

Does Affective Polarization Undermine Support for Democratic Norms?

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ABSTRACT

Affective polarization—the tendency of individuals to dislike and distrust those from the other party—has a number of pernicious consequences documented in previous work. One consequence hypothesized—but not tested—is that affective polarization undermines support for democratic norms. Contrary to this expectation, the researchers find affective polarization does not necessarily undermine support for norms. Instead, they find party identity conditions the relationship in ways that mimic the impact of polarization on other policy issues. Put another way, citizens view fundamental democratic norms as no different than other issues. These results rebut the straightforward expectation that negative out-group attitudes reduce support for democratic norms, but they are nevertheless troubling for U.S. democracy. Norms are politicized and they divide—rather than unite—partisans.

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Until a few years ago, hardly any scholars seriously questioned the health of American democracy. Today, however, many are less sanguine about the state of our politics. One particularly disturbing trend in recent years is an erosion of democratic norms—the set of beliefs and practices that allow democracies to flourish (Lieberman et al. 2019, Carey et al. 2019). While there are many potential causes, some argue that the growth of affective polarization, or the tendency for partisans to dislike and distrust the opposing party and its members, exacerbates this disenchantment with democracy (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018, Fishkin and Pozen 2018). As affective polarization increases, partisans may become more likely to ignore democratic norms if doing so allows them to thwart the other party’s agenda.

Despite the importance of such claims, no previous work has empirically tested this link. We test the claim that affective polarization erodes support for democratic norms, finding a strong, robust relationship between levels of partisan animus and support for democratic norms. However, the relationship is powerfully conditioned by party, with Republicans becoming more supportive of norms as their attitudes towards Democrats improve, but Democrats becoming *less supportive* of these norms as their affect towards Republicans increases (e.g. as they have less animus). This is the exact pattern we find on a host of public policy issues, suggesting that citizens view norms as just another issue—at this particular political moment, an issue where agreement signals a liberal position—rather than a vital foundation for democracy. Rather than unifying citizens, norms now divide the mass public along partisan lines.

Affective Polarization and Support for Democratic Norms

One of the most notable trends in the last quarter-century of American politics is the rise of affective polarization, with citizens increasingly disliking and distrusting those from the other

political party (e.g., Iyengar et al. 2019). Scholars have extensively documented a wide variety of consequences of affective polarization, having shown that it affects inter-personal relations, economic behavior, and many other areas of contemporary life (*ibid*). But curiously, little work has focused on its *political* consequences, aside from a few works that explore its effects on political trust (Hetherington and Weiler 2015) or the nationalization of vote choice (Abramowitz and Webster 2016). Does affective polarization have broader political consequences?

Of particular concern is the possibility that affective polarization decreases support for democratic norms (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018, Fishkin and Pozen 2018). Theories of democracy typically presume that for the system to function and consolidate, citizens must support the principles and values upon which it is founded (Almond and Verba 1963). This includes endorsement of procedural elements (e.g., the right to vote), and the rejection of authoritarian interpretations (e.g., leaders ignoring constitutional rules; see, among others, Weingast 1997, Arikan and Bloom 2019). But as affective polarization increases, individuals may view other partisans as less worthy of democratic protections and may thus dispense with the “nicety” of democratic norms. Affective polarization could therefore undermine support for democratic norms.

Such claims, while important, have not been carefully explored by previous work. The closest study is Lelkes and Westwood (2017), who find that affective polarization does *not* cause individuals to violate democratic norms, such as willingness to allow the other party to engage in political protest (see also Westwood et al. 2019). We build on their work by examining the relationship between a broader set of norms and affective polarization.

Data and Measures

We conducted an online survey experiment with a representative sample of Americans ($N = 3,853$) in the summer of 2019 using data from the Bovitz Forthright panel; see SI1 for sample details. The survey included standard demographic and political measures, as well as standard measures of affective polarization (Druckman and Levendusky 2019)—here, we use (1) feeling thermometer scales of the parties, (2) trait ratings (rating positive and negative characteristics such as intelligence, selfish), (3) a partisan trust measure, and (4) social distance measures (e.g., how upset a respondent would be if his/her child married someone from the other party). We scaled and aggregated all the affective polarization items into one measure of out-party affect ($\alpha=0.88$), such that 0 indicates the most negative affect toward the other party and 1 indicates the most positive affect. We focus on out-party affect since the theoretical argument above focuses on out-party animus (as opposed to in-party identity) leading individuals to put aside protections that come with democratic norms.¹

To measure democratic norms, we asked respondents to indicate their level of (dis)agreement with norms that cover the dimensions of support for democratic procedures (e.g., everyone should be allowed to vote) and rejection of authoritarian practices (e.g., the methods of politicians do not matter if they get things done; see SI2 for more detail on these measures). We created a measure that added the number of norm-congruent responses to the eight items we asked—that is, the number of items for which the respondent’s answer “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the norm (coding details are in SI2) ($\alpha=0.79$). All question wordings are available in SI3.

¹ Our results are robust if we instead use the difference between in-party and out-party sentiments (see SI6). In addition, we exclude pure Independents since there is no clear partisan out-group for such individuals (Druckman and Levendusky 2019).

Results

In Figure 1, we present a histogram of the number of norm-congruent responses in this sample of partisans. Note that the public varies considerably on this measure, with the modal respondent supporting 4 of 8 norms (see SI4 for the distribution of each individual item).

[Insert Figure 1 Here]

We analyze the bivariate relationship between out-group affect and support for democratic norms among Democrats (N=1825) and Republicans (N=990) separately. We do this since members of the two major parties tend to connect their partisan identities to ideology in different ways (Grossman and Hopkins 2016), which may in turn influence the relationship between out-group affect and support for democratic norms. Figure 2 shows this relationship.

[Insert Figure 2 Here]

Among Republicans, we find a positive relationship ($r = .13, p < .01$) between out-group affect and norm-congruent responses. As out-group affect increases (e.g. as Republicans feel more positively about Democrats), they become more supportive of political norms, consistent with the expectation that partisan animus reduces support for democratic norms. Among Democrats, however, we see the opposite result: out-group affect is associated with *fewer* norm-congruent responses ($r = -.09, p < .01$). That is, Democrats who have more favorable attitudes toward Republicans are *less* likely to support democratic norms.

We confirm the robustness of these correlations by regressing democratic norm agreement on out-group affect by party. In these models, we also include control variables that previous research shows to influence support for democratic norms, including political knowledge, education, gender, race, and religion (e.g., McClosky 1964, Nie et al. 1996, Norris 2011, Arikan and Bloom 2019). As our outcome measure is a count of the number of norms a

participant supports and is underdispersed, we use a quasi-Poisson model. The results in Table 1 show that the pattern from Figure 2 is robust to these controls.² Democrats with the most positive affect toward Republicans support, on average, 11% *fewer* norms than Democrats with the most negative affect toward Republicans. In contrast, Republicans with the most positive affect toward Democrats support, on average, 43% more norms than do Republicans with the most negative affect toward Democrats.

[Insert Table 1 Here]

Democratic Norms: An Extension of Polarization on the Issues?

Why does party condition the relationship between democratic norms and affective polarization? One possibility is that, in our current political moment, norms have become politicized like so many other policy issues, with Democrats taking the “pro-norm” stance. This stems from President Trump’s clashes with Democrats over institutional checks and balances, such as the Mueller investigation and impeachment, as well as President’s Trump’s claims of electoral fraud (on this latter point, see Cottrell, Herron, and Westwood 2018). To test this, we explore the relationship between issue positions on 8 salient political issues included in our survey (see SI3 for the full list of issues), support for democratic norms, and affective polarization. The issues include social welfare and cultural policies that divide the parties (Layman and Carsey 2002, Iyengar et al. 2012, Webster and Abramowitz 2017).

First, we find that support for democratic norms predicts liberal issue positions across these issues. Respondents who were more likely to give the liberal response on issues such as transgender discrimination protections, healthcare, and immigration are more likely to support

² In SI7, we show very similar results when using quasi-poisson and OLS models. We also ran a negative binomial model, but the data were inconsistent with over-dispersion, so we present the Poisson model here.

democratic norms (the specific correlations appear in SI5). This suggests that, in this particular political moment, endorsement of norms coheres with a liberal policy outlook.

Second, Figure 3 demonstrates that the party-conditioned relationship between out-group affect and each issue item exhibits the same pattern as the relationship between out-group affect and support for democratic norms.³ For Democrats, having more positive feelings toward Republicans is associated with less liberal issue position stances. For Republicans, in contrast, having more positive feelings toward Democrats is associated giving more liberal responses on these issues. The only exception to this pattern is whether to increase funding for Social Security, an issue where there is little to no partisan polarization (Pew Research Center 2019). For this non-polarized issue, we do not see any relationship with support for democratic norms, further buttressing our argument. More generally, however, issue polarization extends to democratic norms, with more negative attitudes toward the opposing party linked to a higher likelihood of holding the “party-congruent” view on norms—and supporting norms seem no different than other liberal policy positions.

