

SEEK AND YE SHALL BE FINE: ATTITUDES TOWARDS POLITICAL PERESPECTIVE-  
SEEKERS

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## Abstract

Over the past two decades, growing political polarization has led to increasing calls for people to seek out and try to understand opposing political views. Although seeking out opposing views is objectively desirable behavior, do we find it socially desirable when people who agree with us nonetheless seek out views that we oppose? We find that observers strongly prefer individuals who seek out, rather than avoid, political views that the observer opposes. Across nine online studies we find a large preference for these political perspective-seekers, and in a lab study, 73% of participants chose to interact with a perspective-seeking confederate. This preference is weakly moderated by the direction of participants' ideology and the strength of their beliefs. Moreover, it is robust regardless of why the individual seeks or avoids opposing views, and emerges even when the perspective-seeker is undecided and not already committed to participants' own views. However, the preference disappears when a perspective-seeker attends *only* to the perspective that observers disagree with, disregarding the observer's side. These findings suggest that, despite growing polarization, people still think it is important to understand and tolerate political opponents. This work also informs future interventions, which could leverage social pressures to promote political perspective-seeking and combat selective-exposure, thus improving political relations.

## **Lay Summary**

The current research investigates how people feel about individuals who seek out political views that they disagree with. We find that people strongly prefer fellow partisans who try to understand their political opponents more than fellow partisans who avoid their opponent's views. This is because people who seek opposing views seem warmer and more competent than those who avoid opposing views. People socially exclude individuals who avoid their opponent's views. These results suggest that, despite political polarization, people still think it is important to tolerate and learn from their political opponents.

## Preface

This dissertation is an original intellectual product of the author, G. Heltzel. I developed the ideas for the line of research, designed the studies, analyzed and wrote up all data, and my advisor, Kristin Laurin, contributed feedback throughout this process. None of the research presented here has been published at the time of this thesis. This project was approved by the UBC Behavioral Research Ethics Board under the project title “Perspective-Taking” (certificate number H17-02530) and “Perspective-Taking Online” (certificate number H18-02799).

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## 1 Introduction

Imagine you have two acquaintances, Terry and Chris. They both agree with your stance on gun control; this is a topic you have discussed in the past. Chris, however, is interested in learning more about the views of people on the other side of this debate, whereas Terry prefers to talk about gun control with people like you, who share his views. Which of the two do you like more?

Over the last 25 years the American political climate has become increasingly polarized, with more and more people taking Terry's "ignore and disengage" approach with their political opponents. In 2014, twice as many people had very unfavorable attitudes toward the opposing political party compared to 1994, and one third of Americans reported that most of their friends share their political beliefs (Pew Research Center, 2014). In response to these trends, scholars have increasingly warned of the dangers of avoiding opposing political views (Frimer, Skitka, & Motyl, 2017; Golman, Hagmann, & Loewenstein, 2017), and have instead emphasized the importance of being more like Chris, by seeking out and trying to understand these views. Considering other viewpoints can improve social relationships and help opposing parties to reach compromise (Chandler, 1973; Galinsky, Maddux, Gilin, & White, 2008). Moreover, by overcoming biases to seek information one already agrees with, people can make more accurate, informed decisions (Golman et al., 2017; Kunda, 1990; Nickerson, 1998).

Though seeking opposing political viewpoints is objectively desirable, it is less clear if it is *socially* desirable. We do not yet know how do you, and indeed the remaining majority of the population, feel about people like Chris (people on your side of a political debate who seek out the opponents' views) compared to people like Terry (who do the opposite).

The extant literature provides conflicting predictions about these attitudes. On one hand, people approve of the traits and values typically associated with perspective-seeking in the abstract (Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2006; Schwartz, 1992), which suggests people would approve of Chris more than Terry. On the other hand, this abstract approval for perspective-seeking may not extend to the more concrete case of politics, where people typically express outrage toward their political opposition and avoid opposing perspectives (Crockett, 2017; Frimer et al., 2017; Parker & Janoff-Bulman, 2013). As a result, when faced with a specific, concrete instance of someone like Chris seeking out deeply-opposed political perspectives, you might instead respond negatively to his actions, and instead prefer Terry's more dismissive stance. Taken together, it is unclear whether we like or dislike others who agree with us yet seek political views we abhor.

### **1.1 People generally like perspective-seeking**

People form impressions of others largely based on perceptions of morality, warmth, and competence (Fiske et al., 2006; Wiggins, 1996). Chris' behavior may convey a positive impression on all three of these dimensions, so people might hold favorable attitudes toward individuals like Chris who engage in perspective-seeking.

First, people like Chris may appear moral, which some have argued is the most important trait in person perception (Goodwin, Piazza, & Rozin, 2014; Hartley et al., 2016; Landy, Piazza, & Goodwin, 2016). Philosophers have argued that empathy guides moral action, and that empathy itself requires understanding others' perspectives (Hume, 1739; Smith, 1759). Psychologists have made similar arguments about the importance of understanding other's minds (Gray, Young, & Waytz, 2012; Kohlberg, 1981), and found empirically that perspective-seeking facilitates altruistic behavior and empathy (Batson et al., 1991). Lay people's intuitions seem to reflect this belief as well: They often suggest that the way to avoid moral transgressions is to try

to understand the perspective of those affected by one's actions (Bloom, 2017), and when motivated to behave morally, they report a greater desire to feel empathy and seek out other perspectives (Tamir & Gutentag, 2017; Thomas & Maio, 2008; Zaki, 2014). Altogether, this suggests that you may view Chris' willingness to seek out opposing views as a sign of his moral character, even when you personally disagree with those views.

Second, people like Chris may appear warm. Moral people often seem warm (Abele et al., 2016), so perspective-seekers may seem warm by virtue of seeming moral. Nonetheless, perspective-seeking might also signal warmth in other, non-morally relevant ways. In addition to seeming *intellectually* open-minded by seeking out new ideas, people can seem *socially* open-minded by granting tolerance and respect to individuals from different social backgrounds (Fiske et al., 2006). Perspective-seeking facilitates interpersonal tolerance: it helps people find common ground in negotiations (Galinsky et al., 2008; Trötschel, Hüffmeier, Loschelder, Schwartz, & Gollwitzer, 2011) and promotes inclusion and cooperation within demographically diverse groups (Todd & Galinsky, 2012). People who perspective-take also report feeling more inclusive toward the person or group who holds that perspective (Galinsky, Ku, & Wang, 2005), which may seem civil and polite, and set the stage for warm, pleasant social interactions (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Across the political spectrum, people like it when their fellow partisans engage with political opponents in a civil, polite, and otherwise inclusive manner (Frimer & Skitka, 2018). Thus, people may like people like Chris because they seem them as tolerant, civil, and generally warm.

Third, people like Chris may appear competent, as perspective-seeking might seem intelligent, rational, and open-minded. Seeking alternative perspectives often results in learning new information (Golman et al., 2017; Kunda, 1990). As a result, individuals who assimilate

multiple perspectives might seem intelligent and knowledgeable, leading people to like and want to interact with them (Fiske et al., 2006; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). In addition, people in Western cultures value intellectual curiosity and open-mindedness (Schwartz, 1992), and believe it is important to gather and rationally evaluate information when forming beliefs (Ståhl, Zaal, & Skitka, 2016). Given that perspective-seeking involves openness to new ideas and helps people rationally evaluate and form beliefs, this suggests people might like individuals like Chris on the grounds that they seem knowledgeable, open-minded, rational, and generally competent.

In short, people likely view the perspective-seekers on their political teams as moral, warm, and competent. As a result, they may prefer them to others on their political team who instead avoid opposing perspectives, even though observers themselves disagree with those perspectives.

## **1.2 People may dislike perspective-seeking in the political domain, specifically**

When faced with a specific, concrete situation, people's behavior and judgments often conflict with values they endorse in the abstract (Latane & Darley, 1969; Liberman & Trope, 2008; Wilson & Gilbert, 2005). In the political domain specifically, observers' reactions to perspective-seeking may not draw on their abstract endorsement of tolerance and learning, but rather reflect how much they abhor the specific opposing view under consideration. In other words, people may dislike Chris precisely because he seems moral and warm toward his political adversaries and because he treats their position as if it is worth learning and considering.

**1.2.1 Group and political relations shift moral concerns toward commitment and loyalty.** People punish fellow group members who deviate from the group's norms (Fehr, Fischbacher, & Gächter, 2002), and they do so more harshly than they punish outgroup members (Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988). This is especially true when the norm in question is important to the

group's identity (Marques, Abrams, & Serôdio, 2001), such as the norm to endorse the central beliefs of one's political party. In addition, political issues are typically relevant to moral values, so people feel their beliefs about these issues are universal and absolutely true (Goodwin & Darley, 2010; Skitka & Morgan, 2014), and see those who hold opposing political views as wrong, inferior, or even evil (Parker & Janoff-Bulman, 2013; Tappin & McKay, 2018). As a result, whereas people's strongest moral imperatives usually encourage warm behaviors such as treating other individuals with kindness and consideration (Rai & Fiske, 2011), in political contexts they instead emphasize remaining loyal and committed to their party's core values and beliefs (Janoff-Bulman & Carnes, 2013; Parker & Janoff-Bulman, 2013). As a result, a fellow partisan who implies the opposing side has an argument worth listening to has failed to uphold the group norms of condemning the opposing belief (Descioli & Kurzban, 2013; Jordan, Sommers, Bloom, & Rand, 2017), and violated the moral imperatives of commitment and loyalty to their own side (Janoff-Bulman & Carnes, 2013; Parker & Janoff-Bulman, 2013). Thus, in political contexts, individuals like Chris might seem immoral, so people might instead prefer individuals like Terry.

### **1.2.2 In political contexts, competence and warmth have different connotations.**

Although people generally like warm individuals who tolerate and cooperate with others, they dislike group members who are tolerant toward and cooperative with their political enemies. For example, people rebuke ingroup members who are willing to compromise with political enemies (Ryan, 2017), and endorse tolerance for political diversity less than other types of diversity (i.e., ethnic or gender diversity; Haidt, Rosenberg, & Hom, 2003). Additionally, although people generally like competent individuals who make intelligent, rational decisions, they condemn individuals who prioritize rationality over their moral beliefs. People feel outraged at individuals



who choose rational benefits (i.e., financial gains) over their sacred, moralized beliefs (Tetlock, Kristel, Elson, Green, & Lerner, 2000), and dislike individuals who take too long to make a moral decision—even a correct one (Critcher, Inbar, & Pizarro, 2013; Phillips & Cushman, 2017). Thus, even if people recognize that Chris is showing more competence and warmth than Terry is, the political context may be one where these typically positive perceptions lead to backlash. A competing hypothesis, then, is that people will *dislike* political ingroup members who seek (vs. avoid) opposing political views.

### **1.3 What factors might moderate attitudes toward perspective-seeking?**

So far, we have outlined two competing hypotheses about how people might form impressions of Chris and Terry. However, peoples' impressions may depend on a number of factors related to either the person who is forming these impressions, or the person who is doing the perspective-seeking or avoiding.

**1.3.1 Attitudes may depend on observers' political beliefs.** Observers' political beliefs may shape their reactions to ingroup perspective-seekers. On one hand, consider ideological differences between liberals and conservatives. Liberals place comparatively less emphasis on ingroup loyalty as a moral value (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009), so they may be more lenient with group members who seek out opposing views. Liberals also tend to be more open-minded and likely to seek novel ideas (Carney, Jost, Gosling, & Potter, 2008), whereas conservatives are motivated to establish firm, certain beliefs, are less likely to seek alternative possibilities once they have reached a position, and are more dogmatic about their views (Jost, 2017; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003). In addition, liberals report a greater desire to feel empathy and also report feeling empathy more often, relative to conservatives (Hasson, Tamir, Brahms,

Cohrs, & Halperin, 2018). Together, this literature suggests that liberals, compared to conservatives, may be more likely to approve of people like Chris.

On the other hand, intolerance and close-mindedness are also rampant on the far left of the political spectrum (Brandt, Reyna, Chambers, Crawford, & Wetherell, 2014; Ditto et al., 2017; Greenberg & Jonas, 2003). For instance, although liberals report feeling more empathy and a greater desire to feel empathy than conservatives, both liberals and conservatives express less desire to empathize with their political outgroup than with their ingroup (Hasson et al., 2018). Individuals with strongly-held or moralized political beliefs, no matter what their content, are more dogmatically intolerant toward their opposition and express a greater desire to avoid people they disagree with (Skitka, Bauman, & Sargis, 2005; van Prooijen & Krouwel, 2017). These extremists are also more likely to categorize others as friend or foe based on their political beliefs (Lammers, Koch, Conway, & Brandt, 2017; Zaal et al., 2015). Together, these findings suggest that people with stronger, more moralized or dogmatic views, compared to those with more moderate views, may feel less favorable toward group members like Chris.

**1.3.2 Attitudes may depend on characteristics of the perspective-seeker.** Chris' reasons for perspective-seeking, or his attitude toward your own beliefs, might also shape how you see him. Though people can seek opposing views to improve relations with their opposition (Galinsky et al., 2005) or to learn from their opposition for the sake of knowledge (Golman et al., 2017), they may also try to understand and learn from their opposition to gain insight into their weaknesses and secure a competitive advantage (Pierce, Kilduff, Galinsky, & Sivanathan, 2013). Given that the political domain devalues warmth and learning in favor of outgroup derogation, people may like Chris more if he is perspective-seeking to try to outcompete their shared political opponents.

