

**THE “IDEOLOGICAL” ELECTORATE: A SELF-CATEGORIZATION THEORY OF
IDEOLOGICAL IDENTIFICATION**

by

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
The Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

2017

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
DIETRICH SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

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This dissertation examines ideological identification as a form of social identity. In doing so, it provides support for two related claims. First, ideological identity represents a decision to identify with a social group (liberals or conservatives), and is a “self-categorization” based largely upon social factors. Second, ideological identification is motivated in part by a desire within an individual to distance themselves from a partisan political identification. Much of the extant literature within political science has characterized the electorate as non-ideological, or lacking the political sophistication necessary to possess a coherent and constrained ideological belief system. In contrast, this dissertation builds support for a more “ideological” electorate in which an increasing number (majority) of citizens identify with an ideological label. The empirical studies contained within show that this ideological attachment is an aspect of social identity, whereby individuals attach themselves to an ideological group, or label, that best aligns with their own social characteristics. In addition, this work demonstrates that one reason why ideological identification has been increasing is because of threats to individuals’ partisan identities. In the present era of partisan polarization, the parties are perceived in an increasingly negative manner. Certain partisans respond to this threat by distancing themselves from their partisan identity and becoming more strongly attached to an ideological identity.

Chapter One introduces the simultaneous trends of increasing ideological identification and decreasing partisan identification. Chapter Two provides then provides a review of the literature on partisanship and ideology and presents a new theory of ideological identification. Chapter Three identifies stereotypes of partisan and ideological groups and shows that aligned groups (Democrats and liberals; Republicans and conservatives) are viewed as highly similar, which can facilitate a transition between partisan and ideological identities. Further, the degree of similarity between an individual's own personal/social characteristics and their beliefs about ideological groups predicts strength of ideological identification. Chapters Four and Chapter Five then present evidence that partisan threat causes weak partisan identifiers to transition from partisan to ideological identification. Chapter Six concludes by discussing the empirical results and suggesting avenues for future research.

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PREFACE

I wish to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the many faculty, friends, and family who supported me throughout the dissertation writing process. Foremost, I would like to extend thanks to Professor Jon Hurwitz, who has not only been an amazing mentor and advisor during my time at Pitt, but also a friend. With his retirement this year, the department (and the discipline) has lost a brilliant scholar and a tireless advocate for student success. I would also like to thank Professor Torrey Shineman, my committee co-chair, for providing detailed and insightful feedback and advice at all stages of the project. Her dedication to the conduct of rigorous social science has improved this project enormously, and her readiness to help students is a tremendous boon to the department. The Center for American Politics (CAPS) at Pitt has been generous with my requests for funding. I thank the CAPS chair, Jon Woon, for continuing to open my emails seeking funds, as frequent as they sometimes were. In addition, I received generous funding for part of this research through the Edward and Marian Lieberman Award, and I wish to thank the donors for their generosity. Perhaps most importantly, I would like to thank Serena MacDonald for remaining at my side throughout my graduate school career. I know I have not always been entirely pleasant, but your warmth and optimism have kept me sane. Finally, my fellow graduate students at Pitt have always been willing to lend an ear. There are too many of you to name, but I especially thank Eric Loepp, Danial Hoepfner, Fanghui Zhao, and Derek Culp for your friendship, scholarly advice, and dedication to the cause of happy hour.

1.0 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

“If I were a liberal Democrat, people would say I'm the super genius of all time. The super genius of all time. If you're a conservative Republican, you've got to fight for your life. It's really an amazing thing.”

-Donald Trump, *Meet the Press*, August 16th, 2015

The U.S. presidential election of 2016, and the two major party primary contests that preceded it, will be remembered in one of two ways. It could be the case that 2016 is recalled as atypical, a unique election that has little precedent in modern history and is unlike elections to follow.¹ Or, it may be the case that 2016 is referenced as the beginning of a trend. It may be remembered as the first of a series of national elections characterized by heretofore unseen levels of vitriol, hostility, and, most significantly, the success of candidates with little allegiance to the political party that they represent. Of course, only time will provide a certain answer as to how we will look back upon the 2016 election. Yet because several aspects of this election, and developments within the political environment more broadly, were predictable (or at least more predictable than contemporary media commentary would suggest), 2016 may indeed hint at the start of a

¹ The 2016 election does share similarities with the election of 1896, between William Jennings Bryan and William McKinley, as noted by Azari and Hetherington (2016).

trend.² While few could predict the surprising popularity of Bernie Sanders, an avowed “Democratic Socialist,” or the nomination of Donald Trump as the Republican presidential nominee, there appears to be a broader and more predictable pattern occurring that favors candidates who are perceived to be outside of the existing political establishment. And, as of this writing, there are few indications that this trend will cease.

This project provides a framework for addressing and understanding this pattern, as well as several modern features of the political environment. Foremost, this framework revolves around the role of *social identity*, or how individuals define themselves based upon their group memberships. Individuals are motivated to seek out group memberships that positively reflect upon themselves, and that impart a sense of who they are to others (Tajfel and Turner 1979). As social beings, humans are driven to associate with others, and these associations are useful heuristics to evaluate individuals. As an example, how might you evaluate someone who is a member of a local shooting range? What about a member of a local conservation club? Both memberships share similarities, in that they promote outdoor activities, yet you might assume someone with the former membership is likely to be a conservative (and/or a Republican) and someone with the latter membership is likely to be a liberal (and/or a Democrat). Neither of these groups is inherently political, yet their memberships impart clear political connotations. There are perceived associations with each group, and we may apply stereotypes to individuals belonging to each group. The result is that individuals’ social identities, largely defined by group memberships, have clear political implications.

² For an example of how the 2016 election was covered as novel and unpredictable, see: Kurtzleben, Danielle. “Politics has Become Celebrity-Driven: How 2016 Surprised Political Thinkers. *National Public Radio*, July 17, 2016. Accessed January 4th, 2017. <http://www.npr.org/2016/07/17/484016283/-politics-has-become-celebrity-driven-how-2016-surprised-political-thinkers>.

One of the principal arguments presented throughout this project is that the decision to identify with a political group, and more specifically an ideological group, i.e., conservative or liberal, is driven in part by social characteristics. As noted by Converse (1964), most Americans do not appear to possess coherent ideological belief systems. That is, in regards to policy positions, Americans do not exhibit high degrees of constraint, insofar as a more liberal (conservative) position on one issue does not necessarily predict a liberal (conservative) position on another issue.³ However, this does not stop Americans from identifying with an ideological label, nor does it inhibit Americans from using ideological cues in their voting decisions (Malka and Lelkes 2010). By conceptualizing ideology as a type of social identity, the decision to identify with an ideological group finds a more complete explanation.

Why is ideological identification of such importance? Since at least *The American Voter* (Campbell et al. 1960), explanations of political attitudes and behavior have centered upon partisan attachment. It is not an understatement to say that partisan identification is the foundation upon which most explanations of American voting behavior are built, while ideology has been characterized as a related, though comparatively unimportant, predictor of political attitudes. Given the findings of Converse (1964), and subsequent findings indicating an electorate possessing little factual knowledge of politics (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996), partisanship has been viewed as the most important heuristic upon which Americans base their political attitudes. Partisanship serves as a “perceptual screen” which filters and biases incoming information in service of individuals’ partisan preferences (Bartels 2002). According to these accounts, to the extent that the mass public is ideological, it is most likely a result of partisan

³ However, (Ansolabehere, Rodden, and Snyder 2014) do find higher levels of constraint when using multiple measures of issue preferences, though only in regards to within a single issue area (e.g., economic issues, moral issues).

alignments, with Democrats aligned with more liberal policies and Republicans aligned with more conservative policies. In essence, ideological identification may merely serve as a synonym for an individual's partisanship. Given this evidence, why the focus on ideological identification if it is merely an extension of partisan identification?

The motivation for an examination of ideological identification arises from two broad and concurrent trends. The first is quite simple: rates of ideological identification are increasing in the United States. In addition, the rate of partisan identification shows a near-opposite trend: it is decreasing. This trend is striking in that it appears to refute the idea that ideological identification is simply an extension of partisanship, as the two do not always seem to rise and follow together. The second trend, that has been given much more attention in the literature, is that of a "culture war," or the polarization of attitudes between those on the political left and those on the political right. Perhaps the most prominent account of the culture war, penned by Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope (2005), refutes its very existence. However, the past decade has witnessed a substantial amount of evidence in support of a culture war. In addition, much of this support comes from moving away from the examination of issue positions, a more typical conceptualization of ideology, and toward the examination of affect and social factors. The rest of this chapter examines these two trends, the rise of ideological identification and the growing evidence of a culture war, in more detail as they provide the backdrop for the present examination of ideological identification.

1.1 POLITICAL IDEOLOGY: THEN AND NOW

The decades following World War II witnessed the birth and continued growth of academic survey research. In particular, scholars at Columbia (Barelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954) and Michigan (Campbell et al. 1960; Converse 1964) sought to use survey data to explain political attitudes and behavior. While there is disagreement on what factor is *most* important in determining the vote, most of the research from this period agrees that ideology, and issue positions more broadly, may be one of the *least* important factors. Exacerbating this, one study by Adorno and colleagues (1950) that did find significant personality differences between liberals and conservatives was heavily criticized for political bias and lack of methodological rigor. In the end, Bell's (1960) “end of ideology” thesis, while more directly applicable to political theory, nonetheless set the tone in empirical political science for most of the 20th century. That is not to say that scholars became disinterested in examining voters’ issue positions, but that ideology as defined by a coherent and constrained belief system was not considered to be prevalent within the American mass public, and therefore not worthy of much further scholarly attention.

Yet at the turn of the 21st century, research on political ideology began anew, but largely on the margins of political science, at the intersections of social psychology, genetics, and neuroscience. Most significantly, scholars from multiple backgrounds and perspectives became interested in ideology, addressing topics such as differing personality orientations (Jost 2006; Jost et al. 2003; Mondak 2010), interaction styles (Carney et al. 2008; Jost et al. 2003), and even

genes (J. R. Alford and Hibbing 2008; Funk et al. 2013) between conservatives and liberals.⁴ These studies are hugely important beyond their specific conclusions, as they indicate that ideology must have *some* meaning for citizens, otherwise these differences would not occur. Perhaps citizens are capable of ideological thinking, and that social-psychological factors do cause them to align with certain ideologies. Put differently, and echoing Lane (1973), perhaps scholars were looking for evidence of citizen ideology in the wrong manner.

Contemporary scholars have replaced the narrow definition of ideology that defined earlier work with new conceptualizations that allow for a broader understanding of how citizens draw upon ideology, and ideological terms, to inform their political attitudes and behavior. One such conceptualization is of ideology as a label, or symbol, that the public uses to identify with and inform their political decisions. It is not necessarily the case, or even assumed to be the case, that most individuals have a fully-realized ideological belief system that constrains their issue positions. Rather, individuals may simply align themselves with an ideological label and use it as a heuristic, or cognitive shortcut, to evaluate issues, policies, and candidates. Underpinning this effort is an acknowledgement that many citizens, and at present a majority of citizens, do identify as either a liberal or conservative. Thus, these labels must serve some purpose, even if they do so at a superficial level. In this vein, Ellis and Stimson (2012) make a distinction between ideological symbols and ideological preferences. The former, which the authors refer to as “symbolic ideology,” simply refers to how individuals classify themselves, as either a liberal, conservative, or moderate. In contrast, ideological preferences, or in their terminology “operational ideology,” is more akin to earlier conceptualizations of ideology as a belief system.

⁴ Though, much of this work remains the focus of debate, given the complexities of human genetics. More importantly, this research has fostered interest in the possible biological bases of political orientations and behavior, and continues to influence contemporary studies.

Operational ideology refers to beliefs about the size and scope of government, and relates more directly to policy positions. Symbolic and operational ideology do not always align within all individuals. In fact, Ellis and Stimson find that nearly 30% of Americans identify as conservative, yet are operationally liberal. That is, these conflicted conservatives classify themselves as conservative but have issue positions that are more characteristically liberal than conservative. Most importantly, these individuals act like conservatives, casting their ballot more often for Republican candidates, even though their true preferences are usually more aligned with Democratic candidates.

This project is concerned with further exploring the symbolic side to ideology—what I refer to as ideological social identity. However, I am not the first to do so as other scholars have conceptualized ideology in this manner and have provided initial evidence that ideology operates as a form of identity. For example, Devine (2014) measures ideological social identity using a psychometric scale of identity strength, specifically the Identification with Psychological Groups (IDPG) Scale (Mael and Tetrick 1992), and finds that it is empirically distinct from ideological self-placement.⁵ The most common measure of ideology is a seven-point scale asking respondents to locate themselves, ranging from 1 (Extremely Liberal) to 7 (Extremely Conservative).⁶ Devine finds that the strength of attachment to an ideological group measured with the IDPG scale differs from simple belief extremity as measured with the self-placement item. Further, strength of attachment predicts voting behavior, with those with greater attachment to their ideological group more consistently voting for candidates sharing their ideology. Others find that ideological identification increases how receptive individuals are to ideological cues.

⁵ The IDPG scale will be given further, more detailed, explanation in Chapter Two.

⁶ Specifically, the item reads: “Here is a 7-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?”

Those who identify with an ideological label, liberal or conservative, show greater support for an abstract policy when it is described in ideological terms that match their identification (Malka and Lelkes 2010).

This strand of research has not advanced much beyond illustrating that ideology has an identity component. Several questions remain unanswered. First, why do people take on an ideological identity in the first place? As Ellis and Stimson (2012) show, ideological identity (or symbolic ideology) does not align with political beliefs for a large number of people, particularly for self-identified conservatives. What factors cause these people to identify as conservatives when their beliefs on a number of issues would suggest that they should instead identify as liberal? Second, how does partisan identification relate to ideological identification? Is one merely an extension of the other?

These questions are important given trends in ideological and partisan identification, which were mentioned briefly at the beginning of this chapter. Figure 1 displays rates (percentages) of partisan and ideological identification since 1992 using Gallup data. Partisan identification reached a peak of 68% in 2004 and 2006, and has since fallen dramatically. It currently rests at about 55%. However, ideological identification has shown a near-consistent increase since 1992, beginning at 53% in 1992 and ending at 61% in 2016. Thus, partisanship and ideology have shown nearly opposite trends over this period, and individuals now are more likely to identify with an ideological label than a partisan label. These trends underscore the necessity of examining ideological identification in greater detail. Specifically, what explains this move toward ideology and away from partisanship?

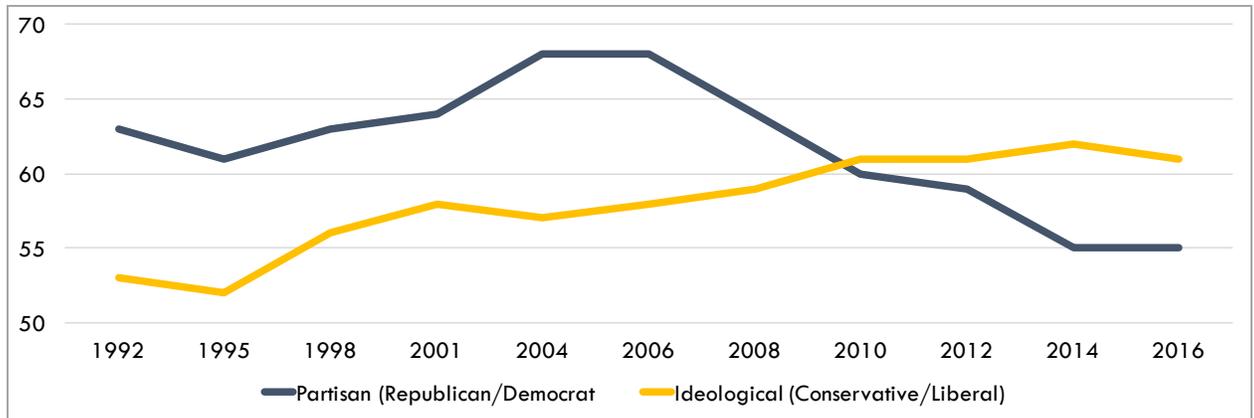


Figure 1. Percentage of Americans Identifying as Partisan (Republican/Democrat) and Ideological (Conservative/Liberal), 1992-2016 (Gallup data)

One place to begin answering this question may be in the well-established literature on political polarization, within the electorate as well as among political elites. Could it be the case that increasing rates of ideological identification reflect a polarizing electorate? The perspective taken throughout this project, and supported empirically, is that the electorate is polarized, but not necessarily along political issues. The polarization stems from a different set of factors altogether, as detailed in the following section. For now, what is clear is that Americans are now more likely to identify as either a liberal or a conservative, but not as a Democrat or Republican. However, just because individuals possess an ideological identity does not necessarily mean that they possess political beliefs that are consistent with that identification. It should not be assumed that the electorate is growing more extreme in their political beliefs.

1.2 POLITICAL POLARIZATION AND THE “CULTURE WAR”

Alongside new studies of ideology within the citizenry, robust methods have been developed to study the ideology of political elites, particularly within the U.S. legislative branch. The most prominent, DW-NOMINATE, estimates legislator ideology using Congressional roll-call votes (Poole and Rosenthal 2007). To avoid getting mired in technical detail, it is enough to say that this method allows members of Congress to be arrayed on a liberal-conservative dimension and allows comparison of the ideologies of parties in Congress across time. To illustrate how ideological differences between the parties have changed during the post-World War II period, the mean DW-NOMINATE score for each party is displayed in Figure 2. The trends within both chambers is clear: the ideological differences between the parties have increased dramatically over time. When it comes to political elites, it does appear that polarization is occurring (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006). Particularly since 1980, the Republican Party has grown much more conservative, while the Democratic Party has trended in the liberal direction, though the Democrats have not moved quite as much as Republicans.

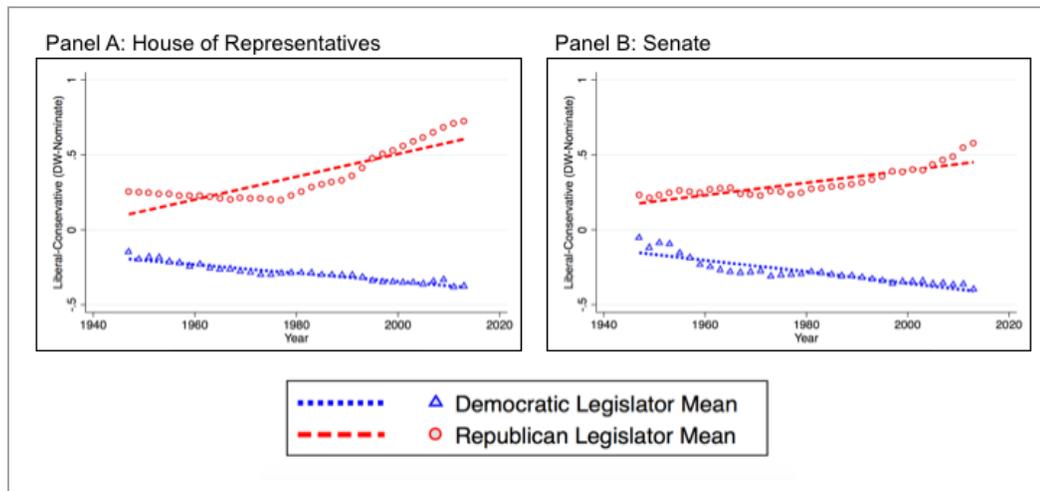


Figure 2. Mean DW-Nominate Score for Republicans and Democrats in Congress, 1946-2012

While there is little debate that ideological polarization has occurred among elites, has such polarization taken place within the electorate? Here, the story becomes much more complex, and scholars have offered a wide-range of answers to this question, with many conflicting perspectives. Polarization has also been a hot topic in the news media, with the term “culture war” being used largely as a flashier substitute for polarization. This term was first coined by the sociologist James D. Hunter in the early 1990s (Hunter 1991), and entered the public psyche with a widely popularized speech by Pat Buchanan at the 1992 Republican National Convention. In his speech, Buchanan boldly stated that, “There is a religious war going on in our country for the soul of America. It is a cultural war, as critical to the kind of nation we will one day be as was the Cold War itself.”⁷ Certainly, it is easy to think that there is such a culture war presently occurring in the United States. The heated rhetoric in campaigns only seems to be growing over time, media sources cater to a particular set of ideological beliefs (for example, compare Fox News and MSNBC), and easily-supported facts are now the subject of debate. Surely then, the electorate is also polarized?

The answer to this question is not entirely straightforward. One of the earliest and most influential perspectives in this domain argues that there is no mass polarization, and no culture war. Fiorina et al. (2005) in their book *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America* posit that if the electorate is polarized, we should observe most citizens identifying as extremely liberal or extremely conservative, with few citizens identifying as moderate. Instead, they find that citizens identifying as moderate continue to vastly outnumber citizens identifying as extremely liberal/conservative, as indicated by responses to questions on national surveys. In fact, the

⁷ Patrick Buchanan, “1992 Republican National Convention Speech” (speech, Houston, TX, August 17, 1992), Patrick J. Buchanan – Official Website, <http://buchanan.org/blog/1992-republican-national-convention-speech-148>.

pattern is unmistakable. Figure 3 displays how citizens have responded to the self-placement ideology item over time on the American National Elections Studies (ANES) surveys. The solid line on the bottom of the chart indicates the percentage of extreme ideologues, which has always been much lower than all other categories, though the percentage has doubled over the observed timespan, from 3.8% in 1970 to 7.6% in 2014. However, the proportion of citizens professing that they are extremely ideological remains relatively small compared to all other categories. The percentages of citizens identifying as moderate, slightly ideological (i.e., “slightly liberal” or “slightly conservative”), or ideological (i.e., “liberal” or “conservative”) are all nearly equal, and in sum account for over 90% of the electorate.

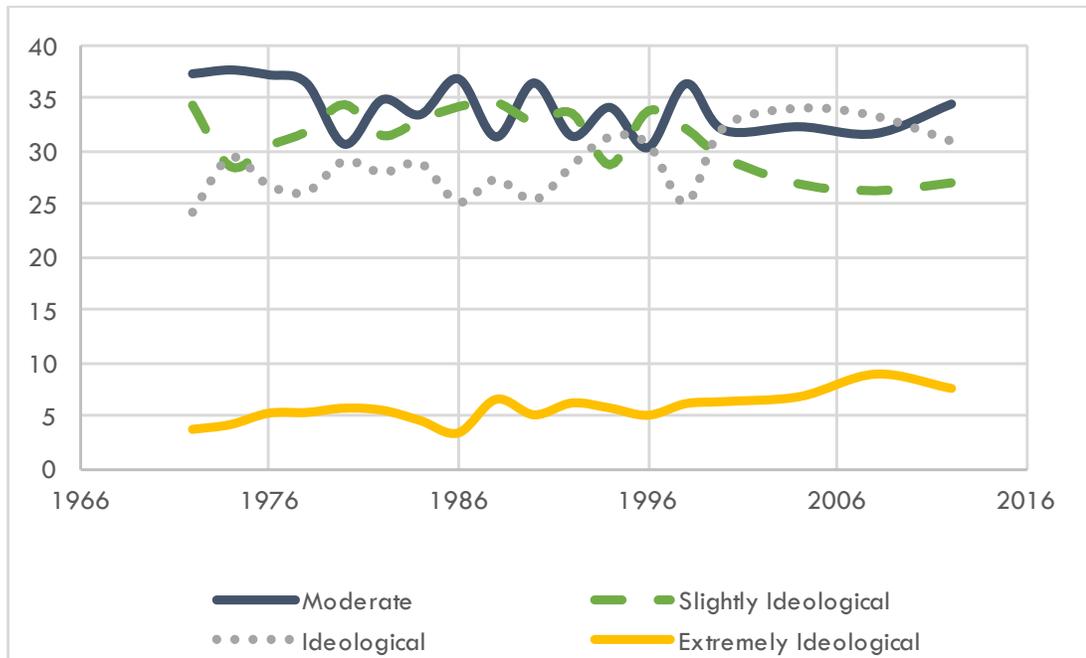


Figure 3. Ideology in the U.S. Electorate by Type of Identification, 1970-2012

In addition, Fiorina et al. (2005) examine individual issue positions and find that the majority of citizens also do not hold extreme positions on many issues. The bulk of their

analyses focus on differences between red states, or those that consistently cast their electoral votes for Republican presidential candidates, and blue states, or those that instead consistently vote for Democratic presidential candidates. They find that these states only differ slightly in regards to party identification, ideological identification, issue positions, and religiosity. The authors thereby conclude that the electorate is closely divided, meaning that the ideological divide is evenly split and with most citizens toward the center of the ideological spectrum. This pattern is in contrast to the claim that the electorate is deeply divided, as we see very few citizens at the extreme ends of the ideological spectrum.

But, this is far from the end of the story. Abramowitz and Saunders (2008) reject most of Fiorina et al.'s (2005) claims as oversimplified. Reanalyzing much of the same survey data, Abramowitz and Saunders find that more politically engaged citizens, i.e., those that are more likely to pay attention to and participate in politics, are much more likely to display more extreme ideological identification and hold more extreme positions on several issues. Further, they find that party identification has become much more correlated with ideological identification and religion over time. These findings have clear implications for the existence of polarization, as each party is increasingly composed of citizens who are more distinct from the other party. While citizens who are relatively apathetic towards politics show more moderation in their ideological identification and issue positions, those who are most engaged and likely to affect electoral outcomes are more extreme. Therefore, according to this perspective, polarization is occurring in the electorate, though it is not occurring evenly throughout, and the polarization may extend beyond political beliefs to demographic characteristics.

While the debate on the existence of polarization in the electorate has not been completely settled, polarization scholars have moved away from the focus on issue positions and

ideological self-identification in more recent analyses. The concept of polarization itself has also been greatly clarified. Mason (2015), for example, makes a useful distinction between issue polarization and social polarization, arguing that previous scholars have conflated the two. Issue polarization pertains to increasing divergence on actual political issues. If occurring, it would manifest itself on items measuring the extremity of citizens' positions on particular issues, with an increasing number of citizens holding more extreme views. In contrast, social polarization is much more about subjective perceptions than real issue differences. This type of polarization occurs when opposed political groups, such as parties or ideological groups, view each other as increasingly distinct and feel more negatively toward those not sharing their political affiliations. If social polarization were occurring, it could be seen in items measuring affect, or emotions/feelings, toward political groups.

While the evidence in favor of issue polarization as discussed thus far is mixed, the evidence in favor of social polarization is more robust. As a starting point, Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes (2012) examine trends in feeling thermometer scores over time. Feeling thermometers measure affect, specifically how favorably (warm) or unfavorably (cold) individuals feel toward a particular group. The authors contrast individuals' own party (in-group) feeling thermometer scores with scores given to the opposing party (out-group). Figure 4 replicates this analysis by showing the mean in-group and out-group feeling thermometer scores from 1972-2012 using ANES data. The trend is quite obvious: in-group scores have remained relatively stable and positive/warm over time while out-group scores have shown a precipitous decline. The gap between in-group scores and out-group scores has grown from approximately 17 points in 1972 to approximately 40 points in 2012. This is a dramatic shift. We begin at a point where citizens

viewed both parties favorably, above the neutral midpoint of 50, to a point where they remain positive toward their party (though slightly less so) but view the other party quite negatively.

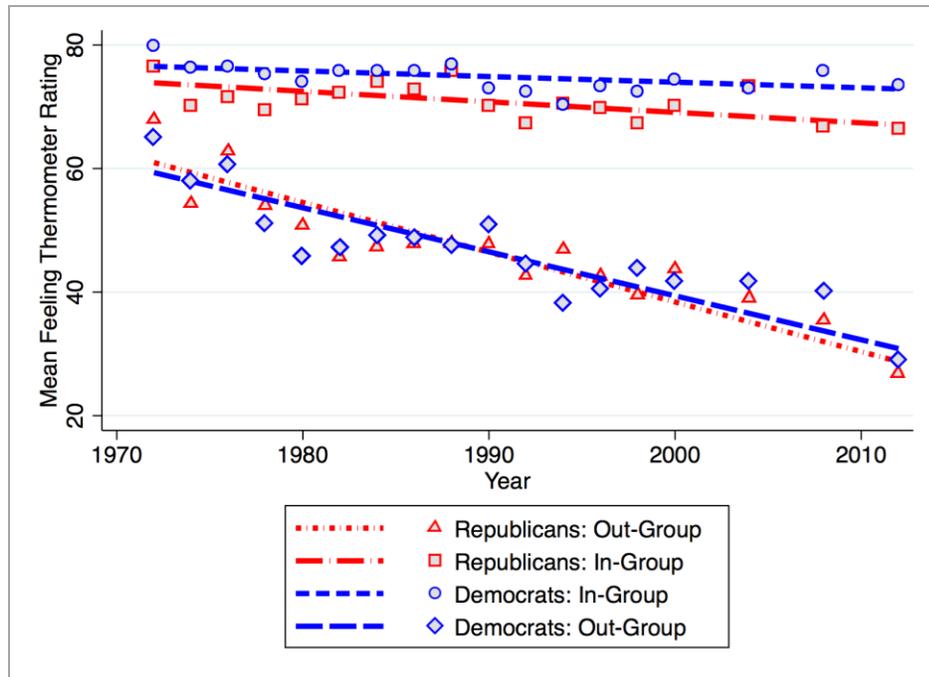


Figure 4. Mean In-Group and Out-Group Party Feeling Thermometer Scores, 1972-2012

The same analysis can be repeated for ideological groups. As shown in Figure 5, the trend for feeling thermometer scores for ideological groups roughly mirrors that of partisan groups. However, there are a few notable differences. The scores for out-groups remained fairly neutral, ending at around 45 for each group. Most of the decline in out-group feeling thermometer scores occurred in 2012, and in years prior to that the out-group scores appeared to be increasing. At this point in time, it is unclear whether 2012 represents an outlier, or the beginning of a trend. More broadly, differences between in-group and out-group feeling thermometer scores pertaining to ideological groups are not nearly as large as those of parties. This may have important implications for rates of ideological and partisan identification, an issue to be revisited later.

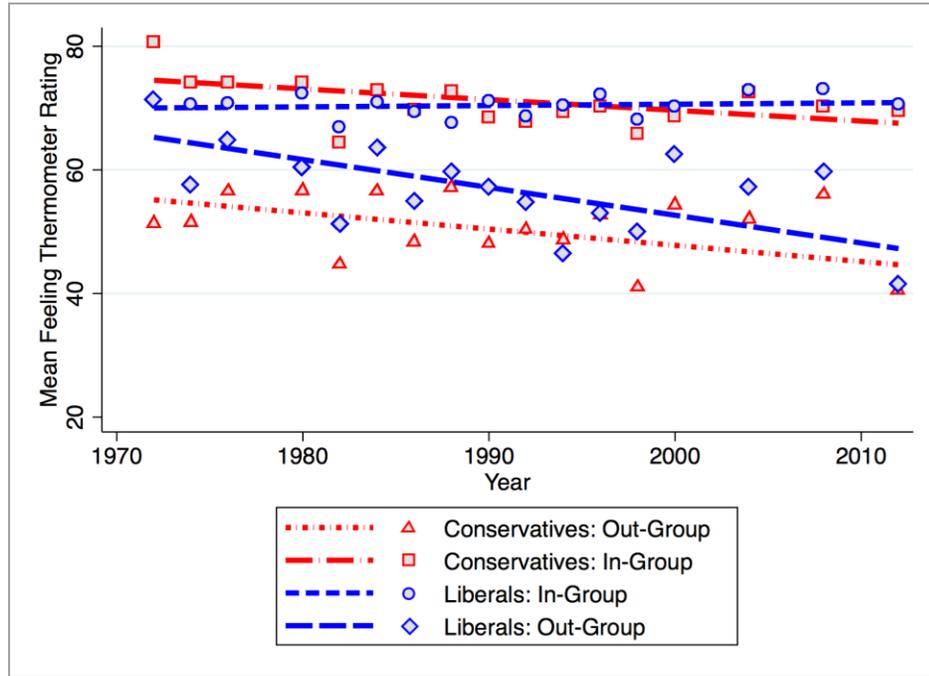


Figure 5. Mean In-Group and Out-Group Ideology Feeling Thermometer Scores, 1972-2012

In addition to feeling thermometers, scholars have looked at other measures of social polarization, such as distrust (Hetherington and Rudolph 2015), anger (Mason 2015), and even propensity for discrimination (Iyengar and Westwood 2014). These provide further evidence that social polarization, characterized by hostility toward those outside of individuals’ own political affiliations, is occurring in the electorate. The most startling evidence even suggests that partisans are more likely to discriminate against opposing partisans than they are to discriminate based on race (Iyengar and Westwood 2014). At the same time, it remains highly debatable that issue polarization, characterized by a divergence of actual political positions between those on the political left and those on the political right, is also occurring. More to the point of the present project, ideological identification is on the rise, which is puzzling if issue polarization is not also occurring. One simple explanation for increasing ideological identification could be that

(issue) polarization among elites results in the electorate being more clearly able to discriminate what position they should take on an issue in order to be consistent with party leaders' positions.⁸ Yet, evidence for issue polarization within the electorate is weak (Fiorina, Abams, and Pope 2005), and likely only occurs among the most sophisticated (Abramowitz and Saunders 2008). If we look at changes in the extremity of ideological self-identification among only partisan identifiers, we see very little growth over time. Figure 6 plots this extremity since 1972, using ANES data, with a scale ranging from 0 (moderate) to 3 (extreme liberal/conservative).⁹ While the trend among both types of partisans is positive, the magnitude of the growth is quite small and the means remain rather low.

⁸ However, elite polarization has resulted in partisan sorting, whereby citizens are more easily able to distinguish between the parties' positions and thereby align themselves more easily with a party that shares their political beliefs (Levendusky 2009)

⁹ Specifically, I collapse the seven-point ideology scale such that each point away from the midpoint (moderate) represents a growth in ideological extremity, with "0" indicating moderate, "1" indicating slightly liberal/conservative, "2" indicating liberal/conservative, and "3" indicating extremely liberal/conservative.

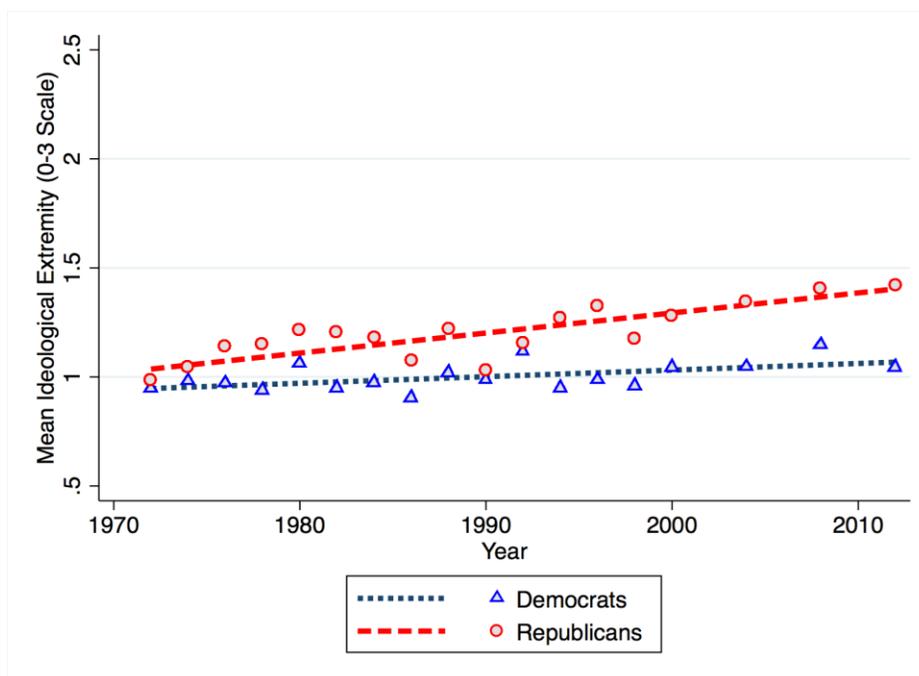


Figure 6. Ideological Extremity among Partisans, 1972-2012

Furthermore, most of this growth is likely accounted for by greater numbers of citizens identifying with an ideological label, not because individuals are actually growing more extreme. As evidence for this assertion, Figure 7 serves as another illustration of increasing rates of ideological identification, using the same ANES ideology measure.¹⁰ Ideological identifiers are those who indicate that they are liberal or conservative, while non-identifiers are those who indicate that they are moderate or unsure of their ideology.¹¹ As shown, rates of ideological identification have increased since 2008. Republicans have exceptionally high rates of ideological identification, nearing 80%, which is likely a result of conservatism having a more positive connotation in American politics compared to liberalism (Ellis and Stimson 2012).

¹⁰ Figure 7 shows rates of ideological identification by partisan affiliation, with the line for independents including only those that indicate that they do not lean toward a particular party, while the Democrats and Republicans lines include leaners. The year 2000 was omitted from the chart because it showed highly irregular rates of ideological identification, 20-40 percentage points higher than in all other years.

¹¹ While moderate is itself a type ideological identification, it is treated here as an ambivalence between liberal and conservative ideology. This largely mirrors the perspective of Conover and Feldman (1981), who argue that much of the decision to self-identify as a liberal or conservative results from evaluations of those labels, rather than from issue positions.

Democrats have also shown an increase, with nearly 60% identifying with an ideological group in 2012. Perhaps the most interesting trend, however, is among independents. Approximately one-third of independents in 2012 profess an ideological identification, an increase of more than 10 percentage points from 2004.¹² What could be causing this trend? Are independents aligning with an ideological group but not identifying with the aligned party? Or are former partisans who possessed an ideological identification becoming independent of the parties?

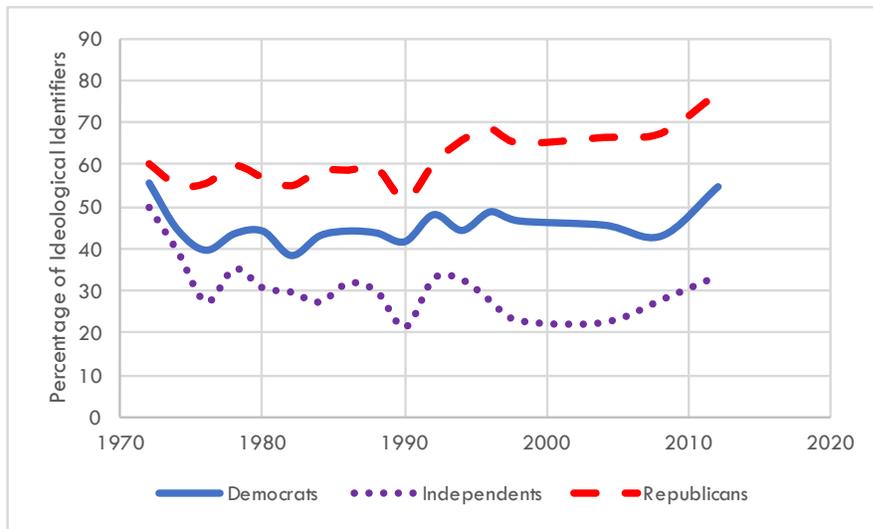


Figure 7. Percentage of Ideological Identifiers by Partisan Affiliation, 1972-2012

¹² Yet it is of note that ideological identification among independents does appear to have been high at the beginning of the series (1972) and has reached near current levels in 1988 and 1992, while rates of identification among partisans is now at the highest point in the series. Throughout the series, there does appear to be a strong correlation in rate of identification between partisans and non-partisans, suggesting that the current increase in ideological identification may not be unique to the current era. Rather, processes underlying ideological identification appear to be prevalent at other times in recent history.

1.3 IDEOLOGICAL IDENTITY AND SOCIAL POLARIZATION

To address these questions, this project seeks to expand the existing knowledge on ideology in the U.S. electorate by reexamining how people come to identify with an ideological group and disentangling the relationship between ideological and partisan identities. The discussion of the extant literature on ideology and polarization in this chapter provides a start, but unanswered questions remain that require a new perspective on ideological identification. Social polarization is almost certainly occurring, but we have little evidence of this beyond feeling thermometers and other affective measures. The evidence for why social polarization is occurring without accompanying issue polarization remains a relatively underexplored topic. Republicans and Democrats increasingly despise each other, yet it would not appear to be because of diverging issue positions. What, then, would cause this effect?