[Insert Figure 3 Here]

The congruence between norms and issue positions suggests a potential mechanism that may drive these effects: affectively polarized partisans, either due to stronger values or social pressures (Connors n.d.), take more extreme policy positions that cohere with their party. This is true for issues long understood as dividing the parties, such as healthcare and immigration, but also for democratic norms. Democrats with more animus towards Republicans take more extreme positions against the President’s dismissal of norms, while Republicans who display less out-party dislike feel less of a need to deride norms.

³ See SI8 for regression tables that show these relationships are robust to the same set of controls used in Table 1.

Conclusion

Scholars, pundits, and citizens express significant concerns about the consequences of affective polarization, yet no existing work explores the consequences for support for democratic norms. Ideally, such norms should not be seen as partisan issues, but rather as beliefs that serve as a unifying bedrock for American democracy. That citizens seem to view democratic norms as just another partisan issue, with their support not only contingent on their partisanship (also see Graham and Svolik 2019) but also on the extent to which they dislike the other party, is deeply troubling.

Our work raises a number of issues for future scholarship. First, while we have identified the relationship between norms and animus, there are various underlying mechanisms that may explain this effect, including partisan signaling, differential values, divided government (e.g., the clash between a Republican president and the Democratic House of Representatives), and no doubt many others. More generally, our work accentuates the need to study whether attitudinal measures of norm support translate into actions that could in fact undermine democracy, as some have worried given contemporary rhetoric (Acemoglu 2017; Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018). The results also highlight the need to attend to the nature of civic education and discourse more generally. We find that political knowledge and education positively correlate with support for norms (see Table 1). Socialization, then, may be the route to solidifying a democratic foundation, particularly during an age of hyper-polarization that has the potential to undermine foundational norms of democratic governance.

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Table 1: The Party-conditioned Relationship between Out-group Affect and Support for Democratic Norms

	Number of Norm-congruent Responses
Republican	-0.408*** (0.046)
Out-party Affect	-0.131*** (0.050)
Republican*Out-party Affect	0.493*** (0.092)
Political Knowledge	0.125*** (0.006)
Education	0.023*** (0.006)
Non-Hispanic White	0.087*** (0.018)
Female	0.025 (0.015)
Religion: Protestant	0.072*** (0.024)
Religion: Catholic	-0.012 (0.025)
Religion: Jewish	-0.008 (0.044)
Religion: None	0.075*** (0.023)
Constant	0.959*** (0.040)
N	2,812
Log Likelihood	-1231.45
AIC	2484.9

* $p < .1$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$

Note: Cell entries are quasi-Poisson regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses.