In addition, you may respond differently to Chris depending on what you believe about his own true beliefs. For instance, individuals benefit from signaling their group membership before deviating from group norms (Krumm & Corning, 2010; Merritt, Effron, & Monin, 2010). Therefore, people might like Chris only if he signals that he is on their ideological side before he seeks out the views of the now-shared opponents. Relatedly, observers' attitudes might depend on whether their own views are taken into account. People like to feel that others acknowledge their perspective (Bruneau & Saxe, 2012; Cohen et al., 2007; Reis, Lee, O'Keefe, & Clark, 2018), and feel angry toward their perspective is overlooked (Fischer & Roseman, 2007). Thus, observers might like Chris only if he also signals his willingness to entertain their views as well as their opponents'.

#### **1.4 Summary and Overview**

Our analysis of the existing literature leads to conflicting predictions about people's attitudes toward Chris, who seeks opposing political perspectives, and Terry, who avoids them. On one hand, people may prefer individuals like Chris who seek opposing perspectives on the grounds that they seem moral, competent, and warm. On the other hand, political conflict may shift peoples' moral concerns so they instead *dislike* individuals who seek opposing perspectives, and prefer people like Terry. Furthermore, these attitudes might depend on factors related the observer as well as factors related to the perspective-seeker and avoider.

We present ten studies (nine of which are pre-registered) examining people's attitudes toward individuals who either seek, or avoid, opposing political perspectives. In Studies 1a-f we examine participants' attitudes toward hypothetical vignette characters who share the participants' political stance and either seek or avoid opposing perspectives on that issue. We employ a variety of issues and experimental manipulations across studies for generalizability,

and test various potential moderators of the effect (i.e., ideology, attitude strength, moral conviction). Studies 1e additionally test whether trait perceptions (i.e., warmth and morality, competence) mediate these attitudes. In Studies 2a – 2c, we assess whether factors related to the perspective-seeker (i.e., motivation, group membership, willingness to consider participants' views) moderate our effects. In Study 3, a lab study, we examine whether these attitudes replicate in a real in-person setting, and translate into behavior, by assessing whether participants choose to spend time with a confederate who seeks out opposing perspectives or one who does not. Together, these studies provide the first investigation of people's attitudes toward individuals who seek or avoid opposing political perspectives. Across the main text and the Supplemental Online Materials, we report all measures, conditions, and data exclusions for all studies.

## **2 Studies 1a-f**

Studies 1a-f use online vignettes to examine participants' attitudes toward someone who agrees with the participant's political views and either seeks or avoids opposing political views. Study 1a provided an initial exploratory test of these attitudes. Study 1b – 1d were pre-registered replications of Study 1a with different political issues, vignettes, and experimental procedures. Study 1e tested how perspective-seeing (vs. avoiding) leads to perceptions of competence and warmth. In addition, Study 1e manipulated perspective-seeking by describing an individual's perspectives-seeking and avoiding *behaviors*, contrasting with the manipulations from Studies 1a – 1d, where the individual verbally reported seeking or avoiding opposing perspectives. We made this change because past research has found that civil language, which could include verbal claims of perspective-seeking but not merely the behavior itself, can yield positive impressions in political contexts (Frimer & Skitka, 2018). Study 1f replicated these effects using a between-

subjects experimental design with a representative sample of Canadian participants. We included various exploratory measures throughout each individual studies and report these in the SOM.

## **2.1 Method**

Study 1a was our first study in this line of work, and therefore we did not pre-register it. Studies 1b-1f were confirmatory; pre-registered predictions, *a priori* power analyses, materials, and analysis plans are available at <https://osf.io/3xjct/>. The SOM contains the exact wording of all vignettes and measures in each study, as well as additional descriptive statistics and analyses.

**2.1.1 Participants.** Across the six studies, we recruited 1835 participants. The 1610 who participated in Studies 1a through 1e were American residents drawn from Amazon's Mechanical Turk; the 225 who participated in Study 1f were Canadians recruited by a survey sampling company and matched to the Canadian census in terms of gender, ethnicity, education and income. In line with our pre-registered plans, across studies we excluded participants who failed to answer any of our primary dependent measures or who failed any of the attention or manipulation checks in each study ( $N = 301$ , 16% of the sample). The final sample included 64% women and the average age was  $M = 37.51$  ( $SD = 12.69$ ). After completing a study reported in this paper, participants could not enroll in any subsequent study. Justifications for sample size and *a priori* power analyses for each individual study are presented in the pre-registration document for each study.

**2.1.2 Procedure.** In all studies, participants signed up to participate in research on person perception. After providing informed consent, participants read brief descriptions of four political issues; across studies these issues included abortion, affirmative action, carbon taxation, climate change, gun control, immigration, universal healthcare, welfare programs, with different combinations of four issues appearing in different studies (see Table 1). For each issue,

participants provided their stance by making a dichotomous choice between the typical liberal and conservative stance on that issue (see SOM for descriptions of issues and prompts).

Next, participants read a vignette featuring one or two characters. The vignette focused on one of the four political issues (randomly assigned between-subjects) on which participants had rated their stance earlier. We matched the character's or characters' stance on this focal issue to the stance participants had endorsed earlier; in other words, participants in these studies always read about a political ingroup member. Our key manipulation was whether the vignette character(s) sought or avoided (either verbally or behaviorally) opposing perspectives on the focal issue. We varied the exact wording of this manipulation across studies (see SOM for exact vignettes used in each study). We provide examples below; bracketed sections differed depending on which issue participants read about and what stance they had reported on that issue.

Studies 1a-d (within-subjects):

Participants first read about a conversation between two characters who mention that they both support the same stance on an issue, and then read that:

One of the individuals, Individual A, mentions he often tries to think about [abortion] from the perspective of those who [are pro-choice], trying to understand where their beliefs come from. The other, Individual B, replies that he never does that and prefers to consider the issue from his own perspective.”

We used these different font colors in our materials so that participants could more easily distinguish between and remember the focal characters

Study 1c (between-subjects):

Participants first read about a character who posted a comment on an online article about an upcoming political vote. After saying he wanted his representatives to vote for a particular policy, the commenter went on to say:

Perspective-seeking condition:	Perspective-avoiding condition:
but I wanna read a few more articles to understand why reps like senator Stephens [are in favor of increased access to abortion]. If any of her supporters feel like commenting back with their perspective, go for it.”	And don’t wanna see any more articles about why reps like senator Stephens [are in favor of increased access to abortion]. If any of her supporters feel like commenting back with their perspective, keep it to yourself.

#### Study 1e (within-subjects):

Participants read about two characters who support the same stance on an issue, and who typically hear from TV news anchors and authors who support that view. They went on to read that:

However, **Individual A** also intentionally seeks out other perspectives on [affirmative action] by watching news anchors from different TV stations and reading articles by authors who [oppose affirmative action policies].

In contrast, **Individual B** intentionally avoids opposing perspectives on [affirmative action] and chooses not to watch different news anchors or read articles by authors who [oppose affirmative action policies].

#### Study 1f (between-subjects):

Participants read the same conversation between two characters presented in Studies 1a-d, only read about one character’s perspective-seeking or -avoiding behavior:

Perspective-seeking condition:	Perspective-avoiding condition:
One of the individuals, Individual A, mentions he often tries to think about carbon taxation from the perspective of those who oppose the carbon tax, and wants to understand where their beliefs come from.	One of the individuals, Individual A, says taking their perspective isn't the answer here, and he doesn't care to understand their beliefs.

**2.1.3 Measures present in all studies.** Following this manipulation, participants reported their attitudes toward the character(s) using the three dependent measures described below.

*Dependent measures.* First, participants completed a feeling thermometer. They responded to the prompt “*Please rate your feelings towards [vignette character] using the scale provided below. Ratings above 50 mean you feel favorable and warm towards [vignette character], with 100 being the most positive response; ratings below 50 mean you don't feel favorable toward [vignette character] and that you don't care too much for [vignette character], with 0 being the most negative rating*” using a 101-point sliding scale.

Second, participants completed a measure of desired social proximity (Skitka, Bauman, & Sargis, 2005). They rated how happy they would be to have the vignette character(s) be in four different roles: as a friend, as a teacher of their children, as a governor of their state, and as President of the United States<sup>1</sup>. They responded using a 7-point scale from 1- *Strongly Disagree* to 7 - *Strongly Agree*; we created a social proximity score by averaging responses to these items ( $\alpha = .94$ ).

Third, participants reported their emotional reactions toward the character(s). Specifically, they reported how much they felt each of two positive emotional states (*proud of* and *compassion toward* the character in Studies 1a-c, or *proud of* and *respect for* the character in Studies 1d-f) and four negative emotional states (*angry at*, *disgusted at*, *look down on*, and *ashamed of* the character). For each state they used a 7-point scale from 1 – *Strongly Disagree* to 7 – *Strongly Agree*. We reverse-scored responses to the negative emotions and created an emotional response composite from all six items ( $\alpha = .84$ ).

Because these three measures were highly intercorrelated, within each study we standardized participants’ scores for each measure and averaged them to create our primary

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<sup>1</sup> In Study 1a we used all 12 items from the original social proximity scale used by Skitka, Bauman, & Sargis, 2005. In subsequent studies we included these 4 items because they were the best predictors of attitudes in Study 1a. Results do not differ between studies using the full and shortened scale.



dependent measure ( $\alpha = .83$ ), attitudes toward the focal character. Higher scores on the composite attitude measure correspond to more positive attitudes toward the vignette character.

*Participant individual differences (moderators).* When reporting their stance on each of the four issues, participants also indicated their attitude strength, using a single item, “**How strongly** do you feel about your stance on [issue]?” rated on a 7-point scale where 1 = *Not Very Strongly* and 7 = *Very Strongly*.

We measured political orientation on a 7-point scale where 1 = *Extremely Liberal*, 4 = *Moderate*, and 7 = *Extremely Conservative* ( $M = 3.56$ ,  $SD = 1.71$  across studies). We varied whether political orientation was measured at the beginning of the study with the attitude strength ratings or at the end within the demographics.

**2.1.4 Additional procedures and measures.** Studies varied in terms of the political issues used, study design (within vs. between), vignette setting, and additional measures of individual differences and mediators. We describe the additional measures below and summarize all unique features of each study in Table 1.

*Individual differences.* Multiple studies included measures of moral conviction (Studies 1a and 1c; Skitka et al., 2005) and dogmatism (Studies 1b and 1d; Altemeyer, 2002). For the measure of moral conviction, participants responded to the prompt, “*How much are your feelings about [abortion] connected to your core moral beliefs or convictions?*” on a 7-point scale where 1 = *None at all*, 4 = *Somewhat*, and 7 = *Very much*.

We measured dogmatism using the following four items modified from a previous dogmatism scale (Altemeyer, 2002): “*I am absolutely certain that my ideas about this issue are correct,*” “*The stance I hold for this issue is so completely true, I could never doubt it,*” “*Anyone who is honestly and truly seeking the truth about this issue will end up believing what I believe,*”

and “*My opinion on this issue is right and will stand the test of time.*” We chose these items because they had the highest factor loadings in pilot testing and were most easily amenable to referencing specific political issues. We randomly assigned each of these four items to refer to one of the four issues participants rated at the beginning of the study.

In addition to the individual difference measures mentioned above which appeared in multiple studies, other exploratory measures appeared in only one single study each. These include party affiliation, desire for group cohesion, attitude certainty, moral absolutism, perceived threat of outgroup, how close the character is with the outgroup (abbreviated *character-outgroup overlap* in SOM), whether the outgroup seems to have different values (abbreviated *perceived value difference* in SOM) or different access to information (abbreviated *perceived info difference* in SOM). We also measured political activism (i.e., frequency of voting, donating to campaign, volunteering for campaign) in Studies 1b-f.

*Mediators.* Participants in Study 1e rated each character on several traits related to warmth and competence (Fiske et al., 2006). We created a warmth composite by averaging participants’ ratings of *warm*, *tolerant*, *sincere*, and *good-natured* ( $\alpha = .91$ ), and a competence composite by averaging ratings of *competent*, *competitive*, *confident*, *intelligent*, and *independent* ratings ( $\alpha = .84$ ). Study 1d also included exploratory measures assessing participants’ perceptions of the characters’ traits (i.e., trustworthy, open-minded, loyal; see SOM), and across all studies we asked participants how strongly the vignette character seemed to feel about the issue they were discussing.

