Acting with Conviction: On the Roles of Moral and Religious Convictions in the Minnesota
Same-Sex Marriage Constitutional Amendment Vote

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Abstract

We investigated how moral and religious convictions relate to voting on a same-sex marriage constitutional amendment. Using data collected before and after people voted on a state constitutional amendment, we examined the psychological conditions under which moral beliefs influence political choice. Voters high in purity-based moral concerns were more likely to vote to ban same-sex marriage, and voters high in fairness-based moral concerns were more likely to vote against banning same-sex marriage. These concerns were particularly important for voters with a moral or religious conviction regarding same-sex marriage. Furthermore, moral and religious convictions moderated the effect of the vote outcome on procedural and outcome fairness perceptions. These results build on prior theory and research in political and moral psychology by highlighting the importance of convictions when understanding the link between moral beliefs and political choice.

Keywords: Moral beliefs, voting, moral and religious convictions, fairness concerns, purity concerns

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Beliefs surrounding many political and social issues are often discussed and understood in moral terms (Mooney & Schuldt, 2008). For example, opponents of same-sex marriage commonly emphasize their moral beliefs that homosexuality is impure, unnatural, and irreligious (Fone, 2000; Whitley, 2009). In contrast, supporters of same-sex marriage commonly emphasize the moral imperative of egalitarianism (Loftus, 2001). For both sets of people, attitudes about same-sex marriage may be associated with moral or religious conviction about right and wrong (e.g., Morgan, Skitka, & Wisnecki, 2010). However, prior work has rarely investigated the conditions under which, or the people for whom, moral considerations are expected to translate into specific political preferences. Thus, same-sex marriage is a valuable context to examine the social-psychological conditions under which moral beliefs influence political choice, and the psychological factors that alter the effect of political outcomes on related attitudes.

In November 2012, voters in the state of Minnesota voted on a proposed constitutional amendment to define marriage strictly as a union between one man and one woman. This election offered an opportunity to examine how moral beliefs and convictions about same-sex marriage relate to voter choice, as well as to examine the effect of the outcome of the vote on voters' subsequent beliefs. Using a 2-wave panel design (pre-/post-ballot) and drawing upon theory and research on moral beliefs, we considered how moral foundations such as fairness and purity concerns (Haidt & Graham, 2007; Haidt & Joseph, 2007) influenced how individuals voted on the same-sex marriage ballot in Minnesota. We also extended this line of work by examining whether moral and religious convictions about same-sex marriage moderated the effect of moral foundations on vote choice. Finally, we considered the effect that the ballot

outcome had on fairness beliefs, particularly for people who have moral and religious convictions about same-sex marriage. By linking moral and religious convictions about same-sex marriage to moral foundations, the current work is among the first to integrate these approaches to help us understand *actual* political behavior and the subsequent effect of electoral outcomes on relevant beliefs.

How are Moral and Religious Beliefs Related to Attitudes about Same-Sex Marriage?

Moral concerns are important determinants of political preferences and behavior (Federico, Weber, Ergun, & Hunt, 2013; Franks & Scherr, 2015; Graham et al., 2009; Lakoff, 2008; Weber & Federico, 2013). For example, individuals' attitudes across many political issues are more strongly associated with their moral beliefs than their political ideology (Koleva, Graham, Iyer, Ditto, & Haidt, 2012). Citizens who lack moral concerns commonly associated with their ideological group are less likely to participate in politics (Johnson et al., 2014; Morgan, Skitka, & Wisneski, 2010; Skitka & Bauman, 2008). Because of the important role played by moral belief in motivating and mobilizing political behavior, rhetoric by political elites is commonly crafted to appeal to the distinct moral considerations of their targeted constituencies (Clifford & Jerit, 2013; Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009; Hillygus & Shields, 2008).

Some perspectives on moral beliefs have addressed the origins and variability in moral judgments in terms of evolved, intuitive concerns about care/harm, fairness/reciprocity, loyalty/betrayal, respect for authority/subversion, and purity/degradation (Haidt & Graham, 2007; Haidt & Joseph, 2007). According to moral foundations theory, these five foundations are central to moral judgment, extending across a broad range of political and social issues. Two of the moral foundations (harm/care and fairness/reciprocity) represent general concern for the protection of people from harm and injustice (i.e., *individualizing* foundations). In contrast, the

other three moral foundations (loyalty/betrayal, respect for authority/subversion, and purity/degradation) represent general concern about the preservation, purity, and integration of communal life (i.e., *binding* foundation; Federico et al., 2013).