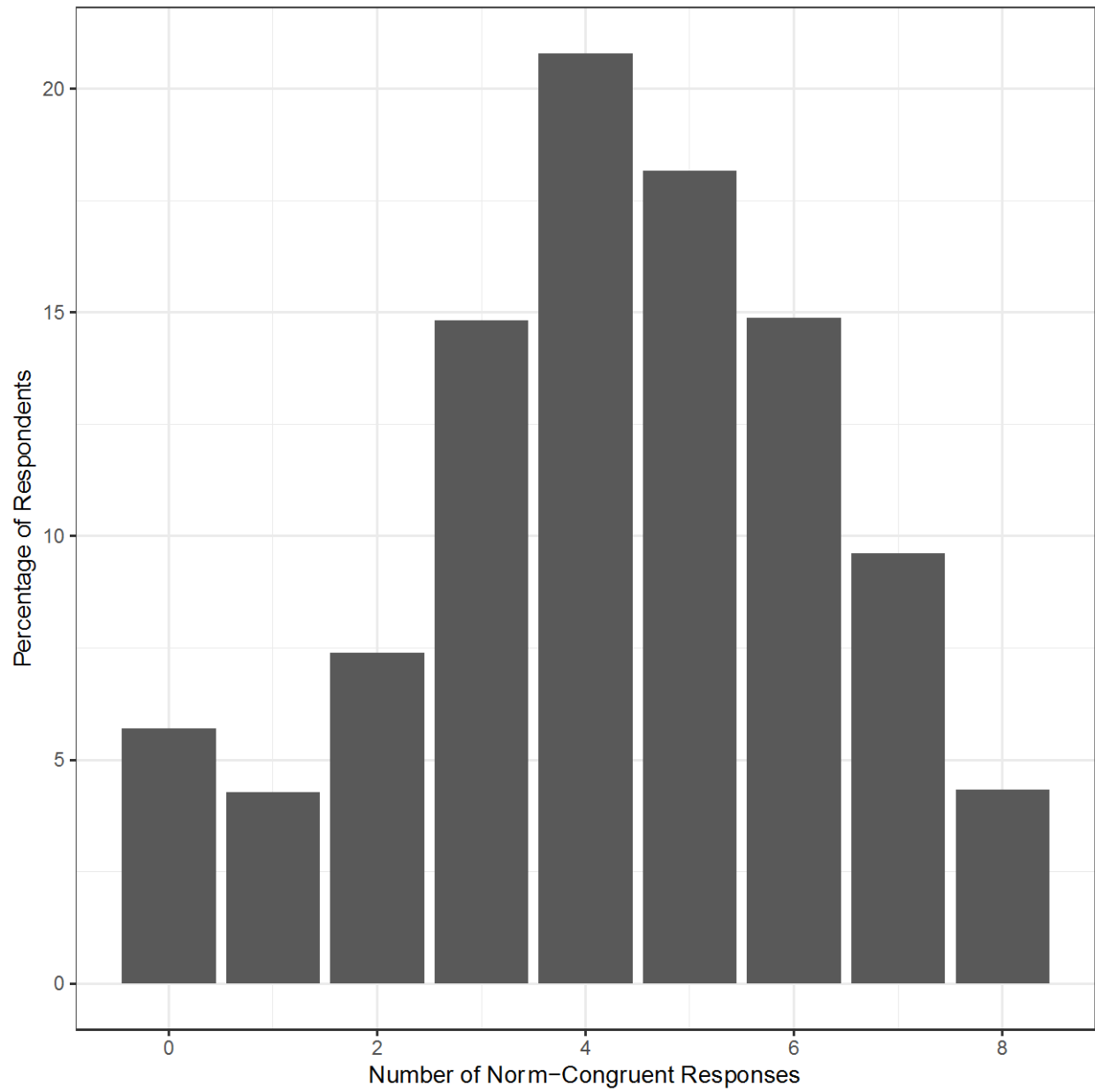


Figure 1: Number of Norm-congruent Responses on Democratic Norm Items

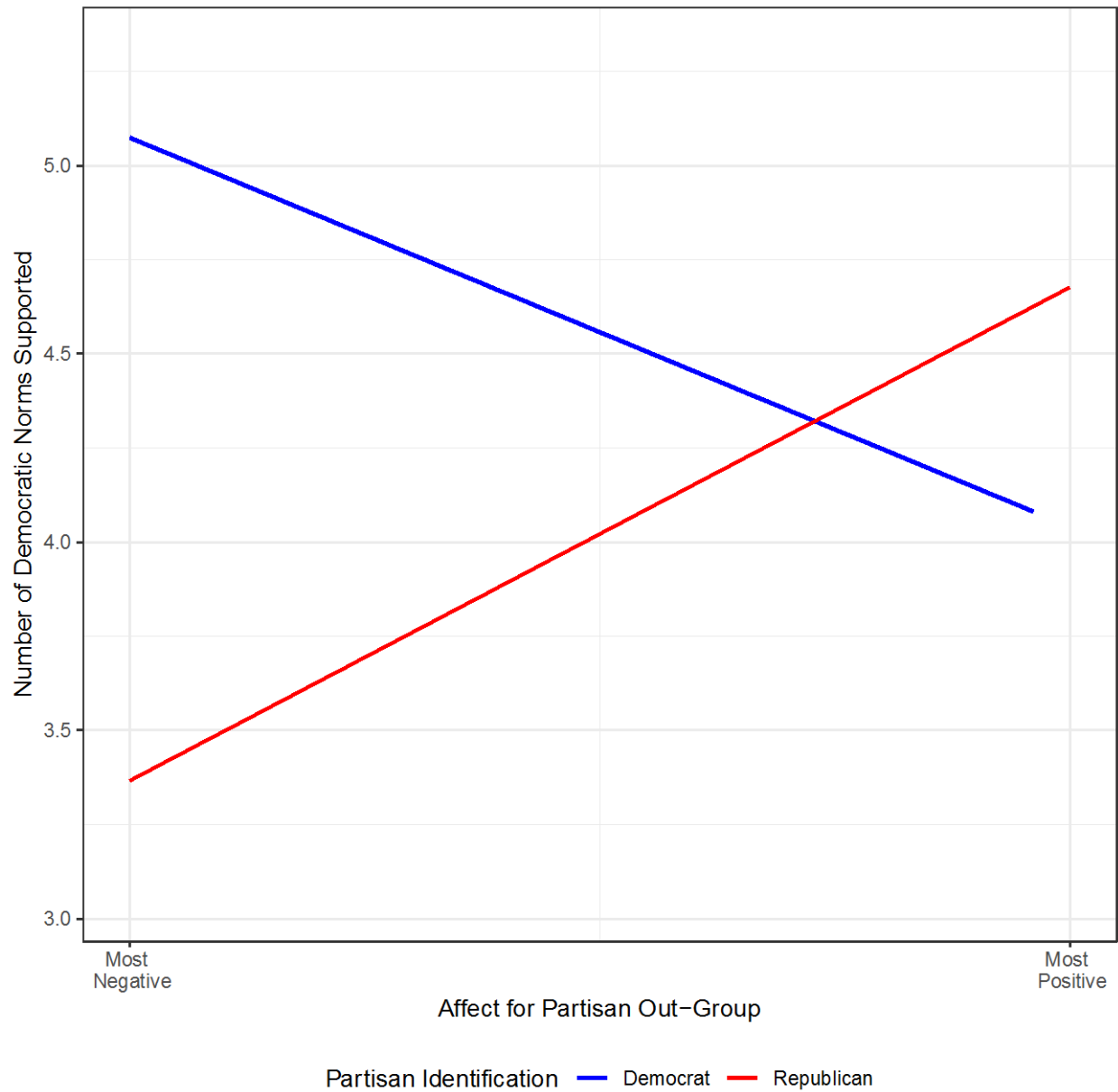


Figure 2: The Party-conditioned Relationship between Out-group Affect and Support for Democratic Norms

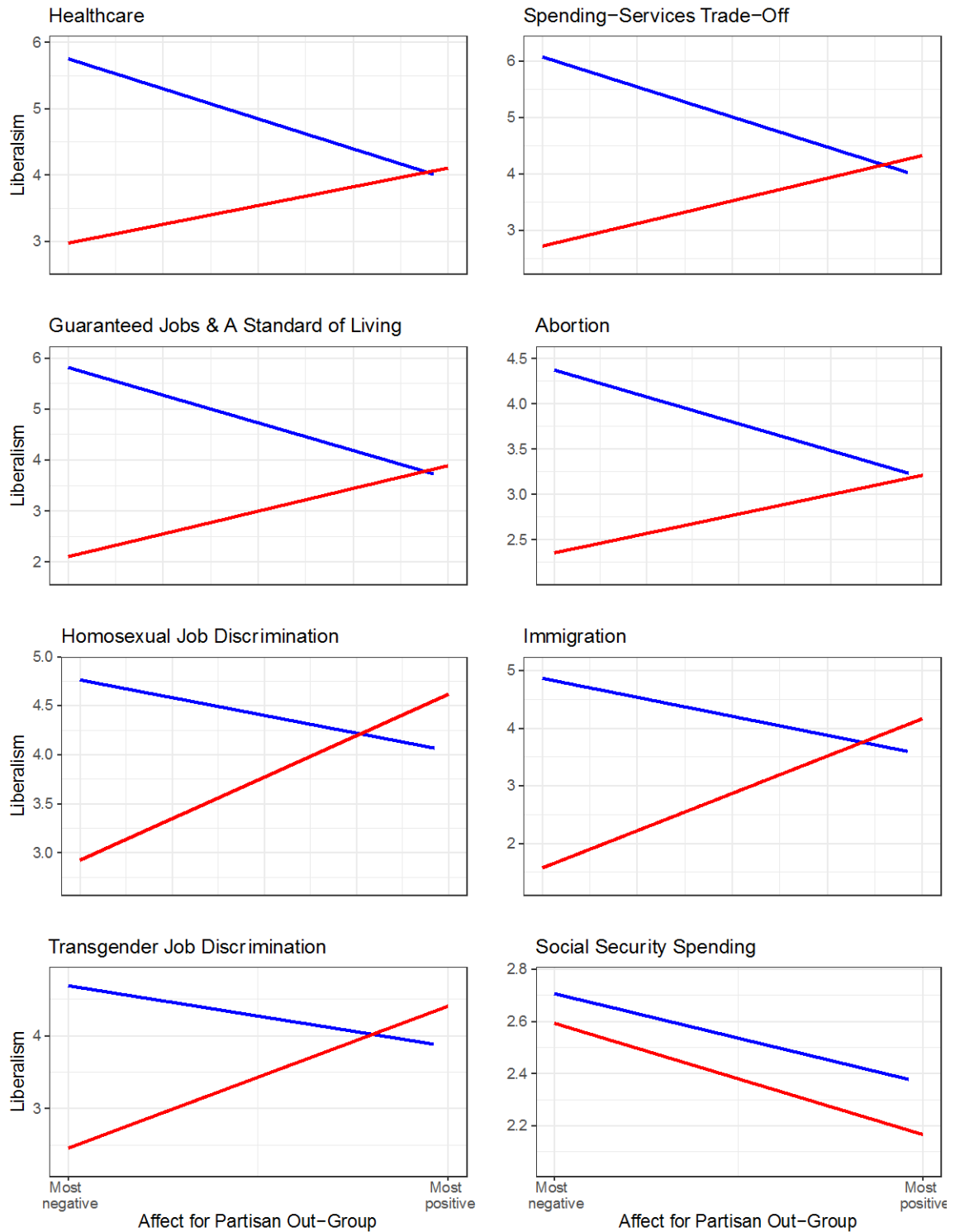


Figure 3: The Party-conditioned Relationship between Out-group Affect and Taking Liberal Policy Positions

Supplemental Appendix for: “Does Affective Polarization Undermine Support for Democratic Norms?”

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Table of Contents:

SI1: Survey Details	1-4
SI2: Norms Scale and Results from Alternative Coding Scheme	5-6
SI3: Question Wording	7-13
SI4: Distribution of Answers on Norm Items	14-17
SI5: Correlations between Norms and Issues	18
SI6: Using In-group Bias Instead of Out-group Affect	19-20
SI7: Using Negative Binomial and OLS Instead of Quasi-Poisson	21-22
SI8: Regressing Issues on Out-group Affect and Controls	23-27
Works Cited	28

Supplementary Information 1: Survey Details

We hired Bovitz Inc. (<http://bovitzinc.com/index.php>) to conduct the survey using their Forthright Panel (<https://www.beforthright.com/for-researchers>). They provide an online panel of approximately one million respondents recruited through random digit dialing and empanelment of those with internet access. As with most internet survey samples, respondents participate in multiple surveys over time and receive compensation for their participation.

The survey took place over two waves.¹ In the first wave (N=5,191), we asked participants about their demographics and political positions. The second wave (N=4,076) contained our measures of out-group affect and support for democratic norms. Out of the 4,076 respondents who finished the second wave, 3,853 answered all the items measuring democratic norms. Because this is the central dependent variable in this study, we compare this sample of 3,853 against Census benchmarks below. It shows a good match – the sample underrepresents older individuals, Hispanics, and those with less than some college. We have no reason to expect these sample differences affect the nature of the key relationships that we find.

Demographics

Age

Age Category	Our Sample (%)	Census Benchmark
18-24	9.42	12.08
25-34	19.88	17.87
35-50	35.19	24.54
51-65	24.60	24.88
Over 65	10.85	20.65

Gender Identity

Gender Identity	Our Sample (%)	Census Benchmark
Female	48.12	50.8
Male	50.90	49.2
Transgender/None	< 1	-- ^[1]

Primary Racial Group

Primary Race	Our Sample (%)	Census Benchmark
Caucasian (White)	69.22	72.2
African-American	14.56	12.7
Hispanic or Latino	9.60	18.3
Asian-American	4.18	5.6
Native American	< 1	< 1
Other	1.58	5

¹ There was a third wave that is irrelevant to our study.

Annual Family Income before Taxes

Income Category	Our Sample (%)	Census Benchmark (%) ^[2]
\$30,000 or less	27.39	29.4
\$30,000 - \$69,999	37.66	30.3
\$70,000 - \$99,999	17.05	12.5
\$100,000 - \$200,000	15.54	20.9
Above \$200,000	2.36	6.9

Education Level

Educational Attainment	Our Sample (%)	Census Benchmark (%)
Did not complete high school	2.08	12
High school graduate	21.13	27.1
Associates Degree/Some College	52.69	28.9
Bachelor's Degree	9.16	19.7
Advanced Degree	14.95	12.3

[1] The U.S. Census Bureau does not currently ask about transgender identity, so there is no government-provided benchmark for that quantity. Flores et al. (2016) estimate that less than 1 percent of Americans identify as transgender, consistent with our estimates here; see <http://bit.ly/2Nj5DZE> for more details.

