

Rethinking Negative Partisanship

Andy Tuholski, Ph.D.

Author Note

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Prof. Tuholski at
andy.tuholski@gmail.com

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to apply Stanga and Sheffield's (1987) concept of partisanship as symmetry to the generation and exploration of negative partisanship based on American electoral data. The main contribution in this study is the generation of a mathematical concept of partisanship that defines negative partisans in terms of the degree to which there is an imbalance between own-party affinity and other-party antipathy. Four hypotheses were examined in the study: (1) Negative partisanship with respect to the major parties has risen over time. (2) Negative partisanship with respect to individual members of the major parties has risen over time. (3) Negative partisanship is equal between the two major parties. (4) The degree of negative partisanship influences the odds of voting for the self-identified party.

Keywords: Partisanship, negative partisanship, traditional partisanship, zero partisanship, electoral politics

Rethinking Negative Partisanship

Why do people vote for certain parties? Since 1960, the mainstream answer (Campbell, 1960) to this question has been that electoral choice is substantially a function of partisanship, or degree of identification—whether cognitive, affective, or otherwise—with a party. However, the paradigm of partisanship has been subject to numerous challenges, beginning as early as Walter Burnham’s 1970 *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics* (Burnham, 1970). Empirical research from Great Britain first suggested (Crewe, 1976) the possibility of negative partisanship as a motivating factor in elections, and, by the 1980s, there was a growing body of literature in the United States that also supported the concept of negative partisanship.

The concept of negative partisanship has become a far more popular explanatory paradigm in recent years (Abramowitz & Webster, 2016; Bankert, Huddy, & Rosema, 2017; Caruana, McGregor, & Stephenson, 2015; McCann & Chávez, 2016; Medeiros & Noël, 2014; Michael McGregor, Caruana, & Stephenson, 2015; Rogowski & Sutherland, 2016; Uslaner, 2015; Wagner & Meyer, 2015), with empirical analyses of this phenomenon encompassing data from the United States, Canada, and Western Europe in particular. Negative partisanship is a firmly entrenched idea in American political science, one that has been explored in traditional electoral studies (Abramowitz & Webster, 2016; Bankert et al., 2017; Caruana et al., 2015; McCann & Chávez, 2016; Medeiros & Noël, 2014; Michael McGregor et al., 2015), sociologically (Uslaner, 2015), and even in terms of cognition and psychology (Bankert et al., 2017; Rogowski & Sutherland, 2016).

However, as early as 1987, Stanga and Sheffield argued (Stanga & Sheffield,

1987) that the decline in partisanship that had first been identified in 1970 by Burnham was illusory. Stanga and Sheffield argued that partisanship ought to be understood as a sort of symmetrical attitude, one in which individuals preferred their party to the same extent that they disliked the other party.

The purpose of this study was to apply Stanga and Sheffield's (1987) concept of partisanship as symmetry to the generation and exploration of negative partisanship based on American electoral data from 1968 to 2012. The main contribution of this study is the generation of a mathematical concept of partisanship that defines negative partisans in terms of the degree to which there is an imbalance between own-party affinity and other-party antipathy. Based on an application of this novel measure of negative antipathy, it appears that, contrary to claims that negative partisanship is increasing (Abramowitz & Webster, 2016; Caruana et al., 2015), negative partisanship in the United States has declined significantly and substantially.

Because the focus of the study was on scale development and application, particular attention has been paid to explaining and justifying how a new negative partisanship measure was generated from the ANES data. This process of scale creation has been conceptually related to the work of Stanga and Sheffield (1987), and, in particular, to Stanga and Sheffield's application of the concept of asymmetry to the measurement of negative partisanship.

Literature Review

While the existence of partisanship, or party identification, is well-documented in the past six decades of scholarship in political science, beginning with Campbell et al.'s seminal *The American Voter* (Campbell, 1960), comparably little attention has been paid

to the phenomenon of negative partisanship, or identification based more on antipathy towards another party than on affiliation with the party for which one votes or otherwise supports. The phenomenon of negative partisanship was barely studied in the 1970s, despite Crewe's excellent 1976 treatment of negative partisanship (Crewe, 1976) and Maggiotto and Piereson's 1977 attempt to embed negative partisanship into the conceptual framework of American electoral studies via their so-called hostility hypothesis (Maggiotto & Piereson, 1977).

Despite the dominance of the paradigm of partisanship (Carsey & Layman, 2006; Dalton, Beck, & Huckfeldt, 1998; Hibbs, 1992; Jennings & Markus, 1984; Ladner & Wlezien, 2007; Markus & Converse, 1979; Page & Jones, 1979), there is also a long history of empirical critique of partisanship, particularly in the explanatory framework of American politics. As early as 1970, only a decade after Campbell et al. (1960) effectively introduced partisanship into the discussion of American political life, Burnham identified a "secular trend toward the gradual disappearance of political parties in the United States" (Burnham, 1970, p. 133). This idea gained traction not only through Burnham's work but also as a result of Wattenberg's 1984 *The Decline of American Political Parties* (Wattenberg, 1984).

