

Market Mindset Reduces Endorsement of Individualizing Moral Foundations, but Not in Liberals

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Supplementary Materials: Data, Materials [see [Index of Supplementary Materials](#)]



Abstract

People with a market mindset attend to ratios and rates, and allocate rewards adequately to costs but are less sensitive to feelings. In this project, we demonstrate that activating a market mindset also affects people's acceptance of free-market principles and their endorsement of individualizing moral dimensions—care/harm and fairness/cheating. Experiment 1 documented that a market mindset positively impacted people's endorsement of fair market ideology. Experiments 2 and 3 showed that the salience of such a market mindset hampered the importance of individualizing moral dimensions. Importantly, we found that political orientation moderated the negative effect of a market mindset on the endorsement of individualizing moral foundations—this effect held for participants who declared moderate and conservative political orientations, but not for liberals.

Keywords

market mindset, market pricing mode, fair market ideology, individualizing moral foundations

The theoretical model of relationships developed by Fiske (1992; Rai & Fiske, 2011) distinguishes four elementary forms of sociality. One of these forms was named *market pricing* (MP). According to Fiske's theory, when adopting the MP mode, people construct their relationships with others along with market exchange rules—they attend to ratios and rates and express a desire to allocate rewards adequately to effort or costs. In contrast to the MP mode, when people adopt another form of sociality, named *communal sharing* (CS), they tend to be helpful and generous, which suggests that communal relationships may be highly asymmetrical—people offer benefits not because they expect a return of a comparable value, but because they intend to increase the recipient's welfare or happiness (Clark & Mills, 1993, 2012).

Recent research (Gasiorowska & Zaleskiewicz, 2021; Zaleskiewicz et al., 2020) has indicated that merely making either a market or communal form of sociality salient activates a specific mindset (market or communal mindset, respectively), which affects people's cognitions and preferences. In a different stream of research, Jost, Blount, et al. (2003) suggested that people's beliefs influence the degree to which they evaluate existing institutional forms and practices, including the economic system, as fair and just. We propose that those beliefs may depend on whether a market or the communal mindset is active. Integrating these two approaches, we document that activating a market mindset, which sets up a specific configuration of beliefs, results in a lower endorsement of two moral dimensions distinguished in moral foundations theory (Graham et al., 2013; Haidt & Graham, 2009), namely care/harm and fairness/cheating—both being of crucial importance for how the free-market economic system works. We also provide evidence that the effect of



a market mindset on the advocacy of these two moral dimensions is present in people with a right-wing orientation but not in those with left-wing views.

Market Mindset and Free-Market Ideology

The psychological features of a market mindset, such as one's orientation on the rational analysis of costs/benefits and efficiency (Fiske, 1992; Rai & Fiske, 2011), seem to support endorsing free-market ideology (FMI). FMI is understood as a worldview that determines values, attitudes, and decisions about what is right or wrong (Jost, Blount, et al., 2003; Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003). Generally, support for FMI is reflected in a belief that the market does not need to be assisted by governmental control and that all agents present on the market should be allowed to act freely (Friedman, 1970/2007; Friedman & Friedman, 1980). The value at the heart of FMI is self-interest, defined as the concern for one's benefit and placing one's well-being above that of others (Friedman, 1970/2007; Hayek, 1960). Prior research has documented that self-interest is one of the most important principles underlying FMI. People whose values are closer to the idea of *homo economicus* reveal more selfish preferences in their financial decisions (Yamagishi et al., 2014). Moreover, those who strongly endorse free-market, neoliberal principles of the social system are more competitive and highly motivated to pursue personal growth (Becker et al., 2021; Scharff, 2016; Teo, 2018).

As noted earlier, the characteristics of a market mindset seem to harmonize with the typical features of FMI. The more people identify with the market mentality, the more they are likely to accept that thinking in terms of transactions and striving to maximize one's benefits are natural and spread to almost all spheres of social life. If the salience of a market mindset makes people more oriented to a rational analysis of costs and benefits and more interested in achieving individual profits, it should also lead to a greater acceptance of FMI. In the present project, we expected that priming a market mindset would promote accepting principles congruent with FMI. Also, we predicted that it would hamper endorsing the moral dimensions associated with care and fairness.

Market Mindset and the Endorsement of Individualizing Moral Foundations

The authors of moral foundations theory (MFT; Graham et al., 2013; Haidt & Graham, 2009) distinguished five moral dimensions: care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation.¹ Two of them—care/harm and fairness/cheating—can be interpreted as individualizing moral foundations because of their emphasis on the rights and welfare of individuals. They strongly focus on the responsibility to respect other people's rights and, in this sense, differ from the three other dimensions accentuating in-group loyalty as well as different group-related and institutional values (e.g., tradition, customs, or religious beliefs), forming the binding moral foundations category. The care/harm dimension represents people's need to protect and worry about others. Endorsing this moral dimension is related to focusing on emotional suffering and cruelty, as well as caring for the weak and vulnerable (Haidt & Graham, 2009). The second moral foundation of interest—fairness/cheating—is oriented toward protecting the fair balance of profit in two-way partnerships. It is associated with gratitude in response to others' fairness or anger due to others' cheating. The endorsement of fairness is linked to one's focus on avoiding unjust actions and ensuring similar treatment for all.

Our general hypothesis that a market mindset may hamper endorsing the moral foundations of care and fairness seems to be supported with several arguments. First, having a market mindset does not allow for intimacy and emotional connectedness, which seem indispensable for expressing care and compassion (Jiang et al., 2014; Mead & Stuppy, 2014; Vohs, 2015). Molinsky and colleagues (2012) found that activating economic schemas reduces compassion toward others in need. In contrast, prior research in moral psychology indicated that the endorsement of the two individualizing moral foundations was positively related to different aspects of empathy (Dawson et al., 2021). In a similar vein, Landmann and Hess (2017) found that a greater endorsement of the care foundation was associated with experiencing more compassion, compared to other moral foundations.