[2] The Census categories for income are slightly different than the ones we use. They record income as: \$34,999 or below, \$35,000 - \$74,999, \$75,000 - \$99,999, \$100,000 - \$199,999, and \$200,000 or greater.

Experimental Conditions

In this survey, we randomized the type of partisans people were asked to evaluate on the affective polarization items (for purposes unrelated to this paper).² Because this could influence the relationship between affective polarization and support for norms, we created a fixed effect for 12 experimental conditions and ran the same regression model as in the main text of the paper (with these conditions added as fixed effects). As can be seen below, the results are almost identical to those presented in the main text of the paper.

² Specifically, the questions varied whether they mentioned the ideology (i.e., liberal or conservative or none mentioned), and political engagement (i.e., rarely, occasionally, or frequently talk about politics or no mention) of the partisans they rated. The basic condition asked them to rate “Republicans” or “Democrats” while an example of another condition is one that asked them to rate “Moderate Republicans who rarely talk about politics,” etc. While these variations affected the absolute levels of affective polarization, they had no effect on the relationships documented in the paper and, to be clear, the core polarization questions are the same as those used in prior work. Moreover, the results are robust if we only use the condition that employs the standard question about “Republicans” and “Democrats.”

Table A1: The Party-conditioned Relationship Between Out-group Affect and Support for Democratic Norms, Including Condition as Fixed Effect

	Number of Norm-congruent Responses
Republican	-0.411*** (0.046)
Out-party Affect	-0.135*** (0.052)
Republican*Out-party Affect	0.497*** (0.092)
Political Knowledge	0.125*** (0.006)
Education	0.023*** (0.006)
Non-Hispanic White	0.086*** (0.018)
Female	0.025 (0.016)
Religion: Protestant	0.071*** (0.024)
Religion: Catholic	-0.012 (0.025)
Religion: Jewish	-0.012 (0.045)
Religion: None	0.073*** (0.023)
Condition 2	-0.023 (0.034)
Condition 3	-0.009 (0.033)
Condition 4	0.002 (0.033)
Condition 5	-0.021 (0.034)
Condition 6	-0.004

		(0.034)
Condition 7		0.033
		(0.033)
Condition 8		0.015
		(0.033)
Condition 9		-0.047
		(0.034)
Condition 10		0.026
		(0.033)
Condition 11		0.001
		(0.033)
Condition 12		0.006
		(0.034)
Constant		0.963***
		(0.044)
<hr/>		
N	2,812	
Log Likelihood	-1229.05	
AIC	2502.1	
<hr/>		

* p < .1; ** p < .05; *** p < .01

Note: Cell entries are quasi-Poisson regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses.

Supplementary Information 2: Norms Scale and Results from Alternative Coding Scheme

Our starting point for the norms items is McClosky (1964), though we made several revisions and extensions to account for differences in the contemporary political context. First, the items from McClosky (1964) focus on democratic procedures, but do not include an important contemporary dimension of norms: the willingness of people to extend political rights to all citizens equally, regardless of their standing. We thus include four items to gauge rejection of authoritarian tendencies (or endorsement of democratic procedures) (akin to Levitsky and Ziblatt's 2018 forbearance) *and* four items to gauge equal political rights (akin to Levitsky and Ziblatt's 2018 mutual toleration). Second, we used non-specific items in the sense that none of them explicitly invokes a specific politician, a specific group that might be protesting, a specific group of people who are misinformed, etc. We do so to avoid a tautology insofar as if we named specific partisan actors it could end up being akin to another measure of affective polarization. Thus, by making these items non-specific, we can be confident that the polarization along party lines (as we find) is not due to the norms being measures of partisan intensity. Third, we worded the items to avoid acquiescence bias, and so some items are reversed scaled (i.e., agreement with the item means that the respondent is *not* endorsing the norm). Fourth, we purposefully made some of the items double-barreled since endorsing these norms typically comes with value tradeoffs – they are easy to endorse in the abstract, but the construct of interest is whether people endorse these norms even if it means not obtaining a desired outcome. Fifth, we were sure to keep items balanced from a partisan perspective – such as including “business community” and “media” as examples in the government respecting other institutions item.

Coding Details of the Norm Items

In the paper, we created the main dependent variable by taking the number of norms items that each respondent answered in a norm-congruent way. On items for which agreeing with the statement indicated support for democratic norms, a respondent received a 1 if they marked “Strongly agree” or “Agree” and a 0 otherwise on that item. On items for which disagreeing with the statement indicated support for democratic norms, a respondent received a 1 if they marked “Strongly disagree” or “Disagree,” and 0 otherwise. We summed across all 8 norms items after coding each item in this way to create the dependent variable.

We made this coding choice because the norms items have far greater reliability when they are dichotomized in this way – norm-congruent response vs. not – than in other ways. This includes trichotomizing the items to norm-congruent, norm-incongruent, and neutral, as well as preserving the full range of the original items. However, to assuage any concerns that this coding could be driving results, we show an OLS model below that mimics Table 1 in the main text of the paper. The only difference is that in this model, the dependent variable uses the full range of the norms items. On items where agreement indicates the normative response, respondents received a 5 if they strongly agreed, 4 if they agreed, 3 if they were neutral, 2 if they disagreed, and 1 if they strongly disagreed. On items where disagreement indicates the normative response, respondents received a 5 if they strongly disagreed, 4 if they disagreed, 3 if they were neutral, 2 if they agreed, and 1 if they strongly agreed. We summed across norms items to create this variable, which correlates with the scale used in the paper at .87.

Table A2: The Party-conditioned Relationship Between Out-group Affect and Support for Democratic Norms, Using Full Range of Responses on Norms

	Support for Norms, Full Scale
Republican	-3.262*** (0.211)
Out-party Affect	-3.744*** (1.047)
Republican*Out-party Affect	10.218*** (1.808)
Political Knowledge	1.212*** (0.057)
Education	0.131** (0.059)
Non-Hispanic White	1.156*** (0.180)
Female	0.352** (0.159)
Religion: Protestant	0.378 (0.239)
Religion: Catholic	-0.567** (0.241)
Religion: Jewish	-0.669 (0.462)
Religion: None	0.630*** (0.230)
Constant	23.850*** (0.331)
N	2,812
R ²	0.247
Adjusted R ²	0.244
Residual Std. Error	4.123 (df = 2800)
F Statistic	83.508*** (df = 11; 2800)

* p < .1; ** p < .05; *** p < .01

Note: Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses.

Supplementary Information 3: Question Wording

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

Democrat

Republican

Independent

Some other party

IF ANSWERED DEMOCRAT OR REPUBLICAN, ASK, PUTTING IN THE APPROPRIATE PARTY:

Would you call yourself a strong [**Democrat / Republican**] or a not very strong [**Democrat / Republican**]?

Strong

Not very strong

IF ANSWERED INDEPENDENT OR SOME OTHER PARTY, ASK:

If you had to choose, do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic Party or the Republican Party?

*Closer to
Democratic Party*

*Closer to
Republican Party*

Neither

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

*Less than
High school*

*High
school graduate*

*Some
college*

*4 year college
degree*

*Advanced
degree*

What is your estimate of your family's annual household income (before taxes)?

< \$30,000

\$30,000 - \$69,999

\$70,000-\$99,999

\$100,000-\$200,000

>\$200,000

Which of the following best describes your religion?

Protestant Catholic Jewish Muslim Hindu Other Not Religious

Which of the following do you consider to be your primary racial or ethnic group?

White African American Asian American Hispanic or Latino Native American Other

Which of the following best describes your gender identity?

Male Female Transgender None of the categories offered

What is your age?

Under 18 18-24 25-34 35-50 51-65 Over 65

If you had a say in making up the federal budget this year, should federal spending on social security be decreased, kept about the same, or increased?

Decreased Kept about the same Increased

There is a lot of concern about the rapid rise in medical and hospital costs. Some people think that medical expenses should be paid by individuals, and through private insurance like Blue Cross. Others think there should be a government insurance plan, which would cover all medical and hospital expenses. Where would you place yourself on this scale?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Only Mostly Slightly more Half private Slightly more Mostly Only
private private private insurance and public public public
insurance insurance insurance half public insurance insurance insurance insurance

Some people think the government should provide fewer services, even in areas such as health and education, in order to reduce spending. Others think that it is important for the government to provide many more services even if it means an increase in spending. Where would you place yourself on this scale?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

<i>Definitely reduce spending/ cut services</i>	<i>Probably reduce spending/ cut services</i>	<i>Maybe reduce spending/ cut services</i>	<i>Keep services and spending the same</i>	<i>Maybe increase services/ raise spending</i>	<i>Probably increase services/ raise spending</i>	<i>Definitely increase services/ raise spending</i>
---	---	--	--	--	---	---

Some people think that the government in Washington should let each person get ahead on his/her own. Others think the government should ensure every person has a job and a good standard of living. Where would you place yourself on this scale?