**Table 1.***Summary of Methods, Designs, and Measures, Studies 1a-f.*

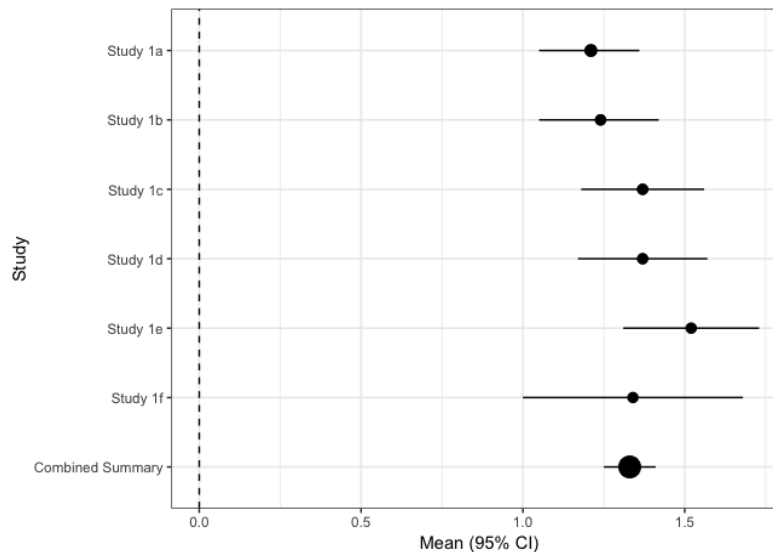
Study	N	Issues	Study Design	Additional Measures	Setting	Notes
1a	366	AA, Ab, H, W	Within	Party Affiliation, Moral conviction	Café	None
1b	260	AA, Ab, G, I	Within	Dogmatism, Group cohesion	Café	None
1c	263	AA, Ab, G, I	Within	Moral conviction; Perceived threat of outgroup; Attitude certainty; Moral absolutism	Café, online article comment	Measured stance, attitude strength about non-political topics (i.e., snacks, pets); presented perspective-seeker and avoider in separate vignettes, with vignette about seeking vs avoiding opposing perspectives about snacks in between (see SOM)
1d	244	Ab, CC, G, W	Within	Dogmatism; Perceived differences in info, values	Café	None
1e	233	I, AA, CC, W	Within	Warmth & competence; Character-outgroup overlap	News consumption behaviors	None
1f	168	CT	Between	None	Café	Representative Canadian sample

For Issues, AA = affirmative action, Ab = abortion, CC = climate change, CT = carbon tax, G = gun control, H = universal healthcare, I = immigration, W = social welfare programs.

## 2.2 Results

We used R (R Core Team, 2014) to analyze results. For the analyses reported below, we present the results for all data collapsed across studies.

**2.2.1 Overall Attitudes.** In line with our pre-registered analysis plan for each individual study, we ran a multilevel model using character (perspective-seeker coded 1, perspective-avoider coded 0) as a predictor variable, our composite attitude measure as our dependent variable, and including random intercepts for participant and issue. Since the present analysis uses data from multiple studies, we included an additional random intercept for study (though models without this random intercept look nearly identical). Overall, participants had more positive attitudes toward the individual who took opposing perspectives than the individual who avoided opposing perspectives ( $\beta = 1.00$ ,  $SE = .028$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [.94, 1.05]; Cohen's  $d = 1.34$ , 95% CI [1.26, 1.42]); this was also true within each study individually. Figure 1 presents the effect size for each individual study as well as the overall effect size.



*Figure 1.* The X-axis represents the *Cohen's d* value for the difference between attitudes toward the perspective-seeking vignette character and the perspective-avoiding character. Each study is labeled separately along the Y-axis along with the combined meta-analytic effect size. The size of each circle corresponds to the number of participants in each study and the line through each circle indicates the 95% confidence interval for the effect size.

On an exploratory basis, we also tested whether the overall preference for the perspective-seeking character differed depending on the issue participants read about in the vignette (see Figure 2). To do so, we tested for a difference in fit between two models: a multilevel model using character, issue, and their interaction to predict attitudes toward the vignette character along with random intercepts for participants and study, and the same model without the interaction term between character behavior and issue. The model including the interaction term did not significantly increase the variance explained,  $\chi^2(7) = 5.27, p = .628$ , suggesting the preference for perspective-seekers did not vary meaningfully across issues.

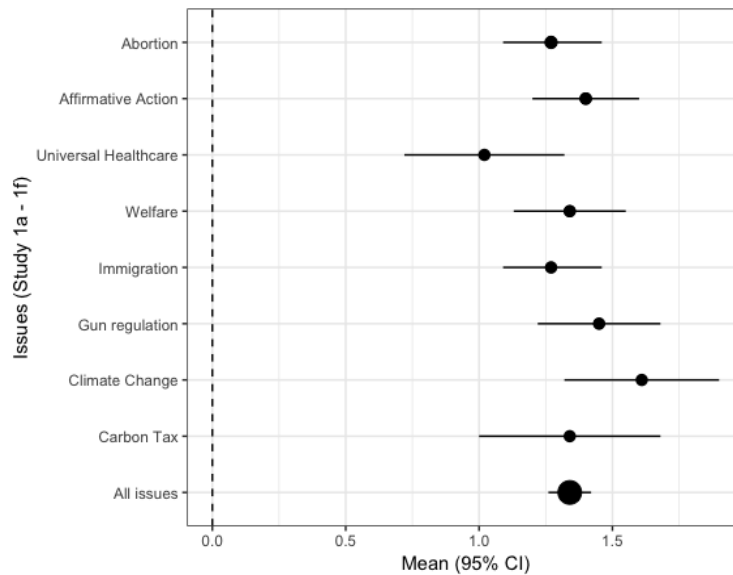


Figure 2. The X-axis represents the *Cohen's d* value for the difference between attitudes toward the perspective-seeking vignette character and the perspective-avoiding character. Each issue is labeled separately along the Y-axis along with the combined meta-analytic effect size. The size of each circle corresponds to the number of participants in each study and the line through each circle indicates the 95% confidence interval for the effect size.

**2.2.2 Mediation.** As pre-registered, we next examined whether perceptions of warmth and competence mediated attitudes toward the characters in Study 1e. We tested three mediation models using Lavaan (Version 0.6-3) in Rstudio (Version 1.1.463). The first and second were separate models testing for indirect effects through warmth and competence; the third included both mediators simultaneously. In all three models, warmth and competence were both

significant mediators of the relationship between the vignette character's behavior (seeking or avoiding opposing perspectives) and attitudes toward the vignette character, though this mediation was only partial, as a significant direct effect remained in all models (see Table 2). We tested this particular sequence of variables based on theoretical considerations (Kelley, 1980), and our data did not support the alternate causal model whereby attitudes were the mediator and warmth and competence were the outcomes (see SOM). Nonetheless, we did not manipulate warmth and competence in the present study (Spencer, Zanna, & Fong, 2005), so we draw no firm causal conclusions regarding the effects of these mediators.

**Table 2.**

*Results of warmth and competence mediation analyses, Study 1e*

Mediator	Character predicting mediator <i>b</i> (SE)	Mediator predicting attitudes <i>b</i> (SE)	Indirect effect <i>b</i> (SE)	Direct effect <i>b</i> (SE)
Separate model				
Warmth	1.24*** (.11)	0.40*** (.022)	0.492*** (.051)	0.604*** (.058)
Competence	1.29*** (.10)	0.40*** (.026)	0.511*** (.051)	0.593*** (.064)
Parallel model:				
Warmth	1.24*** (.11)	0.283*** (.020)	0.353*** (.040)	0.479*** (.062)
Competence	1.29*** (.10)	0.210*** (.021)	0.272*** (.036)	

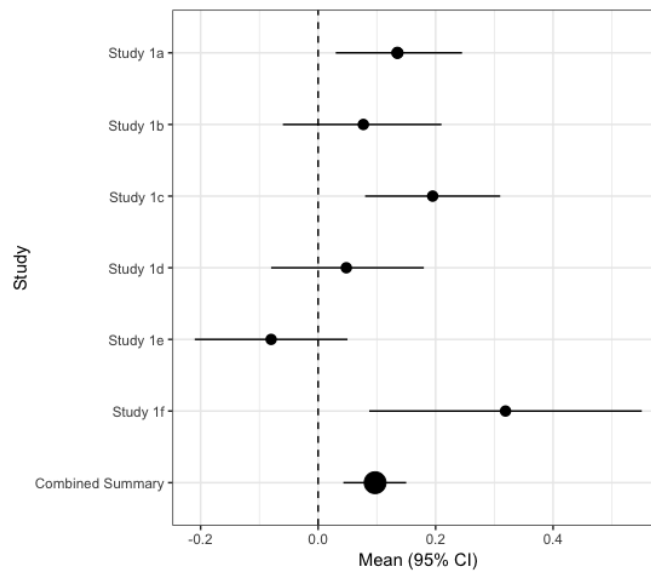
*Note.* SE represents standard error. \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ . \*\*\* indicates  $p < .001$ .

**2.2.3 Moderation.** We tested additional models to assess whether any theoretically derived individual difference measures moderated our effects. For all tests of moderation, we employ multi-level linear models with random intercepts for participant, study, and issue.

We began with the two measures we included in all studies: political orientation (operationalized as self-report on a political orientation scale) and attitude extremity (operationalized as issue-specific attitude strength)<sup>2</sup>. First, we tested a model with character

<sup>2</sup> We also tested participants' stance on the focal issue as a secondary measure of ideology (Federico & Ekstrom, 2018), and participant's ideological extremity as a secondary measure of extremity (van Prooijen & Krouwel, 2017). When testing for moderation by ideological extremity, we included both participant's mean centered political orientation and the quadratic term for their centered score (as recommended by Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). As in the analyses reported here, participants' (liberal vs. conservative) stance on the focal issue ( $\beta = -0.09$ ,

(perspective-seeker coded 1, perspective-avoider coded 0), ideology (standardized), and their interaction predicting attitudes toward the focal vignette character. This model showed a small, significant interaction in the expected direction ( $\beta = -.09$ ,  $SE = .027$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI  $[-.15, -.04]$ ; see Figure 3). Participants at all levels of political ideology showed a strong preference for the perspective-seeker; however this preference was slightly larger among liberals (-1 SD;  $\beta = 1.08$ ,  $SE = .04$ ,  $p < .001$ ) compared to conservatives (+1 SD;  $\beta = .90$ ,  $SE = .04$ ,  $p < .001$ ).



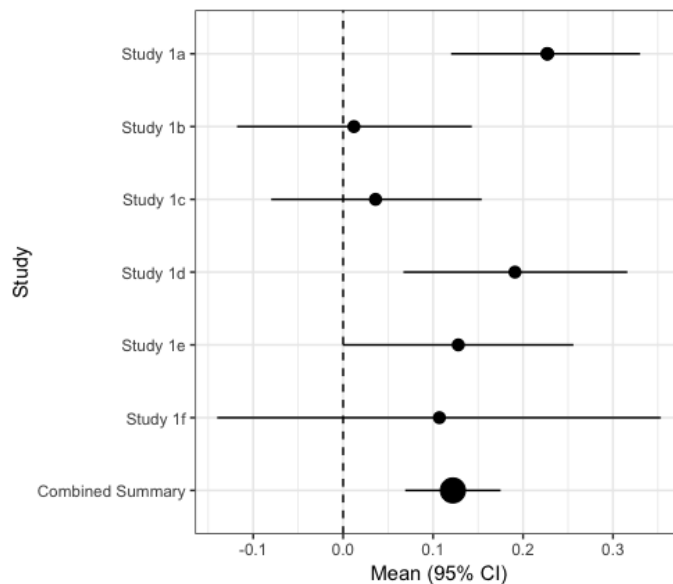
*Figure 3.* The X-axis represents the  $\beta$  for the interaction term between vignette character and political orientation in each study. The size of each circle corresponds to the number of participants in each study and the line through each circle indicates the 95% confidence interval for the effect size. Each study is labeled separately along the Y-axis along with the combined meta-analysis.

Second, we tested an identical model substituting attitude strength for political orientation. This model also showed a small, significant interaction in the expected direction ( $\beta = -.12$ ,  $SE = .027$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI  $[-.17, -.06]$ ; see Figure 4). Participants at all levels of attitude strength showed a strong preference for the perspective-seeker; however this preference was

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$SE = 0.03$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI  $[-0.14, -0.03]$ ) and their ideological extremity ( $\beta = -0.16$ ,  $SE = 0.03$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI  $[-0.21, -0.10]$ ) were both significant moderators, but also as in the analyses reported here, the overall preference remained significant at all levels of each moderator.

slightly larger among moderates (-1 SD;  $\beta = 1.11$ ,  $SE = .04$ ,  $p < .001$ ) compared to extremists (+1 SD;  $\beta = .87$ ,  $SE = .04$ ,  $p < .001$ ).



*Figure 4.* The X-axis represents the  $\beta$  for the interaction term between vignette character and attitude strength in each study. The size of each circle corresponds to the number of participants in each study and the line through each circle indicates the 95% confidence interval for the effect size. Each study is labeled separately along the Y-axis along with the combined meta-analysis.

Finally, we tested our remaining moderators. In each case, we ran models similar to those described above, substituting the moderator measure in lieu of ideology or extremity (see Table 3). People who were more politically active showed a weaker preference for perspective-seeking. In addition, two moderators were near significance: there was a smaller preference for perspective-seeking among people who were more dogmatic and people who felt that their outgroup was less informed of the facts. We did not observe conventionally significant moderation across any of these moderator measures; however, we note that our power to detect these interactions was limited by the fact that we included them in only one or two of our studies.