1) Prior to 2012, exponents of moral foundations theory used slightly different terms: harm/care, fairness/reciprocity, ingroup/loyalty, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity.

Second, money and wealth primes may promote unethical activities such as lying to interaction partners to get higher profits or fraudulently overstating performance to receive better earnings (Gino & Pierce, 2009; Kouchaki et al., 2013; Piff et al., 2012). The readiness to cheat motivated by self-interest remains in obvious opposition to endorsing fairness. For example, the results of research (Li et al., 2018) conducted in a group of Chinese business managers documented that the more these managers declared endorsing individualizing moral foundations, the more they condemned unethical actions in business. Other studies have indicated that declaring approval for care and fairness is associated not only with people's judgments of immoral acts but also their ethical choices. Those with individualizing moral foundations are more likely to engage in sustainable consumption (Watkins et al., 2016) and in consumer boycotts against companies that treat people unfairly and the activities of which can be harmful for customers (Fernandes, 2020). Stronger individualizing moral foundations are linked to a higher willingness to volunteer for charity and to allocating greater charitable donations to causes that benefit out-groups (Nilsson et al., 2016, 2020). What is more, such effects were also observed in the area of economic decision making—the more people endorsed the individualizing moral foundations over the binding moral foundations, the more cooperative, honest, and trustful decisions they tended to make in different economic games (Clark et al., 2017).

Third, endorsing moral foundations of care/harm and fairness/cheating was related positively to personal values (Feldman, 2021; Schwartz, 1992), representing the self-transcendence category, such as benevolence (i.e., promoting supportive social relations) and universalism (i.e., protection for the welfare of all people), but related negatively to personal values representing the self-enhancement category, such as power (i.e., searching for dominance) and hedonism (i.e., desiring pleasure for oneself). It seems that self-enhancement values are much closer to MP sociality than self-transcendence-type values, further supporting our expectation that making a market mindset salient would harm endorsing the two individualizing moral foundations.

Market Mindset, Moral Judgments, and Individual Differences in Political Orientation

Prior research examining the assumptions of MFT has documented that moral judgments vary across the political spectrum. Liberals consistently show greater endorsement and use of the harm/care and fairness/reciprocity foundations compared to the other three foundations, and are more concerned with these dimensions than people holding strongly conservative views (Graham et al., 2009, 2011; Kivikangas et al., 2021). Therefore, we assumed the moderating role of political orientations in the relationship between a market mindset and the endorsement of individualizing moral foundations.

Liberals differ from conservatives in many respects, with some of these differences being crucial for our theoretical reasoning. The former typically support individual rights and favor programs aimed at extending such rights as widely as possible (Haidt & Graham, 2009). In contrast, the latter are resistant to change and prone to accept inequality in the socioeconomic system (Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003). In the present project, we had precise predictions concerning the negative effect of a market mindset on endorsing individualizing moral dimensions, but our analysis of the moderating role of political orientations was more exploratory. We formulated two competing hypotheses pointing at two different possibilities of the involvement of political views in the relation between a market mindset and moral judgments. First, we proposed that the effect of a market mindset may be more pronounced among liberals, whose baseline endorsement of fair market ideology is low, than among conservatives, who are high in FMI. We based this hypothesis on the motivated social cognition model (Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003) and on previous research demonstrating that certain cues elicit a particular motivation, especially in individuals for whom the baseline level of that motivation is low. For example, Nail and McGregor (2009) demonstrated that threat drove liberals toward social attitudes typically more characteristic of conservatives. The rationale behind this effect was that conservatives feel chronically vulnerable and bothered by epistemic instability. In contrast, liberals, who usually do not feel this way, might exhibit similar attitudes when situationally exposed to threats causing vulnerability (Nail & McGregor, 2009). If this is the case, liberals would react to market mindset priming more strongly than conservatives because their baseline thinking about the social environment is detached from transaction-like interpretations, and they would change their moral judgments only if they are induced to think in a market-type manner. In line with this prediction, the extent conservatives endorse individualizing moral dimensions should be similar in both the market mindset and control conditions. Our alternative

hypothesis was that the effect of a market mindset on endorsing moral foundations of care and fairness would be more pronounced in conservatives than in liberals. The reason behind such a prediction was that explicit expression of individualist values and idealization of self-reliance, characteristic for the market-pricing mode, is a powerful theme in the conservative movement (Kay & Eibach, 2013). Therefore, market mentality might be readily available to conservatives, making it easier to activate thinking consistent with a market mindset in this group. Consistent with that, liberals—whose accessibility of market mode is presumably reduced—should be more resistant to the influence of market-mindset priming.

Overview of the Studies

Our project consisted of three experiments. We conducted Experiment 1 to document that making a market mindset salient triggers people's endorsement of FMI, as predicted in our theoretical model. Two further experiments showed that when a market mindset is salient, the importance of the two individualizing moral foundations—care/harm and fairness/cheating—is reduced. Another aim was to investigate the moderating role of participants' political orientations in the effect of a market mindset on endorsing individualizing moral dimensions.

The difference between Experiment 2 and Experiment 3 was twofold. First, we used two different techniques to prime a market mindset. Second, we applied two distinct operationalizations of individual differences in political orientation. In Experiment 2, this variable was measured with a scale. In Experiment 3, we directly compared responses provided by participants who reported a conservative political orientation and those who had a liberal political orientation.