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>
<i>Government should DEFINITELY leave it to each person</i>	<i>Government should PROBABLY leave it to each person</i>	<i>Government should MAYBE leave it to each person</i>	<i>Unsure</i>	<i>Government should MAYBE ensure standard of living</i>	<i>Government should PROBABLY ensure standard of living</i>	<i>Government should DEFINITELY ensure standard of living</i>

There has been some discussion about abortion during recent years. Which one of the following options comes closest to your view on this issue?

- By law, abortion should never be permitted.
- The law should permit abortion only in case of rape, incest, or when the woman's life is in danger.
- The law should permit abortion for reasons other than rape, incest, or danger to the woman's life, but only after the need for the abortion has been clearly established.
- By law, a woman should always be able to obtain an abortion as a matter of personal choice, but only until a certain point in her pregnancy.
- By law, a woman should always be able to obtain an abortion as a matter of personal choice.

To what extent do you believe homosexuals should be legally protected against job discrimination?

<u>Definitely</u>	<u>Maybe</u>	<u>Unsure</u>	<u>Maybe</u>	<u>Definitely</u>
<i>Not Should be Protected</i>	<i>Should Not be Protected</i>		<i>Should be Protected</i>	<i>Should be Protected</i>

Thinking now about immigrants – that is, people who come from other countries to live here in the United States – in your view, should immigration be kept at its present level, increased or decreased?

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>
<i>Definitely decrease</i>	<i>Probably decrease</i>	<i>Maybe decrease</i>	<i>Keep at present level</i>	<i>Maybe increase</i>	<i>Probably increase</i>	<i>Definitely increase</i>

To what extent do you believe transgender individuals should be legally protected against job discrimination?

<u>Definitely</u>	<u>Maybe</u>	<u>Unsure</u>	<u>Maybe</u>	<u>Definitely</u>
<i>Should Not be</i>	<i>Should Not be</i>		<i>Should be</i>	<i>Should be</i>

Protected

Protected

Protected

Protected

Many people don't know the answers to these questions, so if there are any you don't know, just check "don't know."

How much of a majority is required for the U.S. Senate and House to override a Presidential veto?

Cannot
override

1/3

1/2

2/3

3/4

Don't know

Do you happen to know which party currently has the most members in the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C.?

Democrats

Republicans

Tie

Don't know

Whose responsibility is it to determine if a law is constitutional?

President

Congress

Supreme Court

Don't know

Who is the current U.S. Vice President?

Rex Tillerson

James Mattis

Mike Pence

Paul Ryan

Don't know

Would you say that one of the major parties is more conservative than the other at the national level? If so, which party is more conservative?

The Democratic Party

The Republican Party

Neither

Don't know

We'd like you to rate how you feel towards **\$OUTGROUP** on a scale of 0 to 100, which we call a "feeling thermometer." On this feeling thermometer scale, ratings between 0 and 49 degrees mean that you feel unfavorable and cold (with 0 being the most unfavorable/coldest). Ratings between 51 and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm (with 100 being the most favorable/warmest). A rating of 50 means you have no feelings one way or the other. How would you rate your feeling toward these groups? Remember we are asking you to rate ordinary people (e.g., voters) and *not* elected officials, candidates, media personalities, etc. **[Use sliders from 0 to 100; SET IT TO HAVE NO DEFAULT IN QUALTRICS SO WOULD NOT BE AT A VALUE:]**

\$OUTGROUP

\$INGROUP

We are next going to ask more questions about ordinary people (e.g., voters) who are [Republicans and Democrats / Democrats and Republicans]. Remember for *all* of these questions, we are asking about ordinary people (e.g., voters) and *not* elected officials, candidates, media personalities, etc.

We'd like to know more about what you think about \$OUTGROUP. Below, we've given a list of words that some people might use to describe them.

For each item, please indicate how well you think it applies to \$OUTGROUP: not at all well; not too well; somewhat well; very well; or extremely well.

	Not at all well	Not too well	Somewhat well	Very well	Extremely well
Patriotic					
Intelligent					
Honest					
Open-minded					
Generous					
Hypocritical					
Selfish					
Mean					

We'd like to know more about what you think about \$INGROUP. Below, we've given a list of words that some people might use to describe them.

For each item, please indicate how well you think it applies to \$INGROUP: not at all well; not too well; somewhat well; very well; or extremely well.

	Not at all well	Not too well	Somewhat well	Very well	Extremely well
Patriotic					
Intelligent					
Honest					
Open-minded					
Generous					
Hypocritical					
Selfish					
Mean					

How much of the time do you think you can trust \$OUTGROUP to do what is right for the country?

*Almost
never*

*Once in a
while*

*About half
the time*

*Most of the
time*

*Almost
always*

How much of the time do you think you can trust \$INGROUP to do what is right for the country?

<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<i>Almost</i>	<i>Once in a</i>	<i>About half</i>	<i>Most of the</i>	<i>Almost</i>
<i>never</i>	<i>while</i>	<i>the time</i>	<i>time</i>	<i>always</i>

How comfortable are you having close personal friends who are \$OUTGROUP?

<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Not too</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>Extremely</i>
<i>comfortable</i>	<i>comfortable</i>	<i>comfortable</i>	<i>comfortable</i>

How comfortable are you having neighbors on your street who are \$OUTGROUP?

<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Not too</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>Extremely</i>
<i>comfortable</i>	<i>comfortable</i>	<i>comfortable</i>	<i>comfortable</i>

Suppose a son or daughter of yours was getting married. How would you feel if he or she married someone who is a \$OUTGROUP?

<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Not too</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>Extremely</i>
<i>upset</i>	<i>upset</i>	<i>upset</i>	<i>upset</i>

How comfortable are you having close personal friends who are \$INGROUP?

<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Not too</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>Extremely</i>
<i>comfortable</i>	<i>comfortable</i>	<i>comfortable</i>	<i>comfortable</i>

How comfortable are you having neighbors on your street who are \$INGROUP?

<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Not too</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>Extremely</i>
<i>comfortable</i>	<i>comfortable</i>	<i>comfortable</i>	<i>comfortable</i>

Suppose a son or daughter of yours was getting married. How would you feel if he or she married someone who is a \$INGROUP?