One suspect is the media, an important institution linking citizens with political elites. We know that partisans, in an era of nearly unlimited choice, self-select to media that biases coverage in favor of their partisan and ideological predispositions (Prior 2007). Yet we see little evidence of increasing extremity, even among partisans (Figure 6). Further, we see fewer partisans now than in previous periods (Figure 1). Thus, it would not appear that the media are very good at converting independent viewers to partisans or at making viewers more extreme.¹³ Or, at the very least, the effectiveness of the media in accomplishing these tasks has dwindled over time. Yet, there is evidence that the media may have more subtle effects, such as close-up camera angles increasing perceptions of incivility and delegitimizing opposition viewpoints on

¹³ Though, Levendusky (2013) argues that the partisan media do make a small subsection of individuals more extreme. Specifically, those who already possess strong opinions and who display high political interest. This aligns with Abramowitz and Saunder's (2008) findings.

political news programs (Mutz 2007). While the media are certainly contributors to social polarization, it is unlikely the source. What the media account is lacking, along with other elite-driven accounts, is attention to bottom-up processes. That is, scholars of polarization often confer little agency upon citizens, with processes at the elite level (including individuals within government and the media) dominating explanations. That is not to say that citizens do not play a role, but ignoring simultaneous processes in the mass public that in turn contribute to elite phenomena, such as elite polarization and media bias, results in an incomplete understanding.

The perspective I introduce throughout this project is more reciprocal in nature. Changes in the electorate cause, and are caused by, changes at the elite level. As mentioned before in this chapter, this project's perspective centers on social identity, or how people use group memberships to define their sense of self. Specifically, I argue that ideological identification has become increasingly driven by social factors, including where we choose to live, our professions, our religion (or lack thereof), and what we spend our free time doing. These all result in labels that we use to define ourselves, and, increasingly, our political affiliations. While some of this is a result of trends that have been occurring at the elite level, the move toward political identities aligning with social identities reinforces these trends. What this project adds is a more complete portrait of political identification, one that accounts for the move away from party and toward ideology, and one that also accounts for increasing hostility between the left and right. In doing so, I am able to reconcile several findings in the extant literature and to contribute a novel theory of ideological attachment that informs how we think about the electorate, and how we explain the seemingly unpredictable and often bizarre nature of contemporary politics.

1.3.1 Next Steps and Chapter-by-Chapter Outline

To accomplish these goals, I first propose that social identification motivates the decision to identify with an ideological group, or label. Those who are more characteristic of a conservative, or a liberal, will be much more likely to identify as such. This social alignment process is not as likely to be the case for partisan identification, as attachment to political parties is much more informed by evaluations of their performance in government (Fiorina 1981; Mackuen, Erikson, and Stimson 1989). Ideology, in contrast, is a more abstract concept, one that has found more prominence in contemporary political discourse, but one whose performance is much harder to define. Thus, when parties are perceived to be performing poorly, individuals may turn to ideological identification rather than partisan identification. This helps individuals to maintain a positive sense of self. They are able to transmit similar information about their political leanings through ideological labels, which come with less baggage than party labels. It is much easier to criticize a partisan group than an ideological group, and individuals will gravitate toward the latter during periods of high negativity toward their party. The changes in out-group partisan and ideological feeling thermometers, as shown in Figures 4 and 5, provide initial support for the differences between partisan and ideological group evaluations. Individuals have become much more affectively polarized in regard to feelings toward their own versus the other party, than they have in regard to their own versus the other ideological group.

Chapter Two walks through this theory in much more detail, drawing upon the extant literature in social psychology and political science in order to provide more explicit expectations for the empirical tests that follow in the later chapters. All of the hypotheses will be presented within the second chapter, though they will be briefly revisited and stated again within

each of the empirical chapters. The goal of the second chapter, then, is to lay the groundwork for each of the empirical chapters by providing a unified theory of ideological identification.

Following this, Chapter Three will examine the social nature of ideological identification. It is here that I provide further support for ideology as a social identity by examining how prototypicality with ideological groups strengthens identification with those groups. This is a crucial step, as if there is no evidence for the social nature of ideological identity then the following empirical analyses would not hold much sway. Chapter Three also provides evidence that individuals perceive aligned partisan and ideological labels (i.e., Republicans and conservatives, Democrats and liberals) as possessing nearly identical stereotypes, while non-aligned groups are viewed as highly distinct. This similarity between aligned groups should allow for individuals to transition between ideological and partisan identities when the political environment is conducive to doing so.

The next two empirical chapters work to establish the relationship between ideological and partisan identification, specifically how partisan threat may decrease partisan identity strength and increase ideological identity strength. Chapter Four uses observational data to examine how perceptions of Congress, which serve as a proxy for perceptions of party performance, affect rates of partisan and ideological identification. The fourth chapter provides much-needed external validity, to complement the experimental chapters, but does not allow for causal claims to be made. In order to establish causality, I develop and execute a survey experiment in Chapter 5. This experiment manipulates threats to partisan identity, with the expectation that negative (threatening) information about one's party will cause certain types of partisans to weaken their attachment to their party while simultaneously strengthening attachment to an ideological group. Individuals should become less partisan and more

ideological, though only by developing a stronger ideological identity rather than developing more extreme ideological beliefs.

Chapter Six summarizes the findings and draws the project in its current state to a close. I discuss the implications for strengthened ideological identity, particularly by integrating the findings of other scholars who examined the effects of ideological identification and outline ideas for future research in this area. I also discuss in greater depth how this project bears upon the contemporary political environment, and how this research may inform how we understand the unexpected nature of the latest presidential election, as well as the bombastic media coverage surrounding it. Relatedly, I reflect upon the probability of seeing the emergence of additional candidates for political office who characterize themselves as outside of the political establishment and as more distant from the political parties.

2.0 CHAPTER TWO: THEORY

“Any society which contains power, status, prestige and social groups differentials (and they all do), places each of us in a number of *social* categories which become an important part of our *self*-definition. In situations which relate to those aspects of our self-definition that we think we share with others, we shall behave very much as they do ... They acted together but it was not because of any *individual* facts of their personal psychology.”

(Tajfel 1977, p. 66)

How do citizens decide to characterize themselves as a “liberal” or a “conservative?” This question is apt given that most citizens do not have deep levels of political knowledge (Bennett 1988; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). This means that most citizens do not possess the ability to translate their positions on concrete issues to more abstract beliefs about the role of government in a society. While the majority of citizens are likely to have opinions on several issues, only the most sophisticated (and motivated) are likely to exhibit what can be characterized as an ideological belief system (Converse 1964; Federico and Schneider 2007). Therefore, higher rates of ideological identification represent a puzzle. What motivates ideological identification, if not political beliefs? In this chapter, I introduce a framework for understanding ideological identification as a social process, one driven by a motive to seek associations with groups that

reflect positively on the self. It is also a process of self-categorization whereby individuals attach themselves to an ideological group with which they share social and demographic characteristics. In doing so, I posit that ideological identification is meaningful, at least partially distinct from actual political beliefs, and more likely to occur under certain conditions. While ideological identification may not entail a fully-formed belief system, it remains an important concept that citizens use to inform their political attitudes and behavior.

The previous chapter set the agenda for a reexamination of ideology by considering several concurrent trends occurring within the American electorate and among elected representatives. The goal now is to build the foundation for this reexamination by introducing a new means to understand ideological identification and its relationship to partisan identification. This chapter begins by reviewing the relevant literature on social identity as well as research suggesting that political affiliations, such as party and ideology, represent a social identity. I then discuss identity threat, which I argue serves as the primary mechanism for increasing ideological identification. The final and most important step is to utilize the insights gleaned from the extant literature to lay out the logic of a new theory of ideological identification, which I refer to as a “self-categorization theory of ideological identification.” Here, I provide the empirical expectations that will guide the analyses within the chapters that follow.

2.1 THE SOCIAL IDENTITY APPROACH: A PRIMER

The concept of social identity was introduced by Henri Tajfel, a social psychologist primarily interested in studying intergroup prejudice (Tajfel 1981; Tajfel and Turner 1979). Social identity simply refers to an individual’s self-concept as defined by their group memberships (Turner and

Oakes 1986). Social identities refer to all groups with which we identify, such as occupation (e.g., professor, lawyer, machinist), race (e.g., Black, Latino, Asian), and religious affiliation (e.g., Protestant, Methodist, Buddhist). Social identities can be even more diverse than these basic categories, and may consist of nearly anything that represents some sort of broadly defined group membership. For instance, people who like to hunt become “hunters,” people who do not eat meat become “vegetarians.” The point is that we choose to identify with groups that confer some meaning to our sense of self. These identities allow us to describe who we are to others. Interactionism is at the core of social identity, with an individual defined by the group and the group defined by the individual members of the group (Turner and Oakes 1986). In fact, the origins of social identity theory are traced back to a dissatisfaction with the narrow focus on individuals separated from the larger group/societal context (Tajfel 1981). That is, the group and the individual become intertwined, hence the term *social* identity.

The relevance of social identity to thinking about types of political identification is straightforward: individuals navigate the political environment through their affiliations with political groups, including partisan (Republican/Democrat) and ideological (conservative/liberal) groups. The two key questions of interest are, first, why are individuals motivated to attach themselves to a group? And second, which group(s) do they choose to associate with? Answers to these questions are derived from two specific theories in the social identity literature, which together comprise the social identity approach. The first is simply referred to as social identity theory (SIT), as introduced by Tajfel in the 1970s. The second theory is known as self-categorization theory (SCT), and is often described as a cognitive addition to social identity theory (Huddy 2001). SIT and SCT are not distinct theories, but rather address different aspects of social identity. SIT can be described as more affective in nature and addresses the

motivational need to seek group memberships. SCT, in contrast, is more cognitive in nature and concerns the decision to affiliate with one group over another. Taken together, these theories provide the foundation upon which to understand why people align themselves with certain groups, as well as the functions of such alignments.

2.1.1 Social Identity Theory

In the 1970s, a group of social psychologists led by Henri Tajfel conducted a set of experiments employing what is now referred to as the ‘minimal group paradigm’ (Tajfel 1972; Turner 1975, 1978). The procedure involved sorting participants in the experiments into two or more groups and observing how mere categorization into groups affected behavior toward in-group and out-group members. Participants were told that the groups were chosen due to various reasons that were almost entirely meaningless. For example, following a task that required participants to guess the number of dots on a screen, participants were told that one group will consist over-estimators while the other group will consist of under-estimators (Tajfel, Billig, and Bundy 1971). After dividing participants into groups there is some type of allocation task that allows participants to distribute rewards (and/or penalties) to in-group and out-group members. Across these studies, the experimenters found that participants are biased toward allocating greater rewards to their in-group at the expense of the out-group. Simply categorizing people into groups, even if the categorization is near-meaningless, is enough for participants to positively favor their in-group and discriminate against the out-group.

The concept of social identity directly emerged from these studies. The psychological mechanism driving in-group favorability is the motive to achieve positive distinctiveness for one’s group, and one’s own (social) identity that is linked to the group (Tajfel 1979). That is,

there is a desire to achieve a positive sense of self by distinguishing one's groups positively from other groups. Social identity theory thus represents a departure from earlier theories of prejudice that emphasized the role of conflict (see, for example, Sherif et al. 1961). Social identity theorists, in contrast to realistic conflict theorists, found evidence for out-group prejudice in the absence of any real or perceived conflict. The motivation for positive social comparisons is enough for individuals to favor their own group. And when individuals think more in terms of intergroup relations as opposed to interpersonal relations (i.e. relations between groups as opposed to individual persons), the desire to achieve positive social identity increases (Tajfel 1974, 1978).

Many of these findings are reflected in the literature on racial prejudice within political science. For example, a wide body of research points to symbolic racism, or opposition to moral and cultural characteristics that are associated with minority groups, as being a potent explanation for racial prejudice. In comparison, perceptions of realistic threats by these groups—economic, political, or otherwise—are far less important predictors of prejudice (Brader and Valentino 2007; Brader, Valentino, and Suhay 2008; Kinder and Sears 1981). This is entirely consistent with social identity theory, with symbolic opposition to minority groups representing a means by which to positively distinguish the majority white in-group. Rather than prejudice arising simply because out-groups pose a tangible threat to the well-being of the in-group, prejudice arises to a greater degree due to the need to maintain a positive in-group identity. Group (social) identities reflect upon one's self-identity, and the desire to maintain a positive self-identity, or self-esteem (Abrams and Hogg 1988; Hogg and Abrams 1990).¹⁴

¹⁴ However, the type of self-esteem that motivates individuals to seek positive distinctiveness has not been carefully specified, and there is mixed evidence regarding the self-esteem hypothesis (Rubin and Hewstone 1998). Turner and Oakes (1997) prefer the broader term of "positive self-concept."

2.1.2 Self-Categorization Theory

While social identity theory (SIT) describes the desire to achieve positive group distinctiveness, accounting for the motivation to join groups, SIT does not say much about how individuals come to choose the groups with which they associate. This is crucial, as the group and personal identities become linked as a social identity. The groups one chooses then reflect upon the individual, for better or worse. Self-categorization theory (SCT) builds upon SIT by accounting for *why* individuals join specific groups, beyond the desire to achieve a positive self-concept. In regards to the present research, SIT allows us to understand the motives behind identifying with *an* ideological group. SCT then specifies why individuals choose to associate as a liberal versus a conservative, or vice-versa.¹⁵

SCT begins with the assumption that individuals can view the self at varying levels of abstraction, ranging from the broadest category of “human” to the most specific category, or personal identity, of “I.” Identities that apply to a group, as indicated by the pronoun “we” are social identities (Turner and Oakes 1986). For illustrative purposes, Figure 8 displays this continuum, ranging from the personal identity “I,” to social identities “we,” to the all-inclusive human identity.¹⁶ The social identities, located in the middle of the continuum, that are available to individuals are essentially unlimited and situationally-dependent (Oakes 1987). Individuals self-categorize themselves into collective groupings based on some set of criteria that allows the

¹⁵ This is, of course, putting aside ideological belief considerations. While political beliefs likely play some role in determining the decision to take on a conservative/liberal identity, there is also the possibility that individuals first take on the identity and adjust their beliefs to align with the groups’ policy positions. This is consistent with recent work showing that individuals decide that they like a politician for largely non-political reasons and then adjust their beliefs to match that politicians (Lenz 2012).

¹⁶ Here, the all-inclusive category is assumed to be humans, with the out-group being non-humans (animals, etc.). Of course, broader categories than humans could be created, such as “mammals.” However, no research to date has examined the social identities of non-humans, and for this reason they will be excluded from discussion.

group to contrast itself with another group (Turner et al. 1994). That is, the individual creates criteria to establish an “us versus them” or “in-group versus outgroup” categorization. The self then becomes collectivized, or depersonalized, viewing themselves less as unique individuals and more as representatives of the social group. As the salience of the category increases, individuals engage in more self-stereotyping, viewing themselves as more characteristic of the group (Hogg and Turner 1987). For example, if individuals are placed into a situation wherein their political partisan identity becomes salient, perhaps in a political debate with an identifier of the opposite party, they will view themselves less in terms of their personal identity and more in terms of their social (partisan) identity. They will also become more likely to view themselves, and engage in behavior, that they believe is consistent with their beliefs about members of their party, i.e., self-stereotyping. In other situations, where another social identity instead becomes salient, they will view themselves in regards to that social identity and apply self-stereotypes that are consistent with that particular group.



Figure 8. Levels of Abstraction in Self-Categorization Theory

What becomes crucial, then, are beliefs about groups, i.e., stereotypes. These stereotypic beliefs affect not only individuals' views of themselves when a social identity becomes salient, but more importantly these stereotypes also affect the decision to take on a specific social identity in the first place. While situational context determines the readiness of an individual to perceive themselves through the lens of a social identity, what remains to be explored is how individuals decide to initially take on that social identity. The most prominent factor driving alignment with certain groups is "fit," or the extent to which an individual's personal characteristics and beliefs about one's self align with stereotypical beliefs about the group (Turner et al. 1987). Social psychologists use the term "normative fit" to refer to the degree to which the attributes of an individual align with the stereotypes that individual holds toward a particular group (Oakes, Haslam, and Turner 1994). The more attributes that the individual perceives to have in common with a group, the higher the normative fit between the individual and group. This applies not only when individuals evaluate themselves, but also when they evaluate others. For example, if an observed person possessing a particular group membership violates the stereotypes that one holds toward that group then the normative fit is perceived to be lower. Furthermore, an individual may not categorize someone as a member of a group if they do not possess certain attributes that the individual believes necessary to belong to that group.

Consider President Obama as an example of categorization and normative fit. Some members of the African American community have criticized Obama for not being "black enough" because he was raised by a white mother and grandparents and spent some of his years outside of the United States. In a recent interview, then Republican presidential candidate Ben Carson said that, "He was, you know, raised white. Many of his formative years were spent in

Indonesia. So, for him to, you know, claim that, you know, he identifies with the experience of black Americans, I think, is a bit of a stretch.¹⁷” Here, Obama does not fit Carson’s subjective criteria for African Americans. Obama’s upbringing does not fit the normative content, as defined by Carson, for the social category of African Americans. However, Carson is also comparing Obama to himself and his own personal experiences, at least in part. If Carson were to move from this personal identity to the social identity African Americans, comparing himself and Obama to the broad category of whites, it is more likely that he would view Obama as more typical of African Americans. This is where salience reenters to become important: when one moves to a higher, more broad, level of abstraction, here comparing two broad racial categories, the perceived homogeneity of the in-group increases and the differences between the two groups become more accentuated (Hogg and Turner 1987; Turner et al. 1987). That is, the categorization scheme changes depending on the level of abstraction, i.e., the perceiver’s definition of the in-group and out-group, or the “us and them.”

These comparisons underscore the importance of prototypicality, or the degree of normative fit between oneself and what one perceives to be the prototypical group member. If an individual believes that she is more prototypical of a group, that individual becomes more likely to identify with that group, i.e., to take on that social identity. This is particularly likely when the perceived differences between two groups are large. As Turner et al. (1987, 51-52) write:

“Any collection of individuals in a given setting is more likely to categorize themselves as a group (become a psychological group) to the degree that the subjectively perceived differences between them are less than the differences perceived between them and other people (psychologically) present in

¹⁷ For the full interview, see: <http://www.politico.com/story/2016/02/ben-carson-obama-was-raised-white-219657>

the setting (i.e., as the ratio of intergroup to intragroup differences increases).

These comparisons will be made on relevant dimensions selected from the common features of the self-category that includes all those being compared.”

Two forces therefore determine the emergence of a social identity. First, individuals should perceive similarities between themselves and members of the group. That is, they should have a relatively high normative fit—i.e., perceive themselves as similar to the prototypical member of the group. Second, there needs to be a comparison group with which the individual shares fewer similarities than the other group. And, as the differences between the groups becomes larger, the individual is more likely to identify with the more similar group. Together, these factors comprise the *meta-contrast ratio*, or the “ratio of the mean perceived difference between the target stimulus and outgroup (different category) members over the mean perceived difference between the stimulus and other ingroup (same category)” (Turner et al. 1987, 47). When the ratio is higher, indicating a large degree of difference between the groups, and a small difference between the individual and one of the groups, the more prototypical the individual is of a group and the greater the likelihood of classification within that group. That is, it becomes much easier for an individual to contrast the two groups and to identify with the group that is perceived as most similar to the individual.

2.1.3 Putting it All Together: Social Identity Formation

The social identity approach, including social identity theory (SIT) and self-categorization theory (SCT), provides the basis to understand how individuals come to hold certain social identities. First, SIT explains that the fundamental drive to form social identities, i.e., to identify as a member of a group, is to gain positive distinctiveness. Individuals want to identify with groups

which allow them to positively distinguish themselves from non-group members, as this identification will likely result in a more positive self-concept. Second, SCT elaborates upon this theory through examining the cognitive factors underlying the categorization of the self into certain groups. Individuals possess multiple social identities, of which one or more become salient depending on the given context. They form a social identity when they observe two (or more) *distinct* groups and find that they share more similarities with one group than the other(s). Social identities are most likely to emerge when groups are highly distinct from one another, or share few overlapping attributes, and when an individual perceives herself as highly similar with one group (hence highly dissimilar with the other).

In summary, there are three important factors that drive the emergence of a social identity. First, there must be groups available that may be perceived to confer positive distinctiveness to the individual. Second, these groups must be perceived as different from one another such that individuals can differentiate between members of one group versus another. Finally, given that these groups are distinct, the individual will identify with the group with a perceived prototypical member that is more similar to the individual's own beliefs about the self. That is, the group that shares more common attributes with the individual will be the group that the individual will identify with. This becomes easier when the groups are more distinct from one another, with fewer perceived overlapping attributes between them.

2.2 FROM SOCIAL TO POLITICAL IDENTITIES

The previous sections discussed social identities in an abstract manner and drew from literature primarily from social psychology. Yet there also exists contemporary research within political

science on specific social identities associated with two types of political groups: partisan groups (Democrats/Republicans) and ideological groups (liberals/conservatives). Research on partisan social identities preceded the work on ideological social identities by nearly a decade, and work on the latter has only just begun in the past few years. In addition, there is little work on the interaction between partisan and ideological identities, or how processes that affect one identity affect the other identity. Thus, in this section I summarize the current state of the political science literature on these two topics while noting where this project will extend the extant research.

2.2.1 Partisanship as a Social Identity

Contemporary research strongly supports the existence of partisanship, or identification with a political party (Republican, Democrat), as a social identity (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002; Greene 2004). Yet, the origins of this conceptualization of partisanship in this manner finds its origins in the ‘Michigan Model’ or psychological model that was introduced over 50 years ago (Campbell et al. 1960). The Michigan scholars believed that partisan identification was no different than identification with other groups, such as racial and religious groups. That is, partisan identification is developed early in life and remains relatively stable and enduring throughout life. While it is easier to change one’s party identification, compared to one’s racial/ethnic identification, most people do not do so. Citizens change their party affiliation only in response to drastic changes in the political environment, such as the transition of the American South from a Democratic stronghold to a Republican stronghold in response to the Democrats’ position on civil rights legislation in the 1950s and 1960s (Carmines and Stimson 1989).

One of the major reasons why Campbell et al. (1960) argue that partisanship is so enduring and resistant to change is because partisan affiliations form early in life, largely before many issue attitudes are crystallized. In their classic book, *The American Voter*, the authors present the now famous “Funnel of Causality,” whereby individuals experience socialization first, early in the funnel, which develops a psychological attachment to a party. Following this attachment, one’s political attitudes are then shaped by the party with which they identify. Partisan attachment thereby creates a “perceptual screen” that affects how individuals perceive the political environment and their subsequent positions on issues. In essence, most people first determine their partisan identity and then later develop their political attitudes to match this identification. That is, individuals engage in motivated reasoning to ensure that their political beliefs and issue positions align with those of their party, rather than developing these beliefs and positions early on and using those to determine their party affiliation (see also Bartels 2002). This is driven by the deep psychological attachment individuals develop toward their party that is no different than the attachments we develop toward other types of groups.

While the “Michigan Model,” or alternatively the “psychological model,” emphasizes the importance of psychological attachment toward political parties in determining political attitudes and behavior, precisely what psychological attachment means remains unclear. Despite using the term “psychological,” the authors do little to specify what this entails, and do not posit a clear mechanism by which these attachments form beyond socialization processes that occur early in life. Later work, or what might be referred to as the “social model” of partisanship, helps to fill this gap. While the psychological model is more concerned with how partisan attachment affects political attitudes, the social model focuses more interest on how those attachments form and change based upon the social groups that are aligned with parties.

Specifically, in their landmark work *Partisan Hearts and Minds*, Green, Palmquist, and Schickler (2002) begin to specify the psychological group attachment model formulated by Campbell et al. (1960) through examining the mechanisms underlying partisan identification. Green et al. treat partisanship as a form of social identification driven by the beliefs (stereotypes) that individuals have toward partisan groups. The authors focus on the categorization process whereby individuals align with the partisan group that they perceive as comprised of individuals and groups that are most similar to themselves. That is, individuals use what the authors call “partisan images” to inform their decision to align with a particular political party. These images are largely constructed through beliefs about what types of individuals and groups comprise each party. For example, the Republican Party consists more of whites, older individuals, and men. The Democratic Party, in contrast, is more racially diverse, younger, and contains more women. These social characteristics inform the images people possess of parties and subsequent identification with the parties.

Yet, while Green et al. (2002) draw upon self-categorization theory to inform their theory of partisanship as a social identity, they distance themselves somewhat from actual social identity theory.¹⁸ They state that:

“We focus on how people categorize themselves and remain agnostic about the underlying psychological motives that impel people to form social identities such as party attachment. Indeed, it seems to us unlikely that the pursuit of self-esteem drives the formation and adjustment of party attachments. One

¹⁸ It should also be noted that while Green et al. (2002) use the term “self-categorization” frequently, they do not discuss self-categorization theory at all. This is curious for two reasons. First, the process they describe is tremendously similar to the concepts of prototypicality and normative fit described within self-categorization theory. Second, the authors do acknowledge and cite social identity theory, thus they should have come across self-categorization theory during their review of the literature.

would think that esteem-seeking voters would climb aboard the victorious party's bandwagon after a landslide victory, yet we do not see citizens severing their party attachments in the wake of scandals or electoral defeats" (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002, 11).

However, this argument ignores several well-defined aspects of partisanship, and group identity more generally, that have been well-established in the literature, such as motivated reasoning that allows partisans to selectively ignore events that do not favor their partisan identity (e.g., Bartels 2002). More importantly, the argument serves to undermine their conceptualization as partisanship of a form of *social* identification that is affected by social factors that are salient beyond the political sphere. For instance, social changes to the composition of parties have the capability to affect rates of identification, albeit slowly. Some of these changes are driven by political elites, yet much of it occurs due to changes within the electorate, including racial/partisan geographical sorting (Carmines and Stimson 1989; see also Bishop 2008)

While less influential in the literature, the work by Greene (1999, 2004) more directly establishes partisanship as a social identity. Greene uses the Identification with Psychological Groups (IDPG) scale developed by Mael and Tetrick (1992) to directly measure partisan identity strength and to predict attitudes toward parties. The scale measures the depth of attachment toward a group, or group identity strength, on two dimensions: shared characteristics and shared experiences. Shared characteristics refer to the degree to which individuals feel that they share traits and characteristics with members of the group while shared experiences refer to the extent to which the group's successes and failures are experientially shared by, and reflected upon, the individual. These two dimensions strongly predict an individual's group identity strength with a specific group. This measurement strategy is very different from the more conventional partisan

strength self-placement item, used for decades on the American National Election Studies (ANES), which through a series of two branching questions places individuals on a seven-point scale that includes “Strong [Republican/Democrat],” Not Strong [Republican/Democrat],” Lean [Republican/Democrat],” and “Independent.” Summarily, the IDPG scale is a psychological measure of group identity strength while the ANES items, and resulting scale, are more simply a self-report with a very limited number of response categories.

Greene (1999, 2004) finds that measuring partisanship using this social identity measure (the IDPG scale) explains a range of behaviors that are not captured by measuring partisan self-identification, and strength of partisan identity is a better predictor of attitudes than the simple (ANES) partisan strength self-placement item. In addition, Greene finds that independent leaners also possess a partisan social identity, as measured with the IDPG scale, and this helps to explain why independent leaners behave like partisans (see also Hawkins and Nosek 2012; Keith et al. 1992; Klar 2014). Furthermore, contrary to the beliefs of Green, Palmquist, and Schickler (2002), there is evidence that self-esteem is correlated with partisan identity strength, at least in the British context (Kelly 1988). In sum, the evidence that partisanship is a form of social identity is well-supported in the literature, even though some of the most influential work in this area is reluctant to use specific social-psychological theories and concepts.

2.2.2 Ideological Identification as a Social Identity

More recently, there is research showing that ideological identification also functions as a social identity. This is in a similar manner to partisanship. Individuals obtain an ideological identity, liberal or conservative, that serves a similar function to their partisan identity. That is, individuals identify with an ideological group label that then becomes integrated into their self-

concept. However, it should not be presumed that one needs a partisan identity to possess an ideological identity. Because of the present era of elite polarization, whereby a party becomes clearly associated with an ideological label, it should be easier for individuals to confer some sense of what ideological labels mean. This association is reflected in the sorting process occurring within the electorate: individuals are increasingly able, and likely, to align their ideological and partisan identifications (Levendusky 2009). Yet, we also know that many people choose an ideological identity that does not match their policy preferences, most often self-identified conservatives that profess liberal positions on many issues (Claassen, Tucker, and Smith 2014; Ellis and Stimson 2012). While there is a natural relationship between parties and ideology, in that parties (at least at the elite level) possess an ideological association, it should not necessarily be presumed that one is simply an extension of the other. But, the social identity process driving partisan and ideological identities should function in much the same way.

The work on ideological social identity is rather new, and the literature is at this stage quite limited. Perhaps the first work to *explicitly* differentiate ideological identity as distinct from an ideological belief system was conducted by Malka and Lelkes (2010). These authors begin with the premise that most research on ideology in the electorate uses an ideological self-placement scale, which conflates ideological identification and ideological beliefs. While there is certainly good reason to expect that this measure captures ideological beliefs, or issue positions, reasonably well (e.g., Jost et al. 2003; Peffley and Hurwitz 1985), the item does not account for a separate identity aspect. While in general the response to the ideological self-placement item predicts specific issue positions that align with the self-placement (though not always, e.g., Ellis and Stimson 2012), it does not account for how the act of choosing to identify with an

ideological label may affect political attitudes. That is, there are two aspects of ideology: ideological beliefs (or policy preferences) *and* ideological identification (or identity).

For example, Malka and Lelkes (2010) examined how ideological identification affected attitudes on the Iraq War over time, independently of policy preferences and partisan identification. They found that ideological identity did exert a significant effect on war attitudes. Further, they demonstrate experimentally that possessing an ideological identity made respondents more receptive to ideological cues when evaluating a new (i.e., fictional) issue. Respondents became more favorable toward an unknown policy when provided with an ideological cue that matched their ideological identification. While this study justifies the utility of an identity aspect to ideology, it does not provide much detail on the specific nature of ideology as a *social* identity. Is ideology, in fact, a social identity that demonstrates group attachment in the same way as partisanship?

More recent research by Devine (2014) provides an affirmative answer to this question. Similar to Greene's (1999, 2004) work on partisanship, Devine measured ideological social identity using the Identification with Psychological Groups (IDPG) scale (Mael and Tetrick 1992) designed to measure (ideological) group identity strength. He predicted ideological social identity strength using a variety of relevant factors, such as electoral competition, media usage, and ideological self-placement. First, Devine found that when participants were induced to think about electoral competition, in primary and general election contexts, ideological social identity became stronger to reflect this context where ideology serves as a relevant means of differentiating between in- and out-groups. Simply put, elections served to activate participants' ideological social identity. In addition, individuals who received their news primarily from cable TV and blogs, which commonly profess explicitly ideological views, possessed a stronger

ideological social identity. That is, more frequent exposure to ideological discourse appears to have reinforced ideological identity strength. Finally, ideological and partisan self-placements did correlate with ideological social identity strength, though modestly. Individuals who possessed more extreme ideological, and stronger partisan, self-placement, possessed a stronger ideological social identity. Taken together, these findings provide insight on mechanisms that may activate and reinforce ideological social identity and speaks to the utility of conceptualizing and measuring ideology as a social identity using the IDPG scale.

While there is existing evidence that partisanship and ideological identification function as social identities, there is little work examining how these identities interact, or how the strength of, and changes to, each identity affect the other. One notable exception is the recent article by Mason (2015) which showed that partisan activism, hostility, and anger increased when these two political identities aligned. For example, if a Republican (Democrat) also possessed a conservative (liberal) identity, they became more politically active, but also more hostile and angry toward the other side. This is consistent with the idea of social polarization, whereby hostility between the parties is driven by an increasing divide on political and social characteristics between members of each party. However, it is not always the case that political identities, i.e., partisan and ideological, are in alignment or that individuals will choose to express both simultaneously. For example, returning to the information on rates of identification with these two identities (see Figure 1 in the previous chapter), for most of the ANES series (1992-2006) rates of partisan and ideological identification appeared to be positively correlated. Yet from 2006 to the present, they then appeared inversely related, with partisan identification decreasing sharply and ideological identification increasing. Sorting may have been the primary driver of increasing rates of ideological identification early on, with partisan-ideological

alignment allowing individuals to adopt an ideological identity consistent with their partisanship. However, at some point the positive correlation between rates of partisan and ideological identification flipped and became a negative relationship, with rates of partisan identification decreasing and rates of ideological identification increasing. One reason behind the trends may be polarization, whereby individuals feel less positively toward the parties in government because of gridlock. For the past decade, the parties have managed to pass very little substantive legislation, except for the brief period of full Democratic control of both chambers of Congress and the Presidency (2009-2011). Thus, it could be the case that individuals choose one identity over the other when the environment becomes hostile toward one type of identity. The potential for this process emerging will be described in much more detail in the following section, which addresses the psychological effects that occur when a social identity becomes threatened.

2.3 IDENTITY THREATS

Within the field of social psychology, there is a large and robust literature on how individuals respond to threats directed toward their social identities. While there is no broad consensus on what precisely defines a threat, scholars have specified four broad types (Branscombe et al. 1999). First, there is categorization threat, or fear of being categorized as a member of a group. For example, Republicans may fear being categorized as a racist because they do not support policies such as affirmative action, even though they may not support these policies simply because they believe that the free market does not necessitate them. Second, distinctiveness threat may occur when one's group distinctiveness becomes diminished, with the group being viewed as similar to another group. Continuing the previous example, if racists and Republicans

are increasingly viewed as similar, Republicans may perceive a threat to their Republican identity because of this association between the two groups. Third, there are acceptance threats that occur when an individual's position in the group is at risk. This type of threat largely occurs from within the group itself, e.g., members discriminate against another group member. Recall the Ben Carson example given previously. Carson stated publicly that he did not perceive President Obama as a typical African American, and this accusation could threaten Obama's attachment to the group. Finally, there are value threats that serve to undermine the perceived value of one's group within society. This type of threat occurs when individuals negative information about their group that inhibits the ability for the group to reflect positively upon their self-concept. For example, if a public scandal should emerge from within an individual's group, this should serve as a value threat toward the individual's group identity because association with the group may begin to reflect negatively upon the individual. This project will specifically utilize value threat and explore the effects of value threats when directed toward partisan social identities.

Individuals respond to identity threat differently depending on two factors. The first concerns the type of threat. Because the empirical chapters will focus solely on value threat, I will only discuss how value threats in particular affect social identity. Second, the response to threat is conditional on the degree of commitment, or attachment, toward the group. Individuals who possess a weak social identity, characterized by relatively low group attachment, will respond to threat differently from individuals who possess a strong social identity, characterized by high group attachment. Thus, individuals will engage in one of two strategies that serve to protect the self from threats to a social identity, conditional upon their prior attachment to the group.

First, weak group identifiers, or those not possessing a strong attachment toward the group, are likely to engage in a strategy of individual mobility in response to a threat to the group's value (Branscombe et al. 1999; Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje 1997). Specifically, individuals will seek to distance themselves from the threatened group and to instead align with another group. This process can only occur if there is another group available that is similar to the threatened group and permeable, or able to be joined. Put differently, as the strength of the individual's threatened identity becomes weaker, the strength of the non-threatened similar identity (if available and permeable) will become stronger. A common example of this type of strategy occurs among what are commonly known as "fair weather fans." Often, people become fans of a sports team that performs consistently well, perhaps the New England Patriots. This team's winning record serves to confer positive distinctiveness upon the individual. However, some individuals may not hold this identity strongly, particularly if they possess few characteristics that serve to create a strong bond between themselves and the team, such as a common geographic area and/or many friends who also root for that team. Thus, if the team begins to perform poorly certain, i.e., weakly attached, fans are more likely to instead become fans of another team. Hence the pejorative term "fair weather fan."

Yet, a very different strategy is likely to be employed when a group identity is threatened if individuals possess a strong attachment toward that group. Here, they will instead engage in a process of identity affirmation, whereby the strength of their social identity increases in the face of threats (Branscombe et al. 1999; Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje 1997). That is, identity threat serves only to bolster their already high commitment to that identity. This type of strategy can be seen among sports fans that are truly dedicated to their team, or strong group identifiers. The Cleveland Browns, for example, have not won a playoff game since the franchise was

reestablished in 1999. Yet, every year their fans hope for a better season. Despite constant ridicule from fans of other teams, strong Browns fans would never think about deserting their team. They are highly committed to their group, in this case their team, and will emphasize their solidarity with the group if their identity is threatened.¹⁹

Politics is often compared to sports, and identity threat is also relevant to political identities. Partisanship and ideology are identities that are likely to be similar in content (this is examined empirically in Chapter 3), thus individuals may choose to identify with either (or neither) type of group dependent upon the political context. Given that there are two political identities that are permeable, because there are no rules dictating who can identify with partisan or ideological groups, weak identifiers may choose to shift their identity from one group to another group when an identity is threatened. If, for example, partisan identity is threatened, weak partisan identifiers are likely to weaken their partisan identity and strengthen their ideological identity. To be clear, partisan threat should only affect group attachment, or identity strength, and not affect ideological beliefs or policy preferences. Recall that there are (at least) two major aspects of ideology: political beliefs/policy preferences and identification/identity. There is little theoretical rationale to expect that partisan threat should cause individuals to become more ideologically extreme, or to develop more extreme policy preferences.

In sum, partisan threat may account for the now inverse relationship between partisan and ideological identity that was documented in the previous chapter. And, given developments in the political environment, there are good reasons for why this shift is occurring now. Specifically, I argue that the dual processes of elite polarization and mass sorting may account

¹⁹ Note that these examples are not meant to imply that strong/weak Patriots fans are substantively different from strong/weak Browns fans. The point is that the Patriots are more likely to have a higher number of weak fans, given their winning record, while the Browns are more likely to have a higher number of strong fans, given their not-so-winning record.

for why we are now seeing an increase in ideological identification, and decrease and partisan identification.

2.3.1 Why Now? Elite Polarization and Mass Sorting

Within the current political context, there are two simultaneous processes occurring that make threats to partisan identity and the transition to ideological identification among weak partisans more likely. First, there is ideological polarization among elites (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006; Poole and Rosenthal 2007). One of the primary results of this polarization is gridlock, particularly at the federal level. The two parties have grown more distant ideologically, and this makes compromise increasingly unlikely. That is, because there are fewer moderate legislators any piece of legislation is likely to only garner support from members of a single party. In order to pass legislation, one party must then control both chambers (and may need a supermajority in the Senate to avoid filibuster). Further, the party needs the support of the president to sign the legislation, as the two-thirds majority necessary in both chambers to override a veto is nearly impossible to achieve without bipartisan support (which is, again, unlikely given the ideological distance between parties). The end result is a great deal of conflict between the parties within the national government without much significant legislation.

Prior research has established that individuals dislike viewing political conflict. Individuals rather prefer the government to operate on auto-pilot without significant input from citizens (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002). Many citizens do not want to witness the often brutal processes involved in crafting and passing legislation. Therefore, gridlock, which serves to expose the political processes that the American public most dislikes, coupled with a lack of results, sours Americans' views toward their government as well as the parties within

government. This is reflected in congressional approval ratings, which have been consistently below 20% for much of the past decade.²⁰ Thus, one reason why individuals may transition away from parties and toward ideological groups may simply be a reaction to gridlock and poor performance of parties in government, at least in regards to passing legislation.

In addition, sorting within the mass public, whereby Democrats are aligned with liberals and Republicans are aligned with conservatives, may also contribute to the shift toward ideology. First, sorting, which results from elite polarization (Levendusky 2009), has made ideological labels and symbols more clear to the electorate (Claassen, Tucker, and Smith 2014; Ellis and Stimson 2012). When individuals possess aligned partisan and ideological identities, they become more socially polarized, displaying more bias and hostility toward those on the other side of the political spectrum (Mason 2015). Thus, not only may threats to partisan identities come from elites, they may also come from partisans in the electorate. While citizens may not be polarized in terms of issue positions, they are affectively polarized, meaning that they face constant hostility from individuals identifying with the other party.

I argue that these two processes greatly increase the likelihood that individuals' partisan identities will be threatened. Depending on the strength of their commitment to their partisan identity, individuals will utilize different strategies to cope with this threat. Weak partisan identifiers are likely to further weaken their partisan identity and instead gravitate toward an ideological identity because it is a similar type of identification and is freely available for identification. Conversely, strong partisans should affirm their partisan identity in the face of threats, not needing to transition toward ideological identification. Together, these strategies help

²⁰ See, for example, Gallup's tracking of congressional approval since the 1970s: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1600/congress-public.aspx>

explain the consistent stalwartness of some partisans, and more importantly, the growth in ideological identification in the electorate at the expense of partisan identification.

