"It's Not Me, It's You": How Americans' Animosity Toward Their Opponents
Drives Modern Politics

By

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Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of the

Graduate School of Vanderbilt University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Political Science

August 11, 2017

Nashville, Tennessee

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Chapter 1

Introduction

"Politics, as a practice, whatever its professions, ha[s] always been the systematic organization of hatreds." –Henry Adams[1]

One of the most hotly debated topics in public opinion research surrounds the existence and nature of partisan divisions in American politics. A casual political observer might be amused to hear that such a debate even exists. "Real world" politics seems to be teeming with evidence to suggest partisan polarization is alive and well. The state of bipartisanship in Congress, for example, is probably best exemplified by House Speaker John Boehner's suggestion to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid that he "go f–k himself" during negotiations to avert the fiscal austerity crisis in 2013 (Bennett 2013). Inter-party hostility does not appear to be limited to elected officials, either. Rank-and-file partisans, for their part, see their opponents as "horrible idiots," "liars, cheats, and immoral pigs," and "everything that is wrong with the world." When asked about her feelings toward the Republican Party in 2016, one Democratic survey respondent said that she "hate[d]" her opponents so much that she "wouldn't trust them to water a houseplant."[2] For many, this kind of vitriol is everpresent in our political lives; we need only mention politics in passing to turn a Thanksgiving dinner into a shouting match.

Despite strong anecdotal evidence to the contrary, many scholars do not consider ordinary Americans to be polarized. In fact, some evidence suggests that the mass public is fairly centrist, at least when it comes to matters of issues or ideology. Americans' opinions on many political issues have failed to demonstrate the kind of movement toward the ideological poles that the term "polarization" itself implies

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[1]Adams, Henry. 1918. *The Education of Henry Adams: An Autobiography.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, p. 7.

[2]Quotes taken from open-ended responses collected as part of the NBC News|SurveyMonkey Audience Panel Survey, June-July 2016.

(Hetherington 2009). Analysis of public attitudes in the 1980s and early 1990s shows decreased variance in opinions and little change in the kurtosis of attitude distributions, both of which suggest polarization in the mass public either remained stable or even decreased over time (DiMaggio, Evans and Bryson 1996). In their foundational critique of mass polarization, Fiorina, Abrams and Pope (2005) show that the public retains remarkably centrist attitudes, even on contentious issues like abortion that should, theoretically, polarize the public. Data from the Pew Research Center (2012) similarly finds that Democratic and Republican identifiers differ on a variety of issues by just 18 percentage points, on average — a relatively small gap on the 100 point scale.[3] Some even argue that we merely *perceive* the public to be polarized through the media's emphasis on political conflict for dramatic effect (Fiorina, Abrams and Pope 2005; Levendusky and Malhotra 2015).

How, then, to reconcile Americans' apparent ideological centrism with what *feels* like a polarized and hostile political environment? The answer seems to be that for a long time, scholars were simply looking in the wrong place. The public is unlikely to ever exhibit the kind of bimodal preference distributions emphasized by most definitions of polarization (DiMaggio, Evans and Bryson 1996; Hetherington 2009). Most ordinary Americans lack the motivation to follow politics closely (Converse 1964; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Downs 1957) and therefore are unlikely to develop entrenched — let alone extreme — policy preferences on many matters. Instead, most people are likely to provide relatively centrist survey responses because they require the least amount of cognitive effort and are the easiest to justify (Krosnick

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[3]This is not to say that the Republican and Democratic camps have not become more distinct over the past few decades. The parties themselves have become less heterogeneous as individuals sort themselves into the "correct" party (Levendusky 2009), although this may only be true for strong party identifiers who are aware of elites' positions on the issues (Layman and Carsey 2002). Partisans also give more ideologically consistent survey responses than they had in decades past (Abramowitz and Saunders 2008). Whether greater attitudinal constraint equates to polarization, however, is dubious. Consistency, for example, does not necessarily equate with opinion extremity; Republicans might consistency place themselves slightly right of center on a variety of issues, in which case we would hardly describe their positions in this case as "extreme."

1991; Krosnick and Fabrigar 1997). Furthermore, because moderate positions are associated with openness and rationality — traits that are highly prized in social interaction — survey respondents tend to temper their opinions toward the midpoint of an issue scale (Cialdini et al. 1973). Centrism in issue positions, therefore, is probably more reflective of cognitive laziness or social desirability rather than true moderation.

Recently, scholars have documented a divergence in partisan affect that seems to capture polarization both conceptually and in the way in which political participants and observers experience it. Partisans increasingly dislike — and perhaps even despise — their opponents, even as their evaluations of their own side remain fairly warm. Perhaps the best evidence of this so-called "affective polarization" (Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes 2012) can be found in the ratings that partisans ascribe to their opponents using a feeling thermometer. This measure, used by political scientists since the 1960s, asks survey respondents to rate relevant political figures and groups on a scale ranging from 0-100. Ratings of 100 degrees indicate extremely "warm" feelings while ratings of 0 degrees indicate extremely "cool" feelings; scores of 50 indicate neutral feelings. Figure 1.1[4] uses data from the American National Election Study (ANES) Cumulative Data File to track the average feeling thermometer score ascribed to both parties by partisans[5] in every presidential election year since 1980, the first in which party feeling thermometers were included. The solid lines represent partisans' feelings toward their own party, while the dashed lines track partisans' feelings toward the opposite party.

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[4]This figure is similar to those originally produced by Haidt and Hetherington (2012) and replicated by Hetherington and Rudolph (2015), Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes (2012), and Mason (2015).

[5]Here, as in the remainder of the dissertation, I group together "leaning" partisans with "strong" and "weak" identifiers, based on previous research suggesting that Independent leaners think and behave similarly to partisans (Keith et al. 1992).

Figure 1.1: Average Feeling Thermometer Score for the Parties Among Partisans, 1980-2016
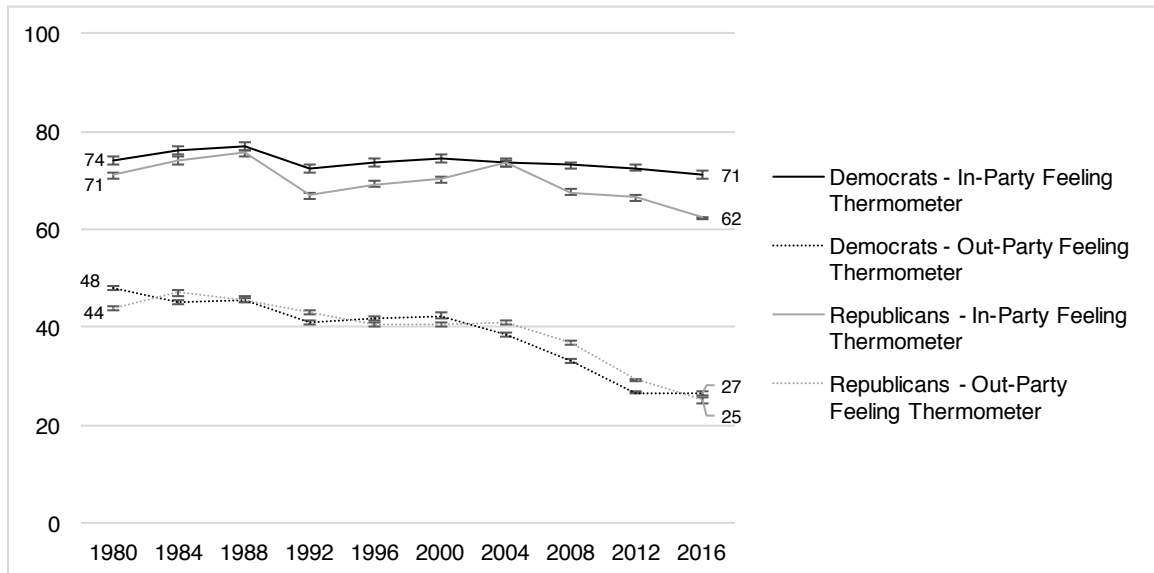
Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.
Source: ANES Cumulative Data File 1948-2012; ANES 2016 Time Series Study.

Since 1980, partisans have ranked their own party fairly warmly, consistently assigning them an average feeling thermometer score in the low 70s. These positive in-party feelings have decreased slightly over time, particularly among Republicans, whose warmth toward their own party dropped five points just between 2008 and 2016. Far more significant, however, is the precipitous drop in warmth expressed by partisans for the other party. At the beginning of the time series, both Republicans and Democrats evaluated the opposition in fairly neutral terms; in 1980, Democrats rated the Republican Party at 48 degrees, while Republicans rated the Democratic Party at 44 degrees. These scores remained relatively constant, with some slight year-by-year variation, for much of the 1990s and early 2000s. Since 2004, however, partisans' antipathy toward the other side has rapidly accelerated. By 2016, Democrats rated the Republican Party at 27 degrees, while Republicans assigned the Democratic Party an average score of 25 degrees. Between 1980 and 2016, the average

feeling thermometer rating that partisans ascribed to the opposite party dropped 19 degrees — nearly a fifth of the entire scale. Evidence from early 2017 suggests that there is room for these feelings to polarize even further. While Democrats' average feeling thermometer score for the Republican Party remained at 27 degrees between the fall of 2016 and March 2017, Republicans' feelings toward the Democratic Party dropped by five points to 20 degrees over the course of mere months.[6]

Not only have the *average* scores ascribed by partisans to their opponents deteriorated over time, the *distribution* of such scores has changed fundamentally as well. Figure 1.2 documents the change in party feeling thermometer scores, organized into 10-degree bins, in 1980 and 2016. The black bars represent feeling thermometer scores among Democrats and the gray bars represent feeling thermometer scores among Republicans. There appears to be little change in the distribution of in-party feeling thermometer scores between 1980 and 2016. In both years, a plurality of Republicans (46% in 1980; 45% in 2016) rated their own party between 51 and 70 degrees. The case is similar among Democrats, with 43% of identifiers rating the Democratic Party between 10 and 70 degrees in 1980 and 39% providing these same scores in 2016. Moreover, partisans' feelings toward their own party do not appear to move significantly toward the poles over time; if anything, in-party feelings have become *less* polarized over time. Whereas 34% of Republicans rated their own party between 81-100 in 1980, only 23% did the same in 2016. Among Democrats, 40% rated their own party similarly favorably in 1980, compared to 39% in 2016.

The change in distributions of out-party feeling thermometer scores, however, is significant. Between 1980 and 2016, the distribution of partisans' feelings toward their

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[6]Original data from YouGov survey conducted March 22-31, 2017. Though this data was collected from a different sample, the average feeling thermometer scores are remarkably similar to those in the 2016 ANES. In March 2017, Democrats' and Republicans' ratings of their own party differed by merely one degree — Democrats rated their own party at 72 degrees (compared to 71 in the 2016 ANES) and Republicans rated their party at 63 degrees (compared to 62 in 2016). Democrats rated the Republican Party at 27 degrees (the same score assigned in the 2016 ANES). More information about the data collection and structure can be found in Chapter 5.

Figure 1.2: Distribution of Feeling Scores for Parties Among Partisans, 1980 & 2016
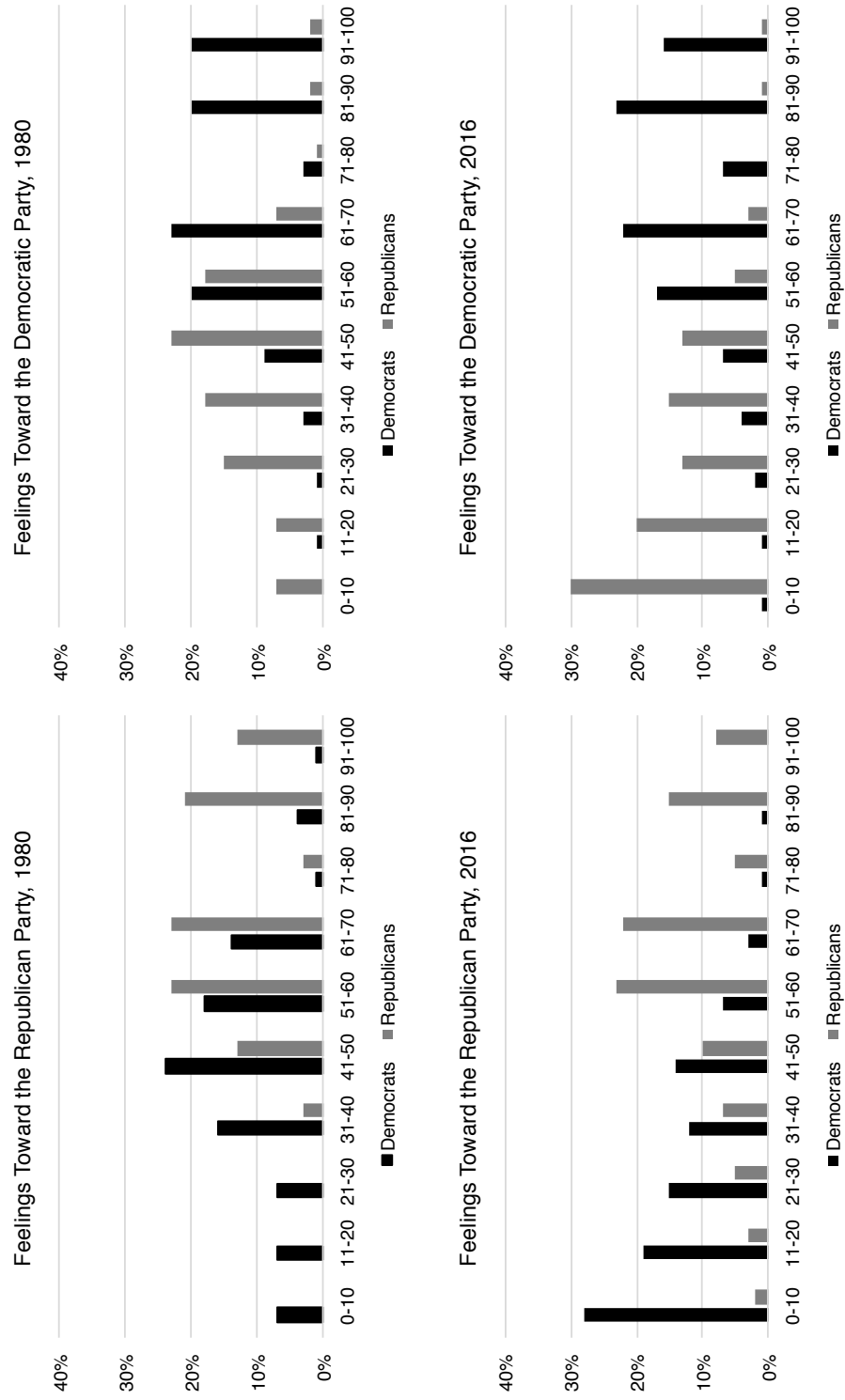
Source: ANES Cumulative Data File 1948-2012; ANES 2016 Time Series Study.

opponents exhibited a striking movement toward and clustering at the South pole. In 1980, only 7% of Democrats rated the Republican Party between 0 and 10 degrees; by 2016, that number had quadrupled to 28%. Similarly, 7% of Republicans rated their opponents between 0-10 degrees in 1980, a full 30% ascribed the same scores to the Democratic Party in 2016. By the conceptual standard of polarization — which emphasizes bimodal distributions clustered toward the poles (DiMaggio, Evans and Bryson 1996; Hetherington 2009) — partisans appear to be increasingly polarized in their feelings toward their opponents.

Evidence of affective polarization is not limited to changes in feeling thermometer scores, either. Partisans' displeasure at the prospect of a family member marrying into the out-party increased dramatically over the past five decades. In 1960, only five percent of Republicans and four percent of Democrats said they would be "displeased" at the prospect of a son or daughter marrying a member of the opposite party; by 2010, nearly half of Republicans and a third of Democrats felt the same way (Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes 2012). By a similar metric, partisans ascribe far more negative personality traits to both the rank-and-file of the opposite party and to the out-party's presidential candidate than they did decades ago (Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes 2012; Hetherington, Long and Rudolph 2016).

The discovery of the divergence in party affect and "social distance" measures (Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes 2012) over time has proven satisfying for many who struggled to reconcile an increasingly contentious political climate with the apparent ideological centrism of the electorate. The question of if — and how — the rise of affective polarization *actually* has changed politics, however, has thus far remained an open one. While the growth in out-party negativity over time is certainly an interesting trend, it is much less consequential for our understanding of politics if it is merely a manifestation rather than a cause of the increasingly partisan behavior that scholars have documented in recent decades (Bartels 2000; Hetherington 2001; Levendusky

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2009). An emerging line of research suggests that unfavorable views of the opposition do indeed correlate with increased partisan behavior when it comes to levels of political participation and straight ticket voting (Abramowitz and Webster 2016; Mason 2015). Whether or not partisans' increasingly hostile feelings toward their opponents have changed how they form important political *attitudes* remains unexplored.[7]

This dissertation begins to document the extent to which the trend of rising out-party negativity influences the way that individuals understand their place in the political world. Though the conventional understanding of partisanship suggests that people orient themselves to politics through their connection to their own party (e.g., Campbell et al. (1960); Green, Palmquist and Schickler (2002)), the analysis contained herein suggests that modern partisanship works primarily through the negativity partisans feel toward their opponents. Across several domains, I demonstrate that out-party negativity plays a dominant role — beyond that of ideology, strength of identification, and in-party positivity — in important aspects of opinion formation and information processing.

Chapter 2 lays the theoretical groundwork for the dissertation by defining and describing out-party negativity. Largely ignored by researchers for decades, out-party negativity provides a particularly useful lens through which to view the current political climate. I provide *prima facie* empirical evidence of negative out-party affect as an enduring social attitude that functions independently of traditional measures of partisanship, which helps to explain a documented increase in partisan behavior even as the distribution of party identification has remained relatively constant in the aggregate. I also provide some evidence suggesting that out-party affect is rather stable at the individual and aggregate levels, bolstering the idea that it is a stable partisan attitude that behaves differently than other, more mobile facets of public opinion. Finally, I provide some theoretical reasons to suspect that out-party negativity exerts

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[7]See Hetherington and Rudolph (2015) for an important exception.

a causal effect on other important political attitudes.

Chapter 3 begins to document some of the consequences of the increase in out-party negativity. It traces the relationship between out-party negativity and partisans' ideological self-identification and policy preferences. The results demonstrate that the affective basis for partisan opinion changed fundamentally throughout the past several decades. Before the onset of partisan polarization, partisans used both in-party and out-party feelings to determine where they stood on important matters of policy – a finding consistent with the conventional understanding of partisanship as a social identity. Since 2000, however, out-party affect has played a primary role in determining these stances, in part due to its increasing influence and in part due to the collapse of in-party positivity as a predictor of these preferences. This trend appears to be strongest among the most knowledgable partisans, but partisans with only a moderate understanding of politics are subject to it as well. The largest gains in the ability of out-party negativity to influence these positions occur among weak and leaning partisan identifiers. This provides further evidence to suggest that out-party negativity has become more central to partisan opinionation and bias in recent years.

Chapter 4 examines the role that out-party negativity plays in partisans' processing of political information. Specifically, this chapter documents how negative feelings toward the opposition influence individuals' willingness to engage in partisan-motivated reasoning — in particular with regard to their acceptance of unverified political "rumors." I show that negative out-party affect is far more important to rumor acceptance than ideology, which challenges the findings of past research. These results persist even after controlling for factors that predispose individuals to believe in rumors, like trust or a propensity to engage in conspiratorial thinking. I also find that the influence of out-party affect on rumor endorsement is particularly strong among highly knowledgeable partisans, suggesting that even those individuals who "should

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know better" are willing to accept egregious misinformation when they sufficiently dislike their opponents. The fact that partisans tend to accept the rumors as truth simply because they loathe the opposition suggests that cooperation and negotiation is nearly impossible in the current political climate. When people cannot even agree on what constitutes "factual" information, opportunities for political progress are few and far between.

Finally, Chapter 5 explores the limits of out-party negativity by exploring if and how it influences the way Americans view democracy. I investigate the origins of two different kinds of democratic attitudes: those related to system support — the degree to which individuals endorse democracy over other types of governance — and democratic norms, which generally refer to civil rights, liberties, and the "rules of the game." I find that though out-party affect is inconsistently related to individuals' attitudes toward democratic and more authoritarian systems of governance, out-party negativity plays a dominant role in the degree to which partisans find abstract civil rights and liberties to be important. Contrary to expectations, however, I find that out-party negativity *bolsters* individuals' endorsement of democratic norms, while in-party positivity *reduces* support. In this sense, out-party negativity — which can sometimes lead to normatively troubling outcomes — plays a normatively *beneficial* role in promoting democratic values. Finally, I theorize that out-party negativity plays this protective role in particular because it appeals to partisans' risk aversion: those who hold particularly hostile attitudes toward the opposition may voice higher support for democratic norms because they worry about the curtailment of their rights when the out-party is in power. Taken together, my results suggest that though partisans' dislike of their opponents does not appear to have shaken their convictions about democracy as a preferred system of government, out-party negativity does influence the degree to which people are willing to extend rights to others and endorse fair play *within* a democracy. In this way, out-party hostility may in fact help

slow democratic deconsolidation indirectly by strengthening people's commitment to democratic principles.

Chapter 2

Out-Party Negativity in Modern Politics

Like other social domains, politics is dominated by the human tendency to understand the world in terms of groups (Achen and Bartels 2016; Bentley 1908; Brewer and Kramer 1985; Huddy 2001; Kinder and Kam 2009). Unlike in other democracies in which class, race, and ethnicity continue to play a large role in guiding political behavior (e.g., Deegan-Krause 2007; Evans 2000; Chandra and Wilkinson 2008), the most important source of contemporary political group conflict in the United States is that between the two major parties. Americans express such deep and enduring group attachments to the Republican and Democratic parties as to classify their party affiliation as social identities in and of themselves, akin to even ethnic or religious identities in strength (Greene 1999; 2003; Green, Palmquist and Schickler 2002; Weisberg and Greene 2003).

Aside from its durability, part of why party identification functions as a social identity is because partisans exhibit favoritism toward their own party and negativity toward the other party (Campbell et al. 1960; Green, Palmquist and Schickler 2002). People who think of themselves as Democrats tend to like the Democratic Party and dislike the Republican Party, and vice versa (Green, Palmquist and Schickler 2002; Greene 2003). This behavior is consistent with psychological theories of intergroup relations predicting the import of in- and out-group membership for individual attitudes and behavior. Based on even the most trivial criteria, people exhibit strong biases toward their own group and against the out-group (Huddy 2001; Tajfel 1981; Tajfel and Turner 1979). Nearly two decades prior to the conceptual development of social identity theory, Campbell et al. (1960) noted the tendency of partisans to display this exact behavior, noting that "responses to each element of national politics are deeply affected by enduring party attachments" (Campbell et al. 1960, 128). In

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the decades since *The American Voter* (1960), scholars have focused their attention on documenting the extent to which identification with a party influences individuals' thinking about politics. Party identification, they discovered, is so central to individuals' self-conceptions that it colors interpretations of all other matters political, including evaluations of candidates and leaders (Campbell et al. 1960; Weisberg and Greene 2003), perceptions of relevant political conditions (Bartels 2002), issue preferences (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Layman and Carsey 2002; Lenz 2012; Zaller 1992), political values (Goren 2005; Goren, Federico and Kittilson 2009; Jacoby 2014), and interpretations of factual information (Gaines et al. 2007; Hochschild and Einstein 2015; Taber and Lodge 2006).

In documenting these consequences, however, scholars have largely ignored the possibility that individuals may also be motivated by their *dislike* of a political party. The idea itself is not new; the notion that political identities can form around the "repelling qualit[ies]" of parties is as old as public opinion research itself (Campbell et al. 1960, 121). For the past half century, however, the scholarly focus has been limited primarily to exploring the nature and effects of one's identification *with* a party. Ironically, it is our very understanding of partisanship as a social identity that has produced this bias. Psychological theories posit that individual and group identities are defined, first and foremost, by the things they represent, e.g. "I am a woman" or "we are Catholics" (Allport 1954; Tajfel 1981; Tajfel and Turner 1979). Out-group orientations are largely thought to be derivative, developing only after the self and in-group are defined (Allport 1954; Karniol 2003; Tajfel 1981; Tajfel and Turner 1979; Zhong et al. 2008). Similarly, we believe partisans "choose" to affiliate themselves with the party that best represents some set of psychological interests, writ-large. Indeed, this focus on the preeminence of in-group — or, more appropriately, in-*party* – attachments in forming partisan identities continues to this day in the form of the traditional party identification question included on most public

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opinion surveys: "Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?" (Campbell et al. 1960).[1]

Other research in psychology, however, suggests that we should not overlook the potential importance of negative party attachments in explaining political attitudes and behavior. First, decades of research in psychology demonstrate that negative information tends to be interpreted cognitively differently than positive information. All things being equal, negative information tends to have a greater impact on psychological processing than positive or neutral information (Baumeister, Finkenauer and Vohs 2001; Lau 1982; 1985; Rozin and Royzman 2001; Taylor 1991). This suggests that when partisans draw on information to form their opinions, their "sample" (Zaller 1992) may be biased more heavily to include negative information about their opponents compared to positive information about their own side. Moreover, affective evaluations of objects are not merely the result of an "average" or "sum" of positive and negative feelings; people tend to rely disproportionately on negative affect in impression formation (Anderson 1965; Feldman 1966; Hodges 1974). For these reasons, partisans' negative feelings toward their opponents are likely to exert a powerful influence *independent* of other, positively-valenced considerations like in-party attachments. Previous research has indeed found that vote choice could be better explained by models that included partisans' evaluations of the opposition alongside in-party evaluations compared to those that simply included in-party evaluations alone (Maggiotto and Piereson 1977).[2]

Though this evidence alone is suggestive of the idea that out-party evaluations

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[1]Even newer, alternate measures of partisanship that attempt to correct for some of the well-known issues with the traditional party identification scale display an in-party bias, with new survey items that zero in on partisans' relationships to their own party but not their attitudes toward their opponents (e.g., Huddy, Mason and Aaroe 2015).

[2]Of important note, however, is the fact that the authors of this study conducted it during a time in which party identification and its influence on political attitudes and behavior was at a post-World-War-II low (Clarke and Suzuki 1994; Dennis 1988; Miller and Wattenberg 1983). It is not yet been fully explored as to whether out-party affect exerts a similar or stronger effect in the more recent partisan environment.

matter in the way partisans see the world, recent trends in public opinion suggest that the effects of out-party negativity could be even more potent now, which could help explain the "resurgence" in partisan thinking and behavior over the past two decades (Bartels 2000; Hetherington 2001; Levendusky 2009). Figure 2.1 helps illustrate why. Using ANES data from every presidential election year since 1980, it chronicles the distribution of party identification in the aggregate over time.

Figure 2.1: Strength of Party Identification, 1980-2016
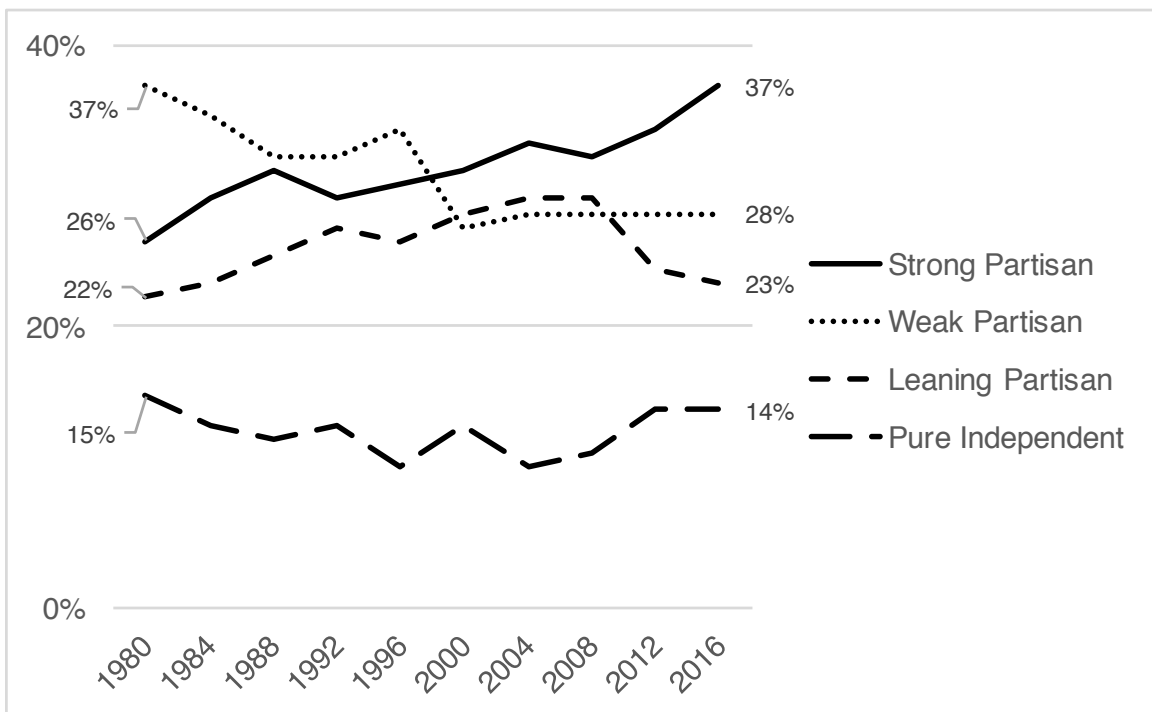
Source: ANES Cumulative Data File 1948-2012; ANES 2016 Time Series Study.

For much of the time series, the proportion of individuals willing to identify themselves as partisan remained more or less stable. From 1980 to 2000, for example, the percentage of strong partisans in the electorate increased only slightly from 26% to 31%. Over this same period, the proportion of weak partisans decreased by six percentage points. The proportion of leaning partisans — who, importantly, shy away

from party labels by first identifying as "Independent" — actually *increased* by six percentage points over the same two decades. During a period in which the impact of partisanship on voting behavior increased substantially (Bartels 2000; Hetherington 2001), it seems curious that there were not larger gains in the proportion of individuals willing to openly identify themselves as partisan. There does appear to be an important shift in the distribution of party identification beginning in 2008. While the number of weak partisans remained more or less constant from 2008 to 2016, the percentage of leaning identifiers in the electorate decreased by six percentage points and the proportion of strong partisans increased by five percentage points. This constitutes a remarkably large change over two presidential election cycles, especially since a comparable shift in aggregate party identification took the entirety of the previous two decades to complete.

The fact that the increase in strong party identification has happened only recently is particularly notable given the trends in party affect over time. Recall from Figure 1.1 that for the better part of three decades, partisans' feelings toward their own party remained relatively stable. Since 2004, however, partisans' antipathy toward the other side has accelerated considerably. A similar shift in aggregate-level party identification did not occur until a full election cycle later. While certainly not conclusive,[3] this suggests that out-party negativity plays a significant role in defining what it means to be a partisan in a polarized political environment.

2.1   How Out-Party Affect Differs from Partisanship

Before exploring potential consequences of the trend of rising out-party negativity, it is important to draw a distinction between party affect and partisanship. Though it is tempting to categorize the increase in out-party antipathy as a rise in

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[3]Unfortunately, since I lack panel data that includes measures of party affect during this time period, I cannot conclusively demonstrate that individual-level changes in out-party negativity induce shifts in the strength of party identification. I hope to explore this possibility more fully in the years ahead.