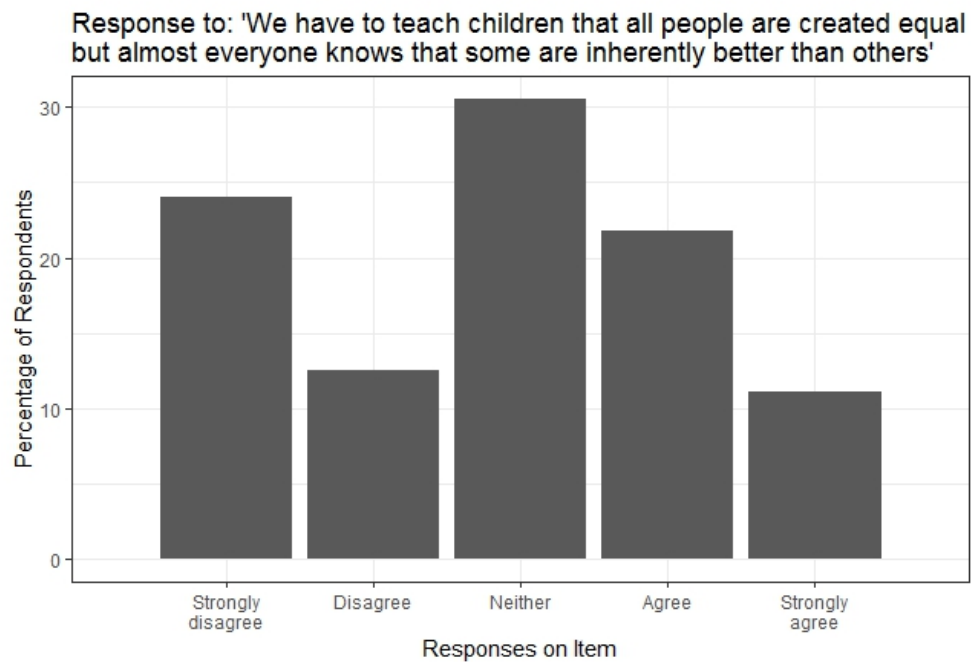
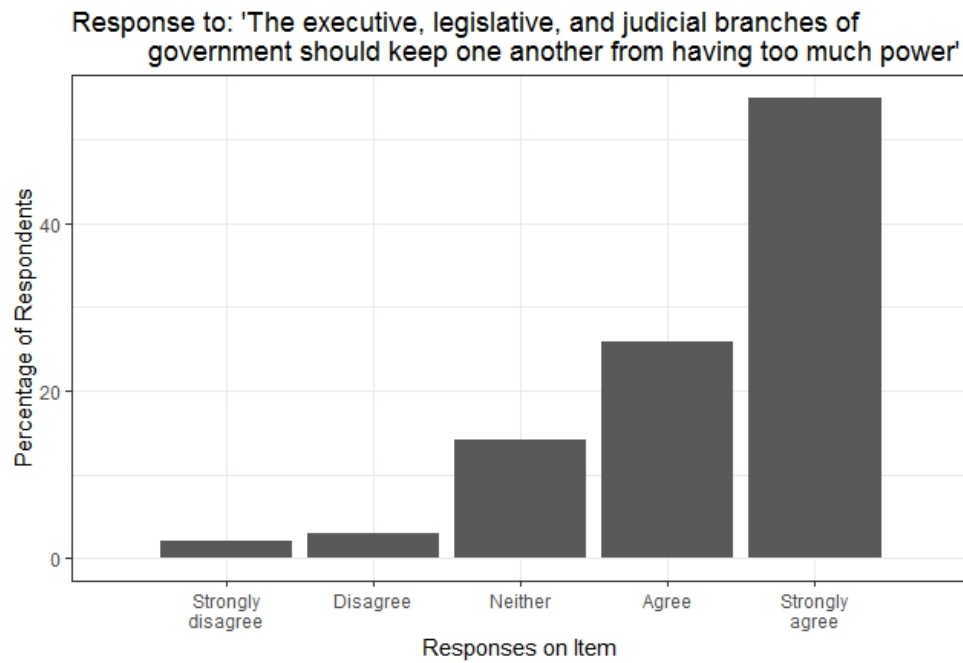
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Not too</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>Extremely</i>
<i>upset</i>	<i>upset</i>	<i>upset</i>	<i>upset</i>

For each item below, please choose the response that is closest to your view.

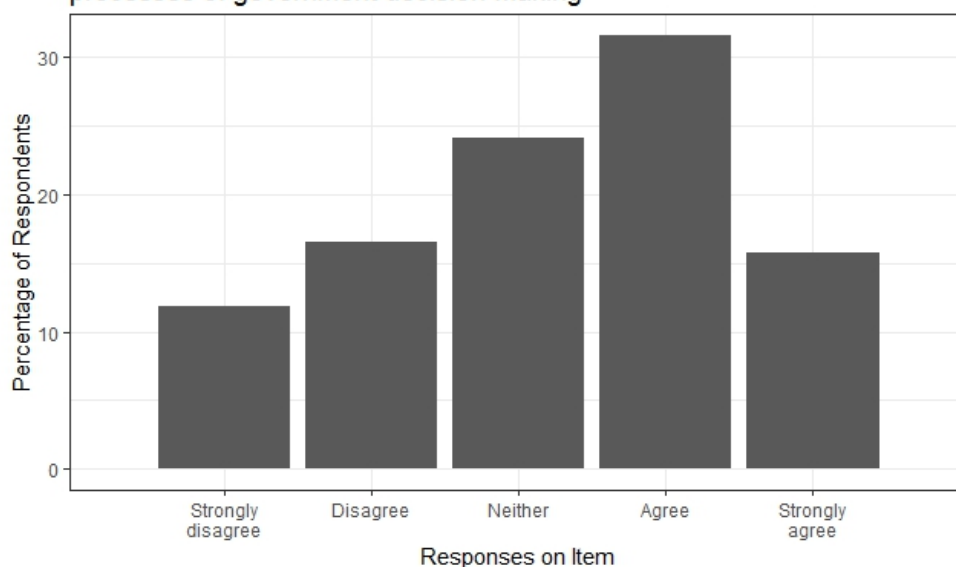
	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I do not mind a politician's methods if he or she manages to get the right things done.					
The executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government					

should keep one another from having too much power.					
When the country is in great danger, it is often necessary for political leaders to act boldly, even if this means overstepping the usual processes of government decision-making.					
It is important that the government treats other institutions with respect, such as news organizations, religious communities, scientific groups, or business associations.					
People should be allowed to vote even if they are badly misinformed on basic facts about politics.					
People who hate my way of life should still have a chance to talk in a public forum.					
We have to teach children that all people are created equal but almost everyone knows that some are inherently better than others.					
Some protests need to be prevented or stopped, even if they are completely peaceful.					

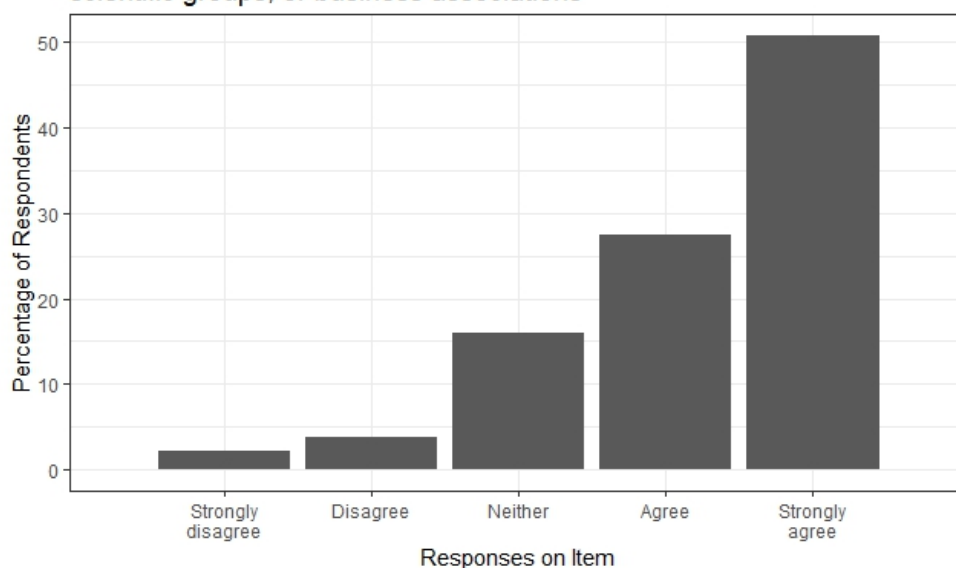
Supplementary Information 4: Distribution of Answers on Norm Items



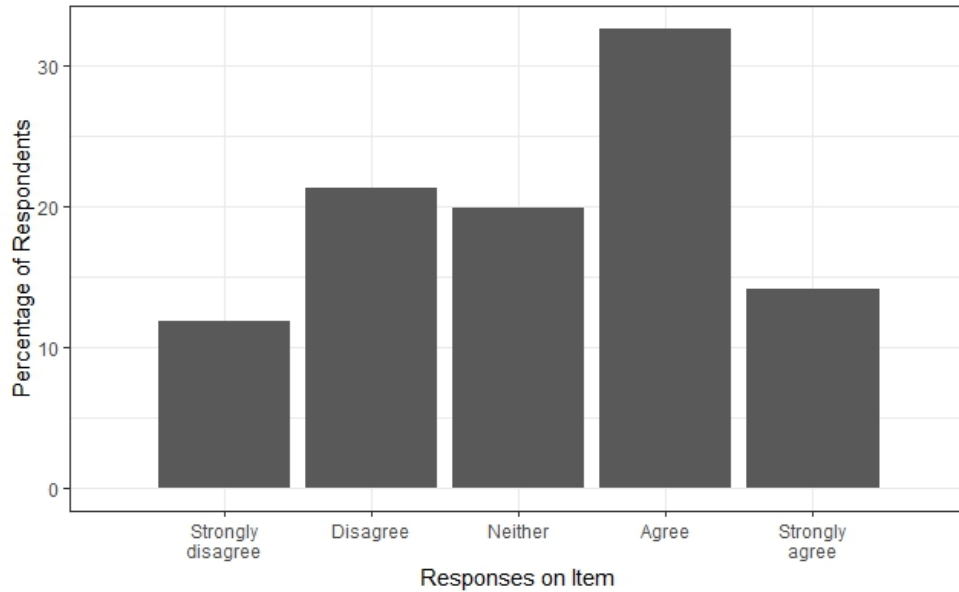
Response to: 'When the country is in great danger, it is often necessary for political leaders to act boldly, even if this means overstepping the usual processes of government decision-making'