**Table 3.**

*Interaction between individual difference measures and perspective-seeking vs. avoiding character*

Variable	$\beta$	SE	-1 SD	+1 SD
Dogmatism	-0.08 <sup>^</sup> [-0.17, 0.01]	0.045	1.08***	0.92***
Moral Conviction	-0.01 [-0.10, 0.07]	0.043	0.95***	0.93***
Attitude Certainty	0.01 [-0.12, 0.14]	0.067	0.94***	0.97***
Perceived threat of outgroup	-0.11 [-0.24, 0.03]	0.067	1.06***	0.85***
Moral absolutism	0.04 [-0.09, 0.10]	0.068	0.92***	0.99***
Desire for group cohesion	-0.01 [-0.13, 0.11]	0.062	1.01***	0.98***
Perceived Info Difference	-0.12 <sup>^</sup> [-0.25, 0.01]	0.066	1.22***	0.97***
Perceived Value Difference	-0.05 [-0.17, 0.08]	0.065	1.14***	1.05***
Activism	-0.11*** [-0.17, -0.05]	0.032	1.12***	0.90***

*Note.*  $\beta$  represents the standardized beta for the interaction term between the character behavior (seeking vs. avoiding) and the variable. 95% CI refers to the 95% confidence interval surrounding the standardized beta size. SE represents standard error. <sup>^</sup> indicates  $p < .1$ . \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ . \*\*\* indicates  $p < .001$

## 2.3 Discussion

Studies 1a-f provide the first investigation of people's attitudes toward political ingroup members who seek, versus avoid, opposing views. Our results support the first prediction we outlined rather than the second, as participants had more positive attitudes toward characters who agree with them but also seek opposing political perspectives. In other words, people preferred Chris to Terry. Attesting to the robustness of this preference, the effect was large ( $d = 1.34$ ; Cohen, 1988) and present across all issues we tested as well as in each of the six studies individually, regardless of variations in the experimental design (within- vs. between-subjects), sample (American vs. Canadian), or how the manipulation was presented (café vs. online article comment scenarios, behavioral descriptions). Moreover, this preference cannot be reduced to merely liking individuals who are civil and polite toward political opponents (Frimer & Skitka, 2018): People still preferred a group member who privately chose to consume media that exposed them to opposing views, even when she did not interact, civilly or otherwise, with individuals with opposing views.

We also observed small interactions consistent with theorizing that conservatives and extremists are more intolerant of individuals who oppose their beliefs (compared to liberals and moderates, respectively; Brandt et al., 2014; Crawford, 2014; Jost et al., 2003; Jost, 2017). However, the overall preference for perspective-seeking was strong and emerged even among the most conservative participants and those with the most extreme views. Viewed against the backdrop of existing literature, it would seem the political right and extremists are surprisingly tolerant of ingroup members who try to understand the views of dissimilar others.

Studies 1a-f also support our theorizing that people might like perspective-seekers because they seem warm and competent (Fiske et al., 2006; Golman et al., 2017). In addition, two of the warmth traits – *sincere* and *good-natured* – are morally relevant (Abele et al., 2016), suggesting that participants also liked perspective-seekers because they seem moral. Even in the political domain where ingroup solidarity and outgroup condemnation are encouraged (Janoff-Bulman & Carnes, 2013), people inferred warmth, morality, and competence from group members who seek opposing views, and liked these individuals more than perspective-avoiding group members. Despite growing polarization (Pew Research Center, 2014), perhaps people are not as averse to their ideological counterparts as previously implied (Lelkes & Westwood, 2017; Tappin & McKay, 2018).

### **3 Studies 2a – 2c**

Whereas we observed a robust preference for perspective-seeking in Studies 1a-f, in Studies 2a-c we tested potential boundary conditions where people might not prefer perspective-seeking Chris over perspective-avoiding Terry. We present the introduction, method, and results for each study separately, followed by a cumulative discussion of all three studies. Table 4 presents a summary of the key features of Studies 2a-c (we describe exact wording of all

exploratory measures in the SOM). Following the Study 2c results, we present an updated meta-analysis for individual difference moderators using data from all studies (1a-f and 2a-c).

**Table 4.**

*Summary of Methods, Designs, and Measures, Studies 2a – 2c.*

Study	N	Issues	Study Design	Additional Measures	Setting
2a (motivations + control character)	323	Ab, G, H, I	Between	Warmth and competence; Character-outgroup overlap; Perceived differences in info, values, preferences	News consumption behaviors
2b (outgroup characters + speaking order)	404	Ab, G, H, I	Within	Dogmatism; warmth and competence	Café
2c (undecided characters)	580	Ab, G, H, I	Between	Perceived immorality; Validity of outgroup beliefs	News consumption behaviors

For Issues, Ab = abortion, G = gun control, H = universal healthcare, I = immigration.

### 3.1 Study 2a Introduction

In Study 2a we examined whether the preference for perspective-seeking depends on why the individual seeks or avoids this view. Individuals regularly seek out perspectives they disagree with for competitive or cooperative reasons (Pierce et al., 2013), and people may prefer group members who compete, rather than cooperate, with their political outgroup (Tappin & McKay, 2018). Therefore, we reasoned that people might like perspective-seekers less when their explicit goal is to cooperate with the outgroup (Galinsky et al., 2005; Todd & Galinsky, 2012). In a fully between-subjects design, Study 2a featured two perspective-seekers: A cooperative perspective-seeker who assumes the opposition has legitimate arguments that he is interested in hearing, and a competitive perspective-seeker who wants to form better arguments against the opposition and change their minds.

For the sake of comprehensiveness, we also manipulated the explicit goal of the perspective-avoider. We reasoned that people might also respond differently to someone whose

dogmatic beliefs motivate him to avoid opposing views, compared to someone whose traumatic experiences motivate their avoidance (Hayes, Wilson, Gifford, Follette, & Strosahl, 1996). Thus, we included a dogmatic perspective avoider who felt the opposition's arguments were weak and not worth listening to, as well as a traumatized perspective avoider who wanted to avoid recalling memories related to the political issue. We made no explicit predictions about how these might change our results; our goal was to see whether the effects from Studies 1a-f were robust to these very different motivations for perspective-seeking and avoiding.

In Study 2a we also included a control condition, wherein we described an ingroup member but did not provide any information about whether this individual seeks or avoids other views. Participants' attitudes toward this neutral character tell us whether people tend to *like* perspective-seekers or *dislike* perspective-avoiders.

### **3.1.2 Study 2a Method**

Pre-registered predictions, *a priori* power analyses, materials, and analysis plans for Study 2a are available at <https://osf.io/hb93z/>.

**3.1.2.1 Participants.** We recruited and compensated 351 American participants through Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Two attention checks produced 28 exclusions, leaving 323 participants (61% female, age  $M = 39.79$ ,  $SD = 12.52$ ). As noted in the pre-registration, we conducted an *a priori* power analysis using G\*power software (Erdfelder, Faul, & Buchner, 1996). Since Study 2a tested a new effect (motivations of perspective-seekers and -avoiders), we aimed for sufficient power to detect small-to-moderate effects ( $d = .4$ ), which suggested a sample of 305 participants. Thus, our final sample had adequate power to detect moderate effects.

**3.1.2.2 Procedure.** Participants initially signed up to participate in a study about person perception. As with Studies 1a-f, participants provided informed consent and rated their stance and attitude strength on four issues (abortion, universal healthcare, immigration, and gun

control). As an exploratory moderator, we also measured how different participants felt their access to information, their values, and their preferences were from the outgroup's. As an exploratory mediator, we assessed how much overlap (i.e., similarity, closeness) participants perceived between the vignette character and the outgroup.

Next, we randomly assigned participants to one of five conditions, each of which presented a different description of a character's behaviors. As in Studies 1a-f, each condition began by describing the character as holding the same stance as the participant on one of the four issues presented at the beginning of the study. All five conditions then described the character as regularly hearing political information from those who agree with this stance. For example, participants who supported pro-choice policies and were assigned to the abortion condition would have read the following:

“Individual A [supports pro-choice policies] and believes that [abortion access should not be restricted]. Individual A often hears about [abortion] from the perspective of those who have similar views, such as TV news anchors and authors who argue [in favor of pro-choice policies].”

The remainder of the vignette presented the key manipulation. We identify the five manipulated conditions as *seek to cooperate*, *seek to compete*, *avoid because trauma*, *avoid because dogmatic*, and *control*. The exact wording of these conditions is presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.**  
*Exact wording for all five conditions in Study 2a.*

Condition	Behavior	Motivation
Seek to cooperate	However, <b>Individual A</b> also intentionally seeks out other perspectives on [abortion] by watching news anchors from different TV stations and reading articles by authors who [oppose pro-choice policies].	This is because <b>Individual A</b> assumes that those who [oppose pro-choice policies] have legitimate and valid reasons for their position, and <b>Individual A</b> is interested in hearing those reasons.
Seek to compete		In this way, <b>Individual A</b> hopes to learn better arguments against those who [oppose pro-choice policies], and wants to convince them to change their minds on this issue.
Control	<b>Individual A</b> also seeks out non-political entertainment by watching tv hosts from other stations and reading articles by authors who write about various other topics.	
Avoid because trauma	In addition, <b>Individual A</b> intentionally avoids other perspectives on [abortion] and chooses not to watch news anchors who [oppose pro-choice policies]	This is because <b>Individual A</b> has had personal experiences with [abortion] that have deeply affected <b>Individual A</b> 's life. As a result, <b>Individual A</b> prefers to avoid hearing from those who [oppose pro-choice policies] altogether.
Avoid because dogmatic	or read articles by authors with these views.	This is because <b>Individual A</b> feels confident that the other side's arguments are weak and could not possibly change anyone's mind. <b>Individual A</b> therefore feels there is not much point in hearing from people who [oppose pro-choice policies].

*Note.* All five vignettes began with the same opening, which is presented in the text.

**3.1.2.3 Measures.** After reading the vignette manipulation, participants responded to the same four warmth and five competence items from Study 1e (Fiske et al., 2006; warmth  $\alpha = .90$ , competence  $\alpha = .85$ ). Next, participants filled out the feeling thermometer, social proximity measures ( $\alpha = .97$ ; this study used the full 12-item social scale as in Study 1a), and emotional reactions toward each character ( $\alpha = .90$ ). The scaled average of these measures made up our composite attitude measure ( $\alpha = .89$ ). Finally, we presented participants with exploratory and demographic measures, thanked them, and compensated them for their participation.

### 3.1.3 Study 2a Results

We began by examining whether attitudes toward the vignette character differed across the 5 conditions. As pre-registered, we conducted an omnibus test (one-way between-subjects ANOVA) using condition as the independent variable and our composite attitude measure as the dependent variable. This revealed a significant main effect of condition,  $F(4, 318) = 11.73$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .13$  (see Table 6, attitudes column); we then proceeded to test our four more specific questions of interest, following our pre-registered analysis plan.

**Table 6.**

*Descriptive statistics for perceived traits and attitudes toward the focal character in each vignette condition, Study 2a.*

Condition	Attitudes $M_{sub} (SD)$	Warmth $M_{sub} (SD)$	Competence $M_{sub} (SD)$
Seek to cooperate	0.33 <sub>a</sub> (0.68)	5.20 <sub>a</sub> (1.23)	5.30 <sub>ab</sub> (1.10)
Seek to compete	0.24 <sub>a</sub> (0.77)	4.84 <sub>a</sub> (1.16)	5.43 <sub>a</sub> (1.07)
Control	0.22 <sub>a</sub> (0.69)	4.77 <sub>a</sub> (1.14)	4.82 <sub>bc</sub> (1.10)
Avoid because trauma	-0.31 <sub>b</sub> (0.86)	4.20 <sub>b</sub> (1.16)	4.26 <sub>d</sub> (1.05)
Avoid because dogmatic	-0.47 <sub>b</sub> (1.04)	4.01 <sub>b</sub> (1.26)	4.61 <sub>cd</sub> (1.12)

**Note.** Tukey's HSD comparisons that share the same letter are not significantly different from one another, whereas dissimilar letters indicate that the two conditions are significantly different. Conditions with different letters are significantly different at  $p < .05$ , and conditions with shared letters are not significantly different at  $p < .09$ .

**3.1.3.1 Do people prefer perspective-seeking over perspective-avoiding?** First, we examined whether, regardless of our motivation manipulations, we replicated our findings from Studies 1a-f. We did replicate our findings, as participants had more positive attitudes in both the *seek to cooperate* and the *seek to compete* conditions than in either *avoid* condition (*avoid because trauma* and *avoid because dogmatic*,  $ps < .003$ ).

**3.1.3.2 Do attitudes differ depending on the motivation for seeking or avoiding other views?** Second, we examined whether our manipulation of motivation changed participants' attitudes at all. They did not: Participants had equivalent attitudes in the *seek to cooperate* and *seek to compete* conditions ( $p = .976$ ), and in the *avoid because trauma* and *avoid because*

*dogmatic* conditions ( $p = .831$ ). Thus, participants did not seem to care about the reasons why the characters either sought or avoided opposing perspectives.

**3.1.3.3 How does the control character compare to the perspective-seeker and avoider?** Third, we examined whether there were differences in attitudes between the control condition and any of the four perspective-seeking and perspective-avoiding conditions. Participants' attitudes in the *control* condition did not differ from either of the perspective-seeking conditions ( $ps > .946$ ). In contrast, participants had more positive attitudes in the *control* condition than in either of the perspective-avoiding conditions ( $ps < .004$ ). Thus, participants prefer perspective-seekers over perspective-avoiders because they especially *dislike* perspective-avoiders; their feelings toward perspective-seeker are the same as toward the average ingroup members.

**3.1.3.4 Do perceptions of warmth and competence explain any of the observed differences?** Fourth, we examined whether warmth and competence perceptions differed across the five conditions, and if so, whether these differences could account for the preferences we observed. Similar one-way ANOVAs to the one described above revealed that warmth ratings,  $F(4, 318) = 10.87, p < .001, \eta^2 = .12$ , and competence ratings,  $F(4, 318) = 12.62, p < .001, \eta^2 = .14$ , both differed across conditions (see Table 7).