"negative partisanship" (Abramowitz and Webster 2016), the two are not necessarily synonymous. The term itself is borrowed from research in comparative politics, where negative partisanship is measured differently — using some variation of the question "Is there a party that you would never vote for?" — and has been documented to have different antecedents than those related to "positive" partisanship (Caruana, McGregor and Stephenson 2015; Garry 2007; Medeiros and Noel 2014; McGregor, Caruana and Stephenson 2015; Rose and Mishler 1998). Moreover, in a multiparty context, individuals can exhibit negative partisanship in relation to more than one party. In the American political system, identification with the Democratic Party is observationally — if not conceptually — equivalent to non-identification with or rejection of the Republican Party. In other democracies in which multiple parties vie for control of government, however, it becomes less obvious as to which is a partisan's "natural" opponent, as there is more than one party toward which an individual can develop a longstanding dislike or aversion (McGregor, Caruana and Stephenson 2015). For this reason, before treating out-party affect and negative partisanship as one and the same, we require a more careful exploration of the nature of out-party negativity and its use by partisans in the United States.

Based upon several pieces of (preliminary) evidence, I argue that out-party negativity is a distinct partisan attitude that is less stable than partisanship but more entrenched than many other facets of public opinion. While the analysis below is by no means conclusive — a more careful discussion about measurement, contingent on future data collection, is warranted — several pieces of evidence suggest this interpretation is correct. First, party affect does not appear to be a simple manifestation of strength of partisanship. In fact, the correspondence between partisanship and party affect, while high in the general population, is relatively low among subpopulations of partisans. Using data from every presidential election year of the ANES from 1980 to 2012, I estimated a series of bivariate OLS regression models to chronicle the associa-

tion between the party feeling thermometers and party identification and between the party feeling thermometers themselves among all respondents and among Democratic and Republican identifiers. To do so, I regressed (1) strength of party identification on the Democratic Party feeling thermometer, (2) strength of party identification on the Republican Party feeling thermometer, and (3) the Republican Party feeling thermometer on the Democratic Party feeling thermometer. Table 2.1 presents the coefficients corresponding to each regression. All variables have been re-scaled from 0-1. A score of 1 on each feeling thermometer indicates the warmest possible feeling toward that party. A score of 0 on the strength of partisanship measure indicates an individual's identification as a strong Democrat; a score of 1 indicates identification as a strong Republican.

Table 2.1: Correspondence Between Partisanship and Feeling Thermometers, 1980-2012

Population	Strength PID & Dem. Party FT	Strength PID & Rep. Party FT	Dem. Party FT & Rep. Party FT
Full sample	-0.912	0.812	-0.383
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.006)
	N=20,577	N=20,558	N=20,604
Democrats	-0.295	0.118	-0.095
	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.008)
	N=10,748	N=10,706	N=10,691
Republicans	-0.158	0.278	-0.105
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.013)
	N=7,488	N=7,522	N=7,481

Bivariate regression coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. Source: ANES Cumulative Data File 1948-2012.

As we can see, the relationships between strength of partisanship and the party feeling thermometers among all respondents are quite strong (β = -0.912 for the Democratic Party feeling thermometer, β = 0.812 for the Republican Party feeling thermometer). Given the broad understanding of party identification as "an individ-

ual's *affective* orientation toward an important group object" (Campbell et al. 1960, 121; emphasis added), it is hardly surprising to find a high correspondence between strength of partisanship and each party's feeling thermometer. Interestingly, the relationship between feeling thermometers is much weaker (β = -0.380), though the correlations likely appear smaller than they actually are due to heterogeneity in individuals' use of the feeling thermometers (Brady 1985; Green 1988). This suggests that while individual party feeling thermometers are highly correlated with self-reported measures of partisanship, the feeling thermometers are not perfect mirror images of one another; being pro-Republican is not necessarily the same as being anti-Democrat. Instead, individuals likely use the party feeling thermometers as two separate affective dimensions.

This seems to be particularly true among subgroups of partisans. The strength of the relationship between partisanship and the Democratic Party feeling thermometer among Democrats is less than a third of that documented among all respondents (β = -0.295); the relationship between these variables in the full sample is more than five times stronger than it is among Republican identifiers (β = -0.158). Similarly, the relationship between the Republican Party feeling thermometer and strength of partisanship is nearly three times weaker among Republicans (β = 0.278) and more than six times weaker among Democrats (β = 0.118) than it is in the full sample. Among both Democrats and Republicans, the relationship between the party feeling thermometers themselves is negligible (β = -0.095 among Democrats; β = -0.105 among Republicans), though again, the strength of the relationship is likely attenuated as a result of measurement error.[4]

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[4]Of important note, the unreliability of the feeling thermometer measures helps mitigate concerns of multicollinearity, which could be a concern in subsequent analyses given that most of my models include the party feeling thermometers and strength of partisanship as explanatory variables. If anything, the fact that the feeling thermometer scores contain a significant amount of measurement error suggests that my models actually underestimate the importance of party affect and overestimate the importance of party identification (which tends to have less measurement error) in predicting other important attitudes.

The fact that the correlations between *in*-party feeling thermometers and strength of partisanship are stronger than those between partisanship and *out*-party feeling thermometers is notable, in that it suggests that co-partisans differentiate themselves from one another more in their evaluations of their opponents rather than in their evaluations of their own party. Figure 2.2 provides further evidence in support of this claim. Using ANES data, it tracks the average party feeling thermometer scores among strong, weak, and leaning partisans from 1980 to 2016.

Looking first at the trends related to in-party feeling thermometers, we can see that the levels and change of partisans' warmth toward their own party over time varies more or less in accordance with their professed identification with a party. Strong Democrats and Republicans consistently express the warmest evaluations of their own party over time, followed by weak partisans, with leaning partisans exhibiting the coolest evaluations of their own side. Moreover, this same pattern more or less holds when it comes to partisans' change in evaluations of their own party over time. For example, between 1980 and 2016, strong Republicans' evaluations of their own party dropped by a margin of nine percentage points, compared to a drop of 12 percentage points among both leaning and weak Republicans. This is largely consistent with the conventional understanding of how the "intensity" (Campbell et al. 1960) of party identification works: those who profess stronger party attachments are more positive toward their own party and should, theoretically, exhibit the least amount of change when it comes to evaluations of their own side. Among Democrats, the pattern with respect to change over time is slightly less linear. Strong Democrats rated their party four percentage points less favorably in 2016 than they did in 1980, but the drop in in-party warmth actually stronger among weak Democrats, whose change in evaluations toward the Democratic Party were a slightly larger seven percentage points over the same time period. Even so, weak identifiers are still, on average, more positive toward their own side than leaning identifiers at the end of the time series.

Figure 2.2: Average Feeling Thermometer Score for the Parties by Strength of Party Identification, 1980-2016
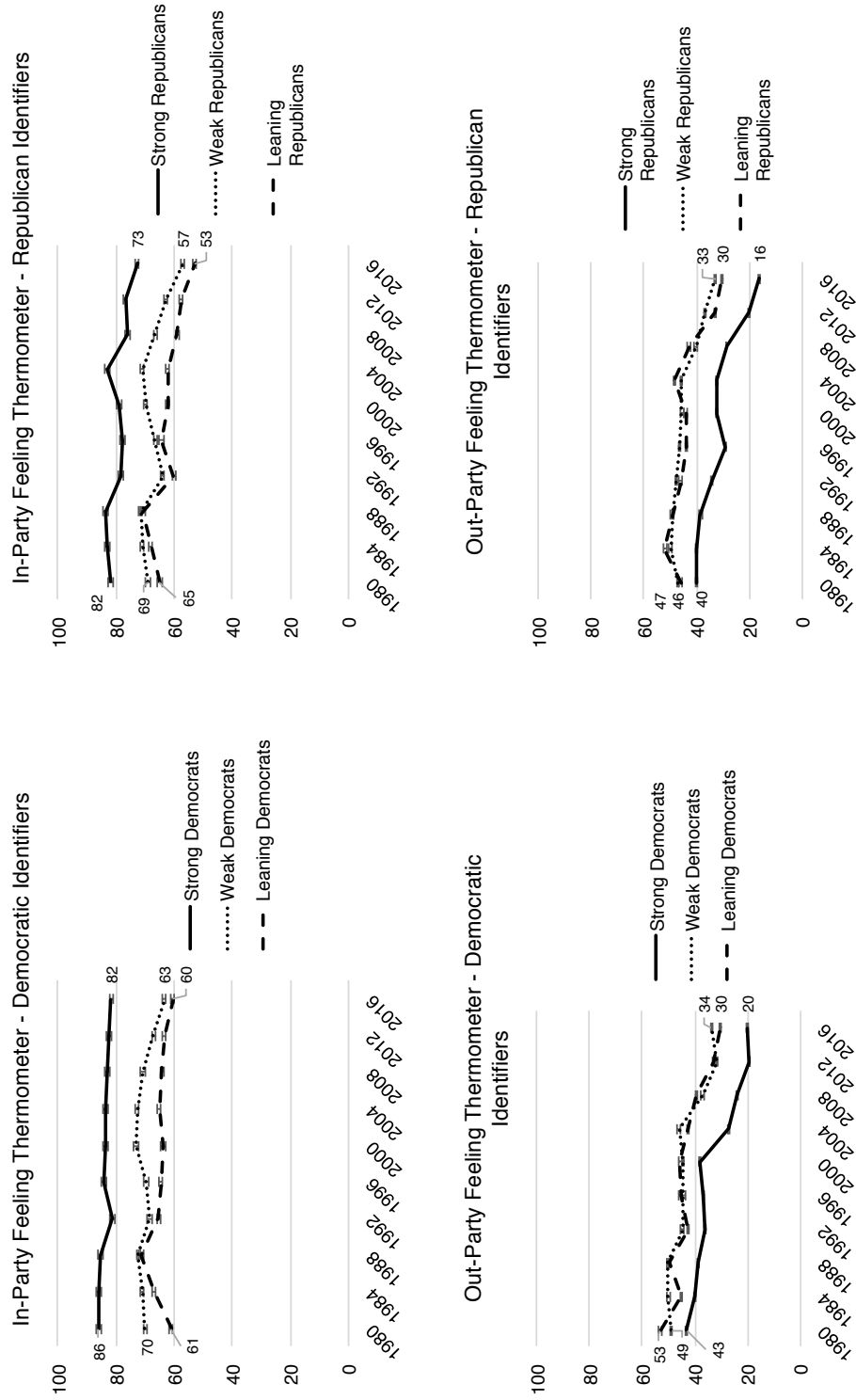
Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Source: ANES Cumulative Data File 1948-2012; ANES 2016 Time Series Study.

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The story is quite different when it comes to evaluations of the other side. Whereas strong partisans consistently provide the most negative evaluations of their opponents, weak and leaning identifiers are nearly identical when it comes to the level of negative affect they hold with respect to the other side. This runs counter to the expectation that attitudes toward the out-party should vary in accordance with strength of partisanship: stronger partisans should exhibit, on average, the most negative attitudes toward their opponents, followed by slightly less negative evaluations among weak partisans, and with the least negative out-party evaluations occurring among leaning partisans. Moreover, the change over time in out-party affect does also not follow the expected pattern. While strong Democrats and Republicans exhibit the most precipitous drop in out-party affect (by a margin of 23 and 24 percentage points, respectively), evaluations of the opposition dropped more among leaning partisans than they did among weak partisans. From 1980 to 2016, leaning Democrats' evaluations of the Republican Party dropped by 23 percentage points, while the drop among their "weak"-identifying co-partisans was only 15 percentage points. Similarly, leaning Republicans rated the Democratic Party 16 percentage points more negatively in 2016 compared to 1980; the drop among weak Republicans was slightly less at 14 percentage points. The fact that out-party party evaluations do not appear to vary in accordance with strength of partisanship when it comes to both the average *level* of dislike and the *change* in dislike over time provides even more reason to treat out-party negativity as an entity separate from in-party warmth or strength of party identification.

2.2   Evidence of Individual- and Aggregate-Level Stability

Central to teasing out the differences between party identification and party affect is the question of attitude stability. Thus far, scholars have treated party affect as mostly a by-product of party identification rather than as a separate entity worthy of

exploration. Green, Palmquist and Schickler (2002), for example, classify party affect as merely another "facet of public opinion" (73) due to the fact that correlations between feeling thermometer scores across panel waves are lower than those related to party identification. While this is certainly true, the magnitude of the difference in correlations between partisanship and party affect across waves is marginal, especially after correcting for measurement error. Across nine panel studies, the average difference between the intra-wave correlation coefficients with respect to party identification and the party feeling thermometers across waves is 0.04; the largest difference between the correlations in any one study is 0.15 (Green, Palmquist and Schickler 2002, 74). Moreover, the measurement-error-corrected correlations between feeling thermometers across panel waves are surprisingly high, ranging from a low of $r = 0.81$ to a high of $r = 0.99$. Despite the high level of stability, the authors argue that party affect is more likely a consequence of party identification rather than its own entity. In justifying their case, they make an important prediction:

> ...there is a critical difference between party identification and feelings of warmth toward the parties: The former is linked to the voter's self concept and thus should be resistant to change. The latter, although affected by the voter's party identification, is much more likely to be subject to the vicissitudes of everyday politics. In other words, a scandal-plagued Democratic administration may well lead Democrats to feel less warmly toward their party, but it should have a much less noticeable effect on Democrats' self concept (Green, Palmquist and Schickler 2002, 74).

But just how stable is party affect in the face of important stimuli? While it is certainly true that aggregate party affect is subject to change as part of broader, long-term trends in politics[5] — as demonstrated in Figure 1.1 — it remains unclear how, if at all, feelings toward the parties change in response to short-term events. If party affect does indeed fluctuate significantly in response to "the vicissitudes of everyday politics," we can have more confidence that it is merely a downstream consequence of party identification. If, on the other hand, party affect remains relatively stable

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[5]I speculate on some of the causes of the drop in out-party affect in the next chapter.

despite more-or-less "exogenous" shocks, we can be more certain that it is indeed central to partisans' self-concepts.

Two pieces of evidence suggest the latter to be true. The first concerns the stability of party affect during a particularly stimuli-ridden environment: a presidential primary campaign. Figure 2.3 uses data collected as part of NBC News and Survey-Monkey's Election Tracking surveys to track the average party feeling thermometer scores among both Democrats and Republicans, beginning in December 2015 and ending in February 2016.[6] For the ease of administration, the feeling thermometers ranged from 0 (least warm feelings) to 10 (warmest feelings) instead of the typical 101-point scale.[7]

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[6]These rolling cross sectional surveys drew nearly 10,000 completed interviews on a weekly basis, with respondents randomly selected from the more than 90 million responses the platform receives every month. As respondents were drawn from a non-probability sample, results are weighted to match population parameters with respect to gender, age, race and ethnicity, education, and geographical region of the U.S.

[7]Given that the vast majority of feeling thermometer scores tend to cluster at points on the scale that are labeled or that end in zero (Alwin 1992; 1997; Broockman, Kalla and Aronow 2015), I am comfortable truncating the scale to these ten intervals. While doing this — and, in general, using "noisy" feeling thermometers as the independent variable of interest throughout — introduces error into estimates, it also likely underestimates the effects of party affect on the dependent variables of interest.

*Bars indicate 95% confidence intervals. Source: NBC News|SurveyMonkey Election Tracking
Surveys, December 2015 - February 2016.*

As we can see, the average feeling thermometer scores for both the in-party and
out-party across a three month time period are extremely stable among both sets of
partisans. This stability is remarkable, especially given a series of events during this
time period that one might expect would induce changes in either in- or out-party
affect (e.g. eight televised debates; the Iowa Democratic and Republican caucuses on
Feburary 1; withdrawal of candidates Martin O'Malley, Mike Huckabee, Rand Paul,
Rick Santorum, Chris Christie, and Carly Fiorina from the race). While this evidence
does not preclude the possibility that party affect might change at the individual level
in response to these events, the lack of significant movement in the average feeling
thermometer scores over a contentious primary campaign suggests that party affect
is not overly responsive to short-term political forces.

Nevertheless, given the aggregate nature of this evidence, I cannot rule out the

possibility that there may be significant short-term fluctuations in individuals' feeling thermometer ratings. Though the evidence above suggests that party affect in the aggregate is mostly stable, I lack evidence demonstrating its stability at the individual level. To test how individuals' feelings toward the parties might change in response to a stimulus, I designed an experiment designed to prime party affect by varying individuals' assignment to a self-referential mood induction task. Such procedures have long been used in psychological research to induce mood states by asking subjects to think and write about a time in which they felt a certain emotion (Mayberg et al. 1999; Richell and Anderson 2004; Velten 1968). Using a variation of this technique to prime party affect is useful for a few reasons. The first concerns its potential utility in priming party affect independent of other partisan considerations or attitudes. To test the causal nature of the relationship between party affect and ideology or issue preferences, for example, it is important to prime *only* the feelings that partisans naturally hold toward the parties; priming other considerations — like issue positions or ideology — could contaminate the results. Secondly, using a mood induction procedure as the experimental stimulus helps further clarify the nature of party affect. The concept of "affect" as I have used it generally refers to the degree to which an individual likes or dislikes some political object, or how negatively or positively valenced said object is in one's mind (Mutz 2007). That being said, the term "affect" as it is used in political science research is much more ambiguous. One study counted 23 theories, models, and concepts, all of which use the term "affect" differently; in practice, "affect," 'mood," "feeling," and "passion" are often used interchangably (Neuman et al. 2007). While certainly not conclusive, attempting to prime party affect in the same way in which psychologists prime more episodic emotions can help distinguish between the two concepts. If party affect is more resilient than mood, we can be more confident that it is indeed more stable than many other political attitudes.

I tested this hypothesis using a survey experiment administered in conjunction with NBC News and SurveyMonkey in the summer of 2016.[8] Consistent with protocol in other mood induction studies, I randomly assigned half of respondents to a treatment in which they were asked to think deeply about and write down their feelings toward each party in an open-ended response format. The prompts were as follows:

> We are interested in hearing about people's feelings toward political parties. Please answer the following questions in your own words. Your feedback is very important.
>
> (1) First, please describe your overall feelings toward the [Democratic/Republican] Party and why you feel this way.
>
> (2) Now, please describe your overall feelings toward the [Democratic/Republican] Party and why you feel this way.[9]

On the subsequent page, respondents in the treatment group were asked to quantify their responses using the party feeling thermometers (again scaled 0-10 for ease of administration). Those assigned to the control group did not receive the open-ended questions but were asked to provide feeling thermometer scores for the parties. In expectation, those partisans assigned to the treatment should provide more extreme party feeling thermometer scores — rating their own party more favorably and the other party less favorably — on average, compared to their counterparts in the control group.

The results of this experiment are presented in Table 2.2. The estimates are derived from a series of difference-in-means tests conducted among the full sample of respondents and subsequently among Democratic and Republican identifiers. The table includes two sets of analyses, one for each party feeling thermometer. Overall, the results suggest that the experimental stimulus did not have a statistically or substantively significant impact on subjects' evaluations of the parties. Looking first at

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[8]This sample is drawn from SurveyMonkey's Audience Panel, a pool of approximately 3 million users who answer SurveyMonkey's consumer and political surveys on a regular basis. Responses were again weighted to match population parameters.

[9] The order of these open-ended questions was randomized.

the results using the Republican Party feeling thermometer as the dependent variable, we can see that subjects in the treatment group tended to rate the Republican Party slightly more negatively than those in the control group by a margin of 0.10 points. This difference, however, is not statistically significant at conventional levels, nor is it particularly meaningful in a substantive sense given the 11-point range of the variable. The results from subsetted analyses using Democratic and Republican partisans are equally unimpressive. Democrats in the treatment group rated the Republican Party 0.28 points more negatively than Democrats in the control group. While the difference is indeed in the expected direction — Democrats who were asked to think about and describe their feelings toward the Republican Party tended to be more negative than those who did not receive the same prompt — it is not large and also does not reach significance at the 95% confidence level. Republicans in the treatment group rated their own party slightly more favorably than their counterparts in the control group, but again, the magnitude of the difference (0.11 points on an 11-point scale) is quite small and not statistically significant.

Table 2.2: Affect Manipulation Experimental Results

DV: Republican Party Feeling Thermometer					
Population	Control Mean	Treatment Mean	Difference (T-C)	*t*-score (Difference)	N
Full Sample	5.77	5.68	-0.09	-0.15	2,201
Democrats	3.19	2.91	-0.28	-0.75	960
Republicans	7.19	7.30	0.11	0.23	708

DV: Democratic Party Feeling Thermometer					
Population	Control Mean	Treatment Mean	Difference (T-C)	*t*-score (Difference)	N
Full Sample	7.18	7.24	0.06	0.08	2,201
Democrats	9.46	9.37	-0.09	-0.09	960
Republicans	3.34	3.59	-0.25	-0.95	708

Source: NBC News|SurveyMonkey Audience Panel Survey, June 21 - July 5, 2016.

The manipulation does not appear to have produced meaningful results with respect to subjects' evaluations of the Democratic Party either. Within the entire sample, subjects in the treatment group appeared to rate the Democratic Party more positively than subjects in the control group, though the difference again is neither substantively or statistically significant (0.06 points, $t = 0.08$). The results are largely the same among both subsets of partisans as well. Though the control-treatment differences within each group are again statistically and substantively insignificant, the sign of the difference runs counter to expectation: Democrats in the treatment group may even feel *less* positively toward their own party compared to those in the control group, while Republicans in the treatment group might be more likely to think *more* positively of Democrats than their counterparts in the control group.

The results presented here are certainly not conclusive. For one, it is possible that party affect could be more responsive to a stronger treatment. The intervention in

this experiment was intentionally subtle, as it was designed to prime generalized party affect instead of particular emotions (e.g. anger, disgust, happiness, pride, etc.) that individuals may feel toward the parties. Following the latter approach could conflate the two concepts without first establishing that discrete emotions form the basis of what researchers have only thus far observed to be a set of positively or negatively valenced considerations. In the future, I plan to explore other avenues to prime party affect — for example, a revealed preference experiment — that may be more successful. But when considered in light of the other pieces of evidence presented above, the results from this experiment provide additional reason to suspect that party affect tends to be stable both at the individual and aggregate levels in response to short-term forces.

2.3 An Additional Note on Causality

Implicit in both the experiment conducted above and my argument throughout the dissertation is the notion that party affect occurs causally prior to many other political evaluations. As most of the evidence presented in subsequent chapters is drawn primarily from observational studies, providing concrete "proof" that the causal arrow runs from individuals' feelings toward the parties to other attitudes is impossible. Party affect — operationalized throughout using feeling thermometer scores for the Democratic and Republican parties — tends to be measured at the same time as other outcome variables, making it difficult to tease out the causal order of these relationships. The dearth of panel studies in social science research, particularly in recent years, contributes to the problem. No publicly-available panel studies have included the party feeling thermometers in more than two waves since the 1992-1994-1996 ANES Panel Study, making it difficult to use existing data to test the causal nature of these relationships in a more polarized political environment (e.g., Lenz 2012). Similarly, finding a suitable instrument for party affect that is uncorrelated

with measures of partisanship is nigh impossible, which precludes using simultaneous equation modeling to circumvent the problem of observational equivalence. Trying to tease out the causal nature of the relationship using experimental methods presents its own challenges as well. As noted previously, priming party affect without simultaneously priming other partisan dependent variables of interest (e.g. ideology or issue preferences) is difficult.[10] And, given the experimental results above, it also may be difficult to move party affect if it truly functions as a more-or-less stable partisan attitude.

While it is possible — and perhaps even likely — that other important attitudes occasionally influence party affect, research suggests that most frequently, the causal arrow should run from party affect to other evaluations rather than the other way around. Scholars have long recognized that individuals' cognitive limitations and meager interest in politics cause them to rely heavily on affect in forming political judgments (Achen and Bartels 2016; Kuklinski and Quirk 2000). Reliance upon affect toward political groups or candidates, rather than other types of information, is "a quicker, easier, and more efficient way to navigate a complex [and] uncertain...world" (Slovic et al. 2007, 1334) in which few people are willing or able to invest significant resources. Although people's memories may fail them in recalling specific details about policies or candidates, people can recall their summary affective evaluations and use them to inform preferences and vote choice (Clore, Gasper and Garvin 2000; Lodge, Steebergen and Brau 1995). The idea that people regularly engage in this

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[10]Recent experimental work arguing ideology occurs causally prior to party affect (Rogowski and Sutherland 2016; Webster and Abramowitz 2017) is subject to this same concern. By varying perceptions of ideological distance, scholars have been able to induce large changes in party feeling thermometer scores. Given concerns about citizens' ability to understand ideological terms and language (Converse 1964; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Ellis and Stimson 2012; Jacoby 1986; Luttberg and Gant 1985) and the close association between partisanship and ideology (Levendusky 2009), it is unclear whether these manipulations are priming something other than partisanship. Also questionable is whether such results generalize to contexts outside of survey experiments. Other work by Ahler and Sood (2017) more convincingly demonstrates that priming partisans with information about party-stereotypical groups can induce changes in party affect, but the magnitude of these shifts is relatively small (about three percentage points).

type of behavior in relation to groups specifically is also well established. More than 30 years ago, Brady and Sniderman (1985) demonstrated that people can use an affective calculus — a "likeability heuristic" — about social groups specifically to make inferences about where such groups stand on issues.

That the affect in question is related to parties makes it even more likely to exert a causal effect on other political attitudes. Party identification has been widely documented to be stable enough to powerfully influence a wide variety of political attitudes (e.g., Bartels 2002; Campbell et al. 1960; Carmines and Stimson 1989; Jacoby 2014; Gaines et al. 2007; Layman and Carsey 2002; Lenz 2012; Zaller 1992). Given partisanship's centrality to political thinking, it is likely that party-centered affective evaluations are employed reflexively when people interact with the political world. Recent research suggests this to be the case: hostile feelings toward the out-party in particular appear to be deeply ingrained and applied automatically in information processing (Iyengar and Westwood 2014). If such attitudes are in fact applied unquestioningly, it seems likely that party affect — and particularly out-party hostility — occurs causally prior to many other evaluations. In this sense, partisans' feelings toward the opposition very likely function as a *dislikability* heuristic that they can rely upon when evaluating the political world. The degree to which citizens rely upon this heuristic in a polarized political context, however, is unclear. It is to this question that I turn in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 3

Out-Party Negativity and Partisan Preferences, 1988-2012

Thus far, I have argued that out-party negativity is an important and potentially powerful lens through which partisans process information and formulate political opinions. But just how important is out-party hostility to individuals' thinking in the contemporary political environment? In a polarized context, does out-party negativity merely provide a complement to in-party feelings in attitude formation, as researchers have understood for decades? Or is its role now fundamental in informing partisan attitudes and opinions?

I argue that the trend toward rising out-party negativity has changed the way that partisans understand their place in the political world. I demonstrate that the affective basis for policy and ideological preferences has changed significantly over the last several decades. Before 2000, the effect of feelings was in line with a traditional understanding of social groups: positive feelings toward one's own party outweighed negative feelings toward the opposition in influencing policy preferences. The reverse is now true; the influence of hostile feelings toward the opposition has surged while the impact of in-party warmth has evaporated. This change is most evident among the most politically knowledgeable partisans, but also among Republicans with a low or moderate understanding of politics as well. I also find notable differences in these effects in accordance with strength of partisanship: those with weaker partisan attachments now use out-party negativity in their evaluations to a greater degree than co-partisans with stronger self-identifications. The results suggest revisiting the means by which partisanship functions in a new, polarized political environment: out-group antipathy, rather than in-group attraction, now appears to dominate partisans' thinking about political issues and ideology.

3.1 Why Should Out-Party Negativity Matter More Now?

Several changes in the political environment in the past few decades suggest that partisans' deployment of positive and negative affect in individuals' political evaluations is now skewed more heavily in favor of the latter. Instead of weighing in-party positivity and out-party negativity equally, partisans' negative evaluations toward the opposition are much more likely to exert a strong influence on their issue and ideological placements since the onset of partisan polarization. The possibility that partisans now orient themselves to politics using a *dislikability* heuristic is likely a result of the increased saliency of out-party negativity in the contemporary political environment. This is due in part to rising levels of uncivil discourse at the elite level. While scholars continue to debate the substance of polarization among the masses (Abramowitz and Saunders 2008; Abramowitz 2010; Bafumi and Shapiro 2009; DiMaggio, Evans and Bryson 1996; Fiorina, Abrams and Pope 2005; Fiorina and Abrams 2008; 2009; Fiorina and Levendusky 2006; Layman and Carsey 2002), few disagree that elites are now more ideologically polarized than they have been in over a century (McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal 2006; Poole and Rosenthal 2016). Greater conflict on an increasing number of issues is likely responsible for a growth in uncivil talk and behavior on the part of elected officials (Fiorina 2013). The incentives for political politeness, deference, and courtesy decline as political gridlock increases because there are no strategic advantages to using it (Herbst 2010; Strachan and Wolf 2013). Political discourse, therefore, is likely more affectively charged in this era of political polarization than it has been in years past, because "for familiar psychological reasons, substantive conflict generates emotional affect and personal animosity" (Fiorina 2013, 150). Because mass partisans' exposure to uncivil speech conveying negative information about the other party is on the rise, it seems probable that individuals would pick up on and incorporate hostile out-party feelings in their own political evaluations (Campbell et al. 1960; Zaller 1992). Indeed, short-term exposure to partisan incivility and negativity

present in these partisan news sources also causes people to doubt the legitimacy of the opposition's arguments and increase their own use of uncivil language (Gervais 2014; Mutz 2015).

Even if the amount of elite incivility were to remain constant, media trends have undoubtedly increased the saliency of out-party negativity by increasing partisans' exposure to information that portrays the opposition in a bad light. The availability of videos that can be circulated and replayed ad nauseam on either broadcast television or the internet contributes, at the very least, to the perception that incivility has increased over the past few decades (Levendusky and Malhotra 2015). Visual frames that produce intensely negative emotional reactions — including those that emphasize the physical distance between political opponents and tight camera shots — are far more prevalent now than they were in the past (Mutz 2015). The increase in partisan media sources only exacerbates these effects. With partisans now able to choose their own information delivery system, their contact with opposing viewpoints that might moderate their views is greatly reduced (Prior 2007). These partisan news sources tend to focus disproportionately on stories that impugn the opposition and ignore ones that paint their own side in a bad light (Baum and Groeling 2008). As a result, exposure to like-minded partisan news outlets increases the likelihood that viewers evaluate the other side more negatively but does not appear to increase positive in-party feelings (Levendusky 2013). The proliferation of internet access throughout the early 2000s also likely contributed to the rise of negative out-party feelings. Greater access to broadband internet appears to have increased the hostility that partisans feel toward their opponents by granting them easier access to a variety of partisan sources (Lelkes, Sood and Iyengar 2016).

Regardless of the cause, high levels of out-party negativity are associated with increasingly partisan behavior in a several areas. Hostile out-party feelings appear to cause higher levels of anger, a heightened tendency to characterize opponents in

negative terms, and a decline in trust in government (Hetherington and Rudolph 2015; Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes 2012; Mason 2015). Negative out-party affect is also associated with increased levels of political participation and straight-ticket voting (Abramowitz and Webster 2016; Mason 2015). Perhaps most relevant to this research, scholars have also demonstrated that hostile feelings toward the out-party are deeply ingrained and automatic in individuals' minds (Iyengar and Westwood 2014). The fact that these effects are most clearly documented only recently, however, suggests that the relative importance of in-party and out-party attachments has likely changed over time. Rising levels of negativity directed at the out-group, coupled with the amplified effect of out-party feelings on attitudes and behavior, suggests that our understanding of how partisan identities shape public opinion is imperfect. For decades, scholars assumed the source of partisan cue-taking to be in-party in nature: partisans responded to what elites in their favored party said or did, and adjusted their views accordingly (Lenz 2012; Zaller 1992). More recent research suggests that partisans may have switched to rely more heavily on cues from the opposition in determining their own stances on important issues (Arceneaux and Kolodny 2009; Goren, Federico and Kittilson 2009; Nicholson 2012). Our understanding of if and when this switch occurred, however, remains incomplete.