2.4 A SELF-CATEGORIZATION THEORY OF IDEOLOGICAL IDENTIFICATION

Based on this survey of the literature, in this final section I briefly summarize the theoretical expectations and explicitly state the hypotheses that will be examined in the empirical chapters to follow. In doing so, I introduce a novel theory explaining ideological identification, which I refer to as “a self-categorization theory of ideological identification.” This theory is novel primarily in its application to political science, as well as its examination of partisan *and* ideological identities. The theory is primarily informed by the vast literature on social identity within social psychology. Based on social identity theory and self-categorization theory, I propose that the decision to identify with an ideological group, i.e., to obtain an ideological social identity, is motivated by two primary factors. First, the decision to identify with a specific ideological group is driven in large part by social characteristics. That is, individuals align with the ideological group that best demonstrates a similarity between that individual and their beliefs about members of that group. As individuals perceive themselves as more similar to the group, their attachment to the group increases. Second, ideological identification is influenced by the political context. As partisan identities are subject to increased threats, certain individuals should become more motivated to identify with an ideological group. Specifically, partisan threat should further weaken the partisan identity of weak identifiers, while simultaneously strengthening the ideological identity of weak identifiers. In contrast, partisan threat should bolster the partisan

identity of strong identifiers. Both components of the theory, and the specific hypotheses derived from them, are given further discussion below.

2.4.1 Prototypicality and Ideological Identification

Self-categorization as a member of an ideological group, or forming an ideological identity, is first motivated by the fit between the individual and the group(s). Recall that self-categorization theory refers to the alignment between social characteristics of the individual and the group as normative fit. Individuals compare their stereotypic beliefs about members of the group with their beliefs about their own social characteristics to assess how well they would fit into the group, i.e., how prototypical they are of the group. To begin to empirically address this claim, I will need to examine the actual stereotypic beliefs that individuals possess toward two sets of political groups: partisan groups (Republican, Democrat) and ideological groups (conservative, liberal). I will use these stereotypes to determine if fit between the individual and group, or the overlap between self and group characteristics, increases the strength of attachment toward ideological groups. These with a higher fit are considered more prototypical. In addition, I will compare the nature and prevalence of stereotypes people possess toward these four specific political groups.

On this latter point, given the political context of elite polarization and mass sorting, whereby partisan groups are increasingly different and align with a clear ideology, individuals should possess highly similar beliefs for aligned political groups (Democrats and liberals, Republicans and conservatives). That is, because the pairs of aligned groups share many members, as Democrats (Republicans) are increasingly associated with being liberal

(conservative), individuals should make few distinctions between them. When looking at group stereotypes, there should be few differences between aligned groups, or:

H1a (Similarity of Aligned Groups): Republicans (Democrats) and conservatives (liberals) should be perceived as possessing many overlapping stereotypes.

In addition, while aligned partisan and ideological groups should be perceived similarly, each non-aligned pair of groups should be perceived as very different from the other pair. That is, Democrats and liberals should be perceived as highly distinct from Republicans and conservatives. Stated succinctly:

H1b (Dissimilarity of Non-Aligned Groups): Republicans and conservatives should be perceived as possessing few overlapping stereotypes with Democrats and liberals.

In essence, stereotype overlap among these four groups should resemble Figure 9. There should be a large degree of overlap between Democrats and liberals, represented by the overlapping circles on the left. This is also true for Republicans and conservatives, represented by the overlapping circles on the right. However, there should be very little if any overlap between these two pairs of aligned groups, indicated in Figure 9 by the non-overlapping circles representing the pairs of groups on the left and right.

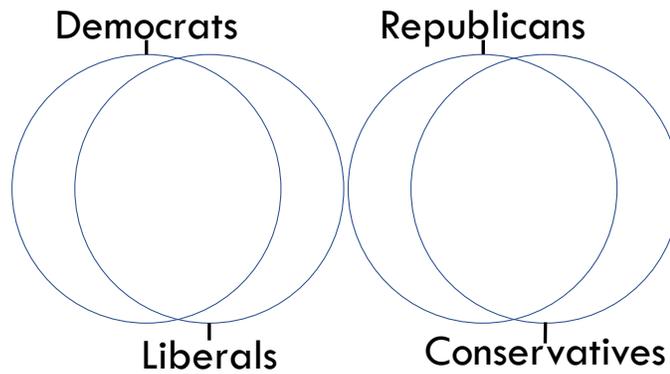


Figure 9. Predicted Stereotype Overlap for Partisan and Ideological Groups

In addition, the normative fit between an individual and an ideological group should predict the strength of the attachment with the group. If an individual believes that they are highly prototypical of an ideological group, they should identify more strongly with that group. Essentially:

H2a (Prototypicality): The more stereotypes of an ideological group that are applicable to an individual, the stronger that individual will identify with that group.

Finally, while I propose that partisan and ideological groups are similar, in that they function as social identities, there is one major difference: parties are represented clearly by individuals in government, while ideologies are less clearly represented. While individuals, including partisans, may be associated with an ideological label (e.g., Rush Limbaugh or Rachel Maddow), they have less control over what an ideology stands for, or is associated with, than

party elites do in regards to party labels. Thus, ideological identity should be much more influenced by social characteristics, specifically the degree of individual prototypicality with the group, while partisan identity should be less influenced by social characteristics, as partisan identities are informed by many other types of evaluations. Therefore:

H2b (Ideological ID as Predominantly Social): Greater prototypicality with a group will more strongly predict ideological group identity strength than partisan group identity strength.

2.4.2 Partisan Identity Threat and Ideological Identity

The goal of the next two empirical chapters is to examine the effects of partisan threat on partisan and ideological social identities. To do so, I first use observational data in Chapter Four to determine if political attitudes, specifically attitudes toward the parties in government, affect the likelihood of partisan and ideological identification. Then, in order to demonstrate the partisan threat mechanism more explicitly, and causally, I conduct a survey experiment in Chapter Five. Thus, the remaining hypotheses all concern the effects of partisan threat, with Hypotheses 3 and 4 applying to the observational analysis in Chapter Four and Hypotheses 5 and 6 applying to the experimental analysis in Chapter Five.

Specifically, Chapter Four examines if party performance, represented by individuals' confidence in Congress (where the parties are most visible), affects rates of identification. Lack of confidence in Congress, particularly when an individual's own party comprises the majority,

should serve as a threat to partisan identity. I propose that individuals who lack confidence in Congress, which serves as a proxy for party performance, should be less likely to identify with one of the two major political parties, Democratic or Republican. That is, when individuals do not believe that Congress, and the parties within it, are doing an adequate job, this should serve as a form of threat to partisan identity. Therefore:

H3a (Congressional Disapproval and Partisan ID): Individuals with low confidence in Congress should be less likely to identify with a political party (Democratic or Republican)

Yet, at the same time, partisan threat should cause certain types of partisans to transition to an ideological identity. The observed effect on ideological identification may be smaller than that of partisan identity, as only weak partisans should bolster their ideological identity. However, rates of ideological identification should show at least a modest increase among individuals who disapprove of congressional performance, and we should observe that:

H3b (Congressional Disapproval and Ideological ID): Individuals with low confidence in Congress should be more likely to identify with an ideological label (liberal or conservative).

Further, and not surprisingly given these two expected trends in H3a and H3b, individuals with less confidence in Congress should be more likely to identify as an independent

ideologue. That is, they should express no partisan identity but express an ideological identity. Thus:

H3c (Congressional Disapproval and Independent Ideologues): Individuals with low confidence in Congress should be more likely to classify themselves as independents (no partisan identification) and possess an ideological affiliation.

Finally, these effects should be magnified when one's own party controls Congress. When the other party controls Congress, the threat to your own partisan identity should be lower, as the majority party possesses most of the power to take action and/or block action from the minority party. Yet, when one's own party is in control, it is more difficult to blame the other party. While the minority party often has some power, given super-majoritarian rules (particularly in the Senate), it becomes more difficult to protect one's identity when one's party possesses much more power. Thus:

H4a (In-Party Majority and Partisan ID): Individuals with low confidence in Congress should be least likely to identify with a partisan group when the individual's party comprises the majority.

H4b (In-Party Majority and Ideological ID): Individuals with low confidence in Congress should be most likely to identify with an ideological group when the individual's party comprises the majority.

Hypotheses 3 and 4 will be examined in Chapter Four. This analysis serves primarily to set the stage for the final empirical chapter. Specifically, in Chapter Five, I use an experiment to causally show that threat to partisan identity is the mechanism driving increased ideological identification and decreased partisan identification. I propose first that individuals who show relatively low levels of attachment to their political party should, when confronted with threat toward that party, show decreased attachment toward their party and increased attachment toward their ideological group. In common political science parlance, these individuals are “weak” partisan identifiers, or those who identify with a party when asked, but who indicate that they do not do so strongly. Therefore:

H5a (Individual Mobility): For weak partisan identifiers, partisan threat will weaken partisan identity and strengthen ideological identity.

However, those who display strong attachment to their party should be affected differently. Strong identifiers should bolster their partisan identity when confronted with a threat to that identity. However, this strengthening of attachment should not necessitate any change in their ideological identity as, unlike weak partisans, strong partisans do not feel the need to fundamentally shift their political identity. Specifically, this hypothesis states that:

H5b (Identity Affirmation): For strong partisan identifiers, partisan threat will strengthen partisan identity and ideological identity will not be affected.

Finally, independent partisan leaners, or those who first indicate that they are independents but admit leaning toward one of the two parties, already display some distance from the parties. Therefore, a threat to their (slightly) preferred party should not result in any significant change to either political identity. This is because independent leaners first identify as independents and only later admit that they do lean toward a political party. Further, Klar and Krupnikov (2016) find evidence supporting the existence of an “independent” identity, and as such these individuals should possess a primarily independent, rather than partisan, identity. Thus, these individuals should be relatively insulated from threats. Therefore, I propose that:

H5c (Independent Insulation): For independents who lean toward a party, partisan threat will not affect partisan identity or ideological identity.

The predicted effects derived from Hypotheses 5a-5c are summarized in Table 1. Among weak partisans, who are the key players in this narrative, partisan identity strength should decrease when faced with partisan threat. At the same time, ideological identity strength should increase. Strong partisans, however, should be relatively immune to the effects of partisan threat. Their partisan identity should be bolstered when confronted with threat, while their ideological identity should show no change.

Table 1. The Predicted Effects of Partisan Threat on Partisan and Ideological Social Identity Strength

	<i>Partisan Identity (H5a)</i>	<i>Ideological Identity (H5b)</i>	<i>Ideological Extremity (H6)</i>
<i>Low Commitment – Weak Partisans (Individual Mobility Strategy)</i>	Decrease ↓	Increase ↑	No Change =
<i>High Commitment – Strong Partisans (Identity Affirmation Strategy)</i>	Increase ↑	No Change =	No Change =
<i>No Commitment – Independent Leaners (No Identity Strategy Necessary)</i>	No Change =	No Change =	No Change =

I also predict that changes in ideological identity should not result in changes to ideological beliefs, measured by where individuals self-identify their ideological beliefs on a spectrum of “extremely liberal” to “extremely conservative.” That is, while weak partisans should show a strengthening of their ideological identity, they should not indicate that their ideological beliefs have grown more extreme. Put simply:

H6 (Ideological Extremity): Ideological belief extremity will not be affected by partisan threat.

2.4.2.1 A Note on Empirical Strategy

The effects of partisan threat on partisan and ideological identities will be examined across two chapters, each with their own strengths and weaknesses. In Chapter Four, Hypotheses 3 and 4 will be tested in using observational (survey) data. The goal is not to establish causality, but rather to provide a degree of external validity to the experimental chapters and to provide

justification for the survey experiment in Chapter Five. There are many inherent limitations to this data, which will be discussed in more detail within Chapter Four. Despite these limitations, it is important to establish that the experimental effects are consistent with actual trends observed throughout recent decades.

In Chapter Five, Hypotheses 5 and 6 will all be tested in the context of a survey experiment. The goal is to firmly establish the causal role of partisan threat in weakening partisan identity, as well as strengthening ideological identity, among weak partisans. While I devote time to discussing strong partisans, as self-categorization theory would also predict that partisan threat affects their partisan identity (by strengthening it), the focus is primarily on weak partisans. They are the ones who should be at the root of decreasing rates of partisan identity and increasing rates of ideological identity, as discussed in the previous chapter. However, one important and well-documented limitation of experiments is that they lack external validity, or generalizability to the broad electorate and actual political events. While every attempt will be made to ensure that the experimental treatment resembles something that participants may encounter in the real-world, Chapter Four provides more confidence that that the processes identified within the experimental setting plausibly occur. Taken together, these two chapters provide robust evidence that partisan threat affects partisan and ideological identities.

3.0 CHAPTER THREE: IDEOLOGICAL AND PARTISAN STEREOTYPES

“For the most part we do not first see, and then define, we define first and then see. In the great blooming, buzzing confusion of the outer world we pick out what our culture has already defined for us, and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture” –Walter Lippman, *Public Opinion* (1922)

One of the main goals of this project is to estimate whether individuals transition from a partisan identifier to an ideological identifier when the political environment becomes hostile their partisan identity. As explained in the previous chapter, for mobility between identities to occur, another identity must be available and similar to the previously held identity. This mobility requires that an ideological identity must be perceived as similar to a partisan identity. The present chapter is concerned with establishing the perceived similarity of partisan and ideological groups by examining the stereotypes individuals hold toward these groups. If aligned groups (e.g., Republicans and conservatives, Democrats and liberals) are perceived in a similar manner, with many overlapping stereotypes, this similarity will facilitate the transition from a threatened partisan identity to an ideological identity. If aligned groups are instead perceived as dissimilar, or possessing few overlapping stereotypes, then this transition will not be as readily facilitated,

and individuals may choose to instead dissociate themselves from a party without taking on an ideological identity.

Stereotypes are defined, perhaps most famously, by Walter Lippmann (1922) as “pictures in the head,” or subjective representations of the world, particularly of groups. More formally, stereotypes are “an exaggerated belief associated with a category.” (Allport 1954), or “beliefs or expectations about the qualities and characteristics of specific social groups” (Nelson, Acker, and Manis 1996). When examining perceptions of a group, what is essentially being measured are stereotypes. Further, these stereotypes are an important means of group identification, according to self-categorization theory. As discussed in the previous chapter, individuals become more likely to identify with a group if they perceive themselves as closer to the prototypical member of that group (Tajfel 1981; Turner et al. 1987). Group prototypes, in turn, are driven by these stereotypes.

To revisit the predictions presented in the previous chapter, the current investigation of partisan and ideological stereotypes hopes to uncover evidence supporting four related hypotheses. Foremost, in the current era of partisan sorting (Levendusky 2009), aligned partisan and ideological groups should be perceived as being quite similar while non-aligned groups should be perceived as highly dissimilar. More formally:

H1a (Similarity of Aligned Groups): Republicans (Democrats) and conservatives (liberals) should possess many overlapping stereotypes.

H1b (Dissimilarity of Non-Aligned Groups): Republicans (Democrats) and liberals (conservatives) should not possess many overlapping stereotypes.

In addition, and in line with self-categorization theory, the more prototypical of a group an individual believes themselves to be, the stronger that individual should identify with a group.

Put differently:

H2a (Prototypicality): The more stereotypes of a group that are applicable to an individual, the stronger that individual will identify with that group.

Finally, there may be an important distinction between partisan and ideological groups: parties have a clear organizational and governmental element, whereas ideological groups do not. These institutional elements, then, may affect strength of identification in addition to the purely social, or social-stereotypical, element. In other words, and as noted in the previous chapter, ideological identity is more socially-defined, while partisan identity is defined by many other factors, most notably party members at the elite level. Therefore, ideological identity strength may be *more* driven by social characteristics than partisan identity strength. This results in one additional hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2b (Ideological ID as Predominantly Social): Greater prototypicality with a group will more strongly predict ideological group identity strength than partisan group identity strength.

The present chapter proceeds as follows. To begin, I briefly discuss stereotypes and strategies that have been developed to measure group stereotypes. Based on these developed strategies, I conduct two separate surveys. First, I conduct an open-ended survey to solicit a

broad array of potential stereotypes. The results of this survey are used to then develop and field a second, closed-ended, survey whereby participants can select from lists of pre-developed stereotypes (from the pretest) that they feel apply to one of four political groups (Republicans, Democrats, conservatives, and liberals). I include stereotypes relevant to three substantive domains: traits/characteristics, jobs/occupations, and hobbies/pastimes. Analysis of this survey forms the bulk to the chapter, and will proceed in three major sections corresponding to these three domains of traits, jobs, and hobbies. Each section will begin with a descriptive analysis, describing the most commonly selected stereotypes for each group and their overlap with other groups. I then use inferential measures to determine the similarity, or dissimilarity, of each group. Finally, I use trait overlap between individuals and groups to predict identity strength. I describe the statistical methodology used in the most detail when analyzing traits, the first category of stereotypes. I then largely repeat the same analyses for the other stereotype categories: jobs and hobbies. Because the methodological details have been detailed previously, these sections are much shorter, though not necessarily less important. I end the chapter with a brief discussion summarizing the major findings.

3.1 MEASURING STEREOTYPES

Identifying stereotypes of particular groups is not entirely straightforward. Specifically, there are two important and related challenges. First, the researcher does not want to project his/her, potentially narrow, beliefs onto participants. As Katz and Braly (1933) note, in perhaps the earliest quantitative examination of (racial) stereotype content, “The authors hoped [...] to obtain

a list of characteristics which would not be limited by their own knowledge of racial stereotypes.” One method of accomplishing this is to use an open-ended questionnaire. With this method, participants could simply be asked what things come to mind when they think about certain groups. However, this raises a second challenge: how can one quantitatively measure the prevalence of stereotypes? While open-ended responses could be subjected to some coding scheme, the nature of an open-ended item is such that participants are only going to provide salient or, to use Zaller's (1992) language, “top of the head” responses. While this is likely to reveal many of the most salient stereotypes, this will be highly idiosyncratic among individuals and situations. Ideally, then, one would want to use a closed-ended checklist, with participants selecting the stereotypes that are associated with a particular group. Yet, this checklist should not be limited to the researcher’s own beliefs about stereotypes.

To overcome these challenges, Katz and Braly (1933) developed a method that uses both of these components in a sequential manner. First, an open-ended survey is conducted among a small sample. Participants are simply asked to list traits or characteristics that are typical of a certain group. These traits are then compiled into a checklist to be administered among a second sample. In this manner, one can combine the strengths of both methodologies to examine stereotypes that are uninfluenced by the researcher’s views, but also in a quantitative fashion that allows the prevalence of the stereotypes to be compared within and between groups. Schneider and Bos (2011, 2014), in their recent examinations of the stereotype content of African American and female politicians, have used this methodology to great success, and this study will use a very similar method, with some minor alterations to be described in the following sections.

To summarize, the following two surveys identify the stereotypes of partisan and ideological groups. The first survey consists of open-ended items and allows participants to list

traits, jobs, and hobbies that are stereotypically associated with a group with minimal interference by the researcher. The second survey then compiles these traits, jobs, and hobbies into a checklist to better facilitate quantitative analysis. In addition, participants in the second survey could select which traits apply to themselves in order to address Hypotheses 2a and 2b.

3.2 SURVEY 1: OPEN-ENDED PRETEST

3.2.1 Methodology

3.2.1.1 Design

Participants were randomly assigned to evaluate one partisan group (Republicans or Democrats) and one ideological group (conservatives or liberals). The order in which they evaluated each group is also randomized (i.e., some will evaluate Republicans/conservatives first and some will evaluate Democrats/liberals first). The instructions for each survey informed participants that this research is interested in impressions people have toward individuals identifying with these groups. In order to minimize social desirability bias, they were also told that these impressions may not reflect the participants' personal beliefs, and that they should provide impressions that they feel people in general may possess.²¹ Similar instructions have been used in previous research on stereotype content (Schneider and Bos 2011, 2014).

²¹ Specifically, the instructions read: In this study, we are interested in the impressions people have about individuals who identify with political parties and other groups. You will be asked to provide your opinion about people in the United States who identify with these political groups. Naturally, the impressions that people in general have about political groups may or may not reflect your personal beliefs. Please answer based on beliefs you feel people in general possess.

To prompt participants to think about several domains of stereotypes, the survey included five open-ended items for each group being evaluated. The first item asked participants to identify general traits or characteristics that are associated with the group. The second item then more specifically asked participants to identify personality traits. The third and fourth items asked about jobs/occupations and hobbies/pastimes, respectively. Finally, the fifth item asked participants to picture a typical member of the group and to list any physical characteristics that come to mind (age, race, clothing, etc.). Thus, the survey was designed to first allow participants to list anything that may be associated with the group and then follows up with more specific domains of interest.

3.2.1.2 Participants

The pretest was conducted using 102 students in introductory political science courses at a large public university (83 participants) and a small private (religiously-affiliated) university (19 participants), both within the Midwest/Appalachian region of the United States. The mean age of participants was 19.6 years (median=19), and consisted primarily of under-classmen (77.7%). The sample consisted of 63.8% men and 34.4% women. Regarding partisanship, 50% identified as Democrats or Democratic-leaning independents, 20.2% identified as pure independents, and 29.8% identified as Republicans or Republican-leaning independents. Finally, 54.3% of the sample identified as liberal, 24.5% identified as moderate, and 21.3% identified as conservative.²²

²² Like many student samples, this sample includes fewer Republican/conservative individuals, compared to Democratic/liberal individuals. However, there are a sufficient number of Republicans/conservatives to ensure that their reported stereotypic traits will be represented in the checklists generated for the second survey.

Convenience samples, and student samples in particular, have been viewed with some skepticism (Sears 1986). However, as Druckman and Kam (2011) indicate, researchers should carefully evaluate how convenience samples might, it at all, affect the outcome of a particular study and proceed with these considerations in mind. In regards to this study, the use of a student sample is unlikely to cause much concern for several reasons. First, stereotypes are, almost by definition, widely known and diffused throughout society. Individuals tend to be aware of stereotypes regardless of their level of prejudice toward a particular group (Devine 1989). Second, the nature of the partisan and ideological groups being studied here is such that university students should have had significant exposure to members of these groups. Third, if students are not as aware of stereotypes as older citizens, this would serve to bias the results in a conservative direction, in that students would most likely be aware of only the most salient stereotypes and less salient stereotypes are unlikely to be provided. Finally, the follow-up study will use a non-student sample, so if these stereotypes are not accurate, this will become apparent, as participants in the non-student sample will not select the stereotypes at a high rate. Taken together, these reasons provide a high degree of credibility to the use of a student sample for this research.

3.2.1.3 Procedure

Participants were administered the survey during the final 25 minutes of their regularly-scheduled introductory political science course. Students were instructed that they could remain in the room to complete the survey, or they could instead leave the room and not take the survey. A small food item was offered to all students as a token of appreciation, regardless of whether or not they completed the survey. Approximately 75% of students opted to complete the survey. Participants randomly received one of the four versions of the survey (containing either partisan,

Republican and Democrat, or ideological, conservative and liberal, groups, presented in two different orders). Before beginning the survey, the participants were briefly read instructions informing them of the content and voluntary nature of the survey.

3.2.2 Results

To compile the trait, job, and hobby checklists for the follow-up survey, every trait provided was first placed into one master list.²³ The list included all terms provided on the general traits, psychological traits, and physical characteristics items on the survey. Some participants wrote in phrases and full sentences and these were condensed (e.g., “strong belief in individualism” becomes “individualistic”). In addition, highly similar terms were combined, taking the form of the more commonly used term (e.g., “caring” becomes “compassionate”). This resulted in a total of 999 non-unique total traits provided across all 102 participants. To then qualify for inclusion in the follow-up survey, each trait had to meet the following criteria: 1) the trait must be mentioned by at least four individuals within the sample, 2) the trait must be social in nature, rather than an issue position, and 3) the trait must be substantive and not simply a positive or negative descriptor. For example, words such as “nice” and “rude” were excluded on the grounds that these traits are driven primarily by affect toward a group.²⁴ This resulted in a final list of 61 traits to be used in the main survey, as shown in Table 2.

²³ Note that because the trait checklist will be the same for all partisan and ideological groups in the second survey, traits were not broken down by group here.

²⁴ Additionally, the terms “liberal” and “conservative,” while being some of the most common traits in describing partisan groups, were excluded from use in the second survey as they are redundant in describing the ideological groups.

Table 2. List of Traits Compiled from Open-Ended Survey and Used in Closed-Ended Survey

Traits	
Open-Minded	Patriotic
Wealthy	Poor
Religious	Confident
Self-Centered	Non-Religious
Stubborn	Female
Compassionate	Traditional
Outspoken	Politically-Correct
Closed-Minded	Reserved
Racially-Diverse	Empathetic
Intelligent	Individualistic
Young	Urban
Angry	Racist
White	Community-Oriented
Old	Christian
Optimistic	Family-Oriented
Middle-Class	Professional
Hardworking	Rural
Passionate	Forward-Thinking
Uncompromising	Argumentative
Male	Entitled
Egalitarian	Hipster
Opinionated	Blue-Collar
Educated	Looks To The Past
Charitable	Nationalistic
Pro-Change	Naïve
Anti-Change	Compromising
Frugal	Assertive
Outgoing	Suburban
Helpful	Modern
Uneducated	Cultured
Accepting	

This same procedure was repeated for the jobs and hobbies. For these categories in particular, commonly mentioned specific terms were combined into a broader category in order to reduce the sheer number of jobs and hobbies that participants would have to respond to in the second survey (e.g., “environmentalists” became “activists” and all hobbies mentioning gun-related activities became “guns/shooting”). This resulted in a list of 24 jobs/occupational categories and 20 hobbies/leisure activities, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Lists of Jobs and Hobbies Compiled from Open-Ended Survey and Used in Closed-Ended Survey

Jobs	Hobbies
Business	Hunting
Teachers	Sports
Government Jobs	Reading
Lawyers	Activism
Blue-Collar Jobs	Outdoor Activities
Agriculture/Farming	Art
CEOs	Volunteering
Finance Jobs	Fishing
High-Paying Jobs	Religious Activities
Low-Paying Jobs	Going to Bars/Clubs
Professors	Political Debate
Small Business Owners	Automotive/Mechanics
Doctors	Social Media
White-Collar Jobs	Theatre/Performing Arts
Social Workers	Writing
Military	Movies
Service/Retail Jobs	Video Games
Police Officers	Going to Coffee Shops
Non-Profit Organizations	Music
Union Jobs	
Nurses	
Artists	
Activists	
Unemployed	

3.3 SURVEY 2: PARTISAN & IDEOLOGICAL STEREOTYPE CONTENT

(CLOSED-LIST)

The first survey generated checklists of traits, jobs, and hobbies to provide participants in the second survey. The primary advantage of conducting a follow-up survey using a checklist, rather than analyzing the open-ended items, is that it allows all participants to respond to the same traits, and therefore allows comparison of the most prevalent stereotypes within and between partisan and ideological groups. The key predictions moving forward are: 1) aligned groups should have similar stereotypes (H1a – Similarity of Aligned Groups) while non-aligned groups should have dissimilar stereotypes (H1b – Dissimilarity of Non-Aligned Groups), and 2) the greater individuals are prototypical of a group, or the more that traits associated with a group also apply to themselves, the stronger that group identity should be (H2a – Prototypicality). This effect should be particularly strong for ideological groups (H2b – Ideology as Predominantly Social). The design of this survey, as described in detail in the following section, allows these predictions to be empirically tested.

3.3.1 Methodology

3.3.1.1 Design and Procedure

Participants were first randomly assigned to either a partisan group (Republican or Democrat) or ideological group (conservative or liberal). Unlike the previous survey, participants evaluated

only one group. They were informed that they will be shown several traits, one at a time, and should indicate which traits are associated with the group they are assigned. For each trait, they could have selected “YES, is commonly associated” or “NO, is not commonly associated.” Participants had four seconds to select an option or the screen will advance to the next trait. There was a timer on each screen that counted down from four so that participants could keep track of how much time they have. Figure 10 displays an example of the trait screen (which is also the same for the jobs and hobbies sections). Additionally, this timer tracked how long it takes participants to decide if a trait applies, which was used as a measure of the salience of a trait.

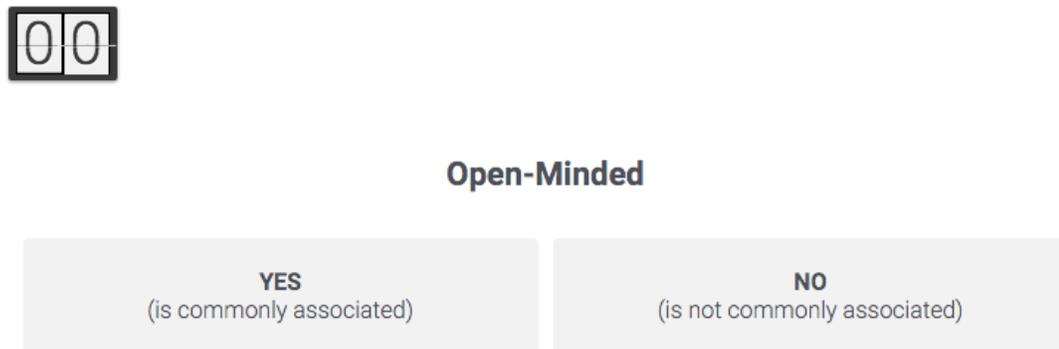


Figure 10. Participant View of Trait Screen

Recall that the goal of this study is not to examine stereotypes that participants personally endorse, but rather to examine stereotypes which are commonly associated with the group. To encourage participants to accurately report stereotypes, even if they did not agree with them or did not want to give socially undesirable responses, participants were incentivized to be accurate. Specifically, at the beginning of the survey, they were informed that the four most accurate

participants (one participant per group) would be given a \$10 bonus, and that this bonus would be calculated by identifying the most/least selected traits and evaluating participants by examining who selected the most common traits while also not selecting the least common traits.²⁵ They were also told that simply selecting all traits would reduce their accuracy score, and thus they should only select traits that they actually believe are associated with the group. In addition, participants were informed that they do not have to select “yes” or “no” if they are unsure, and the screen would advance automatically after four seconds.

Once participants went through all 61 traits, they were presented with a checklist that contained each of the traits that they reported being associated with the group. They were asked to select which of these traits they believe would apply to themselves. They could select as many or as few traits as they wished. This was used as the measure of participant prototypicality of a group.

This procedure was then repeated for the job (24 items) and hobby (20 items) checklists. However, following the jobs checklist, participants did not select which jobs applied to them, and were instead simply asked to provide their career in one open-ended item at the end of the survey. For hobbies, they were again presented with a list containing all the hobbies they reported as being associated with the group and asked to select all hobbies that they themselves enjoyed.

As a distractor task prior to completing the identity strength measures, participants were given feeling thermometers to rate each partisan and ideological group, as well as federal

²⁵ To compute the bonus, I compiled the ten most and least common traits for each group. Participants received +2 points for selecting each of the five most common traits selected, +1 points for the 6th-10th most common traits selected, -2 points for each of the five least common traits selected, and -1 points for each of the 6th-10th least common traits selected. The individual with the highest total score for each group received the bonus, and ties were decided randomly.

institutions (Congress, the Supreme Court), President Obama, and several candidates in the 2016 Republican and Democratic primaries. Following the feeling thermometers, participants were then asked to provide their partisan identification, using the standard ANES branching measure, which resulted in a 1 (Strong Democrat) to 7 (Strong Republican) scale.²⁶ They were then asked to provide their ideological identification in the same manner. While the standard ideology item used was a 1 (Extremely Liberal) to 7 (Extremely Conservative) scale, because ideology is conceptualized as an identity in this study, it was asked in the same manner as partisan identification, but simply with ideological labels in the place of partisan labels. Following these two items, participants completed the Identification with Psychological Groups (IDPG; Mael and Tetrick 1992) scales for groups that they reported identifying with in the previous two questions.²⁷ The IDPG scale measured the strength of individuals' identification with groups, through items measuring psychological attachment and shared identity (e.g., "When someone criticizes [group] I feel embarrassed;" see Appendix A for full list of scale items). This scale served as the dependent variable when examining how prototypicality affects identity strength. The scale was split into two, such that participants received one half (five items) of the scale when evaluating partisan identities and the other half (five items) when evaluating ideological

²⁶ Specifically, the first item reads, "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an independent, or what?" Participants reporting a party affiliation would then be asked, "Would you call yourself a very strong Republican/Democrat of not a very strong Republican/Democrat?" This was matched to the party the individual selected. If participants responded to the initial question as an independent or other, they were given the question, "Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?" They could then select one of the two parties or neither party.

²⁷ This includes leaners (i.e., those participants who initially reported being independent but later indicated they were closer to one of the two parties or ideological groups, as prior research shows that these individuals possess attitudes that are nearly identical to partisan identifiers (Hawkins and Nosek 2012).

identities. The IDPG scale contains two factors, shared experiences and shared characteristics, and for each group participants received at least two items corresponding to each factor.²⁸

Finally, participants then completed standard demographic items, including age, race/ethnicity, gender, education, and income. They also completed the standard (ANES) ideological self-placement measure (described above). And, as an attention check, individuals were asked which group they evaluated in the survey.

3.3.1.2 Participants

This survey was conducted using 400 individuals recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). Of these, 20 individuals were excluded from the analysis because they failed the attention check, bringing the sample to 380 total participants. The sample contains 54% men and 46% women, the mean age was 35.9 years of age (median=32), and 79% of the sample identifies as white and 21% as non-white. This sample again skewed Democratic, with 59% identifying as Democrats (including leaners), 11% as pure independents, and 30% as Republicans (including leaners). Ideological identification displayed a nearly identical pattern, with 52% identifying as liberal, 21% as moderate, and 27% as conservative.

While this sample is more diverse than the student sample, it remains a sample of convenience. Like student samples, MTurk samples have been viewed with some degree of skepticism. Yet, a large body of literature points to the validity of MTurk samples (Berinsky, Huber, and Lenz 2012; Buhrmester, Kwang, and Gosling 2011; Clifford and Jerit 2014; Goodman, Cryder, and Cheema 2013; Mullinix et al. 2016; Paolacci, Chandler, and Ipeirotis

²⁸ Note that all results reported in the following section have been examined by breaking down each scale into the two component factors, as well as looking at each item individually. The results remain consistent regardless of the manner in which the items were used, thus identity strength for each group is simply calculated by averaging the five items of each scale.

2010). Further, recent work by Clifford, Jewell, and Waggoner (2015) compared ideological beliefs of MTurk participants to participants in a nationally-representative survey, and found almost no substantive difference. Overall, MTurk provides a cost-effective means of obtaining a sample of sufficient quality, and more specifically, has been shown to be externally valid for the study of ideology.

3.3.1.3 Analysis

Following the procedures set by previous stereotype content research (e.g., Devine and Baker 1991; Schneider and Bos 2011, 2014), stereotypic traits, jobs, and hobbies that are selected by at least two-thirds (66%) of the participants in each group are tabulated and discussed. Additionally, discriminant analysis was utilized to analyze which types of traits describe and differentiate between these groups. Discriminant analysis predicts membership in groups by generating a linear discriminating function based on a set of discriminating variables. This function works to maximize the group differences based on the discriminating variables in the equation and the output provides the variables that best predict group differences. The number of discriminant functions is equal to the number of groups minus one. In this study, there are three functions as there are four groups (Republicans, Democrats, liberals, and conservatives), though all functions may not be statistically significant. More simply, the analysis used the selected traits, jobs, and hobbies to attempt to predict the group that the individual evaluated.

3.3.2 Descriptive Analysis of Trait Prevalence

This section examines the different trait stereotypes that individuals reported for each political group. In doing so, it provides initial evidence for H1a (Similarity of Aligned Groups) and H1b

(Dissimilarity of Non-Aligned Groups). H1a proposes that Republicans and conservatives are associated with many overlapping stereotypes. In contrast, H1b posits that Republicans and conservatives will be viewed very differently from Democrats and liberals. Throughout the rest of this section, I report and discuss the trait stereotypes associated each group, and provide some commentary on the meaningfulness of the specific types of traits selected. This section is necessarily somewhat exploratory, and following section will then use discriminant analysis to provide more robust empirical support for H1a (Similarity of Aligned Groups and H1b (Dissimilarity of Non-Aligned Groups).

The most commonly selected traits (>66% selected) associated with each group are provided in Table 4, along with the percentage of participants who selected each trait. The five most salient traits, or those that were selected most quickly by participants, are shown in bold text. Any trait that differed in prevalence, or the proportion of individuals selecting it, between aligned groups (Republicans and conservatives, Democrats and liberals) is shown in italics.²⁹ Beginning with Republicans, the most salient and commonly selected traits should come as no surprise, given the modern constituency of the party. Overall, the five most salient traits reported were white, patriotic, Christian, old, and male. In regards to specific categories of trait stereotypes, the most common physical trait stereotypes associated with Republicans were white (99%), old (92%), and male (92%). In terms of associated values, Republicans were viewed as being patriotic (97%), Christian (94%), traditional (93%), family-oriented (87%), and hardworking (81%). For psychological traits, individuals reported that Republicans are stubborn (90%), look to the past (89%), are closed-minded (88%), and are anti-change (82%). These results provide support for recent work by Scherer, Windschitl, and Graham (2015), who found

²⁹ Differences are calculated using chi-square tests of proportions.

that individuals possessed stereotypes of partisans related to motivated cognition, such as preferences toward change and open-/closed-mindedness. These traits are also grounded in actual differences between group members (Federico, Deason, and Fisher 2012; Jost et al. 2003; Jost, Federico, and Napier 2009).

Table 4. Traits selected by at least 66% of the sample by partisan/ideological group

Republicans		Democrats		Conservatives		Liberals	
Trait	%	Trait	%	Trait	%	Trait	%
White ^{CL}	99	<i>Pro-Change</i> ^L	98	Christian ^R	98	<i>Forward-Thinking</i> ^D	95
Patriotic ^C	97	Racially-Diverse ^L	94	White ^{RL}	97	Passionate RD	92
Wealthy ^C	94	Urban ^L	89	Traditional ^R	97	Compassionate ^D	92
Confident ^{DCL}	94	Accepting ^L	89	Religious ^R	97	<i>Empathetic</i> ^D	91
Opinionated ^{DCL}	94	Young ^L	87	Male ^R	97	Opinionated ^{RDC}	91
Christian ^C	94	Community-Oriented ^L	87	Patriotic ^R	95	Young ^D	91
Traditional ^C	93	<i>Forward-Thinking</i> ^L	86	Old ^R	94	Optimistic ^D	91
Old ^C	92	Politically-Correct ^L	86	Nationalistic ^R	94	<i>Pro-Change</i> ^D	90
Male ^C	92	Open-Minded ^L	85	Anti-Change ^R	94	Community-Oriented ^D	90
Religious ^C	91	Modern ^L	84	Looks to the Past ^R	92	Modern ^D	89
Assertive ^{CL}	90	Confident ^{RCL}	84	Opinionated ^{RDL}	90	<i>Hipster</i> ^D	88
Stubborn ^C	90	Outspoken ^{RCL}	84	Confident ^{RDL}	90	Educated RD	88
<i>Self-Centered</i> ^C	89	Opinionated ^{RCL}	84	Assertive ^{RL}	89	Open-Minded ^D	88
Looks to the Past ^C	89	Compassionate ^L	83	Family-Oriented ^R	87	Racially-Diverse ^D	88
Nationalistic ^C	89	<i>Passionate</i> ^{RL}	83	Wealthy ^R	87	Outgoing ^D	87
Argumentative ^C	88	Optimistic ^L	81	Closed-Minded ^R	85	<i>Charitable</i> ^D	86
Outspoken ^{DCL}	88	Outgoing ^L	81	Argumentative ^R	85	Helpful ^D	86
Closed-Minded ^C	88	Helpful ^L	81	Stubborn ^R	85	Non-Religious ^D	86
Family-Oriented ^C	87	Educated ^{RL}	79	Uncompromising ^R	81	Accepting ^D	86
Uncompromising ^C	85	Intelligent ^L	78	Suburban ^{RL}	79	Outspoken ^{RDC}	86
Anti-Change ^C	82	Non-Religious ^L	77	Hardworking ^R	78	Female ^D	85
Professional ^{CL}	81	Female ^L	77	Outspoken ^{RDL}	77	Intelligent ^D	84
Hardworking ^C	81	<i>Empathetic</i> ^L	77	Racist ^R	75	Urban ^D	84
Racist ^C	79	<i>Hipster</i> ^L	75	<i>Self-Centered</i> ^R	73	<i>Cultured</i> ^D	83
Suburban ^{CL}	76	<i>Charitable</i> ^L	74	Angry ^R	70	Confident ^{RDC}	81
Angry ^C	76	Middle-Class ^L	71	Professional ^{RL}	69	Politically-Correct ^D	79
Passionate ^{DL}	71	<i>Cultured</i> ^L	67	Entitled ^R	69	<i>Individualistic</i>	75
Educated ^{DL}	70			Rural ^R	68	Middle-Class ^D	72
Rural ^C	66					Professional ^{RC}	71
Entitled ^C	66					Assertive ^{RC}	71
						<i>White</i> ^{RC}	69
						Suburban ^{RC}	67

^R=Republican Overlap; ^D=Democrat Overlap; ^C=Conservative Overlap; ^L=Liberal Overlap
Italics indicates significant difference from aligned partisan/ideological group (chi-squared test of proportions; $p < 0.05$)

Bold indicates one of five most salient traits for each group

Many participants also reported members of the Republican Party as being perceived as nationalistic (89%), uncompromising (85%), racist (76%), and angry (76%). These are largely negative terms, and ones that the Republican Party has struggled with over the past several years. This sample is, however, skewed Democratic/liberal, so perhaps this could be the result of partisan bias. Yet, upon examination of the traits selected only by Republican participants, the results change little. Republicans in the sample largely reported that their co-partisans are perceived in much the same manner, as nationalistic (92%), uncompromising (82%), racist (68%), and angry (63%). While the most negative traits, racist and angry, were slightly less associated with the party among Republican participants, the differences between partisans are only marginally significant ($p < 0.10$ for both traits).³⁰ These results provide validity to the incentives offered to participants to be accurate, as even party identifiers were willing to select negative traits if they believe they are commonly associated with the group, although they may not have personally endorsed these specific stereotypes.

