

Why Conservatives Hate Liberals and Vice Versa

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One idea gaining currency among psychologists and political scientists is that Democrats and Republicans are politically polarized because they are fundamentally different. As one science journalist concluded after reviewing the literature: "A large body of political scientists and political psychologists now concur that liberals and conservatives disagree about politics in part because they are different people at the level of personality, psychology and even traits like physiology and genetics."

Americans are certainly polarized. According to a recent Pew Research Center poll, 36% of Republicans and 27% of Democrats see the opposing party as a threat to the nation's well-being. But are differences in biology and personality really responsible for political polarization? Perhaps in part. Liberals and conservatives obviously have different ideologies, and research indicates that these ideological differences are correlated with differences in biology and personality.

Research published in *Current Biology*, for example, found that, [on the one hand], **conservatism was associated with increased gray matter in the right amygdala.**

On the other hand, **liberalism was associated with increased gray matter volume in the anterior cingulate cortex.**

Other research has found **personality differences** such that **conservatives have a greater need for order, structure and authority than do liberals....**