3.2 Evaluating the Influence of Out-Party Negativity Across Time

I focus my analysis in this chapter on tracing the changing influence of in- and out-party affect on individuals' issue positions and ideological identification, with the expectation that out-party affect has become increasingly important to these placements since the onset of partisan polarization. Focusing on these dependent variables in particular is a rigorous test of the theory. As opposed to evaluations of political conditions or the ideological placements of parties or candidates, self-placements on issues and ideology are arguably more difficult to change than other

political attitudes. People are more likely to change their opinions of external objects than those related to themselves (Festinger 1957).

Several pieces of evidence suggest that changes in individuals' affective orientations toward the parties can and do influence self-placements. As noted previously, party identification is a strong predictor of individual political thought and action because it creates a "perceptual screen" through which individuals view the world (Campbell et al. 1960). Voters adopt issue positions, adjust candidate perceptions, and invent facts to rationalize decisions they have already made based on social identities like partisanship (Achen and Bartels 2016). Since affective in- and out-group orientations are central to party identification(Campbell et al. 1960; Green, Palmquist and Schickler 2002; Greene 2003), changes in these feelings should affect partisans' issue placements.

Ideological self-identification is not likely to be immune to the influence of party affect, either. Most people know and care little about politics, making their independent understanding of ideology rather weak (Converse 1964; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Ellis and Stimson 2012; Jacoby 1986; Luttberg and Gant 1985). In fact, most people adopt the terms "liberal" and "conservative" more because of their meaning outside of politics than for any connection that the terms have to policy positions (Conover and Feldman 1981; Ellis and Stimson 2012; Malka and Lelkes 2010). The fact that, over time, individuals have changed their ideological self-identifications to match their partisan identities (Levendusky 2009) further suggests that party affect would exert a causal influence on these placements rather than the other way around.[1]

To test this theory, I estimate a series of OLS regressions predicting individuals' issue and ideological positions as a function of their feelings toward their own party,

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[1]This is not to suggest, of course, that certain issues do not exert an influence on party affect. Indeed, some of the issues that individuals find to be particularly salient can cause people to change their party identification (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Carsey and Layman 2006). Often, however, scholars conflate these sorts of changes with partisan persuasion, and thus underestimate the power of partisanship in moving individuals' positions even on issues as "easy" as abortion (Achen and Bartels 2016).

their feelings toward the opposite party, and a series of relevant control variables. Party affect is operationalized in each model as *In-Party Positivity* (feelings toward the Democratic Party among Democrats, and feelings toward the Republican Party among Republicans) and *Out-Party Negativity* (feelings toward the Democratic Party among Republicans, and feelings toward the Republican Party among Democrats).[2] To construct the dependent variable, I average together individuals' ideological self-placement and self-placements on all domestic issue items asked consistently in the ANES in those presidential election years ranging from 1988 to 2012. These ten issue items span both the economic and social policy domains.[3] Restricting the analysis to only those issues and ideological questions that appear in every survey over this time period allows me to mitigate concerns that differences in placements from year to year are due solely to the nature of the survey instrument (e.g. the addition or subtraction of particular questions or changes in question wording).[4] I use a mean score as the dependent variable in the analysis here for the sake of parsimony; estimating the same model for each issue and ideological self-placement yields similar results.

To rule out alternate explanations for variation in self-placements, I include several control variables. Arguably the most important of these measures individuals' strength of partisanship, as I am interested in how in-party and out-party feelings influence attitudes *independent* of the effect of merely classifying oneself a strong or

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[2] I exclude pure Independents from my analysis here and in the subsequent chapters. Since pure Independents eschew party labels — even when prodded in a followup question — they do not have a clear in- or out-party. As a result, it is difficult to determine what their use of the party feeling thermometer scores actually means. Even though I exclude pure Independents from these analyses, I have confidence that my results speak to broader trends in politics, as my samples include roughly 90% of survey respondents. (Pure Independents, on average, make up about 10% of national samples, a figure that has remained remarkably stable over time. See Figure 2.1 for more information.)

[3] Issue items include those related to abortion, government aid to blacks, guaranteed jobs for blacks, gay discrimination laws, government spending and services, government health care, child care spending, school spending, Social Security spending, and guaranteed jobs.

[4] Also in the interest of consistency, I excluded those respondents who received the "new" versions of half-sample questions in any given year. For example, in 2008 and 2012, the ANES administered new question wordings to half the sample on items related to government spending, health insurance, abortion, and defense spending, all of which regularly appear on ANES surveys. I also exclude respondents who participated in the ANES in 2012 via an online survey, as all previous versions of the ANES were administered in face-to-face interviews.

weak Democrat or Republican. I also include a control for political knowledge, using interviewers' assessments of respondents' understanding of the political environment. I do so because those high in political knowledge should be more adept at understanding the partisan relevance of issue and ideological questions and therefore might be more likely to provide what they view as the "correct" partisan response (Achen and Bartels 2016; Zaller 1992).[5]

Because I posit that the relationship between party affect and individual attitudes has changed over time, I subdivide my analysis into two time periods: the presidential election years before 2000 (that is, 1988, 1992, and 1996) and those years after 2000 (2004, 2008, and 2012). I use the year 2000 as the breaking point between the periods for two reasons. First, trends in public opinion suggest that mass polarization accelerated in the time period following the 2000 election (Hetherington, Long and Rudolph 2016; Hetherington and Weiler 2009),[6] suggesting that the relationship between affective evaluations and self-placements likely changed between the two periods. Secondly, media trends changed substantially in the early 2000s. The rise of partisan news networks like FoxNews and MSNBC and increased internet usage allowed people greater exposure to political discourse while simultaneously increasing

[5]In using the interviewer assessment variable, I depart somewhat from past studies that have used respondents' ability to correctly place the parties (i.e. placing the Democratic Party to the left of the Republican Party) as a means by which to gauge their understanding of the political environment (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Hetherington 2001; Carsey and Layman 2006; Levendusky 2009). While that measure seems theoretically appropriate, the percentage of partisans who can correctly place the parties has exploded in the past decade, with anywhere from 75-95% of partisans fulfilling this requirement (Levendusky 2009; Mason 2015). This lack of variation makes it difficult to detect knowledge effects, since the proportion of the public considered to be "low knowledge" (that is, the ones who cannot order the parties correctly) is small. Using the interviewer assessment measure allows for a slightly more nuanced test, since roughly 22% of respondents fall into the "fairly low" or "low" knowledge categories, 33% fall into the "average" category, and 44% fall into the "fairly high" or "very high" categories in the 1988-2012 period. Furthermore, using this measure provides the additional benefit of being able to track the effects of knowledge over time, since knowledge items vary from survey to survey both in their content and quality (Bartels 1996). Interviewers' assessments of respondents' knowledge is also highly correlated with other knowledge measures, making it a valid means by which to measure political sophistication (Luskin 1987; 1990; Zaller 1985).

[6]Evidence from Figure 1.1 also supports this conclusion, as out-party negativity has accelerated in particular beginning in 2004.

their ability to selectively consume like-minded partisan news content (Prior 2007; Lelkes, Sood and Iyengar 2016). These trends suggest that the influences of in- and out-party affect on political attitudes likely changed between the pre- and post-2000 eras. While I collapse the years into two time periods, I allow for idiosyncratic variation for each election by introducing year fixed effects. Finally, to allow for the possibility of differential effects for partisans on either side of the aisle, I estimate separate regressions for Democrats and Republicans.[7]

Table 3.1 displays the results of these analyses. All variables in the model have been re-scaled onto 0-1 intervals. The dependent variable is scaled so that 0 represents an average response that is *least* consistent with the party position (that is, the most *conservative* response for Democrats and the most *liberal* response for Republicans) and 1 represents the response that is *most* consistent with the party position (the most *liberal* response for Democrats and the most *conservative* response for Republicans). Positive coefficients, therefore, indicate a greater likelihood to place oneself closer to the ideological/issue position espoused by one's party.[8] Columns 3 and 6 also display the difference in coefficients across the time periods for Democrats and Republicans, respectively.

Looking first at the effects among Democrats (Column 1), we can see that individuals' affinity for their own party appears to exert a strong influence on issue and ideological positions in the pre-polarization period. The coefficient of $\beta = 0.123$ (p¡.01) on *In-Party Positivity* indicates that as Democrats change their feelings toward their own party from neutral (0.5) to highly positive (1), they increase their agreement with their party's position by an average of around 0.06, or a little less

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[7]I include "leaning" partisans in these groups per previous research suggesting that Independent leaners think and behave similarly to partisans (Keith et al. 1992).

[8]This is not to say that the parties' positions on all of these issues are uniformly situated at the extremes of the scale. That being said, given that most people — partisans included — tend to be, on average, more moderate than their parties (McClosky, Hoffman and O'Hara 1960; Jackson, Brown and Bositis 1982), the assumption that more extreme issue/ideological placements are those that are most consistent with the parties' positions seems reasonable.

than a half of a point on a seven-point issue or ideology scale. This is impressive given that this is the effect of in-party affect independent of strength of party identification. The effect of *Out-Party Negativity* on Democrats' placements during the same period is even stronger, with $\beta = 0.171$ (p<.01). This coefficient indicates that the more negatively Democrats feel toward the Republican Party, the more likely they are to adopt a liberal position. Conversely, the more positively they feel toward the Republican Party, the more likely they are to adopt a conservative position.

While out-party affect appears to exert a slightly more powerful effect than in-party affect for Democrats in the pre-polarization period, these effects change substantially in the post-2000 polarized era. The effect of *In-Party Positivity* on average self-placements during the 2004-2012 elections (Column 2) all but disappears, both in magnitude and in statistical significance. Column 3, which calculates the difference between these effects pre- and post-2000, demonstrates that the decline in the effect of in-party affect is also statistically significant at the 95% confidence level (two-tailed). At the same time, the influence of *Out-Party Negativity* on Democrats' self placements appears to increase in magnitude between time periods (from $\beta = 0.171$, p<.01, to $\beta = 0.206$, p<.01), although is not statistically significant at conventional levels. In comparing the difference between *In-Party Positivity* and *Out-Party Negativity* across time periods among Democrats, it becomes evident that the influence of out-party affect *relative* to in-party affect has increased over time. Even though the effect of out-party affective evaluations remains about the same in magnitude across time, the influence of in-party affect evaporates — making feelings toward the other side substantially more important in attitude formation among Democrats in this latter era.

Even stronger effects emerge among Republican identifiers. Column 4 demonstrates that prior to the onset of polarization, the influence of *Out-Party Negativity* on self-placements ($\beta = 0.264$, p<.01) was stronger than that for Democrats even in

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Table 3.1: Determinants of Average Issue/Ideological Self-Placement

	(1) Dems. - Pre-Polarization	(2) Dems. - Polarization	(3) Diff (2) - (1)	(4) Reps. - Pre-Polarization	(5) Reps. - Polarization	(6) Diff (5) - (4)
Out-Party Negativity	0.171***	0.206***	0.035	0.264***	0.327***	0.063
	(0.023)	(0.026)	(0.035)	(0.025)	(0.040)	(0.047)
In-Party Positivity	0.123***	-0.004	-0.127***	0.099***	-0.015	-0.114***
	(0.029)	(0.034)	(0.045)	(0.030)	(0.048)	(0.057)
Strength PID	0.014	-0.113***	-0.127***	0.127***	0.091	-0.036
	(0.037)	(0.042)	(0.056)	(0.039)	(0.062)	(0.073)
Pol. Knowledge	0.042***	0.047***	0.005	0.060***	0.063**	0.003
	(0.014)	(0.017)	(0.022)	(0.016)	(0.025)	(0.300)
Female	0.034***	0.041***	0.007	-0.029***	-0.005	0.024
	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.053)	(0.010)	(0.015)	(0.018)
Black	0.086***	0.051***	-0.035***	-0.061	-0.097*	-0.036
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.017)	(0.038)	(0.051)	(0.064)
1992	0.014			0.021*		
	(0.011)			(0.012)		
1996	-0.003			0.065***		
	(0.013)			(0.013)		
2008		-0.015			0.004	
		(0.013)			(0.020)	
2012		-0.031**			-0.004	
		(0.013)			(0.018)	
Constant	0.597***	0.449***		0.157***	0.227***	
	(0.031)	(0.036)		(0.035)	(0.051)	
Observations	935	521		882	409	
R-squared	0.165	0.248		0.249	0.232	

Standard errors in parentheses.

***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.1, two-tailed.

Source: ANES Cumulative Data File 1948-2012.

the post-2000 period. The effect of *In-Party Positivity*, on the other hand, was much smaller (β = 0.099, p<.01). The effect of *In-Party Positivity* among Republicans disappears post-2000 (Column 5). The difference in in-party affect between the two periods is substantial (β = -0.114, p<.01) The influence of *Out-Party Negatvitiy* in the polarization period is much stronger, though the difference between coefficients — displayed in Column 6 — is not statistically significant. Once again, out-party negativity dominates partisans' self-placements, and its influence is magnified at least in part to the decline of *In-Party Positivity* as a meaningful predictor post-2000. Out-party negativity now exerts an especially powerful impact on self-placements among Republicans: a change from neutral (0.5) to highly negative feelings (1) toward the Democratic Party induces an average change in self-placements by about 0.16, or more than a full point on all of the issue/ideological scales.

As a final demonstration of these trends, Figure 3.1 graphically depicts the change in the effects (βs) of in- and out-party affective evaluations for both sets of partisans in both time periods. By graphing the absolute value of these effects, we can better compare the effects of in- and out-party feelings on self-placements over time. While the trends are undeniably stronger for Republicans, both sets of partisans discount their feelings toward their own party in orienting themselves to politics in the post-2000 period. Now, feelings toward the other party exert a comparatively larger effect on self-placements for both Democrats and Republicans. This effect itself increased for Republicans in the 2004, 2008, and 2012 elections.

Figure 3.1: Magnitude of Influence on Average Issue/Ideological Self Placement

(Absolute Value of Reported Coefficients)
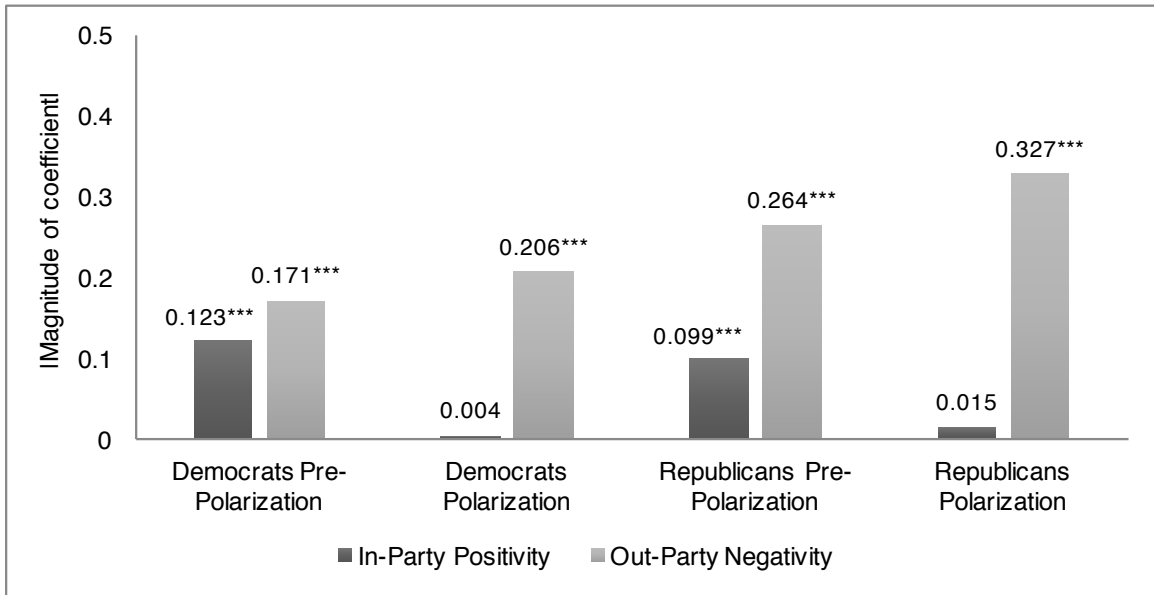
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1, two-tailed.
Source: ANES Cumulative Data File, 1948-2012.

Given these results, it would be reasonable to question whether the quantity of interest in explaining variation in policy or ideological positions over time is in-party positivity instead of out-party negativity. After all, in several instances, out-party negativity has come to dominate partisan thinking by virtue of the fact that the predictive power of in-party positivity has evaporated over time, *not* because the effects of out-party negativity themselves have increased in magnitude. Despite this, several pieces of evidence suggest that out-party negativity should remain central to discussions about partisan preference formation. One explanation for the limited growth in the importance of out-party negativity itself is that its effect was quite large even before the onset of partisan polarization. Consider the results in Table 3.1. Among Democrats prior to 2000, the effect of *Out-Party Negativity* on positions was slightly larger than the effect of *In-Party Positivity*. Among Republicans, the story

is even clearer, with *Out-Party Negativity* dominating perceptions even prior to 2000. This pattern of results is consistent with research that shows psychological processing is disproportionately affected by negative information and affect (Anderson 1965; Baumeister, Finkenauer and Vohs 2001; Feldman 1966; Hodges 1974; Lau 1982; 1985; Rozin and Royzman 2001; Taylor 1991). Unfortunately, scholars have tended to ignore out-party negativity when considering partisanship likely because party affiliation was conceptualized as an in-group attachment from the beginning (Campbell et al. 1960), and social identity theory rests more on in-group favoritism than out-group denigration (Huddy 2001; Tajfel 1981; Tajfel and Turner 1979). The results presented here question the wisdom of this thinking.

Second, no clear developments in politics point to a de-emphasis on the importance of in-party attachments over time. Conversely, several trends — particularly those related to a changing media environment — suggest that out-party negativity has become an integral part of political discussion in the United States (e.g., Baum and Groeling 2008; Gervais 2014; Lelkes, Sood and Iyengar 2016; Levendusky 2013; Mutz 2015). Indeed, experimental evidence demonstrates that exposure to a high-choice, partisan media environment does exert a causal influence on affective polarization (Lau et al. 2017). As the accessibility of partisan news sources continues to accelerate — via the internet in particular (Lelkes, Sood and Iyengar 2016) — it stands to reason that out-party negativity will play an even larger role in partisans' thinking. Though more careful research is needed to establish the causal link between these environmental changes and out-party affect *over time*, the results above suggest that scholars should focus on out-party negativity — rather than in-party positivity — in explaining partisan attitudes going forward.

3.3 The Effective Importance of Changes in Affect

These results demonstrate that the influence of out-party affect on issue and ideological positions has increased over time. In some cases, this is due to an increase in the importance of out-party negativity; in others, it is a result of the fact that the influence of in-party positivity has faded. While this seems consistent with my hypothesis, it only shows half the story. While there were changes in the *effects* of in- and out-party affect between these two time periods, there were also changes in the *levels* of these feelings in the public (Haidt and Hetherington 2012; Hetherington and Rudolph 2015; Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes 2012; Mason 2015; Abramowitz and Webster 2016). To gain a full understanding of the importance of party affect in attitude formation over time, we must consider how changes in both the influence and prevalence of these feelings interact to produce changes in individuals' issue and ideological stances.

Figure 3.2: Changes in Average Level of Party Affect Among Partisans, Pre- and Polarization Periods

(Absolute Value of Average Distance from Neutral [50] Score)
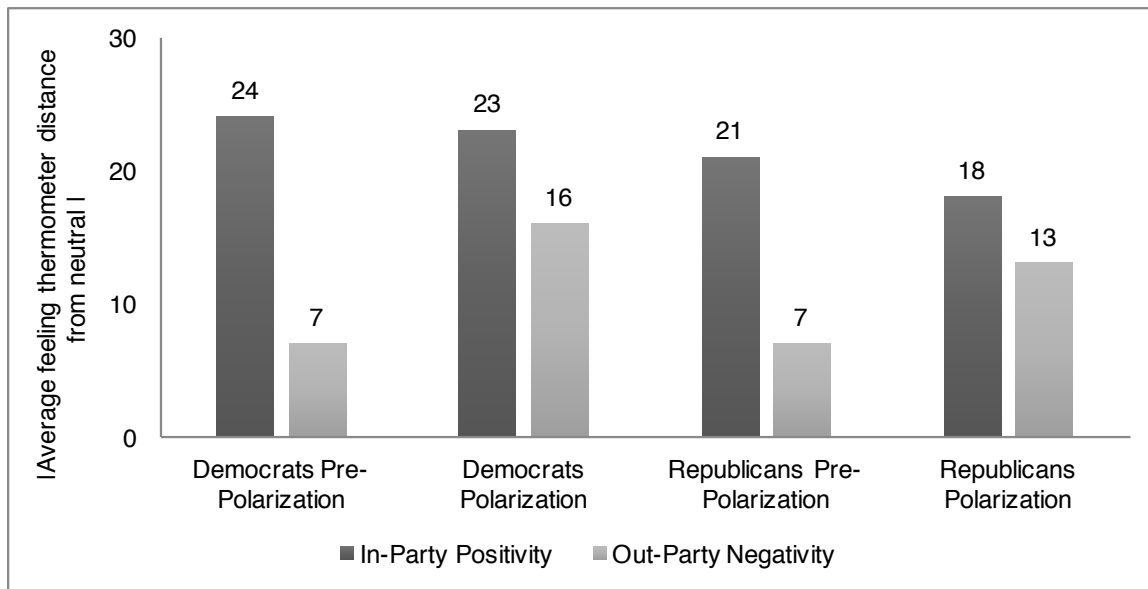
Source: ANES Cumulative Data File, 1948-2012.

To do this, I first calculated the average levels of party affect in the pre- and post-polarization periods for both Democrats and Republicans. Figure 3.2 shows the average feeling thermometer score's distance from the 50 (neutral) point among both Democrats and Republicans for both parties in each era. For example, the average feeling thermometer score for the Democratic Party among Democrats pre-polarization was 74 degrees, translating into a positive in-party bias of 24 percentage points. During that same era, Democrats' average rating of the Republican Party was 43 degrees, translating into an absolute (negative) out-party bias of seven percentage points.

As we can see, there is very little change in partisans' affective bias toward their own party over time. Both Democrats and Republicans decrease only slightly in their average in-party scores — Democrats by a margin of one percentage point and

Republicans by a margin of three percentage points. Levels of affective bias against the opposition, however, more than double among Democrats (by nine percentage points) and increase nearly twofold among Republicans (by six percentage points) between periods.

Using these numbers as indications of the average level of in- and out-party affect in both periods, I multiply them by the corresponding effects for in- and out-party evaluations (βs) estimated in the first set of analyses. Figure 3.3 shows the results of these calculations, giving us an indication of the overall importance of these affective changes to individuals' average placements.

Figure 3.3: Average Importance of Estimated Effects

(Absolute Value of Average Coefficient * Average Level of Party Affect)
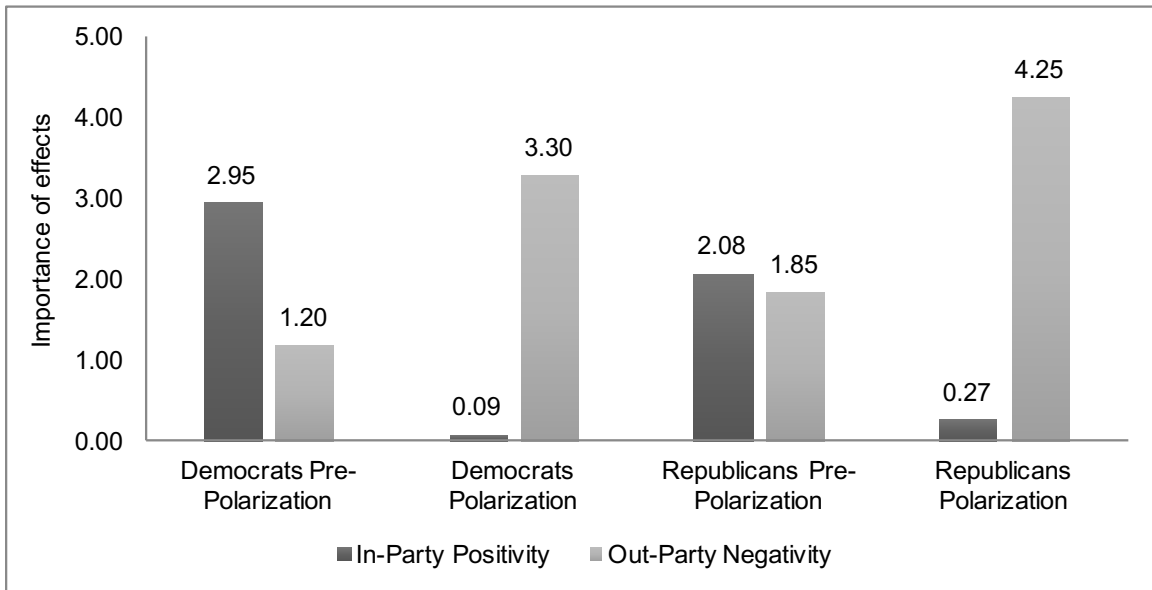
Source: ANES Cumulative Data File, 1948-2012.

The results demonstrate clearly how central out-party affect has become in individuals' self-placements. Prior to the onset of polarization, in-party affect was either more important (in the case of Democrats) or of equal importance to out-party affect (in the case of Republicans) to individuals' self-placements. In the three most

recent presidential elections, the importance of in-party affect almost completely disappears. Meanwhile, the influence of out-party evaluations has exploded. In the case of Republican identifiers, out-party affect is now more than twice as important in determining self-placements than it was in the period prior to 2000. Among Democrats, its influence increased nearly three fold over the same time period. In the contemporary political environment, out-party affect is nearly 16 times more important than in-party affect in explaining ideological/issue self-placements among Republicans. Among Democrats, the figure is even more impressive: in the elections since 2000, out-party negativity is 36 times more important than in-party positivity in explaining issue and ideological positions.

3.4 In- and Out-Party Effects Conditional on Knowledge

Though the results above suggest that out-party antipathy has come to play a central role in partisans' self-placements, they do not provide us with a clear sense of the *types* of partisans for whom out-party negativity matters most. I have argued thus far that cues from the political environment are likely responsible for partisans' increased reliance on out-party affect in recent years. If this is true, we might expect that certain types of partisans are particularly adept at picking up on affect-laden, out-party-centered cues and using them to guide their issue and ideological stances. Indeed, previous work has demonstrated that those partisans who are most knowledgeable about politics are more likely to be polarized on issues and ideology than those partisans who are less informed (Abramowitz and Saunders 2008; Bafumi and Shapiro 2009; Abramowitz 2010; Layman and Carsey 2002). If out-party negativity has become a defining feature of partisanship in a polarized political environment, we should expect that the largest differences in the use of out-party affect between the periods are concentrated among those who demonstrate the greatest understanding of the political world.

To get a better sense of how the relationship between party affect and individuals' placements might change subject to political knowledge, I replicate the analysis presented in Table 3.1 but additionally include terms interacting *Political Knowledge* with *Out-Party Negativity* and *In-Party Positivity*, respectively. I present the results of these OLS regressions in Table 3.2. The results suggest that the largest changes in the use of in- and out-party affect are concentrated among the most knowledgeable partisans. Looking first at the results in Columns 1 and 4, we can see that highly knowledgeable partisans are more likely than their low-knowledge co-partisans to use in- and out-party affect in the pre-polarization period. Prior to 2000, high knowledge Democrats were slightly more likely to rely on *Out-Party Negativity* ($\beta = 0.223$, p<0.01) than *In-Party Positivity* ($\beta = 0.159$, p<0.01) in forming their preferences. Low knowledge Democrats, on the other hand, appeared to use in- and out-party affect to an equal degree (β(*In-Party Positivity*) = 0.049; β(*Out-Party Negativity*) = 0.052), though the effects are not very substantively large and do not achieve statistical significance at conventional levels. In the pre-polarization time period, the effects of party affect are even larger for Republicans. High knowledge Republicans also used *Out-Party Negativity* ($\beta = 0.315$, p<0.01) far more than *In-Party Positivity* ($\beta = 0.124$, p<0.01) in forming their evaluations. As was the case with low-knowledge Democrats, low-knowledge Republicans appear to use *Out-Party Negativity* ($\beta = 0.094$), slightly more than In-Party Positivity ($\beta = 0.038$), but again, these effects are not substantively large and are not statistically distinguishable from zero.

Whereas highly knowledgeable partisans relied on both in- and out-party affect prior to the onset of polarization, they appear to have substituted out-party negativity for in-party positivity almost entirely in guiding their issue stances post-2000. Column 2 demonstrates that since the onset of polarization, the magnitude of the influence of *Out-Party Negativity* among highly knowledgeable Democrats appears to have increased substantially to $\beta = 0.245$ (p<0.01), though the difference between the

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Table 3.2: Determinants of Average Issue/Ideological Self-Placement - Affect x Knowledge Interactions

	(1) Dems. - Pre-Polarization	(2) Dems. - Polarization	(3) Diff (2) - (1)	(4) Reps. - Pre-Polarization	(5) Reps. - Polarization	(6) Diff (5) - (4)
Out-Party Negativity x Pol. Knowledge	0.171***	0.170***	-0.001	0.220***	0.136	-0.084
	(0.064)	(0.071)	(0.096)	(0.079)	(0.123)	(0.146)
In-Party Positivity x Pol. Knowledge	0.114	-0.095	-0.209***	0.086	-0.289*	-0.375***
	(0.071)	(0.089)	(0.114)	(0.087)	(0.155)	(0.178)
Out-Party Negativity	0.052	0.074	0.022	0.094	0.209*	0.115
	(0.049)	(0.060)	(0.077)	(0.066)	(0.111)	(0.129)
In-Party Positivity	0.049	0.071	0.022	0.038	0.229	0.191
	(0.053)	(0.076)	(0.093)	(0.087)	(0.155)	(0.178)
Pol. Knowledge	-0.138**	0.011	0.149	-0.127*	0.175	0.302
	(0.062)	(0.068)	(0.092)	(0.069)	(0.127)	(0.145)
Strength PID	0.012	-0.114***	-0.102*	0.119***	0.106*	-0.013
	(0.036)	(0.042)	(0.055)	(0.039)	(0.062)	(0.073)
Female	0.032***	0.044***	0.012	0.031***	-0.007	0.024
	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.014)	(0.010)	(0.015)	(0.018)
Black	0.085***	0.051***	-0.034*	-0.074*	-0.099*	-0.025
	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.018)	(0.038)	(0.051)	(0.064)
1992	0.013			0.022*		
	(0.011)			(0.012)		
1996	-0.006			0.066***		
	(0.013)			(0.013)		
2008		-0.016			0.006	
		(0.013)			(0.020)	
2012		-0.031**			-0.005	
		(0.013)			(0.018)	
Constant	0.471***	0.426***		0.302***	0.121	
	(0.052)	(0.061)		(0.062)	(0.119)	
Observations	935	521		882	409	
R-squared	0.175	0.257		0.258	0.240	

Standard errors in parentheses.
***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.1, two-tailed.