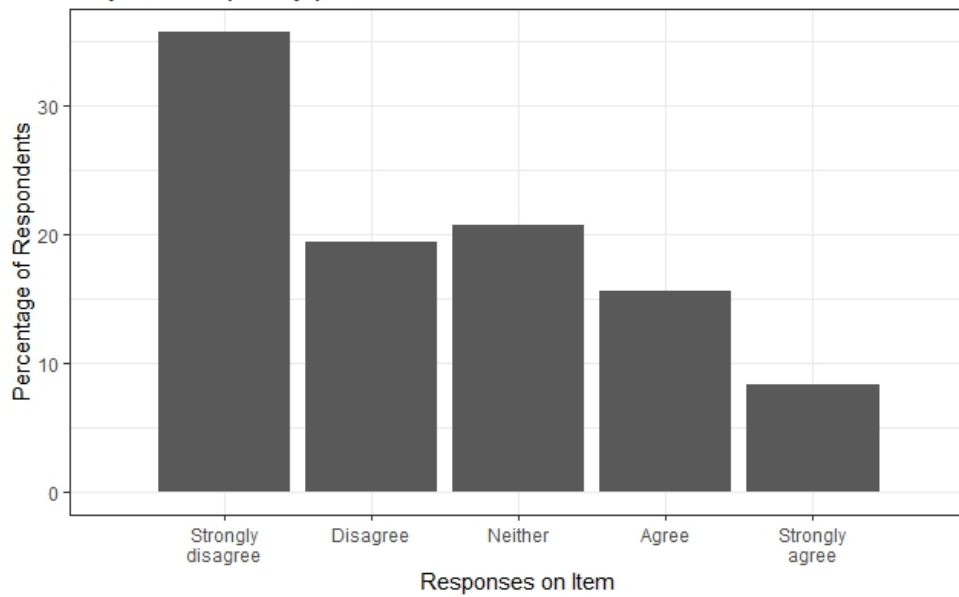
Response to: 'It is important that the government treats other institutions with respect, such as news organizations, religious communities, scientific groups, or business associations'



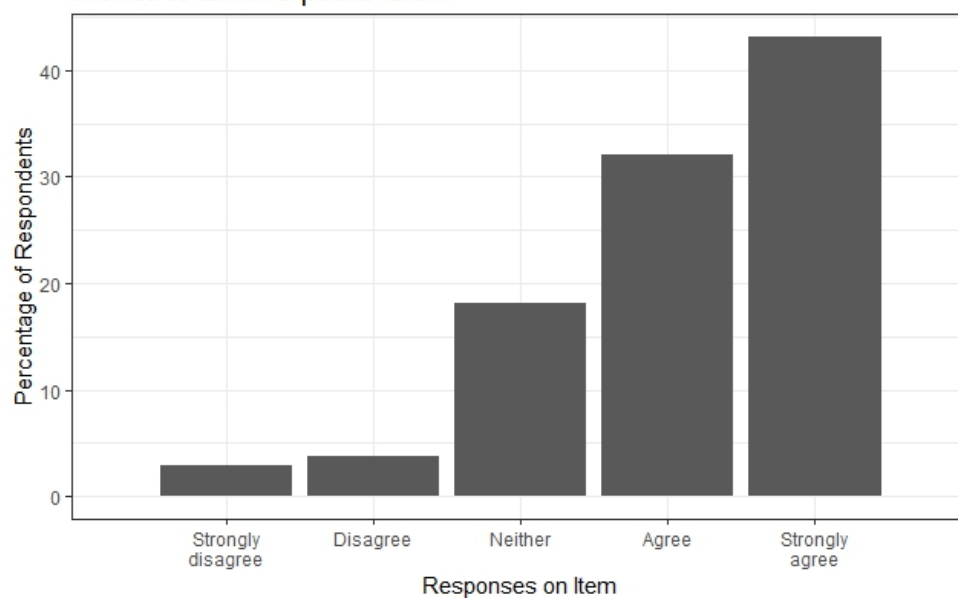
Response to: 'I don't mind a politician's methods if they get the right things done'



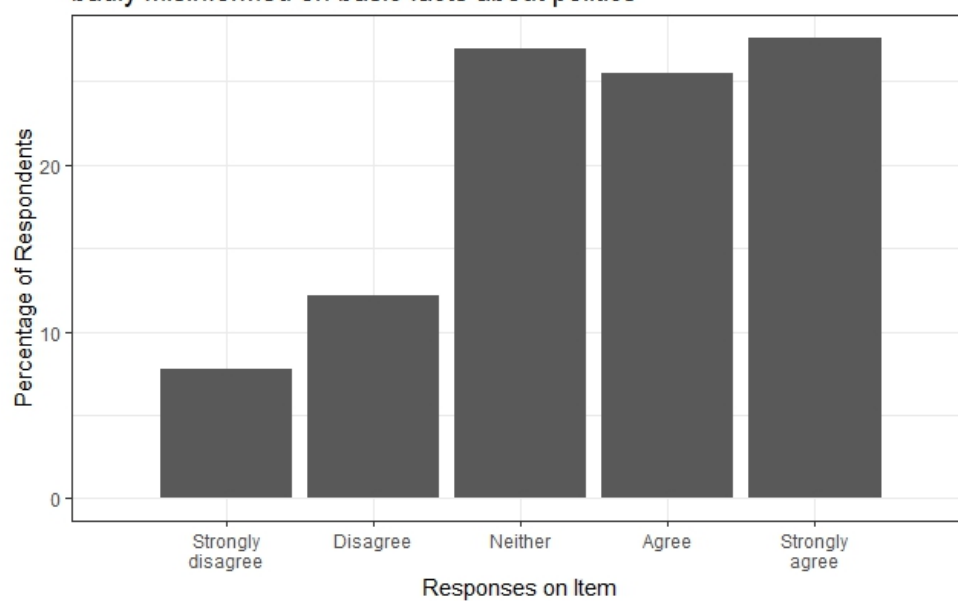
Response to: 'Some protests need to be prevented or stopped, even if they are completely peaceful'



Response to: 'People who hate my way of life should still have a chance to talk in a public forum'



Response to: 'People should be allowed to vote even if they are badly misinformed on basic facts about politics'



Supplementary Information 5: Correlations between Norms and Issues

Table 4: Correlation between Norm-congruent Responses and Liberal Responses to Other Issues among Partisans

<i>Policy item</i>	<i>Correlation with norms scale</i>
Social security spending	.14 (p < .01)
Healthcare	.19 (p < .01)
Social services spending	.25 (p < .01)
Role of government	.16 (p < .01)
Abortion	.20 (p < .01)
Homosexual protection	.27 (p < .01)
Trans protection	.26 (p < .01)
Immigration	.22 (p < .01)

Supplementary Information 6: Using In-group Bias Instead of Out-group Affect

In the body of the paper, we focus on out-group affect, creating an aggregate measure of partisans' attitudes toward the opposing party. This aspect of affective polarization theoretically should influence support for democratic norms (e.g., extending rights even though you may strongly dislike the recipients of those rights). However, affective polarization is sometimes measured instead by taking the difference in attitudes toward the in-group and out-group party, often referred to as in-group bias (see Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012 for a discussion of this point).

We tested whether our results are robust to this alternative operationalization. We did so by first constructing an aggregate measure of attitudes toward the in-group in a manner identical to how we created an aggregate measure of attitudes toward the out-group. Both these scales range from 0-1. We then subtracted out-group affect from in-group affect to create a measure of in-group bias. Though theoretically this scale could go from -1 (completely biased toward the other party) to 1 (completely biased toward one's own party), the minimum value on this scale is -.65. For ease of interpretation, we re-scaled the variable to range from 0-1, with 1 representing maximal bias for one's own party and 0 representing the least. Thus, note that the expected sign for this variable is the opposite from the out-group affect (negative partisanship) operationalization in the text – that is, higher scores reflect more out-group dislike rather than less. Hence, we would predict a negative instead of a positive relationship.

We ran an identical model to the one in the paper, except with this measure of in-group bias. We show the results in the below table. As can be seen, the general thrust of the results is same: Democrats who are more biased toward their own party are more supportive of democratic norms, while Republicans who are more biased toward their own party are less supportive of norms.

Table A3: The Party-conditioned Relationship Between In-group Bias and Support for Democratic Norms

	Number of Norm-congruent Responses
Republican	0.227*** (0.065)
In-group Bias	0.371*** (0.063)
Republican*In-group Bias	-0.742*** (0.119)
Political Knowledge	0.122*** (0.006)
Education	0.023*** (0.006)
Non-Hispanic White	0.092*** (0.018)
Female	0.024 (0.016)
Religion: Protestant	0.072*** (0.024)
Religion: Catholic	-0.010 (0.024)
Religion: Jewish	-0.013 (0.044)
Religion: None	0.076*** (0.023)
Constant	0.696*** (0.049)
N	2,800
Log Likelihood	-1219.35
AIC	2460.7

* p < .1; ** p < .05; *** p < .01

Note: Cell entries are quasi-Poisson regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses.

