13.54$ ).

### ***Sample 2.***

A total of 190 (56 males, 6 undisclosed) individuals completed Study 2 through the SONA undergraduate participant pool at the College of William & Mary. Data collection took place during the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters. Participants were compensated 0.5 SONA course credits. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 23 years ( $M = 18.86$ ,  $SD = .93$ ).

## **Materials**

### ***Political orientation***

Participants' political orientation was assessed using the same set of items as in Study 1. Participants again rated their friend on the same set of political orientation measures.

### ***Friendship fulfillment***

As in Study 1, friendship fulfillment was assessed using the Investment Model Scale (Rusbult et al., 1998), with items edited with word choice that are more appropriate for friendship (i.e., "My friend fulfills my needs for physical affection (hugging, etc.)").

### ***Big Five personality***

Trait personality was measured using the Big Five Inventory-2 (Soto & John, 2017).

### *Self-esteem*

Self-esteem was assessed using Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965).

### *Attachment*

Attachment styles were measured using the Attachment Styles Questionnaire (Feeney et al., 1994).

### **Procedure**

Participants completed all study materials online. To qualify for the study, participants had to be at least 18 years old and be in a friendship of at least 2 years.

### **Results**

We again created absolute political difference scores between the participants and their friends across the three different types of political orientation measures, following the same steps as in Study 1.

### **Correlation analyses**

Correlation analyses examining the relationships between friendship fulfillment and political orientation (Table 4 for descriptives, Table 5 for correlation matrix). Higher party preference differences were correlated with lower friendship satisfaction ( $r = -.10, p = .04$ ).

### **Regression analyses**

We conducted hierarchical regression analyses similar to the ones from Study 1 to test the degree to which political differences predicted friendship fulfillment. Separate analyses were conducted for each relationship commitment, satisfaction, quality of alternatives, and investment, and for each political orientation difference measure (for a total of 12 regression models). In each model, we entered age, gender, and friendship length in Step 1; personality traits, attachment style, and self-esteem in Step 2; and political difference in Step 3 (Table 6).



Differences in political party preference were significantly related to lower levels of friendship satisfaction ( $\beta = -.120, p = .012$ ). Party preference did not affect relationship satisfaction on the global levels of commitment, investment, and likelihood to seek alternative partners. There were also no significant effects between political orientation and liberalism differences and the four relationship satisfaction measures. Thus, it appears that political differences were less likely to contribute to decreased friendship fulfillment compared to romantic relationships.

### **Discussion**

Our findings suggest a difference between romantic relationships and friendships. In Study 1, we found romantic relationship satisfaction to decrease with political ideology differences. However, in Study 2, friendship satisfaction instead decreased with political party differences. This may be due to higher standards that individuals place on their romantic partners due to monogamy. Romantic partners are often idealized, and it may be expected that partners share the same opinions. Romantic partners also tend to spend more time together which may allow them to realize potential differences. Friendships are less likely to assume the pressure of an ideal relationship. Individuals often have a variety of friends that serve different purposes, so it is not necessary to select one person to be the ideal friend. It is probable that friends are not discussing their political opinions as often as romantic partners and therefore have a surface-level understanding of their friend's political views. In this case, individuals are likely to know their friend's party preference and may assume greater ideological differences between them that may not exist.

Furthermore, these effects were only seen on the satisfaction variable of the Investment Model. Political differences did not affect perceived relationship quality on measures of

commitment, investment, or likelihood to seek alternatives. This suggests that individuals who perceive a greater political difference from their partners do not necessarily wish to seek alternative romantic options, nor to be less invested or committed to their relationship. However, they do feel that certain relationship needs are not met, and that they are overall less happy with their relationship. Because we investigated long-term relationships, these partners already have a strong devotion to their relationship and have likely overcome differences that would push them to terminate their relationship. Since the investigated relationships are strong otherwise, it is likely that despite political differences, there are other aspects of their relationship that fulfill them enough to make the relationship worthwhile.

Because satisfaction was the only variable of the Investment Model that was affected by political differences, it reassures that such differences are not a detriment to relationships. Instead, they present the opportunity to assess in what ways satisfaction can be improved. It is possible that the lower satisfaction variable indicates a difference in relationship needs between partners of political differences. Since political differences are related to personal values and characteristics, they may also relate to different expectations one has in relationships. Therefore, political differences may also relate to a difference in relationship needs between partners. Low satisfaction can likely be overcome if partners communicate their values and needs in order to seek compromise and improve the quality of their relationship.

Although we only found political differences to predict lower relationship satisfaction, it is worth noting that this is a robust effect. The impact of political differences on relationship satisfaction remained even above and beyond the predictive effects of other variables that are usually relevant to relationships, such as demographics, personality, self-esteem, and attachment style. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the impact of political differences on relationship

satisfaction is not negligible, and these differences may have more serious downstream implications for a relationship.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

Although the present studies offer further insight into how political differences relate to close relationship satisfaction, an important limitation is that we did not collect data from both partners. Our data is based on what the participant perceives their partner's political views to be. Therefore, there are potential inaccuracies between the other partner's actual political orientation and the participant's perception of it. Future work should examine both partners in a relationship to replicate the present findings. Future research should also investigate the mediating role of political discussions on the relationship between relationship satisfaction and differing political views. This could provide insight into ways that couples maintain their relationship even when different political views relate to a decrease in their satisfaction levels.

### **Conclusion**

The present studies are some of the first to assess how political differences impact close relationships – in terms of both romantic relationships and friendships. We find that higher perceived political differences between partners appears to have a more robust impact on relationship satisfaction between romantic partners, compared to friends. These findings shed more light on the factors that affect relationship fulfillment, and on the impact of political ideology outside of the political realm.