In 1987, Stanga and Sheffield challenged (Stanga & Sheffield, 1987) the burgeoning work on negative partisanship, arguing that, in fact, the American electorate continued to consist of so called positive-negatives, or traditional partisans who felt positively towards one party and negatively towards another. Like the majority of empirical researchers of partisanship in the context of American politics, Stanga and Sheffield (1987) relied on data from the American National Election Studies (ANES)

datasets to make their arguments. Since 1968, the ANES datasets had included group thermometer questions (scaled from 0 to 97) that allowed respondents to indicate their degree of affinity or antipathy towards numerous groups, including the Democratic and Republican Parties. Therefore, as the ANES data grew, scholars such as Stanga and Sheffield were able to engage in the kind of quantitative analysis of negative partisanship that had hitherto been more possible in the context of Great Britain, whose electoral survey data went back to the 1950s (Crewe, 1976). More recently, as argued below, the ANES data have made possible a kind of statistical operationalization of Stanga and Sheffield's (1987) definition of negative partisanship that, despite its obvious advantages, has not been attempted in the previous literature.

Theoretical and Operational Development of Negative Partisanship

Negative partisanship has been defined as voter antipathy towards an opposing party. There are numerous ways to measure such antipathy. Abramowitz and Webster (2016) defined negative partisanship in terms of feelings, or affects, which are tracked in ANES. In particular, the 'group thermometer' measure in ANES tracks antipathy towards both political parties (e.g., 'the Democratic Party') as well as antipathy towards people who identify with political parties (e.g., 'Democrats'). Group thermometer is a continuous-ratio variable whose lowest possible value is 0 and whose highest possible value is 97-100 (note that all scores between 97 and 100 are treated as a single category in ANES). In the group thermometer, lower values represent antipathy whereas higher values represent affinity; values in the middle reflect neutrality.

In terms of the group thermometer operationalization in ANES, and limiting the domain of analysis to Democrats and Republicans (including leaners), negative

partisanship can be defined through the relationship between (a) an individual's group thermometer assignment to his or her identified major party, (b) an individual's group thermometer assignment to the opposing major party, and (c) the mean group thermometer value. For example, a Democrat whose group thermometer scores for the Republican Party is 0, but whose group thermometer score for the Democratic Party is 60, can be described as engaging in negative partisanship, on the basis that the absolute value of the difference between the group thermometer mean of 48.5 and 0 is greater than absolute value of the difference between the group thermometer mean and 60.

Because the ANES treats group thermometer scores of 97, 98, 99, and 100 as 97, and because the lowest possible group thermometer score is 0, the mean group thermometer score—the theoretical point at which an individual is neutral—is $97/2$, or 48.5. The calculation of this mean is important for calculating negative partisanship as a continuous rather than as a dichotomous, polytomous, or ordinal variable, expanding the types of analysis that can be applied to negative partisanship. However, the creation of a measure of negative partisanship that is continuous in nature is not a mere statistical convenience, but the result of a valid process of theory application.

The core theoretical component of negative partisanship is the claim that antipathy is disproportionate to affinity. What had been missing in the literature to date is a single variable capable of measuring this disproportionality. For example, if negative partisanship is defined as, e.g., a Democratic-identifying individual's dislike for the Republican Party, such a definition would only be conceptually valid if dislike for the Republican Party outweighed like for the Democratic Party. In developing the theory of negative partisanship, numerous scholars have made, whether directly or indirectly, this

point about proportionality, but it is only recently that scholars (Abramowitz & Webster, 2016) have generated index values for negative partisanship that attempt to reflect disproportionality, but, as argued below, in conceptually incorrect ways.

Steven Webster, for example, proposed an index value of negative partisanship based on the formula: $(100 - \text{other party's thermometer rating}) - \text{own party's thermometer rating}$. This approach yields possible values of -100 to 100, with the lower values corresponding to scenarios in which respondents like their own party more than they dislike the opposing party. In this approach, negative values indicate the existence of positive partisanship, positive values indicate the existence of negative partisanship, and 0 indicates the absence of partisanship. There are some weaknesses in this approach, as can be demonstrated through the presentation of some scenarios and their conceptual relationship to negative partisanship.

Consider a scenario in which an individual, a self-identified Democrat, assigns a group thermometer score of 100 to the Democratic Party and a group thermometer score of 0 to the Republican Party. Applying Webster's formula, the partisanship score of this individual would be calculated as follows: $(100 - 0) - 100 = -100$. A score of -100 indicates, in Webster's approach, the maximum possible level of negative partisanship. But, based on a close consideration of negative partisanship theory, including the theoretical discussion provided by Abramowitz and Webster (2016) themselves, this individual is not necessarily a negative partisan.

