What does it mean to have a politicized identity?

An investigation of politicization during the 2012 U.S. Presidential Elections

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**Activist Identity**

**Definition:**
- Shared grievance
- Power struggle
- Societal support

**Process:**
- Qualitative change in the self

Simon & Klandermans (2001)
Identification: strength of relation

Identity content: Meaning

Activist Identity

motivated
fun
reader

Athletic
Outline:

- **Study 1**: What identity changes take place during politicization?
- **Study 2**: What type of content characterizes politicized identities?
1. Longitudinal Method

> Sample

- 762 participants
  - 462 female, 268 male, 32 unspecified
  - Age 18-83 (M= 33.23, SD = 12.69)
  - 51% Democrat, 21% Republican 10% Libertarian, 7% other, 12% No preference)
2. Identity content measure

- Associative Recall Task (ART)
  1. Personal identity
  2. Party-activist identity

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Study 1: What identity changes take place during politicization?
Study 1: Sub Sample

115 Participants
- 79 female, 36 male
- Age 18-83 (M = 36.29, SD = 14.29)
- 60% (65.2%) Democratic
- 22.60% (21.7%) Republican
- 8.7% (5%) Libertarian
- 7% (2.6%) Green and 1.7% (0%) other.
- All self-label as non politicized at T1

Group 1: Unpoliticized
87 pps

NOT Party activist

T1

T2

T3

NOT Party activist

Voted
Hypotheses

**Integration hypothesis:** More integration between content of activist & personal Identities in politicized individuals (v. non-politicized).
Hypotheses

**Integration hypothesis**: More integration between content of activist & personal Identities in politicized individuals (v. non-politicized).

**Integration-action hypothesis**: Integration between content of activist & personal Identities predicts engagement in action.
Study 1: Results

- 1. Integration hypothesis
- 2. Integration-Action hypothesis
Study 1: Results

> 1. Integration hypothesis

> 2. Integration-Action hypothesis
Figure 1. Total personal and activist identity content overlap for politicized and non-politicized participants, over-time. Standard errors are 95% confidence intervals.
Predicting politicization (DV)

Step 1
Identity content overlap T1

Figure 2. Plot of exponents from logistic regression model predicting shift in self-labelled politicization from identity content overlap at T1 and T2.
Study 1: Results

1. Integration hypothesis

2. Integration-Action hypothesis
Predicting party activism (DV)

IV:
- Identity content overlap T1
- Identity content overlap T2

Figure 3. Plot of coefficients from regression model predicting engagement in action promoting one’s party at T2 (controlling for T1) from identity content overlap at T1 and T2
Study 1: Conclusion

Politicized individuals have more integrated identities.

Identity content can play a key role explaining change.
Study 2: What type of content characterizes politicized identities?
Study 2: What type of content characterizes politicized identities?

Is an activist identity moral?

Prior literature highlights Moral emotions; Moral mediators; Moral constraints
Hercus, 1999; van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, & Leach, 2004; Thomas & Mcqarty, 2009; Thomas, McGarty & Mavor, 2009; Drury & Reicher, 2005; Simon, & Ruhs, 2008; Simon & Grabow, 2010; Klandermans, Van der Toorn & Van Stekelenburg, 2008; Phalet, Baysu & Verkuyten, 2010; Simon & Stürmer, 2004
Method

- 69 Democratic supporters:
  - 50 female, 19 male
  - Age 19-83 (M = 36.36, SD = 14.46)
Method

> 69 Democratic supporters:

Group 1: Non-activist  
49 pps
Hypotheses

Moral-content hypothesis: Activists perceive more moral content in activist identities than non-activists.

Code:
- Morals
- Competence
- Warmth
Hypotheses

Activist
- honest
- skilled
- motivated

Personal
- motivated
- kind
- smart
- warm

Code:
- Morals
- Competence
- Warmth

*Moral-bridges hypothesis*: moral overlap between personal and activist identities will predict seeing the self as an activist.