A highly similar portrait emerged among conservatives. The five most salient traits for conservatives, or those traits that participants selected most quickly, were Christian, white, confident, stubborn, and angry. Participants reported that conservatives are also perceived as being comprised of individuals similar to Republicans, including being white (97%), male (97%), and old (94%). They were also associated with more traditional values, including being Christian (98%), traditional (97%), patriotic (95%), family oriented (87%), and hardworking (78%). Likewise, the same psychological traits as Republicans were also associated with conservatives, including looking to the past (92%), being anti-change (94%), being closed-minded (85%), stubborn (85%), and uncompromising (81%). Finally, conservatives were also

³⁰ Based on a chi-squared test of equal proportions. For racist, $\chi^2=3.19$, $p=0.07$, and for angry $\chi^2=3.31$, $p=0.07$.

associated with the same traits with negative connotations such as nationalistic (94%), racist (75%), and angry (70%). Taken together, these results provide initial support for Hypothesis 1a (Similarity of Aligned Groups) in that there do not appear to be any major distinctions between Republicans and conservatives. In fact, the only trait that differed in prevalence was self-centered, which was higher for Republicans (89%) than conservatives (73%), $\chi^2=7.04, p<0.01$.

On the other side of the political spectrum, the most salient traits associated with Democrats were young, confident, compassionate, outgoing, and helpful. Note that these are very different from the most salient traits of Republicans and conservatives. This pattern emerged even more clearly in regards to the most prevalent traits, as displayed in the second column of Table 4, and lending support for Hypothesis 1b (Dissimilarity of Non-Aligned Groups). Specifically, the most commonly associated physical descriptors were racially-diverse (94%), young (87%), female (77%), and hipster (75%). While hipster may refer to the lifestyle more generally, it is often associated with a specific look and style of dress. Additionally, notice that these first three traits are the direct opposite of those associated with Republicans and conservatives (racially diverse vs. white, young vs. old, and female vs. male). This provides further support for Hypothesis 1b. In addition, the most prevalent psychological traits reported were pro-change (98%), forward-thinking (86%), and open-minded (85%). Again, we see the opposite of those applied to Republicans and conservatives. Interestingly enough, while Republicans and conservatives were associated with being uncompromising, Democrats were not seen as compromising by two-thirds of participants, though 62% of participants overall selected this trait. Here, however, we do see differences by party, with 76% of Democratic participants having reported that compromising is associated with Democrats, though only 47% of independents and Republicans reported this association, a significant difference $\chi^2=7.10, p<0.01$.

Thus, it appears that while even Republican partisans reported individuals in their own party are not willing to compromise, Democrats felt that their co-partisans do compromise, but this is a belief not shared by individuals outside of the party.

Democrats were also associated with a different set of values than Republicans and conservatives. While Republicans and conservatives were associated with traits such as being patriotic, traditional, family-oriented, and hardworking, traits that are generally characteristic of the Protestant Work Ethic (Weber 1959[1905]), the same was not true for Democrats. Instead, Democrats and liberals were associated with values such as community-oriented (87%), modern (84%) non-religious (77%), and cultured (67%). These different set of values espouse the two different cultures that have been occurring simultaneously in the United States: the idyllic, small town, religious America that has been perhaps most characteristically portrayed in *Leave it to Beaver* or *The Andy Griffith Show*, and the modern, fast-paced, urban, secular America as portrayed on *Friends* or *Sex and the City*. This distinction becomes further apparent in that living in a rural area was associated with Republicans (66%) and conservatives (68%), and living in an urban area was associated with Democrats (89%) and liberals (84%). While there has always been a huge distinction between rural and urban life, in recent years, individuals appear to have sorted themselves into different communities (Bishop 2008), so the clear political association reported here may have become more salient.

Another related set of traits that fits well within the current political context emerged among Democrats: empathy toward others. Specifically, participants reported explicitly that Democrats were empathetic (77%), but also accepting (89%), compassionate (83%), helpful (81%), and charitable (74%). While these are all positive traits, they were associated with another, often more negatively perceived, trait: political correctness (86%). Thus, while

Democrats received high marks, so to speak, for their diversity, compassion, and acceptance of different types of people, a large majority of participants also reported the party was associated with political correctness, which has been alleged to be a contributing factor to the anger arising from those on the right.

Turning to liberals, we can again observe strong evidence that individuals perceived aligned groups, in this case Democrats and liberals, as associated with highly similar stereotypes. The five most salient traits among liberals were passionate, young, educated, outgoing, and intelligent. Thus, like Democrats, individuals associated liberals with being young and outgoing, though among liberals, compared to Democrats, there was a stronger association with education (educated and intelligent) and liberals were more saliently associated with being passionate, rather than compassionate. In regards to the most prevalent physical characteristics associated with liberals, they were perceived as young (91%), hipster (88%; significantly more so than Democrats, $\chi^2=5.59, p<0.05$), racially-diverse (88%), female (85%), and, most interestingly, also white (69%). While at first glance this speaks to a contradiction, in that liberals were associated with being racially diverse *and* white, this is not necessarily contradictory. Liberals in the United States do favor many programs that benefit a wide, and racially diverse constituency, particularly as their support for programs aimed at assisting the urban poor would disproportionately assist minority groups. However, while the Democratic Party was perceived as racially diverse (and less associated than liberals with being white, $\chi^2=6.68, p=0.01$), there is reason to believe that individuals taking on the label “liberal” would be less diverse. Specifically, African Americans and Latinos, the two largest racial minorities in the country, take more liberal positions on economic issues, but are actually more likely than whites to be socially conservative regarding

the issues of same-sex marriage and abortion.³¹ Therefore, because they are in this conflicted position, they may be less likely to take on a liberal identity, and therefore we observe that liberals were associated with being racially diverse (in regards to their targets of their economic policies), but also white (in regards to who is perceived as being a liberal).

Liberals were also associated with an array of psychological characteristics nearly identical to those associated with Democrats. These included forward thinking (95%), pro-change (90%), and open-minded (88%). However, liberals were slightly more associated with forward-thinking, $\chi^2=3.88$, $p<0.05$, while Democrats were slightly more associated with being pro-change, $\chi^2=3.99$, $p<0.05$. These terms are highly similar, so it is unclear whether these differences are meaningful in any way. In terms of empathy traits, liberals were also associated with being compassionate (92%), empathetic (91%), accepting (86%), and also politically-correct (71%). In fact, liberals were viewed as more explicitly empathetic than Democrats, $\chi^2=6.46$, $p=0.01$. Finally, liberals were associated with many of the same non-traditional values as Democrats, such as being community oriented (90%), modern (89%), non-religious (86%), and cultured (83%).

We again observe strong evidence that individuals associated the same types of traits with aligned groups, in this case Democrats and liberals. But, compared to Republicans and conservatives, there were more differences in prevalence of certain traits. Liberals were perceived to be a bit more distinct from Democrats than conservatives were from Republicans. In regards to these differences, a pattern seems to have emerged. While almost all of the traits selected by at least two-thirds of the sample were the same, liberals were more associated with

³¹ See, for example, the summary of recent polling data by the public opinion firm PRRI: <http://www.prii.org/research/african-american-and-hispanic-reproductive-issues-survey/>

being hipster (88%; $\chi^2=5.59$, $p<0.05$), cultured (83%; $\chi^2=5.49$, $p<0.05$), and individualistic (75%; $\chi^2=5.29$, $p<0.05$).³² Thus, liberals seem have been associated with this new class of upwardly mobile millennials, described by (Twenge 2007), and who often were perceived as more narcissistic and entitled, which would appear consistent with the individualistic trait applied here. This group is also the most liberal, particularly on social issues, of all current age cohorts in the United States.³³ While Democrats and liberals appear to have been perceived as similar, for the most part, there does appear to be some evidence for a stereotypic subtype that encompasses this type of liberal individual.

3.3.3 Discriminant Analysis of Traits

The next step is to use canonical linear discriminant analysis to subject Hypotheses 1a (Similarity of Aligned Groups) and 1b (Dissimilarity of Non-Aligned Groups) to more stringent empirical analysis.³⁴ To provide support for these hypotheses, aligned partisan and ideological groups should be closely located in a one (or more) dimensional space while non-aligned partisan and ideological groups should be located far apart within this same space. Put

³² Note that individualistic is not one of the traits associated with Democrats by at least two-thirds of the sample (it was selected by only 58% of participants).

³³ According to a 2013 Gallup poll, available here: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/162881/older-americans-moral-attitudes-changing.aspx>

³⁴ Discriminant analysis is based on a number of assumptions, as described by Klecka (1980). First, there must be at least two groups, with at least two cases per group. The number of discriminating variables must be at least two less than the total number of cases in each group. Discriminating variables must be measured at the interval level, and not a linear combination of other variables in the equation. Finally, each of the discriminating variables must possess a multivariate normal distribution. In this instance, all of the assumptions are met with the exception of the last, as the variables are dichotomous (therefore not possessing a normal distribution). However, Klecka (1980) notes that discriminant analysis is a rather robust procedure, and “when this assumption is violated, the computed probabilities are not exact, but they may still be quite useful if interpreted with caution” (10). In essence, the number of misclassifications may be higher, though due to the large number of variables in the equation (61), this may not be the case. Additionally, these variables may be combined into several related factors (into an additive scale), which would satisfy this assumption. The drawback to this approach is that some information will be inevitably lost, as all of the traits may not be utilized (as they would not fit adequately within the particular scales).

differently, discriminant analysis allows the examination of “the overlap or independence” of groups by creating latent variable(s), or dimensions, and examining “which characteristics are associated with each dimension and where each group is located on the dimension” (Devine and Baker 1991, 45). In this way, discriminant analysis shares similarities with factor analysis. Discriminant analysis is also similar to logistic regression in that it predicts membership in discrete categories using a linear combination of independent variables. The categories are known *a priori* and the analysis also provides a classification table, which predicts membership in a group for each participant based on the stereotypic traits (and later hobbies and jobs) the participant reports being associated with that group. If the groups are highly distinct, there should be little to no misclassification. If they are not very distinct, a higher rate of misclassification should occur.

Two significant dimensions emerged in this first analysis. The first dimension explained the vast majority of the observed variance (93%), and was highly significant $F(183, 948)=6.82$, $p<0.01$. Associated traits such as white, old, traditional, and Christian predicted a lower score on this dimension, while associated traits such as forward-thinking, diverse, young, pro-change, female, and non-religious predicted a higher score on this dimension. Figure 11 displays a score plot, which provides the score of each participant based on the traits they associated with the group. The letter indicates the group that they evaluated.³⁵ As shown, Republicans and conservatives were placed at the lower end of the scale, while Democrats and conservatives were placed at the higher end. Likewise, the aligned groups clustered tightly together, with a large gap between non-aligned groups. This provides the strongest evidence thus far in support of H1a (Similarity of Aligned Groups) and H1b (Dissimilarity of Non-Aligned Groups).

³⁵ Denoted by the letter next to each marker: C=conservative, D=Democrat, L=liberal, R=Republican.

Canonical Discriminant Function Scores (Traits)

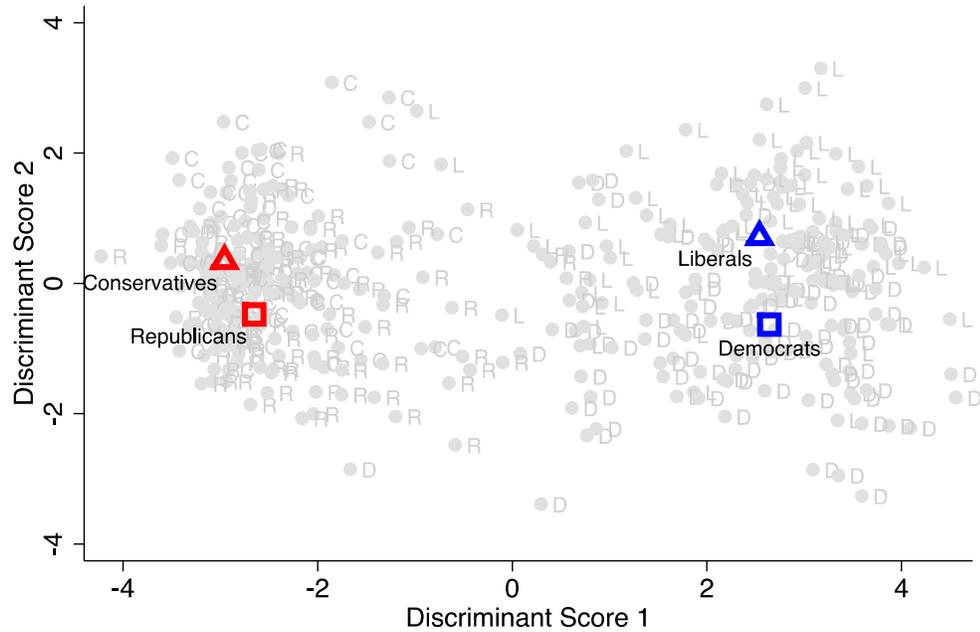


Figure 11. Discriminant Analysis Score Plot for Traits on Two Dimensions (Raw Trait Checklist)

A second dimension also emerged as statistically significant (Wilks' Lambda=0.64, $p<0.05$). However, it only explained a very small portion of the observed variance (4%), and is therefore not particularly meaningful. It does appear to be related to some of the differences between Democrats and liberals, with higher scores being related to traits such as empathy, non-religiousness, cultured, urban, and suburban. Lower scores are related to wealth, being self-centered, being outspoken, and being compassionate. Both ideological groups scored higher on this dimension, yet the distance between each from the aligned partisan group is quite small.

Overall, the discriminant functions were able to predict group membership quite well. The functions correctly classified Republicans 82% of the time, though it misclassified them as conservatives 16% of the time. It was slightly less accurate at classifying Democrats, with correct classifications 70% of the time, and incorrect classifications as liberals 30% the time. For

conservatives, it correctly classified them 69% of the time and incorrectly classified Republicans 30% of the time. Finally, for liberals, it correctly classified 77% of individuals, but misclassified 20% as Democrats. While there were seven other misclassifications total (i.e., into a non-aligned group), this occurred less than 2% of the time. Thus, the discriminant functions were highly accurate at classification, and the vast majority of misclassifications were into the other aligned groups. This finding provides further support for H1a (Similarity of Aligned Groups) and H1b (Dissimilarity of Non-Aligned Groups).

To simplify the analysis, I created several trait scales from the individual traits themselves in order to better examine what factors were most important in distinguishing these groups. Seven different trait scales were created using subsets of the individual traits. The scales are shown in Table 5, which displays the traits that were added together to create the measures. These included scales measuring traits associated with traditional values, modern values, older generations, newer generations, and resistance/acceptance of change. These were then used as the discriminating variables in a second discriminant analysis. That is, they served the same purpose as the individual (dichotomous) variables in the previous analysis.³⁶ Table 6 displays the standardized coefficients for each measure. The first dimension, which captured 98% of the variance, was significant (Wilks' Lambda=0.17, $p<0.01$). The most important discriminating variables were traditional values and acceptance of change. Republicans and conservatives scored high on the traditional values scale and low on the acceptance of change scale, while Democrats and liberals were in the opposite direction. In regards to the second dimension, which only captured 1% of the variance (though still significant, Wilks' Lambda=0.93, $p<0.05$), the older generation and empathy measures were the most important discriminating variables, and

³⁶ This analysis also provides a robustness check on the previous analysis, as continuous variables are recommended for use in discriminant analysis (Klecka 1980).

both were negative in direction. Interestingly enough, liberals scored slightly lower than Democrats (which indicates that they scored higher on these measures). This is likely driven by the finding, discussed previously, that liberals were seen as more associated with being white. The score plots for each group are shown in Figure 12.³⁷ Again, and not surprisingly, Democrats and liberals were almost indistinguishable, while the same is true of Republicans and conservatives. More importantly, the groups were once again located very far apart, showing that there was not much overlap at all between non-aligned groups.

³⁷ Note that the scale is reversed from Figure 3, such that Democrats score lower on the functions while Republicans score higher.

Table 5. Trait Scales Developed for Discriminant Analysis using Continuous Variables

Traits	# of Items	Scale Name	Cronbach's Alpha
Religious, Hardworking, Patriotic, Traditional, Christian, Family-Oriented	6	Traditional Values	0.87
Egalitarian, Accepting, Non-Religious, Community-Oriented, Modern, Politically Correct	5	Modern Values	0.77
White, Old, Male, Racist, Rural	5	Older Generation	0.80
Racially Diverse, Young, Female, Urban, Hipster, Cultured, Individualistic	4	Newer Generation	0.83
Stubborn, Closed-Minded, Uncompromising, Anti-Change, Looks to the Past	5	Resistance to Change	0.85
Open-Minded, Pro-change, Forward Thinking, Optimistic	4	Acceptance of Change	0.87
Compassionate, Helpful, Charitable, Empathetic	4	Empathy	0.88

Table 6. Standardized Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients

Trait Scale	Function 1	Function 2
Traditional Values	0.48	0.56
Modern Values	-0.17	0.29
Older Generation	0.23	-0.76
Newer Generation	-0.26	-0.18
Resistance to Change	0.06	-0.35
Acceptance of Change	-0.44	0.04
Empathy	0.09	-0.92

Canonical Discriminant Function Scores (Trait Scales)

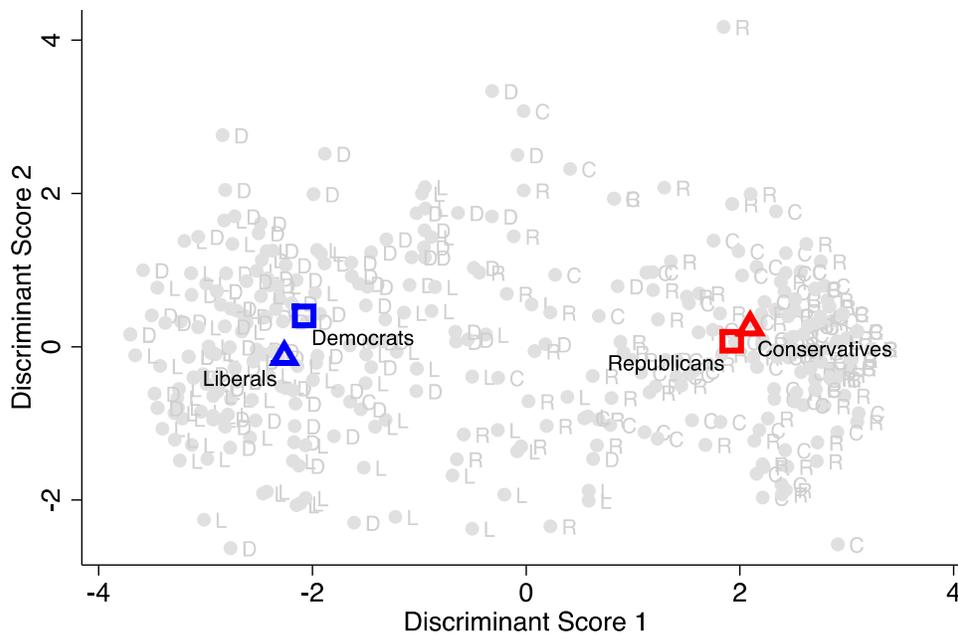


Figure 12. Discriminant Analysis Score Plot for Traits on Two Dimensions (Trait Scales)

3.3.4 Differentiating Between Aligned Groups

The previous analyses showed that aligned partisan and ideological groups were perceived as highly similar in stereotype content. As a further test of H1a (Similarity of Aligned Groups) and H1b (Dissimilarity of Non-Aligned Groups), could there be any traits/characteristics that show a clear distinction between these aligned groups? To help address this question, I used the same trait scales described above (and shown in Table 4) to predict classification into an ideological group, as opposed to a partisan group, using logistic regression. I created two new dependent measures, one for Republicans and conservatives and one for Democrats and liberals, which take

on the value of “1” if the participant evaluated an ideological group or “0” if the participant evaluated a partisan group. Thus, these models predict which group an individual was evaluating. Any significant independent variables in the equation are useful in differentiating between the aligned groups.

The results of the models are presented in Table 7, for Republicans/conservatives and Democrats/liberals, respectively. First, in the model that predicted membership in the conservative group, as compared to the Republican group, none of the coefficients reached significance. Ostensibly then, none of these scales were able to differentiate between these two aligned groups. This is not entirely surprising, given that the prevalence of stereotypic traits was so similar in the previous analysis. However, there were some significant variables that predicted classification as a liberal, as opposed to a Democrat. First, liberals were less associated with traditional values than Democrats. In terms of marginal effects, moving from a “0” on this scale (indicating that none of the six traditional values traits are associated) to a “6” (indicating that all of the traditional values traits are associated) resulted in a 43 percentage point decrease in the probability of evaluating a liberal, as opposed to a Democrat.³⁸ Somewhat surprisingly, traits associated with an older generation (i.e., white, old, male, racist, and rural) resulted in a *greater* probability of liberal, as opposed to Democratic, evaluation. The predicted probability increased from 38% at the lowest end of the scale (no associated traits) to 84% at the highest end of the scale, a sizable difference of 46 percentage points. This result was unexpected, and holds even if white (which was found to be a prevalent trait among liberals but not Democrats, see Table 4) is removed from the scale. While the reasons behind this result can only be speculative at this point, there are some reasons to believe that liberals may be perceived as less diverse and more

³⁸ These probabilities, as well as those described below, were calculated by holding all other variables at their mean value.

associated as being typical majority group members because many minority group members display conflicted issue positions (socially conservative and economically liberal). Finally, empathy was also a significant predictor of liberal group membership, in line with the findings in the previous section. This effect had the greatest magnitude of all the significant predictors, with only a 13% chance of being in the liberal group at the lowest end of the scale and a 65% chance at the highest end of the scale, a huge difference of 52 percentage points. In sum, liberals appear to have been less associated with traits corresponding to traditional values, more associated with traits characteristic of older generations, and more associated with empathy.

Table 7. Predicting Membership in Ideological Group vs. Aligned Partisan Group Using Trait Scales

(Logit Models)

	Conservative (vs. Republican)	Liberal (vs. Democrat)
Traditional Values	0.105 (0.143)	-0.310* (0.123)
Modern Values	0.122 (0.157)	-0.173 (0.152)
Older Generation	-0.044 (0.178)	0.426* (0.169)
Newer Generation	-0.254 (0.144)	0.008 (0.135)
Resistance to Change	-0.051 (0.158)	0.109 (0.148)
Acceptance of Change	-0.077 (0.220)	0.008 (0.255)
Empathy	0.039 (0.159)	0.623** (0.203)
Constant	-0.103 (0.943)	-1.352 (0.917)
<i>N</i>	191	189

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Overall, these results show that aligned political groups were perceived as highly similar. This is an important result, as these groups need to be perceived as similar if individuals are to

transition between these group identities when an identity is threatened. This effect of threat on identification with partisan and ideological groups is examined in detail in the following chapters. The results in this section indicate that there were some minor perceived differences between liberals and Democrats, yet the discriminant analysis revealed that liberals and Democrats were located at almost exactly the same spot in a two-dimensional space. Interestingly, liberals were be more associated with traits associated with an older dominant generation. While this is an interesting, and somewhat puzzling, result, these differences remain relatively minor in contrast to the overwhelming similarity of these groups.

3.3.5 Trait Prototypicality and Identity Strength

Recall that H2a (Prototypicality) predicts that the more prototypical an individual is of a group, measured by the degree to which traits associated with a group and an individual overlap, the stronger their partisan/social identity is. Further, H2b (Ideological ID as Predominantly Social) posits that because ideology is more exclusively defined by social aspects (rather than possessing organizational and institutional aspects), prototypicality should be a particularly important predictor of ideological identity strength, compared to partisan identity strength.

In the following models, identity strength serves as the dependent measure. This was calculated by taking the mean of the five items on the IDPG scale for each group that an individual reports identifying with. The primary independent variable is trait prototypicality, or the proportion of trait overlap, which was calculated by dividing the number of traits an individual reports apply to his or her own self by the total number of traits selected.^{39 40} The four

³⁹ Recall that individuals are only asked to select traits that they previously reported being associated with the group.

models that follow report results for individuals who were randomly assigned to evaluate a group with which they identified, as identity strength was only measured for these individuals. While it could be interesting to measure identity strength for an identity that an individual does not possess, this measurement is not of much interest here.

The results of these four models are shown in Table 8. For partisan groups, trait prototypicality did not appear to predict identity strength. The trait prototypicality measure did not reach significance for Republicans or Democrats. However, trait prototypicality did predict identity strength for ideological groups. For both conservatives and liberals the trait prototypicality variable was statistically significant, indicating that individuals who share a higher degree of overlapping traits reported a stronger ideological identity. The marginal effects of trait prototypicality are shown in Figure 13. The predictions were nearly identical for both liberals and conservatives. Moving from the having almost no trait overlap to nearly full trait overlap resulted in an increase in identity strength of approximately 1.9 points (on a seven-point scale). This is a substantively large effect, one that clearly demonstrates the influence of social characteristics on ideological identification.

Table 8. Predicting Identity Strength by Trait Prototypicality

	Republican ID Strength	Democrat ID Strength	Conservative ID Strength	Liberal ID Strength
Trait Prototypicality	1.350 (1.491)	0.479 (0.999)	2.075* (0.768)	1.945* (0.755)
Constant	3.478** (0.654)	3.422** (0.502)	3.389** (0.335)	3.469** (0.402)
R^2	0.03	0.00	0.23	0.10
N	28	47	25	61

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

⁴⁰ Individuals must have selected at least 12 total traits to be included in the analysis to ensure that there is an adequate number of items to actually choose from. This number was generated by looking at the mean number of traits chosen, and excluding those in the bottom 10% of the distribution (less than 12 traits). However, the results hold when not excluding these individuals.

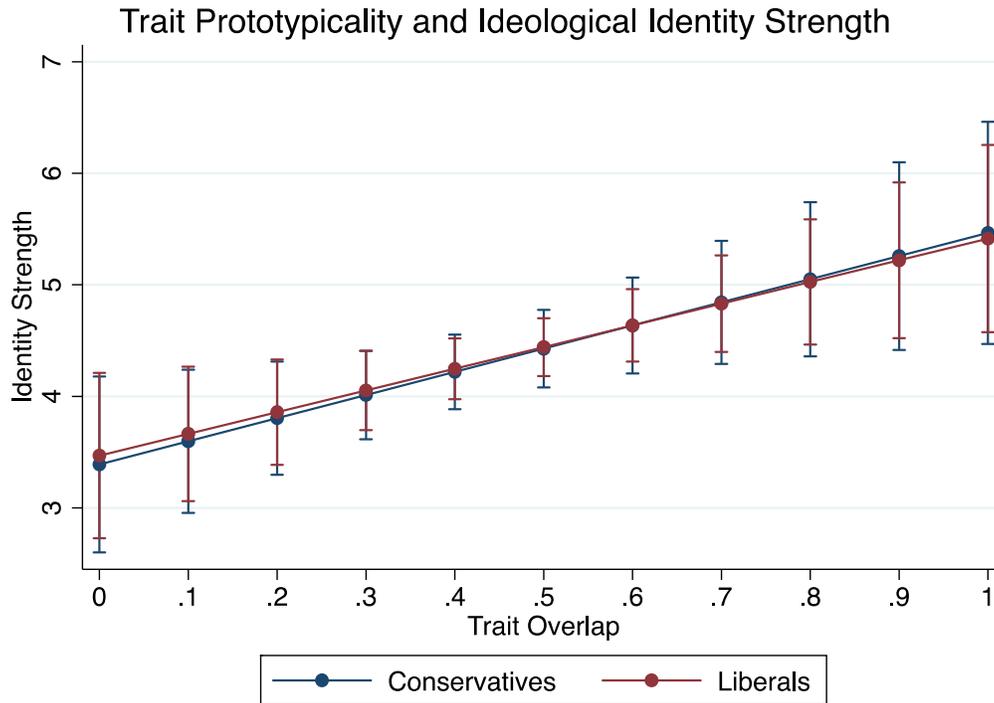


Figure 13. Predicting Ideological Identity Strength by Trait Prototypicality

This analysis provides some initial support for Hypotheses 2a (Prototypicality) and 2b (Ideology as Predominantly Social). While no support for the effects of trait prototypicality on partisan group strength was found, trait prototypicality does exert a large and significant effect on ideological group strength. This lends support for Hypothesis 2a, while Hypothesis 2b finds partial support. I expected that prototypicality would predict identity strength for partisan and ideological groups, but more so for ideological groups. However, prototypicality only predicts identity strength for ideological groups.

3.3.6 Hobbies

The above analyses are now largely repeated in regards to hobbies. Because of the high degree of similarity between these two analyses, exposition will be kept to a minimum. First, the most commonly selected hobbies for each group are shown in Table 9. The hobbies chosen for both sets of aligned groups are identical, though the order of prevalence does differ somewhat. Republicans were commonly associated with engaging in political debate (93%), which was the one activity that was shared across all four groups; religious activities (91%); and guns/shooting (91%). The most salient traits, or those with the fastest reaction time, were hunting, fishing, and guns/shooting. These same three activities were also the most salient for conservatives, and conservatives are similarly most associated with religious activities (94%), fishing (93%; significantly more so than Republicans, $\chi^2=4.23$, $p<0.05$).

Table 9. Hobbies selected by at least 66% of the sample by partisan/ideological group

Republicans		Democrats		Conservatives		Liberals	
Hobby	%	Hobby	%	Hobby	%	Hobby	%
Political Debate ^{DCL}	93	Social Media ^L	93	Religious Activities ^R	94	<i>Writing</i> ^D	96
Religious Activities ^C	91	Volunteering ^L	90	<i>Fishing</i> ^R	93	Activism ^D	95
Guns/Shooting ^C	91	Music ^L	90	Hunting ^R	91	Art ^D	94
Hunting ^C	88	Activism ^L	90	Guns/Shooting ^R	91	Theatre/Performing Arts ^D	94
<i>Fishing</i> ^C	83	Political Debate ^{RCL}	89	Political Debate ^{RCL}	88	Social Media ^D	94
Outdoor Activities ^C	82	Theatre/Performing Arts ^L	88	Outdoor Activities ^R	78	<i>Reading</i> ^D	94
Sports ^C	75	<i>Writing</i> ^L	84	Sports ^R	69	<i>Going to Coffee Shops</i> ^D	93
		<i>Art</i> ^L	83			Volunteering ^D	92
		<i>Going to Coffee Shops</i> ^L	83			Music ^D	91
		Movies ^L	83			Political Debate ^{RCL}	91
		<i>Reading</i> ^L	82			Movies ^D	87
		Going to Bars/Clubs ^L	80			Going to Bars/Clubs ^D	76
		Video Games ^L	72			Video Games ^D	73

^R=Republican Overlap; ^D=Democrat Overlap; ^C=Conservative Overlap; ^L=Liberal Overlap
Italics indicates significant difference from aligned partisan/ideological group (chi-squared test of proportions; $p < 0.05$)
Bold indicates one of three most salient hobbies for each group

The activities most associated with those on the left were quite different than those associated with those on the right. Democrats were most commonly associated with using social media (93%), volunteering (90%) and music (90%). Their most salient traits reported were writing, art, and activism. Liberals, likewise, were most associated with writing (96%), activism (95%), and art (94%) and are most saliently associated with art, music, and activism. There were a few significant differences in terms of prevalence among Democrats and liberals, in that writing ($\chi^2=7.34$, $p<0.05$), art ($\chi^2=5.38$, $p<0.05$), reading ($\chi^2=5.34$, $p<0.05$), and going to coffee shops ($\chi^2=4.06$, $p<0.05$) were all activities more commonly associated with liberals. Again, this provides some support for a specific liberal association with young, cultured, and urban individuals, who are more likely to enjoy these activities than Democrats more generally.

Yet, the results of the discriminant analysis, using all twenty hobby variables (shown in Figure 14), indicated that aligned groups were shown to be very close, particularly Democrats and liberals. Only the first (horizontal) dimension reached significance (Wilks' Lambda=0.17, $p<0.01$), as indicated by the near zero variation on the second (vertical) dimension). As one might expect, outdoor and religious activities most predicted classification as a Republican or conservative, and more artistic activities most predicted classification as a Democrat or liberal. Two archetypes thus emerge, both common to the modern discussion of a "culture war" between those on the political right and those on the political left. Those on the right were perceived to engage in more outdoor and rugged activities, while also enjoying a healthy dose of religion. Meanwhile, those on the left were perceived to enjoy more artistic, modern, and intrinsic pursuits.

Canonical Discriminant Scores (Hobbies)

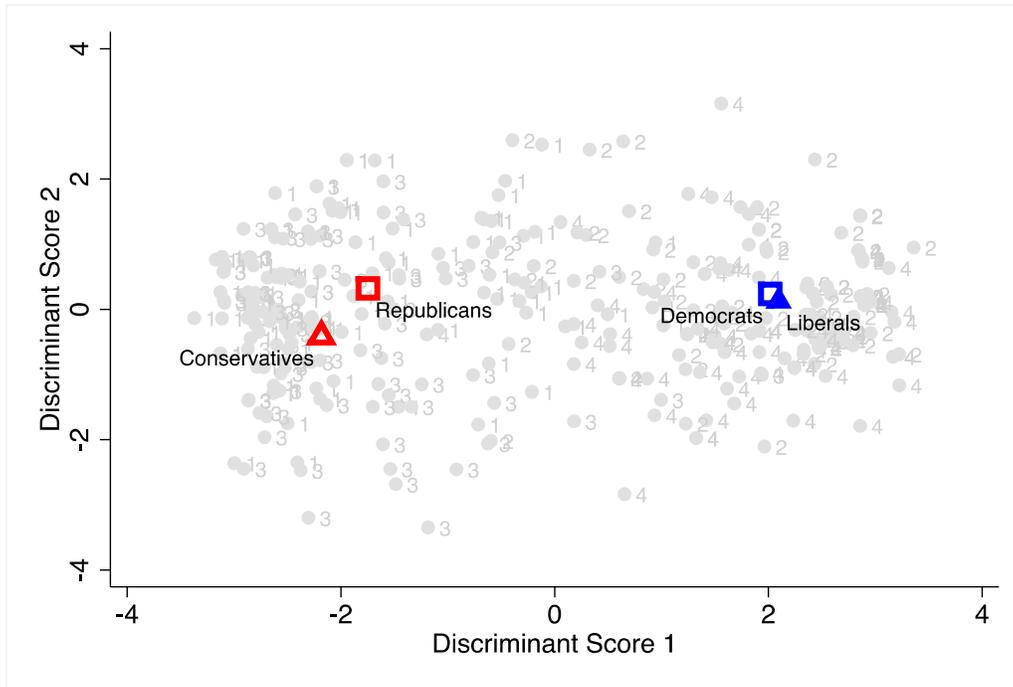


Figure 14. Discriminant Analysis Score Plot for Hobbies on Two Dimensions (Raw Hobby Checklist)

To again examine the link between prototypicality and identity strength, I used four logistic regression models, one for each group. In this instance, hobby prototypicality, or overlap between hobbies associated with a group and hobbies the individual participant enjoys, were significant for all but Democrats. The results are displayed in Table 10, and the marginal effects are plotted in Figure 15. The marginal effects were almost identical for Republicans, conservatives, and liberals. Moving from nearly no hobby overlap to almost full hobby overlap resulted in an increase in identity strength of almost two points (on a seven-point scale) for members of these groups. For Democrats, however, the coefficient was non-significant and the marginal effect was much smaller. This provides additional support for Hypotheses 2a (Ideological Prototypicality) and 2b (Ideology as Predominantly Social). In sum, for traits and hobbies, there was a consistent effect of prototypicality on identity strength, though this effect

was only found for a single partisan group, Republicans, in one of the four models. Thus, while prototypicality appears to have clearly mattered in regards to ideological identity strength, it is far less clear in regards to partisan identity strength.

Table 10. Predicting Identity Strength by Hobby Prototypicality

	Republican ID Strength	Democrat ID Strength	Conservative ID Strength	Liberal ID Strength
Hobby Prototypicality	2.348* (1.110)	1.125 (1.035)	2.347* (0.843)	1.997** (0.674)
Constant	3.024** (0.543)	3.066** (0.546)	3.362** (0.396)	3.404** (0.344)
R^2	0.15	0.03	0.27	0.14
N	27	46	23	58

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

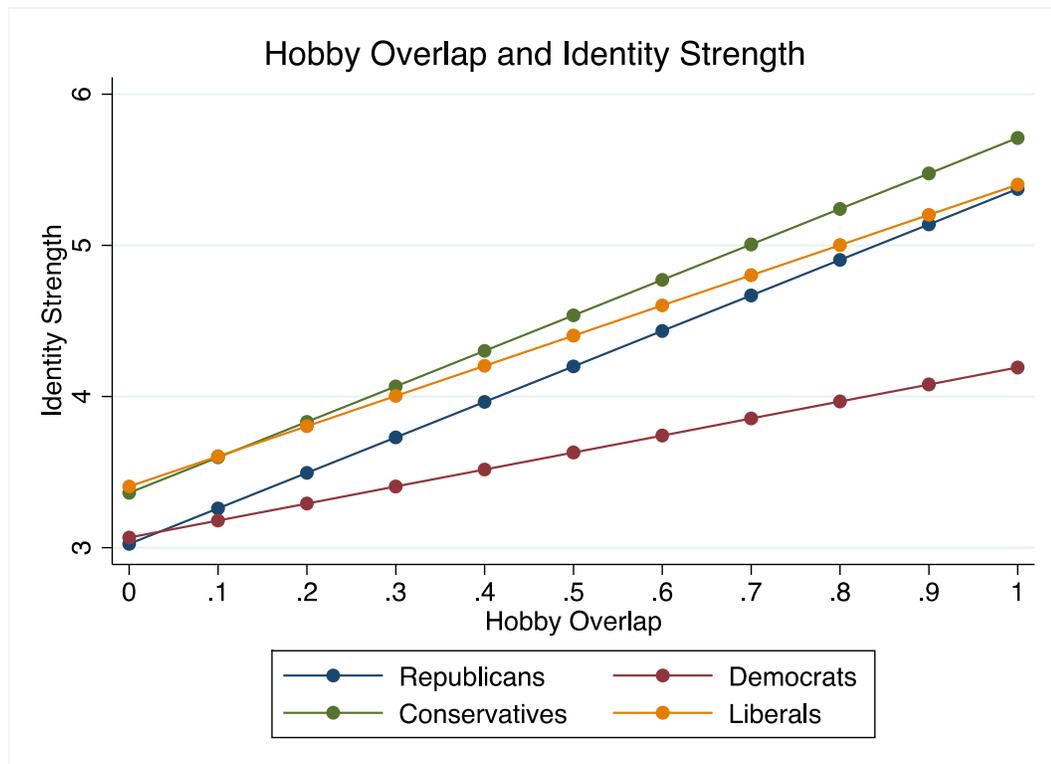


Figure 15. Predicting Identity Strength by Hobby Prototypicality

3.3.7 Jobs

These analyses were repeated a final time for jobs and occupational categories. Aligned groups once again showed a high degree of stereotype overlap, as indicated in Table 11. Republicans were most commonly associated with business occupations (97%), CEO positions (93%), and finance jobs (92%). Likewise, conservatives were most commonly associated with CEO positions (91%), military careers (86%), and business jobs more generally (86%). For both groups, the most salient jobs were business, CEOs, and military. Only two jobs differed significantly in prevalence, with both more commonly associated with Republicans: finance jobs ($\chi^2=5.38, p<0.05$), and lawyers ($\chi^2=5.91, p<0.05$). On the political left, Democrats were most associated with working for non-profit organizations (93%), being activists (92%), and being artists (91%). The most salient jobs associated with Democrats were teachers, social workers, and service/retail positions. Similarly, liberals were most associated with being artists (97%), activists (97%), and social workers (94%). Liberals' most salient jobs were teachers, social workers, and low-paying jobs more generally.