Source: ANES Cumulative Data File 1948-2012.

coefficients across periods is rather small ($\beta = 0.022$) and not statistically significant at conventional levels. The influence of *In-Party Positivity* among high knowledge Democrats, on the other hand, has vanished to a statistically and substantively insignificant effect of $\beta = 0.024$ in the post-2000 period. Importantly, this decrease in magnitude of *In-Party Positivity* across time periods is rather large ($\beta = -0.135$, p<0.01). This suggests that out-party affect has become more central to highly knowledgeable Democrats' evaluations of policy and ideology, mostly due to the collapse in importance of in-party evaluations over time. As was the case prior to 2000, low-knowledge Democrats appear to use *In-Party Positivity* ($\beta = 0.071$) and *Out-Party Negativity* ($\beta = 0.074$) roughly equally since the onset of polarization, though these effects are not particularly important in either a substantive or statistical sense.

When it comes to Republicans in the polarized era (Column 5), however, we can see that out-party affect has become more important to policy preferences among both high *and* low-knowledge identifiers. Post-2000, the effect of *Out-Party Negativity* among the most politically savvy Republicans is now $\beta = 0.345$ (p<.01), though it is not statistically distinguishable from its effect pre-2000 ($\beta = 0.315$, p<.01). The effect of in-party evaluations on issue stances, however, has again vanished, with β(*In-Party Positivity*)= -0.060 failing to achieve statistical significance in the polarized era. Importantly, the decrease in import of *In-Party Positivity* between the two time periods is large ($\beta = -0.184$) and statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. This again demonstrates that negative out-party affect has become increasingly central to the policy and ideological stances of high-knowledge Republicans by virtue of the decline in import of in-party evaluations.

Interestingly, since the onset of partisan polarization, even the least politically savvy Republicans have come to rely on *Out-Party Negativity* substantially in their evaluations of policy and ideology. Prior to 2000, the effects of both *Out-Party Negativity* and *In-Party Positivity* were rather inconsequential from both a statistical

and substantive standpoint in determining their issue/ideological positions. Post 2000, low-knowledge Republicans appear to use in- and out-party affect to a roughly equal degree (β(*In-Party Positivity* $= 0.229$, p<0.2; β(*Out-Party Negativity* $= 0.209$), though the effect of the former is not statistically significant at conventional levels. Nevertheless, the fact that even low knowledge Republicans — who did not previously appear to use party affect to a significant degree in determining their positions – now use out-party evaluations to determine their stances on matters of policy and ideology is notable.

The fact that the import of out-party negativity has increased most dramatically among highly knowledgeable partisans, however, suggests that the cues from the political environment provide a plausible over-time mechanism. Those high in political knowledge are those who are most likely to pick up on party-relevant cues and incorporate them into their political attitudes (Zaller 1992). If highly knowledgeable rank-and-file partisans have mostly abandoned the use of in-party evaluations and — in some cases — increased their use of out-party evaluations in forming their preferences, it seems probable that these shifts reflect changes in the ways that elites talk about politics. The fact that even low knowledge Republicans now use out-party affect in their evaluations suggests that these cues may even be strong enough to reach even less savvy partisans.

3.5   In- and Out-Party Effects Conditional on Strength of Partisanship

In the previous chapter, I provided cursory evidence suggesting that the traditional measure of partisanship may not accurately capture the degree to which out-party negativity has become central to the way that partisans think and reason about politics. Figure 2.2, for example, used aggregate-level data to demonstrate that out-party evaluations do not appear to vary in accordance with strength of partisanship when it comes to partisans' average level of out-party dislike and change in out-

party dislike over time. In my final analysis, I examine whether partisans of varying strength *apply* party affect differently, and whether their use of in-party positivity and out-party negativity may have changed over time.

To do so, I again replicate the basic analysis from Table 3.1 among strong, weak, and leaning party identifiers. Table 3.3 shows the effects of *In-Party Positivity* and *Out-Party Negativity* for both time periods among strong Democrats and Republicans; Table 3.4 contains a similar the same for weak Democrats and Republicans, and Table 3.5 displays the results among leaning Democrats and Republicans.

Looking first at the results among strong identifiers (Table 3.3), we can see that strong partisans' average issue/ideological self placements are primarily defined by out-party antipathy in both periods. Strong Democrats did not appear to incorporate *In-Party Positivity* to any substantively or statistically significant degree prior to polarization nor since its onset. The effect of *Out-Party Negativity* is substantial — moving from feeling neutral toward the Republican Party (0.5) to highly negative (1) implies a shift of nearly a half of a placement point on an issue/ideological scale in both periods — but the difference pre- and post-2000 is not statistically significant at conventional levels. *In-Party Positivity* did appear to matter to strong Republicans in the pre-polarization period, but its influence is less than half of that attributed to *Out-Party Negativity.* Post-2000, however, strong Republicans' placements do not appear to be shaped by in-party evaluations to any statistically or substantively significant degree. On the whole, strong Republicans appear to use out-party negativity to a greater degree than their Democratic counterparts ($\beta = 0.250$, p<.01 prior to 2000; $\beta = 0.240$, p<.01 post-2000), but the change between periods is again substantively and statistically insignificant.

Though strong partisans have consistently provided the most negative evaluations of their opponents over time (Figure 2.2), the results of these analyses for weak and leaning identifiers (Tables 3.4 and 3.5, respectively) suggest that strong partisans are

Table 3.3: Determinants of Average Issue/Ideological Self-Placement Among Strong Partisans

	(1) Strong Dems. - Pre-Polarization	(2) Strong Dems. - Polarization	(3) Diff (2) - (1)	(4) Strong Reps. - Pre-Polarization	(5) Strong Reps. - Polarization	(6) Diff (5) - (4)
Out-Party Negativity	0.129***	0.155***	0.026	0.250***	0.240***	-0.010
	(0.034)	(0.038)	(0.051)	(0.039)	(0.060)	(0.072)
In-Party Positivity	0.013	-0.090*	-0.103	0.112*	0.021	-0.091
	(0.047)	(0.051)	(0.069)	(0.051)	(0.090)	(0.103)
Pol. Knowledge	0.079***	0.029	-0.050	0.113***	0.098*	-0.015
	(0.022)	(0.026)	(0.034)	(0.028)	(0.051)	(0.058)
Female	0.033***	0.066***	0.063***	-0.008	-0.005	0.003
	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.021)	(0.015)	(0.024)	(0.028)
Black	0.092***	0.033*	-0.059***	0.053	-0.215	-0.268
	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.023)	(0.065)	(0.158)	(0.171)
1992	-0.027			0.010		
	(0.018)			(0.018)		
1996	-0.020			0.083***		
	(0.020)			(0.019)		
2008		0.008			0.002	
		(0.020)			(0.034)	
2012		-0.020			-0.017	
		(0.018)			(0.029)	
Constant	0.476***	0.344***		0.237***	0.334***	
	(0.050)	(0.049)		(0.054)	(0.092)	
Observations	356	240		329	165	
R-squared	0.163	0.144		0.258	0.139	

Standard errors in parentheses.

***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.1, two-tailed.

Source: ANES Cumulative Data File 1948-2012.

Table 3.4: Determinants of Average Issue/Ideological Self-Placement Among Weak Partisans

	(1) Weak Dems. - Pre-Polarization	(2) Weak Dems. - Polarization	(3) Diff. (2) - (1)	(4) Weak Reps. - Pre-Polarization	(5) Weak Reps. - Polarization	(6) Diff. (5) - (4)
Out-Party Negativity	0.173***	0.251***	0.078	0.233***	0.343***	0.110
	(0.043)	(0.053)	(0.068)	(0.047)	(0.086)	(0.098)
In-Party Positivity	0.198***	0.131*	-0.067	0.037	-0.333***	-0.370***
	(0.052)	(0.069)	(0.086)	(0.054)	(0.106)	(0.119)
Pol. Knowledge	0.030	0.034	0.004	0.034	0.099**	0.065
	(0.025)	(0.032)	(0.041)	(0.024)	(0.047)	(0.053)
Female	0.036**	0.045**	0.009	-0.053***	-0.054*	-0.001
	(0.017)	(0.020)	(0.026)	(0.016)	(0.032)	(0.036)
Black	0.073***	0.046**	-0.027	-0.193***	0.118	0.311***
	(0.024)	(0.023)	(0.033)	(0.061)	(0.134)	(0.147)
1992	0.073***			0.012		
	(0.022)			(0.020)		
1996				0.071***		
				(0.021)		
2008		0.033			0.025	
		(0.024)			(0.037)	
2012		-0.008			0.032	
		(0.026)			(0.039)	
Constant	0.690***	0.604***		0.332***	0.465***	
	(0.050)	(0.064)		(0.051)	(0.098)	
Observations	305	117		297	114	
R-squared	0.178	0.288		0.218	0.285	

Standard errors in parentheses.
***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.1, two-tailed.

Source: ANES Cumulative Data File 1948-2012.

Table 3.5: Determinants of Average Issue/Ideological Self-Placement Among Leaning Partisans

	(1) Leaning Dems. - Pre-Polarization	(2) Leaning Dems. - Polarization	(3) Diff. (2) - (1)	(4) Leaning Reps. - Pre-Polarization	(5) Leaning Reps. - Polarization	(6) Diff. (5) - (4)
Out-Party Negativity	0.195***	0.291***	0.096	0.232***	0.504***	0.272***
	(0.045)	(0.049)	(0.067)	(0.049)	(0.068)	(0.084)
In-Party Positivity	0.139***	0.009	-0.130	0.097*	0.139**	0.042
	(0.052)	(0.067)	(0.085)	(0.055)	(0.063)	(0.084)
Pol. Knowledge	0.004	0.058*	0.054	0.034	0.018	-0.016
	(0.025)	(0.031)	(0.040)	(0.029)	(0.035)	(0.045)
Female	0.028	0.006	-0.022	-0.029	0.040*	0.069***
	(0.018)	(0.020)	(0.027)	(0.020)	(0.023)	(0.030)
Black	0.072***	0.089***	0.017	-0.047	-0.095*	-0.048
	(0.026)	(0.027)	(0.037)	(0.069)	(0.050)	(0.085)
1992	-0.009			0.048**		
	(0.021)			(0.024)		
1996	-0.0356			0.043*		
	(0.023)			(0.025)		
2008		-0.075***			-0.027	
		(0.024)			(0.031)	
2012		-0.048**			-0.003	
		(0.023)			(0.026)	
Constant	0.554***	0.523***		0.287***	0.118*	
	(0.050)	(0.058)		(0.058)	(0.069)	
Observations	274	164		256	130	
R-squared	0.143	0.294		0.131	0.362	

Standard errors in parentheses.
***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.1, two-tailed.

Source: ANES Cumulative Data File 1948-2012.

actually the *least* likely of the three groups to rely on out-party negativity in their self-placements since 2000. The effect of *Out-Party Negativity* among weak Democrats ($\beta = 0.251$, p<.01), weak Republicans ($\beta = 0.343$, p<.01), and leaning Democrats ($\beta = 0.291$, p<.01) is larger than it is for either strong Democrats or Republicans in the polarization period. The effect among leaning Republicans ($\beta = 0.504$, p<.01) is more than twice as large as that among strong Republicans. Moreover, the largest *increase* in the magnitude of the effect of *Out-Party Negativity* occurs among leaning Republicans (Table 3.5, Column 6; $\beta = 0.272$, p<.01) as well. This seems puzzling given the expectation that strong partisans — who have experienced the greatest drop in out-party affect over time – may also be the group that incorporates out-party hostility most effectively into their self-placements, particularly in a polarized era. Instead, it is their weak and leaning counterparts who have come to rely on out-party antipathy most in their self-placements.

Taken together, these results support the idea that partisans differentiate themselves from one another primarily in how much they rely upon out-party — *not* in-party — evaluations in forming their opinions on important policy matters. This is particularly true when it comes to contemporary politics, as these differences have become greatly magnified since 2000. Now, it is their feelings toward the other side — not their warmth toward their own party — that help partisans of varying levels of identification arrive at opinions on important policy and ideological matters.

3.6   Discussion

The evidence presented in this chapter suggests a need to re-visit our understanding of how partisan social identities influence the way people orient themselves to politics. The majority of public opinion research emphasizes the centrality of in-group affect in determining individuals' opinions on a variety of matters: people adopt their party's issue or ideological stances because they like their party. My results demon-

strate that out-party negativity has *always* played a significant role in preference formation, either equal to or greater than the influence attributable to in-party attachments. Over time, the influence of out-party negativity on issue and ideological positions has only grown. In-group feelings now play little role in guiding partisans' views on issue or ideological matters, making out-party negativity disproportionately more important to partisan thinking in recent years. In this sense, partisans now appear to rely on a dislikability heuristic — that is, the amount to which they dislike the other party — to guide them attitude formation.

That these effects appear to be concentrated primarily among partisans with a strong understanding of politics is notable. Previous research has demonstrated that the most knowledgeable partisans are also those who are the most likely to pick up on cues from the political environment and incorporate them into their beliefs (Zaller 1992). The fact that out-party negativity now dominates the self-placements of the most knowledgeable partisans suggests that signals from the political environment focus more on who and what one's opponents are rather than the actions or makeup of one's own party. While more work is needed to fully substantiate this claim, the results in this chapter suggest this to be the case.

My analyses also further support to the idea that the current measure of party identification is flawed. Since the onset of affective polarization, weak and leaning identifiers actually use out-party affect more heavily than their "stong"-identifying co-partisans. Moreover, the largest over-time gains in the predictive power of out-party negativity are also concentrated among those who profess weaker attachments to a political party. For decades, political scientists have relied primarily on individuals' self-reported strength of partisanship as the main predictor for a plethora of important political attitudes (e.g. Campbell et al. (1960); Bartels (2002); Carmines and Stimson (1989); Layman and Carsey (2002); Lenz (2012); Zaller (1992)). The evidence presented here suggests that relying solely upon this classification to explain

and predict partisan attitudes risks obscuring the full story: out-party negativity now defines the way that partisans understand their place in a polarized political environment.

Chapter 4

Out-Party Negativity and Receptiveness to Political Misinformation

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated that partisans' affective basis for policy and ideological preferences has changed dramatically over time. In a polarized environment, people's understanding of where they stand when it comes to politics is now dominated more by their negativity toward their opponents than by any warmth they may feel toward their own party. In this chapter, I shift the focus to examining how out-party negativity may influence the way that partisans process political information. Specifically, I examine the role that animosity toward the other party plays in individuals' willingness to endorse a particularly pernicious type of misinformation — political rumors.

I demonstrate that negative out-party affect bolsters partisans' beliefs in rumors that affirm their worldview, above and beyond the effects of party identification, ideology, and positive affect toward one's own party. Hostile feelings toward the opposition also play a vital role in preventing partisans from accepting rumors that disparage their own side. These results persist even after controlling for factors that predispose individuals to believe in rumors, like trust in government or in other people and a propensity to engage in conspiratorial thinking.

My results also cast doubt on the notion that a better informed public would be less susceptible to assessing rumors on the basis of partisan affect. On the contrary, I find that the most knowledgeable partisans are also the most likely to use their negativity toward the other party in endorsing attitudinally congruent rumors. Moreover, out-party negativity — not in-party positivity — plays the primary role in inoculating partisans against accepting rumors that portray their own party in a negative light. These findings have important implications for our understanding of the nature of

contemporary partisan bias: partisans' hostility toward their opponents trumps cognition in information processing and facilitates the acceptance — and possible spread — of political misinformation.

4.1 The Role of Rumors in American Politics

Rumors are deeply ingrained in American political history. These "claims of fact — about people groups, events, and institutions — that have not been shown to be true" (Sunstein 2009, 4)[1] have been used as a political tool since the birth of the country. "The Declaration of Independence," as Uscinski and Parent (2014) note, was "the original American conspiracy theory," predicated upon the belief that King George III intended to enslave American colonists under absolute tyranny (1-2). It only took until the new nation's first partisan election for rumors and misinformation to become a powerful weapon. In 1800, Federalists initiated rumors that Thomas Jefferson maintained a "Congo Harem" at Monticello and would emancipate Southern slaves should he be elected president (Knudson 2006, 72). For their part, Jeffersonian Republicans circulated propaganda claiming that John Adams planned to marry off one of his sons to the daughter of George III to establish a dynasty under British rule (Dunn 2004).

Today, rumors remain a constant fixture in American politics. Belief in such rumors is neither rare nor relegated to the beliefs of those at the fringes of society. Evidence suggests that nearly all Americans believe at least one political rumor; many believe more than one (Miller, Saunders and Farhart 2015; Oliver and Wood 2014; Uscinski and Parent 2014). In my own survey of rumor beliefs in 2016, between roughly

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[1]This definition is fairly broad, and reflects the "conceptual murkiness" that scholars acknowledge surrounds the term "rumor" (Sunstein 2009). While rumors are thought to be distinct from urban legends and gossip (DiFonzo and Bordia 2007), researchers frequently use the terms "rumor" and "conspiracy theory" interchangeably (e.g., Berinsky 2012; DiFonzo and Bordia 2007; Fine 2005; Sunstein 2009; Uscinski and Parent 2014), with perhaps the only distinction being that the latter sometimes implies the participation of a group (Campion-Vincent 2005). Throughout this paper, I opt to use the term "rumor" most frequently, but will occasionally reference "conspiracy theory" to refer to the same concept as well.

30-60% of individuals either "strongly" or "somewhat" endorsed each of a series of political rumors.[2] In addition, rumor endorsers come from nearly every demographic and political background imaginable; liberals and conservatives, Democrats and Republicans, rich and poor, and uneducated and educated alike tend to endorse rumors at similar rates (Berinsky 2012; Uscinski and Parent 2014).[3]

Rumors are useful to individuals because they fulfill important psychological needs (DiFonzo and Bordia 2007; Uscinski and Parent 2014). Those socialized to believe in an uncertain world have an inherent predisposition to accept rumors — regardless of their political content — because they provide an explanation for unseen events. For others, rumors reinforce their political worldview. Acceptance of political rumors — as is the case with other types of political information — is largely a product of individuals' tendency to engage in motivated reasoning (Berinsky 2012; Pasek et al. 2015; Uscinski and Parent 2014). As people encounter information about the political world, they filter it through their prior beliefs. These prevailing attitudes cause people to adopt information in line with their prior views and reject information that contradicts them (Campbell et al. 1960; Festinger 1957; Kunda 1990; Taber and Lodge 2006; Zaller 1992). Since political rumors are rarely positive in nature, individuals are far more likely to accept those that paint their opponents in a negative light than ones that embarrass themselves and their allies. Endorsing rumors that attribute nefarious motives to political opponents can serve to further confirm one's own outlook by questioning the legitimacy of others (Kahan, Jenkins-Smith and Braman 2010).

Understanding the political correlates that make rumor acceptance likely is important for the health of democratic governance in the United States. Factual knowledge about politics is essential for active and informed citizenship; without it, people can-

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[2]See Study II for more information.

[3]This finding, it should be noted, is in direct contradiction with Hofstadter's (1964) assertion that beliefs in rumors or conspiracy theories are concentrated on the right. To the contrary, beliefs in such rumors are not a product of greater authoritarianism or conservatism (Oliver and Wood 2014).

not engage in meaningful debate and obtain what they need or desire (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). When people ground their political opinions in unsubstantiated information derived from rumors, they often support public policies that waste resources or harm others (Hochschild and Einstein 2015). Moreover, once people accept and incorporate political rumors into their thinking, their beliefs are notoriously hard to correct; in fact, attempting to do so may even backfire and cause endorsers to double-down on their positions (Berinsky 2012; 2015; Hochschild and Einstein 2015; Nyhan and Reifler 2010). Even mere exposure to political rumors reduces trust in government services and institutions that are wholly unconnected to the allegations themselves (Einstein and Glick 2015). By understanding the antecedents of rumor acceptance, we may be better equipped to recognize the sources of such bias as they arise and slow the spread of rumors before they take root.

4.2 Out-Party Hostility and Rumor Acceptance

If beliefs in political rumors are largely driven by a desire to accept information that comports with one's political worldview, the natural question that follows is what constitutes a political "worldview" for most Americans. To date, scholars have argued that rumor acceptance is largely a product of liberal-conservative ideology (Miller, Saunders and Farhart 2015; Pasek et al. 2015; Uscinski and Parent 2014; Uscinski, Klofstad and Atkinson 2016). Ideology, it is argued, not only guides one's political thinking, but is also a motivational device that allows people to justify or rationalize the way the world works (Jost, Federico and Napier 2013; Miller, Saunders and Farhart 2015). Liberals, in theory, accept rumors that vilify conservatives because they abhor the conservative philosophy; conservatives believe the worst of liberals because they disagree with the tenets of liberalism.

Several pieces of evidence suggest, however, that ideology is not the primary organizing device for most people when it comes to politics. Since the earliest days of

public opinion research, scholars have noted that most Americans are "innocent of ideology" (McClosky 1964). They do not think about politics in ideological terms and do not understand the meaning of ideological language (Converse 1964; Luttberg and Gant 1985; Jacoby 1986). When most people call themselves "liberal" or "conservative," they do so for reasons that are largely emblematic and have little to do with their actual preferences on public policy issues, which are often disorganized (Conover and Feldman 1981; Malka and Lelkes 2010; Ellis and Stimson 2012). The idea that individuals endorse political rumors on because of their ideology seems unlikely given that so few actually think in ideological terms. In addition, the fact that so many contemporary rumors are bereft of policy or ideological content (Ballatore 2015) — e.g. Hillary Clinton's hit list; Donald Trump's sexual proclivities — makes it less likely that philosophical beliefs drive rumor acceptance.

A far more plausible explanation for rumor endorsement is partisanship. Party identification has long been understood to be a primary source of motivated reasoning in American politics (e.g., Campbell et al. 1960; Bartels 2002; Gaines et al. 2007; Hochschild and Einstein 2015; Taber and Lodge 2006; Zaller 1992). Because party identification occurs causally prior to most other political outcomes — including ideology (Levendusky 2009)— it is perhaps "the most obvious factor leading to rumor acceptance or rejection" (Berinsky 2012, 12).[4] Previous research has indeed documented a partisan cycle in the dissemination of rumors: those focusing on Democrats and their allies are more prevalent when a Democrat holds the White House, and rumors about Republicans and their side increase under Republican administrations (Uscinski and Parent 2014).

While it is perhaps more theoretically appropriate to attribute rumor endorsement to partisanship instead of ideology, merely knowing an individual's party or ideological

[4]That scholars have found ideology to be a significant predictor of rumor endorsement may be a result of the increasingly tight correspondence between partisanship and ideology (Levendusky 2009) and not because ideology exerts an independent effect on rumor endorsement.

identification only tells us half of the story: namely, the *type* of rumor she is likely to endorse. In an era in which partisan behavior is on the rise (Abramowitz and Webster 2016; Bartels 2000; Hetherington 2001; Levendusky 2009), knowing the partisanship of an individual merely helps predict the direction of rumor acceptance: Democrats should endorse rumors that make Republicans look bad, and Republicans should endorse rumors that make Democrats look bad. What is less understood are the political correlates that drive the *intensity* of rumor acceptance. Not all partisans (or ideologues, for that matter) endorse political rumors. Many, however, do accept them as part of the attitudinally-congruent information they filter in from the political world. The real question surrounds the source of what makes a partisan more or less likely to accept political rumors.

I argue that out-party hostility drives this variation. People's negative feelings toward their opponents should play a particularly powerful role in rumor endorsement for a number of reasons. First, as argued in Chapters 2 and 3, modern partisans tend to differentiate themselves based on the level of dislike they feel toward their opponents, not on the basis of the positive feelings they hold toward their own side. This makes out-party dislike — rather than party identification itself — a likely candidate in explaining the intensity with which people endorse partisan political rumors. Secondly, the idea that out-party negativity may be used as a heuristic filter for rumor content is well-supported. Because hostile feelings toward the opposition are deeply ingrained and easily deployed (Iyengar and Westwood 2014), they are cognitively "easier" for most people to use than ideology when it comes to evaluating rumors. In addition, since the onset of polarization, partisans are more likely to characterize their opponents as "close-minded," "hypocritical," and "mean" (Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes 2012). Since partisans already view their opponents negatively, it seems probable that they would engage in confirmation bias by believing information that confirms their view of the opposition as having less-than-pure motives. In other

words, partisans are likely to believe political rumors about their opponents simply because they think the worst of them. In this way, they accept misinformation about the out-party for the same reason that many whites believe rumors about blacks and other minorities (Uscinski and Parent 2014): not because they have a deep philosophical disagreement with them, but rather out of simple dislike.

The question of whether partisans sincerely believe political rumors is one worth considering. It may be that individuals endorse rumors in surveys as a form of "partisan cheerleading," intended to signal to researchers or the public at large something about the worthiness of their own beliefs and the illegitimacy of others'. If this is the case, it may be possible to attenuate rumor endorsement by incentivizing respondents to answer "correctly," a technique that has been successful in reducing partisan information gaps in other contexts (Bullock et al. 2015). There is some evidence to suggest, however, that political rumors function differently than other types of political misinformation and are therefore resistant to these kinds of incentives. Previous research demonstrates that once people accept and incorporate political rumors into their calculus, their beliefs are notoriously hard to correct; in fact, attempting to do so may even backfire and cause endorsers to double-down on their positions (Berinsky 2012; 2015; Hochschild and Einstein 2015; Nyhan and Reifler 2010). This suggests that simply encouraging partisans to think more carefully about whether they sincerely believe in rumors may not cause people to disavow them.

Secondly, even if partisans did report lower levels of rumor beliefs when incentivized, it is unlikely that they regularly encounter these kinds of incentives in the real world. Individuals' engagement with the political world is not contingent upon their acting sincerely or accurately. Nor are there many forums within politics in which the veracity of rumors is regularly questioned; if anything, the internet — where people can publish anything with anonymity — has probably exacerbated partisans' access to unverified information (Berinsky 2012; Sunstein 2009). This suggests

that the consequences of rumor endorsement for the political system are still very real. With few incentives for partisans to back away from what appear to be sincerely-held beliefs in rumors, it seems that the impact of political rumors — the number of which appears to be increasing over time (Garrett 2011; Shin et al. 2016) — is only likely to grow.

4.3   Study I: 2012 American National Elections Study

As a first test of whether out-party hostility influences rumor endorsement, I make use of a series of items tapping "non-mainstream beliefs" appearing on the online administration of the 2012 American National Elections Study. Following the approach of Miller, Saunders and Farhart (2015), I construct two indices, one that averages together responses to two items designed to tap beliefs in *worldview consistent rumors* (for Democrats, left-leaning items that impugn Republicans, and for Republicans, right-leaning items that impugn Democrats) and *worldview inconsistent rumors* (for Democrats, right-leaning items that make Democrats look bad, and for Republicans, left-leaning items that make Republicans look bad). The items are as follows:

- Worldview *consistent* items for Republicans (worldview *inconsistent* items for Democrats:

  - "Was Barack Obama definitely born in the United States, probably born in the United States, probably born in another country, or definitely born in another country?"

  - "Does the health care law passed in 2010 definitely authorize panels to make end-of-life decisions for people on Medicare, probably authorize government panels to make end-of-life decisions for people on Medicare, probably not authorize government panels to make end-of-life decisions for people on Medicare, or definitely not authorize government panels to make

end-of-life decisions for people on Medicare?"

- Worldview *consistent* items for Democrats (worldview *inconsistent* items for Republicans):

  – "Did senior federal government officials definitely know about the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 before they happened, probably know about the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 before they happened, probably did not know about the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 before they happened, or definitely did not know about the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 before they happened?"

  – "Some people say that when Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast in the summer of 2005, the federal government intentionally breached flood levees in New Orleans so that poor neighborhoods would be flooded and middle-class neighborhoods would be spared. Do you think the federal government definitely did this, probably did this, probably did not do this, or definitely did not do this?"

For a brief look at partisans' beliefs in these rumors, Figure 4.1 displays the percentages of self-identified Democrats or Republicans said that each event either "probably" or "definitely" happened. The largest partisan difference emerges on the question regarding Obama's place of birth. More than four times as many Republicans as Democrats believed that Obama was likely born outside of the United States. The partisan breakdowns on the other items are much less clear; in fact, in every other instance, partisans tended to endorse attitudinally *incongruent* rumors more than rumors that should comport with their worldview. For example, Democrats endorsed the rumor regarding the existence of death panels as part of the Affordable Care Act over Republicans by nearly a 2-to-1 margin. Republicans also tended to endorse left-leaning rumors about 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina more than Democrats (by margins

of seven and 12 percentage points, respectively). From a *directional* standpoint, therefore, these results run counter to expectations: Democrats, on the whole, did not tend to endorse left-leaning rumors, and Republicans did not tend to endorse right-leaning rumors. Nevertheless, my hypothesis argues that out-party negativity should matter for both the direction *and* strength of rumor endorsement. For that reason, I turn to a more sophisticated analysis.

To construct the dependent variable, I average together respondents' items to the two left-leaning items and the two right-leaning items to create indices of rumor belief. I use averages of these items as the dependent variables for a few reasons. First, as I argue that it is out-party negativity — not ideology — that explains variation in rumor belief, it is useful to replicate the approach of Miller, Saunders and Farhart (2015) so that I can directly test my hypothesis in light of their findings. Secondly, as I am interested in how partisan affect influences individuals' *general* tendency to believe in rumors that comport with their worldview, the content of specific rumors is not particularly theoretically important; the idea is that partisans who dislike the opposition should be more likely to believe any set of contemporary political rumors that disparage their opponents. Finally, despite the lack of clear partisan breakdowns on the items (Figure 4.1), the results presented in the subsequent table reflect those produced from models predicting support for each individual item.[5]

The independent variables of interest in this model are two pertaining to party affect, operationalized once again as *In-Party Positivity* (feelings toward the Democratic Party among Democrats, and feelings toward the Republican Party among Republicans) and *Out-Party Negativity* (feelings toward the Democratic Party among Republicans, and feelings toward the Republican Party among Democrats). To assess the predictive power of party affect relative to other explanations, I also include a number of other independent variables. To estimate the effects of party affect in-

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[5]This is also true of the results presented for Study II; support for both the rumor indices and individual rumors are driven substantially by out-party antipathy.