In theoretical terms, negative partisans can only be people who dislike the other party more than they like their own party. In the scenario of the Democrat who rates her party at 100, and the Republican Party at 0, there is exact symmetry: This person likes her

party exactly as much as she dislikes the other party. If, for the sake of convenience, 50 is assumed to be the ANES mean for all group thermometer values, this individual is +50 for the Democratic Party and -50 for the Republican Party; there is the same distance, in either direction from the mean, to the positive and negative scores. Therefore, this person should not be designated as a negative partisan, but merely as a partisan.

Theoretically, it seems more appropriate to designate someone as a negative partisan for whom the distance between the ANES group thermometer mean and her own party rating is less than the distance between the ANES group thermometer mean and the other party rating. Consider a scenario in which a self-identified Democrat scores the Democratic Party at 49, but the Republican Party at 0. There is a true asymmetry in this kind of scoring that genuinely reflects negative partisanship, as this individual is merely lukewarm on the Democratic Party but detests the Republican Party.

Design of the Measure of Negative Partisanship

In this study, an index of symmetry-based negative partisanship was generated using the following steps:

First, the ANES time-series dataset was downloaded and truncated to all cases from 1968 to 2012, the years in which there were group thermometer values for either major party ratings, major party member ratings, or both.

Second, a generic index of partisanship based on assessment of the majority parties was calculated as follows for self-identified Democrats and Republicans in the sample ($n = 47,611$):

- Party partisanship index for Democrats = (48.5- Democratic Party group thermometer) + (48.5- Republican Party group thermometer)

- Party partisanship index for Republicans = (48.5- Republican Party group thermometer) + (48.5- Democratic Party group thermometer)
- Party member partisanship index for Democrats = (48.5- Democratic Party member group thermometer) + (48.5- Republican Party group thermometer)
- Party member partisanship index for Republicans = (48.5- Republican Party group thermometer) + (48.5- Democratic Party member group thermometer)

In this approach, the absence of partisanship exists when the score is 0. Partisanship occurs when the score is positive. Negative partisanship occurs when the score is negative. Again, the mean of 48.5 was used because ANES treats all group thermometer values greater than or equal to 97 as part of a single 97-100 category. This approach to scale construction was, both conceptually and operationally, a more valid means of measuring negative partisanship, as it was based on the measurement of asymmetries between own-party like and other-party dislike that, as Stanga and Sheffield (1987) argued, are a more appropriate measurement of negative partisanship in particular.

Technically, the scale measures disparities between party like and dislike and, in this context, does not differentiate between a scenario in which, for example, (a) a self-identified Democrat is lukewarm about the Democratic Party and greatly dislikes the Republican Party and (b) a self-identified Democrat is lukewarm about the Republican Party and greatly dislikes the Democratic Party. In the scale, these two scenarios are measured equally as instances of negative partisanship. In such scenarios, it is possible that the respondent has an existing party registration that he or she might not have changed, or that he or she is likely to depart the currently identified party anyway. Even if otherwise, it is impossible for a correlational analysis of ANES values to identify the

genuinely partisan characteristics of a respondent; all that the scale purports to measure is the disparity between antipathy towards one party and affinity for another party, which is the core component of negative partisanship.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were examined in this study:

H1: Negative partisanship with respect to the major parties has risen over time.

H2: Negative partisanship with respect to individual members of the major parties has risen over time.

H3: Negative partisanship is equal between the two major parties.

H4: The degree of negative partisanship influences the odds of voting for the self-identified party.

All statistical procedures and graphics generation related to the testing of the hypotheses was carried out in Stata / SE 14.2, and the level of statistical significance was designated as $p < .05$.

Findings

The findings of the study have been presented separately for each of the hypotheses.

H1 Findings

The first hypothesis of the study was that negative partisanship with respect to the major parties has risen over time. In ANES, respondents were asked to give group thermometer readings on the major parties in a total of 15 years—1978, 1980, 1982, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2004, 2008, and 2012. The first step in analyzing H1 was to tabulate the mean negative partisanship values (as pertaining

to party, not to party members) for both Democrats and Republicans in these 15 years.

