

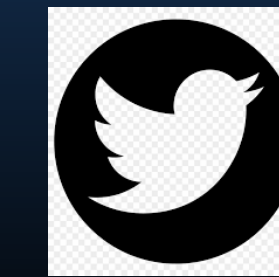


# Does Priming Utopian and Dystopian Mindsets affect Liberals and Conservatives Differently?

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## Background

Are liberals and conservatives equally likely or unlikely to engage in activism when adopting a utopian or dystopian mindset?

- **Motivated Cognition:** conservatives are fearful, and have higher need for closure and security (Jost et al., 2017)
- **Moral Motives:** conservatives rely more on avoidance morality while liberals rely more on approach morality (Janoff-Bulman et al., 2007)

Are liberals and conservatives equally likely to experience a negativity bias for engagement in activism?

- **Negativity bias:** people are more likely to avoid the bad than they are to approach the good (Janoff-Bulman et al., 2009)
- Evidence suggests Motivated Cognition and Moral Motives theories don't always hold
  - Liberals in left-wing countries are more likely to have security and safety concerns compared to conservatives (Federico & Malka, 2018)
  - Approach and avoidance motivators did not differentially predict activist intentions for liberals and conservatives for same-sex marriage and gun-control (Skitka, Hanson, & Wisneski, 2017)

## Methodology

### Study 1

CloudResearch:  
799 Participants  
62.5% female; 81.0% White  
 $M_{age} = 50.51, SD_{age} = 17.50$

Future writing task about  
Black Lives Matter Movement (BLM) or  
Blue Lives Matter:  
Utopian outcome  
Dystopian outcome  
Control outcome

#### Measures:

Political orientation  
-9 = Very Liberal, 9 = Very Conservative  
Positive Emotions & Negative Emotions  
1 not at all, 9 a great deal  
Activist Intentions  
1 not at all willing, 9 very willing

### Study 2

CloudResearch:  
526 Participants  
47.7% female; 76.4% White  
 $M_{age} = 40.39, SD_{age} = 12.21$

Future writing task before  
2020 Election:  
Utopian outcome  
Dystopian outcome  
Control outcome (tech-related future)

#### Measures:

Political orientation  
-4 = Very Liberal, 4 = Very Conservative  
Positive Emotions & Negative Emotions  
1 not at all, 5 completely  
Activist Intentions  
1 not at all willing, 4 very willing

Liberals and conservatives endorsed stronger activist intentions when feeling positive emotions after a utopian outlook and negative emotions after a dystopian outlook, however **both positive and negative emotional pathways were stronger for conservatives.**