Participants' perceptions of warmth tracked their attitudes toward the characters. Specifically, participants rated the characters as equally warm in the *seek to cooperate*, *seek to compete*, and *control* conditions ( $ps > .235$ ). Participants also rated the characters as equally warm in the *avoid because trauma* and *avoid because dogmatic* conditions ( $ps > .897$ ). Furthermore, they rated the characters in both perspective-seeking conditions and the control condition as warmer than the characters in both perspective-avoiding conditions ( $ps < .047$ ).



Participants' perceptions of competence lined up less well with their attitudes. Similar to warmth and attitudes, participants rated the characters as equally competent in the two perspective-seeking conditions ( $p = .967$ ), equally competent in the two perspective-avoiding conditions ( $p = .377$ ), and more competent in the former two than the latter two conditions ( $ps < .001$ ). However, contrasting with warmth and attitudes, participants rated the control character as marginally or significantly less competent than both perspective-seeking characters ( $ps < .086$ ), and as no more competent than the character in the *avoid because dogmatic* condition ( $p = .801$ ; although they rated the control character more competent than the character in the *avoid because trauma* condition;  $p = .030$ ).

These analyses portray warmth as a more plausible mediator of our attitude findings. The next step in our pre-registered plan was to test whether warmth accounted for indirect effects; we also planned to conduct exploratory tests to see whether competence separately accounted for indirect effects, and whether warmth and competence were parallel mediators<sup>3</sup>. We began by examining the difference between perspective-seekers and perspective-avoiders (see Table 7); since our motivation manipulations had not influenced participants' attitudes, we collapsed across them. We next examined the difference between perspective-avoiders and the control condition, again collapsing across motivation (see Table 7). (As pre-registered, we did not test for mediation in the difference between perspective-seekers and the control condition, since we found no such difference to begin with.) In all cases, warmth (as predicted) and competence mediated differences in attitudes between the conditions; in most cases, as in Study 1e, this mediation was only partial, and a significant direct effect remained.

#### **Table 7.**

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<sup>3</sup> We ran Study 2a before we ran Study 1e, so this was our first test of whether competence was a mediator. Our exploratory trait measures in Study 1d suggested that perceptions of warmth mediated the preference for perspective-seeking, which is why we felt more confident in pre-registering mediation by warmth in Study 2a.

*Results of warmth and competence separate and parallel mediation analyses, Study 2a*

Mediator	Character predicting mediator <i>b</i> ( <i>SE</i> )	Mediator predicting attitudes <i>b</i> ( <i>SE</i> )	Indirect effect <i>b</i> ( <i>SE</i> )	Direct effect <i>b</i> ( <i>SE</i> )
<i>Perspective-seeking vs. avoiding conditions</i>				
Warmth (separate)	0.917*** (.150)	0.468*** (.035)	0.429*** (.077)	0.243** (.091)
Competence (separate)	0.930*** (.136)	0.507*** (.040)	0.471*** (.078)	0.202* (.094)
Warmth (parallel)	0.917*** (.150)	0.294*** (.033)	0.269*** (.054)	0.131 (.092)
Competence (parallel)	0.930*** (.136)	0.292*** (.037)	0.272*** (.052)	
<i>Control vs. perspective-avoiding conditions</i>				
Warmth (separate)	0.666*** (.177)	0.458*** (.041)	0.305*** (.086)	0.301** (.106)
Competence (separate)	0.385* (.164)	0.528*** (.042)	0.204* (.088)	0.403*** (.099)
Warmth (parallel)	0.666*** (.177)	0.240*** (.037)	0.160 (.049)	.308** (.097)
Competence (parallel)	0.385* (.164)	0.359*** (.040)	0.138 (.061)	

*Note.* SE represents standard error. ^ indicates  $p < .1$ . \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ , \*\*\* indicates  $p < .001$ .

### 3.2.1 Study 2b Introduction

In Study 2b we examined whether the preference for ingroup perspective-seekers extends to outgroup members who seek, or avoid, our perspectives. Intuitively, we would probably like opponents who are willing to reach out and understand our perspective more than those who refuse to see our side but, given that our previous studies featured exclusively ingroup characters, this intuition remains untested. Moreover, we do not know whether this intuitively obvious preference is larger than, of the same size as, or even smaller than the more surprising preference we have documented thus far. We addressed these questions in Study 2b.

In addition, one concern about our previous studies is that the perspective-avoiding character typically replied to and contradicted the perspective-seeking character. People might have disliked the perspective-seeker solely because they found him disagreeable, so in Study 2b we also examined whether people's preference for perspective-seekers remains even when it is the perspective-seeker who disagreeably contradicts the perspective-avoider.

### 3.2.2 Study 2b Method

Pre-registered predictions, *a priori* power analyses, materials, and analysis plans for Study 2b are available at <https://osf.io/6jtfa/>.

**3.2.2.1 Participants.** We recruited and compensated 433 American participants through Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Two attention checks produced 31 exclusions, leaving 402 participants (53% female, age  $M = 38.34$ ,  $SD = 12.81$ ). As noted in the pre-registration, we conducted an *a priori* power analysis using G\*power software and aimed to have sufficient power to detect a small-to-moderate effect ( $d = .4$ ) of speaking order within the ingroup and outgroup conditions. This suggested a sample of 196 participants per condition, so our final sample of 404 ( $N = 201$  in each group membership condition) had adequate power.

**3.2.2.2 Procedure.** Participants initially signed up to participate in a study about person perception. As in our previous studies, participants provided informed consent and rated their stance and attitude strength on four issues (abortion, universal healthcare, immigration, and gun control). Participants also responded to questions assessing how dogmatic they were about each issue using the same dogmatism items from Studies 1b and 1d (Altemeyer, 2002).

Next, we presented participants with a vignette describing two characters having a conversation, very similar to the ones from previous studies. However, we manipulated the vignettes in two additional ways. First, we manipulated the speaking order of the characters, such that half of the participants saw the perspective-seeker speak first, while the other half saw the perspective-avoider speak first, for example:

Perspective-seeking character speaks first:	Perspective-avoiding character speaks first:
After establishing that they [are both pro-life], they begin to argue about the other side—about people who [are pro-choice]. One of the individuals, Individual A, mentions that he does not understand people who [are pro-choice], but he often tries to think about [abortion] from their perspective, and wants to understand where their beliefs come from. The other person, Individual B, replies that he does not understand people who [are pro-choice] either, but he is frankly not interested in their perspective, and doesn't waste his time considering it.	After establishing that they [are both pro-life], they begin to argue about the other side—about people who [are pro-choice]. One of the individuals, Individual A, mentions that he does not understand people who [are pro-choice]. He says he is frankly not interested in their perspective, and doesn't waste his time considering it. The other person, Individual B, replies that he does not understand people who [are pro-choice] either, but he often tries to think about [abortion] from their perspective, and wants to understand where their beliefs come from.

Second, we manipulated the group membership of the characters, such that half of the participants read about characters who hold the same stance on the focal issue as the participant, whereas the other half of the characters held the stance that opposes the participant's stance. Thus, the full design was a 2 (within: perspective seeker vs. avoider) X 2 (between: perspective-seeker speaks first vs. last) X 2 (between: characters are ingroup vs. outgroup members).

**3.2.2.3 Measures.** After reading the vignette manipulation, participants responded to the same four warmth and five competence items from Study 1e (Fiske et al., 2006; warmth  $\alpha = .91$ , competence  $\alpha = .77$ ). Next, participants filled out the feeling thermometer, social proximity measures ( $\alpha = .96$ ; 4-items from Studies 1b-f), and emotional reactions toward each character ( $\alpha = .93$ ). The scaled average of these measures made up our composite attitude measure ( $\alpha = .89$ ). Finally, we presented participants with exploratory and demographic measures, thanked them, and compensated them for their participation.

### 3.2.3 Study 2b Results

**3.2.3.1 Moderation by speaking order.** As pre-registered, we began by assessing whether the preference for perspective-seeking was moderated by the speaking order of the two

vignette characters. We tested a multi-level linear model with character behavior (perspective-seeking coded 1, avoiding coded 0) and speaking order (seeking character spoke first = 1, avoiding character spoke first = 0) as predictors, attitudes as our dependent measure, and random intercepts for participant and vignette issue. Since we were interested in whether speaking order might have influenced our previous results, we pre-registered this model for participants in the ingroup condition only, as these participants were comparable to conditions in previous studies. This model revealed no significant interaction between speaking order and character behavior,  $\beta = .04$ ,  $SE = .119$ ,  $p = .737$ , 95% CI  $[-.19, .27]$ , suggesting that people's attitudes do not differ based on the speaking order of the characters. Indeed, both the participants who saw the perspective-seeker speak first,  $\beta = .93$ ,  $SE = .088$ ,  $p < .001$ , and the participants who saw the perspective-avoider speak first,  $\beta = .97$ ,  $SE = .081$ ,  $p < .001$ , preferred the perspective-seeker. Given that there was not a significant difference in attitudes between the speaking order conditions, all further analyses collapse across the two speaking order conditions and control for variance due to speaking order with random intercepts.

**3.2.3.2 Moderation by group membership.** Next, to assess whether the preference for the perspective-seeking character differs as a function of the vignette character's group membership, we tested a pre-registered multi-level linear model with character behavior (seeking vs. avoiding character, where seeking was coded as 1 and avoiding 0) and group membership (ingroup vs. outgroup, where ingroup was coded 0 and outgroup 1) as predictors, attitudes as our dependent measure, and random intercepts for participant, speaking order, and vignette issue. This model revealed a significant interaction between group membership and character behavior,  $\beta = .28$ ,  $SE = .08$ ,  $p = .001$ , 95% CI  $[.12, .44]$ . Participants showed a stronger preference for the

perspective-seeker over the perspective-avoider when the characters were in participants' outgroup,  $\beta = 1.23$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [1.12, 1.34], compared to participants' ingroup,  $\beta = .95$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [.83, 1.07]. That is, even though it was large, our theoretical effect of interest was smaller than the intuitively obvious preference people have for political opponents who seek, rather than avoid, their views. In fact, this intuitive preference was so large that participants had more positive attitudes toward the perspective-seeking outgroup member than toward the perspective-avoiding ingroup member (see Table 8).

**Table 8.**

*Pairwise comparisons for attitudes toward the focal character according to group membership condition, Study 2b.*

Condition	<i>M (SD)</i>	1 <i><math>\beta</math> (SE)</i>	2 <i><math>\beta</math> (SE)</i>	3 <i><math>\beta</math> (SE)</i>
1. Ingroup perspective-seeker	0.832 (0.072)			
2. Ingroup perspective-avoider	-0.117 (0.072)	0.949*** (0.065)		
3. Outgroup perspective-seeker	0.254 (0.072)	0.858*** (0.065)	-0.371*** (0.065)	
4. Outgroup perspective-avoider	-0.976 (0.072)	1.808*** (0.065)	0.578*** (0.065)	1.230*** (0.065)

*Note.* SE represents standard error. \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ , \*\*\* indicates  $p < .001$ .

**3.2.3.3 Mediation.** As pre-registered, we next tested whether perceptions of warmth mediated differences between the perspective-seeking and perspective avoiding conditions. We ran this analysis using only participants in the ingroup condition, allowing for a replication of the findings in Studies 1e and 2a (though results look virtually identical if we include all participants). We also conducted exploratory analyses to assess whether competence separately mediated these between-condition differences, and whether both competence and warmth were parallel mediators of our effects. The results of the analyses for warmth and competence are displayed in Table 9. As predicted, participants rated the perspective-seeker as warmer and more competent, and this in turn predicted preferring the perspective-seeker over the perspective-avoider. As additionally predicted, perceived warmth and competence both separately and

simultaneously mediated differences in attitudes between the perspective-seeking and perspective-avoiding characters, though neither fully mediated the effect.

**Table 9.**  
*Results of warmth and competence mediation analyses, Study 2b*

Mediator	Character predicting mediator <i>b</i> (SE)	Mediator predicting attitudes <i>b</i> (SE)	Indirect effect <i>b</i> (SE)	Direct effect <i>b</i> (SE)
Separate model				
Warmth	1.464*** (.094)	0.428*** (.026)	0.625*** (.055)	0.275*** (.063)
Competence	0.206* (.080)	0.406*** (.034)	0.084* (.033)	0.816*** (.056)
Parallel model:				
Warmth	1.464*** (.094)	0.343*** (.025)	0.502*** (.049)	0.364*** (.062)
Competence	0.206* (.080)	0.164*** (.030)	0.034* (.015)	

Note. SE represents standard error. ^ indicates  $p < .1$ . \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ , \*\*\* indicates  $p < .001$

### 3.3.1 Study 2c Introduction

In Study 2c we examined whether people's preference for a perspective-seeker depends on whether the individual has an established group membership before seeking opposed views. Individuals benefit from signaling their group membership before deviating from group norms (Krumm & Corning, 2010; Merritt et al., 2010), so people may dislike an individual who fails to establish their group membership before perspective-seeking. Alternatively, we examined whether people's preference for a perspective-seeker depends merely on that individual's willingness to take their perspective into account (Bruneau & Saxe, 2012; Cohen et al., 2007; Fischer & Roseman, 2007; Reis et al., 2018).