The results are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Index of Negative Partisanship (NP) Values (for Party)

| Year | NP Mean (Democrats) | NP SD (Democrats) | NP Mean (Republicans) | NP SD (Republicans) |
|------|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1978 | -23.73805 | 0.7900625 | -15.99251 | 0.8263411 |
| 1980 | -23.8394 | 0.9997221 | -16.41011 | 1.019909 |
| 1982 | -21.78267 | 0.9451326 | -16.57071 | 0.9831617 |
| 1984 | -22.56712 | 0.8117107 | -21.98817 | 0.7489899 |
| 1986 | -23.97998 | 0.8450128 | -19.81818 | 0.8032718 |
| 1988 | -24.84256 | 0.8792269 | -21.1 | 0.8502935 |
| 1990 | -20.68033 | 0.9712244 | -17.37572 | 0.9493743 |
| 1992 | -15.59783 | 0.7819478 | -10.72166 | 0.8080971 |
| 1994 | -18.54745 | 0.9119864 | -9.641631 | 0.7964073 |
| 1996 | -17.37088 | 0.8778525 | -11.96992 | 0.9089322 |
| 1998 | -12.90513 | 1.073176 | -10.97496 | 1.133523 |
| 2000 | -19.05916 | 0.9237935 | -11.13809 | 0.925718 |
| 2004 | -12.90846 | 1.116013 | -15.06577 | 1.022919 |
| 2008 | -11.88772 | 0.7297734 | -7.744212 | 0.9593224 |
| 2012 | -2.937278 | 0.4695727 | 4.228115 | 0.5519846 |

There is a clear pattern of decline in negative partisanship for both Democrats and Republicans. This pattern is more clearly illustrated in Figure 1 below, in which the negative partisanship for Democrats and Republicans has been graphed. Unexpectedly, negative partisanship declined, rather than increased, over time. Moreover, the pattern of decline in negative partisanship appeared fairly linear in nature. For Democrats, negative partisanship (vis-à-vis the Republican Party, not Republican Party members, who were assessed in H2) declined by 0.530 points a year ($b = 0.530$, $SE = 0.073$, $t = 7.240$, $p < .001$). The R^2 of this model was .801, indicating a strong linear fit. For Republicans, negative partisanship (vis-à-vis the Democratic Party) declined by 0.490 points a year (b

= 0.490, $SE = 0.113$, $t = 4.340$, $p = .001$). The R^2 of this model was .561, also indicating a strong linear fit.