We extend this work by considering the implications of moral foundations for political behavior related to same-sex marriage. Little research to date has linked moral beliefs to actual behavior surrounding same-sex marriage (Wilkinson & Sagarin, 2010), such as political participation and voting (but see Saucier & Cawman, 2004). Although we expected each moral foundation to be relevant, two moral foundations in particular should be of central importance to citizens' votes on the Minnesota same-sex marriage ballot: fairness and purity. We based these predictions on both the political rhetoric commonly employed by advocates and opponents of same-sex marriage as well as empirical research linking moral foundations to political ideology, religiosity, and attitudes toward lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals.

People who endorse the fairness foundation should be more sensitive to unequal or unfair treatment of others, and hence should be more likely to vote in support of same-sex marriage. In contrast, the experience of disgust, a purity-based emotion, is associated with negative lesbian, gay, and bisexual attitudes (Olatunji, 2008), religiosity (Haidt & Joseph, 2007) and conservative moral judgment (Eskine, Kacinik, & Prinz, 2011; Schnall, Benton, & Harvey, 2008). We therefore expect individuals preoccupied with concerns about purity to be more likely to vote against same-sex marriage.

Moderating Role of Moral and Religion Convictions for Predicting Ballot Vote

Prior work has rarely investigated the characteristics of individuals for whom general moral foundations are expected to translate into political behavior. It is likely that moral or religious beliefs will predict ballot voting only among individuals whose attitudes toward same-

sex marriage are based on fundamental moral or religious conviction about right and wrong (e.g., Morgan et al., 2010; Skitka & Mullen, 2002a). People often hold attitudes and beliefs about specific political and social issues with strong conviction (Skitka, 2010), and such convictions can be distinguished from other dimensions of attitudes, including attitude strength, importance, and certainty (e.g., Krosnick & Petty, 1995; Skitka, Bauman & Sargis, 2005).

People may experience moral and religious convictions as universal, objective and stable judgments of right and wrong about specific issues (Skitka, 2010). As a result, people with a moral conviction about a specific attitude object tend to be more socially intolerant of disagreement (Skitka, Bauman, & Sargis, 2005), and more willing to disregard procedural safeguards and civil rights to achieve a desired outcome (Skitka & Mullen, 2002b; but see Napier & Tyler, 2008). We extend this line of work by examining whether people's moral foundations only spur them to their vote choice, in this case on the Minnesota same-sex marriage ballot, when they have a conviction about a *specific* issue.

Moral conviction is conceptually and empirically distinct from religious conviction (Skitka, Bauman, & Lytle, 2009; Wisneski, Lytle, & Skitka, 2009). Whereas moral conviction is based on beliefs about right and wrong, religious conviction is grounded in religious teachings and beliefs. Religious and moral convictions can both be characterized as attitudinal properties that share variance, but each draws on distinct considerations with differing implications for political preferences and choice. For example, a moral conviction about an attitude object (e.g., same-sex marriage) might be linked to different beliefs (e.g., fairness concerns) than religious conviction about the same attitude object (e.g., purity concerns). Thus, religious and moral convictions should moderate the effect of moral beliefs on political preferences and behavior.

Rarely has prior work on moral and religious conviction included actual behavior as the outcome of interest (for an exception, see Skitka et al., 2005), focusing instead on voter turnout *intentions* (e.g., Morgan, Skitka, & Wisneski, 2010). The current work is among the first to specify the role of religious and moral convictions for real world political behavior, and to link these variables to moral foundations, which have more commonly been studied in electoral contexts (e.g., Weber and Federico, 2013). Given the strong association between moral concerns about purity and religiosity (e.g., Preston & Ritter, 2012), we expect the effect of concern for moral purity on ballot voting to be moderated by both moral and religious convictions. We also expect moral, but not religious, conviction to moderate the effect of moral concerns about fairness on ballot vote choice, as fairness is not necessarily a religiously-based moral concern, unlike purity. Given the tendency of advocates and opponents of same-sex marriage to primarily emphasize fairness and purity concerns, we did not expect moral or religious convictions to moderate the effect of other moral foundations on vote choice.