Figure 4.1: Proportion of Respondents Believing in Right- and Left-Leaning Political Rumors by Party Identification, 2012
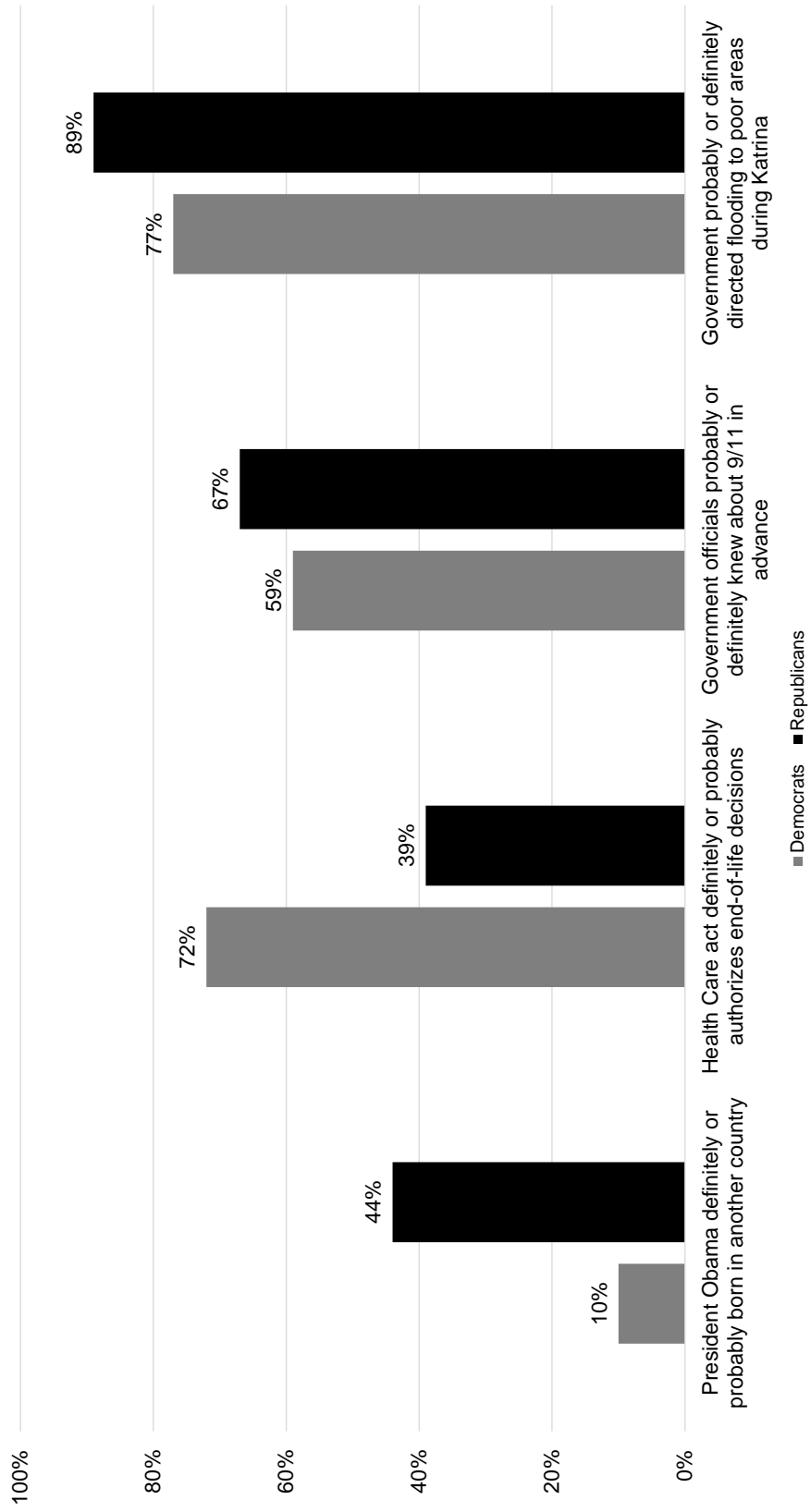
Source: ANES 2012 Time Series Study

dependent of party identification, I include a measure of individuals' self-reported strength of partisanship. Because ideology is the prevailing explanation for political rumor endorsement (Miller, Saunders and Farhart 2015; Pasek et al. 2015; Uscinski, Klofstad and Atkinson 2016), I also include two dummy variables, one for whether one self-identifies as a "liberal" and one for whether one self-identifies as a "conservative."[6]

In accordance with previous work, I also include a measure of "generalized" trust, which averages together individuals' responses to the traditional trust in government and interpersonal trust items (Miller, Saunders and Farhart 2015). I include it primarily to mitigate the possibility that individuals' willingness to endorse specific worldview-affirming rumors is simply a function of their overall inclination to endorse *all* political rumors. While this measure is not perfect — a better measure would tap a person's tendency toward conspiratorial thinking in general — past research suggests that individuals predisposed to be highly trustful are less willing to endorse political rumors and conspiracy theories (Miller, Saunders and Farhart 2015; Swami, Charmorro-Premuzic and Furnham 2010). In the absence of a better alternative, I use generalized trust as a proxy for an individual's tendency to believe in conspiracy theories regardless of political content.

I also include a measure of political knowledge.[7] Scholars are divided as to whether individuals' levels of political knowledge lessen or enhance rumor endorsement. On one hand, those with a greater understanding of the political world might be better able to recognize rumors as unsubstantiated, and therefore be less willing to endorse

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[6]I classify those individuals who reported being "extremely liberal," "liberal," and "somewhat liberal" as "liberal" in this model; those labeled "conservative" here are those who self-identify as "extremely conservative," "conservative," and "somewhat conservative."

[7]The knowledge measure is a simple count of correct answers to the following three questions: (1) "Is the U.S. federal budget deficit — the amount by which the government's spending exceeds the amount of money it collects — now bigger, about the same, or smaller than it was during most of the 1990s?" (2) "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?" [open-ended] (3) "On which of the following does the U.S. government currently spend the least?" [Foreign aid, Medicare, national defense, Social Security]. I opt to use these questions only — instead of, for example, the traditional office recognition knowledge questions — to make comparisons between this study and the next, in which I once again used these exact three questions.

them (Berinsky 2012). On the other hand, those partisans who are particularly sophisticated also tend to be very interested in politics and thus highly invested in maintaining their worldview (Achen and Bartels 2016; Lau and Redlawsk 2001; Taber and Lodge 2006), of which rumors can be an important component (Miller, Saunders and Farhart 2015). Including a measure of political knowledge in my analysis will allow me to better adjudicate as to which is the stronger explanation.

Finally, I include two demographic indicators, one for whether or not the respondent identifies as a woman and the other for whether or not she identifies as black. I include both as standard controls for public opinion data, but also because evidence suggests that African-Americans in particular are more highly predisposed to believe in political rumors due to their minority status and a substantial history of being the target of racist conspiracies (Goertzel 1994; Uscinski and Parent 2014).

Table 4.1 presents the results of four OLS regression models, one for each index (worldview consistent and worldview inconsistent rumors) for both groups of partisans (Democrats and Republicans).[8] The worldview consistent index consists of those items that confirm partisan beliefs by painting the opposition in a bad light (i.e. those rumors that impugn Republicans among Democrats, and those that impugn Democrats among Republicans); the worldview inconsistent index is constructed of items that work against partisans' preconceived notions by suggesting the worst about their own side (i.e. rumors that make Democrats look bad for Democratic respondents, and rumors that make Republicans look bad for Republican respondents). All variables are scaled 0-1, with positive coefficients indicating a greater tendency to endorse that particular set of rumors. The key coefficients of interest are those relating to in- and out-party affect. A positive coefficient on *In-Party Positivity* would indicate that a greater fondness for one's own party increases beliefs in that rumor index. A positive coefficient on *Out-Party Negativity* would indicate that the more

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[8]I again classify Independent leaners as partisans as previous research has documented their tendency to think and behave like other partisans (Keith et al. 1992).

partisans dislike their opponents, the more they are likely to believe a particular set of rumors. For example, when it comes to beliefs in worldview consistent rumors, we should expect positive coefficients on both *In-Party Positivity Out-Party Negativity*, indicating that greater affinity for one's own party or greater animus toward the opposition are associated with an increased tendency among partisans to believe the worst of their opponents. Conversely, we should expect negative effects for *In-Party Positivity* and *Out-Party Negativity* when it comes to worldview inconsistent rumors if party affect plays a protective role for partisans when it comes to disavowing rumors that make their own side look bad.

	Worldview Consistent Rumors		Worldview Inconsistent Rumors	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Republicans	Democrats	Republicans	Democrats
Out-Party Negativity	0.419***	0.057**	0.006	-0.192***
	(0.033)	(0.027)	(0.032)	(0.025)
In-Party Positivity	0.214***	0.016	-0.068*	-0.029
	(0.036)	(0.029)	(0.036)	(0.027)
Strength PID	-0.020	-0.006	-0.042**	0.018
	(0.018)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.014)
Liberal	-0.006	-0.037**	0.084***	-0.059***
	(0.032)	(0.012)	(0.031)	(0.011)
Conservative	0.030*	-0.031*	-0.088***	0.030**
	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.015)
Generalized Trust	-0.239***	-0.256***	-0.206***	-0.220***
	(0.044)	(0.037)	(0.043)	(0.034)
Pol. Knowledge	-0.097***	-0.150***	-0.167***	-0.149***
	(0.025)	(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.020)
Female	0.013	0.012	0.011	-0.04
	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.010)
Black	-0.113**	0.081**	0.165***	0.021*
	(0.054)	(0.013)	(0.053)	(0.012)
Constant	0.581***	0.522***	0.510***	0.343***
	(0.033)	(0.030)	(0.033)	(0.027)
Observations	1,298	1,707	1,307	1,696
R-squared	0.221	0.107	0.129	0.157

Standard errors in parentheses.
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1, two-tailed.

Source: ANES 2012 Time Series Study.

As expected, *Out-Party Negativity* is a substantial predictor of beliefs in worldview consistent rumors among Republicans (Column 1). The effect of out-party affect among Republicans ($\beta = 0.419$), suggests that as Republicans move from feeling neutral toward the Democratic Party (0.5 on a 0-1 scale) to highly negative (1 on a 0-1 scale), their endorsement of right-leaning rumors that impugn Democrats increases

by about 21%. As feelings toward their own party move from neutral (0.5) to highly positive (1), however, they are only about 10% more likely to endorse such rumors (β = 0.214, p<.01). The effect of negative out-party affect dwarfs that of ideology; the coefficients on *Liberal* and *Conservative* are substantively insignificant in both models. *Generalized trust*, as is the case for all four models, is a strong negative predictor of belief in political rumors; its influence on Republicans' endorsement of worldview consistent rumors is about half as large as the effect of negative feelings toward the Democratic Party (β = -0.239, p<.01, indicates that moving from moderately trustful to fully trustful decreases belief in right-leaning rumors by about 12 percentage points). The negative coefficient for *Political Knowledge* indicates that those Republicans who demonstrate a greater factual understanding of politics are less likely to believe rumors that confirm their preconceived notions by making Democrats look bad. This effect, however, is only about one fourth as large as that of out-party negativity. These results demonstrate that negative out-party affect plays a significant role in Republicans' endorsement of rumors that disparage Democrats, over and above that of strength of party identification, ideology, and even positive affect toward one's own party.

Interestingly, out-party negativity also plays an important role for Democrats in their rejection of rumors that disparage themselves and their allies. Column 4 demonstrates that, compared to Democrats who feel neutrally toward Republicans (0.5), those Democrats who hold particularly unfavorable opinions of the Republican Party (1) are nearly ten percentage points less likely to believe in rumors that impugn Democrats (β = -0.192, p<.01). In contrast, the influence of Democrats' positive feelings toward the Democratic Party on belief in these rumors is not statistically distinguishable from zero. Democrats' ideological identification is a statistically significant predictor, but its effect size is too small to be substantively significant. Here, out-party negativity — not in-party positivity — actually helps Democrats resist

believing the worst of their own side. The fact that Democrats apply their negative feelings toward their opponents — *not* feelings toward their own group — when asked to evaluate information about *their own group* is suggestive of the idea that out-party antipathy plays a substantial role in contemporary information processing.

In contrast, out-party affect does not appear to exert a statistically or substantively significant impact upon Democrats' beliefs in worldview consistent rumors (Column 2). In fact, the effects of both *Out-Party Negativity* and *In-Party Positivity* on Democrats' beliefs in rumors that make Republicans look bad are negligible. While *Political Knowledge* and *Generalized Trust* behave much as they did in the models predicting support for worldview consistent rumors among Republicans — that is, higher levels of political knowledge and trust are associated with lower levels of rumor endorsement — no other explanatory variables in the model are substantively significant. This also seems to be the case for Republicans when they are asked about worldview inconsistent rumors (Column 3). Neither in-party nor out-party affect exerts any substantively meaningful effect for Republicans' endorsement of rumors that paint their own side in a poor light.

The fact that neither *Out-Party Negativity* nor *In-Party Positivity* appear to be meaningful predictors in these two models may have more to do with the nature of the dependent variable than with partisans' use of party affect in rumor endorsement. Both sets of analyses use the same index that include rumors impugning Republicans and affirming the worldview of Democrats. Using this index, however, may not be an entirely appropriate test of the theory. First, it may be that partisans do not rely upon party affect in their endorsement of these rumors because the survey was administered during a time when a Democrat occupied the White House. As noted previously, the balance of left- and right-leaning rumors and conspiracy theories is subject to a partisan cycle, with right-leaning rumors becoming more prevalent during Democratic administrations and left-leaning rumors flourishing under Republican

presidents (Uscinski and Parent 2014). Second, it may be that rumor endorsement is conditioned by the saliency of the rumors themselves. The rumors included in this index — that the Bush administration knew about 9/11 in advance and that the government directed flooding to poor areas during Katrina — were, by the time of this survey in 2012, much older than the right-leaning rumors (which had originated at least three to four years after the Katrina rumor). It may simply be that partisan affect did not appear to exert an influence on left-leaning beliefs because more partisans were unfamiliar with the claims. From these results, however, it is impossible to tell which explanation is most likely.

4.4 Study II: 2016 NBC News Survey

In an attempt to clarify the role of party affect in left-leaning rumor endorsement, I replicated and extended the analysis in Study 1 using an original survey administered in conjunction with NBC News and SurveyMonkey from June 21-July 5, 2016. The sample was drawn from SurveyMonkey's Audience Panel, a pool of approximately 3 million users who answer SurveyMonkey's consumer and political surveys on a regular basis.[9]

To determine whether saliency of political rumors accounted for the observance of the asymmetry in the 2012 data, I included a battery of items to measure beliefs in more contemporary political rumors, though I also repeated two items from the 2012 ANES survey to maintain some consistency. The items are as follows:

> "Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements."
> [Response options: strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree.]

- Worldview *consistent* items for Republicans (worldview *inconsistent* items for Democrats:

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[9]Since respondents were drawn from a non-probability sample, individuals' responses were weighted to match population parameters with respect to gender, age, race and ethnicity, education, and geographical region of the U.S.

- "Barack Obama was born in the United States."[10]

- "The implementation of stricter gun laws will eventually lead to the confiscation of guns from Americans who legally own them."

- "The emphasis on same-sex marriage, evolution, and LGBT rights in recent years is an attempt to dismantle the nuclear family and remove religion from daily life."

- Worldview *consistent* items for Democrats (worldview *inconsistent* items for Republicans):

  - "Senior federal government officials knew about the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 before they happened."

  - "The primary goal of voter identification laws is to prevent low-income and minority voters from participating in elections."[11]

  - "Cheaper, more efficient versions of renewable energy technologies are available but are being suppressed by oil companies and the government."

Also included in this survey is a measure tapping an individual's "conspiratorial disposition," which asks respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the following statement: "Big events like wars, recessions, and outcomes of elections are controlled by small groups of people who are working in secret against the rest of us" (Uscinski, Klofstad and Atkinson 2016; Uscinski and Parent 2014). I introduced this

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[10]The question wording here is slightly modified from that in Study I, which tapped endorsement using a question rather than a statement. Respondents' answers were reverse-coded in analysis.

[11]Of important note is at the time of this survey, the conjecture that voter identification laws were designed to restrict voting rights was not verified to be true. Later, some Republican elected officials acknowledged that this was indeed the purpose of such laws (Wines 2016). Though conspiracy theories and rumors do occasionally turn out to be true — e.g. the Democratic National Committtee's headquarters in the Watergate hotel was bugged by Republican officials; the CIA administered LSD and other drugs in the process of investigating the existence of "mind control" — does not mean that they did not qualify as such prior to verification. All that is needed to classify something as a rumor or conspiracy theory is that a significant segment of the population believes it to be true in the absence of concrete, factual information (Sunstein and Vermeule 2009; Pigden 2006; 2007).

question in order to capture participants' tendency to believe in rumors regardless of their political content. Recall that in Study 1, I followed others (Miller, Saunders and Farhart 2015) in using a measure of generalized trust as a stand-in for such a predisposition; however, it is an imperfect measure of the concept. For one, both interpersonal trust and trust in government are fluid, the latter in particular varying in accordance with partisan control of the White House (Rosseau et al. 1998; Hetherington and Rudolph 2015). This suggests that the measure is not tapping a personality characteristic, but rather a sociopolitical attitude that in and of itself might vary temporally or in accordance with partisanship. The conspiratorial disposition — that is, the inherent tendency to believe in any type of rumor, political or not — represents a more static trait and its inclusion here provides a more difficult test of my theory.

To provide some context, Figure 4.2 displays the proportion of partisans who either "somewhat" or "strongly" supported each rumor. As we can see, the partisan divides on these items is much more in line with expectations than those related to the ANES items presented in Figure 2.1. Republicans endorse the three right-leaning rumors by an average of 48 percentage points more than Democrats, with the biggest partisan division again occurring on the question related to Obama's birthplace (a margin of 58 percentage points). Partisan differences on the left-leaning items were much smaller. The only left-leaning item that inspired a large divide was the rumor about voter identification laws (Democrats endorsed this over Republicans by a margin of 45 points). Democrats were only slightly more likely than Republicans to believe that oil companies are suppressing cheaper, more efficient forms of energy, and Republicans were actually slightly more likely than Democrats to believe the government knew about the 9/11 attacks in advance.[12][13] This effect, however, may be driven by the fact

[12]The differences between partisans on these questions, however, are both statistically significant at the 99% confidence level.

[13]While these items perform closer to expectations than those from the 2012 ANES, only one of the three left-leaning items inspired the kind of partisan divisions we might expect. Part of this may be due to the fact that both surveys were administered during a Democratic administration, in which left-leaning rumors likely not as prevalent. I plan on conducting a follow-up study in the

that Republicans in this survey appeared to be more predisposed to conspiratorial thinking than their Democratic counterparts (by a margin of 8 percentage points, p<0.01). In order to discern whether out-party affect influences these endorsements independent of conspiratorial dispositions, I turn to a more sophisticated analysis.

Table 4.2 again presents a series of four OLS models, one for each group of partisans and for each index of rumors. The dependent variables, as before, are averages of respondents' endorsement of left- and right-leaning rumors (labeled here as worldview consistent and worldview inconsistent rumors, depending on the partisan group). The independent variables of interest — with the exception of the conspiratorial disposition measure — remain the same as those in the 2012 study.[14] As before, variables are scaled 0-1, with positive coefficients indicating an increased tendency to endorse rumors. As a reminder, a positive coefficient on *In-Party Affect* indicates that partisans' positive feelings toward their own side increases rumor belief, while a positive coefficient on *Out-Party Negativity* indicates that the more partisans dislike their opponents, the more likely they are to believe said rumors.

current target-rich environment for left-leaning rumors to determine whether my results replicate for more salient left-leaning rumors.

[14]As described briefly in Chapter 2, the feeling thermometer items included in this study asked respondents to rate their feelings toward the parties on a scale from 0-10 (instead of the standard 0-100) due to limitations in SurveyMonkey's instrument. Though this may limit response options, feeling thermometer scores tend to cluster around a smaller number of values (Alwin 1992; 1997; Broockman, Kalla and Aronow 2015), which suggests I may not be losing much by using a scale with fewer points of articulation. In addition, the feeling thermometer values were labeled in a way similar to what appears on the ANES, so I have no reason to believe that respondents would use these feeling thermometers in a way that would substantially differ from how they use a 101-point scale.

Figure 4.2: Proportion of Respondents Believing in Right- and Left-Leaning Political Rumors by Party Identification, 2016
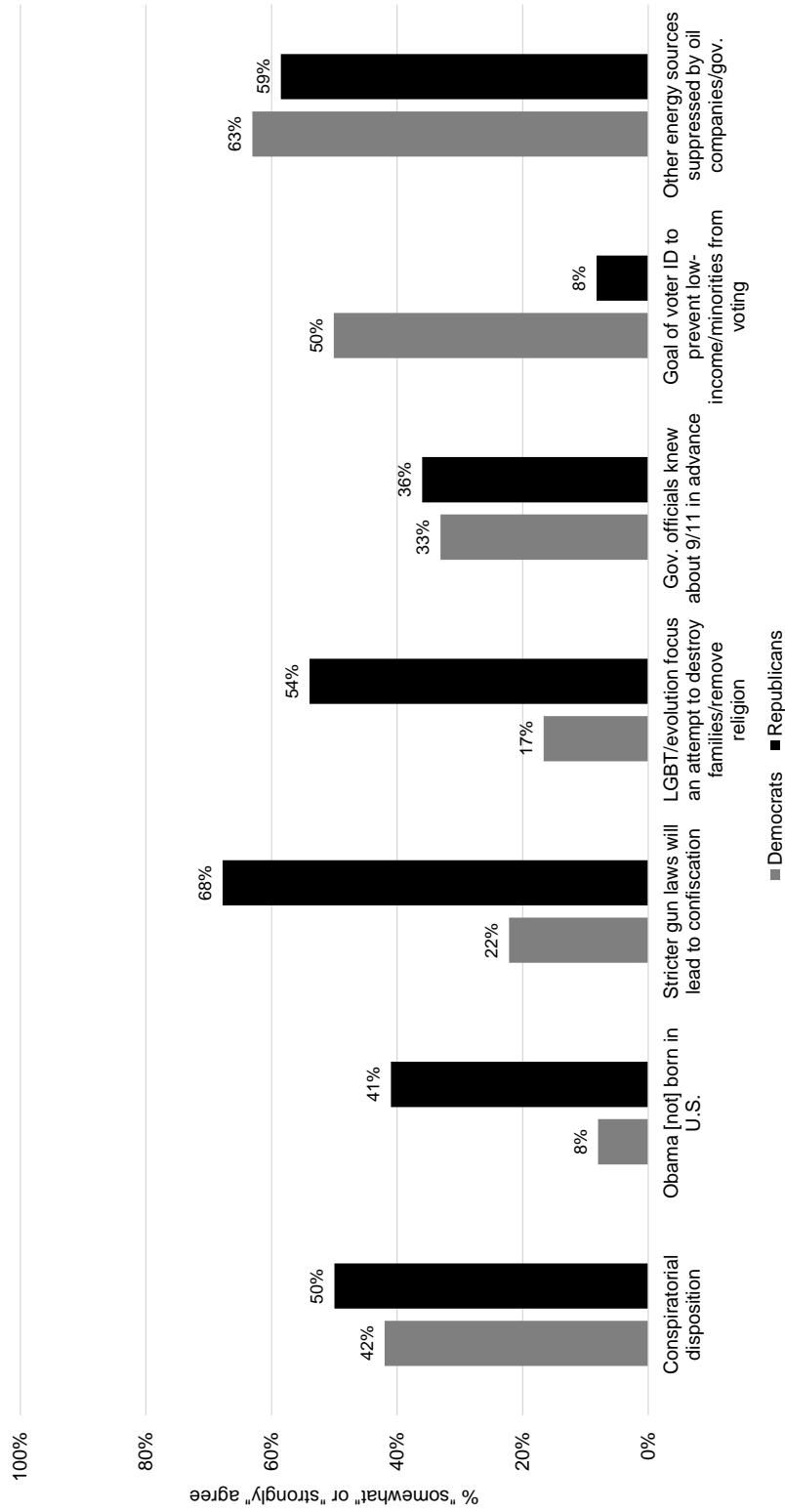
Column for "Obama [not] born in the United States" displays the proportion of those who "strongly" or "somewhat" disagreed with the statement that "Barack Obama was born in the United States" to reflect levels of belief in said rumor.

Source: NBC News | SurveyMonkey Audience Panel Survey, 2016.

N=1,679; MoE ± 2.5%

Table 4.2: Beliefs in Worldview Consistent/Inconsistent Rumors by Party Identification, 2016

	Worldview Consistent Rumors		Worldview Inconsistent Rumors	
	(1) Republicans	(2) Democrats	(3) Republicans	(4) Democrats
Out-Party Negativity	0.326***	0.111***	-0.181***	-0.189***
	(0.042)	(0.031)	(0.037)	(0.032)
In-Party Positivity	0.023	0.076**	0.098***	-0.037
	(0.038)	(0.031)	(0.033)	(0.032)
Strength PID	0.026	-0.040**	-0.009	0.016
	(0.022)	(0.017)	(0.019)	(0.017)
Liberal	-0.017	0.031**	0.064*	-0.080***
	(0.043)	(0.014)	(0.036)	(0.014)
Conservative	0.116***	0.046**	-0.049**	0.135***
	(0.019)	(0.021)	(0.017)	(0.014)
Conspiratorial Disposition	0.242***	0.255***	0.290***	0.137***
	(0.027)	(0.021)	(0.024)	(0.021)
Pol. Knowledge	-0.0120	-0.016	-0.092***	-0.143***
	(0.034)	(0.022)	(0.030)	(0.022)
Female	0.013	-0.001	0.039**	0.035***
	(0.018)	(0.013)	(0.015)	(0.013)
Black	0.158***	0.037**	0.036	0.120***
	(0.056)	(0.017)	(0.050)	(0.017)
Constant	0.447***	0.402***	0.233***	0.186***
	(0.040)	(0.031)	(0.036)	(0.031)
Observations	685	935	686	932
R-squared	0.279	0.179	0.274	0.328

Standard errors in parentheses.
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1, two-tailed.

Source: NBC News|SurveyMonkey Audience Panel Survey, June-July 2016.

Once again, out-party affect plays an important, independent role in rumor endorsement. Looking first at the effects on beliefs in worldview consistent rumors for Republicans (Column 1), we see that among Republicans, moving from neutral feelings (0.5) to highly negative feelings (0) toward the Democratic Party increases beliefs in worldview affirming rumors by nearly 17% ($\beta = 0.326$, p<.01). This is more than double the influence of either naming oneself as conservative or moving from a

moderately to a highly conspiratorial predisposition. These results show that negative out-party affect — not ideological or partisan identification — plays a specific and instrumental role in Republicans' willingness to endorse political rumors, a trend that is also very much in line with its effect in the ANES study.

Results from Columns 2 and 3 begin to help solve the puzzle presented in the 2012 results. *Out-Party Negativity* does play an important role for both groups of partisans when it comes to the endorsement of more contemporary left-leaning rumors (that is, those that comport with Democrats' worldview). Democrats who feel strongly negatively toward the Republican Party are nearly 6% more likely to believe in worldview-*consistent*, left-leaning rumors than co-partisans who feel neutrally toward Republicans ($\beta = 0.111$, p<.01). The influence of *Out-Party Negativity* on Republicans' endorsement of worldview-inconsistent, left-leaning rumors is slightly larger ($\beta = $ -0.181, p<.01). These effects are substantially larger than the effects of ideology for both sets of partisans. The largest predictor of left-leaning rumor endorsement among both groups, however, is one's *Conspiratorial Predispostion*, the effect of which is twice as large as that for *Out-Party Negativity* among both Republicans and Democrats. These results suggest that beliefs in left-leaning rumors — even under a Democratic administration, in which they are less plentiful — are determined, in part, by how partisans feel toward their opponents. When it comes to left-leaning rumors in 2016, a disposition toward conspiratorial thinking outpaced the role of negative out-party affect in predicting endorsement, perhaps because rumors that condemn Republicans are less prevalent during a Democratic administration (Uscinski and Parent 2014).

Finally, Column 4 demonstrates that among Democrats, moving from neutral (0.5) to highly negative (1) in one's evaluations of the Republican Party reduces support for worldview inconsistent rumors by about 9% ($\beta = $ -0.189, p<.01). This again suggests that out-party feelings provide some protection against partisans' willingness

to believe rumors that disparage their *own* side. Here, the influence of *Out-Party Negativity* on rumor endorsement is approximately similar in magnitude to the effect of ideology; adding together the absolute value of the coefficients for *Liberal* and *Conservative* leaves us with an effect of $\beta = 0.215$ (p<0.01). Among Democrats, beliefs in worldview inconsistent rumors in 2016 seem to be driven by both out-party feelings and ideology. Though the results here are not as clear as those for Republicans, they do suggest that out-party affect plays an important role even for partisans when it comes to rejecting rumors that impugn their own side.

Interestingly, the influence of political knowledge varies substantially across the models. It does not appear to play a role in partisans' endorsement of rumors that would impugn their opponents. *Pol. Knowledge* does not exert a statistically significant influence for either group of partisans when it comes to their endorsement of worldview-consistent rumors. On the other hand, there exist substantial differences between low- and high-knowledge partisans when it comes to their endorsement of rumors that conflict with their partisan predispositions. Low-knowledge partisans are more likely to endorse worldview inconsistent rumors than their high knowledge counterparts. Taken together, these results suggest that political knowledge inoculates partisans against accepting rumors that conflict with their predispositions but not against endorsing ones that affirm them.[15]

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[15] A simple crosstab confirms these results. Low- and high-knowledge Republicans do not differ from one another when it comes to their level of endorsement of worldview consistent rumors (differing by only 0.03 points on a 0-1 scale, a difference that is not statistically significant at conventional levels). Low and high-knowledge Democrats do not differ, either, when it comes to their beliefs in worldview consistent rumors (a difference of 0.06, which is again not statistically significant at conventional levels). On the other hand, low-knowledge Republicans are significantly more likely to endorse worldview inconsistent rumors compared to their higher knowledge counterparts (by a margin of 0.22 points; t-score(diff) $= 6.06$), and low-knowledge Democrats are more likely to endorse worldview inconsistent rumors compared to high-knowledge Democrats (by a margin of 0.23 points; t-score (diff) $=8.02$).

4.5 Knowledge as a Conduit for Out-Party Antipathy

The fact that knowledge plays a differential role in partisans' endorsement of particular types of political rumors suggests that it may also complicate the relationship between partisan affect and rumor acceptance. Might higher levels of political knowledge attenuate the effects of out-party hostility on endorsement of rumors that portray partisans' opponents in a bad light? Or might they actually enhance the effect of negative out-party feelings on these beliefs? In an attempt to answer these questions, my final analyses replicate those presented in Table 4.2 but include interactions between in- and out-party affect and political knowledge. The results are presented in Table 4.3, with a series of accompanying graphs in Figure 4.2 — demonstrating the effects of *Out-Party Negativity* conditional on knowledge — and Figure 4.3 — demonstrating the effects of *In-Party Positivity* conditional on knowledge — to aid in interpretation.

Looking first at the main effects of *Pol. Knowledge*, the results from Columns 3 and 4 demonstrate that higher levels of political knowledge still prevent partisans from believing in rumors that disparage their own side. High-knowledge Republicans are less likely to endorse worldview inconsistent rumors than their low-knowledge counterparts (β = -0.136, and high-knowledge Democrats are less likely to believe worldview inconsistent rumors than low-knowledge Democrats (β = -0.227, p<0.01). However, the interaction between *Pol. Knowledge* and *Out-Party Negativity* indicates that knowledge bolsters the impact of out-party antipathy on belief in worldview-consistent rumors and sometimes further inoculates against beliefs in worldview-inconsistent rumors. Column 1 demonstrates that when it comes to Republicans' beliefs in worldview consistent rumors, moving from neutral feelings toward the Democratic Party (0.5) to highly negative feelings (1) is associated with roughly an 8% increase in rumor endorsement among the least politically knowledgeable (β = 0.190, p<.05) but a 24% increase among the highly knowledgeable (β =

0.468, p<0.01). A similar trend is evident among Democrats in their use of out-party negativity in endorsing worldview consistent rumors, albeit slightly less pronounced. Again, Column 2 shows that knowledge intensifies the influence of out-party negativity; whereas *Out-Party Negativity* seems to play no role in worldview-consistent rumor endorsement among low-knowledge Democrats, it exerts a substantial effect among high-knowledge Democrats ($\beta = 0.152$, p<.01).