Table 11. Occupations selected by at least 66% of the sample by partisan/ideological group

Republicans		Democrats		Conservatives		Liberals	
Occupation	%	Occupation	%	Occupation	%	Occupation	%
Business^C	97	Non-Profit Organizations ^L	93	CEOs^R	91	Artists ^D	97
CEOs^C	93	Activists ^L	92	Military^R	86	Activists ^D	97
Finance Jobs ^C	92	Artists ^L	91	Business^R	86	Social Workers^D	94
High-Paying Jobs ^C	91	Social Workers^L	88	High-Paying Jobs ^R	81	Non-Profit Organizations ^D	93
Military^C	91	Teachers^L	87	Finance Jobs ^R	80	Professors ^D	85
Lawyers ^C	87	Service/Retail Jobs^L	83	White-Collar Jobs ^R	79	Teachers^D	85
White-Collar Jobs ^C	83	Nurses ^L	81	Police Officers ^R	74	Service/Retail Jobs ^D	79
Small Business Owners ^C	79	Union Jobs ^L	79	Lawyers ^R	72	Union Jobs ^D	78
Police Officers ^C	68	Professors ^L	78	Agriculture/Farming	70	Unemployed ^D	77
Government Jobs ^D	68	Low-Paying Jobs ^L	78	Small Business Owners ^R	70	Low-Paying Jobs^D	76
Doctors	67	Unemployed ^L	77			Nurses ^D	71
		Government Jobs ^R	70				

^R=Republican Overlap; ^D=Democrat Overlap; ^C=Conservative Overlap; ^L=Liberal Overlap
Italics indicates significant difference from aligned partisan/ideological group (chi-squared test of proportions; $p < 0.05$)

Bold indicates one of three most salient jobs for each group

In the discriminant analysis, which now uses the 24 jobs as discriminating variables, aligned groups were once again clustered extremely closely, with a great deal of distance between the two pairs of non-aligned groups, as displayed in Figure 16. Only the first dimension was significant (Wilks' Lambda=0.12, $p<0.05$), and all four groups were clustered at around the zero-point on the second dimension, indicating a significant lack of differentiation on this dimension. The most important predictors of being classified on the low end of the first dimension, where Democrats and liberals are placed, were occupations such as social workers, artists, and activist. Placement on the right, where Republicans and conservatives are located, was driven by jobs such as CEOs, small business, military, and high-paying more generally. Thus, the pattern that emerged is one in which those on the political left were occupationally characterized by people-oriented or care professions (social workers, teachers, nurses), while those on the political right were associated with high-paying finance/business jobs, entrepreneurial jobs (small business ownership), or careers in the military.⁴¹

⁴¹ Recall that participants were not asked to indicate which jobs applied to themselves, as ostensibly an individual could only have a low number of jobs at one time, and because the flexibility to choose a job is far less than for most traits and hobbies. Thus, the effect of prototypicality on identity strength was not estimated for this category of stereotypes.

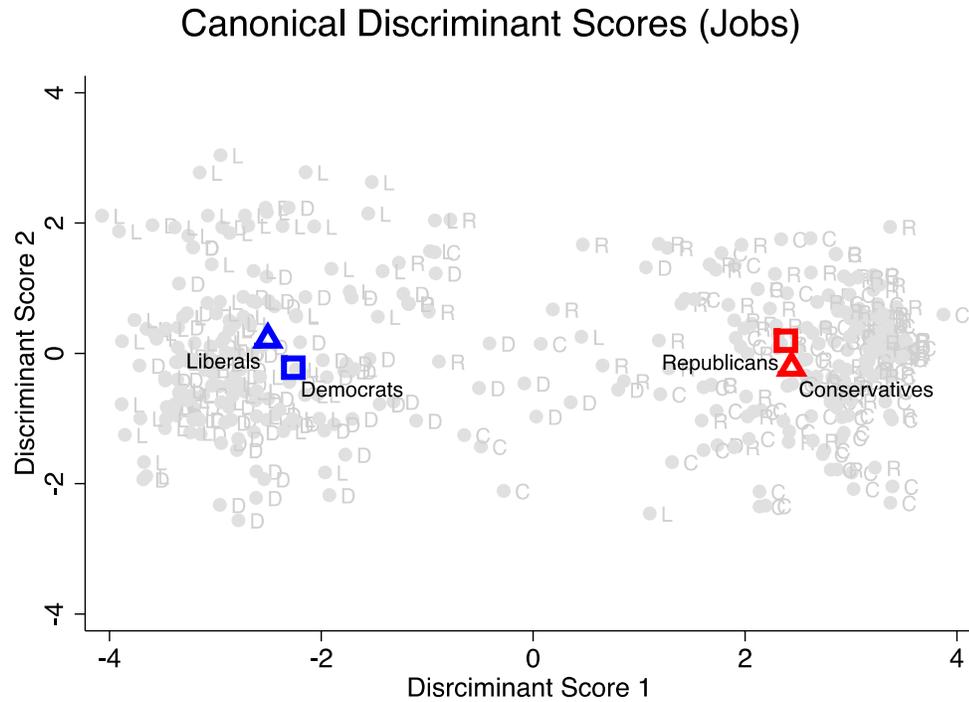


Figure 16. Discriminant Analysis Score Plot for Jobs on Two Dimensions (Raw Job/Occupation Checklist)

3.4 CONCLUSION

This analysis provides support for each of the hypotheses introduced at the beginning of the chapter. Specifically, aligned groups were perceived as possessing almost identical stereotypes (Hypothesis 1a – Similarity of Aligned Groups), while non-aligned groups were perceived as possessing almost entirely distinct stereotypes (Hypothesis 1b – Dissimilarity of Non-Aligned Groups). While these results are encouraging, they do raise an additional question: what distinguishes these aligned groups? What makes a conservative different from a Republican? What makes a liberal different from a Democrat? This analysis is limited insofar as these

questions remain largely unanswered. At least, in regards to liberals and Democrats, there appears to be some initial evidence in favor of distinct stereotypic subgroups, whereby liberals and Democrats were characterized by most of the same stereotypes, though there are a few significant differences. Interestingly, liberals were more associated with stereotypes that characterize an older political generation (or, perhaps, the dominant group more generally, e.g., white, male, old), while also less associated with stereotypes that characterize traditional values. This result is somewhat difficult to explain given these data. However, conservatives and Republicans were perceived as nearly identical, with none of the trait scale variables indicating a significant difference between these two groups. Why the difference between groups on the left versus groups on the right? One explanation is that Republicans have been more willing to embrace the conservative label while Democrats have been less willing to do the same with the liberal label. In fact, since the 1980s, the term liberal has taken on a negative connotation (see, for example, Neiheisel 2016). This may explain why the only significant differences emerge in regards to liberals and Democrats, but not conservatives and Republicans.

In addition, prototypicality did predict ideological identity strength (Hypothesis 2a – Prototypicality), but did not consistently predict partisan identity strength (Hypothesis 2b – Ideology as Predominantly Social). This provides important support for the conceptualization of ideology as a social identity. Both trait and hobby prototypicality predicted ideological identity strength for liberals and conservatives. Hobby prototypicality also predicted Republican identity strength, but not Democratic identity strength. In addition, trait prototypicality did not predict identity strength for either partisan group. The differences between partisan and ideological groups were only partially predicted by Hypothesis 2b. While prototypicality was predicted to be a stronger predictor of ideological social identity than partisan social identity, it did not predict a

nearly zero effect of prototypicality on partisan social identity. A likely explanation for this null result arises from the different aspects of ideology and parties. Ideology is, as Levendusky (2009) writes, “a nebulous concept,” in that it is almost entirely societally defined. While parties are clearly associated with an ideology, particularly in the current era of partisan sorting, the parties do not have control over what is associated with an ideology, in the same way they do over their party platform. Further, individuals at the elite level clearly speak for, and represent, parties, though this is not the case for ideologies. Therefore, multiple, and often competing, factors influence partisan identity in addition to social factors (see, for example, Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002). Party performance plays a key role here, as examined in the next chapter. For these reasons, a strong relationship between prototypicality and partisan identity strength was not found in these analyses.

4.0 CHAPTER FOUR: PARTISAN THREAT AND POLITICAL IDENTIFICATION – OBSERVATIONAL EVIDENCE

The previous chapter established that individuals possess many overlapping stereotypes about aligned partisan and ideological groups (and few overlapping stereotypes between non-aligned groups). In addition, the strength of identification with ideological groups is, in part, driven by the degree to which individuals perceive members of these groups as similar to themselves. These findings provide further evidence that ideology is a form of social identity. The next step is to identify how threat toward partisan identities affects identification with partisan and ideological groups. According to the self-categorization theory of ideological identification presented in Chapter Two, threat toward a partisan identity should result in weak partisans moving away from partisan identification and toward ideological identification. This chapter, as well as the following chapter, seek to build support for this hypothesis.

To that end, this chapter will focus on using observational (survey) data to establish a relationship between perceptions of party performance and rates of political identification, both partisan and ideological. I rely on the cumulative General Social Survey (GSS) dataset, containing cross-sectional surveys beginning in 1972 (the first year that ideology and partisanship were consistently measured) and ending in 2014.⁴² I examine the probability of

⁴² While attempts were made to attain suitable panel data, there are several problems preventing such an approach. First, the panel data available from the GSS and American National Election Studies (ANES) is almost entirely

ideological and partisan identification in response to approval of Congress, which serves as a proxy for party performance. This is to build support for the following hypotheses, which were introduced in Chapter Two. First, when individuals disapprove of Congress, indicating that they currently possess low confidence in the institution, they should become less likely to identify with a party:

H3a (Congressional Disapproval and Partisan ID): Individuals with low confidence in Congress should be less likely to identify with a political party (Democratic or Republican).

Second, these individuals should instead be more likely to possess an ideological identification:

H3b (Congressional Disapproval and Ideological ID): Individuals with low confidence in Congress should be more likely to identify with an ideological label (liberal or conservative).

based on panels conducted in a short time, and always within an election year. Not only would results be influenced by electoral events, but the period of just a few months is likely not long enough to capture changes in political identifications. Second, the one ANES panel that spans four years (respondents in 2000 were re-contacted in 2004) occurs during a tumultuous period in American politics that included the September 11th attacks and the launching of two major wars. Attitudes towards institutions were unstable during this period, thus making it unsuitable for use. In addition, the main independent variable of interest, approval of Congress, differed dramatically between waves (an approve/disapprove scale in 2000 versus a feeling thermometer in 2004), making it difficult to accurately measure changes in individuals' perceptions of Congress over time.

Third, and following from the first two hypotheses, individuals should be more likely to be an independent ideologue, or possess an ideological identity with no accompanying partisan identity, when they show greater disapproval of Congress:

H3c (Congressional Disapproval and Independent Ideologues): Individuals with low confidence in Congress should be more likely to classify themselves as independents and possess an ideological affiliation.

Finally, when an individual's party is in control of Congress *and* when they disapprove of Congress, the effects of congressional approval on partisan and ideological identification should become magnified. This is because the threat toward their partisan identity, indicated by their disapproval of an institution their own party controls, should be greater. Therefore:

H4a (In-Party Majority and Partisan ID): Individuals with low confidence in Congress should be least likely to identify with a partisan group when the individual's party comprises the majority.

H4b (In-Party Majority and Ideological ID): Individuals with low confidence in Congress should be most likely to identify with an ideological group when the individual's party comprises the majority.

4.1 METHODS

All analyses utilized the cumulative GSS data-file, spanning from 1972-2014. The dataset contained 30 cross-sectional surveys spanning this period.⁴³ Each wave contained between 1,372 and 4,510 participants, with an average of 1,967 participants per wave.

4.1.1 Measures

4.1.1.1 Partisan Identification

Partisan identification was originally measured using a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (Strong Republican) to 7 (Strong Democrat). I dichotomized this variable in order to indicate whether an individual identifies as a partisan (“1”) or non-partisan (“0”). Independent leaners, or those who initially report that they are an independent but then admit that they lean toward one political party over the other are coded as (“0”). This is because these individuals classify themselves as an independent, first and foremost, and are clearly choosing to not classify themselves as a partisan.⁴⁴ I also created a measure of partisan strength, which simply folds the original seven-point scale to indicate the strength with which they identify with a party such that “0” indicates pure independent, “1” indicates an independent leaner, “2” indicates a weak partisan, and “3” indicates a strong partisan.

⁴³ The surveys were conducted yearly from 1972-1978, 1982-1981, 1993-1994, and bi-yearly since 1994.

⁴⁴ While there is robust evidence showing that independent leaners behave much like partisans (Hawkins and Nosek 2012; Keith et al. 1992), the point here is that these individuals make the deliberate decision to report that they are not partisans, even if do act and behave much like self-identifying partisans (cf. Klar and Krupnikov 2016).

4.1.1.2 Ideological Identification

Similar to partisan identification, ideological identification was originally measured on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (Extremely Liberal) to 7 (Extremely Conservative). I again dichotomized this variable to indicate whether individuals identify with an ideological group (“1”) or do not (“0”). That is, I classified those who self-identify as moderate as not identifying with an ideological group (liberals or conservatives). While identifying as moderate does not indicate that the individual is non-ideological, or not in possession of ideological beliefs, it does indicate that they do not identify with one of the two ideological groups that are most prevalently discussed in U.S. politics. Like partisan identification, the most important factor is the decision to self-identify, rather than actual political beliefs. I also generated a measure of ideological strength, ranging from 0 (Moderate) to 3 (Extremely Liberal/Conservative). Finally, I created a dichotomous variable indicating whether a respondent is an independent ideologue. The variable takes on the value of “1” if participants identify with an ideological group but not a partisan group. It takes on the value of “0” for all other types of identification.

4.1.1.3 Congressional Disapproval

I utilized an item measuring confidence in Congress, which was present in all years of the survey. Specifically, the item asked: “As far as the people running [Congress] are concerned, would you say you have a great deal of confidence, only some confidence, or hardly any confidence at all in them?” The response choices were “0” (Hardly Any), “1” (Only Some), and “2” (A Great Deal). Again, this measure is intended to serve as a proxy for party performance, as parties are most visible within this institution, and partisanship has been shown to be, in part, driven by perceptions of Congress (Fiorina 1981; Mackuen, Erikson, and Stimson 1992).

4.1.1.4 Institutional Control

I included a binary measure indicating the party that controls Congress, with “0” indicating Democratic control and “1” indicating Republican control. This allows assessment of how the likelihood of partisan and ideological identification change in response to whether the individual’s own party, or the other party, control the institution. I also included a continuous measure indicating the strength of partisan control of government, primarily as a robustness check on the binary measure. The original measure, created by Howell (2005) indicates the percentage of seats in control by the majority party across both chambers.⁴⁵ I modified the measure by centering the variable around 0, rather than 50 (e.g., 53% becomes 3%). I then multiply the years with a Democratic majority by -1 so that positive values indicate Republican control and negative values indicate Democratic control. I then modified the measure further to account for the influence of the president and halved the value if the other party controls the presidency or doubled the value if the majority congressional party also controls the presidency.⁴⁶ This created a continuous measure that summarizes the influence of the majority party in government.⁴⁷ Thus, in years when the value of the variable was further away from 0 (negative for Democratic control and positive for Republican control) the public should have been able to clearly attribute government action to one party.

⁴⁵ It is calculated by adding the percentage of seats controlled by the majority party in the House to the percentage of seats controlled by that party in the Senate, divided by two. In periods where one party controlled the House and the other party controlled the Senate, the majority party is the one in control of the House. This is due to the greater number of seats in the House, as well as the visibility of party leadership through the Speaker.

⁴⁶ This account for the strong influence of the presidency on public opinion. While larger/smaller values could be justified, the intent is to weight the presidency as equal in influence to the legislative branch, being able to double/halve their influence.

⁴⁷ The resulting variable ranges from -29.2 (indicating highest point Democratic control of government) to 7.6 (indicating highest point of Republican control). The overall mean is -4.38 ($SD=8.81$), while the mean under Democratic control is -8.33 ($SD=8.52$) while the mean under Republican control is 2.79 ($SD=2.59$).

4.1.1.5 Control Variables

Finally, I included several demographic variables common to survey research. Specifically, I utilized indicators of respondent gender (0=male, 1=female) and race (0=white, 1=non-white). I also included the respondent's age, highest education level achieved (ranging from 0-20, with higher values indicating greater education), and income (ranging from 0-12, with higher values indicating greater income).

4.2 ANALYSIS

4.2.1 Congressional Approval and Likelihood of Partisan and Ideological Identification

In order to examine H3a (Congressional Disapproval and Partisan ID) and H3b (Congressional Disapproval and Ideological ID) I first used logistic regression to predict the likelihood of identification as a partisan (Democrat, Republican) or ideologue (liberal, conservative) based upon an individual's confidence in Congress. The dependent variable represented the decision to identify with each group, with "1" indicating identification as a partisan/ideologue and "0" indicating otherwise. In each model, and all subsequent models, standard errors were clustered by year. The results of the two models are shown in Table 12, with partisan identification in the left column and ideological identification in the right column. As shown, confidence in Congress was positively related to the probability of partisan identification. Specifically, when individuals possessed less confidence in, or higher disapproval of, Congress they were less likely to identify with a political party. However, confidence in Congress had the opposite (negative) effect on

ideological identification: when individuals reported lower confidence in Congress they became more likely to identify with an ideological group.

Table 12. Congressional Approval and Likelihood of Partisan/Ideological Identification (Logit)

	Partisan Identification	Ideological Identification
Disapproval of Congress	-0.276** (0.020)	0.045** (0.017)
Gender	0.206** (0.021)	-0.238** (0.031)
Race	0.181** (0.030)	0.012 (0.026)
Age	0.020** (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)
Education	0.013 (0.009)	0.093** (0.004)
Income	0.015* (0.007)	-0.022** (0.005)
Constant	-0.195 (0.145)	-0.516 (0.073)**
<i>N</i>	34,915	32,391

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Figure 17 displays the predicted probabilities of partisan and ideological identification based upon an individual’s reported confidence in Congress. The darker line, corresponding to partisanship, shows a sharp decrease in the likelihood of identification with a political party as individuals displayed less confidence in the institution. While individuals who expressed “a great deal” of confidence in Congress had about a 72% likelihood of identifying with a political party, this decreased to approximately 58% among individuals who had “hardly any” confidence in Congress. Ideological identification, however, flowed in the reverse direction, albeit with a smaller overall effect. Individuals with “a great deal” of confidence had an approximately 60% likelihood of ideological identification, and this rose to 63% for those with “hardly any” confidence in Congress.

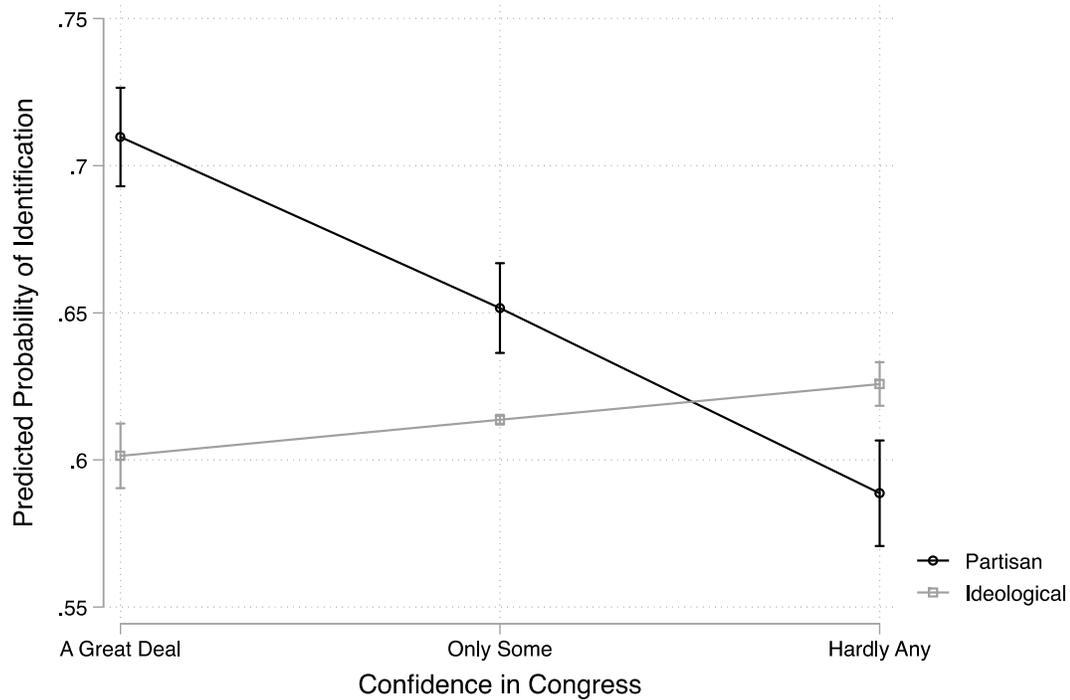


Figure 17. Confidence in Congress and Predicted Probability of Partisan and Ideological Identification

To identify the likelihood of identifying as a certain type of partisan or independent, I repeated these analyses employing ordered logistic regression on measures of partisan and ideological strength. Ordered logit allows for a categorical dependent variable consisting multiple, ordered, categories where the distance between the categories is unknown and may vary. Thus, it is ideal for predicting how congressional disapproval affects partisan and ideological identity strength, using the collapsed self-placement scales where “0” indicates moderate/independent and “3” indicates strong ideologue/partisan.

The results for partisan (left column) and ideological (right column) identity strength are presented in Table 13. However, for ease of interpretation, the predicted probabilities of identifying as each type of partisan and ideologue are plotted in Figures 18 and 19, respectively. Starting with partisan identification, there was steep decline in the likelihood of identifying as a

strong partisan among individuals who displayed less confidence in Congress. In contrast, the likelihood of identifying as an independent, both a pure independent and an independent leaner, increased among individuals who displayed less confidence. The likelihood of identifying as a weak partisan remained fairly constant across levels of confidence. While purely speculative, one explanation could be that individuals shifted their partisan strength downward, with strong partisans identifying more as weak partisans, and weak partisans shifting to independent identification. Thus, the likelihood of identification as a strong partisan declined, the likelihood of identification as an independent increased, and the likelihood of identification as a weak partisan remained relatively stable. In regards to ideological identification, the results were similar but opposite in direction and much smaller in magnitude. Individuals with more confidence in Congress were slightly less likely to identify as moderates than those with less confidence, while all other categories showed a slight increase, with the steepest slope for ideologues (liberals/conservatives) as compared to slight and extreme ideologues.

Table 13. Congressional Approval and Strength of Partisan/Ideological Identification (Ordered Logit)

	Partisan Strength	Ideological Strength
Disapproval of Congress	-0.229** (0.019)	0.082 (0.019)**
Gender	-0.104** (0.020)	0.197 (0.030)**
Race	-0.264** (0.031)	-0.057 (0.027)*
Age	-0.023** (0.001)	-0.003 (0.001)**
Education	-0.028** (0.009)	-0.072 (0.004)**
Income	-0.004 (0.006)	0.024 (0.004)**
Cut 1	0.137 (0.138)	-0.187 (0.065)**
Cut 2	-1.157** (0.115)	-1.447 (0.065)**
Cut 3	-2.874** (0.091)	-3.471 (0.076)**

N

34,915

32,391

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

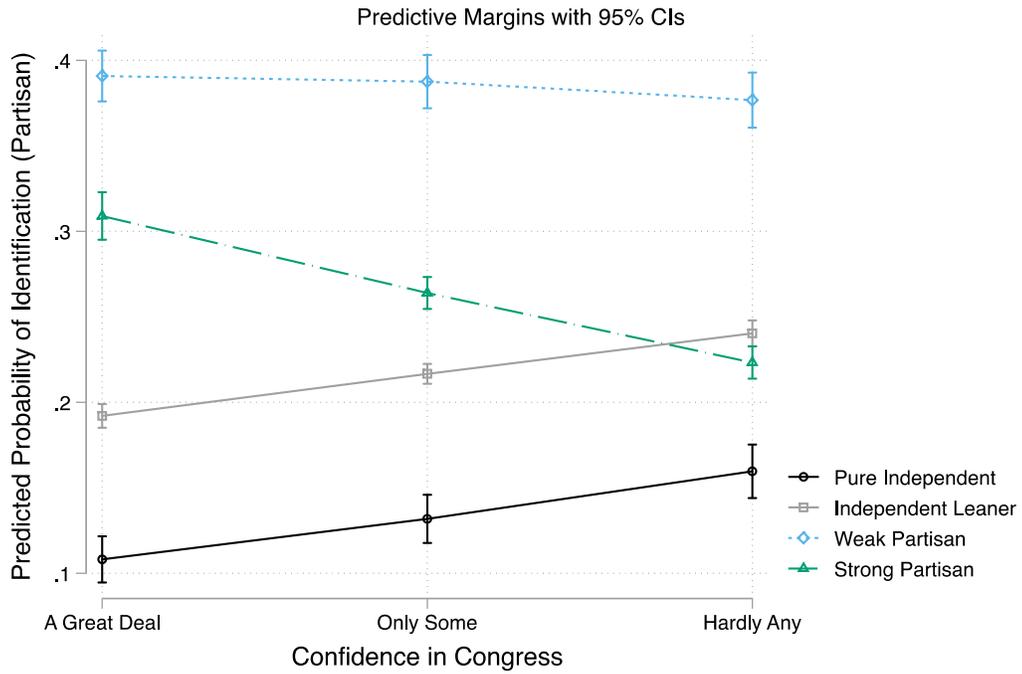


Figure 18. Confidence in Congress and Predicted Probability of Partisan Strength

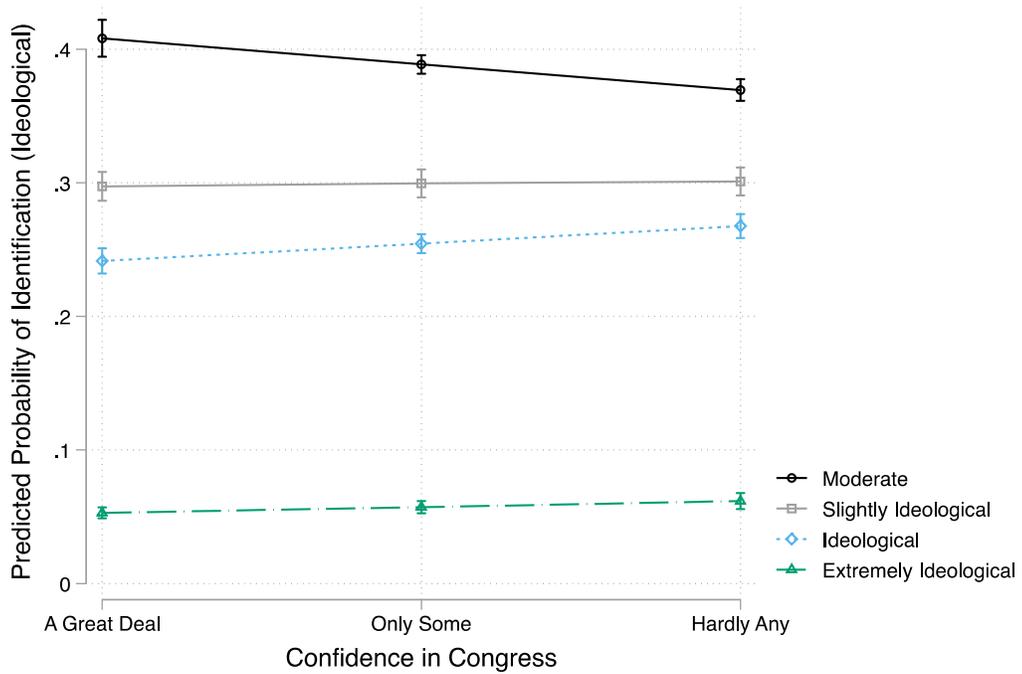


Figure 19. Confidence in Congress and Predicted Probability of Ideological Strength

Taken together, these results provide support for Hypothesis 3a (Congressional Disapproval and Partisan ID) and Hypothesis 3b (Congressional Disapproval and Ideological ID). Individuals with low confidence in Congress were less likely to identify as partisans (H3a), with the sharpest decline in the probability of identifying as a strong partisan. Meanwhile, individuals with low confidence in Congress were more likely to identify as ideologues, either as liberal or conservative (H3b). That is, they were less likely to identify as a moderate and more likely to identify with one of the two ideological groups.

4.2.2 Congressional Approval and Independent Ideologues

Given that the analyses thus far have shown a decrease in the likelihood of partisan identification and an increase in the likelihood of ideological identification, we should observe that individuals are more likely to identify as an independent ideologue, indicated by an ideological identification not accompanied by a partisan identification (H3c – Congressional Disapproval and Independent Ideologues). Table 14 displays the results of two logistic regression models that predicted identification as an independent ideologue. The dependent variable takes on the value of “1” if an individual identifies as a non-partisan with an ideological identification, “0” if otherwise. The left column includes only those identifying as a pure independent with an ideological identification and the right column is the same model but also includes independent leaners. The results are similar for both models, with a negative relationship between confidence in Congress and the likelihood of identification as an independent ideologue. This indicates that individuals with low confidence in Congress were more likely to identify as an independent ideologue. This was the case when including just pure independents and when including leaners.

Table 14. Congressional Approval and Likelihood of Independent Ideologue Identification (Logit)

	Pure Independent	Including Leaners
Disapproval of Congress	0.251** (0.030)	0.214** (0.024)
Gender	0.067 (0.060)	0.238** (0.033)
Race	0.051 (0.036)	0.136** (0.025)
Age	0.020** (0.001)	0.017** (0.001)
Education	0.069** (0.014)	-0.022* (0.010)
Income	0.029** (0.010)	0.040** (0.007)
Constant	0.250 (0.150)	0.095 (0.120)
<i>N</i>	35,539	35,539

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Figure 20 displays the predicted probability of identification as an independent ideologue across levels of confidence in Congress. The dark line displays the results for pure independents. As shown, the likelihood of identification increased from approximately 6% for those who reported “a great deal” of confidence in Congress to approximately 9% for those who reported “hardly any” confidence in Congress. The lighter (gray) line displays the predicted probability for the model including leaners. The likelihood of independent ideologue classification for those who had “a great deal” of confidence was approximately 17% and this increased to nearly 25% among those who had “hardly any” confidence. This is a substantively large effect, with an almost 8 percentage increase in the predicted probability of being an independent ideologue across levels of confidence. These models provide strong support in favor of Hypothesis 3c (Congressional Disapproval and Independent Ideologues).

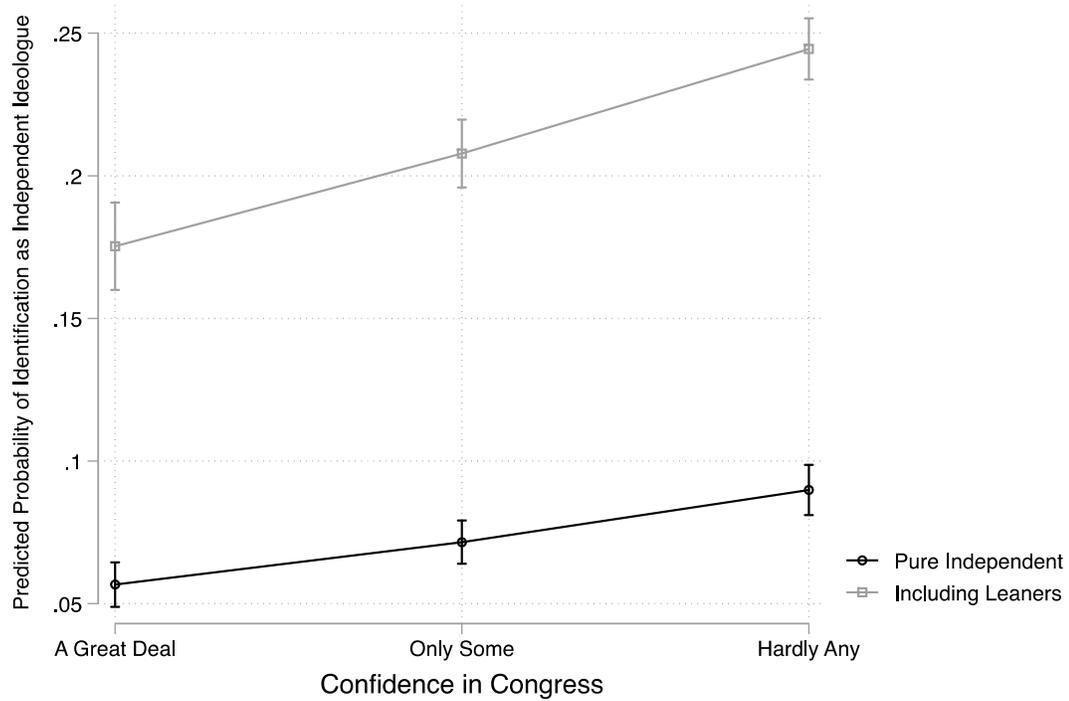


Figure 20. Confidence in Congress and Predicted Probability of Identification as an Independent Ideologue

4.2.3 Partisan/Ideological Identification and Congressional Control

Hypothesis 4a (In-Party Majority and Partisan ID) and Hypothesis 4b (In-Party Majority and Ideological ID) posit that the party that controls Congress affects the relationship between confidence toward the institution and partisan/ideological identification. Simply put, these two identities should be most affected when: 1) an individual’s own party controls Congress and 2) they express low confidence. This is because partisan identity threat should be highest here, as their own party is more likely to be blamed for poor performance. To this end I first utilized a binary measure indicating partisan control of Congress. Recall that when control was split between two chambers, the party controlling the House was coded as the majority party. This is for two reasons. First, the party leadership in the House is more visible than in the Senate due to

the active role of the Speaker, who frequently addresses the public through media exposure. Second, the House simply has more members, and in all cases where control of the two chambers is split, the majority party in the House has more members out of the 535 combined total between the two chambers.

The results of two logistic regression models which predicted partisan and ideological identification are shown in Table 15. In these models, I interacted the confidence in Congress variable with the binary party control variable in order to estimate the effects of party control on the likelihood of partisan identification across levels of confidence. The first model, in the left column, included Democratic and independent respondents. In contrast, the second model, in the right column, included Republican and independents respondents. Thus, these models estimated the probability of identifying with a Democrat versus an independent and the probability of identifying with a Republican versus an independent. Independent leaners are coded as independents, rather than partisans. The models indicate how congressional disapproval affects rates of identification with each party individually. I separated the parties in order to compare the likelihood of identification between Republican and Democratic control of Congress. The probability of identification with each party should differ depending on the individual's level of disapproval and the party in control.

The interaction term was highly significant for Democrats ($p < 0.01$) and was also significant for Republicans ($p = 0.052$), though not quite at the standard threshold of 0.05. This was likely due to the Republican Party having control of far fewer Congresses than the Democrats. The predicted probabilities for Democratic and Republican respondents are displayed in Figures 21 and 22, respectively. When Democrats were in control of Congress, the likelihood of identification as a Democrat, compared to identification as an independent, became

lower as respondents expressed less confidence in Congress. That is, as shown in Figure 21, the slope of the darker line indicating Democratic control is much steeper than the lighter line indicating Republican control. The same applies for Republican (as compared to independent) identification, though to a lesser extent. The lighter line indicating Republican control is steeper, and respondents who report “hardly any” confidence in a Republican-controlled congress were less likely to identify as a Republican than those respondents who reported “hardly any” confidence in a Democratic-controlled congress. This provides some initial support for Hypothesis 4a (In-Party Majority and Partisan ID).