The Effect of Voting for the Winning Side of the Ballot on Fairness Perceptions

Moral and religious convictions might also influence how people respond to the same-sex marriage ballot outcome. Specifically, voting for the winning or losing side could affect the way voters perceive the *fairness* of the vote. Recently researchers have contended that perceptions of procedural and outcome fairness can be influenced by the outcome of political events or decisions (Skitka, 2002; Skitka & Mullen, 2002b; Skitka & Mullen, 2008). According to the *value protection model*, individuals who have a moral or religious conviction toward an issue are more likely to view an outcome and decision procedure as fair *if* they agree with the outcome. Thus, the value protection model suggests that individuals' moral and religious convictions about same-sex marriage will interact with the ballot outcome to predict fairness, such that people with

convictions who vote for the winning side of the vote should perceive the procedure and outcome of voting on same-sex marriage rights as more fair.

Importantly, this logic implies that moral and religious conviction can affect judgments of procedural and outcome fairness in ways not previously considered by procedural justice researchers, who argue that people are more accepting of decision outcomes if they view the procedure through which the decision was rendered as fair and legitimate (*group-value model*; Tyler, 1989). Consequently, these scholars have challenged the value protection model by arguing that perceptions of procedural and outcome fairness should be independent of the direction and intensity of interested parties' moral or religious conviction (e.g., Napier & Tyler, 2008). In the present context, if voting for the winning or losing side of the amendment leads to congruent perceptions of procedural and outcome fairness, and individuals' moral or religious conviction does not alter this relationship, this would provide evidence for the group-value model. However, evidence that moral and religious convictions moderate the effect of voting for the winning or losing side on perceptions of fairness would lend support for the values protection model. The current research extends the literature by considering how participation in a real political event influences subsequent perceptions of procedural and outcome fairness.

We expect that moral and religious convictions will moderate the impact of the outcome of the vote on fairness perceptions. Given the past research on the value protection model, we expect that it is primarily voters with a strong moral or religious conviction about same-sex marriage who will report more positive perceptions of procedural and outcome fairness, as a function of having voted for the winning or losing side of the ballot; people lacking a moral or religious conviction may be indifferent to, unaware of, or uninspired by the ballot outcome.

The Current Research

Using data from a two-wave panel study conducted before and after the 2012 marriage amendment ballot vote in Minnesota, we analysed two primary sets of hypotheses. First, we expected that participants' vote on the same-sex marriage ban amendment would be predicted by the moral foundations of purity and fairness, particularly among individuals with moral or religious conviction regarding same-sex marriage. Second, we expected that participants who voted for the winning side of the marriage amendment, and who had a moral or religious conviction about same-sex marriage, would feel that the procedure and outcome were fair.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): People high on moral beliefs about fairness will be more likely to vote against the amendment.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): People high on moral concerns about purity will be more likely to vote in favor of the amendment.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): People high on moral concerns about fairness and with a moral conviction about same-sex marriage, will be more likely to vote against the amendment.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): People high on moral concerns about purity and with a moral or religious conviction about same-sex marriage will be more likely to vote in favor of the amendment.

Hypothesis 5 (H5): People who vote for the winning side of the amendment and who have a moral or religious conviction about same-sex marriage will be more likely to report that the procedure of voting on marriage rights was fair and that the outcome was fair.

Method

Participants

Participants were 144 students (115 females, 28 males; mean age = 20.19, $SD = 2.39$) at a public university in Minnesota, United States, during the 2012 election cycle. Most participants identified as White (85%), and party identification skewed Democratic, with 92 Democrats, 38 Republicans, and 13 independents. The mean political ideology of participants fell between slightly liberal and moderate ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.62$; the question ranged from 1 “Very liberal” to 7 “Very conservative”). The large majority of our sample identified as heterosexual (94%), but a few participants also identified as gay or lesbian (2%) or bisexual (2%). Only 11% of the participants failed to complete both the pre- and post-election surveys; these participants were not included in analyses

Procedure

We used a two-wave panel design to measure participants’ beliefs and behaviors before and after the 2012 presidential election. At both time points, participants completed a brief online survey for partial course credit. The initial survey was completed during the four weeks leading up to the 2012 presidential election, and the second survey was completed within two weeks following the 2012 presidential election.