Supplementary Information 7: Using Negative Binomial and OLS Instead of Quasi-Poisson

Though the quasi-Poisson model is most appropriate for our data because it is underdispersed count data, to ensure that the results in the paper are not being driven by our choice to use this model, we show results below from running the same regression but using negative binomial and OLS models (respectively) instead. As can be seen, the main findings are robust to using these models. In both, out-group affect decreases support for democratic norms among Democrats, but increases support for democratic norms among Republicans.

Table A4: Party-conditioned Relationship between Out-group Affect and Support for Democratic Norms, Using Negative Binomial

	Number of Norm-congruent Responses
Republican	-0.408*** (0.055)
Out-party Affect	-0.131** (0.059)
Republican*Out-party Affect	0.493*** (0.109)
Political Knowledge	0.125*** (0.007)
Education	0.023*** (0.007)
Non-Hispanic White	0.087*** (0.021)
Female	0.025 (0.018)
Religion: Protestant	0.072** (0.028)
Religion: Catholic	-0.012 (0.029)
Religion: Jewish	-0.008 (0.053)
Religion: None	0.075*** (0.027)
Constant	0.959*** (0.048)
N	2,812
Log Likelihood	-5,689.277
AIC	11,402.550
theta	97,839

* $p < .1$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$

Note: Cell entries are negative binomial regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. In this model, theta is approaching infinity because our data is under-dispersed rather than over-dispersed. This is precisely why we use a quasi-poisson in the main paper.

Table A5: Party-conditioned Relationship between Out-group Affect and Support for Democratic Norms, Using OLS

	Number of Norm-congruent Responses
Republican	-1.765*** (0.192)
Out-party Affect	-0.646*** (0.222)
Republican*Out-party Affect	2.129*** (0.384)
Political Knowledge	0.517*** (0.024)
Education	0.095*** (0.025)
Non-Hispanic White	0.391*** (0.075)
Female	0.107 (0.066)
Religion: Protestant	0.293*** (0.099)
Religion: Catholic	-0.068 (0.100)
Religion: Jewish	-0.034 (0.192)
Religion: None	0.334*** (0.096)
Constant	2.365*** (0.167)
N	2,812
R ²	0.234
Adjusted R ²	0.231
Residual Std. Error	1.712 (df = 2800)
F Statistic	77.822*** (df = 11; 2800)

* $p < .1$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$

Note: Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses.

Supplementary Information 8: Regressing Issues on Out-group Affect and Controls

In the paper, we show how similar the bivariate, party-conditioned relationship between out-group affect and support for democratic norms matches the bivariate, party-conditioned relationships on other policy issues. Below, we show that the party-conditioned relationships between out-group affect and taking more liberal stances on other policy issues are robust to the same set of controls used in Table 1 in the paper. This demonstrates that the relationship between out-group affect and democratic norms is the same as that found on the other issues (in a liberal direction) when controls are added. The one exception is social security spending which we already had found differed from the other issues. (Each table contains results for two separate policy issues.)

Table A6: The Party-conditioned Relationship between Out-group Affect and Liberalness of Opinion on Healthcare and Social Services Spending

	Healthcare	Social Services Spending
Republican	-2.699*** (0.179)	-3.350*** (0.180)
Out-party Affect	-1.618*** (0.207)	-2.013*** (0.208)
Republican*Out-party Affect	2.877*** (0.359)	3.720*** (0.360)
Political Knowledge	0.100*** (0.022)	0.126*** (0.022)
Education	-0.064*** (0.023)	0.033 (0.023)
Non-Hispanic White	0.182*** (0.070)	0.194*** (0.070)
Female	0.244*** (0.062)	0.324*** (0.062)
Religion: Protestant	-0.392*** (0.093)	-0.225** (0.093)
Religion: Catholic	-0.425*** (0.093)	-0.194** (0.094)
Religion: Jewish	-0.302* (0.179)	-0.160 (0.180)
Religion: None	0.096 (0.089)	-0.010 (0.090)
Constant	5.476*** (0.156)	5.286*** (0.157)
N	2,812	2,812
R ²	0.207	0.247
Adjusted R ²	0.204	0.244
Residual Std. Error (df = 2800)	1.601	1.605
F Statistic (df = 11; 2800)	66.566***	83.318***

* p < .1; ** p < .05; *** p < .01

Note: Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses.

Table A7: The Party-conditioned Relationship between Out-party Affect and Liberalness of Opinion on Government Jobs Guarantee and Abortion

	Jobs Guarantee	Abortion
Republican	-3.642*** (0.203)	-1.840*** (0.133)
Out-party Affect	-2.090*** (0.234)	-0.932*** (0.154)
Republican*Out-party Affect	3.912*** (0.405)	1.854*** (0.266)
Political Knowledge	0.024 (0.025)	0.142*** (0.017)
Education	-0.017 (0.026)	0.037** (0.017)
Non-Hispanic White	-0.075 (0.079)	0.103** (0.052)
Female	0.228*** (0.070)	0.145*** (0.046)
Religion: Protestant	-0.203* (0.105)	-0.094 (0.069)
Religion: Catholic	-0.298*** (0.105)	0.081 (0.069)
Religion: Jewish	0.009 (0.202)	0.522*** (0.133)
Religion: None	-0.121 (0.101)	0.652*** (0.066)
Constant	5.838*** (0.176)	3.263*** (0.116)
N	2,812	2,812
R ²	0.238	0.251
Adjusted R ²	0.235	0.248
Residual Std. Error (df = 2800)	1.807	1.189
F Statistic (df = 11; 2800)	79.628***	85.361***

* p < .1; ** p < .05; *** p < .01

Note: Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses.

Table A8: The Party-conditioned Relationship between Out-party Affect and Liberalness of Opinion on Discrimination Protections for Homosexuals and Transgender People

	Homosexual Discrimination Protections	Transgender Discrimination Protections
Republican	-1.808*** (0.127)	-2.211*** (0.132)
Out-party Affect	-0.585*** (0.147)	-0.713*** (0.152)
Republican*Out-party Affect	2.354*** (0.254)	2.741*** (0.263)
Political Knowledge	0.134*** (0.016)	0.126*** (0.016)
Education	0.005 (0.016)	0.009 (0.017)
Non-Hispanic White	0.161*** (0.050)	0.199*** (0.051)
Female	0.264*** (0.044)	0.285*** (0.045)
Religion: Protestant	-0.046 (0.066)	-0.096 (0.068)
Religion: Catholic	-0.010 (0.066)	0.022 (0.068)
Religion: Jewish	0.038 (0.127)	-0.034 (0.131)
Religion: None	0.221*** (0.063)	0.218*** (0.066)
Constant	3.936*** (0.111)	3.856*** (0.115)
N	2,812	2,812
R ²	0.153	0.196
Adjusted R ²	0.150	0.193
Residual Std. Error (df = 2800)	1.136	1.174
F Statistic (df = 11; 2800)	45.998***	61.935***

* p < .1; ** p < .05; *** p < .01

Note: Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses.

Table A9: The Party-conditioned Relationship between Out-party Affect and Liberalness of Opinion on Immigration and Social Security Spending

	Immigration	Social Security Spending
Republican	-3.144*** (0.178)	-0.165** (0.064)
Out-party Affect	-1.132*** (0.206)	-0.327*** (0.074)
Republican*Out-party Affect	3.717*** (0.356)	-0.046 (0.128)
Political Knowledge	0.099*** (0.022)	0.053*** (0.008)
Education	0.035 (0.023)	-0.013 (0.008)
Non-Hispanic White	-0.035 (0.069)	0.104*** (0.025)
Female	-0.102* (0.062)	0.119*** (0.022)
Religion: Protestant	-0.070 (0.092)	-0.041 (0.033)
Religion: Catholic	-0.057 (0.093)	-0.067** (0.033)
Religion: Jewish	0.373** (0.178)	-0.175*** (0.064)
Religion: None	0.342*** (0.089)	-0.081** (0.032)
Constant	4.283*** (0.155)	2.507*** (0.056)
N	2,812	2,812
R ²	0.215	0.065
Adjusted R ²	0.212	0.061
Residual Std. Error (df = 2800)	1.591	0.571
F Statistic (df = 11; 2800)	69.783***	17.557***

* p < .1; ** p < .05; *** p < .01

Note: Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses.

Supplementary Information References

Iyengar, Shanto, Gaurav Sood, and Yphtach Lelkes. 2012. "Affect, not Ideology: A Social Identity Perspective on Polarization." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76(3): 405-431.

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McClosky, Herbert. 1964. "Consensus and Ideology in American Politics." *American Political Science Review* 58: 361-382.