Table 15. Effects of Confidence and Party Control on Likelihood of Partisan Identification

	Democratic Identification	Republican Identification
Disapproval of Congress	-0.373*** (0.027)	-0.233*** (0.029)
Party Control (1=Republican)	0.290*** (0.076)	0.344*** (0.070)
Party Control × Disapproval	0.238*** (0.058)	-0.112* (0.057)
Gender	-0.254*** (0.025)	-0.112*** (0.039)
Race	-0.375*** (0.022)	0.406*** (0.027)
Age	-0.023*** (0.001)	-0.020*** (0.002)
Education	-0.009 (0.012)	-0.066*** (0.008)
Income	-0.019** (0.007)	-0.046*** (0.007)
Constant	1.398*** (0.180)	2.183*** (0.116)
<i>N</i>	22,787	16,923

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

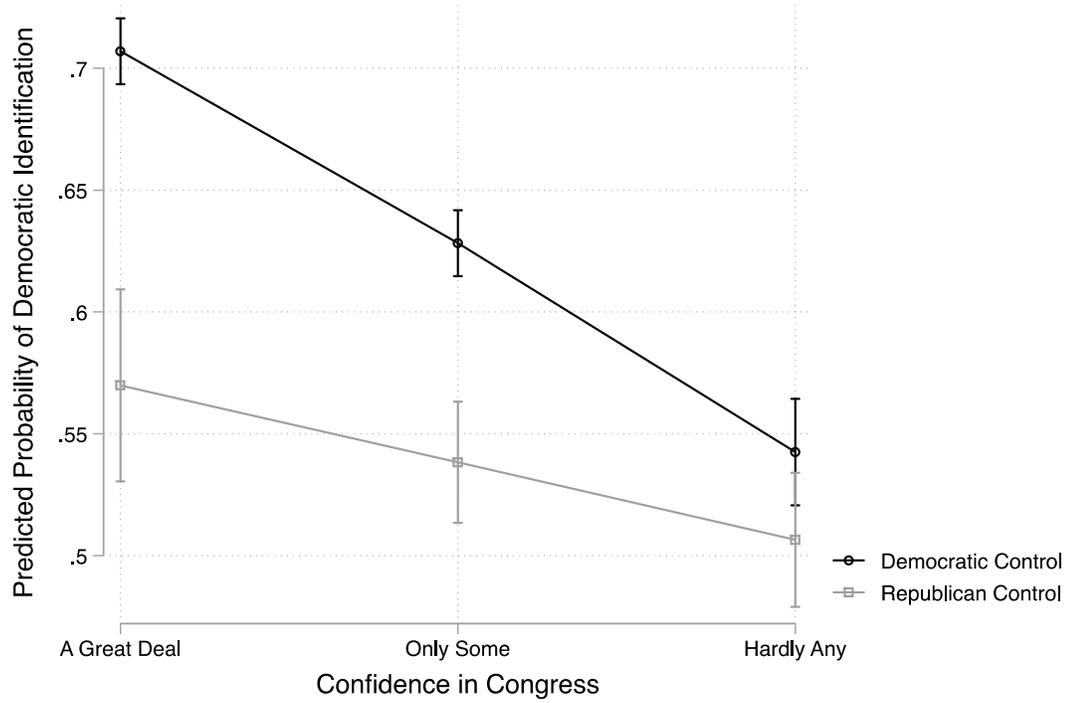


Figure 21. Predicted Probability of Democratic Identification by Party Control and Confidence in Congress

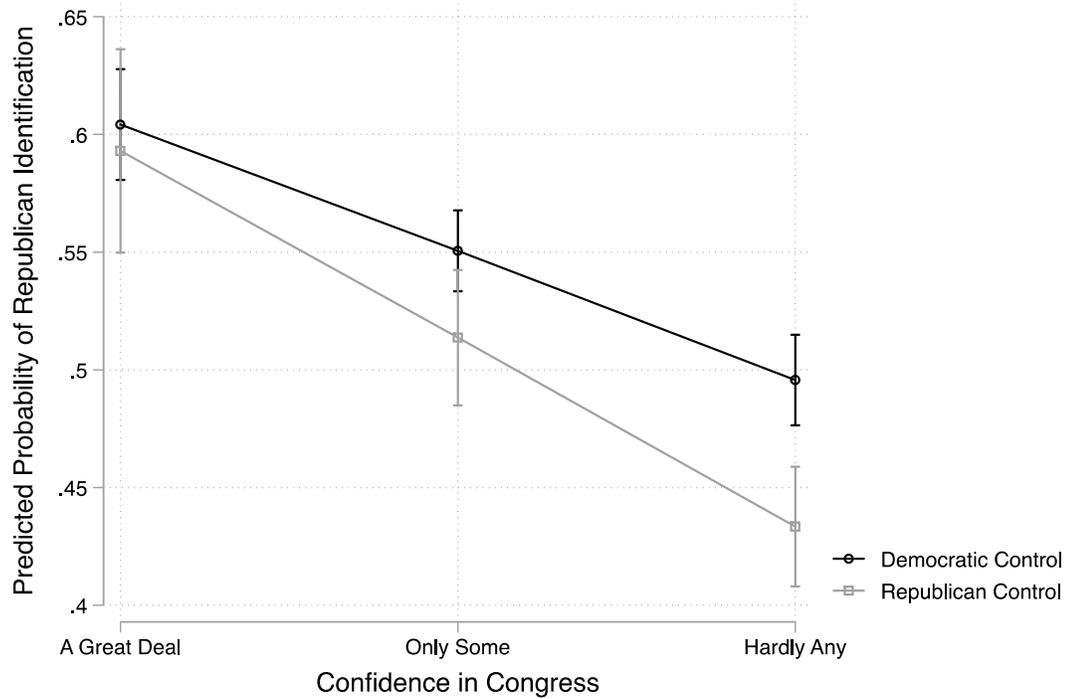


Figure 22. Predicted Probability of Republican Identification by Party Control and Confidence in Congress

However, the story becomes much less clear when examining the likelihood of ideological identification. Table 16 repeated these analyses but in regards to the likelihood of ideological identification, with separate models estimated for Democrats and independents as well as Republicans and independents. The interaction term for Democrats was significant ($p < 0.01$), though the interaction term for Republicans was not significant at conventional levels ($p = 0.18$). Looking at Figure 23, which plots the predicted probabilities of ideological identification in the Democratic model, we observe that the effect of party control occurred in an unanticipated direction. Rather than liberal identification increasing as individuals expressed lower confidence in a Democratic-controlled congress, it appears that liberal identification instead became more likely to occur when individuals disapproved of a Republican-controlled congress. Figure 24, which displays the predicted probabilities of ideological identification among Republicans and independents, shows the effect occurred again in the non-expected direction.

Table 16. Effects of Confidence and Party Control on Likelihood of Partisan Identification

	Ideological Identification (Dems. and Inds.)	Ideological Identification (Reps. and Inds.)
Disapproval of Congress	-0.032 (0.028)	0.077*** (0.024)
Party Control (1=Republican)	0.012 (0.053)	0.129** (0.058)
Party Control × Disapproval	0.104*** (0.038)	-0.090 (0.059)
Gender	0.196*** (0.039)	0.261*** (0.033)
Race	-0.060** (0.025)	0.020 (0.033)
Age	0.002 (0.001)	-0.005*** (0.001)
Education	-0.080*** (0.005)	-0.100*** (0.006)
Income	0.034*** (0.007)	0.001 (0.007)
Constant	0.209** (0.089)	0.756*** (0.102)
<i>N</i>	20,646	15,551

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

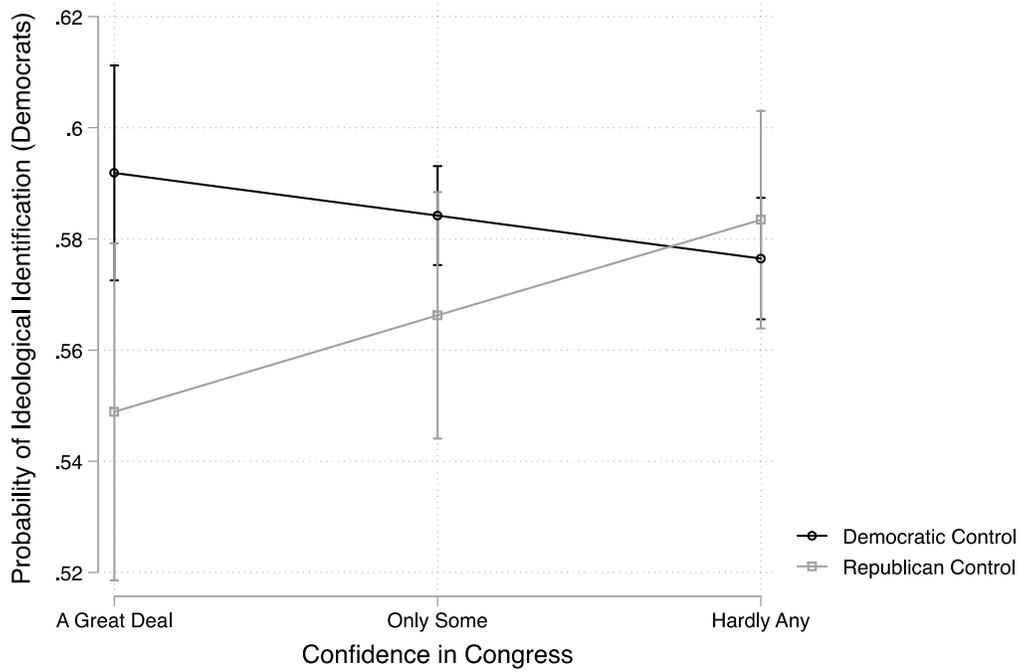


Figure 23. Predicted Probability of Ideological Identification by Party Control and Confidence in Congress
(Democrats)

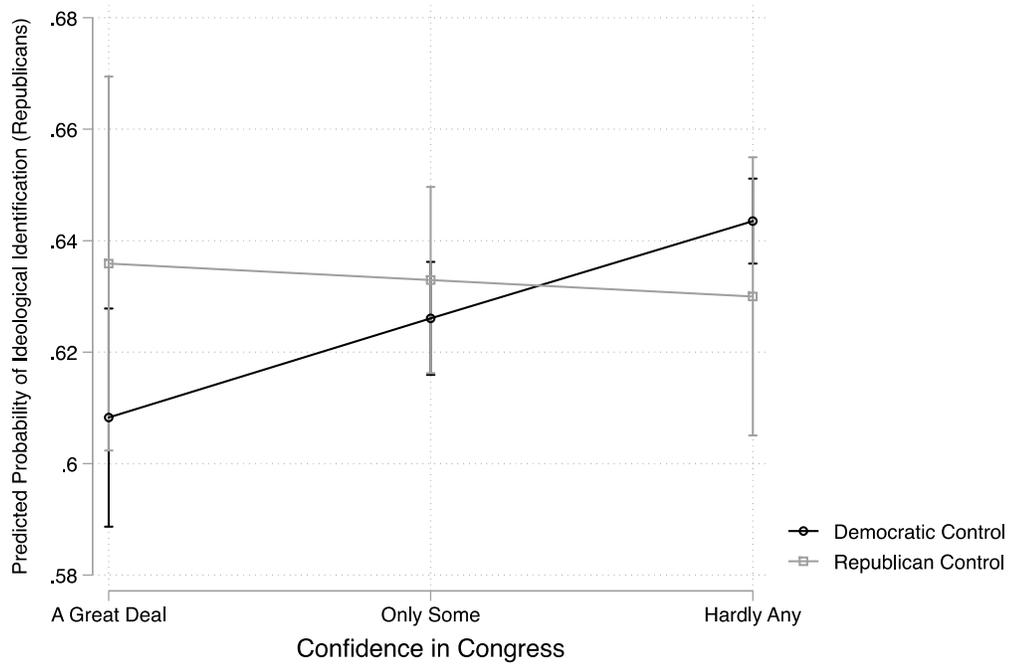


Figure 24. Predicted Probability of Ideological Identification by Party Control and Confidence in Congress
(Republicans)

Thus, it appears to be the case that Democrats responded to a Republican-controlled Congress that they do not approve of by bolstering their ideological identification. They became nearly as likely to identify with an ideological group when they expressed low confidence in a Republican congress than they are under a Democratic congress with which they expressed high confidence. Meanwhile, there is not much we can say about Republican respondents, as the interaction was not significant, and the direction of the effect was again in the non-predicted direction (ideological identification increased when confidence toward a Democratic congress was lower). However, the probability of partisan identification decreased as predicted: when an individual's own party is in control and they express low confidence, the probability of partisan identification is much lower. In sum, these results provide support for Hypothesis 4a (In-Party Majority and Partisan ID), as in-party congressional disapproval decreased the likelihood of partisan identification. However, these results do not support Hypothesis 4b (In-Party Majority and Ideological ID), as out-party congressional disapproval actually appeared to have increased ideological identification.

4.2.4 Partisan/Ideological Identification and Majority Party Strength

The final analyses of this chapter expand on the party control results presented in the previous section to examine H4a (In-Party Majority and Partisan ID) and H4b (In-Party Majority and Ideological ID). Here, I used a continuous measure of partisan strength in government in order to better account for the attributions individuals make toward Congress. This also serves as a robustness check on the previous analyses using binary measures of congressional control. Put simply, when a party is stronger, controlling more seats in Congress as well as the presidency, individuals should be more likely to attribute blame (or praise) to that party. Thus, I used the

continuous measure of partisan strength described previously in this chapter to indicate: 1) which party is in control (negative values indicate Democratic control while positive values indicate Republican control), and 2) how strong the party is within the federal government, based upon Congressional majority size and control of the presidency (with values more distant from “0” indicating greater strength). Because Democrats controlled Congress much more often during this period, and often with much larger majorities particularly in the 1970s and 1980s), the variable is lopsided, and ranges from -29.2 (the highest Democratic strength observed) to 7.6 (the highest Republican strength observed), with a neutral point (where neither party exerts much control) at “0.”⁴⁸ We should observe that differences in the likelihood of partisan and ideological identification occur when an individual’s party has the highest degree of control. That is, differences between high and low levels of confidence during these periods of high control should result in larger differences to probabilities of partisan, as well as ideological, identification.

To this end, I ran logistic regression models identical to those in the previous section but incorporated the continuous measure of party strength into the congressional disapproval and party control interaction, replacing than the binary measure of partisan control of Congress. The models predicting partisan identifications are presented in Table 17, separated by party (left column: Democratic versus independent identification; right column: Republican versus independent identification). As shown in the table, the interaction term was significant in both models, indicating that the effect of confidence in Congress was conditional upon the strength of the majority party. This becomes much clearer in Figures 25 (Democrats) and 26 (Republicans). As predicted, differences in the predicted probability across levels of confidence were highest for

⁴⁸ See Appendix B for distribution of the strength of party control variable.

a party when that party had firmer control of the federal government. Starting with Figure 25, we can observe that when the Democratic Party had the strongest control there were large differences in the probability of identification with the party between the three levels of confidence in Congress. Those with “a great deal of confidence” had an approximately 74% chance of Democratic (as compared to independent) identification, while those with “hardly any” confidence had only a 56% chance of Democratic identification. Meanwhile, when Republicans had strong control, the differences in the likelihood of Democratic identification were not significant, as indicated by the overlapping confidence intervals.

Table 17. Effects of Confidence and Strength of Party Control on Likelihood of Partisan Identification

	Democratic Identification	Republican Identification
Disapproval of Congress	-0.299*** (0.037)	-0.333*** (0.028)
Strength of Party	0.006 (0.004)	0.012*** (0.004)
Strength × Disapproval	0.005** (0.003)	-0.009*** (0.002)
Gender	-0.241*** (0.026)	-0.109*** (0.039)
Race	-0.353*** (0.026)	0.425*** (0.027)
Age	-0.022*** (0.001)	-0.019*** (0.002)
Education	-0.004 (0.012)	-0.064*** (0.008)
Income	-0.008 (0.009)	-0.039*** (0.008)
Constant	1.318*** (0.211)	2.260*** (0.129)
<i>N</i>	22,787	16,923

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

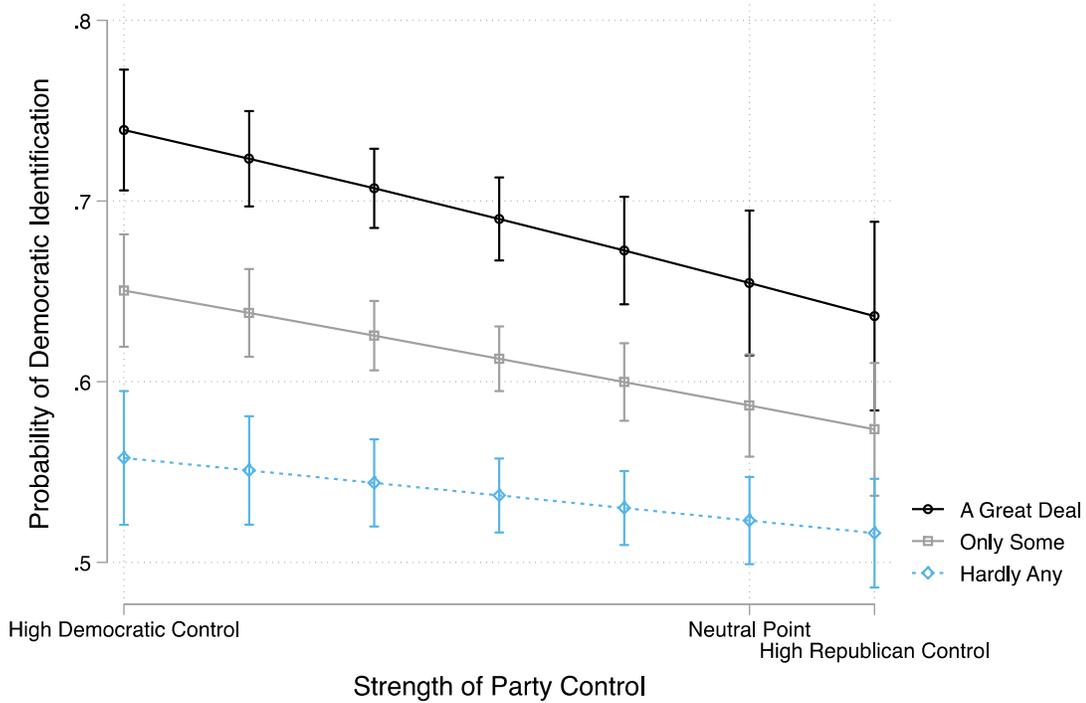


Figure 25. Predicted Probability of Partisan Identification by Strength of Party Control and Confidence in Congress (Democrats)

The story is much the same for the likelihood of Republican (as compared to independent) identification, with differences between high and low Republican control even more pronounced than in the previous (Democratic) model. The predicted probabilities are displayed in Figure 26. When Republicans had strong control, those possessing “a great deal” of confidence had an approximately 58% chance of Republican identification, while those with “hardly any” confidence had only a 46% chance. In addition, when Democrats have high control, the differences in the likelihood of identification across levels of congressional approval are largely non-existent. Regardless of level of confidence, respondents possessed about a 54-55% likelihood of identification with the party.

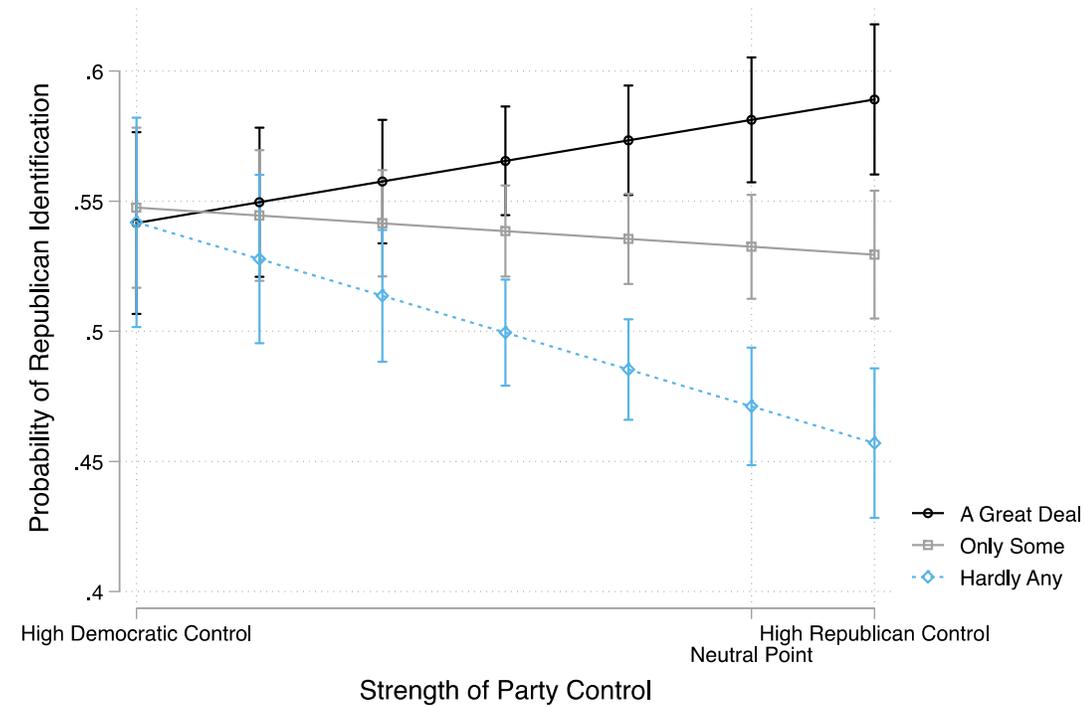


Figure 26. Predicted Probability of Partisan Identification by Strength of Party Control and Confidence in Congress (Republicans)

Once again, however, the effects of partisan strength on the likelihood of ideological identification were difficult to interpret. Table 18 displays the results of these two models. The confidence in Congress and partisan strength interaction term was only significant in the Democratic model ($p < 0.10$). Figures 27 and 28 display the predicted probabilities by confidence across levels of partisan strength for the Democratic and Republican models, respectively.⁴⁹ Similar to the binary measure, the likelihood of ideological identification increased when the opposite party controlled Congress in that those with “hardly any” confidence in Congress were more likely to identify with an ideological group when the other party had stronger control.

⁴⁹ In order to make the results easier to interpret, confidence intervals are not shown in these figures. However, they overlap across levels of confidence at all levels of partisan strength in both figures.

Conversely, with “a great deal” of confidence were less likely to identify with an ideological group when the out-party had control. Thus, these analyses provide no support for Hypothesis 4b (In-Party Majority and Ideological ID), which predicted that the effect would run in the opposite direction, with those who displayed “hardly any” confidence in a same-party controlled Congress being more likely to identify with an ideological group.

Table 18. Effects of Confidence and Strength of Party Control on Likelihood of Ideological Identification

	Ideological Identification (Dems. and Inds.)	Ideological Identification (Reps. and Inds.)
Disapproval of Congress	0.018 (0.022)	0.025 (0.033)
Strength of Party	-0.002 (0.002)	0.006*** (0.002)
Strength × Disapproval	0.004* (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)
Gender	0.198*** (0.039)	0.262*** (0.033)
Race	-0.056** (0.026)	0.019 (0.034)
Age	0.002* (0.001)	-0.005*** (0.001)
Education	-0.079*** (0.005)	-0.100*** (0.006)
Income	0.036*** (0.006)	0.001 (0.006)
Constant	0.159 (0.098)	0.847*** (0.116)
<i>N</i>	20,646	15,551

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

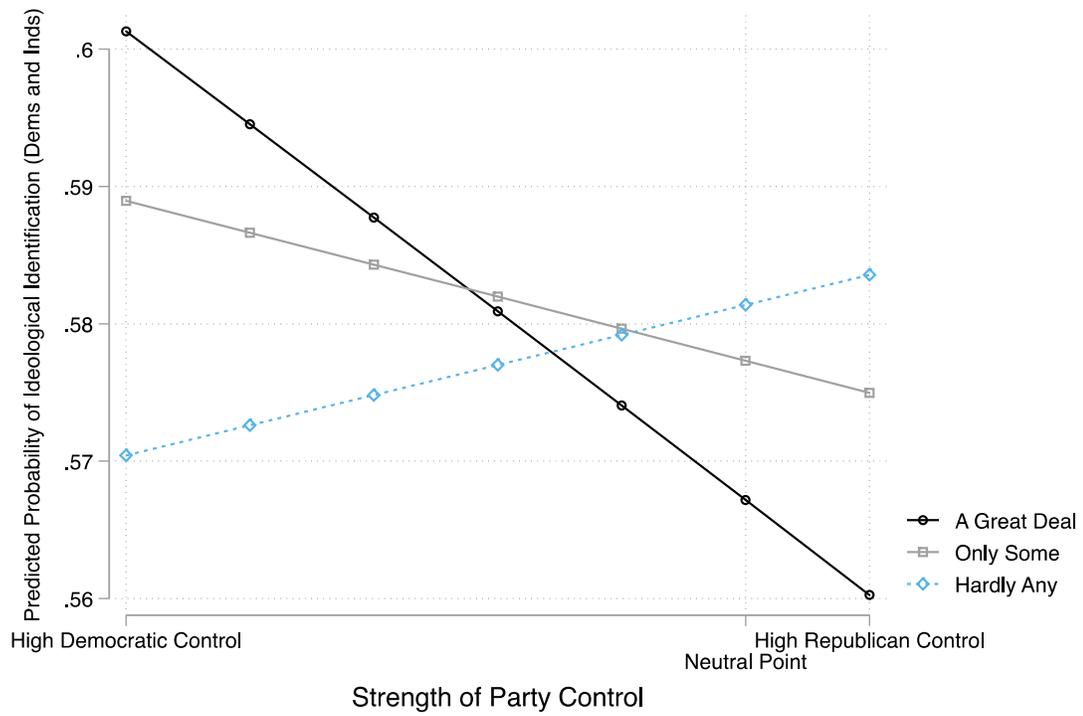


Figure 27. Predicted Probability of Ideological Identification by Strength of Party Control and Confidence in Congress (Democrats and Independents)

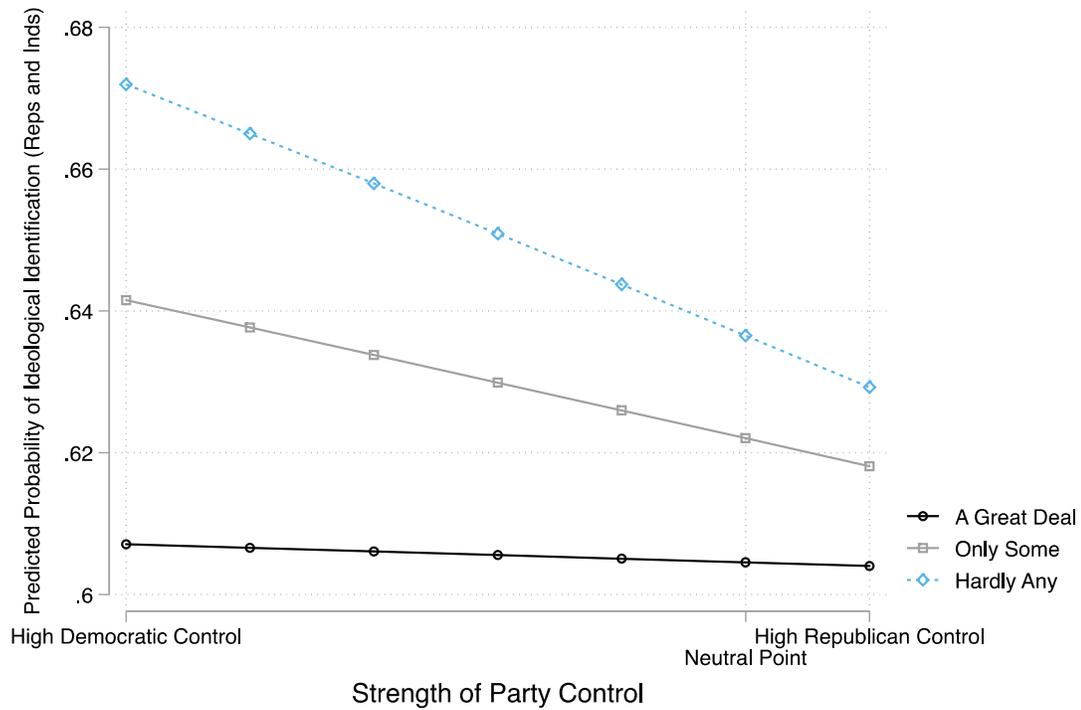


Figure 28. Predicted Probability of Ideological Identification by Strength of Party Control and Confidence in Congress (Republicans and Independents)

Taken together, the results using the continuous measure partial support for Hypothesis 4a (In-Party Majority and Partisan ID) but not Hypothesis 4b (In-Party Majority and Ideological ID). Like the analyses using the binary measure of partisan control, the likelihood of partisan identification was affected by an individual’s confidence in Congress, conditional upon the party that controls Congress and the strength of their control. When the Democrats had strong control of government, those with low confidence were less likely to identify with the Democratic Party compared to those with high confidence. The same holds true for Republican identification when the Republican Party had strong control of government. However, rates of ideological identification seem to be more of a reaction to the other party, with the likelihood of identification higher when one possesses low confidence of an out-party controlled congress.

4.3 CONCLUSION

Across these analyses, strong support was proffered for H3a (Congressional Disapproval and Partisan ID), H3b (Congressional Disapproval and Ideological ID), and H3c (Congressional Disapproval and Independent Ideologues). Individuals who reported low confidence in Congress were less likely to identify with a partisan group and more likely to identify with an ideological group. In addition, those with low confidence were more likely to identify as an independent ideologue, possessing an ideological identification without a partisan identification. These results are strongly in line with the self-categorization theory of ideological identification presented in Chapter Two. Simply put, individuals who disapprove of a party should be more likely to distance themselves from the party and instead adopt an ideological identification. This is consistent with the results presented in this chapter, but with two major caveats.

First, only partial support was obtained for Hypotheses 4a (In-Party Majority and Partisan ID) and 4b (In-Party Majority and Ideological ID). The effect of confidence in Congress on the likelihood of partisan identification was more pronounced when an individual's own party controlled Congress and when the strength of that party in government was greater, consistent with Hypothesis 4a. However, the effects of party control and disapproval on ideological identification were either non-existent or in the non-predicted direction, providing no support for Hypothesis 4b. Individuals instead appeared to be more likely to identify with an ideological group as a response to having low-confidence in a Congress controlled by the other party. This could represent a strengthening of the resistance, so to speak, whereby individuals affirm their principles in response to a Congress that is perceived as performing poorly and controlled by individuals from the other end of the political spectrum. While interesting, this does not conform to theoretical expectations. The most likely reason is that these results incorporate a large time

period, including times when the parties were not as clearly sorted (i.e., ideological labels were not a clearly associated with one party). Much more control of environmental factors may be needed to isolate this effect.

A second caveat concerns endogeneity. As mentioned previously, these analyses may be endogenous in that strength of partisan or ideological identification may affect confidence in Congress, rather than vice versa. Of course, controversy often arises when partisan identification is put on the left side of the regression equation, as it is viewed as one of the most stable and enduring political attitudes. This must, of course, be acknowledged and the appropriate cautions mentioned when interpreting these results. For example, it would not be surprising if strong partisans were more likely to report higher confidence in Congress, particularly when their own party is in control. Alternatively, strong partisans may be more attentive to politics and may have stronger, more well-informed (and/or biased), opinions about Congress's performance. However, given that these results are coupled with the likelihood of ideological identification moving in the opposite direction, it would seem unreasonable to completely reject these results out of hand.

Thus, these analyses are not meant to provide strong causal evidence in favor of the self-categorization theory of ideological identification, but serve more modestly to set the stage for the experimental evidence in the following chapter. In addition, these results provide much-needed external validity. The results in this chapter justify an experimental approach in that they are largely in support of the theory but do not allow causality to be established. Therefore, it is appropriate to turn to experimental methods, which of course excel at establishing causality but are not able to offer the same degree of external validity as other methods. Specifically, the experiment in the following chapter will directly manipulate partisan threat. In addition, I am able to break down the results by strength of partisanship, measured prior to the experiment. In

sum, I propose that the results presented in this chapter help to establish some external validity, if they are consistent with the experimental results that follow. In other words, I believe that this observational evidence, paired with the experimental evidence, should allow strong support to be established toward the present theory of ideological identity.

5.0 CHAPTER FIVE: PARTISAN THREAT AND IDEOLOGICAL SOCIAL IDENTITY

This final empirical chapter serves as the most important test yet of the self-categorization theory of ideological identification. Using an original survey experiment, I am able to directly manipulate partisan threat in order to examine its effects on partisan and ideological identity strength. The purpose of the previous two chapters were largely to build support for the present study. Chapter Three established that individuals perceive aligned partisan and ideological groups (Republicans and conservatives, Democrats and liberals) as highly similar, yet non-aligned groups as highly distinct. This allows individuals to transition from partisan to ideological identification when conditions do not favor partisan identities. Chapter Four then used over forty years of survey data to show that this effect would be consistent with actual observed trends within the electorate. Specifically, when individuals express low confidence in Congress they are less likely to identify with a partisan group and more likely to identify with an ideological group. The task now is to demonstrate causally that threat to a partisan identity causes certain individuals to transition away from partisan identification and toward ideological identification.

Before doing so, let us briefly revisit the hypotheses proposed in Chapter Two that correspond to this experiment. Foremost, individuals who show low levels of attachment to their political party should, when confronted with threat toward their partisan identity, show decreased

attachment toward their party. In addition, these individuals should strengthen their attachment to their ideological group. In other words, these individuals are “weak” partisan identifiers, or those who identify with a party when asked, but who indicate that they do not do so strongly.

Therefore:

H5a (Individual Mobility): For weak partisan identifiers, partisan threat will weaken partisan identity and strengthen ideological identity.

In contrast, those who display strong levels attachment to their party should respond to partisan threat in a very different manner. Rather than weakening their partisan identity, they should bolster their partisan identity in the face of threat. However, threat should not require any change to their ideological identity strength. Specifically, this hypothesis states that:

H5b (Identity Affirmation): For strong partisan identifiers, partisan threat will strengthen partisan identity and ideological identity will not be affected.

Finally, independent partisan leaners, or those who first report that they are independents but then (on the follow-up party identification question) admit leaning toward one of the two parties, already display distance from the parties. Therefore, a threat to their (slightly) preferred party should not necessitate any change to either political identity. Specifically:

H5c (Independent Insulation): For independents who lean toward a party, partisan threat will not affect partisan identity or ideological identity.

I also predict that changes in ideological identity should not result in changes to ideological beliefs, measured by where individuals self-identify their ideological beliefs on a spectrum of “extremely liberal” to “extremely conservative.” That is, while weak partisans in particular should strengthen their ideological identity, these individuals should not indicate that their ideological beliefs have grown more extreme. Put simply:

H6 (Ideological Extremity): Ideological belief extremity will not be affected by partisan threat.

Each of these hypotheses will be examined using an original survey experiment, described in the following section. In addition, the empirical analyses that follow will evaluate the evidence in favor, or against, each hypothesis.

5.1 METHOD

5.1.1 Design

I developed and implemented a survey experiment to randomly manipulate partisan threat. I utilized a between-subjects pre/post design, which allowed the measurement of ideological and partisan identities prior to (pretest), and immediately following (posttest), the partisan threat manipulation. Participants were assigned to one of two conditions: 1) a no threat (control) condition, wherein the parties were discussed in a positive manner, or 2) a threat condition,

wherein the participant's party was discussed in a negative manner. The threat manipulation was matched to the participant's party, such that the text of the treatment was focused upon the Republicans or Democrats, depending on the party that the participant selected during the pretest.

For the partisan threat manipulation, I took advantage of a then-current (Spring 2016) high-profile controversy: President Obama's nomination of Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court. This issue is ideal for two major reasons. First, most public opinion polls showed that the majority of Americans believed that the Senate should hold a hearing on the nominee.⁵⁰ However, there was never enough support in the Senate for a hearing, and Americans were once again frustrated by gridlock in Congress. As mentioned previously, I argue that a potential mechanism for the growing dissatisfaction with parties is due to such gridlock. In this regard, the Garland nomination serves as a relevant and appropriate example.

Second, despite Senate Republicans having to bear much of the blame for the gridlock surrounding a hearing for Garland, the Republicans had a counter-argument to shift blame to the Democrats: the aptly named "Biden Rule." In June of 1992, then-Senator Joseph Biden delivered a speech on the floor of the Senate arguing that President Bush should follow "a majority of his predecessors" and not name a nominee to the Supreme Court.⁵¹ Thus, according to the Senate Republicans, there was precedent for delaying any action on confirming a nominee to the Court during a presidential election year. This was important for the present purposes because either

⁵⁰ A CBS/NYT poll conducted March 17-10, 2016 shows that 53% of Americans support a hearing, while a CNN/ORC poll conducted during the same period shows that 64% of Americans support a hearing.

⁵¹ A contemporary (2016) summary of this issue in the New York Times can be found here: http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/23/us/politics/joe-biden-argued-for-delaying-supreme-court-picks-in-1992.html?_r=0

party could be blamed for the inaction regarding the nomination of Garland and thus allowed the treatments to be as similar as possible for each party.

<p><i>Compromise Likely on Supreme Court Nominee</i></p>	<p><i>Control Text</i> Threat Text Democrat-Specific Threat Text Republican-Specific Threat Text</p>
<p>[Democrats] [Republicans] to Blame for Partisan Gridlock on Supreme Court Nominee</p>	
<p>By: David Johnson, <i>[political]</i> [Democratic] [Republican] strategist</p>	
<p>Since Justice Antonin Scalia's death in February of this year, one seat on the nine-member Supreme Court has remained vacant, prohibiting the Court from making rulings on key issues and holding up the judicial process. So far, the Senate has refused to hold a hearing to consider a nominee to fill the vacancy.</p>	
<p><i>[However,]</i> The recent battle between Senate Republicans and President Obama over the consideration of Merrick Garland to fill the vacancy on the Supreme Court is <i>[likely coming to a close]</i> <u>[simply the latest example of partisan gridlock on Capitol Hill]</u>.</p>	
<p><i>[Democrats and Republicans are working to end]</i> [Democrats] [Republicans] <u>[have no one else to blame for]</u> the standstill now occurring.</p>	
<p>During <i>[current and past]</i> [their past] <i>[their current]</i> control of Congress, <i>[both parties have used their power]</i> [Democrats were the first to use their power] [Republicans became the first to use their power] to refuse to consider several reasonable nominations and [first] to enact the policy of refusing to even hold a hearing to consider a nominee during an election year, resulting in the recent gridlock in the Senate.</p>	
<p>Now, the parties [do not] appear to be willing to compromise, and <u>[in an unprecedented move]</u> [in repeating a past move by the Democrats] the Senate will [not] hold a hearing to consider the nominee, <i>[even though]</i> [because] it is an election year.</p>	
<p>In a recent national poll, a clear majority of <i>[Americans]</i> [Democrats] [Republicans] admit that <i>[they look forward to ending]</i> [their own party bears most of the responsibility for] the deadlock that is occurring over the fight to hold a nomination for Garland, a moderate appointee.</p>	

Figure 29. Vignette Text by Condition

To take advantage of this issue, I designed a brief vignette that mirrored the tone and style of a newspaper editorial. Figure 29 displays the full text of the vignette.⁵² The vignette was written to be flexible, such that it was easily modified to positively portray the parties (for the control condition) or to negatively portray one party, Republicans or Democrats (for the treatment/threat conditions). The control condition text began with the headline “Compromise Likely on Supreme Court Nominee” and went on to describe progress that has been made on scheduling a hearing. It described the conflict as “coming to a close” and described how the parties were working together to end the stalemate on this issue. It also contained a quote from a

⁵² See Appendix A for the text of the vignette displayed separately by each condition.

woman saying that she felt proud of the parties for ending the gridlock. In essence, this condition was meant to make participants feel somewhat positively toward the parties and that despite past transgressions, i.e., extended gridlock, the parties would be able to make some progress. In clear contrast, the threat conditions (recall that these were matched to each participant's party), began with the headline "[Democrats/Republicans] to Blame for Partisan Gridlock on Supreme Court Nominee." In the Republican threat condition, the text described how the Republican Party had been blocking a reasonable nominee and that their obstruction was historically unprecedented. It also included a quote from a Republican identifier saying that she felt ashamed of the party. In the Democratic threat condition, while the text was much the same throughout, it instead blamed the Democrats for setting the precedent for blocking nominees in election years when they controlled the Senate and also include a quote from a (Democratic) party member.

In sum, the control condition was identical for both parties. However, the threat conditions differed slightly in that they frame one party as to blame for the inaction on this issue, and gridlock more generally. This was necessary in order to include individuals from both parties in the study. However, some control was inevitably lost because the threat texts did differ slightly in their framing. To account for this, all results were analyzed separately by party. While I do not expect results to differ between partisan groups, this approach does account for potential differences based on the use of different treatments. It is entirely possible, for example, that one partisan threat may be more effective than the other. Thus, thinking of this study as two parallel experiments, one for Republicans and one for Democrats, helps to alleviate this concern.

5.1.2 Procedure

5.1.2.1 Pretest

I recruited approximately 1000 individuals using Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) to participate in the pretest. There were few restrictions on who could participate at this point. Participants merely had to be a U.S. citizen, 18 years or older, and currently reside in the United States. The main goal of the pretest was to measure participants' partisan and ideological identities. This was accomplished by first asking for their partisan identification using the standard ANES measure.⁵³ I also measured their ideological identification using the same measure, simply with ideological labels (liberal/conservative/moderate) rather than partisan labels.⁵⁴ Participants then received between zero and two Identification with Psychological Groups (IDPG) scales (Mael and Tetrick 1992) corresponding to their partisan and ideological orientations (see Appendix A for full list of items). That is, participants received the partisan (Republican or Democratic) IDPG scale only if they identified with a party (including independent leaners) and the ideological (conservative or liberal) IDPG scale only if they identified with an ideological group (also including moderate leaners)⁵⁵. The IDPG measure contains ten items, all using a seven-point Likert scale (agree/disagree), that measure the strength of a social identity, or psychological attachment, toward a group. Four items on the IDPG scale measure "shared characteristics," or the degree to which an individual sees herself as

⁵³ This question asks, "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?" before branching to follow-up questions measuring the strength of their partisan identification, not strong (weak) or strong (if they identify as a Republican or Democrat), or if they lean toward either party (if they identify as independent).

⁵⁴ "Republican" was replaced with "conservative," "Democrat" was replaced with "liberal," and "independent" was replaced with "moderate" in the ANES item referenced previously.

⁵⁵ Leaners refer to those who first report independent (moderate) identification but then report on the follow-up question that they lean toward the Republicans or Democrats (conservatives or liberals).

prototypical of a group. For example, one item states “I act like a typical [group name].” Six items measure “shared experiences,” or the degree to which one’s successes or failures are tied to the group’s performance. For example, one item reads “When someone praises [group name], it feels like a personal compliment.” I divided the scale in half such that five items measure partisan and five items measure ideological identification (two shared characteristics items and three shared experiences items each), with the group order (partisan/ideological) and item order within each group randomized.⁵⁶ The analyses focus on the shared characteristics items, as individuals should strengthen/weaken their political identities, conditional upon the prior strength of their identity, by emphasizing their similarity or dissimilarity toward the group. In addition, all respondents completed the ANES measure of ideological identification, indicating their ideological beliefs on a scale of 1 (extremely liberal) to 7 (extremely conservative). Finally, participants completed several demographic measures common in survey research.