Table 4.3: Beliefs in Worldview Consistent/Inconsistent Rumors by Party Identification, 2016 - Affect x Knowledge Interactions

	Worldview Consistent Rumors		Worldview Inconsistent Rumors	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Republicans	Democrats	Republicans	Democrats
Out-Party Negativity x Pol. Knowledge	0.278*	0.183*	0.050	-0.202*
	(0.145)	(0.105)	(0.128)	(0.207)
In-Party Positivity x Pol. Knowledge	-0.043	-0.021	0.096	-0.070
	(0.124)	(0.092)	(0.109)	(0.094)
Out-Party Negativity	0.190**	0.036	-0.203***	-0.105*
	(0.082)	(0.054)	(0.072)	(0.055)
In-Party Positivity	0.051	0.088*	0.049	-0.068
	(0.075)	(0.049)	(0.066)	(0.051)
Pol. Knowledge	0.074	0.031	-0.136*	-0.227***
	(0.085)	(0.073)	(0.075)	(0.075)
Strength PID	0.025	-0.039**	-0.011	0.015
	(0.022)	(0.017)	(0.019)	(0.017)
Liberal	-0.018	0.030**	0.064*	-0.080***
	(0.043)	(0.014)	(0.036)	(0.014)
Conservative	0.115***	0.046**	-0.050**	0.136***
	(0.019)	(0.021)	(0.017)	(0.022)
Conspiratorial Disposition	0.243***	0.253***	0.292***	0.140***
	(0.027)	(0.021)	(0.024)	(0.021)
Female	0.015	0.002	0.040**	0.032**
	(0.018)	(0.013)	(0.015)	(0.013)
Black	0.140**	0.034**	0.034	0.123***
	(0.057)	(0.017)	(0.051)	(0.017)
Constant	0.397***	0.382***	0.256***	0.223***
	(0.059)	(0.043)	(0.052)	(0.043)
Observations	685	935	686	932
R-squared	0.283	0.182	0.275	0.331

Standard errors in parentheses.
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1, two-tailed.

Source: NBC News|SurveyMonkey Audience Panel Survey, June-July 2016.

Figure 4.3: Effects of Out-Party Negativity on Rumor Endorsement, Conditional Upon Political Knowledge

Worldview Inconsistent Rumors

Out-Party Negativity - Republicans

Out-Party Negativity - Democrats

Worldview Consistent Rumors

Out-Party Negativity - Republicans

Out-Party Negativity - Democrats

Source: NBC News | SurveyMonkey Audience Panel Survey, 2016.

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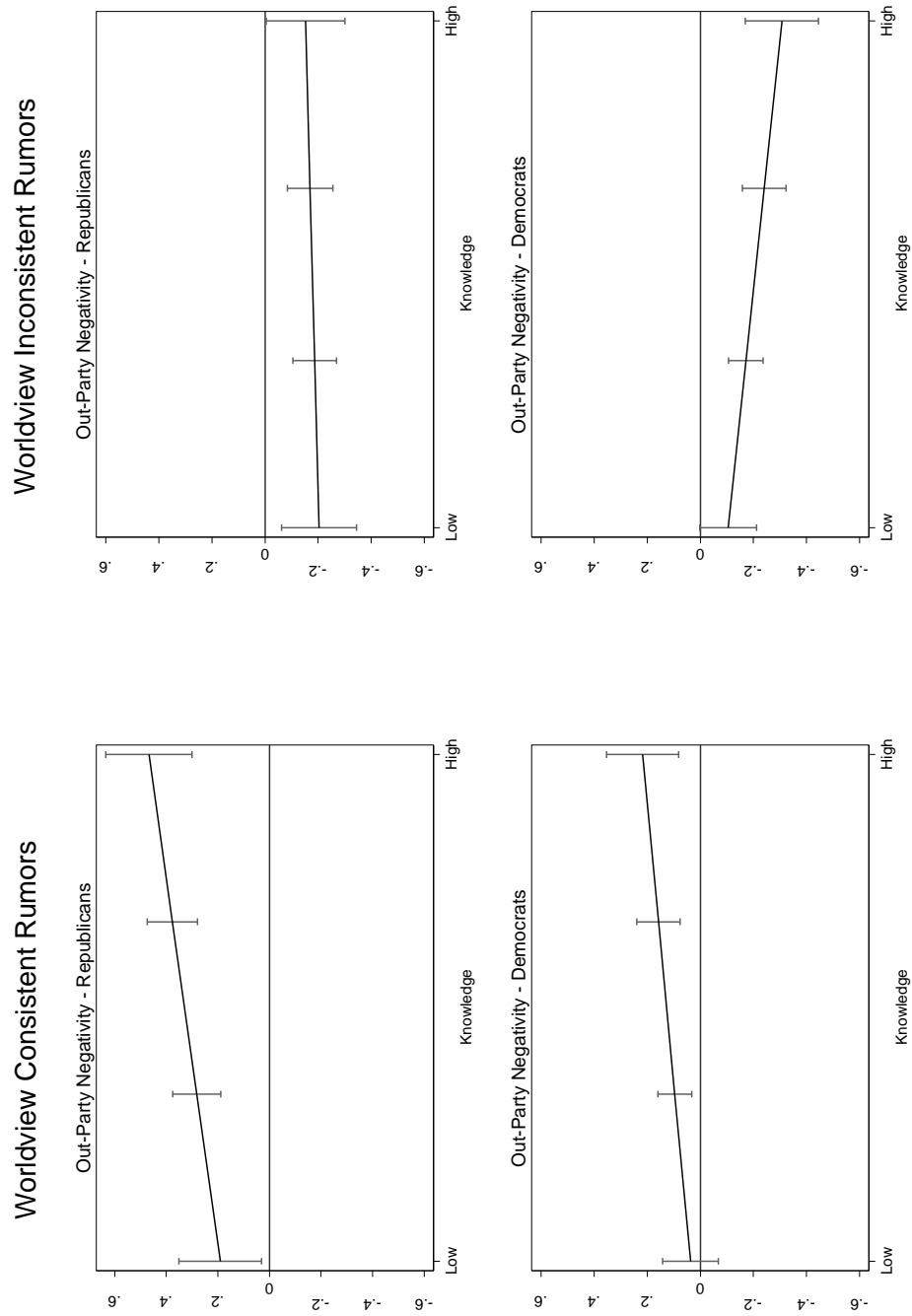
Figure 4.4: Effects of In-Party Positivity on Rumor Endorsement, Conditional Upon Political Knowledge

Source: NBC News | SurveyMonkey Audience Panel Survey, 2016.

Knowledge also appears to bolster the influence of out-party antipathy in inoculating Democrats against believing the worst of their own side. Column 4 demonstrates that the effect of *Out-Party Negativity* on Democrats' beliefs in worldview inconsistent rumors nearly triples from the least politically knowledgeable (β = -0.105) to most politically knowledgeable (β = -0.307, p<.01). In other words, politically knowledgeable Democrats use their negativity toward the Republican Party to 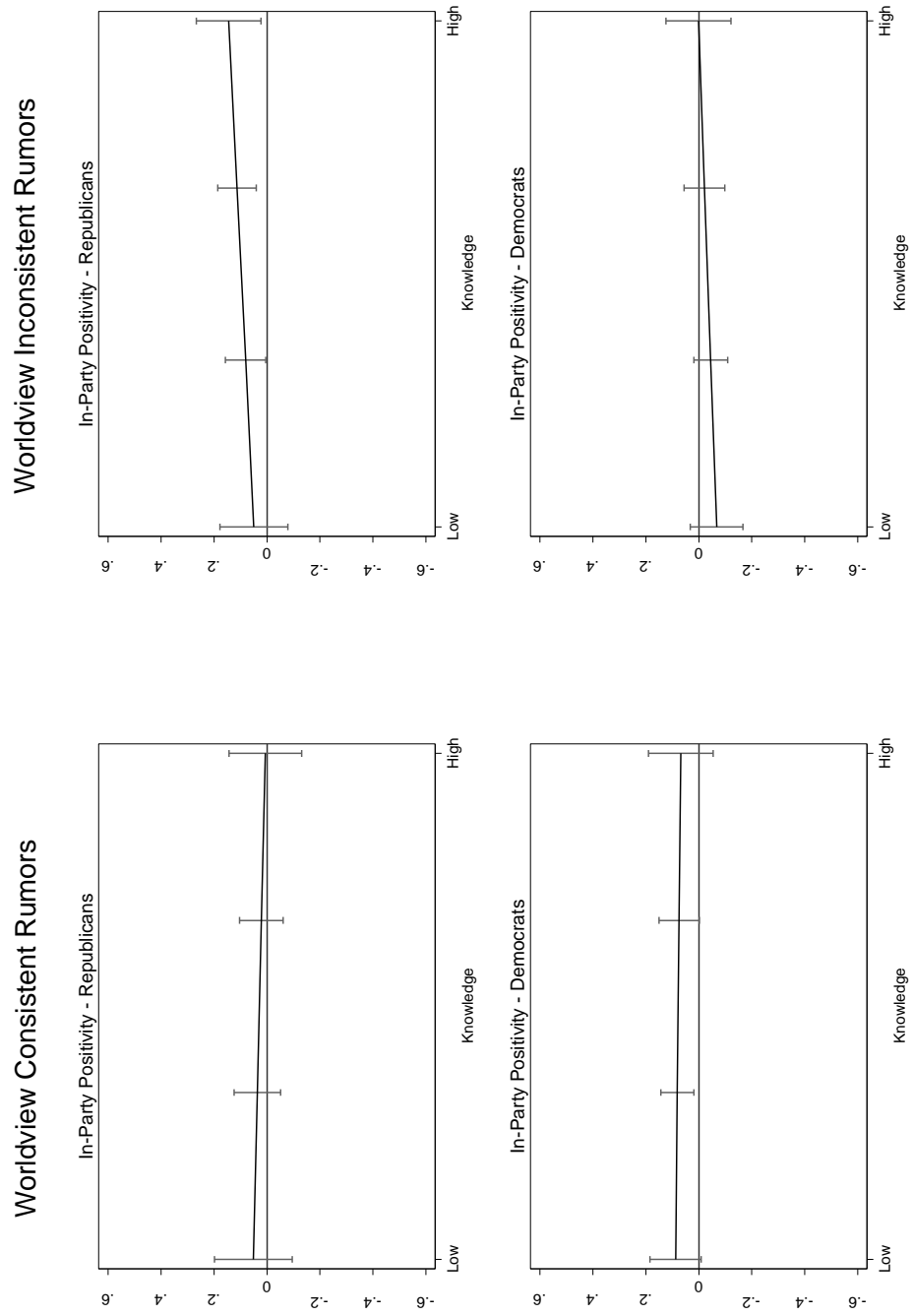reject worldview inconsistent rumors three times more effectively than those Democrats low in political knowledge. These effects are nearly four times as large as the effect of ideology and nearly twice as large as the effect of conspiratorial thinking. On the other hand, knowledge does not appear to play much of a moderating role for Republicans when it comes to the effect of negative feelings toward the Democratic Party on their propensity to believe in worldview inconsistent rumors; the effect of *Out-Party Negativity* on rumor acceptance is statistically significant for Republicans at all levels of knowledge.

Interestingly, knowledge does not appear to condition the influence of in-party feelings on rumor endorsement among partisans for either set of rumors. Figure 4.3 shows that *Out-Party Negativity* exerts a statistically significant impact upon belief in worldview consistent and inconsistent rumors, and its effects are heightened among higher knowledge partisans. On the other hand, as Figure 4.4 demonstrates, the influence of *In-Party Positivity* on rumor endorsement of any kind is statistically insignificant for partisans at all levels of knowledge, with the exception of high-knowledge Republicans' beliefs in worldview consistent rumors. Even in that case, however, the effect of *In-Party Positivity* is substantively insignificant. These findings underscore the fact that rumor acceptance is driven by a very specific aspect of party identification: it is out-party negativity in particular — rather than party affect or partisanship in general — that is activated among high-knowledge partisans when they are asked about their beliefs in political rumors that comport with their worldview and those

that challenge it.

4.6   Discussion

The results presented here demonstrate negative feelings toward the opposition play a specific and important role in motivating partisans to accept political rumors, a source of misinformation. Rumor acceptance appears to be driven not simply by partisan or ideological identification, but by a particular partisan attitude — one that appears to be intensifying over time (Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes 2012). Negative out-party feelings not only cause people to think the worst of their opponents, but also keep partisans from believing the worst about their own side. These findings challenge to our understanding of how partisanship, as a social identity, should work: it is negative out-party feelings, *not* positive in-party feelings, that play this inoculating role. In addition, political knowledge appears to exacerbate these effects. Rather than being a crutch of the ignorant, out-party affect is used most by highly knowledgeable partisans — the very people whose understanding of the political world should cause them to question the plausibility of political rumors.

The fact that partisans are more willing to believe worldview-affirming rumors primarily because they dislike their political opponents presents some troubling prospects for the future of political progress in America. If partisans' acceptance of political misinformation is driven more by animosity toward the opposition than by a principled set of policy stances — let alone the actual veracity of rumor content — developing consensus on any matter seems unlikely. Partisans' blind acceptance of rumors, driven primarily by out-party animosity, suggests that Americans are increasingly living in two separate worlds. Cooperation and negotiation are nearly impossible when people cannot even agree on the terms of debate; progress becomes non-existent when people's mere dislike of their opponents makes them feel entitled to not only their own

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opinions, but also their own facts.[16]

This is particularly troubling in light of recent developments in American politics. The ascendancy of "fake news" on both the left and the right during and since the 2016 election has undoubtedly increased partisans' exposure to rumors. Moreover, the fact that the president of the United States frequently asserts that he is the target of a left-leaning conspiracy makes it more likely that rank-and-file Republicans, who normally might be less susceptible to such claims under Republican leadership, will also believe and spread such rumors. This, coupled with the proliferation of left-leaning rumors under an out-party administration, creates a perfect maelstrom for heightened rumor belief on both sides of the aisle. With out-party negativity — a primary determinant of rumor endorsement — on the rise, it seems unlikely that partisans will be able to have a fact-based debate about any political matter for the foreseeable future.

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[16]This phrase is a variation of that famously attributed to the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

Chapter 5

Out-Party Negativity and Democratic Attitudes

The campaign and election of Donald Trump have pushed the limits of partisanship beyond what many could have imagined, raising concerns about the fundamental health of American democracy. Trump has, in the words of one prominent political scientist, "trample[d] willy-nilly over many standard norms and conventional practices in liberal democracies" (Norris 2017, 3) with few repercussions from his own party. The President of the United States has undermined public confidence in the electoral process (Liptak and Merica 2017), flouted ethics guidelines (Craig and Lipton 2017; Johnson 2017), attacked an independent judiciary (Bennett 2017), declared the news media "the enemy of the American people" (Grynbaum 2017), and compromised the historically apolitical status of the FBI by firing Director James Comey (Baker and Shear 2017). Actions like this on the part of the Chief Executive are largely unprecedented in the United States, which has — until recently — consistently been ranked as one of the most "free" democracies in the world (Freedom House 2017). Despite Trump's unorthodox behavior, at the time of this writing, few Republican leaders have spoken out or taken serious action against his behavior. Trump's support among Republicans in the electorate has also remained high since he took office, with approval ratings consistently in the low- to mid-80s. As of May 2017, only 13% of Republican identifiers considered Trump's firing of Comey to be inappropriate (Hartig, Lapinski and Perry 2017).

The tepid Republican response to Trump's actions demonstrates that basic tenets of democracy are not considered sacrosanct by large portions of the American public. In some respects, this is hardly surprising; more than a half century ago, public opinion scholars demonstrated that far more Americans supported democratic norms in principle than in practice (McClosky 1964; Prothro and Grigg 1960; Stouffer 1955).

When considered in the context of broader trends, however, the lack of a swift reaction to Trump's violations of norms and practices is emblematic of a larger shift in the way that Americans think about democracy. Over the past three decades, citizens in the United States have become more cynical about the value of a democratic political system while expressing an increasing enthusiasm for authoritarian interpretations of democracy (Foa and Mounk 2016; 2017). During this period of democratic "deconsolidation" (Foa and Mounk 2016), partisans have grown increasingly hostile toward their opponents and more distrustful of the federal government (Hetherington and Rudolph 2015; Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes 2012). If people evaluate politics in terms of the hatred they feel toward their opponents (Chapters 3 and 4), living within a political system that occasionally affords their adversaries power over their fortunes may become increasingly unappealing. The influence of out-party negativity on attitude formation, therefore, may extend well beyond the way that partisans think about issues or evaluate information: it may fundamentally change the way they value democracy itself.

In this chapter, I examine the role that out-party negativity plays in shaping Americans' attitudes toward democracy. Specifically, I investigate the origins of two different kinds of democratic attitudes: those related to system support — the degree to which individuals endorse democracy over other types of governance — and democratic norms, which generally refer to civil rights, liberties, and the "rules of the game." I find that out-party affect is inconsistently related to system support, which suggests that partisans' negative feelings toward their opponents are not the primary explanation for the trend toward democratic deconsolidation in the United States. When it comes to endorsement of democratic norms, however, I find that out-party negativity plays a dominant role in the degree to which partisans find abstract civil rights and liberties to be important in a democratic society. Contrary to expectations, I find that out-party negativity *bolsters* individuals' endorsement of democratic

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norms, while in-party positivity *reduces* support. Ironically, this finding is strongest among Republican identifiers whose attitudes should, in theory, be motivated more by in-party evaluations at a time when their party controls Congress and the White House. In this sense, out-party negativity — which, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, can sometimes lead to normatively troubling outcomes — plays a normatively *beneficial* role in promoting democratic values. While the mechanism behind such effects is unclear, I theorize that out-party negativity may play this protective role because it appeals to partisans' loss aversion: those who hold particularly hostile attitudes toward the opposition may voice higher support for democratic norms because they worry about the curtailment of their rights when their opponents are in power. Taken together, my results suggest that though partisans' dislike of their opponents does not appear to have shaken their convictions about democracy as a preferred system of government, out-party negativity *does* influence the degree to which people are willing to extend rights to others and endorse fair play *within* a democracy. In this way, out-party hostility may actually strengthen people's commitment to democratic principles.

5.1 Why Study Democratic Attitudes in the United States?

Americans have long reported high levels of dissatisfaction with their political system. Since the 1980s, an average of two in three have reported that they believe the country is "off on the wrong track" (Clement 2016). Levels of trust in government have plummeted over time; now, only about one in five Americans say they trust the government in Washington to do what's right "always" or "most of the time" (Hetherington 2005; Pew Research Center 2017*b*). The proportion of Americans who report having "hardly any" confidence in Congress has grown substantially over the past decade and a half (Voeten 2017). Americans have become so disenchanted with political institutions in the United States that by 2015, a plurality reported that

they believed they could do a better job running the government than their elected representatives (Pew Research Center 2015).

Few political observers have taken these warning signs seriously. Democratic rule in the United States has largely been assumed to be path-dependent; as the world's "beacon of democracy," the American political system has been widely regarded as impervious to challenges of legitimacy (Foa and Mounk 2017; Norris 2017). Indeed, the United States has a few structural advantages that encourage long-term democratic rule. America is both wealthy and well-established, two key characteristics that decrease its susceptibility to regime change. In fact, no democracy with a GDP per capita of over $6,100 in 1985 dollars and a history of at least two government turnovers following free and fair elections has ever fully collapsed (Przeworski et al. 2000; Przeworski and Limongi 1997).

Despite these advantages, some evidence suggests that there is some cause for worry when it comes to the *quality* of democracy in the United States. Scholars have long understood that stable democratic regimes rely significantly upon the pro-democratic attitudes of their citizens to survive (Almond and Verba 1963; Norris 1999; 2011). Indeed, democracy is only considered to be fully "consolidated" in a country when its citizens recognize it as "the only game in town" (Linz and Stepan 1978; 1996). In other words, for democracy to persist, the overwhelming majority of the public must view it as the best form of government while simultaneously rejecting authoritarian alternatives. Evidence from the World Values Surveys suggests that, at least when it comes to the United States, this is increasingly not the case. Over the past few decades, Americans have become more skeptical of democratic rule while simultaneously expressing increasing openness to non-democratic alternatives. As evidence of this trend, Figure 5.1 documents the proportion of U.S. survey respondents agreeing that each alternative is a "good" or "fairly good" way of "running the country."
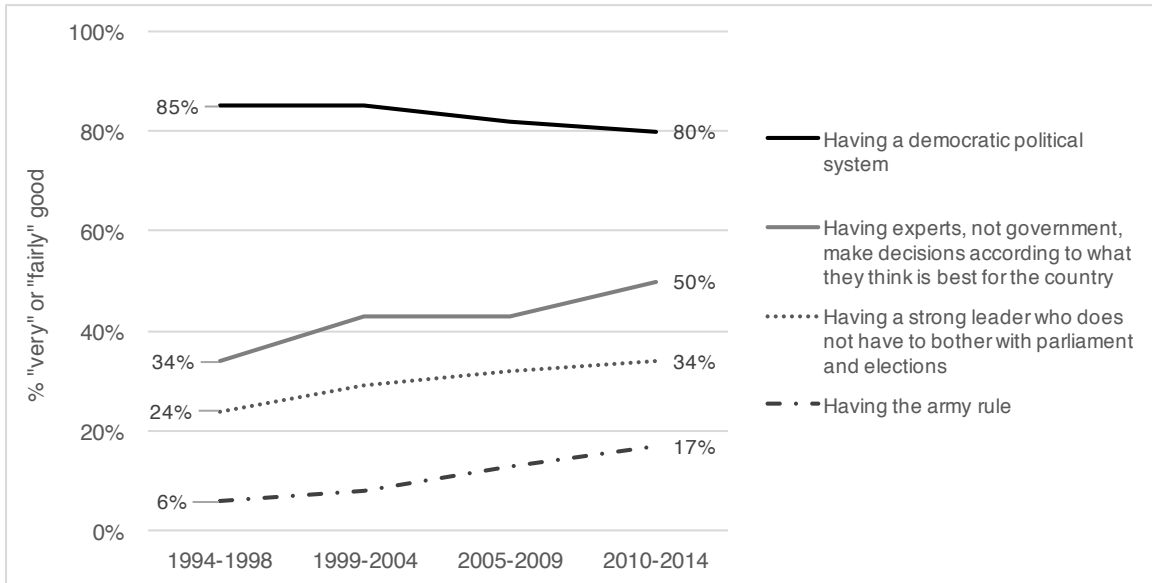
Source: World Values Surveys Waves 3-6.

As we can see, Americans' support for a democratic political system has remained more or less stable over time, with the proportion of respondents believing it to be a "very" or "fairly" good way of governing the United States remaining in the low to mid 80s. In contrast, support for non-democratic alternatives has increased substantially. Between the 1994-1998 and 2010-2014 waves of the World Values Survey, respondents' support for an authoritarian-like leader increased by ten percentage points, while their support for rule-by-experts increased by 16 percentage points. Support for military rule more than doubled from 6% to 15% over the same time period. These changes are remarkably large, especially given the slow pace with which public opinion tends to shift (Stimson 2004).

While these trends are disconcerting, they do not necessarily suggest that democracy in the United States is on the brink of demise. To dismiss the importance of these trends, however, would be misguided. Cynicism toward political institutions, including legislatures and elections, can have destabilizing effects, making citizens

more open to populist authoritarian figures who attach little value to civil rights and liberties (Norris 1999). In this sense, the election of Trump — who has criticized the media, advocated the imprisonment of his opponent, and projected the strongman message of "I alone can fix" during his presidential campaign — should probably be viewed more as a symptom rather than a cause of the decline of democratic support in the United States (Alexander and Welzel 2017; Norris 2017). While American democracy may not fail overnight, the slow erosion of democratic norms and values over a longer period of time could lead citizens to consider non-democratic alternatives more seriously.[1] Uncovering the political correlates that predict citizens' attitudes toward systems of governance and specific norms and values, therefore, may be key to understanding how the quality of American democracy might change in the future.

5.2 Out-Party Negativity and Attitudes Toward Democracy

What determines the degree to which individuals support democratic government and norms? While questions related to system support have rarely been addressed in the American politics literature, those concerning the origins of people's endorsement of democratic *norms*[2] — the building blocks upon which support for democracy rests — were of great interest to early public opinion scholars. In order for democracy to be "successful," political theorists argued, a necessary condition was widespread agreement on basic democratic principles (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee 1954; Dahl 1956; Key 1961). In examining empirical data, however, researchers found that although people tended to agree on principles of democracy in the abstract, they were much less likely to support rights and liberties in specific applications (McClosky

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[1]These concerns are shared by the group of political scientists who recently founded Brightline Watch, an organization dedicated to monitoring the quality of democracy in the United States.

[2]While I make a conceptual distinction between system support and norms, both are relevant to a discussion about democratic deconsolidation: "to understand why levels of support for democracy have changed, we must study the ways in which people's conception of democracy have changed...full-fledged support for democracy should also entail a commitment to liberal values such as the protection of key rights and civil liberties" (Foa and Mounk 2016, 8).

1964; Prothro and Grigg 1960; Stouffer 1955). For example, though an overwhelming proportion of Americans (95%) agreed that "every citizen should have an equal chance to influence government policy," more than half also agreed that "only people who are well-informed" on the subject of a government referendum should be able to vote on that referendum in an election (Prothro and Grigg 1960). This tendency to endorse democratic principles in the abstract while expressing lower support for their specific applications was particularly true with respect to the rights of groups considered to be distasteful by American society. For example, Stouffer (1955) and Prothro and Grigg (1960) found that, at the height of McCarthyism, not only did substantial majorities not wish to extend basic civil rights — like speaking in public — to communists, they also endorsed more restrictive measures, like allowing the government to tap their phones or revoke their citizenship.

Though these studies implied that democratic attitudes had origins in political and psychological factors, at the time, researchers' exploration of the determinants of democratic attitudes was largely limited to demographic differences. Early studies found that that the most significant differences of opinion on democratic principles were rooted in markers of social class, like education, income, and region (McClosky 1964; Prothro and Grigg 1960; Stouffer 1955). At the time, other potential "bases of disagreement" — like gender, age, and partisanship — "were found to only have a negligible effect" on individuals' support for these values (Prothro and Grigg 1960, 287). It wasn't until the 1970s that political scientists began to examine the political correlates of democratic attitudes more systematically. Though this research primarily investigated the determinants of "political tolerance," its findings relate conceptually to the study of democratic norms because "tolerance...implies a commitment to the 'rules of the game' and a willingness to apply them equally. Therefore persons are tolerant to the extent they are prepared to extend such constitutional guarantees — the right to speak, to publish, to run for office — to those with whom they disagree"

(Sullivan, Piereson and Marcus 1982, 2). This body of research demonstrated that most people do not apply tolerance neutrally; rather, judgments about whether specific acts should be permitted are grounded in evaluations of groups (Lawrence 1976). In particular, Sullivan, Piereson and Marcus (1982) found that people's willingness to extend rights to specific groups was affected by how *threatening* they perceived these groups to be. Perhaps more importantly, they found a strong association with the degree to which people endorsed abstract democratic principles — the same investigated by (Stouffer 1955) and (McClosky 1964) — and the degree to which they were prepared to tolerate highly disliked groups in certain circumstances (Sullivan, Piereson and Marcus 1982).

While the psychological mechanism driving norm endorsement has likely remained the same, several pieces of evidence suggest that the groups that people reference in forming these opinions have probably changed. For one, the reference groups in Sullivan, Piereson and Marcus's (1982) study reflected a very different political environment. These groups — including the Black Panther Party, the John Birch Society, the Symbionese Liberation Army, and fascists, to name a few — represented fringe elements of politics. Accordingly, they were the natural out-groups for most people, particularly since partisanship was not particularly salient at the time. During the 1970s, parties at the elite level were ideologically less distinct (McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal 2006) and provided fewer clear cues to the electorate. As a consequence, party identification and its influence were at post-World-War-II lows (Clarke and Suzuki 1994; Dennis 1988; Miller and Wattenberg 1983), which might explain why the researchers did not investigate partisanship as a source of individuals' contingent attitudes toward democracy.

In contrast, in today's more polarized political environment, the most relevant out-group for most people is the party with which they do not identify. As I have argued throughout this dissertation, out-party negativity is a prime source of most

contemporary partisans' political evaluations. The fact that Sullivan, Pierson and Marcus (1982) uncovered a relationship between democratic attitudes and people's feelings about groups that they dislike and perceive to be threatening makes it even more likely that contemporary partisans would use out-party negativity in forming their opinions.[3] Partisans not only intensely dislike their opponents (Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes 2012), but many are also "afraid" of the other side and believe the policies of the out-party "threaten the nation's well-being" (Pew Research Center 2016b). For example, in June 2016, 55% of Democrats and 49% of Republicans said their opponents made them "afraid," while 45% of Republicans and 41% of Democrats agreed that the other side's policies threaten the country (Pew Research Center 2016b). Accordingly, when individuals are asked about the importance of civil liberties, rights, and "fair play" in a democracy, they likely use their out-party feelings to guide their answers.

Partisans who who view their opponents as "deplorable"[4] (Chozick 2016) or "not even human"[5] (Hensch 2017) are unlikely to believe the out-party's influence in the American political system is positive, which may cause feelings of ambivalence toward democratic systems and norms. Those whose party currently wields significant power may be more supportive of authoritarian styles of governance that constrain the ability of their opponents to have a say in governing or decision making. On the other hand, those who find themselves on the "losing" side of politics may place a higher value on a democratic political system that will eventually afford them the opportunity to regain power in the next election. Similarly, feelings of hostility or dislike toward the

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[3]Of course, Sullivan, Pierson and Marcus (1982) argued the opposite: that those who endorsed abstract democratic principles were more likely to believe that members of disliked groups should be afforded specific rights. Given the lack of clear causal evidence, however, we might suspect the direction of the relationship to be reversed. If people primarily think about politics in terms of groups (Achen and Bartels 2016; Bentley 1908; Brewer and Kramer 1985; Huddy 2001; Kinder and Kam 2009), they are probably likely to use their evaluations of disliked groups to inform their support for abstract democratic principles rather than the other way around.

[4]Hillary Clinton's characterization of (some) Trump voters.

[5]Eric Trump's description of Democrats.

out-party may condition the importance that partisans attach to specific democratic norms, which could work to either constrain the voice of the opposition or protect the ability of their own side to participate in politics. Partisans' views on institutions like elections or the press are also likely to be conditioned by their feelings toward their opponents. For example, election winners who loathe their opponents may be be highly predisposed to believe election losers should recognize the legitimacy of the results. Conversely, losers who feel particularly negatively toward the other side should be more open to contesting the results.[6]

While evidence from comparative politics research suggests that being on the winning or losing side of elections does influence people's satisfaction with democracy (Anderson and Guillory 1997), this need not always be the case; instead, partisans may maintain these dual considerations regardless of whether their party controls the government. In a consolidated democracy with regular alternations of power, partisans may consider not only what benefits them most in the short term — i.e. preventing "dangerous" opponents from exerting influence — but also how their fates may fare under an out-party administration. This thinking is consistent with research in psychology demonstrating the tendency of people to make decisions on the basis of *potential* losses and gains, with a disproportionate desire to minimize losses in particular (Kahneman and Tversky 1979; 1984; Tversky and Kahneman 1992). Accordingly, partisans' negative out-party feelings may cause them to place a higher importance on the value of democracy and democratic values *regardless* of in- or out-party status because they fear for their status when their opponents are in power. Whether this is indeed the case is the subject of the following analysis.

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[6]Donald Trump perfectly illustrated this mindset in October 2016, when he said he would "totally accept the results of this great and historic presidential election...if I win" (Sanders 2016).

5.3 Predicting System Support

I hypothesize that out-party negativity plays an important role in determining both people's support of a democratic political system and their endorsement of specific democratic norms. To test this prediction, I rely upon data collected as part of an original survey carried out by YouGov in March 2017.[7] In this survey, I probed respondents' democratic attitudes using two sets of questions. The first set concerns individuals' support of democracy and other, non-democratic systems of governance. The questions included in this survey were drawn from those tapping system support included in the past three waves of the World Values Survey. Respondents were asked whether they thought each of the following was "a very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad way of governing the United States":

- "Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with Congress and elections"[8]

- "Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country"

- "Having the military rule"[9]

- "Having a democratic political system"

To provide some context, Figure 5.2 displays the percentages of respondents and of Democrats and Republicans who said each system would be a "very" or "fairly" good way of governing the United States. While there are some partisan differences across items, they are not as stark as one might expect. Republicans are slightly more likely

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[7]YouGov matched respondents in their sampling frame on the basis of gender, age, race, education, party identification, ideology, and political interest and weighted responses using population parameters from the 2010 American Community Survey, the November 2010 Current Population Survey, and the 2007 Pew Religious Life Survey.