### 3.3.2 Study 2c Method

Pre-registered predictions, *a priori* power analyses, materials, and analysis plans for Study 2c are available at <https://osf.io/9dfvp/>.

**3.3.2.1 Participants.** We recruited and compensated 608 American participants through Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Two attention checks produced 28 exclusions, leaving 580

participants (54% female, age  $M = 37.37$ ,  $SD = 12.54$ ). As noted in the pre-registration, we conducted an *a priori* power analysis using G\*power software (Erdfelder et al., 1996) and aimed for sufficient power to detect small effects ( $d = .26$ ). This suggested a sample of 574 participants, so our final sample had adequate power.

**3.3.2.2 Procedure.** Participants initially signed up to participate in a study about person perception. As in our previous studies, participants provided informed consent and rated their stance and attitude strength on four issues (abortion, universal healthcare, immigration, and gun control).

Participants read a vignette describing the behavior of one character. We manipulated the vignette across two independent variables, resulting in a 2x3 between-subjects design. On one hand, as in our previous studies, we manipulated whether the character sought out, or avoided, views that the participant opposed. On the other hand, we manipulated the character's attitudes toward the participant's stance. For some participants, the character already agreed with the participants' own views; effects in these conditions served to replicate our previous findings. For other participants, the character had not decided their views on the focal issue but sought out views that the participant agreed with; effects in these conditions served to test whether people only like perspective-seekers who have established their ingroup status. For yet other participants, the character had also not decided their views on the focal issue but did not mention views that the participant agreed with; by comparing the undecided conditions, we test whether people only like perspective-seekers who take observers' views into account in some capacity.

For the conditions where the character already agreed with the participant and sought vs. avoided opposing views, we used similar vignettes to Study 2a. Specifically, this condition's perspective-seeker vignette was the same as the *seek to cooperate* vignette in Study 2a, and its



perspective-avoider vignette was similar to the *avoid because dogmatic* vignette in Study 2a, except the perspective-avoider was motivated to avoid annoyance and anger from hearing opposing views (Dorison, Minson, & Rogers, 2019). In the remaining four conditions, we began the vignette by introducing a character who was undecided, but knew that some people had strong feelings, and that these feelings are often on display in news anchors and authors. People dislike individuals who do not feel strongly about their political beliefs (Zlatev, 2019), so we made our character a first-time voter yet to choose their stance on an issue, rather than one who was familiar with the issue and had not chosen a stance. Next, participants read that the character recently decided to either seek or avoid the stance that participants disagree with, using text similar to what we had used in Study 2a; bracketed sections differ according to issue and condition:

Individual A is a first-time voter who is undecided about [gun regulation] and hasn't chosen a stance on this issue yet. Individual A knows that some people have stronger feelings about [gun regulation] than he does, and that these views are often represented by TV news anchors and authors.

Next, participants read that the character recently decided to either seek or avoid the stance that participants disagree with, using text similar to what we had used in Study 2a:

Recently Individual A started intentionally [seeking out / avoiding] the perspectives of news anchors and authors who [support gun rights]. [This is because Individual A wants to understand people who hold these beliefs before making up his mind. / believes that hearing these views will make him annoyed and angry, and ultimately not be worth it. Therefore,

Individual A does not bother trying to understand the perspectives of people who [support gun rights]]

The vignette ended here in the two conditions where the character did not mention the participant's stance. In the two conditions in which the character also sought the perspective participants held, the vignette went on to say:

In addition, Individual A started intentionally seeking out the perspectives of news anchors and authors who [support increased gun control]. [This is because Individual A wants to understand people who hold these beliefs before making up his mind.

**3.3.2.3 Measures.** Next, participants filled out the same attitude measures as used in previous studies, including the feeling thermometer measure, the desired social proximity scale ( $\alpha = .96$ ; this study used the full 12-item social scale as in Study 1a), and the six-item emotional response measure ( $\alpha = .90$ ). We standardized then averaged these three measures to create an overall attitude composite ( $\alpha = .89$ ). Then participants responded to two exploratory moderator measures: perceived immorality of the outgroup and validity of outgroup beliefs. Finally, we presented participants with demographic measures, we thanked them and compensated them for their participation.

### 3.3.3 Study 2c Results

As pre-registered, we first tested whether we had replicated our findings from previous studies; indeed, in the condition where the character already agreed with participants' views, participants had more positive attitudes toward perspective-seeker ( $M = .44$ ,  $SD = .77$ ),

compared to the perspective-avoider ( $M = -.06$ ,  $SD = .88$ ),  $t(191) = 4.23$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = [.27, .73].

As pre-registered, next we assessed whether this preference for perspective-seekers was moderated by our second manipulation. A 3 x 2 between-subjects ANOVA with the composite attitude measure as the dependent variable (see Table 10) revealed a significant main effect such that participants overall preferred perspective-takers, and a significant main effect such that participants' attitudes differed depending on whether the characters were on their side, undecided but open to their side, or undecided but did not mention their side. Critically, however, this analysis also revealed a significant interaction between these factors.

**Table 10.**  
*3x2 ANOVA results using attitudes toward vignette character as the dependent variable, Study 2c*

Predictor	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	partial $\eta^2$
Seeks vs. avoids opposing view	1	16.79	<.001	.027
Shares vs. seeks vs. does not mention participants' view	2	8.46	<.001	.027
Interaction	2	7.02	= .001	.023
Error	573			

To probe this interaction, we assessed whether participants preferred the character who sought, rather than avoided, opposing views separately in all three conditions (see Table 11). As noted above, this preference emerged when the character agreed with the participant; it also emerged when the character was undecided but sought participants' views. However, our familiar effect disappeared when the character did not mention views the participant agreed with.

**Table 11.***Results of simple effects analysis for 3x2 ANOVA on attitudes toward vignette character, Study 2c*

Character's attitudes toward opposing stance	Character's attitudes toward participant's stance		
	Initially agree with participant's stance <i>M (SD)</i>	Seek participant's stance <i>M (SD)</i>	Not mention participant's stance <i>M (SD)</i>
Seek opposing view	0.44 (.77)	0.20 (.82)	-0.21 (.81)
Avoid opposing view	-0.06 (.88)	-0.24 (.89)	-0.12 (.87)
Cohen's d (SE)	.50*** (.12)	.44*** (.12)	-.08 (.12)

*Note.* M represents the mean, SD represents standard deviation, SE = standard error. ^ indicates  $p < .1$ . \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ , \*\*\* indicates  $p < .001$

### 3.4 Studies 1a – 2c updated meta-analysis

Since Studies 2a – 2c included additional tests of the main effect documented in Studies 1a-f, we analyzed the data from all studies together to provide more accurate effect size estimates of peoples' attitudes toward ingroup members who seek vs. avoid opposing views. To do this, we compiled data from all conditions across Studies 1a – 2c, except for the control condition from Study 2a, the outgroup condition from Study 2b, and the conditions with undecided characters in Study 2c.

**3.4.1 Overall Attitudes.** We first tested whether participants had more positive attitudes toward the character who sought opposing perspectives compared to the character who avoided opposing perspectives. We ran a multilevel model using character (perspective-seeker coded 1, perspective-avoider coded 0) as a predictor variable, our composite attitude measure as our dependent variable, and including random intercepts for participant, issue, and study. Results

indicated that participants had more positive attitudes toward the individual who took opposing perspectives than the individual who avoided opposing perspectives ( $\beta = 0.95$ ,  $SE = .024$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [.90, 1.00]; Cohen's  $d = 1.27$ , 95% CI [1.20, 1.34]).

**3.4.2 Moderation.** Next, we tested whether the newly introduced measures from Studies 2a-c moderated our effects and also updated our analyses for moderators included across multiple studies. We ran models similar to those described in the Study 1a-f meta-analysis for each moderator (see Table 12). As reported earlier, we found significant but very small moderating effects of participants' ideology and their attitude strength, such that our primary effect was slightly smaller among conservatives and individuals with extreme views<sup>4</sup>. This effect was also significantly but very slightly reduced among participants who believe that their opponents have different information than they do; this was marginally true of participants who believe that their opponents hold different values, or who themselves hold dogmatic views on the issue in question.

In Study 2c, we found the first individual difference moderator that completely eliminated the preference for perspective-seekers: Participants who perceived their outgroup as immoral, and participants who had a hard time imagining valid reasons for their outgroup's beliefs, showed no preference for the perspective-seeker over the perspective-avoider. For both of these variables, participants at +1 *SD* had no preference between the two characters (perceived immorality  $\beta = .05$ , validity of outgroup beliefs immorality  $\beta = .10$ ). Among participants who responded at the scale endpoint for each item, the effect was in the direction of preferring the

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<sup>4</sup> As in Studies 1a-c, we also tested for moderation by participant's stance on the issue and ideological extremity. Participants' (liberal vs. conservative) stance on the focal issue ( $\beta = -0.08$ ,  $SE = 0.024$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = [-0.12, -0.03]) and their ideological extremity ( $\beta = -0.16$ ,  $SE = 0.029$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = [-0.21, -0.10]) were both significant moderators, but also as in the analyses reported here, the overall preference remained significant at all levels of each moderator.

perspective-avoider (perceived immorality  $b = -.18$ ,  $p = .404$ ; validity of outgroup beliefs immorality  $b = -.09$ ,  $p = .660$ ), although this preference was not significant.

**Table 12.**

*Individual Differences predicting Attitudes toward Perspective-Seeking vs. Avoiding character*

Variable	$\beta$	SE	-1 SD	+1 SD
Political Orientation	-0.08** [-0.12, -0.03]	0.024	1.02***	0.87***
Attitude Strength on the vignette issue	-0.13*** [-0.17, -0.08]	0.024	1.07***	0.82***
Dogmatism on the vignette issue	-0.06^ [-0.13, 0.01]	0.036	1.08***	0.95***
Perceived Info Difference	-0.12* [-0.24, -0.01]	0.058	1.05***	0.81***
Perceived Value Difference	-0.10^ [-0.21, 0.02]	0.057	1.03***	0.84***
Perceived Preference Difference	-0.11 [-0.31, 0.10]	0.105	0.73***	0.52***
Perceived Immorality	-0.44*** [-0.68, -0.21]	0.118	0.93***	0.05
Validity of Outgroup Beliefs	-0.41*** [-0.64, -0.18]	0.118	0.92***	0.10
Activism	-0.09** [-0.14, -0.03]	0.028	1.10***	0.93***

*Note.*  $\beta$  represents the standardized beta for the interaction term between the character behavior (seeking vs. avoiding character) and the variable. 95% CI refers to the 95% confidence interval surrounding the standardized beta size. SE represents standard error. Political orientation was standardized within study. ^ indicates  $p < .1$ . \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ . \*\*\* indicates  $p < .001$

### 3.5 Studies 2a – 2c Discussion

In Studies 2a-c we sought to replicate and extend key findings from Studies 1a-f. Across Studies 2a-c we again find that participants have more positive attitudes toward group members who seek out, rather than avoid, opposing perspectives. In other words, people prefer Chris over Terry, and this preference emerged in almost all circumstances.

First, people prefer perspective-seekers like Chris regardless of why he sought opposing views. Specifically, participants' attitudes did not respond to our manipulations of the vignette characters' motives. People liked an ingroup member who sought opposing views for cooperative reasons (Galinsky et al., 2005) as much as one who sought these views for competitive purposes (Pierce et al., 2013). Likewise, people disliked perspective-avoiders like

Terry regardless of why he avoided opposing views. People liked an ingroup member who was certain the opposition's views were wrong as much as an ingroup member who avoided opposing views out of a desire to prevent recalling deeply impactful life experiences. This is surprising given that people who experience trauma are often perceived as victims (Schein & Gray, 2017), thereby eliciting sympathy and compassion from others; however, peoples' attitudes toward this character were no more lenient than toward the dogmatic perspective-avoiding character.

Second, people liked perspective-seeking Chris more than perspective-avoiding Terry even when Chris spoke second, thereby disagreeably contradicting Terry. This suggests that our previous results are not reducible to mere dislike for contradictory individuals. In addition, people still preferred outgroup perspective-seekers over avoiders, and despite the general tendency toward ingroup favoritism (Tajfel, Turner, Austin, & Worchel, 1979), people liked the outgroup perspective-seeker more than the ingroup perspective-avoider. Thus, the preference for perspective-seeking is strong enough to override ingroup favoritism.

Third, people still prefer Chris over Terry when he is not already committed to their side, so long as he signals that he is open to it. Although participants have preferred individuals who established their ingroup membership before deviating from norms by seeking opposing views (Merritt et al., 2010; Tajfel et al., 1979), it seems that ingroup signaling is not a necessary ingredient for this preference to emerge. However, we did find one case where participants' preference for perspective-seekers was eliminated: Participants had no preference between an individual who sought, vs. avoided, views that the participant disagreed with, when that individual was both undecided on that view and also did not seek the participant's views. Thus, it seems the necessary ingredient for observers to like perspective-seekers is that these individuals

must account for their observer's views, by either endorsing or merely seeking them (Bruneau & Saxe, 2012; Reis et al., 2018).

Study 2a also addressed a limitation of Studies 1a-f by introducing a control condition describing a neutral ingroup character. Participants felt similarly positive toward this character compared to an ingroup perspective-seeker, suggesting that the preference for perspective-seeking we have previously observed is due to dislike for perspective-avoiders. Given that people rated both neutral and perspective-seeking ingroup members as warm and competent, it seems that there are neither benefits nor costs to perspective-seeking. In contrast, people rated perspective-avoiding ingroup members as colder and less competent relative to neutral and perspective-seeking ingroup members, suggesting that there are interpersonal costs to avoiding opposing views.