5.1.2.2 Experiment and Posttest

One week after participants completed the pretest, they were invited to participate in a follow-up study on MTurk. Only participants who identified as both partisan and ideological identifiers (including leaners) were invited to participate.⁵⁷ Participants were randomly assigned to either the treatment (partisan threat) or control condition. They then completed the IDPG scales for their partisan and ideological identities, and again completed the ANES measure of ideological

⁵⁶ I divide the scale in half (five items per identity, including at least two shared experiences and at least two shared characteristics items) so that participants do not have to complete the same ten items twice, potentially biasing results. However, a limitation to this approach is that strength of partisan vs. ideological identification cannot be directly compared. Because the results will measure change (between pre-/post- test) this will not present an issue in the analysis.

⁵⁷ That is, only partisans that are correctly sorted (conservative and Republican, liberal and Democratic), including independent leaners, were included. The impact of threat on the identities of pure independents and moderates is reserved for future work.

beliefs. Participants were also asked three factual questions about the vignette, to serve as a manipulation check. Finally, they again completed standard demographic items.

5.1.3 Participants

In total, 960 individuals were recruited on MTurk to participate in the pretest. The mean age of the sample is 36.2 years (median=33), 53.3% identify as female, 75.8% identify as white, and the median education level is a four-year (bachelor's) degree. In regards to partisanship, 48% identified as Democrats, 22% as Republicans, and 30% as independents (including leaners). Similarly, 50% identified as liberals, 23% as conservatives, and 27% as moderates (including leaners). In sum, 520 Democrats/liberals and 240 Republicans/conservatives were eligible for the experiment.⁵⁸

The experiment was open one week after the pretest ended for the aforementioned participants, capped at 220 for each party, and made available for a week. In total, 185 Republicans (mean age=40, 85% white, 55% female) and 213 Democrats (mean age=36, 73% white, 56% female) participated in the experiment. However, 49 Republicans and 29 Democrats were removed for failing one or more of the manipulation checks (See Appendix C for more information on the manipulation checks and excluded participants).^{59 60}

⁵⁸ Thus, the sample is fairly representative of the U.S. population in regards to age, but skews slightly female, is somewhat less racially diverse, and is more educated. Additionally, more participants identify as Democratic and liberal than in the population at large, yet the experiment attempts to recruit an equal number of Democrats/liberals and Republicans/conservatives.

⁵⁹ Two additional Republicans were removed for identifying as Democrats, despite identifying as Republicans during the pretest. Party identification using the ANES measure was measured at both times.

⁶⁰ The substantive interpretation of the results remained the same if these participants were included. The manipulation checks consisted of two factual questions about the content of the vignettes, and participants must have answered both items correctly to be included in the analyses. As an attention check, I also excluded participants who spent less than 30 seconds reading the vignette.

5.2 RESULTS

In order to test Hypotheses 5a (Individual Mobility), 5b (Identity Affirmation), and 5c (Independent Insulation), I examined differences at three levels of partisan identification, based upon the ANES measure of partisanship at pretest. To accomplish this task, I generated a measure of partisan strength which takes on the value of “0” for independent leaners, “1” for not strong (weak) partisans, and “2” for strong partisans. Within these three groups, I then generated difference scores, often referred to as gain scores or change scores, by subtracting participants’ partisan (ideological) strength at pretest from their partisan (ideological) strength at posttest. I then conducted pairwise comparisons within each group. That is, I examined changes in partisan and ideological identities between the control and treatment (threat) conditions at each of the three levels of partisan strength.

Recall that most of the movement should occur among weak partisans, as these individuals display clear identification with a party, yet do not identify as “strong” partisans. This is reflected in the IDPG scores at the pretest. Table 19 displays the mean IDPG score for Republicans and Democrats in regards to party and ideology. As can be seen, leaners displayed the least partisan and ideological attachment, weak partisans displayed more attachment than leaners, and strong partisans displayed more attachment than weak partisans. This is to be expected, as strong partisans should be the most attached to their party, and because each party currently espouses a clear ideological leaning, they are the most attached to their ideological group as well. Interestingly enough, while ideological attachment was higher among all identifiers across both parties, recall that because they were measured using different items on the IDPG scale, this might have been an artifact of measurement. That is, baseline identity

strength levels may have changed in the interim period between surveys. Therefore, most of this analysis focuses on differences within individuals between pre- and post- test.

Table 19. Partisan and Ideological Identity Strength at Pretest

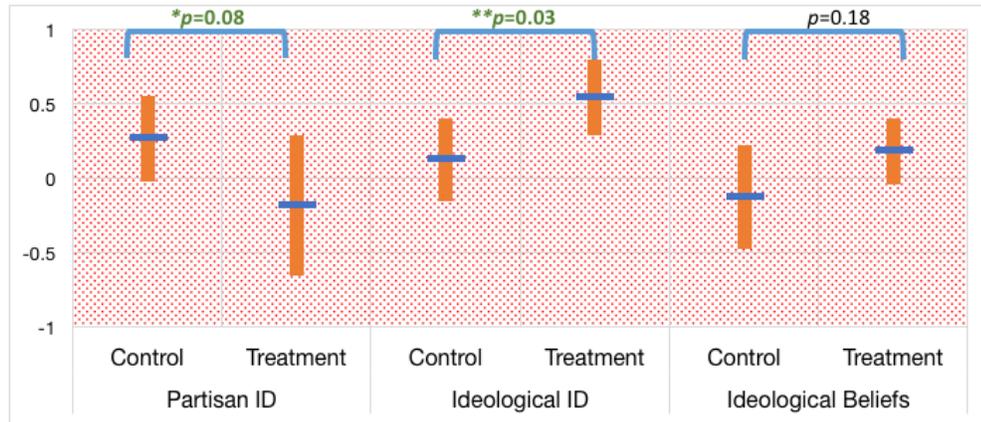
		Partisan Identity (1-7 scale)	Ideological Identity (1-7 scale)
Republicans	Leaners	2.92 (0.11)	4.03 (0.13)
	Weak Partisans	3.61 (0.12)	4.36 (0.12)
	Strong Partisans	4.43 (0.13)	5.13 (0.13)
Democrats	Leaners	2.79 (0.21)	3.85 (0.19)
	Weak Partisans	3.47 (0.13)	4.02 (0.98)
	Strong Partisans	4.45 (0.12)	4.82 (0.10)

(Standard Errors in Parentheses)

First, and most importantly, how did threat affect partisan and ideological identity strength among weak partisan identifiers? According to H5a (Individual Mobility), weak partisan identifiers should become less attached to their partisan group and more attached to their ideological group when their partisan identity is threatened. Here, and in most of the subsequent analyses, I focus on the changes between pretest and posttest on the shared characteristics items of the IDPG scale. This is where changes in identity strength should occur, as individuals should seek to either create or remove distance between themselves and their party (and/or ideological group) by viewing themselves as more or less distinct from the group. To this end, I subtracted the mean IDPG party score on the two shared characteristics items at pretest from the mean of the same items at posttest to show the change in identity strength between waves.

Figure 29 displays the mean change in partisan and ideological identity strength for weak Republicans (Panel A) and weak Democrats (Panel B). Weak Republican identifiers in the partisan threat condition displayed decreased attachment to the Republican Party compared to those in the control condition who displayed increased attachment, $t(1, 52)=1.78, p=0.08$. This same effect holds true for weak Democrats, and those in the treatment condition displayed a weakened Democratic identity while those in the control condition displayed a strengthened Democratic identity, $t(1, 74)=3.21, p<0.01$. In regards to ideological identity, weak Republicans, $t(1, 52)=2.19, p=0.03$, and weak Democrats, $t(1, 74)=0.43, p=0.02$, in the treatment conditions each displayed a strong increase in the strength of their ideological identification compared to the control conditions. On average, weak Republicans in the treatment condition increased their conservative identification by approximately 0.55 points while weak Democrats increased their liberal identity by about 0.25 points. These are substantively significant effects, particularly among Republicans, as these changes occur on a seven-point scale.

Panel A: Weak Republicans



Panel B: Weak Democrats

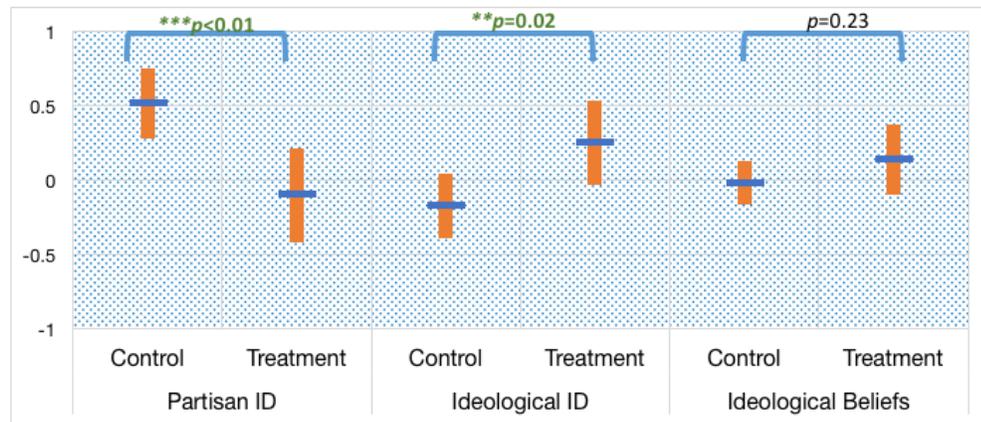


Figure 30. Change in Partisan Identity Strength, Ideological Identity Strength, and Ideological Belief

Extremity Among Weak Partisans

In contrast, according to H5b (Identity Affirmation), strong partisans should increase their partisan identity strength, when confronted with partisan threat, yet their ideological identity should be unaffected. Figure 30 displays the effect of partisan threat on strength of identity for strong partisans. Unexpectedly, there were no significant differences in partisan identity strength change between the treatment and control conditions, including for strong Republicans ($t(1, 47)=0.13, p=0.89$) and strong Democrats ($t(1, 76)=0.07, p=0.97$). There were also no significant differences across members of both parties in ideological identity change, though this was expected to be the case (Republicans: $t(1, 47)=1.29, p=0.20$; Democrats: $t(1, 29)=1.01, p=0.32$). In sum, these analyses show support for the H5a (Individual Mobility) but not H5b (Identity Affirmation).

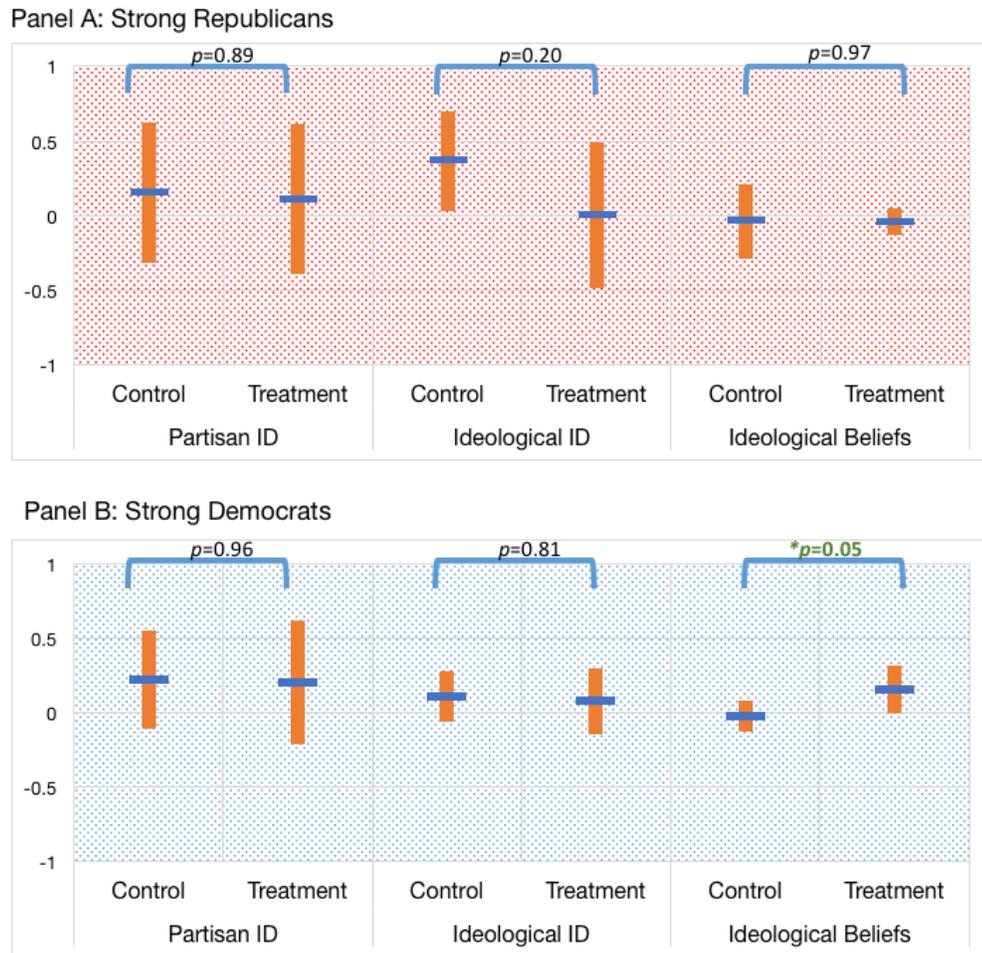


Figure 31. Change in Partisan Identity Strength, Ideological Identity Strength, and Ideological Belief Extremity Among Strong Partisans

Next, H5c (Independent Insulation) states that leaners should not adjust their partisan and ideological identities when faced with threat to their partisan identity, as these individuals do not display strong attachment to either party. Figure 31 displays the changes in identity strength for independent leaners. Across both parties, leaners showed no differences between conditions in regards to changes in partisan strength (Republicans: $t(1, 32)=0.43, p=0.66$; Democrats: $t(1, 29)=1.01, p=0.32$). Ideological identity change was also not significantly different between conditions within either party (Republicans: $t(1, 32)=0.91, p=0.36$; Democrats: $t(1, 29)=0.01, p=0.99$).

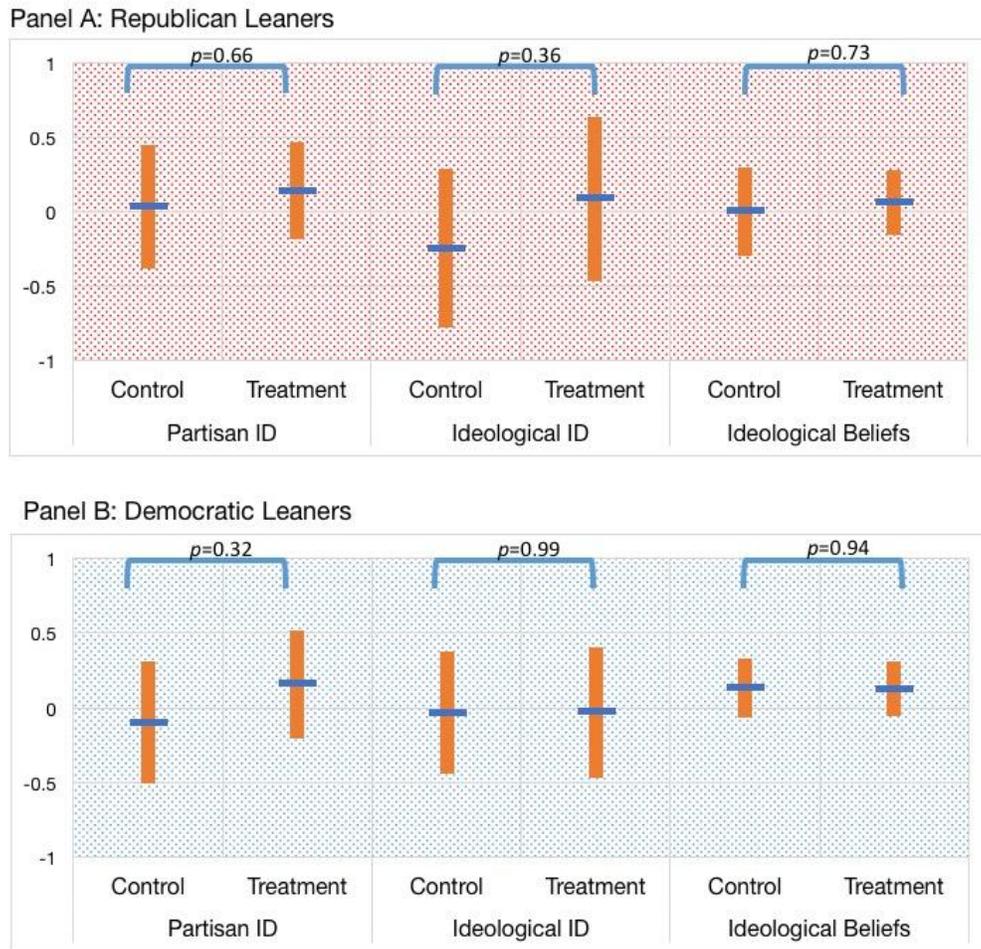


Figure 32. Change in Partisan Identity Strength, Ideological Identity Strength, and Ideological Belief Extremity Among Independent Leaners

Finally, H6 (Ideological Extremity) proposes that ideological belief extremity among partisans of all stripes should not be affected by partisan threat. That is, the process that is occurring is one of social identity, or psychological attachment, to ideological groups, not one of ideological extremity. There is little reason to suspect that partisan threat would make individuals identify as more “extreme” in regards to ideology nor should it affect specific issue positions, though the latter is beyond this paper’s scope. To test this, I examined the difference between each participant’s reported ideological beliefs, using the ANES measure of ideological extremity, between pretest and posttest.

The results for each type of partisan are displayed in the final column of Figures 29-31. Among Republicans, as expected, there were no significant differences between the control and treatment conditions for leaners, $t(1, 30)=0.3, p=0.73$, weak partisans, $t(1, 52)=1.35, p=0.18$, or strong partisans, $t(1, 56)=0.03, p=0.97$. On the Democratic side, the results were much the same. There were no significant differences between conditions among leaners, $t(1, 29)=0.07, p=0.94$, or weak partisans, $t(1, 74)=1.19, p=0.23$. Surprisingly, however, there was a significant difference among strong Democrats, $t(1, 75)=1.99, p=0.05$. Strong partisans in the treatment condition reported an increase in liberal belief extremity compared to the control condition. This result is unexpected, with no strong theoretical reason to predict such a result, and it does not occur among strong Republicans.

5.3 DISCUSSION

These results provide robust support for nearly all of the hypotheses presented, with one notable exception: strong partisans did not appear to bolster their partisan identity when exposed to partisan threat (H5b – Identity Affirmation). Instead, their identification with their party did not change compared to the control group. While this is not the primary focus of the paper, this result does merit some brief discussion. The most likely explanation for a null effect is that because strong partisans already displayed a strong attachment to their party, there is little that could potentially increase it even further. That is, because their attachment was so high to begin with there is no need for them to bolster their identity further in the face of identity threat (see Table 19). Alternatively, strong partisans may have engaged in motivated reasoning to discount the credibility of the threat toward the partisan identity. Importantly, their partisan identity did not decrease when threatened, like it did for weak partisans. Strong partisans remained highly attached to their party even when confronted with strong criticism.

All of the other hypotheses were strongly supported by these results. When confronted with partisan threat, weak partisans displayed less attachment toward their political parties and more attachment toward their ideological group (H5a – Individual Mobility). Partisan threat toward weak partisans identifiers resulted in a gravitation toward their ideological identity, and at the same time they distanced themselves from their partisan identity. This builds support for the theoretical argument that, among this type of partisan, ideological attachment may be inversely related to partisan attachment, with a weakening of partisan attachment and a growth of ideological attachment during periods of dissatisfaction with parties. In addition, partisan threat did not appear to affect ideological belief extremity (H6 – Ideological Extremity). This threat appears to have only affected social identity strength, and did not bear a direct relation to

ideological beliefs.⁶¹ This reaffirms the importance of conceptualizing, and measuring, ideology in (at least) two ways: as an identity and as policy/issue preferences. While the ANES self-placement item is only a rough estimator of the latter, partisan threat did not increase self-reported ideological extremity of weak partisans. However, and most importantly, partisan threat did significantly increase the ideological identity strength of weak partisans. Thus, these items largely measure very different constructs.

5.4 CONCLUSION

In their book *Culture War?: The Myth of a Polarized America*, Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope (2005) make a distinction between closely divided and deeply divided. They argue that the U.S. is closely divided, but not deeply divided, meaning that there is an almost even split between those on the right and left, but that the vast majority of citizens are not ideologically extreme. On this point, I do not disagree. However, the key point of the present research is that there is a deep divide, not in regards to ideological extremity, but in regards to ideological attachment. I argue that the mechanism is a dissatisfaction with political parties, which results in the gravitation toward ideological groups, particularly among weak partisan identifiers. On the surface, this may not appear to be a deleterious process. However, other research within the discipline, as well as mere observation of the current political environment would appear to say otherwise.

The most pressing concern may be a reduction in weak partisans and/or the cues that weak partisans use in their voting calculus. As a starting point, Lavine, Johnston, and

⁶¹ The one notable exception is among strong Democrats who became slightly more ideologically extreme. However, their partisan and ideological attachments were unaffected. This effect did not occur among strong Republicans.

Steenbergen (2012) argue that ambivalent partisans, or those who hold both positive and negative considerations regarding their party, function more responsibly as citizens by more critically evaluating their party and updating their voting decisions at times when their party may be performing especially poorly. However, they argue that univalent partisans, or those with only positive feelings toward their party, engage in motivating reasoning and blindly vote the party line regardless of party performance. I posit that weak partisans are more likely to be ambivalent, and thereby would add to this narrative by proposing that, rather than switch parties when confronted with partisan threat (i.e., heightening ambivalence), they are more likely to increase their ideological attachment.

Why might this matter? Malka and Lelkes (2010), in their examination of the role of ideological identification in political evaluations, show that ideological identifiers are receptive to ideological cues. That is, much like partisans use party labels, i.e., Democrat and Republican, to determine their attitudes toward political actors, ideologues will do the same with ideological labels, i.e., liberal and conservative. Combined with a reduction in partisan identity strength, this may result in strong ideological identifiers being drawn to candidates who display a clearer, and usually more extreme, ideological identification. That is, while citizens' ideological beliefs, or extremity, may not change, their attachment to that ideological group strengthens, thus making them more favorably disposed toward ideologically extreme candidates. The implications of this work will be discussed further in the final, concluding, chapter.

6.0 CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

From the beginning, the most fundamental goal of this project has been to reexamine ideological identification in the electorate in a relatively new manner: as a form of social identity. In doing so, the current research provides unique insights into how the electorate makes use of ideological labels to navigate the political environment. I focused on three related aspects of ideology, particularly as related to social identity. First, I examined the beliefs that individuals hold toward ideological groups, as compared to partisan groups. Second, I explored how the alignment of individuals' own social characteristics, and the perceived characteristics of members of ideological groups, related to ideological identification. Finally, I showed that partisan threat was a key driver of ideological identification among weak partisans, a finding demonstrated using experimental data that aligns with observed trends in individuals over time.

Self-categorization theories of social identity can largely explain each of these findings, and provide insight into the “how” and “why” of ideological social identity. Not surprisingly, I refer to the theory developed in this project as a “self-categorization theory of ideological identification.” Rather than looking at ideological identification as a summary of political beliefs, as it has been more typically conceptualized, I developed and empirically tested a theory explaining how this identification likely represents something much less cognitively complex to many citizens: a (social) group label. To be clear, I am not arguing that this encompasses everything that ideological identification represents to citizens, but rather serves as one vital

component. Further, this project does not represent an entirely new approach to understanding political ideology, and why citizens adopt a certain ideological label, but merely adds another layer of understanding to this complex concept. It remains fully compatible with many of the theoretical approaches to citizen political ideology, and where it most differs is in its focus on a new aspect of what ideology means to average citizens.

In this final chapter, I review and discuss the most important findings derived from the present investigation of ideological social identity. While this brings the project in its current state to a close, I also discuss the limitations of the studies and suggest avenues for future research. Most importantly, I provide a general discussion of ideological social identity, synthesizing the current state of the literature as well as the results of these three studies. I discuss how this research relates to the present (2016-2017) political context, and how these analyses may shed light on the unusual turn in American politics. While much of this discussion is speculative, I argue that this project provides some means by which to understand the surprising nature of the 2016 presidential primaries, and the unexpected election of Donald Trump as President of the United States.

6.1 KEY FINDINGS

Across three studies, this project has identified that ideological labels mean something to voters. “Liberal” and “conservative” group labels have clear connotations to many voters, and individuals can utilize these terms in a similar manner to partisan labels. A primary means by which voters evaluate these labels is through their beliefs about people who identify with these groups. Rather than these labels simply being a descriptor, or summary, of political beliefs,

individuals also have beliefs about people who identify as *a* liberal or *a* conservative. That is, ideological labels serve as both an adjective and noun, and individuals' beliefs about who liberals or conservatives are affect their own identification. This process is similar to how individuals think about partisanship, which is informed by beliefs about Democrats and Republicans (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002). Additionally, individuals may transition between ideological and partisan identification when it is conducive to do so within the political context. In sum, ideological identification is an important means by which individuals engage with, and navigate, the political system.

6.1.1 Beliefs about Ideological and Partisan Groups

The first empirical chapter examined the beliefs, or stereotypes, individuals possess in regards to partisan group members (Republicans, Democrats) and ideological group members (conservatives, liberals). While the content of the stereotypes toward these groups is itself interesting, the primary goal was to compare the content between aligned partisan and ideological groups (e.g., Republicans and conservatives, Democrats and liberals), as well as non-aligned groups (e.g., Republicans and liberals, Democrats and conservatives). In doing so, I established that individuals hold highly similar beliefs about members of aligned political groups, and highly divergent beliefs about members on opposite sides of the political spectrum. By this standard, individuals showed little distinction between those who identify as partisans and those who identify as ideologues for the groups that are on the same side of the spectrum (e.g., left or right). This finding is intuitive, given the sorting process that has occurred in recent decades within the electorate (Levendusky 2009).

More importantly, the similarity of beliefs about members of aligned political groups means that individuals may transition their identity from one group to another under certain conditions. This strategy of individual mobility can only occur when another group is available and permeable (Branscombe et al. 1999; Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje 1997). Therefore, this similarity satisfied a necessary condition: (aligned) partisan and ideological groups are perceived as being composed of similar types of people, and given that anyone can freely associate with either group, these groups are available for identification. Further, groups on one side of the political spectrum provide a clear contrast to those on the other side, making the distinction between the two sides clear. Both conditions help to facilitate the development of social identities.

6.1.2 Prototypicality and Ideological Social Identity

Self-categorization theory also predicts that individuals should identify with a group that best matches their own characteristics (Turner et al. 1987). Therefore, the more that individuals perceive that their own characteristics are shared with a group, the stronger their identity as a member of that group should be. I predicted that this should be particularly true in regards to ideological groups, as individuals evaluate parties by examining their performance, and these evaluations are less applicable to ideological groups. That is, while it is relatively simple to determine if a party is performing well, based on economic indicators, productivity, scandals, etc., it is much harder to do the same for ideologies or ideological groups. For example, while policies are implemented that are clearly liberal or conservative in nature, it is difficult to assess the success or failure of such policies until many years later. Further, party leaders complicate this process by praising policies that their party implemented, regardless of how effective those

policies are, while criticizing the policies that the other party implemented, and again, regardless of their actual effectiveness. Due to this difficulty, individuals are more likely to rely much more on social beliefs about ideological groups in determining their attachment, rather than performance measures or policy evaluations.

The social nature of ideological identification was borne out in the data: individuals who reported more overlap between their own traits/characteristics and those of an ideological group displayed higher identity strength, or attachment, with the group. This prototypicality effect occurred for traits (personality, demographic, etc.) and hobbies/pastimes, or the types of activities that they enjoyed doing, and was consistent across these two categories of stereotypes for liberals and conservatives.⁶² However, this prototypicality effect did not consistently occur for partisan groups. Only in one instance (hobby overlap predicting Republican identity strength) did overlap predict partisan identity strength. Thus, while ideological identity strength is largely predicted by social characteristics, partisan identity strength largely was not. This is one instance where ideological and partisan social identities clearly differ. This is not to say that partisan identity is not at all driven by social characteristics (see, for example, Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002), but that prototypicality with a group, or overlap between social characteristics of the self and the group, is not a major predictor of identity strength. Other factors are likely to be more potent explanations for partisan identity strength.

Overall, the first study provided evidence that ideological and partisan groups are perceived as being composed of similar types individuals. This allows for individuals to transition between identification with these two groups. In addition, there was strong evidence for ideology being a form of *social* identity, as strength of identity with an ideological group is

⁶² Recall that this I did not estimate prototypicality for the jobs/occupations category because individuals can only hold a limited number (typically one, but usually no more than three) jobs.

significantly driven by prototypicality with the group. The more that an individual's self-characteristics overlap with the perceived characteristics of members of an ideological group, the higher that individual's ideological identity strength became.

6.1.3 Partisan Identity Threat and Ideological Social Identity

The purpose of the first empirical study was largely to build support for conceptualizing ideology as a social identity, one that may be utilized in lieu of a partisan identity when conditions are hostile toward partisan identities. Specifically, I am interested in how threats toward a partisan identity may cause certain types of individuals to transition to an ideological identity. I predicted that partisan threat would cause weak partisans to distance themselves from their preferred party and strengthen their bond with an ideological group. I addressed this question in two ways. First, I used a large body of observational data spanning the past four decades to see if partisan and ideological identification fluctuated, at the individual level, when approval of government (specifically Congress) was low. While this did not establish causality, it did allow me to say that the proposed effect was consistent with observed trends. Second, I conduct an experiment using a contemporary political issue to randomly manipulate partisan threat in order to more directly establish causality.

In Chapter Four, I examined pooled cross-sectional data from the General Social Survey (GSS). Specifically, I used approval or disapproval of Congress to predict the likelihood of partisan and ideological identification. Congressional approval served as a proxy for partisan threat. Because parties are highly visible in Congress, disapproval can represent a threat to partisan identities, particularly when an individual's own party controls the institution. I predicted that when disapproval is high, individuals should be less likely to identify with a

partisan group and more likely to identify with an ideological group. This was borne out in the analyses, with a sharp reduction in the likelihood of partisan identification when disapproval was high, accompanied by a more modest increase in the likelihood of identifying with an ideological group. Further, the effect of disapproval on the likelihood of partisan identification was much greater when an individual's own party controlled Congress. However party control did not affect the likelihood of ideological identification. Overall, these results were largely consistent with the prediction that partisan threat is associated with lower partisan identification and higher ideological identification.

To establish that partisan threat *causes* a decrease in partisan identity strength and an increase in ideological identity strength, I conducted a survey experiment in the final empirical chapter. Based on the previous literature on social identity threat (Branscombe et al. 1999; Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje 1997), I predicted that weak partisans, those who possess a weak attachment to their partisan identity, would further decrease their partisan identity strength and increase their ideological identity strength when confronted with threat to their partisan identity. I used a salient political issue, the gridlock surrounding the nomination of Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court, to manipulate partisan threat. This issue was ideally suited for this purpose because it could be realistically adapted to blame either the Republican or Democratic party for the gridlock, and public opinion polls found that the majority of the public disapproved of the gridlock. Thus, I “threatened” the individual's own party identity, which was established in a pretest, by blaming their party for the gridlock.

Consistent with expectations, I found that weak partisan identifiers shifted toward an ideological identity when confronted with threat to their partisan identity. Specifically, individuals' partisan identity became weaker, and their ideological identity stronger, in the threat

condition as compared to those the control (no threat) condition. This effect was isolated to weak partisans; neither independent leaners nor strong partisans showed significant changes in the strength of either of their identities when their partisan identity was threatened. Thus, this experiment established much stronger evidence in favor of partisan threat causing certain individuals, specifically weak partisans, to transition from a partisan to an ideological identity.

6.2 GENERAL DISCUSSION, CONTRIBUTIONS, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Together, these sets of analyses build support for a broader view of ideology in the American electorate. Ideological identification acts not only as a summary term for one's political views, but represents a social grouping of individuals with which individuals may choose to identify. As a social identity, an ideological group becomes a potentially important part of an individual's self-identity, and this identity has implications for a wide-range of political attitudes and behaviors. This project, and the extant literature on this topic more generally, have only begun to understand the consequences of ideological social identity. However, the research presented here is likely the most substantial effort thus far to examine ideology specifically as a social identity, and to consider how ideological identity interacts with a much more commonly studied political identity: partisanship. By investigating how individuals come to hold an ideological identity, I believe that this project complements the current literature on ideology and partisanship by providing a more fuller understanding of the ways individuals may draw upon ideological labels within contemporary politics.

There are several questions that remain, and this project does possess some limitations that merit further investigation. Specifically, more work is needed to disentangle how ideological

social identity differs from partisan social identity, given that individuals view these groups as highly similar. Additionally, further research is needed to determine the specific attitudinal and behavioral implications of ideological social identity, and a more “ideological” electorate. Finally, this work has important implications regarding recent trends in U.S. politics. More specifically, it helps to explain part of the turn toward so-called “outsider” candidates, or those who show little attachment to the parties they represent, such as Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump. I discuss each of these in turn below.

6.2.1 Ideological versus Partisan Social Identity

Conceptualizing ideological identification as a form of social identity is relatively new within political science, and has only received limited attention outside of the present work, with the noted exceptions of Devine (2014), Malka and Lelkes (2010), and Mason (2015).⁶³ However, treating partisanship as a social identity has a longer history, with the notable works of Green, Palmquist, and Schickler (2002) as well as Greene (1999, 2004). While this project finds that individuals perceived that aligned ideological and partisan groups were composed of highly similar types of people, having reported nearly identical stereotypes for each, it is not necessarily the case that we should treat ideological social identity as merely a substitute for partisan social identity.

As noted previously, there are important differences in how individuals may evaluate parties as compared to ideologies. Parties have clear leaders as well as many individuals representing them in government. These exemplars allow individuals to develop beliefs about

⁶³ See also the similar work on “symbolic ideology” (Ellis and Stimson 2012).

parties, and partisans, more easily. In contrast, ideological groups do not have clear leaders or representatives, which makes it more difficult to evaluate their performance. Thus, I argue this difference accounts for one important distinction found in these results: prototypicality was a significant predictor of ideological group strength but not partisan group strength. This was most likely the case because ideological identity relies upon social evaluations to a far greater degree than partisan identity. This is a potentially important distinction. Partisan threat, as conceptualized here, largely arises through the actions of partisan elites, or those in government that serve under a party label. However, what would an ideological threat look like?

Due to the unique nature of an ideology, as compared to a party, ideological threat is unlikely to arise from those in government. It is very difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of an ideology, or ideological policies. Instead, threats to ideological identity are more likely social in nature, and would take the form of criticizing specific groups of people. This is supported by the Republican Party's explicit, and often successful, strategy to give the liberal label a negative connotation (Neiheisel 2016; Schiffer 2000). Indeed, this strategy has often been referenced to explain why liberal identification has consistently been lower than conservative identification, despite Democratic identification consistently being higher than Republican identification. Indeed, this helps to explain the large number of operationally liberal individuals within the electorate, or those who identify as conservative but who possess liberal policy preferences (Ellis and Stimson 2012).

Beginning largely with Reagan, the Republican Party has blamed "the liberals" for many national problems. For example, the 1984 Republican platform stated, "The cruelest result was the maternalization of poverty, worsened by the breakdown of the family and accelerated by

destructive patterns of conduct too long tolerated by permissive liberals.”⁶⁴ That is, the Republicans blamed the liberals, long-associated with the radical left, as destructive to the social order, and the cause of many social problems. The conservatives, in contrast, were the hard-working Americans who advocated strong family values or, to use Nixon’s memorable phrase, the “Silent Majority.” In recent years, the liberal label does appear to be growing in acceptability, as shown by an increased number of individuals in the electorate increasingly identifying as such. However, the label still carries certain connotations, as made clear in Chapter Three. Specifically, it would appear that liberals are perceived as being young, urban activists who are still viewed by many as the antithesis of American ideals. Social media, and the comments following any news article, would largely confirm this view. The insulting term “libtard” arises often in these spaces, and many perceive liberals as living off the government’s dime, unwilling to work while the rest of the country struggles to make ends meet.⁶⁵ The point here is to simply illustrate that ideological threats are likely to be more social in nature, relying on long-established stereotypes to criticize and undermine those identifying as a liberal (or conservative).

Thus, an important distinction between ideological and partisan social identity is the nature of threat that each is more likely to confront. This is an important question for future research to address. Specifically, future work should manipulate different types of threats to each type of identity and make comparisons between types in terms of level of threat experienced as well as the effects on each type of identity. While different types of threat may differ in their effectiveness, or how well they are suited to threatening each type of identity, the mechanism should be the same. For example, a threat to an ideological identity should cause weak

⁶⁴ Full text of the Republican Party Platform of 1984 can be found here: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25845>

⁶⁵ For example, see this recent *Chicago Tribune* column by Rex Huppke (2016, December 29) on the pejorative nature of the term: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/huppke/ct-libtard-huppke-20161229-story.html>

ideological identifiers to transition to a more partisan identity. Alternatively, it could be the case that individuals will transition to another political identity or label, such as libertarian (on the right) or progressive (on the left). This would allow them to distance themselves from partisan and mainstream ideological labels, instead identifying with a third group that is more socially desirable.

6.2.2 The Social Nature of Ideological Identification: Toward a More “Ideological”

Electorate

The present research portrays the electorate as increasingly ideological as it explores why more people choose to identify with an ideological group and the largely social reasons driving ideological identity. The work on the social identity of partisanship, which preceded the research on ideological social identity by over a decade, has witnessed some criticism. However, viewing ideology as a social identity helps to overcome at least one major challenge to the social identity model of partisanship, to be discussed in detail below. In doing so, the social identity model of ideology also raises several important questions that represent crucial next steps for this research agenda.

Specifically, one conflict confronting the social identity literature on partisanship concerns the critiques from Abramowitz and Saunders (2006). However, these critiques become less relevant in light of the present research. In reexamining the data from Green et al.’s (2002) work, these authors found that ideological self-placement was a much stronger predictor of partisanship than social (largely demographic) characteristics. Their evidence utilized panel data, and used ideological self-placement and social characteristics to predict partisanship from one wave to the next. They correctly noted that ideological identification had increased dramatically

in recent decades, largely as a result of party polarization (see also McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006; Poole and Rosenthal 2007). Abramowitz and Saunders proceeded to argue that the sorting process in the electorate had resulted in the stronger role of ideology in determining partisan identification over time, as well as a more significant predictor of partisanship than social characteristics.

The robustness of the analyses presented by Abramowitz and Saunders (2006) are not the key issue. Rather, given the evidence presented in this project, as well as that of Devine (2014) and Malka and Lelkes (2010), it could be said that what Abramowitz and Saunders actually did was to use a measure of social identity to predict partisanship. They drew upon ideological self-placement, which we now know is determined in part by social characteristics (Chapter Three), to predict party identification. Thus, while their work was intended as a critique of the social identity model of partisanship, in the end their analyses support it. If ideology is a social identity, and that identity predicts another identity, then the latter identity is also, albeit indirectly, informed by social factors. The point is the current research can reconcile these findings that were originally presented as contradictory. The electorate is growing more ideological, and ideological identification does predict partisanship. Yet, while previous scholars viewed ideology in terms of political beliefs, here it is instead viewed as also encapsulating social factors.

Where scholars should disagree, then, is not in regards to (increasing) rates of ideological identification, nor is it much about the sorting process that results in the alignment of ideology and partisanship. Rather, disagreement should center upon what ideology means to individuals and how they use ideology to make political decisions. There has been a long debate about the degree of ideological sophistication in the electorate, in regards to the consistency and temporal stability of ideology (compare the work of Converse [1964] and Jacoby [1995]). However, now

that we know that increasing numbers of people consider themselves aligned with an ideological label, the most pressing concern is not whether their ideology conforms to the discipline's view of a proper ideological belief system, but rather the more important question concerns the political effects of citizens' ideology.