Experiment 1

In Experiment 1, we investigated whether a simple visual manipulation of market vs. communal mindset can effectively trigger associations with free-market ideology. We used the manipulation method developed by Zaleskiewicz et al. (2020) in their research on the effects of market mindset on moral judgment and choice (see also Gasiorowska & Zaleskiewicz, 2021). In this method, participants are exposed to pictures illustrating different social interactions and asked to consider them for a while. In the present research, we used visual cues referring to either a market transaction or noncontingent gift-giving to manipulate the salience of market and communal mindsets. We expected that participants exposed to the market cue would be more likely to declare that the free-market system is fair than participants exposed to a communal cue. Further, we aimed to test whether the effect of the market vs. communal mindset manipulation on the belief that the free market is fair is independent of participants' political orientation. In addition to the main analyses, we also investigated whether the difference between the market mindset condition and the communal mindset condition in perceptions of the free-market system as fair is because market-related cues increase the endorsement of the free-market system, or rather that communal cues decrease it.

Method

Participants

A meta-analysis of earlier studies on the psychological consequences of being in a market mindset (Gasiorowska & Zaleskiewicz, 2021; Zaleskiewicz et al., 2020) revealed a small effect of such a manipulation (Hedge's $g = 0.405$). A priori power analysis using G*Power (Faul et al., 2007) revealed that, given an alpha of .05 and a power of .80, a sample of 97 participants per condition would be required to detect such an effect. We doubled this number and decided to recruit at least 200 participants per condition in all three studies in this project.

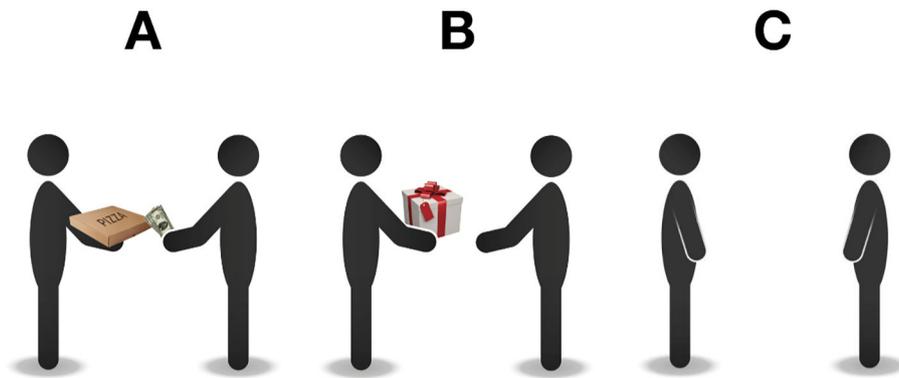
For Experiment 1, we recruited 400 U.S. participants on Prolific Academic in exchange for £0.55 (213 women, 187 men, $M_{\text{age}} = 35.95$ years, $SD = 12.41$). No data was discarded. The collection of data was not continued after analysis.

Procedure

After providing informed consent and answering questions on gender and age, participants were randomly assigned either to the market mindset condition ($n = 213$) or the communal mindset condition ($n = 187$). Participants in the market mindset condition saw a picture depicting two black cartoon silhouettes on a white background facing each other. The character on the left was holding a flat box with the label “pizza,” and the character on the right handed money (U.S. dollars) to the other character (see Figure 1, Panel A). Participants in the communal mindset condition saw a similar picture, but the character on the left was holding a box wrapped like a gift, while the hands of the character on the right were empty (see Figure 1, Panel B). Participants imagined a real-life situation of a similar kind, described it in detail, and had to remember this interpretation to answer several questions later in the study.

Figure 1

Two Silhouettes Used in the Market Mindset Condition (Panel A), in the Communal Mindset Condition (Panel B), and in the Control Condition (Panel C)



Note. Panel C was used only in Experiment 2. Source: Zaleskiewicz et al. (2020).

Then, as a manipulation check, participants thought about the interpretation of the picture they provided earlier, and answered two questions presented in a counterbalanced order (1 = “definitely not” to 7 = “definitely yes”) on (a) whether their interpretation of the picture was related to close relations between people (such as between friends, family members, or colleagues) and (b) whether it was related to commercial relations between people (as in business or trade).

Next, participants completed the 15-item Fair Market Ideology Scale (Jost, Blount, et al., 2003), in which they indicated their agreement that the free-market system is fair on procedural grounds (1 = “completely disagree,” 5 = “completely agree”; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .86$).

Finally, participants reported their political orientation (Talhelm et al., 2015; 1 = “very liberal,” 7 = “very conservative,” 4 = “a moderate political outlook”; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .85$; see [Supplementary Materials](#)).

Results

First, we confirmed that the experimental manipulation was effective (detailed analyses can be found in the [Supplementary Materials](#)).

To test our hypothesis that cuing a market mindset triggers endorsement of free-market fairness, we conducted an ANOVA with experimental manipulation as an independent variable (IV) and score on the FMI scale as a dependent variable (DV) (Data supporting the results or analyses presented in the paper can be found in the [Supplementary Materials](#)). An effect of the manipulation was significant, $F(1, 398) = 8.63, p = .003, \eta^2 = .021$, such that participants who were presented with the market-related cue admitted that the free-market system is fair to a higher extent ($M = 0.15, SD = 1.39$) than those presented with the communal cue ($M = -0.28, SD = 1.56$).

Next, we conducted a regression analysis with mindset manipulation, political outlook, and their interaction as predictors, and the same DV as in the first analysis (Model 1 in Process 4.0). All variables were *z*-scored before the analysis. The total regression model was significant, $F(3, 396) = 53.83, p < .001, R^2 = 28.97\%$. Both main effects were significant, respectively $\beta = .10, SE = .04, t = 2.41, p = .017$ for market mindset manipulation and $\beta = .51, SE = .04, t = 11.20, p < .001$ for conservative political outlook. The positive relation between endorsement of the fair market ideology and political conservatism corroborated previous results (Jost, Blount, et al., 2003), confirming the validity of our findings. The interaction between market mindset priming and political outlook was not significant, $\beta = -.05, SE = .04, t = -1.25, p = .213$, suggesting that the associations of transaction-related cues with endorsement of free-market ideology might be independent of political views in social and economic domains.