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**Table 1***Means and Standard Deviations for Variables of Interest in Study 1*

| Variable                         | M     | SD     |
|----------------------------------|-------|--------|
| Age                              | 28.98 | 11.45  |
| Relationship Length in Months    | 80.94 | 113.01 |
| Satisfaction - Global            | 6.38  | 1.66   |
| Alternatives - Global            | 2.71  | 1.91   |
| Investment - Global              | 5.69  | 1.65   |
| Commitment - Global              | 3.61  | .59    |
| Political Orientation Difference | .84   | .93    |
| Party Preference Difference      | .63   | .83    |
| Liberalism Difference            | .42   | .40    |

**Table 2***Correlation matrix for political differences and relationship fulfillment in Study 1*

| Variable Name                       | 1       | 2       | 3      | 4      | 5      | 6      |
|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. Satisfaction - Global            |         |         |        |        |        |        |
| 2. Alternatives - Global            | .360**  |         |        |        |        |        |
| 3. Investment - Global              | .320**  | -.257** |        |        |        |        |
| 4. Commitment - Global              | .619**  | -.478*  | .447** |        |        |        |
| 5. Political Orientation Difference | -.172** | .017    | -.047  | -.065  |        |        |
| 6. Party Preference Difference      | -.075   | -.040   | -.126* | -.050  | .645** |        |
| 7. Liberalism Difference            | -.231** | .010    | -.049  | -.129* | .593** | .473** |

Note: \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq .01$ .

**Table 3**

*Regression results for analyses predicting relationship fulfillment from political differences after controlling for demographics and individual differences in Study 1*

|                                  | $\beta$      | <i>SE</i>   | <i>p</i>        |
|----------------------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Satisfaction (Global)            |              |             |                 |
| Political Orientation Difference | <b>-.114</b> | <b>.091</b> | <b>.028</b>     |
| Party Preference Difference      | .104         | -.030       | .570            |
| Liberalism Difference            | <b>-.184</b> | <b>.211</b> | <b>&lt;.001</b> |
| Alternatives (Global)            |              |             |                 |
| Political Orientation Difference | .005         | .114        | .934            |
| Party Preference Difference      | -.045        | .130        | .429            |
| Liberalism Difference            | -.003        | .268        | .958            |
| Investment (Global)              |              |             |                 |
| Political Orientation Difference | -.021        | .099        | .707            |
| Party Preference Difference      | -.107        | .111        | .061            |
| Liberalism Difference            | -.038        | .231        | .503            |
| Commitment (Global)              |              |             |                 |
| Political Orientation Difference | -.026        | .035        | .634            |
| Party Preference Difference      | -.006        | .040        | .914            |
| Liberalism Difference            | -.089        | .082        | .110            |

Note: Significant results are boldfaced. Political differences results reported are taken from Step 3 of the regression.

**Table 4***Means and Standard Deviations for Variables of Interest in Study 2*

| Variable                         | M     | SD    |
|----------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Age                              | 28.78 | 13.68 |
| Friendship Length in Years       | 10.60 | 9.13  |
| Satisfaction - Global            | 6.20  | 1.57  |
| Alternatives - Global            | 4.47  | 1.87  |
| Investment - Global              | 4.68  | 1.84  |
| Commitment - Global              | 3.54  | .57   |
| Political Orientation Difference | .95   | 1.14  |
| Party Preference Difference      | .73   | .99   |
| Liberalism Difference            | .46   | .50   |

**Table 5***Correlation matrix for political differences and friendship fulfillment in Study 2*

| Variable Name                       | 1      | 2       | 3      | 4     | 5      | 6      |
|-------------------------------------|--------|---------|--------|-------|--------|--------|
| 1. Satisfaction - Global            |        |         |        |       |        |        |
| 2. Alternatives - Global            | .065   |         |        |       |        |        |
| 3. Investment - Global              | .392** | -.162** |        |       |        |        |
| 4. Commitment - Global              | .555** | -.109*  | .371** |       |        |        |
| 5. Political Orientation Difference | -.070  | .030    | -.026  | -.023 |        |        |
| 6. Party Preference Difference      | -.103* | .087    | -.037  | -.062 | .779** |        |
| 7. Liberalism Difference            | -.036  | .065    | -.014  | .004  | .721** | .662** |

Note: \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq .01$ .

**Table 6**

*Regression results for analyses predicting friendship fulfillment from political differences after controlling for demographics and individual differences in Study 2*

|                                  | $\beta$      | <i>SE</i>   | <i>p</i>    |
|----------------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Satisfaction (Global)            |              |             |             |
| Political Orientation Difference | -.081        | .066        | .091        |
| Party Preference Difference      | <b>-.120</b> | <b>.075</b> | <b>.012</b> |
| Liberalism Difference            | -.075        | .150        | .123        |
| Alternatives (Global)            |              |             |             |
| Political Orientation Difference | .011         | .082        | .826        |
| Party Preference Difference      | .071         | .094        | .156        |
| Liberalism Difference            | .060         | .187        | .235        |
| Investment (Global)              |              |             |             |
| Political Orientation Difference | -.054        | .083        | .291        |
| Party Preference Difference      | -.064        | .094        | .209        |
| Liberalism Difference            | -.054        | .188        | .296        |
| Commitment (Global)              |              |             |             |
| Political Orientation Difference | -.042        | .024        | .382        |
| Party Preference Difference      | -.078        | .028        | .104        |
| Liberalism Difference            | -.047        | .055        | .331        |

Note: Significant results are boldfaced. Political differences results reported are taken from Step 3 of the regression.