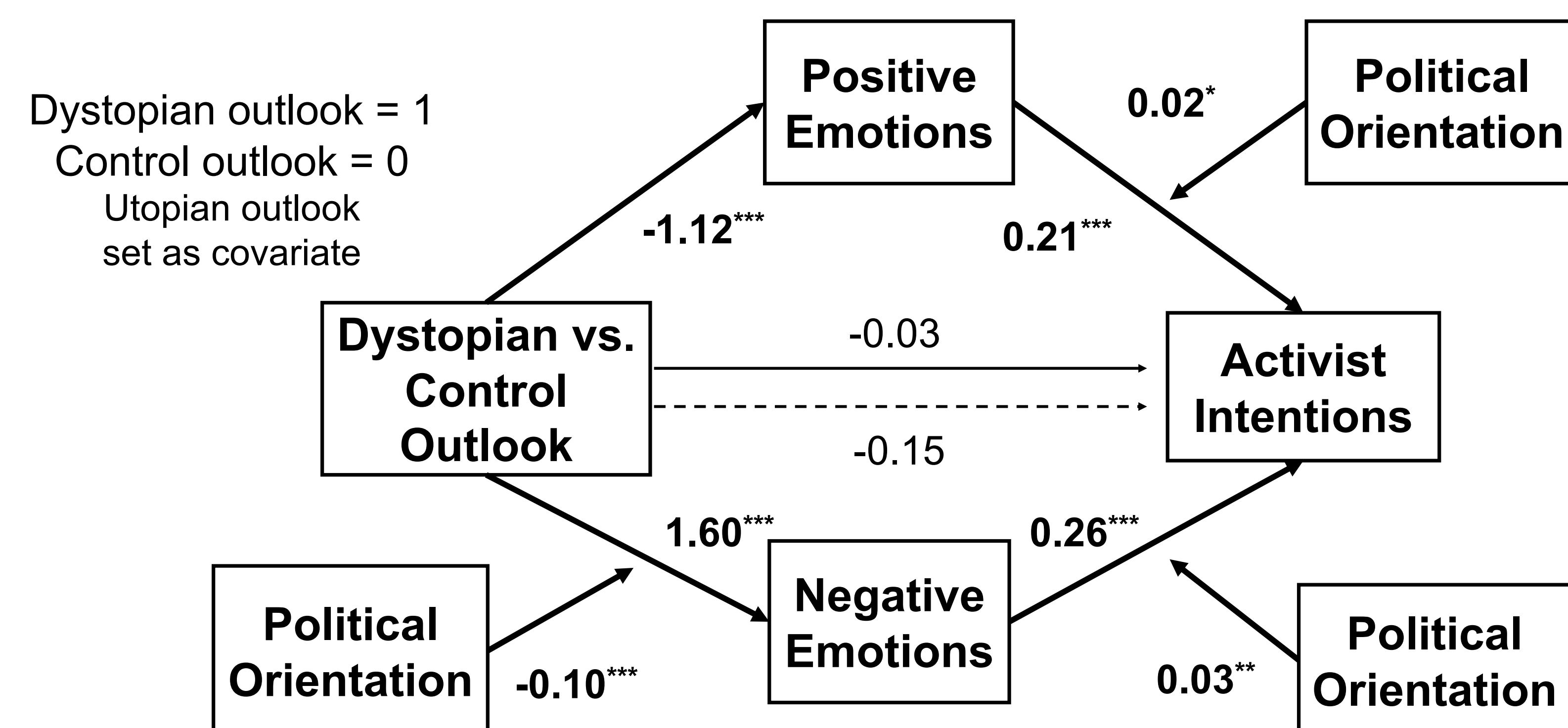
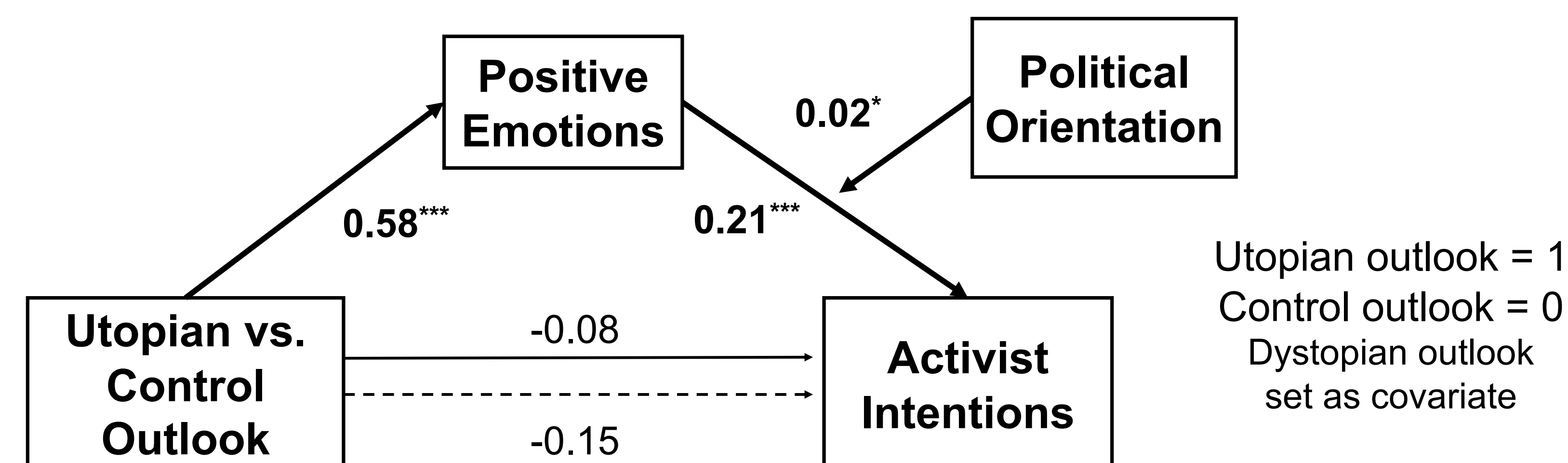
## Analyses

- We tested 'a' and 'b' pathways through hierarchical regression prior to final models (Baron & Kenny, 1986)
- Non-significant mediators and moderators were excluded
- Mediators and moderators that explain less than 1% variance have un-bolded path lines

### Study 1

- There were no significant model pathways for utopia vs control or dystopia vs control for Study 1

### Study 2



\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$

## Results

### Study 1

- Futures imagined for BLM or Blue Lives Matter:
  - Neither utopian nor dystopian outlook type predicted activist intentions beyond a control outlook

### Study 2

- Futures imagined before the 2020 election:
  - The **utopian outlook (vs. control) predicted stronger activist intentions through stronger positive emotions, result that was stronger for conservatives**,  $\beta = 0.14$ ,  $CI = [0.06, 0.24]$ , than liberals,  $\beta = 0.08$ ,  $CI = [0.01, 0.17]$
  - The **dystopian outlook condition (vs. control) predicted stronger activist intentions through stronger negative emotions, a result that was stronger for conservatives**,  $\beta = 0.47$ ,  $CI = [0.31, 0.66]$ , than liberals,  $\beta = 0.29$ ,  $CI = [0.08, 0.49]$
  - The **dystopian outlook (vs. control) predicted weaker activist intentions through weaker positive emotions, a result that was stronger for conservatives**,  $\beta = -0.27$ ,  $CI = [-0.41, -0.16]$ , than liberals,  $\beta = -0.17$ ,  $CI = [-0.30, -0.03]$

## Discussion

Findings support the idea that both utopian and dystopian outlooks motivate activist intentions in specific contexts

- Approach-oriented, utopian, outlooks compared to a control outlook, were motivating for activist intentions for the 2020 election indirectly through their effects on positive emotions
  - This relationship was stronger for conservatives compared to liberals, a findings at odds with motivated cognition and moral motives theories
- Avoidance-oriented, dystopian, outlooks compared to control outlooks, were motivating for activist intentions for the 2020 election through negative emotions
  - This relationship was stronger for conservatives compared to liberals, providing some support for motivated cognition and moral motives theories
- Positive outlooks and negative outlooks are motivating for political engagement in some contexts but not others
  - Whereas positive and negative outcomes were motivating through emotional pathways for the 2020 election, they were not for BLM protests.
  - Conservatives were more sensitive to emotional effects of motivational outlooks on activist intentions than liberals