We also conducted a mediation analysis using Model 4 in Process 4.0 (Hayes, 2017) with 10,000 bootstrapping samples to examine whether the priming of the market cues increased the endorsement of free-market fairness or rather that the priming of the communal cues decreased it. We introduced two manipulation check items as parallel mediators to the link between our experimental manipulation and the DV. All variables were *z*-scored before the analysis.

The total effect of market vs. communal mindset priming on the perception of free-market system as fair was significant, path *c*: $\beta = .15, SE = .05, t = 2.94, p = .003$. The market mindset (vs. communal mindset) manipulation had a positive effect on the perception of the situation as reflecting commercial relations, $\beta = .84, SE = .03, t = 30.53, p < .001$, whereas its effect on the perception of the situation as reflecting close relations was negative, path *a*: $\beta = -.84, SE = .03, t = -31.40, p < .001$. The relation between the perception of the situation as reflecting commercial relations and the perception of the free-market system as fair was significant and positive, $\beta = .28, SE = .09, t = 2.95, p = .003$, while the relation between the perception of the situation as reflecting close relations and the perception of the free-market system as fair was not significant, $\beta = .11, SE = .10, t = 1.15, p = .249$. While controlling for the two mediators, the direct effect of the market mindset priming was not significant, $\beta < .01, SE = .10, t = 0.07, p = .947$. The 95% bootstrapped confidence interval (CI) for the relative indirect effect via the perception of the situation as reflecting close relations contained zero, 95% boot CI [-.25, .06], suggesting a lack of an indirect effect. However, the 95% bootstrapped CI for the relative indirect effect via the perception of the situation as reflecting market relations did not contain zero, 95% boot CI [.10, .37], thereby confirming a significant indirect effect. Furthermore, the 95% bootstrapped CI for the specific indirect effect contrast did not contain zero, 95% boot CI [-.55, -.10], corroborating that the indirect effect via the market-related interpretation of the picture was significantly stronger than the effect via the communal-type interpretation.

To summarize, we demonstrated that a market mindset, compared to a communal mindset, facilitates the perception of the free-market system as fair. We also showed that this effect is independent of participants' political orientation and, in line with our predictions, that it is due to the fact that market-related cues increase the perception of the free market as fair, rather than that communal cues decrease it.

Experiment 2

In Experiment 2, we intended to demonstrate that the salience of free-market beliefs has an effect on people's endorsement of the care/harm and fairness/cheating moral domains and that it can differentially affect liberals and conservatives in terms of their endorsement of the individualizing moral foundations (Graham et al., 2009). In particular, we predicted that being exposed to market cues (vs. neutral cues in the control condition) would hamper the perception of concerns related to the care/harm and fairness/cheating moral domains as relevant to one's thinking, while exposure to communal cues (vs. neutral cues in the control condition) would not affect the endorsement of these two moral domains.

To make either a market or a communal mindset salient, we used the same manipulation method as in Experiment 1. In our previous experiment, we provided indirect evidence that market mindset salience increased endorsement of FMI rather than that communal mindset salience decreased it, but this study did not include a control condition. Although the latter interpretation seems unlikely in light of previous research showing that a communal mindset does not differ from a control condition (Gasiorowska & Zaleskiewicz, 2021; Zaleskiewicz et al., 2020), we decided to add a third control condition to investigate the predicted direction of the effects. We also expected to find a significant interaction between

our experimental manipulation and political orientations, but, as delineated in the Introduction, we had two competing predictions—a first one assuming that the effect of a market mindset is stronger in conservatives and a second one assuming that it is more pronounced in liberals.

Finally, in this experiment, in addition to the political orientation, we included one more moderating variable: subjective socioeconomic status (SES). In earlier research, Bianchi and Vohs (2016) and Kraus and Keltner (2009) found that wealthier individuals are more likely to disengage from communal social interactions, and Piff et al. (2012) documented that higher social class predicts increased unethical behavior. Therefore, we could expect that people with higher SES might be less ready to endorse the care/harm and fairness/cheating moral foundations. Moreover, conservatives represent, on average, higher subjective SES than liberals (Jetten et al., 2013); hence the moderation by political views might be an artifact caused by the effect of wealth and status. To exclude such a potential confound, we measured subjective SES to demonstrate that the effect of a market mindset on the endorsement of individualizing moral foundations indeed depends on political views, and goes beyond and above the effect of both objective and subjective wealth.

Method

Participants

Through the Amazon MTurk research mechanism, 611 participants from the U.S. received \$0.50 for completing the study. We discarded data from 20 participants who did not provide a valid answer to the manipulation task and data from one participant who gave identical answers for all items. The final sample consisted of 590 participants (301 women, 289 men, $M_{\text{age}} = 35.58$ years, $SD = 12.22$). Data collection was not continued after analysis.

Procedure

After providing informed consent, participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: the market mindset condition ($n = 194$), the communal mindset condition ($n = 202$), or the control condition ($n = 194$). We used the same mindset manipulation as in Experiment 1, but here we added the control condition (see Figure 1, Panel C).

Participants filled out the two parts of the Moral Foundations Questionnaire (Graham et al., 2011), measuring five moral foundations. The scores of care/harm and fairness/cheating moral foundations were averaged and used as our main DV in the data analysis (see Table S2 in the Supplementary Materials for descriptive statistics and correlations between variables).