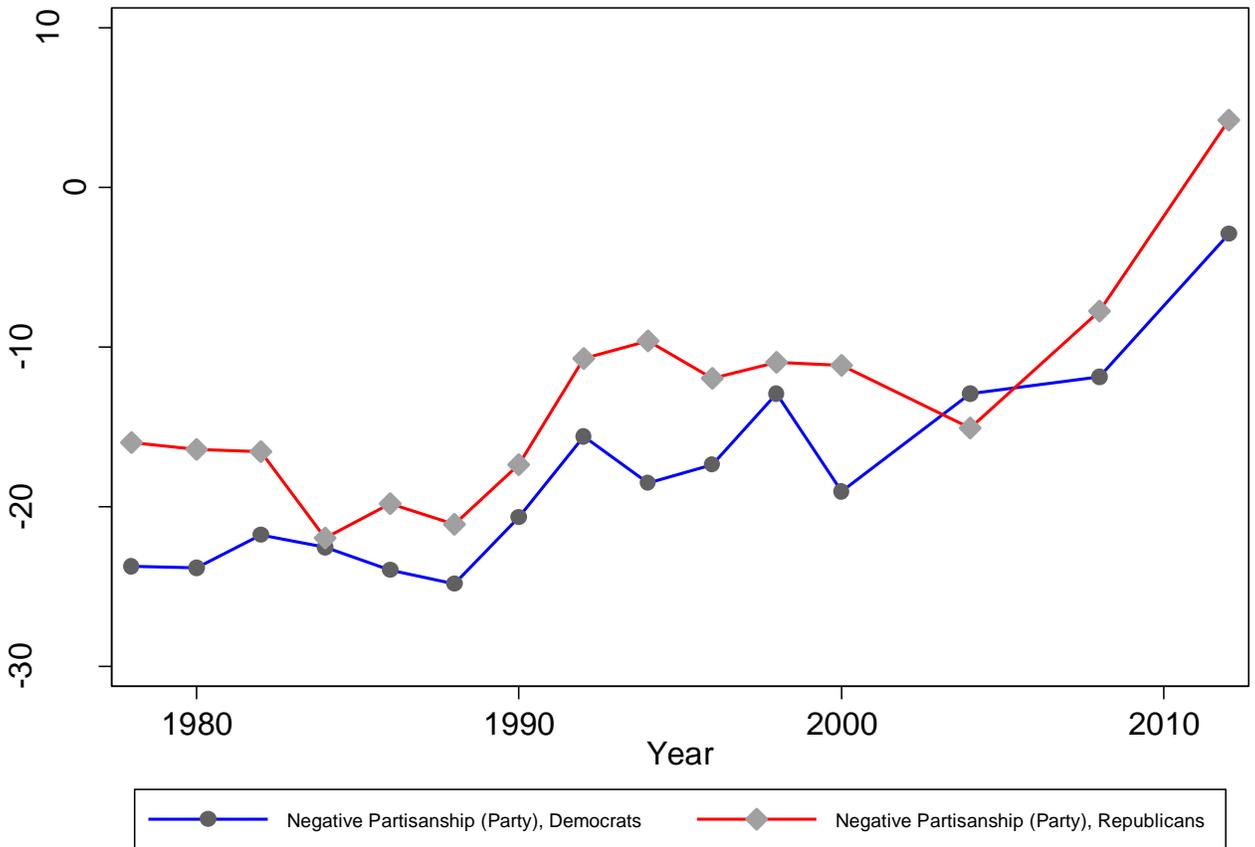


Figure 1. Change in negative partisanship (party) over time for both Democrats and Republicans.

Therefore, in terms of the first hypothesis, it was concluded that, contrary to expectations, negative partisanship has declined rather than risen over time. This finding held true for both Democrats and Republicans. Moreover, in relative terms, it was observed that Democrats were more likely to engage in negative partisanship than Republicans.

The existence of a strong linear fit for the change in partisanship measured in H1 meant that no time-series analyses were applied to the dataset. Ordinary least squares

regression appeared to be an appropriate measure of the change in party-oriented partisanship. The histograms below depict variation in group thermometer rating by the party identification of the respondent.

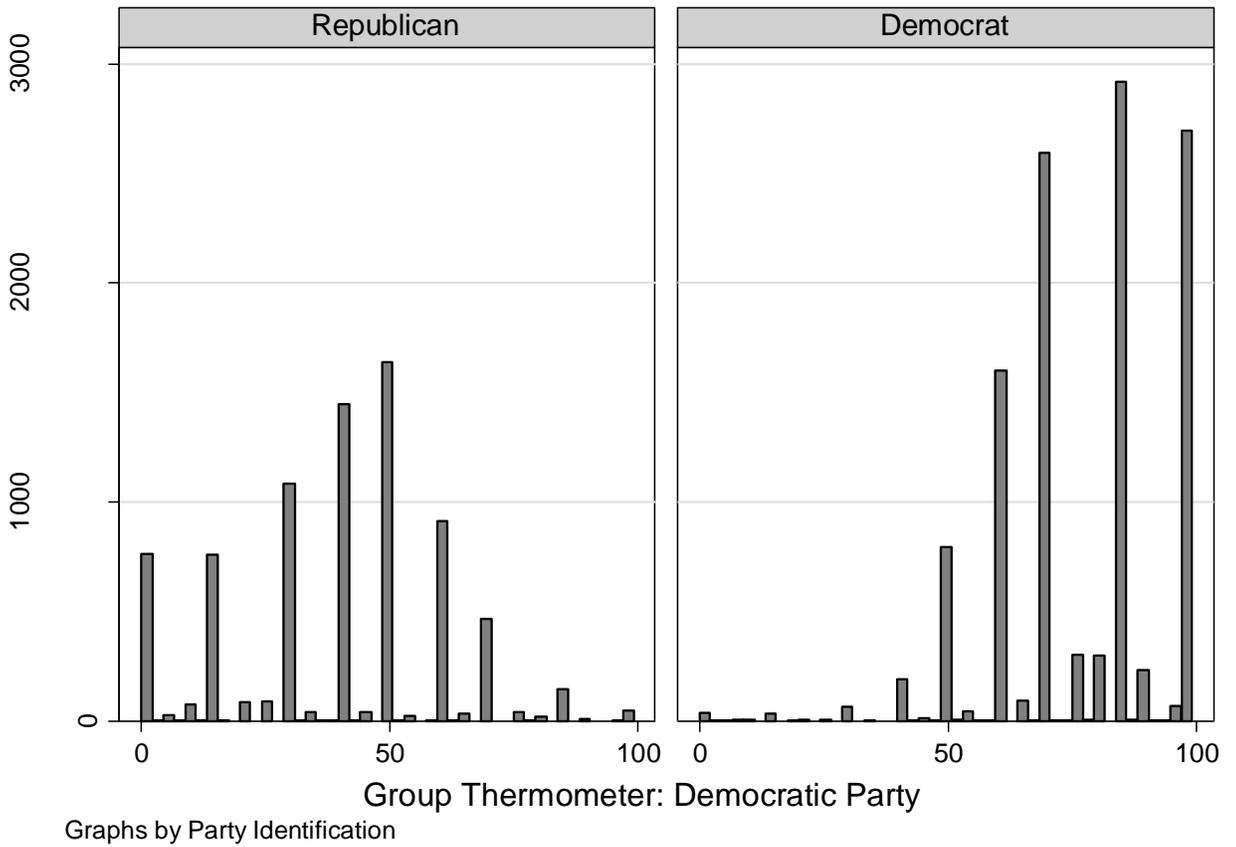


Figure 2. Histogram, group thermometer rating for the Democratic Party by rated self-party identification of ANES respondent.