Measures

Administered Only at Time Point 1:

Measures administered only at time point 1 served either as predictors (i.e., moral foundations) of the same-sex marriage amendment vote choice, moderators (i.e., moral and religious convictions), or covariates (i.e., attitudes toward gay marriage; demographics).

Moral foundations. Participants reported their moral beliefs using the Moral Foundation Questionnaire (MFQ-30; Graham et al., 2011). Using a scale ranging from 0 (“Not at all relevant”) to 5 (“Extremely relevant”), participants reported the extent to which items were important when deciding if something is right or wrong, such as “Whether or not people were treated differently than others”. We averaged responses relevant to each of the five subscales across the six items for each respective subscales, including purity (Cronbach’s alpha= .83), fairness (Cronbach’s alpha= .61), harm and care¹ (Cronbach’s alpha =.51), loyalty (Cronbach’s alpha= .71), and authority (Cronbach’s alpha= .67).

Strength of attitudes toward same-sex marriage. Using an item ranging from 1 (“Not at all”) to 5 (“Extremely”), participants reported the strength of their attitude toward same-sex marriage.

Demographics. In addition to gender, age, sexual orientation, and race, participants reported their family income, employment status, political ideology, and general interest in politics. With the exception of sexual orientation, these variables were used as covariates in the analyses.

Administered at Both Time Points 1 and 2:

Participants reported their moral and religious convictions about same-sex marriage at both the first and second time points.

Moral conviction. Using a scale ranging from 1 (“Not at all”) to 5 (“Extremely”), participants reported the extent to which their attitudes toward same-sex and traditional marriage

¹ Although the MFQ-30 is well-validated and commonly used in the published literature, the harm and care subscale demonstrated low internal reliability with this sample. However, we decided to retain these subscales given their common use, in this format, in the literature.

were based on moral beliefs about right and wrong (e.g., Morgan et al., 2010). We averaged responses across the two items to form each participant's moral conviction score.

Religious conviction. Using an item ranging from 1 ("Not at all") to 5 ("Extremely"), participants reported the extent to which their attitudes toward same-sex and traditional marriage were based on religious beliefs (e.g., Morgan et al., 2010).

Administered Only at Time Point 2:

Fairness measures administered only at the second time point were used as outcomes in our analysis, and were measured after vote choice. The exception to using time 2 measures as outcomes was amendment vote choice, which we used as both an outcome and as a predictor of the previously mentioned outcomes. In addition, we also measured vote choice in the 2012 presidential election, and used this variable as a covariate in models examining how voting for the winning or losing side of the amendment vote affected changes in subsequent beliefs and behavior. By including presidential vote choice as a covariate in these models, we are better able to estimate the unique effects of the same-sex marriage ballot outcome, above and beyond the impact that the presidential election had on variables of interest.

Procedural fairness. Participants reported their beliefs about the fairness of allowing Minnesota citizens to vote on marriage rights by responding to such items as, "How fair or unfair is it for citizens of the state of Minnesota to vote on a constitutional amendment that would prohibit same-sex marriage?" Participants used a scale ranging from 1 ("Unfair") to 7 ("Fair"). We averaged responses to all three items to form a score for each participant who indicated beliefs regarding procedural fairness of the vote (Cronbach's $\alpha = .80$).

Outcome fairness. Participants reported their beliefs about the fairness of the outcome of the marriage amendment vote by responding to such items as "How fair or unfair is the outcome

of for the same-sex marriage ballot?” Participants used a scale ranging from 1 (“Unfair”) to 7 (“Fair”). We averaged responses to all five items to form a score for each participant who indicated beliefs regarding outcome fairness of the vote (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .76$).

Voting behavior. In the November 2012 election that provided the context for the current research, a majority of voters in the state of Minnesota voted against a proposed constitutional amendment to define marriage strictly as a union between one man and one woman. In our survey, participants reported whether they voted for or against the marriage amendment. Of the 144 participants in the study, 119 reported voting on the marriage amendment (99 voted to not amend the constitution, 20 voted to amend the constitution). Participants who voted “Yes” on the amendment were coded as having voted for the losing side, whereas “No” voters were coded as having voted for the winning side. We also asked about voting in the presidential election, and a total of 131 participants reported voting for a presidential candidate (98 for Obama, 33 for Romney).