[8]The question wording here is slightly different from that included in the World Values Survey, which instead asks about "parliament and elections."

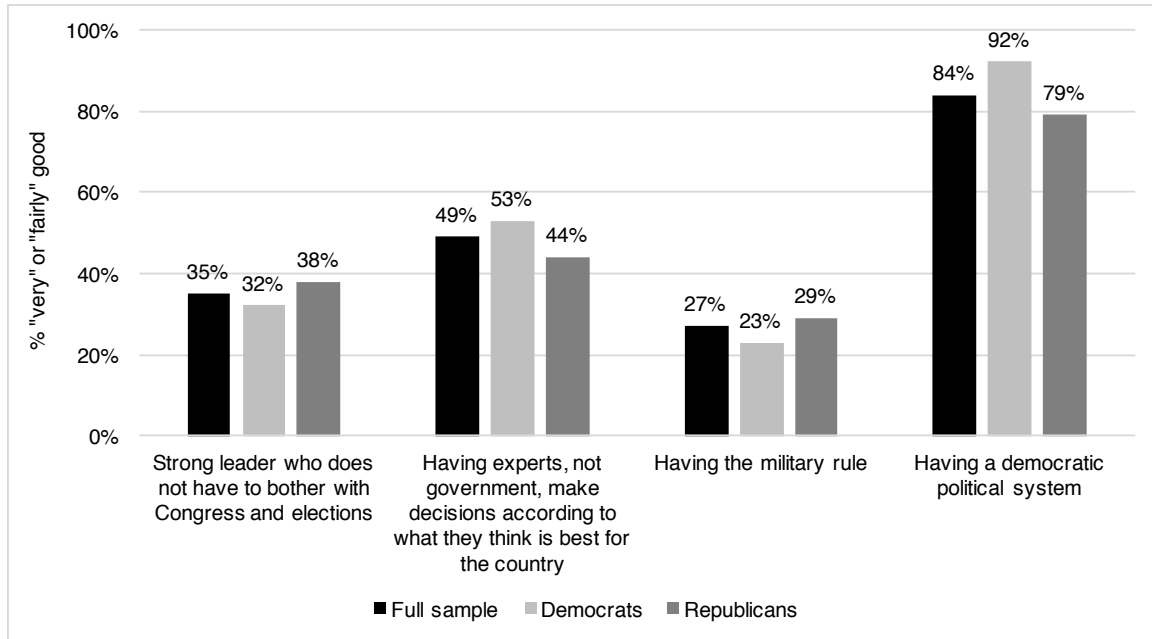[9]This question wording was also changed from "army" to "military."

than Democrats – by a margin of six percentage points — to feel positively about governance under a strong leader who is not held accountable by other institutions. This is probably reflective of the fact that Republicans tend to be more authoritarian — and thus attracted to a strong leader — than Democrats (Hetherington and Weiler 2009). Possibly for similar reasons, Republicans were six percentage points more likely than Democrats to favor military rule.[10] More Democrats (53%) than Republicans (44%) supported rule by "experts," which is more or less consistent with the growing polarization of science and research over the past few decades (Gauchat 2012) and the partisan gap on the feeling thermometer for "experts" within this study.[11] The largest partisan differences emerges in Democrats' and Republicans' preferences for democratic rule. While large proportions of both Democrats (92%) and Republicans (79%) report that having a democratic political system is a "very" or "fairly" good way of governing the United States, Democrats are substantially more likely to favor democratic rule than Republicans. On the surface, this is somewhat puzzling: we might expect that Democrats — who recently lost the 2016 election — would feel less positively about democracy than Republicans, in accordance with previous research (e.g., Anderson and Guillory 1997). On the other hand, Democrats may report feeling more favorable to democracy because they anticipate being able to take advantage of the system to gain power in the next election.[12]

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[10]On average, Republicans rated the military 14 percentage points more favorably than Democrats on the feeling thermometer for the military included in this study.

[11]On average, Democrats rated experts 14 percentage points more favorably than Republicans.

[12]Interestingly, the partisan breakdowns on these items are very similar to those from the most recent wave of the World Values Survey, which ended its data collection in 2014. While the WVS did not ask about respondents' party identification, they did ask about which party respondents were likely to vote for in the next national election. In comparing the attitudes of those individuals who said they would vote for either the Democratic or Republican Party to Democrats and Republicans in this survey, the only significant difference was in the proportions of potential Republican voters and Republicans who said thought it was a "very" or "fairly" good thing to have a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament/Congress and elections. Thirty eight percent (38%) of potential Republican voters in the WVS fell into this category compared to only 25% of Republicans in the YouGov survey. This decrease is particularly surprising in the context of Trump's win. That being said, there are no other significant differences between the distribution of responses across items; no differences exceed five percentage points. The partisan gap on favorability of democratic rule is of about the same magnitude (12 percentage points) as in the YouGov survey. The lack of

Figure 5.2: System Support by Party Identification

Figure showing bar chart with categories:

- Strong leader who does not have to bother with Congress and elections: Full sample 35%, Democrats 32%, Republicans 38%
- Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country: Full sample 49%, Democrats 53%, Republicans 44%
- Having the military rule: Full sample 27%, Democrats 23%, Republicans 29%
- Having a democratic political system: Full sample 84%, Democrats 92%, Republicans 79%

Y-axis: % "very" or "fairly" good

Legend: Full sample, Democrats, Republicans

Source: YouGov Survey, March 2017.

While these differences are interesting, they cannot tell us if and how partisans use their affect toward the parties in shaping these preferences. To investigate if and how out-party negativity influences these attitudes, I estimate a series of OLS regression models predicting support for each system of governance as a function of partisans' feelings toward the parties and a series of control variables. As in previous chapters, the independent variables of interest in this model are the two feeling thermometers toward the parties, operationalized as *In-Party Positivity* (feelings toward the Democratic Party among Democrats, and feelings toward the Republican Party among Republicans) and *Out-Party Negativity* (feelings toward the Democratic Party among Republicans, and feelings toward the Republican Party among Democrats).[13] As an initial test, I include the same control variables that appeared

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change between 2014 and 2017 on most of these items again runs counter to expectations, especially as the party in the White House changed between surveys.

[13]The measures of *In-Party Positivity* and *Out-Party Negativity* here are composed of two feeling

in other models throughout this dissertation. These include a measure of individuals'
self-reported strength of partisanship and dummy variables for ideology,[14] gender,
and race. Though this study did not include a measure of political knowledge, I also
include a measure of political interest here as a proxy, as previous research suggests
that tolerance and knowledge might have similar effects on one's attitudes toward
democratic rule. Attention to politics, like political knowledge, can help individuals
understand what is at stake and the tradeoffs associated with democratic rule. There-
fore, those individuals who report being more interested in politics should, on average,
be more supportive of democracy and less enthusiastic about alternative systems of
governance (Nie, Junn and Stehlik-Barry 1996).

I present the results of these analyses in Tables 5.1 (for Democrats) and 5.2 (for
Republicans).[15]   All variables are scaled 0-1; positive coefficients indicate greater
support for that type of governance. Starting with the results among Democrats
(Table 5.1), we can see that out-party negativity appears to play an important role
in shaping their assessments about the value of each system of governance. Across all
models, the effects of both *Out-Party Negativity* and *In-Party Positivity* dwarf those
related to either strength of partisanship or ideology, which again provides evidence
that it is party affect in particular — not identification with a party nor ideology —
that influences partisan opinion formation. In three of the four models — specifically,
those assessing the value of more authoritarian systems of government — higher

thermometers each. In an attempt to discern whether partisans discriminated between their feelings
toward the parties and their feelings toward partisans, I conducted a survey experiment in which half
of the sample was asked to rate their feelings toward "the Democratic Party" and "the Republican
Party," and the other half was asked to rate their feelings toward "Democrats" and "Republicans."
There do not appear to be any statistically or substantively important differences between these
ratings, either within the full sample or among each set of partisans. Therefore, for the sake of
statistical power in the subsequent analysis, I combine the feeling thermometers for each party with
the corresponding feeling thermometers for partisans in constructing the measures of party affect.

[14]I classify those individuals who reported being "extremely liberal," "liberal," and "somewhat
liberal" as "liberal" in this model; those labeled "conservative" here are those who self-identify as
"extremely conservative," "conservative," and "somewhat conservative."

[15]Once again, in accordance with previous research, I classify leaning Independents as partisans
(Keith et al. 1992).

levels of out-party negativity reduce Democrats' likelihood to believe rule by a strong leader, experts, or the military to be good ways of governing the U.S. For example, the coefficient for *Out-Party Negativity* in the first column (β = -0.438, p<.01) — regarding the value of rule under a strong leader — indicates that as Democrats move from neutral feelings (0.5) to highly negative feelings (1) toward the Republican Party, their support for governance by a leader who does not have to be responsive to other institutions *decreases* by about 21 percentage points, or nearly a quarter of the scale of the dependent variable. This runs counter to the expectation that, in the abstract, Democrats who strongly dislike Republicans might prefer an alternative system of government that constrains the power of the opposition. When considered in more specific terms, however, the positive effect of *Out-Party Negativity* may reflect that Democrats — who find themselves out of power — might be wary of a leader who is relatively unrestricted in his powers and therefore could act in a way that limits the ability of their party to have a say in governing.

In-Party Positivity, on the other hand, does not appear to exert a meaningful effect upon Democrats' opinions. These results suggest that Democrats may thinking about Trump specifically when answering this question; in that case, their feelings toward the out-party — which Trump leads — should be dominant, whereas their feelings toward their own side should have little bearing on their preferences. *Out-Party Negativity* also plays a significant role in shaping Democrats' evaluations of military rule (Column 3). Its effect (β = -0.411, p<.01) is more than twice the effect of *In-Party Positivity* (β = 0.182, p<.01). The positive coefficient on *In-Party Positivity* indicates that the more warmly Democrats feel toward their own side, the more likely they are to *support* military rule. The fact that warmer feelings toward their own side leads Democrats to increase their support for military rule may again reflect partisans' ambivalence toward this style of governance. On one hand, they may fear it when they are out of power; on the other hand, they may support it in

the abstract if, in the future, it helps limit Republicans' influence.

A similar case might be made with respect to the results in Column 2, which concern Democrats' evaluations of rule by experts. Here, the influences of *Out-Party Negativity* ($\beta = $ -0.114, p<.05) and *In-Party Positivity* ($\beta = 0.141$, p<.01) are roughly equal. Again, increased out-party antipathy *reduces* Democrats' preference for a non-democratic system of governance, while in-party warmth *increases* it. Only in the last model — concerning the benefit of a democratic system — do higher levels of *Out-Party Negativity* lead Democrats to be *less* supportive of a democratic alternative. This is puzzling, particularly given the consistency of the direction of the effects of *Out-Party Negativity* in the other models. Moreover, the influence of *In-Party Positivity* ($\beta = $ -0.322, p<.01) is larger than that of *Out-Party Negativity*, which runs counter to my expectation that out-party feelings should be dominant in partisans' support for each type of system.

Across all models, the effects of both *Out-Party Negativity* and *In-Party Positivity* tend to be weaker than those related to *Political Interest*. In the case of Democrats' assessments of non-democratic styles of governance (Columns 1-3), the effect of *Political Interest* is negative. Its largest effect emerges regarding Democrats' endorsement of a strong leader. The coefficient of $\beta = $ -0.354 (p<.01) indicates that as Democrats move from being moderately to very interested in politics, the appeal of a strong leader decreases by about 17 percentage points. The fact that this effect is negative for Democrats' opinions about non-democratic alternatives confirms the theoretical expectation that higher levels of political interest should lead to more democratic attitudes. That being said, surprisingly, the effect of *Political Interest* is also negative in the model predicting support for a democratic political system (Column 4). This indicates that highly interested Democrats are actually *less* likely than those Democrats who are not particularly interested in politics to disapprove of a democratic political system. This may indicate that though highly interested Democrats are not entirely

ready to abandon democracy in favor of other styles of governance, their interest in politics leads them to find some aspects of democratic rule — perhaps, for example, the rights afforded to their opponents — unappealing.

The results displayed in Table 5.2 demonstrate that *Out-Party Negativity* also plays an important role in Republicans' assessments of three of the four types of governance. Once again, increasingly negative out-party feelings appear to cause Republicans to be more supportive of democratic rule, while higher levels of in-party warmth undermine democratic support. When it comes to Republicans' assessments of rule by experts (Column 2), for example, the effect of *Out-Party Negativity* (β = -0.212, p<.01) suggests that as Republicans move from being neutral toward the Democratic Party (0.5) to highly negative (1.0), they become about 10 percentage points less likely to believe that experts' running of the country would be a good means to govern the U.S. Conversely, the effect of *In-Party Positivity* (β = -0.212, p<.01) indicates that moving from neutral feelings toward the Republican Party (0.5) to highly positive feelings (1.0) increases the likelihood that Republicans favor rule by experts by a little more than eight percentage points. Similarly, increasingly negative out-party feelings bolster Republicans' beliefs that a democratic political system is a good system of governance (Column 4); interestingly, in-party feelings do not appear to have a statistically or substantively important impact on this evaluation. These mixed results again may signal the competing considerations that Republicans have in mind when evaluating various types of systems. On one hand, because their party is in power, they may be tempted to support anti-democratic alternatives if they think doing so would bolster its influence and constrain the power of Democrats. If so, it appears that *In-Party Positivity* is largely responsible for this kind of thinking. On the other hand, Republicans' negative feelings toward the Democratic Party may cause them to be a little more forward thinking, and thus worry about their own rights under autocratic rule. In that case, higher levels of out-party negativity may cause

Table 5.1: Predictors of System Support, Basic Model - Democrats

	(1) Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with Congress and elections	(2) Having experts, not the government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country	(3) Having the military rule	(4) Having a democratic political system
Out-Party Negativity	-0.438***	-0.114**	-0.411***	-0.206***
	(0.048)	(0.050)	(0.048)	(0.036)
In-Party Positivity	0.080	0.141***	0.182***	-0.322***
	(0.052)	(0.055)	(0.052)	(0.039)
Strength PID	0.026	-0.031	0.025	0.009
	(0.031)	(0.032)	(0.031)	(0.023)
Liberal	-0.076***	-0.050*	-0.062**	-0.024
	(0.027)	(0.028)	(0.027)	(0.020)
Conservative	-0.068*	-0.252***	-0.049	0.004
	(0.040)	(0.042)	(0.040)	(0.030)
Political Interest	-0.354***	-0.168***	-0.182***	-0.205***
	(0.049)	(0.051)	(0.049)	(0.037)
Black	0.003	-0.137***	0.026	-0.057**
	(0.034)	(0.036)	(0.034)	(0.025)
Female	-0.004	0.023	0.027	-0.011
	(0.025)	(0.026)	(0.024)	(0.018)
Constant	0.870***	0.681***	0.554***	0.294***
	(0.060)	(0.063)	(0.060)	(0.045)
Observations	639	640	637	641
R-squared	0.280	0.089	0.208	0.257

Standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1, two-tailed. Source: YouGov Survey, March 2017.

Table 5.2: Predictors of System Support, Basic Model - Republicans

	(1) Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with Congress and elections	(2) Having experts, not the government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country	(3) Having the military rule	(4) Having a democratic political system
Out-Party Negativity	-0.108	-0.212***	-0.312***	0.131*
	(0.081)	(0.075)	(0.078)	(0.074)
In-Party Positivity	0.394***	0.171**	0.374***	0.041
	(0.081)	(0.073)	(0.076)	(0.072)
Strength PID	0.092**	-0.069	0.056	0.008
	(0.046)	(0.042)	(0.043)	(0.041)
Liberal	0.177*	0.289***	0.408***	0.083
	(0.104)	(0.096)	(0.100)	(0.101)
Conservative	-0.111***	-0.160***	0.064*	0.048
	(0.038)	(0.035)	(0.037)	(0.035)
Political Interest	-0.420***	-0.056	-0.152**	-0.280***
	(0.068)	(0.059)	(0.061)	(0.058)
Black	-0.051	0.031	0.089	0.163*
	(0.108)	(0.100)	(0.104)	(0.099)
Female	-0.026	-0.022	0.103***	0.139***
	(0.035)	(0.031)	(0.033)	(0.031)
Constant	0.587***	0.640***	0.302***	0.736***
	(0.086)	(0.078)	(0.081)	(0.077)
Observations	382	381	381	380
R-squared	0.212	0.174	0.221	0.130

Standard errors in parentheses. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$, two-tailed. Source: YouGov Survey, March 2017.

them to prefer democratic alternatives under which their rights would be protected.

When it comes to Republicans' assessment of rule under the military or under a strong leader, the effects of *In-Party Positivity* are stronger than those related to *Out-Party Negativity.* In fact, when it comes to Republicans' evaluations of the latter (Column 1), out-party feelings do not appear to exert a statistically or substantively significant effect at all. Instead, support for rule by a strong leader is driven primarily by Republicans' feelings toward their own side. Here, as is the case for the two other non-democratic alternatives (Columns 2 and 3), ideology does appear to play a role in determining Republicans' preferences. Conservative Republicans — which comprise 64% of the sample — are 11 percentage points less likely to favor rule by a strong leader and 16 percentage points less likely to favor rule by experts than moderate Republicans.[16] This is the first model in this dissertation in which ideology has had a statistically and substantively significant impact upon attitude formation, though the rationale behind why increased conservatism in particular should lead to more democratic attitudes is unclear.

The impact of *Political Interest* also varies across models. While *Political Interest* does not appear to have a meaningful effect on Republicans' evaluations of rule by experts, the effect of *Political Interest* is the most powerful suppressor of support for strongman leadership. Interestingly, as was the case for Democrats, *Political Interest* has the reverse effect on Republicans' assessments of a democratic political system: highly interested Republicans are less likely than uninterested Republicans to believe that democracy is a good way to govern the U.S. While we cannot be sure, this may again indicate that though interested Republicans do not approve of authoritarian alternatives, they may be less than satisfied with the way democracy works if it affords their opponents basic rights.

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[16]Though the coefficients for *Liberal* are rather large and statistically significant in three models, only 3% of the Republicans in the sample identify as such.

5.4   Refining Predictions of System Support

While these models are informative, they do not take into account some other theoretically important considerations that may affect system support. For example, previous research suggests that education, age, and income play an important role in determining individuals' democratic attitudes. Formal education helps citizens understand the long-term tradeoffs that are necessary in a democracy, like balancing the will of the majority against the rights of the minority. Education also may play a role in helping citizens to understand how these rights might be compromised under non-democratic rule (Nie, Junn and Stehlik-Barry 1996; Prothro and Grigg 1960). Research on "democratic deconsolidation" also demonstrates that those with higher levels of education tend to be less supportive of authoritarian systems of governance than those who are not as well educated (Norris 2017). Scholars have also found that younger Americans are generally more skeptical of democracy than older ones. While the effects of age are thought by some to be generational (e.g., Foa and Mounk 2016), more rigorous analysis suggests that its effects may be driven more by the life cycle, as most Americans tend to grow more supportive of democracy in old age (Alexander and Welzel 2017; Norris 2017; Voeten 2017). Finally, some evidence suggests that there may be a weak relationship between income and democratic attitudes, as more wealthy Americans appear to be slightly more likely to express higher levels of support for non-democratic alternatives than those with lower incomes (Foa and Mounk 2016).

Other political attitudes may affect system support as well. For example, all things being equal, partisans who express higher levels of trust in government should be more supportive of democracy and less open to more authoritarian alternatives. Individual personality traits like authoritarianism may matter as well. Those who score particularly high on the authoritarianism scale should be less supportive, on average, of democracy and more open to autocratic alternatives than those partisans who are less authoritarian. Authoritarianism also serves as a potential proxy for

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intolerance, which has been demonstrated to decrease support for democracy (Sullivan, Piereson and Marcus 1982) Finally, attitudes toward individual institutions may matter as well. We might naturally expect that feelings toward experts or feelings toward the military might play a role in individuals' willingness to support rule by these groups.

In order to test how the influence of party affect might change in light of these considerations, I estimate two more sets of models that add more demographic controls — for age, income, and education — and controls related to other political attitudes — including trust in government and authoritarianism — to the basic models above. Because the survey also asked respondents to rate the military and experts using feeling thermometers, I also include these scores in an attempt to rule out alternative explanations for system support. As was the case before, all of these variables are scaled 0-1, so that positive coefficients indicate greater support for that system of governance.

Beginning with the results among Democrats (Table 5.3), we can see that many of these additional variables have statistically and substantively important influences on democratic attitudes. Higher levels of trust in government, for example, are associated with lower levels of support for governance by a strong leader or by experts (Columns 1 and 2). Interestingly, however, higher levels of trust correspond to *lower* levels of support for democracy (Column 4). The positive coefficients on *Authoritarianism* in Columns 1-3 demonstrate that, as expected, those Democrats who score higher on the authoritarianism scale tend to exhibit greater support for non-democratic styles of governance; however, *Authoritarianism* does not appear to affect Democrats' support of a democratic political system in any statistically or substantively meaningful way. As expected, *Age* has a large and statistically significant effect in three out of the four models. In fact, when it comes to Democrats' views of rule by experts and rule by the military, *Age* exerts the largest effect of any variable in the models. *Income*,

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on the other hand, does not appear to have any meaningful effect on system support. *Education* does not appear to exert a substantively important effect on these attitudes either, with the exception of Democrats' attitudes toward military rule, in which it performs in accordance with expectations: those Democrats who are highly educated are less supportive of military rule than Democrats who have less schooling.

Turning to the independent variables of interest, we can see that *Out-Party Negativity* still plays an important role for Democrats in determining their levels of system support. Introducing more control variables, for example, slightly increases the effect of *Out-Party Negativity* on Democrats' assessment of rule by a strong leader from β = -0.438 (p<.01) in the previous model (Column 1, Table 5.1) to β = -0.448 (p<.01) (Column 1, Table 5.3). Its effects are nearly double that of *In-Party Positivity* (β = 0.244, p<.01). Once again, this demonstrates that negative out-party feelings actually promote democratic attitudes by lessening Democrats' support for a political system ruled by an authoritarian figure. Negative out-party feelings also exert a stronger effect than positive in-party evaluations when it comes to Democrats' support for military rule (Column 3). However, *In-Party Positivity* has a greater impact than *Out-Party Negativity* on attitudes toward expert rule and toward democracy itself. Furthermore, as was the case in Table 5.1, the results from Column 4 demonstrate that highly negative out-party feelings actually *reduce* support for a democratic political system. This is curious given the positive effect that *Out-Party Negativity* plays in reducing support for authoritarian alternatives in Columns 1 and 3.

Though *Out-Party Negativity* continues to play an important role in Democrats' attitudes toward different political systems, its effects among Republicans are muted by the introduction of new variables (Table 5.4). *Out-Party Negativity* is only statistically significant in one of the four models — that related to support for military rule. Moreover, its effect (β = -0.188, p<.05) is substantially smaller than that of *In-Party Positivity* (β = 0.325, p<.01). *In-Party Positivity* also exerts a fairly large

Table 5.3: Predictors of System Support, Fully Specified Model - Democrats

	(1) Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with Congress and elections	(2) Having experts, not the government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country	(3) Having the military rule	(4) Having a democratic political system
Out-Party Negativity	-0.448***	-0.050	-0.286***	-0.162***
	(0.055)	(0.059)	(0.060)	(0.040)
In-Party Positivity	0.244***	0.127**	0.168***	-0.237***
	(0.055)	(0.061)	(0.060)	(0.040)
Strength PID	0.026	0.013	-0.001	0.024
	(0.032)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.023)
Liberal	-0.097***	-0.060*	-0.033	-0.054**
	(0.029)	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.021)
Conservative	-0.077*	-0.187***	-0.010	-0.013
	(0.040)	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.029)
Trust in Gov.	-0.166***	-0.137**	-0.024	-0.111**
	(0.063)	(0.068)	(0.067)	(0.045)
Authoritarianism	0.177***	0.102**	0.228***	0.027
	(0.040)	(0.043)	(0.042)	(0.029)
Political Interest	-0.202***	-0.170***	-0.088	-0.173***
	(0.051)	(0.056)	(0.055)	(0.037)
Feelings Toward Experts		0.177***		
		(0.066)		
Feelings Toward the Military			0.120**	
			(0.059)	
Income	-0.067	-0.001	-0.043	0.001
	(0.066)	(0.071)	(0.071)	(0.048)
Education	-0.050	-0.051	-0.141***	-0.071**
	(0.045)	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.033)
Age	-0.367***	-0.466***	-0.343***	-0.034
	(0.053)	(0.057)	(0.058)	(0.039)
Black	-0.028	-0.141***	-0.027	-0.048*
	(0.035)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.025)
Female	-0.045*	0.004	0.019	-0.048***
	(0.025)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.018)
Constant	0.489***	0.271***	0.119	0.357***
	(0.084)	(0.093)	(0.099)	(0.061)
Observations	559	560	557	561
R-squared	0.373	0.205	0.288	0.267

Standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1, two-tailed. Source: YouGov Survey, March 2017.

Table 5.4: Predictors of System Support, Fully Specified Model - Republicans

	(1) Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with Congress and elections	(2) Having experts, not the government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country	(3) Having the military rule	(4) Having a democratic political system
Out-Party Negativity	-0.114	-0.015	-0.188**	0.094
	(0.086)	(0.086)	(0.085)	(0.080)
In-Party Positivity	0.362***	0.061	0.325***	0.131*
	(0.084)	(0.081)	(0.084)	(0.077)
Strength PID	0.080*	-0.072*	0.078*	0.025
	(0.044)	(0.042)	(0.043)	(0.041)
Liberal	0.180*	0.304***	0.398***	0.094
	(0.095)	(0.092)	(0.095)	(0.094)
Conservative	-0.079**	-0.158***	0.082**	0.071**
	(0.038)	(0.036)	(0.039)	(0.035)
Trust in Gov.	-0.033	0.045	0.122	-0.138
	(0.093)	(0.090)	(0.091)	(0.088)
Authoritarianism	0.186***	-0.003	0.156***	0.117**
	(0.058)	(0.056)	(0.057)	(0.054)
Political Interest	-0.189**	0.068	0.019	-0.133**
	(0.073)	(0.065)	(0.067)	(0.063)
Feelings Toward Experts		0.276***		
		(0.081)		
Feelings Toward the Military			0.090	
			(0.099)	
Income	0.065	-0.123	-0.270***	-0.009
	(0.091)	(0.088)	(0.089)	(0.084)
Education	-0.181***	-0.126**	-0.076	-0.141**
	(0.062)	(0.060)	(0.061)	(0.058)
Age	-0.513***	-0.314***	-0.589***	-0.446***
	(0.075)	(0.071)	(0.074)	(0.068)
Black	-0.138	-0.322**	-0.189	-0.084
	(0.152)	(0.146)	(0.149)	(0.142)
Female	-0.033	-0.044	0.082**	0.139***
	(0.034)	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.031)
Constant	0.107	0.260**	-0.282**	1.098***
	(0.123)	(0.118)	(0.137)	(0.109)
Observations	326	325	325	325
R-squared	0.358	0.291	0.392	0.286

Standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1, two-tailed. Source: YouGov Survey, March 2017.

and statistically significant effect on Republicans' preferences for a strong leader and toward a democratic political system. Interestingly, the positive coefficient on *In-Party Positivity* demonstrates that warmer feelings toward the Republican Party actually increase Republicans' support for a democratic political system. In that sense, *In-Party Positivity* plays a different role for Republicans than for Democrats: while warmer in-party feelings translate into *reduced* support for democracy among Democrats, they *increase* support among Republicans. This suggests that, to the extent that being on the winner or losing side of elections influences democratic support (Anderson and Guillory 1997), it is in-party feelings in particular that are largely responsible for this phenomenon in the United States. That being said, even in-party feelings do not appear to be as important as other attributes in determining system support. Once again, *Age* is a strong, negative predictor of support for authoritarian systems of government and a strong, positive predictor of support in a democratic system. Across all models, the effect of *Age* is consistently much larger than those related to either *Out-Party Negativity* or *In-Party Positivity*. *Authoritarianism* also plays an important role in bolstering Republican support for an autocratic leader or for rule by the military, but curiously, higher levels of *Authoritarianism* correspond to increased support for democracy. This runs counter to expectations, though it may be the result of an authoritarian impulse to retain the status quo. In accordance with expectations, higher levels of education again appear to erode support for non-democratic alternatives (Columns 1-3) and increase support for democracy (Column 4). Finally, *Political Interest* appears to exert an effect only in two instances — in partisans' evaluations of governance under a strong leader and of democracy as a political system. In the former, higher levels of interest appear to lead Republicans to reject authoritarian rule; in the latter, they appear to *decrease* support for democracy.

Taken together, these results demonstrate that negative out-party feelings are inconsistently related to system support. They do not always appear to exert a

statistically or substantively important influence on partisans' endorsement of various styles of governance. When out-party negativity *does* appear to play a role in shaping these preferences, however, it works in a manner contrary to initial expectations: greater dislike of the out-party bolsters support for democracy and reduces support for anti-democratic alternatives. Positive in-party feelings, on the other hand, tend to do the reverse, and often appear to matter more to these evaluations than out-party negativity. This may reflect partisans' competing considerations regarding system support in the *abstract* versus the *concrete*. In-party feelings may drive partisans to evaluate systems in the present, in which case partisans may be tempted to endorse non-democratic alternatives if it curtails the influence of the opposition. On the other hand, out-party feelings may cause partisans to examine these alternatives in a more concrete fashion: higher levels of out-party negativity may cause them to worry about their own rights under the opposition party either in the present (in the case of Democrats) or in the future (in the case of Republicans). In either case, the fact that many of these patterns hold with respect to partisans' attitudes toward anti-democratic alternatives but *not* toward their evaluations of democracy itself is notable. This suggests that perhaps while the influence of party affect may not have filtered up to dominate partisans' support for various styles of governance entirely, it may play a larger role in determining partisans' views of how things work *within* a democratic system. In the next section, I assess the plausibility of this claim.

5.5   Predicting Support for Democratic Norms

Thus far, out-party negativity does not appear to consistently affect partisans' democratic attitudes. Admittedly, the preceding analysis constituted a difficult test of my theory. Items measuring "diffuse" system support like the ones above may, in fact, be relatively impervious to change (Easton 1965; Norris 1999) and thus are more likely to be determined by more static characteristics like demographics or personality.

Given partisans' high levels of support for democracy (Figure 5.2), it may be difficult to dislodge their attachments to democratic rule. This does not necessarily mean that party affect does not influence other democratic attitudes. Instead, we might expect it to play a more prominent role in determining partisans' attitudes toward specific *components* of democracy, which could be more malleable.