Next, participants thought about the interpretation of the picture they provided earlier and answered two questions concerning whether it was related to close and commercial relations between people (same as in Experiment 1). Participants also judged how much the two characters involved in a situation were close to each other (1 = “not close at all,” 7 = “very close”).

Finally, participants reported, in a random order, their political orientation (same as in Experiment 1) and subjective SES (Griskevicius et al., 2011; 1 = “strongly disagree,” 5 = “strongly agree”).

Results

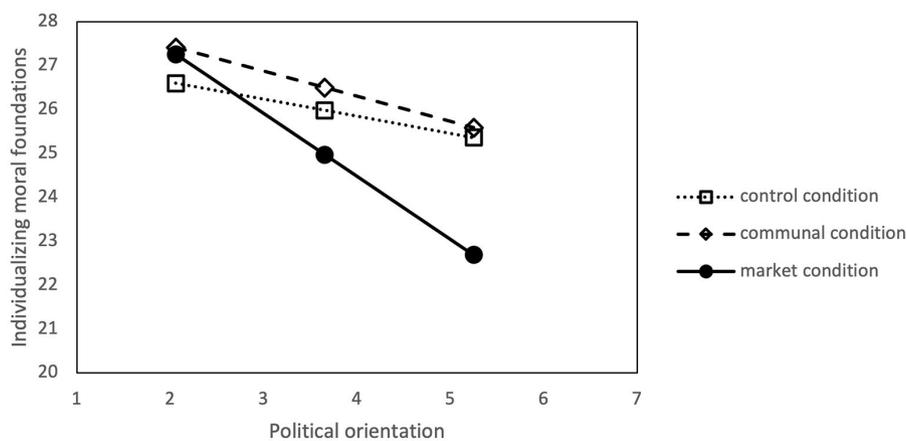
First, we confirmed that the experimental manipulation was effective (detailed analyses can be found in the Supplementary Materials).

To test our core hypothesis, we conducted a series of moderation analyses using Process 4.0 (Hayes, 2017). We intended to demonstrate that the market mindset priming affected participants' endorsement of individualizing moral foundations (i.e., care/harm and fairness/cheating, combined). The mindset manipulation served as an IV, mean score on the two moral foundations as DV, and political orientation and SES as two moderators. The continuous variables were z-scored before the analysis. Because mindset manipulation is a multicategorical variable, we used indicator coding with the control condition as a reference category (coded as 0) (Hayes & Preacher, 2014). The two dummy variables represent communal mindset manipulation and market mindset manipulation (coded as 1).

The total regression model with two moderators (Model 2 in Process 4.0) was significant, $F(8, 581) = 8.40, p < .001, R^2 = 10.37\%$. The effect of the communal mindset priming (compared to the control condition) on the DV was not significant, $\beta = .10, SE = .10, t = 1.08, p = .280$, while the effect of the market mindset priming (vs. control condition) was significant and negative, $\beta = -.22, SE = .10, t = -2.26, p = .024$. SES was not related to the individualizing moral foundations in the control condition, $\beta = -.03, SE = .07, t = -.39, p = .694$, same as the political orientation, $\beta = -.12, SE = .07, t = -1.71, p = .088$. The tests of the highest-order unconditional interactions revealed that the interaction between political orientation and the experimental manipulation was significant, $F(2, 581) = 6.10, p = .002, \Delta R^2 = 1.88\%$, while the interaction between SES and the experimental manipulation was not, $F(2, 581) = 1.00, p = .366, \Delta R^2 = 0.31\%$. Decomposition of the significant interaction revealed that only the market mindset manipulation (vs. control condition) interacted with political orientation, $\beta = -.32, SE = .10, t = -3.30, p = .001$, while the interaction between political orientation and the communal mindset manipulation (vs. control condition) was not significant, $\beta = -.06, SE = .10, t = -0.68, p = .499$ (Figure 2).²

Figure 2

Endorsement of Individualizing Moral Foundations as a Function of Political Orientation and Experimental Condition (Experiment 2)



Since the communal mindset condition did not differ from the control condition, we merged these two conditions to simplify further analyses. A regression analysis with the market mindset (vs. nonmarket mindset) manipulation, political orientation, and their interaction as predictors with two moderators (Model 1 in Process 4.0) accounted for $R^2 = 9.21\%$ of the individualizing moral dimensions' variance. The effect of the market mindset manipulation was significant and negative, $\beta = -.25, SE = .08, t = -3.03, p = .003$, as was the effect of political orientation, $\beta = -.15, SE = .05, t = -3.18, p = .002$. These two effects suggest that both participants' exposure to market relationships and more conservative orientation were related to a lower endorsement of the individualizing moral dimension. The interaction between manipulation and political orientation was also significant, $\beta = -.31, SE = .08, t = -3.62, p < .001$. Further decomposition of this interaction revealed that the effect of the market mindset priming (vs. nonmarket mindset priming) was not significant for liberals ($M - 1 SD = 2.06$ on the political orientation scale), $\beta = .05, SE = .12, t = 0.44, p = .657$, whereas for the moderate orientation ($M = 3.65$) and for conservatives ($M + 1 SD = 5.25$) it was significant, respectively $\beta = -.25, SE = .08, t = -3.03, p = .003$, and $\beta = -.56, SE = .12, t = -4.59, p < .001$.

To sum up, priming a market mindset (vs. a nonmarket mindset) was related to perceiving the individualizing foundations as less relevant. Moreover, participants who declared a more conservative (or less liberal) political orientation judged concerns related to such moral foundations as less relevant to their thinking when primed with market mindset reminders than when primed with nonmarket cues, such as communal or neutral (control) reminders. The effect of

² See Tables S3 and S4 in the [Supplementary Materials](#) for the analyses, including five specific moral foundations as DVs.

market mindset priming was not observed for those declaring strongly liberal views. Therefore, we found support for the hypothesis that the negative effect of a market mindset on the endorsement of individualizing moral foundations was less pronounced in liberals than conservatives, whose mentality more closely resembles the principles of the market-pricing mode. Moreover, we documented that these effects cannot be explained by individual differences in SES.