Results

Overview

We conducted all analyses exclusively on people who voted on the same-sex marriage ballot in Minnesota. Given the sample size of participants who voted on the ballot ($N = 119$), we estimated that we had 18% power to detect a Cohen’s d of 0.2, 77% power to detect a Cohen’s d of 0.5, and 99% power to detect a Cohen’s d of 0.8. Each model included age, race, gender, SES, employment, political ideology, and political interest as covariates. All interaction variables were centered around the mean, and main effects were always included in models testing interactions.

Analyses examining the effect of voting for the winning or losing side of the marriage amendment also controlled for vote choice in the presidential election. Versions of all models

were also run controlling for strength of attitude toward same-sex marriage, and minimal differences were discovered; any differences in the results between versions of models are highlighted. Correlation tables containing all of the constructs of interest across all of the analyses, including means and standard deviations, can be found in Table 1 (containing variables from the models predicting vote choice) and Table 2 (containing variables from the models examining how vote choice predicts outcomes of interest).

Did Moral Beliefs Predict the Same-Sex Marriage Ballot Vote Choice?

We first evaluated the main effect of each moral foundation on marriage ballot vote choice (1 = vote “yes” to amend the constitution, 0 = vote “no” to not the amend constitution) by regressing the binary vote indicator on each foundation separately. This analytical approach provided a direct test of Hypotheses 1 and 2. Results indicated that none of the main effects of moral foundations were significantly related to marriage ballot-vote ($p > .05$) above and beyond the effects of political ideology. However, when political ideology was not included as a covariate in the models, results indicated that the moral foundations of purity ($\text{Exp}(B) = 2.76, p < .01$), fairness ($\text{Exp}(B) = 0.38, p < .05$), authority ($\text{Exp}(B) = 3.95, p < .001$), and in-group loyalty ($\text{Exp}(B) = 2.38, p < .05$) were each significantly related to the marriage ballot vote in the theoretically expected direction (i.e., fairness predicted voting against the amendment, and purity; authority and in-group loyalty also predicted voting for the amendment). To better understand this dynamic, we assessed the incremental validity of each foundation by using all five foundations in the same model. When controlling for the other moral foundations, only purity ($\text{Exp}(B) = 2.44, p < .05$) and fairness ($\text{Exp}(B) = .38, p < .05$) predicted vote choice, consistent with expectations (H1 and H2).

Do Moral and Religious Convictions Moderate the Impact of Moral Beliefs on the Same-Sex Marriage Ballot Vote?

To test Hypotheses 3 and 4, separate interaction terms were constructed between 1) moral conviction and each moral foundation and 2) religious conviction and each moral foundation. Only significant interactions are reported below. Simple slopes for significant effects were computed at one standard deviation above and below the mean of the moderator, following the procedures recommended by Aiken and West (1991).

The interaction between moral conviction and fairness ($\text{Exp}(B) = 0.31$ ($CI = .11, .83$), $p < .05$), authority ($\text{Exp}(B) = 2.52$ ($CI = 1.14, 5.59$), $p < .05$), and purity ($\text{Exp}(B) = 2.75$ ($CI = 1.3, 5.79$), $p < .001$) significantly predicted vote choice, even when controlling for political ideology. Simple slope analyses indicated that only for voters one standard deviation above the mean on moral conviction did the effect of fairness ($\text{Exp}(B) = .25$ ($CI = .06, 1.14$), $p < .07$), authority ($\text{Exp}(B) = 4.78$ ($CI = 1.19, 19.1$), $p < .05$), and purity ($\text{Exp}(B) = 3.41$ ($CI = 1.11, 10.43$), $p < .05$) significantly predict vote choice in the expected direction. Although we did not expect convictions to moderate the effect of authority on vote choice, these findings largely support Hypotheses 3 and 4. These results are presented graphically in Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3.