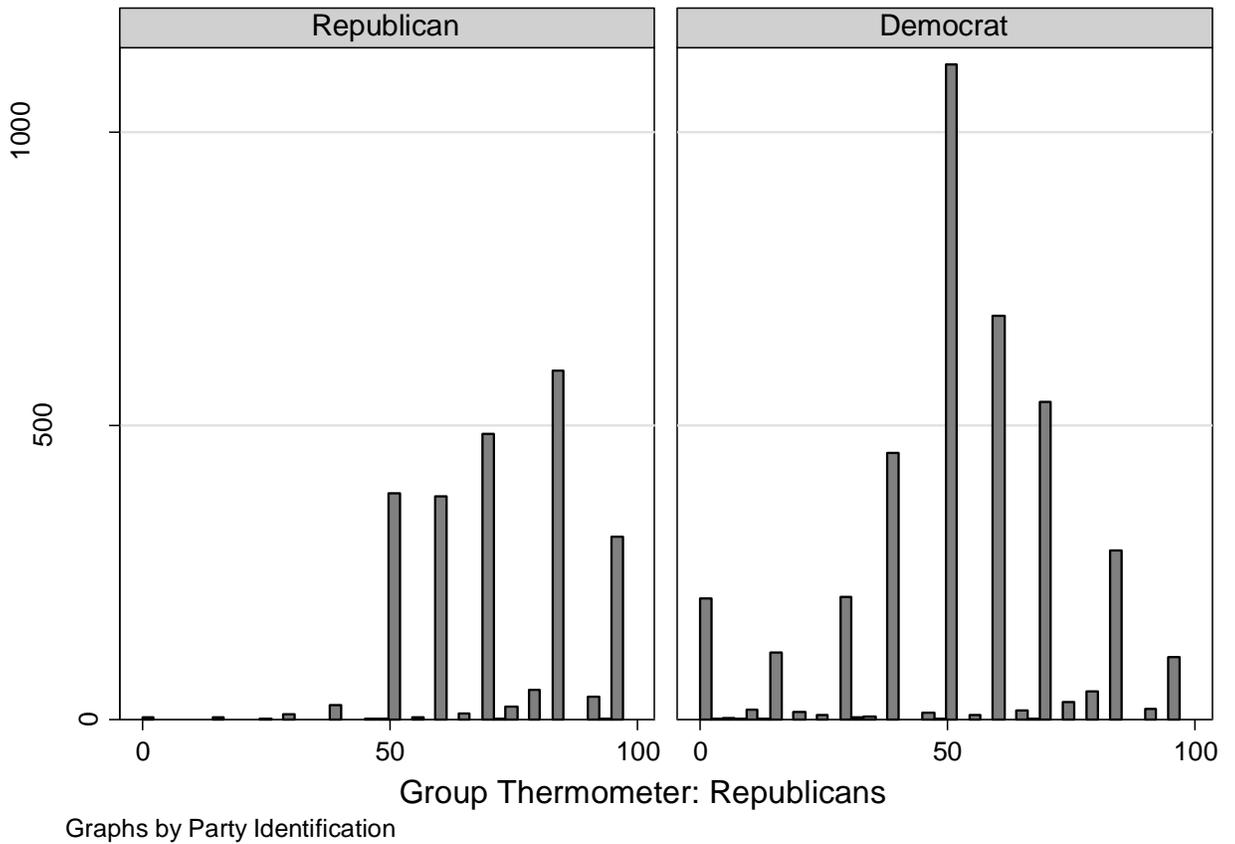


Figure 3. Histogram, group thermometer rating for the Republican Party by rated self-party identification of ANES respondent.

H2 Findings

The second hypothesis of the study was that negative partisanship with respect to individual members of the major parties has risen over time. The first step in analyzing H1 was to tabulate the mean negative partisanship values (as pertaining to party members, not to the party) for both Democrats and Republicans. In the ANES dataset, only nine years (1964, 1966, 1968, 1970, 1972, 1974, 1976, 1980, and 1982) contained group thermometer readings for Democrats and Republicans (as opposed to group thermometer readings for the Democratic and Republican parties, which, as noted in the analysis for H1, were collected over a more substantial cross-section of time).

The tabulation for H2 appears in Table 2 below and has been graphed in Figure 4 below.