To test for this possibility, I turn to the second set of questions included in the March 2017 YouGov survey measuring attitudes toward specific democratic norms and practices. These questions are adapted from those included in past surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center (2016*a*; 2017*a*). Respondents were asked to rate the importance of each of the following items for "maintaining a strong democracy" in the United States using a scale from 1 ("not too important") to 5 ("very important").[17]

- "The rights of people with unpopular views are protected"

- "National elections are open and fair"

- "News organizations are free to criticize political leaders"

- "People have the right to non-violent protest"

- "Those who lose elections recognize the legitimacy of the winners"

- "Those elected to office do not use their power to advance their own financial interests"[18]

Figure 5.3 displays the proportions of the full sample and of the partisan subsamples who reporting finding each norm to be "very important" to the quality of democracy in the United States. As we can see, large partisan divisions emerge on
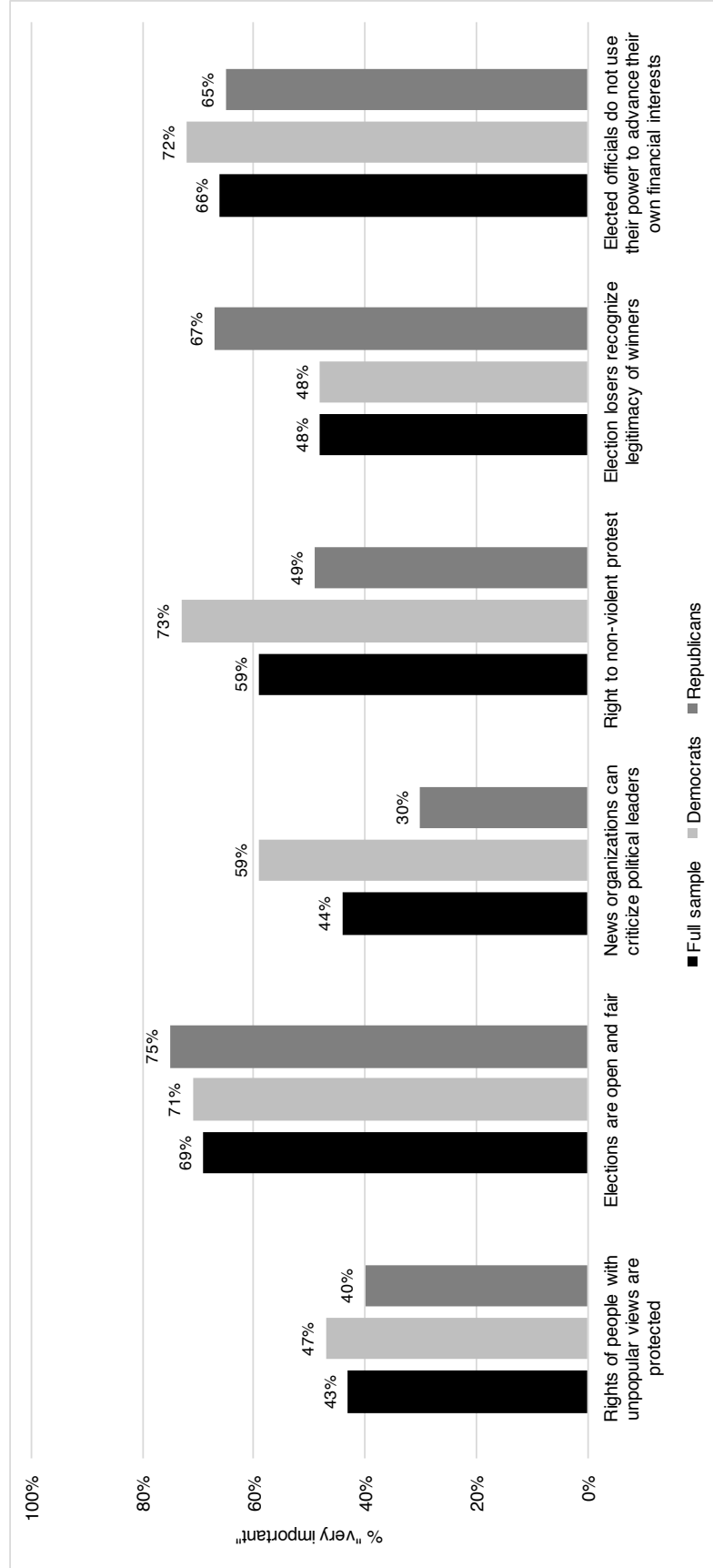
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[17]Other response options included "somewhat unimportant" (2), "neither important nor unimportant" (3), and "somewhat important" (4).

[18]Though this item did not appear in past Pew surveys, I added it since, at the time of the survey and of this writing, Trump had not yet detached himself from his business interests (e.g., Craig and Lipton 2017).

several items. For example, Democrats were much more likely than Republicans to view the right to non-violent protest as important to maintaining U.S. democracy (by a margin of 24 percentage points). They were also significantly less likely than Republicans — by margin of 19 percentage points — to view election losers' recognition of the results as important. Democrats were also more likely than Republicans to attach importance to the notions that elected officials should not enrich themselves while in office and that the rights of people with unpopular views should be protected (both by a margin of 7 percentage points). These divisions are largely what we might expect: many of these norms have become politicized, either directly by Trump himself (e.g. his criticism"paid protesters") or by virtue of the fact that Democrats, who find themselves on the losing end of the election, may feel threatened under a Republican administration. The largest partisan difference, however, emerges with respect to the ability of news organizations to criticize political leaders: 73% of Democrats believed it to be very important to maintaining U.S. democracy, in comparison to only 49% of Republicans. While Trump has likely also contributed to the politicization of the press through his accusations of "fake news," partisan differences in attitudes toward the media long precede his presidency (Ladd 2011).Interestingly, there was little partisan difference with respect to the importance of free and fair elections. This may be due to the fact that concerns relating to election integrity were present among both sets of partisans during and after the 2016 campaign: Trump questioned whether the election results would be "rigged," and Hillary Clinton raised concerns about Russian interference.[19]

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[19]Once again, the partisan breakdowns on these items are similar to those in the October 2016 Pew survey. The largest gap again related to news' organizations' ability to criticize political leaders, and the smallest pertained to free and fair elections. The only other significant shift was the closing of the gap on the issue of election losers recognizing the legitimacy of the winners. In Pew's October 2016 survey, Democrats were 35 percentage points more likely than Republicans to believe that losers should recognize the election outcome, perhaps because of the expectation that Clinton would win. By March 2017, however, that gap had shrunk to only 19 percentage points. The lack of change between 2016 and 2017 on most of these items is again surprising, as we might expect to see larger shifts as a result of the election.

Figure 5.3: Support for Democratic Norms by Party Identification

% "very important"

Elected officials do not use their power to advance their own financial interests
- 65%
- 72%
- 66%

Election losers recognize legitimacy of winners
- 67%
- 48%
- 48%

Right to non-violent protest
- 49%
- 73%
- 59%

News organizations can criticize political leaders
- 30%
- 59%
- 44%

Elections are open and fair
- 75%
- 71%
- 69%

Rights of people with unpopular views are protected
- 40%
- 47%
- 43%

■ Full sample　■ Democrats　■ Republicans

Source: YouGov Survey, March 2017.

While the partisan differences on these items were much larger than those related to system support, we do not yet know whether negative out-party affect is responsible for the varying importance that partisans attach to each norm. To determine if and how party affect influences these attitudes, I again estimated a series of OLS models regressing support for each democratic value on *In-Party Positivity*, *Out-Party Negativity*, and the same series of controls included in Tables 5.3 and 5.4.[20] Again, all variables are scaled 0 to 1; positive coefficients indicate an increase in the importance that individuals attach to each norm. The results appear in Tables 5.5 (Republicans) and 5.6 (Democrats).

The results presented in Table 5.5 demonstrate that *Out-Party Negativity* is highly influential in determining Republicans' support for democratic norms. Across all of the models, it consistently exerts a substantive and statistically significant positive effect, indicating that the more Republicans dislike the Democratic Party, the more likely they are to view each norm as important to the functioning of American democracy. Moreover, while *In-Party Positivity* is inconsistently related to support for these norms, when it does play a role n Republicans' evaluations, its effect is positive. This suggests that warmer in-party feelings cause Republicans to view these norms as *less* important to U.S. democracy. However, Republicans' feelings toward their own party only seem to matter significantly and substantively in two cases — those related to the rights of people with unpopular views (Column 1) and the right to non-violent protest (Column 4). While the effect of *In-Party Positivity* on Republicans' attitudes toward the right of news organizations to criticize political leaders (Column 3) is not statistically significantly at conventional levels, its size is fairly substantively important (β = -0.122, p = .14). Given that Trump has provided a strong in-party cue with respect to these three rights in particular, it seems natural that in-party feelings

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[20]The only exception to this is that I have removed *Feelings Toward the Military* and *Feelings Toward Experts* from the models, as they are not theoretically important to predicting support for democratic norms.

Table 5.5: Support for Democratic Norms - Republicans

	(1) Rights of people with unpopular views are protected	(2) National elections are open and fair	(3) News organizations are free to criticize political leaders	(4) People have the right to non-violent protest	(5) Those who lose elections recognize the legitimacy of the winners	(6) Those elected to office do not use their power to advance their own financial interests
Out-Party Negativity	0.193**	0.249***	0.188**	0.169***	0.250***	0.296***
	(0.075)	(0.056)	(0.086)	(0.059)	(0.063)	(0.058)
In-Party Positivity	-0.176**	0.017	-0.122	-0.131**	-0.041	0.028
	(0.071)	(0.054)	(0.083)	(0.057)	(0.060)	(0.056)
Strength PID	-0.010	0.011	-0.017	0.022	-0.053*	-0.030
	(0.038)	(0.028)	(0.044)	(0.030)	(0.032)	(0.030)
Liberal	-0.167*	-0.042	0.033	-0.002	0.023	-0.095
	(0.088)	(0.062)	(0.095)	(0.065)	(0.069)	(0.065)
Conservative	-0.073**	-0.032	-0.050	0.056**	0.018	-0.014
	(0.033)	(0.024)	(0.038)	(0.026)	(0.028)	(0.026)
Trust in Gov.	0.061	-0.049	0.029	0.065	0.182***	0.033
	(0.080)	(0.060)	(0.094)	(0.064)	(0.068)	(0.063)
Authoritarianism	-0.163***	-0.076**	-0.150**	-0.125***	-0.041	-0.071*
	(0.050)	(0.037)	(0.058)	(0.040)	(0.042)	(0.039)
Political Interest	0.015	0.011	0.051	-0.059	-0.051	-0.029
	(0.059)	(0.044)	(0.068)	(0.046)	(0.049)	(0.046)
Income	0.173**	0.117***	0.085	0.066	0.179***	0.063
	(0.078)	(0.059)	(0.091)	(0.062)	(0.066)	(0.062)
Education	-0.041	0.010	0.056	-0.015	0.011	-0.002
	(0.054)	(0.040)	(0.062)	(0.042)	(0.045)	(0.042)
Age	0.037	0.162***	-0.019	0.027	0.197***	0.287***
	(0.063)	(0.047)	(0.073)	(0.050)	(0.053)	(0.050)
Black	0.170	0.037	0.212	0.063	0.132	0.089
	(0.132)	(0.098)	(0.152)	(0.103)	(0.111)	(0.103)
Female	0.001	-0.040*	-0.040	-0.002	0.085***	0.011
	(0.029)	(0.022)	(0.033)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.023)
Constant	0.813***	0.821***	0.615***	0.826***	0.715***	0.828***
	(0.101)	(0.075)	(0.117)	(0.079)	(0.085)	(0.079)
Observations	326	326	326	325	327	325
R-squared	0.130	0.210	0.105	0.094	0.149	0.234

Standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1, two-tailed. Source: YouGov Survey, March 2017.

Table 5.6: Support for Democratic Norms - Democrats

	(1) Rights of people with unpopular views are protected	(2) National elections are open and fair	(3) News organizations are free to criticize political leaders	(4) People have the right to non-violent protest	(5) Those who lose elections recognize the legitimacy of the winners	(6) Those elected to office do not use their power to advance their own financial interests
Out-Party Negativity	0.032	-0.008	0.163***	0.158***	-0.038	0.164***
	(0.038)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.031)	(0.044)	(0.040)
In-Party Positivity	0.019	-0.022	-0.060	0.060*	0.003	-0.082**
	(0.038)	(0.040)	(0.039)	(0.032)	(0.045)	(0.040)
Strength PID	-0.087***	-0.060***	-0.068***	-0.064***	-0.034	-0.024
	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.022)	(0.018)	(0.026)	(0.022)
Liberal	0.075***	0.103***	0.047**	0.052***	0.080***	0.067***
	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.017)	(0.023)	(0.020)
Conservative	0.011	-0.053*	-0.107***	0.009	-0.059*	0.031
	(0.027)	(0.029)	(0.028)	(0.023)	(0.032)	(0.028)
Trust in Gov.	0.164***	0.059	0.112***	0.111***	0.116**	0.002
	(0.043)	(0.045)	(0.043)	(0.036)	(0.051)	(0.044)
Authoritarianism	-0.059**	0.026	-0.151***	-0.008	0.021	0.007
	(0.027)	(0.029)	(0.027)	(0.023)	(0.032)	(0.028)
Political Interest	0.228***	0.211***	0.299***	0.298***	0.268***	0.156***
	(0.035)	(0.037)	(0.036)	(0.029)	(0.041)	(0.035)
Income	0.046	0.074	0.047	0.001	0.056	-0.030
	(0.046)	(0.048)	(0.046)	(0.038)	(0.054)	(0.046)
Education	-0.004	0.049	-0.009	-0.026	0.042	-0.007
	(0.031)	(0.033)	(0.031)	(0.026)	(0.037)	(0.031)
Age	0.082**	0.355***	0.134***	-0.039	0.203***	0.195***
	(0.037)	(0.039)	(0.037)	(0.031)	(0.043)	(0.038)
Black	0.067***	0.034	0.089***	0.028	0.034	-0.000
	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.024)	(0.020)	(0.028)	(0.024)
Female	0.011	0.041**	0.013	0.017	0.015	0.052***
	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.015)	(0.021)	(0.018)
Constant	0.620***	0.834***	0.635***	0.468***	0.596***	0.781***
	(0.058)	(0.061)	(0.063)	(0.048)	(0.068)	(0.064)
Observations	561	559	556	562	557	558
R-squared	0.234	0.276	0.410	0.349	0.204	0.194

Standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1, two-tailed. Source: YouGov Survey, March 2017.

might matter to Republicans in these cases. The cases in which *In-Party Positivity* is not substantively nor statistically important — that is, with respect to the fairness of national elections (Column 2), the legitimacy of election results (Column 5), or the protection of corruption (Column 6) — are the same that lack significant partisan divisions (Figure 5.3). Even in these cases, however, *Out-Party Negativity* exerts a strong, statistically significant, positive effect.

In fact, across all models, *Out-Party Negativity* emerges as the strongest predictor of the importance that Republicans attach to these norms. This is notable, especially since we might expect Republicans to rely on their in-party feelings during a Republican administration. No other independent variables exert a consistently significant effect across all models. *Age*, for example, seems to matter in only three of the six cases (those related to the fairness of national elections [Column 2], the legitimacy of election results [Column 5] and the protection against corruption [Column 6]); the case is similar for *Income* (it appears to affect only those attitudes related to the rights of people with unpopular views [Column 1], the fairness of national elections [Column 2], and the legitimacy of election results [Column 5]). Curiously, age is associated with lower support for democratic norms, which runs counter to findings from other research (Alexander and Welzel 2017; Norris 2017; Voeten 2017) and from my findings above with regard to system support. *Authoritarianism* is the only variable that exerts a statistically significant effect in a majority of the models, but in two cases (those related to the fairness of national elections [Column 2] and protections against corruption [Column 6]), it is not very substantively important. Strength of partisanship and ideology also do not appear to matter in five of the six models, again suggesting that out-party affect in particular is driving the importance Republicans attach to each norm.

Table 5.6 shows that while *Out-Party Negativity* is less consistently related to Democrats' support of democratic norms, it does exert a strong, positive effect in

three out of the four norms about which partisans are deeply divided (those related to the ability of news organizations to criticize politicians [Column 3], the right to non-violent protest [Column 4], and the protection against corruption [Column 6]). As was the case for Republicans, Democrats' negative feelings toward their opponents increases the importance they attach to each norm. In fact, *Out-Party Negativity* is the largest predictor of norm support in every model with the exception of *Political Interest*, the effect of which is consistently large and statistically significant in all cases. *In-Party Positivity*, on the other hand, does not appear to exert a statistically or substantively meaningful effect in any of the models. Individuals' strength of partisanship and ideology do exert statistically significant effects across the various models, but their effects are not very substantively important. As was the case among Republicans, the effect of *Age* among Democrats is again statistically and substantively significant and negatively signed, and neither *Education* nor *Income* appear to matter in shaping the importance that partisans attach to democratic norms.

Interestingly, *Trust in Government* is an important, positive predictor of norm importance in four of the six models (those related to the rights of people with unpopular views [Column 1], the ability of news organizations to criticize politicians [Column 3], the right to non-violent protest [Column 4], and the legitimacy of election results [Column 5]). The fact that *Trust in Government* matters for Democrats' evaluations of democratic norms but not Republicans' is consistent with research suggesting that trust in government is especially important for partisans whose party is not in power (Hetherington and Rudolph 2015). In any case, with the exception of age, out-party negativity still remains the largest consistent predictor of support for democratic values among Democrats.

5.6 Discussion

The results presented in this chapter demonstrate that the effects of out-party negativity on democratic attitudes are mixed. Out-party negativity is inconsistently related to partisans' evaluations of various systems of government, which suggests that affective polarization is not the primary explanation behind Americans' increased skepticism of democracy and receptiveness to more authoritarian systems of government. In fact, neither out-party negativity nor any other measure of partisanship seems to consistently cause partisans to doubt whether democracy should be "the only game in town" (Linz and Stepan 1978; 1996). When out-party negativity does occasionally exert an influence on partisans' preferences toward democratic governance, it actually *bolsters* their support for democracy and *increases* their skepticism of non-democratic alternatives.

While negative out-party affect does not always appear to influence partisans' evaluations of various systems of government, it *does* play an influential role in shaping the importance that partisans attach to specific democratic norms and values. Negative out-party feelings consistently increase support for democratic norms among Republicans. While Democrats do not rely upon their out-party feelings as consistently in these evaluations, when they do, higher levels of out-party negativity appear to increase the importance they attach to particular democratic values. Moreover, the effects of out-party negativity are consistently larger than those related to in-party positivity, strength of party identification, and ideology, which suggests that it is partisans' dislike of their opponents specifically that drives support for democratic norms. In this way, out-party negativity may help slow democratic deconsolidation by bolstering partisans' support for democratic values, which play a critical role in the survival of democratic regimes (Almond and Verba 1963; Norris 1999; 2011). In this way, out-party negativity appears to have a normatively *beneficial* effect within the American political system. This stands in contrast to the role it has played in

forming other important attitudes. Findings in the previous chapter, for example, demonstrated that higher levels of out-party negativity motivate partisans to accept unconfirmed or even patently false rumors about their opponents.

While the reason why out-party negativity should boost support for democracy and democratic norms is unclear, out-party feelings may appeal to partisans' risk aversion. Though partisans might benefit from a political system that restricts the freedoms afforded to their opponents in the short term, they may be especially sensitive to the losses their own side would experience under less democratic forms of government (Kahneman and Tversky 1979; 1984). When partisans neither like nor trust the motives of their opponents, they may instinctively fear that the out-party would use its power to take away their say in the political process — perhaps precisely because they would do just that given the opportunity. If this is indeed the case, it indicates that partisans may accept one of the most important tenets of democracy itself. Democracy endures because powerful political actors believe that they are better off accepting the rules of the democratic game than risking their fortunes under a system of government that may not be as accommodating of their rights. In that sense, partisans understand that even if they lose this round, there will be an opportunity for them to win in the next election (Przeworski et al. 2000). If increasingly negative out-party feelings remind partisans of this possibility, it may continue to bolster public support for democracy in the United States.

Chapter 6

Conclusions, Implications, and Areas for Future Research

This dissertation began with a quest to understand and explain how party identification works in contemporary American politics. The canonical account of partisanship suggests that individuals use their identification with the party they favor as a basis for political thought and action. "Most Americans," the authors of *The American Voter* argued, "have [a] sense of attachment with one party or another. And for the individual who does, the strength and direction of party identification are facts of central importance in accounting for attitude and behavior" (Campbell et al. 1960, 121). For more than half a century, scholars used this work as a springboard from which to develop hypotheses and investigate how people's ties to the party with which they identify color their interpretations of the political world. Wherever scholars looked, they found a mountain of evidence demonstrating the impact of party identification on attitudes and behavior. People adopted issue positions, adjusted their evaluations of candidates, and invented excuses to rationalize the decisions they have already made on the basis of their answer to the question "Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?" (Achen and Bartels 2016; Campbell et al. 1960; Bartels 2002; Carmines and Stimson 1989; Gaines et al. 2007; Hochschild and Einstein 2015; Layman and Carsey 2002; Lenz 2012; Taber and Lodge 2006; Zaller 1992).

This account does not seem to square with how people now orient themselves to politics. Now, the political conversation seems to center most frequently on the other side's missteps, hypocrisy, or malice. The 2016 presidential election illustrates just how much politics is now characterized by the contempt and distrust that people feel toward their political opponents. Despite winning their respective parties' nom-

inations, Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump had the highest unfavorability ratings in polling history (HuffPost Pollster 2016). For the first time, more voters reported casting their ballot against the opposition than for any other reason — including to support their own candidate (Reuters Polling Explorer 2016). Many partisans toed the party line, it seemed, not out of any sense of loyalty or obligation to their own side; instead, they held their noses and pulled the lever simply to prevent their opponents from winning.

This dissertation demonstrates that the influence of partisans' increasingly hostile out-party feelings is not simply limited to the way they voted in one particularly combative election. Instead, people's animosity toward their opponents has come to define the way they think about the political world. Rather than being a simple byproduct of party identification, out-party negativity functions as an independent, rather stable political attitude that behaves differently than other facets of public opinion (Chapter 2). In a polarized political environment, people's self-reported strength of partisanship or positive in-party feelings do little to explain their attitudes. Now, the negativity they feel toward their opponents dominates the way they form opinions and process political information.

This wasn't always the case. For decades, people's issue and ideological preferences appear to have been driven in at least equal measure by their attachments to their own party *and* their dislike of the opposition. Over time, however, the impact of out-party negativity on people's issue and ideological stances has increased dramatically. In the contemporary political environment, people's feelings toward their own side and their self-professed strength of partisanship have little bearing on these preferences (Chapter 3). This represents a fundamental change in the way that we understand partisanship as a social identity. Instead of relying upon the group they favor for important political cues, people now use their hostility toward the other side as a heuristic to determine where they should stand on important issues.

Out-party negativity also appears to be a driving force behind biased information processing. Scholars have long understood that party identification functions as a "perceptual screen" that partisans use to embrace information that comports with their prior beliefs and to filter out information that conflicts with them (Campbell et al. 1960; Zaller 1992). Out-party negativity — not party identification itself — now fulfills this function for most partisans, at least when it comes to their acceptance or rejection of political misinformation. Partisans unquestioningly accept unverified, often salacious political rumors as truth not because of principled ideological differences with their opponents, but simply because they dislike them. Interestingly, negative out-party feelings — not positive in-party feelings — also play an important role in inoculating partisans against believing in rumors that paint themselves and their allies in a poor light (Chapter 4). Out-party negativity, therefore, may be at least partially responsible for the breakdown of political dialogue in the United States. In order for adversaries to engage in meaningful political debate, they must not only argue from the same facts, but they must also believe that their counterparts come to the conversation with sincere motives (Einstein and Glick 2015; Gutmann and Thompson 2012). Animosity toward the opposition undermines both. Partisans' distaste for their opponents causes them to rely on two very different bases of information, picking and choosing "facts" that paint the other side so negatively as to give partisans reason to distrust their motives. Under such circumstances, cooperation, negotiation, and progress seem nearly impossible.

While out-party negativity may occasionally lead to normatively troubling outcomes, this need not always be the case. In fact, out-party negativity appears to play a beneficial role in promoting democratic values. Partisans who intensely dislike their opponents are more likely to attach importance to specific rights — like protest, free speech, or freedom of the press — and to particular norms — like the importance of recognizing election outcomes or restraining corruption — than are their counterparts

who feel neutrally or even positively toward the other side (Chapter 5). In this way, out-party negativity may actually help cement support for a democratic system by promoting the attitudes that help stabilize it. This is particularly important during a time in which Americans express a growing openness to authoritarian interpretations of democracy. Of course, the likely motivation behind *why* out-party negativity bolsters these attitudes — fear of what the out-party might do while in power — is not particularly reassuring given what this mindset could mean for other important outcomes like political compromise. Nevertheless, the idea that out-party negativity may not always be a toxic force in American politics is encouraging.

Two empirical regularities regarding the types of partisans whose views are strongly shaped by out-party negativity are worth mentioning. The first concerns the differential use of out-party feelings by partisans of varying levels of political knowledge. Rather than being a crutch of the politically ignorant, out-party negativity appears to be applied most readily by those with a greater factual understanding of politics. In fact, the greatest gains in the tendency of out-party negativity to inform individuals' issue or ideological positions over time are concentrated among the most knowledgeable partisans. While highly knowledgeable partisans appeared to rely on both in- and out-party affect prior to the onset of polarization, they now appear to have substituted out-party negativity for in-party positivity almost entirely in forming these evaluations (Chapter 3). Knowledge also plays a particularly powerful role bolstering partisans' use of out-party antipathy in evaluating political information. Highly knowledgeable partisans are particularly adept at using their hostile feelings toward the opposition not only to accept political rumors that portray their opponents in a bad light, but also to reject rumors that disparage their own side (Chapter 4). These findings are consistent with a growing body of research demonstrating that increased knowledge exacerbates rather than ameliorates political bias (Achen and Bartels 2016; Ahler and Sood 2017; Lodge and Taber 2013; Taber and Lodge 2006).

The second concerns the fact that Republicans appear to incorporate their negative out-party feelings in attitude formation and information processing more consistently and powerfully than Democrats do. Results from Chapter 3 demonstrate that Republicans displayed a disproportionate reliance on out-party negativity in forming their political evaluations years earlier than Democrats. Republicans also seem to use their hostile out-party feelings more powerfully than Democrats in a contemporary setting as well. In a polarized political environment, Republicans are more likely than Democrats to rely on out-party negativity in their issue and ideological placements (Chapter 3). Out-party negativity also appears to matter more in Republicans' evaluations of political rumors than in Democrats' (Chapter 4). In addition, while Democrats only occasionally use their out-party feelings to evaluate the importance of democratic norms, Republicans do so much more consistently, even during a time in which their party occupies the White House (Chapter 5). These findings seem to directly contradict recent research suggesting that rank-and-file Republicans are motivated primarily by matters of ideology while Democrats tend to be concerned more with group interests (Grossman and Hopkins 2016).

That the effects of out-party negativity are strongest among the most knowledgeable partisans suggests that future research should focus on the nature of the cues emanating from the political environment. The fact that highly knowledgable partisans use out-party negativity most effectively points to a shift in the way that political elites think and act. Scholars have long understood that those who are most knowledgable or interested in politics are more likely to pick up political cues and incorporate them into their evaluations (e.g., Zaller 1992). If the effects of out-party negativity are concentrated among political sophisticates, signals from the political environment may now focus more on the shortcomings of the other party than they did in the past.

This may be particularly true with respect to the cues originating from Repub-

lican elites. A popular interpretation of the over-time shifts in the distributions of congressional roll call votes is that the Republican Party has moved faster to the ideological right than the Democratic Party has moved to the left (McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal 2006). Inferring ideological extremity from these distributions, however, relies upon a number of statistical assumptions that may not be realistic. For example, such an interpretation assumes that members of Congress vote solely in accordance with their sincerely-held issue or ideological preferences and not as a result of other strategic considerations (Clinton 2012). A growing body of research points to the idea that the latter may outweigh the former. For example, far more votes in Congress now appear to be motivated by partisan gamemanship rather than principled philosophical disagreement (Bateman, Clinton and Lapinski 2017; Hetherington and Rudolph 2015; Lee 2009).

A more plausible interpretation of the growing distance between the parties in Congress, therefore, is that the Republican Party has simply become more *constrained* than the Democratic Party in its voting patterns (Hetherington 2009). If this is indeed the case, it suggests that Republican elites may simply be providing a clearer *partisan* — not necessarily ideological — signal to their followers. This signal may be increasingly affective in nature. Quite frequently, elites speak and act in a way that emphasizes the importance of attacking and demonizing one's opponents above all else. For example, Republicans' desire to rally their base in opposition to Affordable Care Act clearly outweighed concerns about the political feasibility of repealing the law itself. While it was clear that neither the Democratic-controlled Senate nor the President himself would support a bill that dismantled Obamacare, House Republicans nevertheless scheduled 40 separate votes to repeal the legislation in the 2011-2012 term. All of this was done in service of destroying a proposal modeled off of a Republican-backed, conservative health care plan that originated nearly two decades prior (Hetherington and Rudolph 2015). What Republican elites signaled,

therefore, was that stopping Democrats and their "Job-Killing Health-Care Law" (Ferraro and Smith 2012) was the most important goal; policy considerations were, at best, secondary.

This suggests that the extent to which rank-and-file Republicans — or Democrats, for that matter — are "ideological" may be a result of their attempts to rationalize the animosity they feel toward their opponents. Partisans who sufficiently dislike their other side may search for reasons to justify their dislike and then deploy those reasons in political debate to feel rational and righteous in their anger. If this sounds circular in its reasoning, it is because, in the contemporary political environment, affective and ideological polarization likely feed off of one another in a vicious cycle. Because we have good theoretical reasons to believe party affect occurs causally prior to other evaluations, pinpointing the historical origins of increasing out-party antipathy may be key to understanding how we arrived at our present political situation.

Relatedly, future work might focus on further teasing out the distinct effects of party affect and ideology on important political outcomes. While this is certainly of interest to the academic community[1], the answer also has implications for political practitioners. If party affect explains most of the variance in political opinions, then political operatives are likely to waste resources — and potentially lose important battles — trying to change minds with policy arguments. Instead, politicians and campaigns may be better served by appealing to individuals' feelings toward the parties — and out-party negativity in particular — to mobilize their base to affect change.

A more serious attempt at reconceptualizing and measuring party identification is also warranted. There is little doubt that the "direction" of people's party attachments — that is, their identification as a Democrat, Republican, or Independent

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[1]For example, disentangling the effects of party affect and ideology could help resolve the debate about whether party affect occurs causally prior to other evaluations (e.g., Iyengar and Westwood 2014) or whether ideology determines party affect (e.g., Rogowski and Sutherland 2016; Webster and Abramowitz 2017).

(Campbell et al. 1960)— continues to strongly predict a host of important political attitudes and behaviors. That being said, the evidence presented in this dissertation suggests that the traditional measure of "intensity" of these attachments — whether people identify as a "strong," "weak," or "leaning" partisan (Campbell et al. 1960)— may not longer be a meaningful predictor of political attitudes. Instead, out-party negativity may explain more of the variation in partisan thinking than the degree to which people identify with a party. Of course, this dissertation is not the first study to recognize measurement problems inherent in the standard 7-point party identification scale (e.g., Burden and Klofstad 2005; Huddy, Mason and Aaroe 2015; Jacoby 1982; Miller and Wattenberg 1983; Weisberg 1980). However, given the predictive power of out-party negativity in a polarized political environment, scholars interested in explaining variation in attitudes and behavior *within* partisan groups might be well-served by incorporating measures of party affect into their analyses.

Further diagnosing the nature and source(s) of out-party negativity can also provide us with clues as to what the future of political conflict in the United States may look like. As demonstrated in this dissertation, many contemporary political conflicts have origins in negative out-party affect. That these feelings are so central to the way people view the political world suggests that partisans' hatred for their opponents could contaminate attitudes toward virtually any political matter, including those that have not yet emerged on the political stage. For now, the future of political consensus looks bleak. But things were not always this way — and finding out how we got here may help us find a way out.

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