The Impact of Economic and Psychological Metrics on Political Decision-Making

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Purpose
This research was undertaken with the goal of improving our understanding of complex economic and psychological phenomena that underlie political decisions, in order to better serve Maine citizens and policy-makers.

Background
This analysis used data collected by the Sustainability Solutions Initiative’s (SSI) 2013 Maine Energy Survey. Over 2,000 participants answered an inventory of questions regarding recreational, environmental, psychological and economic behaviors. Two items, shown below, were used to determine political alignment measuring fiscal and social leanings.

Methods
All analysis conducted on this data was performed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Means, ANOVA, and Post-Hoc tests were utilized. All responses were on modified Likert Scales, wherein ‘1’ indicated a liberal response, and ‘7’ indicated a conservative response.

Psychological
Tolerance for Disagreement
“I prefer interacting with people whose opinions are very different from my own.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
<th>F-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal x Liberal</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>Conservative x Conservative</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>5.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal x Liberal</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>Moderate x Moderate</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal x Conservative</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>Conservative x Conservative</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Faith in Academia
Agreement from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) with…

Economic
Agreement from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) with…

Significant Points
- There were significant differences in the recreation behavior of political groupings.
- There were significant differences in the education, income and gender of political groupings.

Discussion
The Liberal x Conservative group’s significantly different mean income may underline their low economic stressor scores.

In general, Conservatives are more tolerant of disagreement – however, they also demonstrate lower levels of trust in academic institutions. Liberals’ faith in academia may have motivated the significant difference found between Liberal and Conservative participants’ belief in climate change.

Acknowledgements
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