Table 2

Index of Negative Partisanship (NP) Values (for Party Members)

| Year | NP Mean (Democrats) | NP SD (Democrats) | NP Mean (Republicans) | NP SD (Republicans) |
|------|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1964 | -31.36816 | 1.135149 | -35.70595 | 0.8623815 |
| 1966 | -29.30809 | 1.14326 | -42.25181 | 1.024018 |
| 1968 | -26.80477 | 1.088531 | -33.45103 | 1.012823 |
| 1970 | -27.44461 | 1.101002 | -30.66919 | 0.9836074 |
| 1972 | -29.69854 | 0.8802682 | -34.08616 | 0.8908082 |
| 1974 | -24.9531 | 1.06912 | -29.99474 | 0.9524049 |
| 1976 | -20.27685 | 0.8386348 | -25.85779 | 0.8769148 |
| 1980 | -21.62963 | 1.047577 | -28.93651 | 0.9198243 |
| 1982 | -18.65352 | 1.172697 | -25.56873 | 1.032157 |

As in H1, which addressed negative partisanship based on group thermometer ratings of parties, there is a clear pattern of decline in negative partisanship for both Democrats and Republicans when negative participation is considered in terms of ratings of party members rather than the parties themselves. This pattern is apparent in Figure 2. For Democrats, negative partisanship (vis-à-vis Republican Party members, not the Republican Party) declined by 0.664 points a year ($b = 0.664$, $SE = 0.116$, $t = 5.740$, $p = .001$). The R^2 of this model was .825, indicating a strong linear fit. For Republicans, negative partisanship (vis-à-vis members of the Democratic Party) decreased by 0.700 points a year ($b = 0.700$, $SE = 0.184$, $t = 3.790$, $p = .007$). The R^2 of this model was .672, also indicating a strong linear fit. The decline of negative partisanship discovered in the analysis of H2 was strikingly similar to the decline of negative partisanship observed in the analysis for H1. The fact that both of these measures of negative partisanship

declined—in roughly the same manner, and for both parties—adds to the strength of the inference that negative partisanship declined, rather than rose, over the time period encompassed in the study.

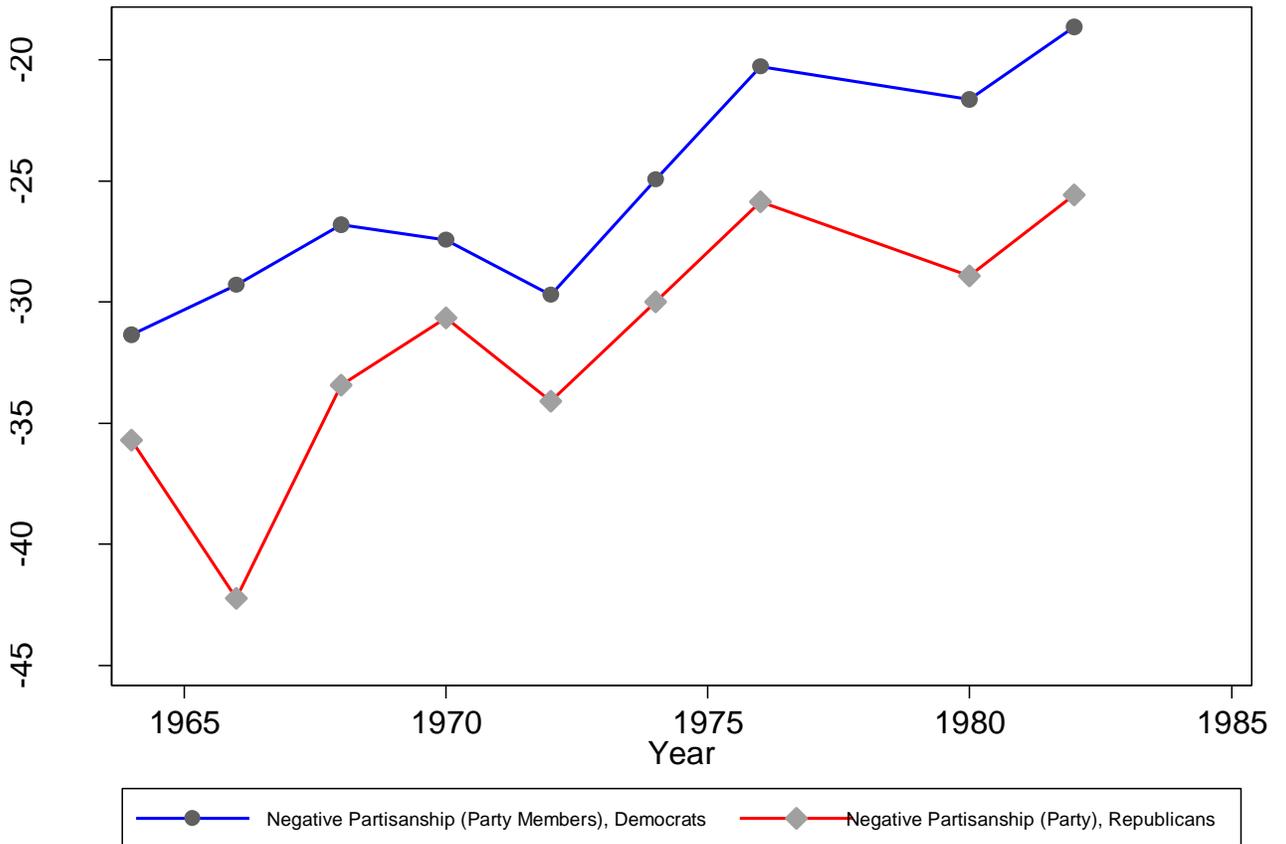


Figure 4. Change in negative partisanship (party membership) over time for both Democrats and Republicans.