### **4 Study 3**

The goal of Study 3 was to examine whether people also prefer perspective-seeking in live interactions. People might have liked perspective-seeking in our hypothetical vignettes because they could draw on their abstract values like tolerance and rationality (Schwartz, 1992; Ståhl et al., 2016). Conversely, they might dislike perspective-seeking in live interactions, where a specific ingroup member tolerates and considers a specific opposing view firsthand (Kawakami et al., 2009; Trope & Liberman, 2010). Additionally, although the participants in Studies 1a-2c had preferential attitudes toward a hypothetical perspective-seeker, we do not know whether these attitudes lead to preferential behaviors toward perspective-seekers. Do people actually want to spend time interacting with fellow partisans who are interested in understanding opposing views? Study 3 addresses this question by assessing people's preference to interact with live perspective-seekers.



## 4.1 Method

Pre-registered predictions, materials, and the analysis plan for Study 3 are available at <https://osf.io/hnb5s/>.

**4.1.1 Participants.** We recruited 101 participants from the University of British Columbia human subject pool. Before taking part in the study, participants took a pre-screen survey that assessed their age at the time they moved to Canada as well as their stance on Canada's carbon tax. Because confederates presented this study's manipulation through scripted dialogue, we chose to focus on a single issue (the carbon tax) to simplify the scripts. We chose to focus on the carbon tax because it was a hotly contested issue in Canadian politics at the time of the study; indeed, our politically representative sample from Study 1f had as strong attitudes about the carbon tax as they did about welfare, immigration, and affirmative action (see SOM), suggesting it is similarly contentious as the issues we have examined so far. To ensure our participants were familiar with Canadian politics, we pre-registered that we would exclude participants if they moved to Canada after age 14.

We chose to focus on the pro-carbon tax stance because this is the more commonly held stance among our participant population, thus providing us with a larger portion of eligible participants. We therefore also excluded participants who opposed carbon tax policies to ensure that our participants' stance on the carbon tax matched the confederates' scripted stance. All participants passed our only attention check, which asked them to recall the contents of our confederate participants' introduction at the very end of the study. Three participants were excluded for indicating suspicion and three participants were excluded due to technical issues (familiarity with the confederates, confederates straying from script, computer issues), leaving a

final sample of 95 participants. In the final sample, 77% of participants were women (1% non-binary), the average age was  $M = 20.08$  ( $SD = 2.10$ ).

**4.1.2 Procedure.** Participants initially completed a pre-screen survey at least a day before they participated in the main study, which we described as piloting a new cooperation task. This pre-screen assessed participants' age at the time of moving to Canada, their stance and attitude strength on four issues (Canada's carbon tax policies, abortion, welfare, and immigration), and their political ideology on the same 7-point scale used in the preceding studies. These measures were interspersed with several demographic items and measures of participants' attitudes toward other non-political topics (i.e., pets, snacks) to reduce suspicion.

Upon arriving at the study location, participants were joined by two confederate participants waiting for the study. Three pairs of research assistants played the confederates in this study and each confederate pair was matched on their gender and ethnicity. We counterbalanced which research assistant played which confederate role.

The experimenter greeted the participants and confederates, who provided informed consent in a private cubicle, then returned from the cubicles and sat around a central table. The confederates always sat next to each other. The experimenter then formally began the study by handing out notes pages and instructing the participants to spend a few minutes writing an introduction about themselves to read to the others. Here, the experimenter suggested that participants write about a topic that they care about. The confederates' note pages already featured their script, written in very light pencil, which they traced over while the real participants wrote their introductions. When all participants were finished writing, the experimenter pointed out that there was space on their pages to write notes about the other participants' introductions to help them remember these details for later in the study.

The experimenter then had the real participants introduce themselves first so that they would not be focused on their own introductions while the confederates delivered their manipulated introductions. In light of findings demonstrating that people broadly endorse civility even in contentious political contexts, we wanted to reduce the likelihood that people's preference for perspective-seeking is only attributable to civility. Therefore, we wrote the introduction of our perspective-seeking character to be less civil by including established signals of incivility (Brown & Levinson, 1987) such as using imposing language (i.e., *"take action,"*) and a mild insult (*"It's crazy to me"*). When the perspective-seeking confederate spoke, she said the following:

*"Alright – Hi guys, my name is (say name slow to emphasize). I'm a 2nd year psych major, and one thing that I really care about is the environment. I think we should take action to stop climate change and I think taxing people and businesses who use a lot of carbon is a great way to reduce emissions. It's crazy to me that there are people who oppose the carbon tax, but I've been trying to take their perspective, and to understand why they feel that way. Anyway, that's all I had written."*

In contrast, we wrote the perspective-avoiding confederate's script to include aspects of civility such as communicating belonging and acceptance (i.e., by noting shared interests and agreement) as well as hedging one's language (i.e., by expressing uncertainty; Frimer & Skitka, 2018). The perspective-avoiding confederate always spoke directly after the perspective-seeking confederate, and said the following:

*"Okay – hi everyone, my name is (say it then wait a sec for people to write name) and I'm a 3rd year psych major. And it's funny you mentioned the environment, because I wrote down the same thing. I think caring for the environment is really important. And I*

*agree with you that the carbon tax is a great way to try to stop climate change. But I'm not sure that we feel the same about people who don't like the carbon tax. I guess I really don't understand their perspective either, but honestly, I just don't think taking their perspective is the answer here. (shrugs shoulders). But yeah, that's all I've got."*

Following these introductions, the experimenter dismissed the participants back to the private cubicle they went into earlier, reminding them to bring their notes. Participants first entered the names of the other participants in their session; we piped their entries back into the survey later when they responded to questions about the other participants. Next, participants filled out basic demographic measures and filler items to reduce the suspicion they might have felt if the primary measure had come first.

**4.1.3 Measures.** For our primary dependent measure, each participant chose which of the other participants in their session they most wanted to work with on an upcoming cooperation task. In contrast with the attitude measures used in previous studies, this measure requires participants to make a real decision to interact and spend time with a perspective seeker or avoider. This measure also taps into perceptions of warmth and competence. In choosing a partner for a cooperation *task*, participants were motivated to perform well, so they should prefer a partner who is competent. However, in choosing a partner for a *cooperation* task, participants were also motivated to collaborate and get along with their partner, so they should also prefer a partner who is warm. For this measure, participants first read the following prompt:

*For this task, you will work with a partner. Please rank the other participants that are taking part in today's study in the order of who you would like to work with most.*

Participants were instructed to rank the other participants in the order in which they preferred to work with them<sup>5</sup>. To reinforce our manipulation, we also explicitly told participants that they could refer to their notes when making this choice.

Following the ranking measure, participants rated the traits of each other participant in their session. These traits included the same warmth and competence items from previous studies (Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2006), as well as *open-minded*, which served as a manipulation check, and *polite*, which we included as a covariate to show that the preference for perspective-seeking is not reducible to politeness (Frimer & Skitka, 2018). Finally, participants completed a five-item suspicion check and an attention check, after which they were debriefed and granted course credit.

## 4.2 Results

**4.2.1 Manipulation checks.** As a test of whether our manipulation was successful, we conducted paired-samples t-tests comparing ratings of open-mindedness and politeness for the perspective-seeking confederate and perspective-avoiding confederate. Participants rated the perspective-seeking confederate ( $M = 5.56$ ,  $SD = 1.43$ ) as more open-minded than the perspective-avoiding confederate ( $M = 4.56$ ,  $SD = 1.60$ ),  $t(94) = 4.99$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [.60, 1.40], suggesting that our manipulation was successful. However, they also rated perspective-seeking confederate ( $M = 5.73$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ) as more polite than the perspective-avoiding confederate ( $M = 5.54$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ),  $t(94) = 2.02$ ,  $p = .046$ , 95% CI [.00, .38]. Therefore, as specified in our pre-registration, we controlled for politeness in our subsequent analyses.

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<sup>5</sup> Sessions varied in whether they had one or two real participants; in cases where there were two real participants, we excluded the ranking of the other real participant and only compared the rankings of the two confederates.

**4.2.2 Partner choice.** We tested a multilevel binomial logistic model predicting participants' partner choice (preferring to work with the perspective-seeking character was coded as 1, preferring the perspective-avoiding character was coded as 0). This model included the difference in polite ratings (i.e., the politeness rating for the perspective-avoiding confederate subtracted from the perspective-seeking confederate) as a covariate and a random intercept for the research assistant who played the perspective-seeking confederate role<sup>6</sup>. This model revealed that politeness significantly predicted participants' preference,  $b = 0.806$ ,  $SE = 0.336$ ,  $OR = 2.24$ , 95% CI [1.16, 4.33],  $p = .017$ , but the intercept remained significantly different from 0,  $b = 0.935$ ,  $SE = 0.24$ ,  $OR = 2.55$ , 95% CI [1.59, 4.07],  $p < .001$ , suggesting that participants' preference for the perspective-seeking character is not reducible to politeness. Similar results emerged without politeness as a covariate,  $b = 0.959$ ,  $SE = 0.245$ ,  $OR = 2.61$ , 95% CI [1.61, 4.21],  $p < .001$ . Overall, 69 of the 95 participants (73%) chose to work with the perspective-seeking confederate, compared to only 26 (27%) who chose to work with the perspective-avoiding confederate.

**4.2.3 Perceived traits.** Our second pre-registered hypothesis was that participants would perceive the perspective-seeking confederate as warmer than the perspective-avoiding confederate. For our pre-registered test of this hypothesis, we tested a multilevel model where warmth was the outcome variable and confederate role (seeks or avoids opposing perspectives) was the predictor, along with politeness ratings as a covariate and random intercepts for the

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<sup>6</sup> The analysis reported here is what we pre-registered, which was based on our plan to have each confederate work with only one other confederate for the duration of data collection. Under this plan, including an additional random intercept for the research assistant who played the perspective-avoiding role would have been redundant. However, due to changes to the study team during recruitment, some of our confederates ultimately worked with more than one other partner, eliminating that redundancy. We therefore tested an additional model with a second random intercept representing the research assistant who played the perspective-avoiding role; this model returned nearly identical statistics as the pre-registered model.

participant and confederate actor (the name of the RA who played the perspective-taker). The perspective-seeking character was perceived as marginally warmer than the perspective-avoiding character,  $\beta = .13$ ,  $SE = .068$ , 95% CI  $[-.00, .26]$ ,  $p = .059$ , though politeness was a better predictor of warmth ratings ( $\beta = .73$ ,  $SE = .046$ , 95% CI  $[.63, .82]$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Next, we tested the same multilevel model described above using competence as the outcome variable to determine whether competence perceptions differed between the perspective-seeking and avoiding confederates. Controlling for politeness, the perspective-seeking confederate was rated as less competent than the perspective-avoiding confederate,  $\beta = -.17$ ,  $SE = .067$ , 95% CI  $[-.30, -.04]$ ,  $p = .012$ , and politeness also marginally predicted ratings of competence  $\beta = .11$ ,  $SE = .057$ , 95% CI  $[-.03, .26]$ ,  $p = .059$ .

Our third pre-registered hypothesis concerned whether warmth or competence best predicted participants' partner choice. Here, we tested our pre-registered multilevel binomial model with partner choice as the outcome variable, the difference in warmth ratings between the two characters (i.e., perspective-seeking confederate warmth – perspective-avoiding) and the difference in competence ratings between the two characters as our predictors, and a random intercept for the research assistant who played the perspective-king confederate role. This model revealed perceiving the perspective-seeking confederate as warmer than the perspective-avoiding confederate predicted choosing the perspective-seeking confederate,  $b = 1.35$ ,  $SE = .321$ ,  $OR = 3.85$ , 95% CI  $[2.05, 7.22]$ ,  $p < .001$ , whereas the competence difference did not predict partner choice,  $b = -.23$ ,  $SE = .41$ ,  $OR = .80$ , 95% CI  $[.36, 1.77]$ ,  $p = .578$ .

The preceding analyses portray warmth as a more plausible mediator of people's preference to work with the perspective-seeker. Thus, we conducted an exploratory test to determine whether warmth, as well as competence, accounted for indirect effects. We conducted

separate and parallel models for both warmth and competence (see Table 13). Warmth partially mediated differences in attitudes between the conditions, though this effect only emerged in the parallel mediation, and was marginally significant. As in previous studies, a significant direct effect remained after accounting for warmth and competence.

**Table 13.**

*Results of warmth and competence separate and parallel mediation analyses, Study 3*

Mediator	Character predicting mediator <i>b</i> ( <i>SE</i> )	Mediator predicting attitudes <i>b</i> ( <i>SE</i> )	Indirect effect <i>b</i> ( <i>SE</i> )	Direct effect <i>b</i> ( <i>SE</i> )
Warmth (separate)	0.271 <sup>^</sup> (.141)	0.067* (.033)	0.018 (.013)	0.434*** (.065)
Competence (separate)	-0.124 (.120)	-0.028 (.039)	0.003 (.006)	0.449*** (.065)
Warmth (parallel)	0.271 <sup>^</sup> (.141)	0.110** (.032)	0.030 <sup>^</sup> (.018)	0.411*** (.064)
Competence (parallel)	-0.124 (.120)	-0.096* (.038)	0.012 (.012)	

*Note.* SE represents standard error. <sup>^</sup> indicates  $p < .1$ . \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ , \*\*\* indicates  $p < .001$ .