Experiment 3

In Experiment 3, we aimed to provide further support for the effects we found in Experiment 2 and resolve some of the potential confounders in Experiment 2, in which we presented participants with a picture showing a transaction in which someone buys a pizza. To exclude the interpretation that this picture triggers associations with hunger or food rather than with a typical market exchange, in Experiment 3, we employed a different manipulation that involved three conditions—money vs. food vs. control (Gasiorowska et al., 2018). Using money cues is an indirect method of making market relationships salient, because, as Fiske (1992) suggested, “Money is the prototypical medium of MP relations” (p. 692). Hence, people exposed to money-related stimuli tend to interpret social interactions in market-related terms. Prior research has also indicated that when money thoughts are activated, people are more willing to endorse the free-market system and the presence of socioeconomic inequalities, and that money cues trigger market-related associations (Caruso et al., 2013; Gasiorowska et al., 2016). Therefore, we expected that, compared to the control condition, money cues—but not food-related cues—would hamper the endorsement of individualizing moral foundations (i.e., care/harm and fairness/cheating). Based on Experiment 2, we also hypothesized that this effect would arise in conservatives but not in liberals.

Another issue that might have obscured the results of Experiment 2 was the skewed distribution of the responses to the political orientation variable, with 44.24% of the participants choosing a response lower than 4 (midpoint of the scale), 23.39% choosing 4, and only 32.37% indicating a response above 4. Such a distribution echoed previous results showing MTurkers to be slightly more liberal than the general U.S. population (Clifford et al., 2015). To counteract this issue, in Experiment 3, we used MTurk’s prescreening option to select only participants who reported either very conservative/conservative or very liberal/liberal political orientation on a 5-point scale. This allowed us to directly compare conservatives and liberals instead of correlating the political orientation score with other variables.

Method

Participants

Five hundred and ninety-nine U.S. participants (300 conservatives and 299 liberals) recruited on Amazon’s MTurk completed the survey for \$0.25. We discarded data from 38 participants (24 conservatives and 14 liberals) who did not provide valid links in the manipulation task. The final sample consisted of 561 participants (276 conservatives, 285 liberals; 308 women, 253 men, $M_{\text{age}} = 37.37$ years, $SD = 11.76$). Data collection was not continued after analysis.

Procedure

After providing an informed consent, participants were randomly assigned to one of the three experimental conditions: money ($n = 196$), food ($n = 192$), or control ($n = 173$). They performed a search task serving as a mindset manipulation (Gasiorowska et al., 2018) and were provided with three separate web addresses, at which one could see pictures of “a pile of money,” “a pile of burgers,” or “a pile of papers,” depending on the experimental condition. Then, as in Experiment 1, participants filled out the Moral Foundations Questionnaire (Graham et al., 2011). Again, the scores of care/harm and fairness/cheating moral foundations were averaged and used as a main DV (see Table S5 in the Supplementary Materials for descriptive statistics and correlations).

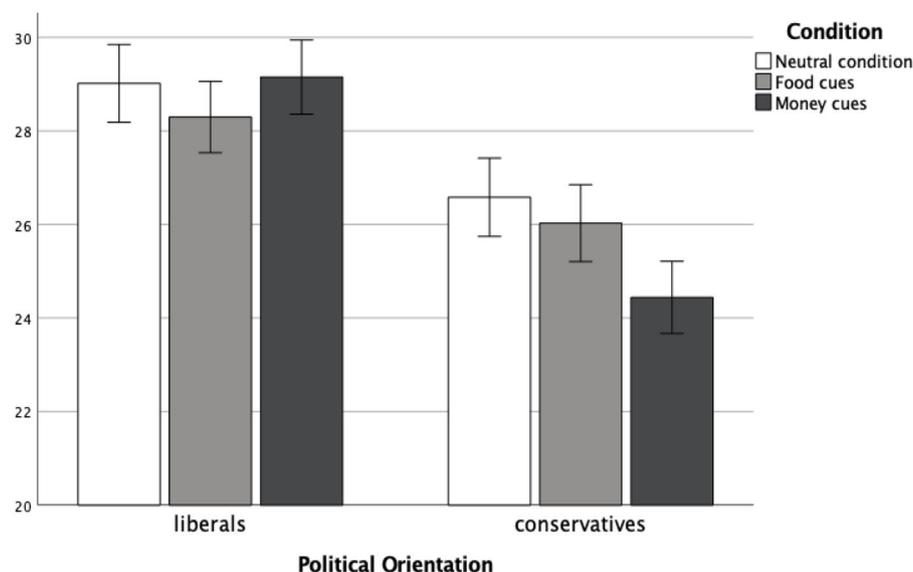
Results

To test our research hypothesis that the salience of market-related cues has a detrimental effect on conservatives' (but not liberals') endorsement of individualizing moral foundations, we conducted regression analyses with political orientation, mindset manipulation, and their interaction as predictors. We again used indicator coding with the control condition as a reference category, coded as 0 (Hayes & Preacher, 2014). The two dummy variables represented the money cue condition and the food cue condition. The continuous variables were z-scored before the analysis.