Regarding the moderating effect of religious conviction (H4), only the interaction between religious conviction and purity ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.76$ ($CI = 1.05, 2.96$), $p < .05$) was significant. Simple slope analyses indicated that only for people one standard deviation above the mean of religious conviction did the effect of purity ($\text{Exp}(B) = 2.86$ ($CI = 1.04, 7.88$), $p < .05$) predict vote choice (Hypothesis 4). These results are presented graphically in Figure 4.²

² Past research on moral and religious convictions demonstrates that convictions about an issue are distinct from strength of one's attitude toward that same issue. To confirm that our effects were driven by convictions and not by attitude strength, we ran the same models, controlling for

Did Moral and Religious Convictions Moderate the Effects on Fairness Perceptions?

First we examined the main effects of voting for the winning (“No” vote) or losing (“Yes” vote) side of the amendment vote. Analyses revealed that voting for the winning or losing side of the marriage amendment vote was significantly predictive of outcome fairness ($b = -1.30$ ($CI = -1.88, -.73$), $p < .001$, $d = -.84$), but not procedural fairness. These analyses suggest that those who voted for the winning side of the amendment vote perceived the outcome to be fairer.

Separate interaction terms were constructed between 1) moral conviction and the amendment vote choice variable and 2) religious conviction and the amendment vote choice variable. This analytical approach provides a direct test of Hypotheses 5 and 6. As expected, the interaction between amendment vote choice and moral conviction obtained significance for procedural fairness ($b = .94$ ($CI = .06, 1.82$), $p < .05$, $d = .39$), and approached significance for outcome fairness ($b = -.54$ ($CI = -1.11, .03$), $p = .065$, $d = -.35$).

Simple slope analyses indicated that voting for the winning side (dummy coded as 0) led to weaker perceptions of procedural fairness ($b = 1.41$ ($CI = .21, .30$), $p < .05$, $d = .43$) but stronger perceptions of outcome fairness ($b = -1.80$ ($CI = -2.58, -1.02$), $p < .001$, $d = -.85$). However, these effects were only observed among voters one standard deviation above the mean on moral conviction, consistent with Hypotheses 5 and 6 (Figure 5 and Figure 6). Although we expected that voting for the winning side would lead to higher, not lower, perceptions of procedural fairness, the results are still consistent with the value protection model (Skitka, 2002). Specifically, these results show that people with a moral conviction about same-sex marriage who voted against the amendment were more likely to view the procedure of voting on marriage

both the attitude strength main effect and its interaction with moral beliefs (when appropriate). The pattern of results for all sets of analyses presented in this paper were unchanged.

rights as unfair, but to view the actual outcome of the vote as fair. Importantly, this pattern of overall effects is consistent with the pre-ballot analyses reported earlier, which demonstrated that moral foundations were only predictive of voting behaviors among people whose attitudes about same-sex marriage was based on their moral conviction.

Finally, the interaction between amendment vote choice and religious conviction predicted outcome fairness ($b = -.53$ ($CI = -.92, -.14$), $p < .01$, $d = -.49$), but not procedural fairness ($b = -.12$ ($CI = -.75, .51$), $p > .10$, $d = -.07$). These results support Hypothesis 6. Follow-up simple slope analyses indicated that voting for the winning side predicted stronger perceptions of outcome fairness ($b = -1.21$ ($CI = -1.83, -.60$), $p < .01$, $d = -.72$), but only among voters one standard deviation above the mean on religious conviction (Figure 7). These results indicate that people with a religious conviction about same-sex marriage who voted against the same-sex marriage ban amendment were more likely to view the outcome of the same-sex marriage vote as fair; in contrast, people characterized by a religious conviction who voted to prohibit same-sex marriage were more likely to view the outcome as unfair.

Discussion

Using data from a two-wave panel study, the current research investigated the predictors and consequences of voting on a constitutional amendment to prohibit same-sex marriage in the state of Minnesota, which provided a context for studying the psychological conditions under which moral foundations influence political judgment and behavior. Our results strongly support the hypotheses, and highlight the importance of moral and religious beliefs for understanding actual same-sex marriage vote preferences and ballot outcomes. Accordingly, these results build upon prior theory and research in political and moral psychology by highlighting that convictions about specific moral issues moderate the effect of moral foundations on voting choice.