If ideological identification represents a social identity and is driven in large part by social alignment between individuals and their beliefs about ideological group members, what are the political consequences of an increasingly "ideological" electorate? While this was not a primary question of the present research in its current state, it is a question of high priority for this research moving forward. The extant literature on ideological social identity provides some clues. First, Malka and Lelkes (2010) found that individuals who held an ideological identity used it to evaluate new political information. Specifically, individuals use ideological cues to determine their stance on a new policy, in the same way that they would use partisan cues. In addition, Devine (2014) found that ideological social identity strongly relates to vote choice among those who held at least a moderately strong attachment to an ideological group. Finally, Mason (2015) found that partisan bias and hostility were highest among individuals with aligned partisan and ideological social identity, which contributed to social polarization.

Taken together, these findings provide strong clues to the effects of increasing levels of ideological social identity within the electorate. Individuals with a stronger ideological social identity are likely going to prefer political candidates who provide more ideological cues. While strength of ideological social identity is only modestly related to ideological extremity (Devine 2014; see also Chapter Five), those who identify strongly with a group should be more likely to evaluate in-group members, or candidates espousing membership in that ideological group through cues, as more favorable. Therefore, a scenario could arise in which individuals who

possess relatively moderate policy preferences, but a strong ideological social identity, could vote for ideologically extreme candidates. This highlights the need to measure ideology as two distinct concepts: policy preferences and social identity. Future work should incorporate both types of measures and examine how both of these affect the evaluation of policies and candidates.

A second major question regards the social nature of ideology, and how individuals come to align with an ideological group. Do individuals choose an ideological group based on the match between their own pre-existing characteristics and those of the group? Or do they first choose a preferred ideological group and then assimilate their own characteristics to become aligned? There are reasons to suspect each process, and the answer would not do much to alter the implications of the social nature of ideology and the analyses presented in Chapter Three. However, it is an important question to consider, as it has implications for political strategy and the success of groups on the political left and right. Some scholars allege that ideology is heritable, and to a greater degree than partisanship (Alford, Funk, and Hibbing 2005). This evidence would favor the first process, whereby individuals gravitate toward the ideological group that best aligns with their own characteristics. Yet, work by Lenz (2012), whereby voters adapt their own political views to align with the candidate they most prefer, would instead favor the second process. That is, individuals may alter, or assimilate, their own characteristics to align with the group that they prefer. The actual process that occurs could also be a mix of the two, whereby individuals' own characteristics predispose them toward a certain ideological group, and from that point individuals develop to become more prototypical of the group. Sorting out these two processes, though it would be a very difficult task, would provide significant insight

into how individuals develop an ideological social identity. In addition, it would speak to the success of each group at certain points in time.

6.2.3 Disapproval of Parties, the 2016 Election, and Beyond

In bringing this project to a close, I return to a discussion of political conditions presently occurring, as of this writing, as the results of the analyses presented here would appear to have important implications for the unusual nature of the 2016 presidential election. Of course, the 2016 electoral process ended with the election of Donald Trump as the 45th President of the United States. Mr. Trump was a party outsider, having never held elected office and being openly critical toward the Republican Party, under which he was seeking nomination as a presidential candidate. The party initially returned the favor by being very much against his nomination, up until his victory in the primaries was inevitable. This result very much goes against the “party decides” thesis (Cohen et al. 2008), with party insiders being unsuccessful to prevent Trump’s nomination.⁶⁶

In addition to Trump’s success in the Republican primary contest, Senator Bernie Sanders, an independent from Vermont, received a surprising degree of support on the Democratic side. His political views are far to the left of most of the Democratic Party and he unabashedly refers to himself as a “Democratic Socialist.” That he could pose any real challenge to Hillary Clinton, the eventual and always presumptive Democratic nominee, as astounding given conventional wisdom about the American electorate’s non-receptiveness of socialism.

⁶⁶ While extensive debate has occurred within the discipline as to whether the 2016 election undermines Cohen et al.’s (2008) research, I remain agnostic to this matter, and am simply stating that this particular result does not support their theory.

Further, while he ran under the Democratic label, and caucused with Democrats in the Senate, he continues to identify as an independent. Thus, in both major primaries outsiders gained significant electoral support, and while Sanders was not successful in his bid to become the nominee, the high level of support that he received is extraordinary. This begs the question, what factors contributed to the success of these outsider candidates?

According to the research presented here, one key aspect underlying the rise in ideological identification is disapproval of parties, or partisan threat. Given that each party, particularly as represented in Congress, faced high levels of disapproval, it becomes less surprising why Trump and Sanders gained such a following in the 2016 contests. It likely also indicates a growing desire for candidates who distance themselves from the parties. Given that levels of partisan identification have fallen, it could be the case that voters, while still preferring one party, may desire candidates who are not strong partisans themselves. And, because of growing ideological attachment, it could also be the case that voters will prefer candidates who provide clear ideological signals. Sanders certainly did so, with his provocative display of “democratic socialism.” Trump, while possessing a mixed bag of ideological views, may have done so in a different way: through social cues. Despite not being viewed as traditionally conservative as, for example, his primary opponent Ted Cruz, Trump embodies many characteristics that align with conservatism. He is wealthy businessman, straight-talking, and decidedly anti-establishment. In a year when voters are frustrated with the gridlock in Congress, as well as uneven economic growth, Trump was able to emerge as the one who could get things done and campaigned to provide jobs and economic opportunity to voters in areas long disadvantaged by the global economy and the shift away from manufacturing jobs. That Trump was not uniformly conservative across policy areas should have mattered to conservative, i.e.,

ideological, voters, but only if their ideology was based mostly upon policy preferences. However, if their conservative identity was indeed motivated by social factors, then Trump is a natural fit. He is white, male, often crass, and emphasizes his “common man” attributes, despite his wealth. An article from the New York Times during the campaign speculates that, “His highbrow, lowbrow image — of the jet-setting mogul who takes buckets of fried chicken onto his private plane with the gold-plated seatbelt buckles — is also a carefully crafted one.”⁶⁷ He presents himself as different from more polished politicians that appear more disconnected from actual voters, particularly in rural areas. In many ways, Trump may represent someone who many aspire to become. His traits and characteristics should have appealed to conservative voters’ social identities, and provided a clear ideological signal that Trump is the man that should represent them.

Overall, I believe this project dovetails with the political processes that were on display in 2016. An increased reliance on ideological identity, compared to partisan identity, may result in more unusual candidates that are largely party outsiders. Disapproval of parties has likely caused a weakening of loyalty toward the parties, and among certain voters a greater reliance on ideological identity. While the link between this work and the 2016 election is merely speculative, the outcomes are consistent with the theory and empirical results presented here. I do not take a normative position on whether ideological social identity is good or bad for American democracy, as there are likely positive and negative aspects. It remains to be seen whether a structural shift in the party system will occur, breaking gridlock and inspiring more

⁶⁷ Parker, Ashley. “Donald Trump’s Diet: He’ll Have Fries with That.” *The New York Times*, August 8, 2016. Accessed March 10, 2016. https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/09/us/politics/donald-trump-diet.html?_r=0

confidence in Congress, and unless a major change occurs I believe that the current trends we are currently witnessing will continue.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

A.1 PARTISAN/IDEOLOGICAL STEREOTYPES

The pre-test for the partisan/ideological stereotypes survey (Chapter Three) used a paper and pencil format and was administered to students enrolled in introductory political science courses. The following images display one of the four (randomly assigned) versions of the survey. One half of the sample evaluated partisan groups (Republicans, Democrats), as shown in this version, and the other half of the sample evaluated ideological groups (conservatives, liberals). I also reversed which group came first, e.g., some participants evaluated Democrats and then Republicans or they evaluated liberals and then conservatives.

Section A.

Please list characteristics or traits that are typical of **Republicans**. List anything that comes to mind. Please try to list at least five characteristics/traits.

What personality traits are typical of **Republicans**?

What types of occupations/jobs are typical of **Republicans**?

Section B.

Please list characteristics or traits that are typical of **Democrats**. List anything that comes to mind. Please try to list at least five characteristics/traits.

What personality traits are typical of **Democrats**?

What types of occupations/jobs are typical of **Democrats**?

A.2.2 Survey

[PAGE 1 INSTRUCTIONS]: In this study, you will be asked to give your opinion about what traits, jobs, and hobbies people associate with [RANDOMLY ASSIGNED: **Republicans/Democrats/conservatives/liberals**]. We are interested in what you believe *people in general* think about [RANDOMLY ASSIGNED: **Republicans/Democrats/conservatives/liberals**], even if you do not personally agree that these associations are true. Please answer based on beliefs you feel people in general possess.

You will be paid \$1.00 for completing this survey. Additionally, you have the opportunity to earn a \$10 bonus. After the study is completed, we will identify the most/least commonly selected traits associated with [Randomly assigned: **Republicans/Democrats/conservatives/liberals**]. The four most accurate participants, or those that select the most common traits, *while selecting the fewest uncommon traits*, will earn the \$10 bonus. It does NOT benefit you to select as many traits as possible, as this will decrease your accuracy. Please note that it may take up to 30 days for your bonus to be applied to your MTurk account.

[TRAIT CHECKLIST INSTRUCTIONS]: You will now be shown several traits, one at a time. If you believe that a trait is associated with [RANDOMLY ASSIGNED: **Republicans/Democrats/conservatives/liberals**], please select "Yes." If you do not believe that a trait is associated with [RANDOMLY ASSIGNED: **Republicans/Democrats/conservatives/liberals**], please select "No." You will have *four seconds* to select an answer. If you do not select an answer within four seconds, the screen will move forward to the next term.

Remember, the four most accurate participants will receive a \$10 bonus. If you are unsure about a trait, it is better to leave it blank, rather than select an answer, and the next trait will be shown once the timer reaches 0.

[Screenshot of trait screen (same set-up for jobs and hobbies). Will have four seconds to answer, if none selected will auto-advance to next trait]



Open-Minded

YES
(is commonly associated)

NO
(is not commonly associated)

[Shown the following jobs, one at a time, in random order]:

Trait#	Trait	Trait#	Trait
1	open-minded	32	patriotic
2	wealthy	33	poor
3	religious	34	confident
4	self-centered	35	non-religious
5	stubborn	36	female
6	compassionate	37	traditional
7	outspoken	38	politically-correct
8	closed-minded	39	reserved
9	racially-diverse	40	empathetic
10	intelligent	41	individualistic
11	young	42	urban
12	angry	43	racist
13	white	44	community-oriented
14	old	45	Christian
15	optimistic	46	family-oriented
16	middle-class	47	professional
17	hardworking	48	rural
18	passionate	49	forward-thinking
19	uncompromising	50	argumentative
20	male	51	entitled
21	egalitarian	52	hipster
22	opinionated	53	blue-collar
23	educated	54	looks to the past
24	charitable	55	nationalistic
25	pro-change	56	naïve
26	anti-change	57	compromising
27	frugal	58	assertive
28	outgoing	59	suburban
29	helpful	60	modern
30	uneducated	61	cultured
31	accepting		

[SELF-TRAIT RATINGS ITEM]: Which of the following traits would you say apply to **yourself**? Check all that apply.

[Will be shown selected traits (i.e., clicked “YES” in one single-column checklist)]

[JOB CHECKLIST INSTRUCTIONS]: You will now be shown several jobs/occupations, one at a time. If you believe that a job/occupation is associated with [Randomly assigned: **Republicans/Democrats/conservatives/liberals**], please select "Yes." If you do not believe that a job/occupation is associated to [Randomly assigned: **Republicans/Democrats/conservatives/liberals**], please select "No." You will have *four seconds* to select an answer. If you do not select an answer within four seconds, the screen will move forward to the next term.

Remember, the four most accurate participants will receive a \$10 bonus. If you are unsure about a job/occupation, it is better to leave it blank, rather than select an answer, and the next job/occupation will be shown once the timer reaches 0.

[Shown the following jobs, one at a time, in random order]

Job#	Job	Job#	Job
1	Business	13	Doctors
2	Teachers	14	White-Collar Jobs
3	Government Jobs	15	Social Workers
4	Lawyers	16	Military
5	Blue-Collar Jobs	17	Service/Retail Jobs
6	Agriculture/Farming	18	Police Officers
7	CEOs	19	Non-Profit Organizations
8	Finance Jobs	20	Union Jobs
9	High-Paying Jobs	21	Nurses
10	Low-Paying Jobs	22	Artists
11	Professors	23	Activists
12	Small Business Owners	24	Unemployed

[HOBBY CHECKLIST INSTRUCTIONS]: You will now be shown several hobbies/pastimes, one at a time. If you believe that a hobby/pastime is associated with **Republicans**, please select "Yes." If you do not believe that a hobby/pastime is associated with **Republicans**, please select "No." You will have *four seconds* to select an answer. If you do not select an answer within four seconds, the screen will move forward to the next term.

Remember, the four most accurate participants will receive a \$10 bonus. If you are unsure about a hobby/pastime, it is better to leave it blank, rather than select an answer, and the next hobby/pastime will be shown once the timer reaches 0.

[Shown the following jobs, one at a time, in random order]

Hobby#	Hobby	Hobby#	Hobby
1	Hunting	11	Guns/Shooting
2	Sports	12	Political Debate
3	Reading	13	Automotive/Mechanics
4	Activism	14	Social Media
5	Outdoor Activities	15	Theatre/Performing Arts
6	Art	16	Writing
7	Volunteering	17	Movies
8	Fishing	18	Video Games
9	Religious Activities	19	Going to Coffee Shops
10	Going to Bars/Clubs	20	Music

[SELF-HOBBY RATINGS]: Which of the following hobbies/pastimes do **you** enjoy? Check all that apply.

[Will be shown selected hobbies (i.e., clicked “YES” in one single-column checklist)]

[FEELING THERMOMETERS]: Now, please rate your feelings toward the following groups using something called the feeling thermometer. As shown below, ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward them. Ratings between 0 and 50 degrees mean that you don’t feel favorable, and that you don’t care too much for them. Indicate the 50-degree mark if you don’t feel particularly warm or cold toward them.

- [FT1]: Republicans
- [FT2]: Democrats
- [FT3]: Conservatives
- [FT4]: Liberals
- [FT5]: Congress
- [FT6]: President Obama
- [FT7]: Donald Trump
- [FT8]: Ted Cruz
- [FT9]: Marco Rubio
- [FT10]: Jeb Bush
- [FT11]: Hillary Clinton
- [FT12]: Bernie Sanders

[PARTY IDENTIFICATION]: Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?"

- Republican
- Democrat
- Independent
- Other – Please Specify _____

[IF REPUBLICAN/DEMOCRAT: STRENGTH OF PARTISANSHIP]: Would you call yourself a strong [Republican/Democrat] or a not very strong [Republican/Democrat]?

- Strong
- Not Strong

[IF INDEPENDENT/OTHER]: Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?

- Republican
- Democratic
- Neither

[IDEOLOGICAL IDENTIFICATION]: Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a conservative, a liberal, a moderate, or what?"

- Conservative
- Liberal
- Moderate
- Other – Please Specify _____

[IF CONSERVATIVE/LIBERAL: STRENGTH OF IDENTIFICATION]: Would you call yourself a strong [conservative/liberal] or a not very strong [conservative/liberal]?

- Strong
- Not Strong

[IF MODERATE/OTHER]: Do you think of yourself as closer to the conservatives or liberals?

- Conservatives
- Liberals
- Neither

[IDPG SCALES – PARTISAN/IDEOLOGICAL: Assigned five items to measure partisan identity strength and five items to measure ideological identity strength. Partisan and ideological items presented on separate pages, in random order. Party and ideological group matched to the participant]:

[IDPG1]: When someone criticizes [Democrats/Republicans], it feels like a personal insult
1-Strongly Disagree; 7-Strongly Agree

[IDPG2]: When I talk about [Democrats/Republicans], I usually say "we" rather than "they."
1-Strongly Disagree; 7-Strongly Agree

[IDPG3]: [Democrats/Republicans] successes are my successes
1-Strongly Disagree; 7-Strongly Agree

[IDPG4]: I don't act like a typical [Democrats/Republicans]

1-Strongly Disagree; 7-Strongly Agree

[IDPG5]: If a story in the media criticized [Democrats/Republicans], I would feel embarrassed

1-Strongly Disagree; 7-Strongly Agree

[IDPG6]: I'm very interested in what others think about [conservatives/liberals]

1-Strongly Disagree; 7-Strongly Agree

[IDPG7]: I have a number of qualities typical of [conservatives/liberals]

1-Strongly Disagree; 7-Strongly Agree

[IDPG8]: When someone praises [conservatives/liberals], it feels like a personal compliment

1-Strongly Disagree; 7-Strongly Agree

[IDPG9]: I act like a typical [conservatives/liberals]

1-Strongly Disagree; 7-Strongly Agree

[IDPG10]: The limitations associated with [conservatives/liberals] apply to me also 1-

Strongly Disagree; 7-Strongly Agree

[IDENTITY PREFERENCE MEASURES]:

[IF DEMOCRAT AND LIBERAL]: Generally speaking, do you consider yourself more of a Democrat or more of a liberal?

1-Much more of a Democrat, 2-Slightly more of a Democrat, 3-Neither, 4-Slightly more of a liberal, 5-Much more of a liberal

[IF REPUBLICAN AND CONSERVATIVE]: Generally speaking, do you consider yourself more of a Republican or more of a conservative?

1-Much more of a Republican, 2-Slightly more of a Republican, 3-Neither, 4-Slightly more of a conservative, 5-Much more of a conservative

[GENDER]: What is your gender?

1-Male, 2-Female, 3-Other

[AGE]: What is your age in years? _____

[RACE]: What is your race/ethnicity?

1-Black/African-American, 2-Hispanic/Latino, 3-Asian/Pacific Islander, 4-White/Caucasian, 5-Other: Please Specify _____

[EDUCATION]: What is the highest level of education you have completed?

1-Less than high school; 8-Professional Degree

[JOB]: What is your current job/occupation? _____

[EDUCATION]: What is your annual income range?

1-Below \$20,000; 8-\$90,000 or more

[IDEOLOGY-CLASSIC]: Which of the following best describe your ideological beliefs?

1-Extremely Liberal; 7-Extremely Conservative

[MANIPULATION CHECK]: At the beginning of the survey, which group did were you asked to select traits, jobs, and hobbies for? _____

A.2 PARTISAN THREAT AND IDEOLOGICAL SOCIAL IDENTITY

Block 1 – Introductory Script

The purpose of this research study is to examine attitudes on political issues in the United States. For that reason, we are surveying Mechanical Turk users and asking them to complete a brief survey. It should take approximately 3-5 minutes to complete and you will be paid \$0.35 for completing the survey.

If you are willing to participate, our survey will ask about background (e.g., age, race, years of education), as well as about your political attitudes, such as party affiliation and ideology. There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project, nor are there any direct benefits to you. This is an entirely anonymous survey, and your responses will not be identifiable in any way. All responses are confidential. Your data may be shared with investigators conducting similar research, however all identifying information will be removed. The data will be stored on a password protected computer which only the investigators may access. Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from this study at any time. Once the survey is submitted, however, your data cannot be withdrawn. This study is being conducted by the University of Pittsburgh. For questions, please contact Jarrod Kelly at jtk47@pitt.edu.

Block 2 – Party and Ideological Identification

Q2.0: Directions: Please answer the following questions about your political beliefs.

Q2.1: Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?

- Republican
- Democrat
- Independent
- Other – Please Specify _____

Q2.1a [IF REPUBLICAN]: Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican?

- Strong
- Not Strong

Q2.1b [IF DEMOCRAT]: Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?

- Strong
- Not Strong

Q2.1c [IF INDEPENDENT/OTHER]: Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic Party?

- Republican
- Democrat
- Neither

Q2.2: Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a conservative, a liberal, a moderate, or what?

- Republican
- Democrat
- Independent
- Other – Please Specify_____

Q2.2a [IF REPUBLICAN]: Would you call yourself a strong conservative or a not very strong conservative?

- Strong
- Not Strong

Q2.2b [IF DEMOCRAT]: Would you call yourself a strong liberal or a not very strong liberal?

- Strong
- Not Strong

Q2.2c [IF INDEPENDENT/OTHER]: Do you think of yourself as closer to the conservatives or liberals?

- Conservatives
- Liberals
- Neither

[IF DEMOCRAT] Block 3 – Democrat Identification with Psychological Groups

Q3.0: Directions: Please indicate your agreement to the following statements

Q3.1: When someone criticizes Democrats, it feels like a personal insult

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q3.2: When I talk about Democrats, I usually say "we" rather than "they."

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q3.3: Democrats' successes are my successes

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q3.4: I don't act like a typical Democrat

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q3.5: If a story in the media criticized Democrats, I would feel embarrassed

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

[IF REPUBLICAN] Block 4 – Republican Identification with Psychological Groups

Q4.0: Directions: Please indicate your agreement to the following statements

Q4.1: When someone criticizes Republicans, it feels like a personal insult

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)

- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q4.2: When I talk about Republicans, I usually say "we" rather than "they."

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q4.3: Republicans' successes are my successes

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q4.4: I don't act like a typical Republican

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q4.5: If a story in the media criticized Republicans, I would feel embarrassed

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

[IF CONSERVATIVE] Block 5 – Conservative Identification with Psychological Groups

Q5.0: Directions: Please indicate your agreement to the following statements

Q5.1: I'm very interested in what others think about conservatives

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q5.2: I have a number of qualities typical of conservatives

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q5.3: When someone praises conservatives, it feels like a personal compliment

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q5.4: I act like a typical conservative

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q5.5: The limitations associated with conservatives apply to me also

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)

- Strongly Agree (7)

[IF LIBERAL] Block 6 – Liberal Identification with Psychological Groups

Q6.0: Directions: Please indicate your agreement to the following statements

Q6.1: I'm very interested in what others think about liberals

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q6.2: I have a number of qualities typical of liberals

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q6.3: When someone praises liberals, it feels like a personal compliment

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q6.4: I act like a typical liberal

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q6.5: The limitations associated with liberals apply to me also

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)

- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Block 7: Self-Esteem Scale

Q7.0: Directions: Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

Q7.1: I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Agree (3)
- Strongly Agree (4)

Q7.2: I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Agree (3)
- Strongly Agree (4)

Q7.3: All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Agree (3)
- Strongly Agree (4)

Q7.4: I am able to do things as well as most other people.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Agree (3)
- Strongly Agree (4)

Q7.5: I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Agree (3)
- Strongly Agree (4)

Q7.6: I take a positive attitude toward myself.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Agree (3)

- Strongly Agree (4)

Q7.7: On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Agree (3)
- Strongly Agree (4)

Q7.8: I wish I could have more respect for myself.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Agree (3)
- Strongly Agree (4)

Q7.9: I certainly feel useless at times.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Agree (3)
- Strongly Agree (4)

Q7.10: At times I think I am no good at all.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Agree (3)
- Strongly Agree (4)

Block 8: Political Interest

Q8.1: During a typical week, how many days do you watch, read, or listen to news on the Internet, not including sports?

- None (1)
- One day (2)
- Two days (3)
- Three days (4)
- Four days (5)
- Five days (6)
- Six days (7)
- Seven days (8)

Q8.2: How much attention do you pay to news about national politics on the Internet?

- A great deal (1)
- A lot (2)
- A moderate amount (3)
- A little (4)

- None at all (5)

Q8.3: During a typical week, how many days do you watch news on TV, not including sports?

- None (1)
- One day (2)
- Two days (3)
- Three days (4)
- Four days (5)
- Five days (6)
- Six days (7)
- Seven days (8)

Q8.4: How much attention do you pay to news about national politics on TV?

- A great deal (1)
- A lot (2)
- A moderate amount (3)
- A little (4)
- None at all (5)

Q8.5: During a typical week, how many days do you read news in a printed newspaper, not including sports?

- None (1)
- One day (2)
- Two days (3)
- Three days (4)
- Four days (5)
- Five days (6)
- Six days (7)
- Seven days (8)

Q8.6: How much attention do you pay to news about national politics in printed newspapers?

- A great deal (1)
- A lot (2)
- A moderate amount (3)
- A little (4)
- None at all (5)

Q8.7: During a typical week, how many days do you listen to news on the radio, not including sports?

- None (1)
- One day (2)
- Two days (3)
- Three days (4)

- Four days (5)
- Five days (6)
- Six days (7)
- Seven days (8)

Q8.8: How much attention do you pay to news about national politics on the radio?

- A great deal (1)
- A lot (2)
- A moderate amount (3)
- A little (4)
- None at all (5)

Block 9: Political Knowledge

Q9.0: Directions: Please answer the following factual questions to the best of your ability.

Q9.1: Do you happen to know how many times an individual can be elected President of the United States under current laws? _____

Q9.2: Is the U.S. federal budget deficit, the amount by which the governments spending exceeds the amount of money it collects, now bigger, about the same, or smaller than it was during most of the 1990s?

- Bigger
- About the same
- Smaller

Q9.3: For how many years is a United States Senator elected, that is, how many years are there in one full term of office for a U.S. Senator? _____

Q9.4: What is Medicare?

- A program run by the U.S. Federal government to pay for old people's health care
- A program run by state governments to provide health care to poor people
- A private health insurance plan sold to individuals in all 50 states
- A private, non-profit organization that runs free health clinics

Q9.5: On which of the following does the U.S. federal government currently spend the least?

- Foreign aid
- Medicare
- National defense
- Social security

Block 10: Merrick Garland

Q10.0: Please respond to the following items

Q10.1: How closely have you been following the news regarding President Obama's nominee to the Supreme Court?

- Extremely closely
- Closely
- Somewhat closely
- Not very closely
- Not at all

Q10.2a: Do you know who President Obama nominated to fill the vacancy on the Supreme Court?

- Yes
- No

Q10.2b: [IF YES]: Who did he nominate? _____

Q10.3: Some people say that the Senate should fulfill their duties and hold hearings on President Obama's Supreme Court nominee. Say that these people are located at 1. Other people say that the Senate should wait and let the next president choose the nominee. Say these people are located at 5. Where do you stand on this issue?

- 1 (Senate should hold hearings on Obama's nominee)
- 2
- 3 Neutral/Unsure
- 4
- 5 (Senate should wait and let the next president choose nominee)

Block 11: Demographic Measures

Q11.0: Directions: Please answer the following questions about yourself.

Q11.1: What is your gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Other (3)

Q11.2: What is your age in years? _____

Q11.3: What is your race/ethnicity?

- Black/African American (1)
- Hispanic/Latino (2)
- Asian/Pacific Islander (3)
- White/Caucasian (4)
- Other: (5) _____

Q11.4: What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than High School (1)
- High School / GED (2)
- Some College (3)
- 2-year College Degree (4)
- 4-year College Degree (5)
- Masters Degree (6)
- Doctoral Degree (7)
- Professional Degree (JD, MD) (8)

Q11.5: What is your annual income range?

- Below \$20,000 (1)
- \$20,000 - \$29,999 (2)
- \$30,000 - \$39,999 (3)
- \$40,000 - \$49,999 (4)
- \$50,000 - \$59,999 (5)
- \$60,000 - \$69,999 (6)
- \$70,000 - \$79,999 (9)
- \$80,000 - \$89,999 (7)
- \$90,000 or more (8)

Q11.6: Which of the following best describes your ideological beliefs?

- Extremely Liberal (1)
- Liberal (2)
- Slightly Liberal (3)
- Moderate/Middle of the Road (4)
- Slightly Conservative (5)
- Conservative (6)
- Extremely Conservative (7)

Block 1 – Introductory Script

The purpose of this research study is to examine attitudes on political issues in the United States. For that reason, we are surveying Mechanical Turk users and asking them to complete a brief survey. It should take approximately 7-10 minutes to complete and you will be paid \$0.65 for completing the survey.

If you are willing to participate, our survey will ask about background (e.g., age, race, years of education), as well as about your political attitudes, such as party affiliation and ideology. There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project, nor are there any direct benefits to you. This is an entirely anonymous survey, and your responses will not be identifiable in any way. All responses are confidential. Your data may be shared with investigators conducting similar research, however all identifying information will be removed. The data will be stored on a password protected computer which only the investigators may access. Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from this study at any time. Once the survey is submitted, however, your data cannot be withdrawn. This study is being conducted by the University of Pittsburgh. For questions, please contact Jarrod Kelly at jtk47@pitt.edu.

Block 2 – Party and Ideological Identification

Q2.0: Directions: Please answer the following questions about your political beliefs.

Q2.1: Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?

- Republican
- Democrat
- Independent
- Other – Please Specify_____

Q2.1a [IF REPUBLICAN]: Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican?

- Strong
- Not Strong

Q2.1b [IF DEMOCRAT]: Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?

- Strong
- Not Strong

Q2.1c [IF INDEPENDENT/OTHER]: Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic Party?

- Republican
- Democrat
- Neither

Q2.2: Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a conservative, a liberal, a moderate, or what?

- Republican
- Democrat
- Independent
- Other – Please Specify_____

Q2.2a [IF REPUBLICAN]: Would you call yourself a strong conservative or a not very strong conservative?

- Strong
- Not Strong

Q2.2b [IF DEMOCRAT]: Would you call yourself a strong liberal or a not very strong liberal?

- Strong
- Not Strong

Q2.2c [IF INDEPENDENT/OTHER]: Do you think of yourself as closer to the conservatives or liberals?

- Conservatives
- Liberals
- Neither

[ASSIGNED TO NO THREAT OR THREAT CONDITION, THREAT MATCHED TO PARTY; IF DEMOCRAT BLOCK 3A OR 3B, IF REPUBLICAN BLOCK 3A OR 3C]

BLOCK 3A: NO THREAT

The following excerpt recently appeared in a national newspaper. Please read it carefully before continuing the survey.

Compromise Likely on Supreme Court Nominee

The recent battle between Senate Republicans and President Obama over the nomination of Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court may be coming to a close. Democrats and Republicans are working to end the standstill that has been occurring. The decision not to hold hearings in an

election year does find precedent in the 1980s and early 1990s. However, the parties now appear willing to compromise, and the Republicans now seem more willing to confirm a nominee during an election year. A clear majority of Americans in a recent CBS/NYT poll admit that they look forward to the end of the deadlock now being seen and look forward to a nomination hearing for this moderate appointee to the Court. One woman polled remarked, “The parties have chosen to end the status quo of partisan bickering, and I feel proud to see that they are compromising.” Meanwhile, approval of both parties has increased since the news broke.

BLOCK 3B: THREAT - DEMOCRATS

The following excerpt recently appeared in a national newspaper. Please read it carefully before continuing the survey.

Democrats to Blame for Partisan Gridlock on Supreme Court Nominee

The recent battle between Senate Republicans and President Obama over the nomination of Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court is simply the latest example of partisan gridlock on Capitol Hill. Democrats have no one to blame but themselves for the standstill now occurring. The decision not to hold hearings in an election year finds precedent when the Democrats controlled Congress in the 1980s and early 1990s. The Democrats were the first to use their power to block several reasonable nominations, and invented the policy of not considering a nominee during an election year. A clear majority of Democrats in a recent CBS/NYT poll admit that their own party bears some responsibility for the deadlock now being seen in the fight to hold a nomination hearing for a moderate appointee to the Court. One woman polled remarked, “The Democratic Party has consistently chosen to maintain the status quo of partisan bickering, and I feel ashamed to call myself a Democrat.” Meanwhile, approval of the Democratic Party has reached historic lows.

BLOCK 3C: THREAT – REPUBLICANS

The following excerpt recently appeared in a national newspaper. Please read it carefully before continuing the survey.

Republicans to Blame for Partisan Gridlock on Supreme Court Nominee

The recent battle between Senate Republicans and President Obama over the nomination of Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court is simply the latest example of partisan gridlock on Capitol Hill. Republicans have no one to blame but themselves for the standstill now occurring. The decision not to hold hearings in an election year is unprecedented and did not occur when the Democrats controlled Congress in the 1980s and early 1990s. The Republicans are the first to

use their power to block several reasonable nominations, and invented the policy of not considering a nominee during an election year. A clear majority of Republicans in a recent CBS/NYT poll admit that their own party bears some responsibility for the deadlock now being seen in the fight to hold a nomination hearing for a moderate appointee to the Court. One woman polled remarked, "The Republican Party has consistently chosen to maintain the status quo of partisan bickering, and I feel ashamed to call myself a Republican." Meanwhile, approval of the Republican Party has reached historic lows.

[IF DEMOCRAT] Block 4 – Democrat Identification with Psychological Groups

Q4.0: Directions: Please indicate your agreement to the following statements

Q4.1: When someone criticizes Democrats, it feels like a personal insult

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q4.2: When I talk about Democrats, I usually say "we" rather than "they."

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q4.3: Democrats' successes are my successes

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q4.4: I don't act like a typical Democrat

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)

- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q4.5: If a story in the media criticized Democrats, I would feel embarrassed

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

[IF REPUBLICAN] Block 5 – Republican Identification with Psychological Groups

Q5.0: Directions: Please indicate your agreement to the following statements

Q5.1: When someone criticizes Republicans, it feels like a personal insult

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q5.2: When I talk about Republicans, I usually say "we" rather than "they."

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q5.3: Republicans' successes are my successes

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q5.4: I don't act like a typical Republican

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q5.5: If a story in the media criticized Republicans, I would feel embarrassed

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

[IF CONSERVATIVE] Block 6 – Conservative Identification with Psychological Groups

Q6.0: Directions: Please indicate your agreement to the following statements

Q6.1: I'm very interested in what others think about conservatives

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q6.2: I have a number of qualities typical of conservatives

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q6.3: When someone praises conservatives, it feels like a personal compliment

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)

- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q6.4: I act like a typical conservative

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q6.5: The limitations associated with conservatives apply to me also

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

[IF LIBERAL] Block 7 – Liberal Identification with Psychological Groups

Q7.0: Directions: Please indicate your agreement to the following statements

Q7.1: I'm very interested in what others think about liberals

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q7.2: I have a number of qualities typical of liberals

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q7.3: When someone praises liberals, it feels like a personal compliment

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q7.4: I act like a typical liberal

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Q7.5: The limitations associated with liberals apply to me also

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neutral (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

Block 8: Self-Esteem Scale

Q8.0: Directions: Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

Q8.1: I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Agree (3)
- Strongly Agree (4)

Q8.2: I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Agree (3)
- Strongly Agree (4)

Q8.3: All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Agree (3)
- Strongly Agree (4)

Q8.4: I am able to do things as well as most other people.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Agree (3)
- Strongly Agree (4)

Q8.5: I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Agree (3)
- Strongly Agree (4)

Q8.6: I take a positive attitude toward myself.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Agree (3)
- Strongly Agree (4)

Q8.7: On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Agree (3)
- Strongly Agree (4)

Q8.8: I wish I could have more respect for myself.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Agree (3)
- Strongly Agree (4)

Q8.9: I certainly feel useless at times.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Agree (3)
- Strongly Agree (4)

Q8.10: At times I think I am no good at all.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)

- Agree (3)
- Strongly Agree (4)

APPENDIX B

Distribution of Strength of Party Control (Continuous) Measure

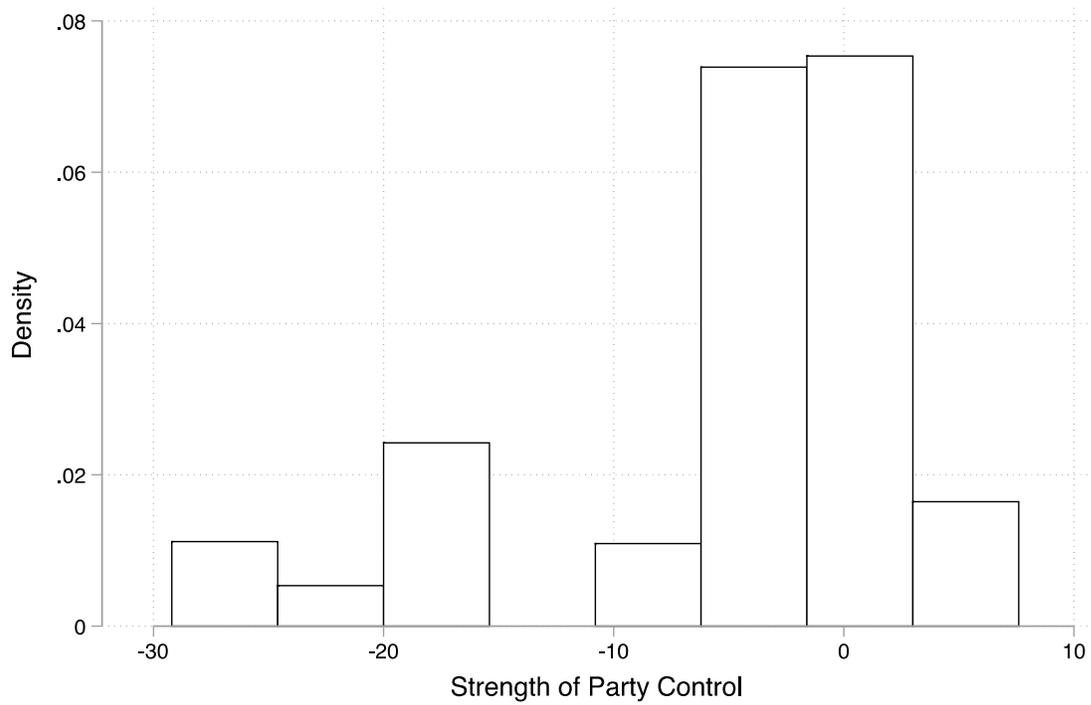


Figure 33. Strength of Party Control Histogram

APPENDIX C

PARTISAN THREAT MANIPULATION CHECKS

REPUBLICANS

Manipulation Check 1: According to the article, will the Senate hold hearings to consider the Supreme Court nominee?

1. Yes (control correct answer)
2. No (treatment correct answer)
3. Don't Know

Table 20. Manipulation Check 1 Excluded Participants by Party Strength (Republicans)

	Leaners	Weak Republicans	Strong Republicans	Total
Did Not Fail MC	39	63	59	161
Control Fail MC	1	7	5	13
Treatment Fail MC	4	6	5	15

Manipulation Check 2a (Only Treatment Condition): According to recent polls, which party do most Americans feel is to blame for the gridlock in Congress?

1. Democrats
2. Republicans (correct answer)
3. Neither
4. Don't Know

Table 21. Manipulation Check 2a Excluded Participants by Party Strength (Republicans)

	Leaners	Weak Republicans	Strong Republicans	Total
Did Not Fail MC	41	76	64	181
Treatment Fail MC	3	0	5	8

Manipulation Check 2b (Only Control Condition): According to recent polls, do the majority of Americans support or oppose holding hearings on the Supreme Court nominee?

1. Support (correct answer)
2. Oppose

Table 22. Manipulation Check 2b Excluded Participants by Party Strength (Republicans)

	Leaners	Weak Republicans	Strong Republicans	Total
Did Not Fail MC	41	66	68	175
Control Fail MC	3	10	1	14

Attention Check: Participants are excluded if they spend less than 30 seconds reading the article

Table 23. Attention Check Excluded Participants by Party Strength (Republicans)

	Leaners	Weak Republicans	Strong Republicans	Total
Did Not Fail MC	38	59	56	153
Control Fail MC	2	12	3	18
Treatment Fail MC	3	12	3	18

DEMOCRATS

Manipulation Check 1: According to the article, will the Senate hold hearings to consider the Supreme Court nominee?

4. Yes (control correct answer)
5. No (treatment correct answer)
6. Don't Know

Table 24. Manipulation Check 1 Excluded Participants by Party Strength (Democrats)

	Leaners	Weak Democrats	Strong Democrats	Total
Did Not Fail MC	33	79	85	197
Failed MC	2	8	11	21

Manipulation Check 2a (Only Treatment Condition): According to recent polls, which party do most Americans feel is to blame for the gridlock in Congress?

1. Democrats (correct answer)

2. Republicans
3. Neither
4. Don't Know

Table 25. Manipulation Check 2a Excluded Participants by Party Strength (Democrats)

	Leaners	Weak Democrats	Strong Democrats	Total
Did Not Fail MC	32	83	87	202
Treatment Fail MC	3	4	9	16

Manipulation Check 2b (Only Control Condition): According to recent polls, do the majority of Americans support or oppose holding hearings on the Supreme Court nominee?

1. Support (correct answer)
2. Oppose

Table 26. Manipulation Check 2b Excluded Participants by Party Strength (Democrats)

	Leaners	Weak Democrats	Strong Democrats	Total
Did Not Fail MC	34	84	91	209
Control Fail MC	1	3	5	9

Attention Check: Participants are excluded if they spend less than 30 seconds reading the article

Table 27. Attention Check Excluded Participants by Party Strength (Democrats)

	Leaners	Weak Democrats	Strong Democrats	Total
Did Not Fail MC	31	72	74	177
Failed MC	2	7	12	21

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