The regression model (Model 1 in Process 4.0) was significant, $F(5, 555) = 21.78, p < .001, R^2 = 16.41\%$. The effect of money (vs. control condition) was significant, $\beta = -.23, SE = .10, t = -2.39, p = .017$, while the effect of food (vs. control condition) was not, $\beta = -.15, SE = .10, t = -1.54, p = .124$. The effect of conservative political orientation in the control condition was significant, $\beta = -.28, SE = .07, t = -4.06, p < .001$. Political orientation did not interact with food manipulation, $\beta = .02, SE = .10, t = 0.20, p = .840$, while it interacted with money manipulation, $\beta = -.26, SE = .10, t = -2.76, p = .006$. Further decomposition of this latter interaction revealed that the effect of the money cue was significant for conservatives, $\beta = -.50, SE = .13, t = -3.70, p < .001$, but not for liberals, $\beta = .03, SE = .14, t = 0.23, p = .817$ (Figure 3).³

Figure 3

Endorsement of Individualizing Moral Foundations by Liberals and Conservatives Depending on Experimental Condition (Experiment 3)



To conclude, Experiment 3 confirmed the effects observed in Experiment 2, showing that inducing a market mindset using money cues has a detrimental effect on endorsing the individualizing moral foundations (i.e., care/harm and fairness/cheating). Similar to the results found in Experiment 2, the effect of a market mindset on endorsing these moral foundations was observed only for participants with a conservative orientation but not for those ascribing to liberal political views.

The results obtained in Experiment 3 additionally showed that making people think about money is sufficient to produce the same effects as making people think about being involved in a relationship associated with a monetary transaction (in which one individual pays another individual). This can be considered as indirect support for the theoretical claim proposed by Fiske (1992) that money can be seen as a prototypical characteristic of market pricing sociality.

³ See Tables S6 and S7 in [Supplementary Materials](#) for the analyses, including five specific moral foundations as DVs.

General Discussion

Summary of the Findings

In Experiment 1, we found that cuing a market mindset, in contrast to a communal mindset, triggered support for the idea that a free market is fair and legitimate. Interestingly, the relation between a market mindset and a belief in free-market fairness was not moderated by political views represented on the liberal-conservative spectrum. Experiments 2 and 3 indicated that making market relationships salient hindered endorsement of both individualizing moral foundations, supporting our main hypothesis. Compared to communal or neutral (control) mindsets, people with a market mindset were less convinced that such virtues as compassion, care, justice, or fairness are an important part of the morality system and should be abided by. Additionally, the negative effect of a market mindset on the endorsement of individualizing moral foundations was found in participants with a conservative orientation but not in those ascribing to liberal political views.

Market Mindset and People's Reduced Endorsement of Individualizing Moral Foundations

We have built our prediction that market relationships can hamper the endorsement of individualizing moral foundations on the assumption that people having a market mindset are more prone to accept the core principles of the liberal, free-market system. In Experiment 1, we provided evidence for the relationship between a market mindset and people's reliance on fair-market ideology. Fair-market ideology (Jost, Blount, et al., 2003) originates in a belief that the most fair and efficient economic system is a free-market system in which everyone is allowed to pursue their economic interests. Rigorous adherence to such a belief often comes at the expense of other people's outcomes and needs. For example, conservatives are more likely to believe that the gains of some groups (e.g., immigrants) must inevitably lead to other groups' losses (e.g., U.S. citizens) (Davidai & Ongis, 2019). The negative effect of a market mindset on endorsing individualizing moral dimensions seems to resemble the results of prior studies showing how permanent exposure to corporate capitalist ideology regulates people's decisions at the junction of social relations and morality (Kasser et al., 2007). For example, Frank et al. (1993) showed that economists are more likely to engage in free riding than noneconomists (see also Vansteenkiste et al., 2006), where free riding is defined as obtaining benefits at other people's expense or without a necessary cost or effort (Baumol, 1952). Such a finding suggests that their endorsement of moral foundations related to care and fairness may also be less pronounced—not sharing with those in need can be seen as an expression of not exhibiting care about them.

The psychological characteristic that seems to be related to the behavioral effects discussed so far in this section is greed. It can be perceived as a part of free-market behaviors because it is related to wanting more for oneself and being indifferent to the outcomes of others (Seuntjens et al., 2015). Classical economics even sees greed as a factor society can benefit from (Greenfeld, 2001). Importantly, Jonason et al. (2017) found that the level of greed was negatively correlated with both individualizing moral foundations. Therefore, if greed is amplified by a market mindset, we might speculate that greed mediates the link between the exposure to market relationships and reduced endorsement of individualizing moral foundations.

In another stream of research, Zaleskiewicz et al. (2020) found that when market relationships are salient, people are more prone to take the utilitarian position in their moral decisions (Zaleskiewicz et al., 2020). For example, when entrepreneurs following utilitarian thinking suffer economic difficulties during a crisis, they search for different possibilities to cut costs, and one of them is the dismissal of some employees. It means that utilitarian moral decisions produce favorable consequences for the majority, but they are usually associated with unfavorable outcomes for the minority (Greene & Haidt, 2002). In this sense, such decisions seem incompatible with strictly endorsing individualizing moral foundations. Hence, our results showing that a market mindset lowers people's advocacy for individualizing moral dimensions are highly consistent with prior results indicating the relation between the priming of market relationships and the tendency to make utilitarian moral choices. Interestingly, however, such an interpretation indicates that the association between liberalism, utilitarian thinking, and the endorsement of the moral foundations of care and fairness postulated in moral foundations theory (Graham et al., 2009) may be more complex.

Why Does Political Orientation Moderate the Relation Between Market Mindset and Individualizing Moral Foundations?

We found that priming a market mindset hinders endorsement of individualizing moral foundations in people with conservative but not liberal views. Interestingly, in Experiment 1, in which we investigated the impact of market-mindset on judging a free market as fair, we did not find the interaction with political views. This result seems consistent with earlier findings that priming personal merit (vs. a good fortune mindset) shifted participants' opinions toward endorsing market-driven inequality as fair, and that this effect was independent of their baseline political orientation (Bryan et al., 2009). Considering all these effects, we may conclude that the salience of market relationships increases the endorsement of the free-market principles in all participants, but it further reduces support for individualizing moral foundations only in those with a conservative orientation.