First, we found that vote choice related to fundamental moral foundations, particularly fairness and purity, but only among individuals whose attitudes on same-sex marriage are characterized by either a moral or religious conviction about right and wrong. Second, we also found that people who voted for the winning side of the amendment vote - that is, voting to *not* change the state constitution to ban same-sex marriage - were more likely to view the process of voting on the rights of gay and lesbian people as unfair, but were more likely to view the outcome of the vote as legitimate. However, this diverging judgment of outcome and procedural fairness was only observed among individuals characterized by a moral conviction on the specific issue of same-sex marriage. This finding is inconsistent with much existing scholarship on procedural fairness, which argues that judgments of outcome fairness should be consistent with judgments of procedural fairness (e.g., Napier & Tyler, 2008; Skitka, 2002; Skitka & Mullen, 2008). Similarly, we found that people with a religious conviction who voted for the winning side of the amendment vote were more likely to report that the outcome was fair. This finding, together with evidence suggesting that moral convictions also moderated fairness perceptions, lends even stronger support to the value protection model.

Taken together, this research demonstrates that moral and religious convictions are both essential to understanding how general moral beliefs translate into real-world political judgments and behavior. Current research in the areas of political and moral psychology has begun to explore the moral underpinnings of sociopolitical beliefs, judgment and behavior (Federico et al., 2013). Our findings directly contribute to this dialogue by demonstrating that liberals are guided by *individualizing* moral concerns (e.g., fairness), and conservatives are guided by *binding* moral concerns (e.g., purity and authority), particularly among people for whom actual political behavior and judgment is most likely to be shaped by moral belief. Our research is the first to

connect moral foundations to moral and religious convictions to predict actual political behavior and attitudes.

The role of moral and religious convictions in understanding the effects of political events on the beliefs and behaviors of voters can also be extended into other political areas. For example, for those with a moral or religious conviction concerning welfare support, voting for the winning or losing side of amendment votes on public welfare spending might lead to changes in beliefs about the poor, as well as feelings of responsibility toward low-income individuals. More generally, experiencing victory or defeat in a vote that one is morally or religiously invested in has the potential to strengthen or undermine confidence in prior attitudes implicated by the election, or more generally influence trust in government institutions, processes, parties, or actors. Additional research should focus on the effect of electoral outcomes on attitudinal certainty and strength, attitudes towards relevant social groups and political objects, and the potential ways in which religious or moral conviction might moderate these effects.

Given some differences in the moderating effects of moral and religious conviction, we would like to once more emphasize that moral and religious convictions are distinct constructs that must be appreciated individually. Importantly, moral and religious convictions might more prominently relate to different kinds of political and social issues, as well as different kinds of beliefs. First, moral issues might not always implicate religious beliefs, and religious issues might not always implicate moral beliefs. Second, just as certain issues may be distinctly related to either a moral or religious conviction, certain kinds of moral or religious beliefs might be more or less intimately tied to either a moral or religious conviction as well.

For example, a moral conviction for an attitude object (e.g., same-sex marriage) might involve specific types of general moral beliefs (e.g., fairness concerns), whereas a religious

conviction for the same attitude object might implicate other, distinct types of moral or religious beliefs (e.g., purity concerns). In this vein, we found that moral conviction interacted with fairness, authority, and purity concerns to predict vote choice, but religious conviction only interacted with purity concerns to predict vote choice. These results suggest that there might be a “matching effect” of moral or religious conviction to distinct issues, and for distinct kinds of judgments and behaviors. Future work should determine the types of moral and religious beliefs likely to interact with moral or religious conviction for distinct types of issues. Similarly, additional research should investigate the extent to which moral beliefs are indeed more intimately linked to moral conviction and religious beliefs are indeed more intimately linked to religious conviction. In general, a functional match between specific moral or religious beliefs and the attitudinal object under consideration should guide theoretical expectations about the potential for either religious or moral conviction to moderate the effects of these beliefs on relevant attitudes, judgments, and behaviors.