*Moral-action hypothesis*: morals overlap between personal and activist identities will predict engagement in party action.
Study 2: Results

1. Moral Content hypothesis

2. Moral-bridges hypothesis

3. Moral-action hypothesis
Study 2: Results

1. Moral Content hypothesis

2. Moral-bridges hypothesis

3. Moral-action hypothesis
Note. Non-activist n=49; Activist n=20, 95% CI around estimate
Note. Non-activist n=49; Activist n=20. 95% CI around estimate.
Study 2: Results

1. Moral Content hypothesis

2. Moral-bridges hypothesis

3. Moral-action hypothesis
Logistic Regression: Predicting Seeing the self as an activist (DV)

T1:

Step 1
Overlap:

Step 2
Overlap:
Moral overlap:
Logistic Regression: Predicting Seeing the self as an activist (DV)

T2:

- **Step 1**
  - Overlap: $B = 0.31$, $SE = 0.16$, $W \ (1) = 3.63^\$, $Exp \ = \ 1.36$

- **Step 2**
  - Overlap: $B = 0.12$, $SE = 0.22$, $W \ (1) = 0.30$, $Exp \ = \ 1.13$
  - Moral overlap: $B = 1.62$, $SE = 0.90$, $W \ (1) = 3.25^\$, $Exp \ = \ 5.05$
Study 2: Results

1. Moral Content hypothesis

2. Moral-bridges hypothesis

3. Moral-action hypothesis
Predicting party activism (DV)

IV:
- Identity content overlap T1
- Moral identity content overlap T1

*Figure 4.* Plot of coefficients from regression model predicting engagement in action promoting one’s party at T2 (controlling for T1) from general and moral identity content overlap at T1
Generalizability: Republicans

69 Participants
- 26 politicized, 43 unpolticized at T2
- 47 female, 22 male
- Age 19-75 (M= 39.80, SD = 14.77)

- Moral content hypothesis: Replicates
- Moral bridges hypothesis: Some support
- Moral action hypothesis: Replicates
Study 2: Conclusion

➤ Moral overlap is important for how activists see the self
➤ ...But has weaker motivational power
➤ Strong evidence for morals in the activist identity.
Final Conclusion

› Politicization is a process of qualitative change

› Unconstrained content recall gives results!
Thank you for your attention!

Questions?...
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<th>moral</th>
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<tr>
<td>trustworthy (16.2), (20.2), (21.1), (21.2), (22.i), (22.1), (22.2), (4.1), (8.1), (Felicity, paper 30), (F, 30), (6.1), (1.1), (5.1), (4.1 psyc), (5.2 psyc), (8)</td>
<td>Intelligent (1) (15.1), (15.4), (16.2), (21.1), (21.3) (Felicity, paper 30), (21.2), (22.1) (22.3), (23.1), (4.1), (5.1), (6.1), (F,30, example), (2.6 psyc), (4.1 psyc) (3.i psyc info)</td>
<td>friendly (1) (21.2), (22.1), (23.1), (4.1), (30.i) (F, 30), (F, 30), (13.3) (5) (6) (8r?) (15) (16) (22.i) (3.i psyc info)</td>
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<td>sincere (16.2), (20.2), (21.1), (21.2), (22.i), (22.1), (22.2), (23.1), (4.1), (8.1), (F, 30), (1.1), (5.1), (6.1), honest (16.2), (22.i), (22.1), (22.2), (23.1), (4.1), (8.1), (Felicity, paper 30), (F, 30), (6.1), (F, 31), (2.1, 2.3 psyc)</td>
<td>capable (1) (15.1), (21.2), (22.3), (8.1) (16) (22.1)</td>
<td>kind (1) (21.2), (23.1), (F, 30), (5.3 psyc) (5) (6) (3.i psyc info) (5.1 psyc info)</td>
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<td>correct (1) (F, 30), (2.2 psyc)</td>
<td>efficient (1) (15.1), (22.1) (22.3), (16 skilfullness (16.2), (22.1) (22.3), (6.1), (Felicity, paper 30), (5) (8r?) (3.i psyc info)</td>
<td>likeability (1) (20.2), (21.2), (23.1), (F, 30), (F, 30), (4.1 psyc) (5) (6) (15) (16) (21) (22.i) (22.1) (4.1 psyc info)</td>
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<td>moral (13.3) (8r?) (15) (4.1 psyc info)</td>
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<td>9 organized (4.1), (8r?)</td>
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