Our interpretation of such a divergent moderating effect of political views is based on two factors: values and empathy. Individualizing moral dimensions are inextricably related to personal values representing self-transcendence (Feldman, 2021; Graham et al., 2009). It is, therefore, not surprising that liberals, who endorse individualizing moral foundations more than conservatives, also declare a strong reliance on self-transcendence values (Caprara et al., 2006; Graham et al., 2009; Piurko et al., 2011; Thorisdottir et al., 2007). Hence, they may be more immune to the harmful effect of a market mindset on endorsing individualizing moral foundations than those with right-wing views. Consequently, even if liberals also react to the market mindset priming with an increased belief that a free market is fair, they do not transfer such a belief to the sphere of moral considerations.

The second explanation refers to the potential role of empathy that may operate similarly to values, protecting some people—those predisposed to feel more empathy—against the detrimental effect of market-mindset salience on moral considerations associated with care and fairness. Strupp-Levitsky and others (2020) found that dispositional empathy is a significant predictor of the endorsement of individualizing moral foundations. Interestingly, liberals are not only more motivated to experience empathy than conservatives, but they also show stronger empathic reactions and are more willing to help (Hasson et al., 2018; Iyer et al., 2012; McCue & Gopojan, 2000). We propose that even if liberals react to the induction of a market mindset similarly to conservatives, they may not reduce their endorsement of individualizing moral foundations because they are more empathic. Both explanations we offered here require further empirical examinations.

How Stable Are the Effects of a Market Mindset on Moral Foundations?

The final issue we will discuss refers to the stability of the effect of market mindset induction on the endorsement of individualizing moral dimensions. In our view, the participants' reactions that we observed when running our experiments should be rather considered as momentary changes (as it occurs in most psychological experiments that use subtle interventions similar to ours; e.g., Lodder et al., 2019, Weingarten et al., 2016). However, we do believe that the effects we found show how people's moral principles can potentially alter when people are consistently and repeatedly exposed to certain stimuli. When people are constantly exposed to market-type cues, and their relationships with others are repeatedly framed in terms of a transaction (e.g., in an organization, but also in a family, see Clark et al., 2010), their moral foundations may also start changing more permanently. In the long run, a lower acceptance of individualizing moral foundations caused by a market mindset could harm relationships with others and weaken social connectedness, both being strongly predictive of personal well-being (e.g., Hommerich & Tiefenbach, 2018; Le et al., 2018). No doubt, the stability as well as personal and social consequences of the effects of interventions aimed at evoking a market mindset comprise the issue that seems worth investigating in further research.

Practical Implications

Our project can also offer some practical implications. For example, the effects we observed might be used to better understand why and under what conditions consumers with conservative views are less concerned with corporate social responsibility (CSR) and react less critically to its violations (Chin et al., 2013; Gupta & Wowak, 2017; Jasinenko et al., 2020; Jung et al., 2017). Our results seem to contribute to a twofold understanding of such an effect. First, the acceptance

of irresponsible corporate activities in conservatives may be firmly enhanced when the social network is based on exchange-type relationships which stimulate a market mindset. Second, conservatives' attitudes toward supporting CSR may be unfavorable, because their tendency to interpret reality through market-related lenses makes them less willing to endorse individualizing moral foundations. If the salience of the market mindset makes conservatives less concerned about such moral dimensions as care and fairness, it can further lead to their reduced support for CSR.

Another practical implication refers to the fact that the negative psychological consequences of market mindset salience for endorsing the moral values of care and fairness were not found in liberals. Evidence indicates that political orientation is associated with people's preferences for how an organization is structured and coordinated. Liberals generally oppose traditional hierarchical structures which support inequality and are based on exchange-type regulations (Bermiss & McDonald, 2018; Land & King, 2014; Tetlock, 2000). If their preferences cannot be met, they tend to relocate to more ideologically congruent communities (Bermiss & McDonald, 2018; Chopik & Motyl, 2016). One explanation behind such an effect is that people naturally search for an environment that can match their needs. Another interpretation might be that people holding liberal views are determined to build flat and highly democratic structures in organizations they are part of, because they are concerned that hierarchical, exchange-based regulations would enhance extremely individualistic attitudes and reduce the importance of such values as care and fairness. However, our results suggest that even if the culture of organizations attracting people with liberal views were to be grounded in exchange-type relationships which have the capacity to boost market cognition, we should not observe a reduced concern for individualizing moral foundations among members of those organizations.

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Data Availability: For this article, three data sets are freely available (Zaleskiewicz, Gasiorowska, & Kuzminska, 2022a)

Supplementary Materials

The Supplementary Materials contain the following items (for access see [Index of Supplementary Materials](#) below):

- The results of the manipulation checks for Experiment 1 and Experiment 2.
- Supplementary tables reporting descriptive statistics, correlations between variables, and detailed results of regression analyses.
- Data supporting the results or analyses.

Index of Supplementary Materials

Zaleskiewicz, T., Gasiorowska, A., & Kuzminska, A. (2022a). *Supplementary materials to "Market mindset reduces endorsement of individualizing moral foundations, but not in liberals"* [Research data]. OSF. <https://osf.io/sk2j6/>

Zaleskiewicz, T., Gasiorowska, A., & Kuzminska, A. (2022b). *Supplementary materials to "Market mindset reduces endorsement of individualizing moral foundations, but not in liberals"* [Additional information]. PsychOpen GOLD. <https://doi.org/10.23668/psycharchives.12202>

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