As informative as this study is, there are a few shortcomings to acknowledge. First, we were only able to test our ideas on voters before and after a single amendment vote. Efforts to amend the Minnesota constitution to prohibit same-sex marriage in Minnesota failed, so we were only able to determine how supporters of same-sex marriage responded to being on the winning side of a vote. However, by controlling for a wide range of demographic and ideological variables, we are confident that the winning versus losing outcome was the driver of the subsequent effects on beliefs. Also, given the modest sample size it is possible that a larger sample might have provided us more statistical power, which would improve the precision of our estimated effects (Maxwell, 2004). This does not, however, mean these findings are uninformative or invalid, but should instead be viewed as evidence for or against the null

(Cumming, 2013). Despite the smaller number of “Yes” voters in our sample, we obtained robust findings with relatively impressive effect sizes that are not only consistent with our theoretical expectations, but were observed across both measurement points and in models that controlled for a large number of factors that may otherwise account for variability in our dependent variable. Furthermore, that we were able to reliably predict the actual political behavior of *both* sets of voters a month in advance, and to observe intra-individual change within *both* groups in relation to the ballot outcomes, also speaks well to the strength of our overall set of findings.

Our findings are a useful and important contribution to a literature that has largely been limited to cross-sectional measurement of behavioral intentions in laboratory contexts, despite these limitations of our sample. Similarly, the sample of college students used in this study had some benefits (e.g. a demographic group concerned about same-sex marriage; access to a sample with low attrition over time), but may also have led to a skewed distribution of political ideology and education levels, relative to the state population. For this reason, we would like to encourage caution in generalizing these effects beyond a college-age population. Although it is very likely that what we observed in this sample aptly characterizes the psychological factors and attitudinal consequences associated with same-sex marriage, future research should also examine these hypotheses in a sample more representative of the voting population to better understand the robustness of these findings.

On balance, the Minnesota same-sex marriage ballot presented a compelling opportunity to examine the social-psychological conditions under which moral beliefs influence *actual* political choice, and the psychological factors that moderate the effect of political outcomes on perceptions of fairness. This is a major and novel extension of prior research and theory on the implications of moral foundations for political contexts. We were able to determine that moral

and religious convictions play a key role in determining who acts in ways consistent with their moral beliefs by voting on a same-sex marriage amendment, as well as the ways in which voters are affected by the outcome of the vote. These results were robust and emerged even when controlling for political ideology, presidential election voting, political interest, attitude strength, and demographics. Furthermore, our findings provide a better theoretical and applied understanding of the psychological conditions under which moral belief influences political behavior, and factors relevant to voting on same-sex marriage amendments and how amendment ballot outcomes can affect citizens' beliefs relevant to same-sex marriage.

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Table 1

Correlations between moral foundations (i.e., purity, fairness, harm, loyalty, and authority), moral conviction, religious conviction, and ballot vote (coded as 0 = voting no on the gay marriage ban, 1 = voting yes on the gay marriage ban)

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Purity	3.41	1.12	--							
2. Fairness	4.60	0.63	-.01	--						
3. Harm	4.74	0.65	.15†	.53**	--					
4. Loyalty	3.84	0.84	.52**	.13	.21**	--				
5. Authority	3.77	0.78	.59**	-.03	.04	.63**	--			
6. Moral Conviction	3.73	1.03	-.01	.12	.20*	-.06	-.06	--		
7. Religious Conviction	2.28	1.54	.43**	-.22**	-.04	.11	.28**	.29**	--	

8. Ballot Vote	0.17	0.38	.32**	-.20*	-.08	.24**	.31**	.15†	.52**	--
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Note. † $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 2

Correlations between ballot vote (coded as 0 = voting no on the gay marriage ban, 1 = voting yes on the gay marriage ban), moral conviction, religious conviction, procedural fairness, and outcome fairness

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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1. Ballot Vote	0.17	0.38	--							
2. Moral Conviction	3.73	1.03	.15†	--						
3. Religious Conviction	2.28	1.54	.52**	.29**	--					
4. Procedural Fairness	3.73	1.68	.26**	-.14	.20*	--				
5. Outcome Fairness	5.85	1.22	-.52**	-.01	-.43**	-.15†	--			

Note. † $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Figure 1

Interaction of belief in fairness with moral conviction to predict ballot vote

Figure 2

Interaction of belief in authority with moral conviction to predict ballot vote

Figure 3

Interaction of belief in purity with moral conviction to predict ballot vote

Figure 4

Interaction of belief in purity with religious conviction to predict ballot vote

Figure 5

Interaction of ballot vote with moral conviction to predict procedural fairness

Figure 6

Interaction of ballot vote with moral conviction to predict outcome fairness

Figure 7

Interaction of ballot vote with religious conviction to predict outcome fairness