### 4.3 Discussion

Study 3 extends our previous findings by demonstrating that people prefer political ingroup members who seek opposing perspectives, even in real interactions. Whereas participants in the previous online studies rated hypothetical perspective-seekers more positively, participants in the present study opted to spend time working with a real perspective-seeker. This suggests our past findings were not merely a quirk of hypothetical online lab studies, but rather generalize to concrete in-person scenarios. Further, our findings suggest the preference for perspective-seeking could have real implications for interpersonal interactions: people may interact more with group members who seek opposing views and exclude group members who avoid opposing views.

Study 3 also extends previous findings that people across the political spectrum like civility (Frimer & Skitka, 2018). Participants rated the perspective-seeking confederate as more polite than the perspective-avoiding character; in turn, perceiving a confederate as more polite



predicted choosing to work with that confederate. Thus, the present results suggest that people not only like polite, civil individuals, but also prefer to interact with such individuals. However, the preference for working with the perspective-seeking confederate was independent from the politeness effects, occurring even when we controlled for politeness.

This study is limited by its focus on a single issue and recruitment of participants with a liberal stance on this issue. Economic issues like the carbon tax are typically less divisive and moralized (Crawford, Brandt, Inbar, Chambers, & Motyl, 2017), so participants may be more receptive to opposing views on this issue. Participants with liberal stances displayed a greater preference for perspective-seeking in Studies 1a-f, so our sample of individuals with exclusively liberal stances might have a stronger preference for perspective-seeking. However, the moderating role of ideology was so small in previous studies that we speculate it is likely that conservatives too would prefer a perspective-seeker in real life.

## **5 General Discussion**

Over the past two decades, growing political polarization has led to increasing animosity between people with opposing political views. One potential way to reduce polarization is through encouraging people to seek out and understand opposing political views. Seeking opposing views leads to objectively desirable outcomes like helping people find common ground (Galinsky et al., 2008) and make informed political decisions (Golman et al., 2017). However, previous research has not examined the social desirability of perspective-seeking: do we actually like it when our fellow group members seek out political views that we hate?

The present research addresses this question by providing the first evidence that people do in fact prefer when others who agree with them also seek out, rather than avoid, the views of their shared political opponents. We found this effect behaviorally as well as on self-report

measures, and it was reliably robust, emerging across various political issues, regardless of experimental designs (within vs. between subjects, hypothetical vignettes vs. real-life interactions), in American and Canadian samples, and even when we statistically or experimentally controlled for whether the perspective-seeker seemed polite or contrarian. It also emerged regardless of whether perspective-seeking was verbally claimed or behavioral, regardless of the perspective-seeker's motivation for engaging with opposing views, and even when the perspective-seeker was not already committed to people's own views, but merely wanted to hear about them as well. One study found that people may not in fact have a preference for perspective-seekers as much as they have an aversion to perspective-avoiders. Moreover, in three studies we found that people preferred perspective-seekers because they seemed more competent, moral, and warmer than perspective-avoiders.

We tested whether these preferences were moderated by various aspects of perceivers' beliefs. Consistent with extant theorizing, conservatives and extremists showed a slightly weaker preference for perspective-seeking compared to their liberal and moderate counterparts (respectively); however, across the majority of variables we tested, virtually all participants strongly preferred the perspective-seeker over the perspective-avoider. We found only two exceptions to this pattern. In one case, participants who thought their political opponents were immoral and participants who could not fathom legitimate reasons for the opposing position showed no preference between the perspective-seeker and avoider. In the second case, observers had no preference for perspective-seekers over avoiders when these individuals were undecided on the focal issue and also failed to take the observers' views into account.

### **5.1 People like perspective-seekers because they seem warm, moral, and competent.**

Our findings supported the first of the two hypotheses we began with. People like and prefer to spend time with warm, moral, and competent individuals (Fiske et al., 2006; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). Because perspective-seekers might seem more tolerant (Galinsky et al., 2005), moral (Bloom, 2017), and informed (Golman et al., 2017) than perspective-avoiders, we predicted people might prefer them. Indeed, people rated perspective-seekers as warmer, more moral, and more competent, and in turn preferred them over perspective-avoiders. Thus, the present work supports the idea that perspective-seeking is both an objectively *and* socially desirable behavior, whereas perspective-avoiding is objectively and socially undesirable.

## **5.2 People like perspective-seeking, even in the political domain**

However, our findings contradicted the second of our two hypotheses. People detest political outgroups (Parker & Janoff-Bulman, 2013) and want members of their own political group to be loyal and committed (Janoff-Bulman & Carnes, 2013). Perspective-avoiders might seem more committed to their group (Jordan et al., 2017) and less interested in tolerating and learning detested outgroup views (Ryan, 2017; Tetlock et al., 2000). Thus, we predicted that people might prefer perspective-avoiders over perspective-seekers. However, we found that people liked ingroup perspective-seekers much more than ingroup perspective-avoiders: Rather than demanding loyalty from their fellow partisans, as suggested by past researchers (Parker & Janoff-Bulman, 2013), we find that people instead condemn fellow partisans who refuse to hear out opposing views. To explain this apparent contradiction, we suggest a more nuanced account of when people like warmth and competence in the political domain.

**5.2.1 People may approve of learning about opposing perspectives, but not of seriously considering them.** One possibility is that people might like competence in the political domain when it involves *learning* the opposition's political views, but not when it involves

*rationally deliberating* those views. After all, people typically dislike individuals who are willing to entertain and deliberate immoral ideas (Phillips & Cushman, 2017; Tetlock, 2003). However, people also want others to form their beliefs by gathering and evaluating evidence (Ståhl et al., 2016). Indeed, perspective-seekers are more likely to learn and evaluate new ideas (Golman et al., 2017), but people might perceive perspective-seekers as falling short of validating these views by deliberating their merits. Perhaps perspective-seekers reap the benefits of *knowing thy enemy* while also avoiding the costs of entertaining and validating detested views.

**5.2.2 People may approve of tolerance and civility toward outgroups, but not compromise.** Another possibility is that people might like warmth in the political domain when it promotes tolerant, polite interactions with the opposition, but not when it involves compromising with them. People strongly dislike opposing views (Pew Research Center, 2014) and condemn fellow partisans who are willing to compromise with the political opposition (Ryan, 2017). However, people in Western cultures believe it is important to treat groups who have different beliefs and traditions with tolerance and civility (Schwartz, 1992), even when we fiercely disagree with them. Nonetheless, tolerating another group is different from compromising with or otherwise validating their beliefs (Brown, 2009; Verkuyten & Yogeeswaran, 2017). In this sense, people might interpret a perspective-seeking group member as tolerant yet uncompromising. Perhaps perspective-seekers reap the benefits of appearing tolerant and civil toward their political opponents while also avoiding the costs of actively compromising with or conceding to their opponents' views.

### **5.3 Extending theories of ideologically-based intolerance.**

We expected conservatives and extremists would like perspective-seeking less than liberals and moderates. Some scholars argue that conservatives are more prejudiced toward

dissimilar outgroups (Jost et al., 2003), yet other scholars argue that this prejudice is prevalent in individuals with especially strong, extreme attitudes, regardless of their ideology (Brandt et al., 2014; van Prooijen & Krouwel, 2017; though see Jost, 2017). We found some support for both of these ideas, as liberals and moderates showed a stronger preference for perspective-seekers compared to conservatives and extremists (respectively). Nonetheless, people of all ideological bends strongly preferred perspective-seekers. The present research builds on these theories by demonstrating that intolerance of outgroup members does not extend to intolerance of ingroup members who seek to understand the outgroup. In addition to extending these theories, our findings also pose a challenge to them: if conservatives and extremists are more prejudiced against outgroups, then why do they like group members who seek out outgroup views, and dislike group members who avoid these views?

Though we found that intolerance of perspective-seekers was not strongly related to a particular ideology or extreme views, our findings suggest that intolerance was related to beliefs about the morality one's outgroup and the validity of their views. These measures were distinct from ideology ( $r$ 's < .16) and attitude strength ( $r$ 's < .38; see SOM) and predicted prejudicial attitudes, even towards ingroup members. Beyond intolerance of ingroup members, future research could benefit from examining the utility of these measures in predicting prejudice and intolerance toward outgroups.

#### **5.4 When might people dislike perspective-seekers?**

People seem to endorse perspective-seeking (Bloom, 2017; Schwartz, 1992), and we find this is even true for opposing political perspectives. Nonetheless, there are certainly times when people object to perspective-seeking (Fiske & Tetlock, 1997; Palo, 2017). Indeed, when we began this research, we chose to focus on politics because we expected it was a context where

people might not endorse understanding and tolerating diverse beliefs. Although our expectations were incorrect, we offer some speculative thoughts about specific cases when people might dislike perspective-seekers. For example, given the two measures that fully moderated our effects, people might dislike perspective-seeking when the target's perspective is considered deeply immoral (i.e., pedophiles, white supremacists), or founded on invalid beliefs (i.e., flat-earthers, holocaust deniers). In addition, whereas political beliefs are divisive and debated, unanimous beliefs provide people with a sense of shared reality (Jost, Ledgerwood, & Hardin, 2008) and are not up for debate. As a result, people might dislike someone who is willing to seek out ideas that contradict consensus and undermine their sense of shared reality. Future research should identify perspectives that people believe are not worth seeking, and the features that preclude these perspectives from consideration.

Another possibility is that people may dislike perspective-seekers with whom they already have a close relationship. People often form relationships with others based on shared values and beliefs (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2002), and these relationships can provide individuals with a deep source of meaning (Heine, Proulx, & Vohs, 2006). As a result, witnessing a close friend seek out opposing values and beliefs might threaten the shared foundation of your friendship. In addition, people are highly invested in continuing close relationships, and are more willing to express anger toward close others to enforce better behavior in the future (Fischer & Roseman, 2007). People also expect close relational partners to take their side in times of conflict (DeScioli & Kurzban, 2009). As a result, when your close friend seeks out opposing political views, you might feel she is failing to take your side, and you might angrily request that she reconsider her loyalties. Although people like hypothetical and

unfamiliar perspective-seekers, future research should assess whether this is still the case when close others seek out opposing political views.

People might also have negative attitudes toward perspective-seeking in outrage-friendly contexts such as social media platforms. People express stronger outrage when fellow group members are also outraged (Konishi, Oe, Shimizu, Tanaka, & Ohtsubo, 2017). Most of our participants reported their attitudes in private, so their politicized social identities were less salient (Brewer & Gardner, 1996), which could have discouraged expressions of outrage toward deviant group members (Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988). Although this is less true of participants in Study 3 who were in a room with politically like-minded confederates, psychology experiments are generally not conducive to outrage either. In contrast, social media websites typically feature networks of politically like-minded individuals (Dehghani et al., 2016; Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1995) who openly voice their political beliefs. Outrage toward political opponents is prevalent on social media (Crockett, 2017), though it is unclear whether this extends to outrage toward group members who consider opposing political views. Thus, it would be fruitful for future research to assess attitudes toward perspective-seekers on social media.

## **5.5 Implications for political relations.**

Beyond their theoretical implications, the present findings have practical implications for improving relations between political foes. Given that people are more likely to seek out opposing views when it is socially desirable to do so (Thomas & Maio, 2008; Zaki, 2014), the present findings suggest that people should feel strong social motivations to seek out opposing political views. In turn, people who seek other views typically find it easier to get along with their political foes (Galinsky et al., 2008), and make better-informed decisions when choosing which policies to support (Golman et al., 2017). By emphasizing the social desirability of

perspective-seeking, and the undesirability of perspective-avoiding, the present results have promising implications for improving political relations.

Although most participants in our studies found it socially desirable to seek opposing perspectives, it is unclear whether people expect others to strongly prefer perspective-seeking. Given the plethora of hostile and extreme political views in modern media (Mullainathan & Shleifer, 2005), people might mistakenly anticipate that others will condemn perspective-seeking. As a result, people might avoid opposing views to avoid social condemnation (Prentice & Miller, 1993), even though our results suggest that most people privately condemn perspective-avoiding. Thus, future research should assess whether individuals accurately expect that others will prefer perspective-seeking, and whether these expectations cause people to seek or avoid opposing views.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

The ability to understand other perspectives plays a fundamental role in human social relationships (Galinsky et al., 2005; Preston & de Waal, 2001) and learning (Golman et al., 2017; Kunda, 1990). These benefits could help combat growing political polarization (Pew Research Center, 2014). Though perspective-seeking is *objectively* desirable, it is unclear whether people think such behavior is *socially* desirable, especially when it involves seeking opposing political perspectives. Across ten studies, people strongly preferred perspective-seekers compared to perspective-avoiders. This was the case even for divisive political topics, regardless of the perspective-seeker's group affiliation, and why the perspective-seeker wanted to understand other views. The preference for perspective-seeking also has behavioral consequences, as people socially exclude perspective-avoiders. These findings also extend theories of political intolerance, suggesting that people of all ideological backgrounds like perspective-seeking.



These findings could inform interventions to promote perspective-seeking and improve people's willingness to understand their ideological opponents. By understanding people's attitudes toward political perspective-seeking, we step closer to reducing ideological conflict and improving political relations.

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