The existence of a strong linear fit for the change in partisanship measured in H2 meant that no time-series analyses were applied to the dataset. Ordinary least squares regression appeared to be an appropriate measure of the change in party member-oriented partisanship. The histograms below depict variation in group thermometer rating by the party identification of the respondent. One point of note in this set of histograms, which also applies to the histograms presented for H1, is that a numerous Democrats assigned

both Republicans and the Republican Party extremely low ratings on group thermometer values, whereas, by comparison, Republicans did not rate either Democrats or the Democratic Party in as low a manner. The practical consequences of this divergence between Democrats and Republicans will be explored in the analysis for H3.

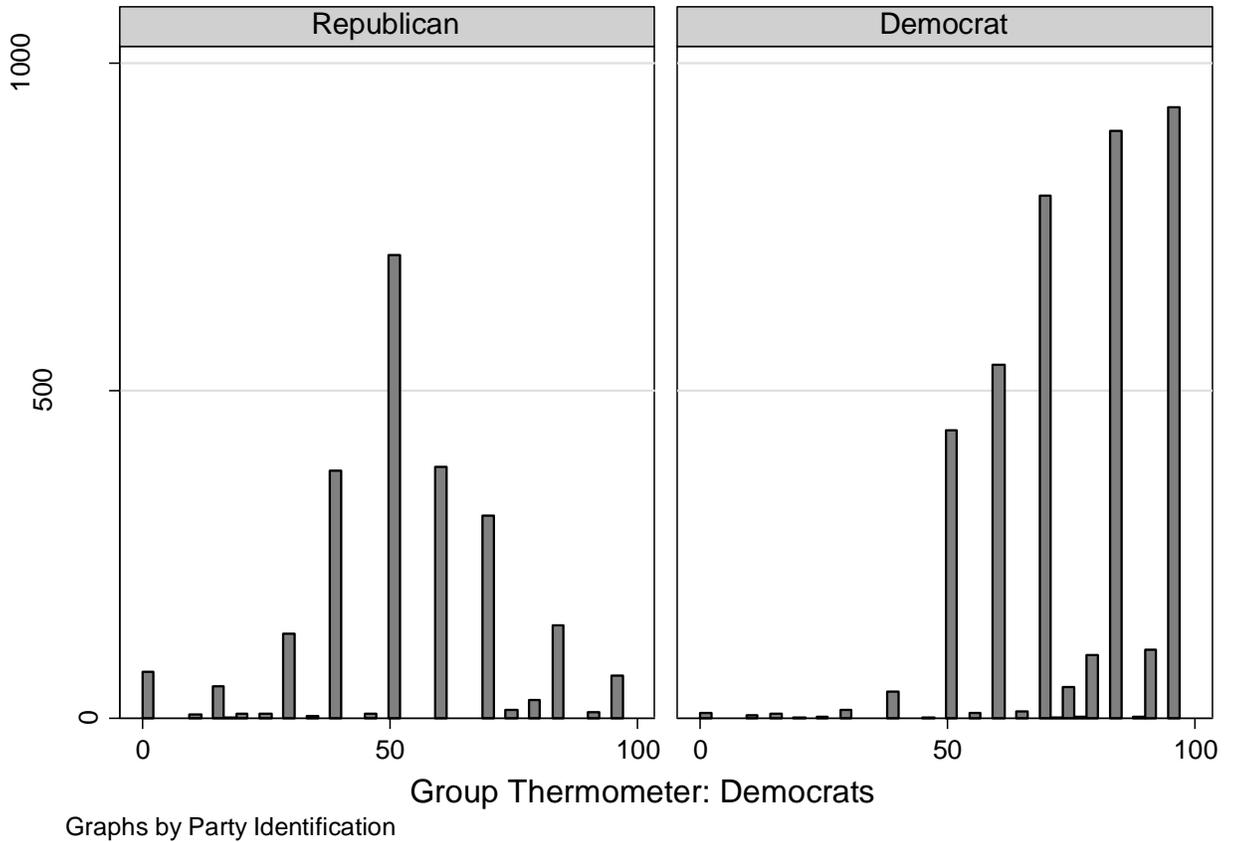


Figure 5. Histogram, group thermometer rating for Democratic Party members by rated self-party identification of ANES respondent.

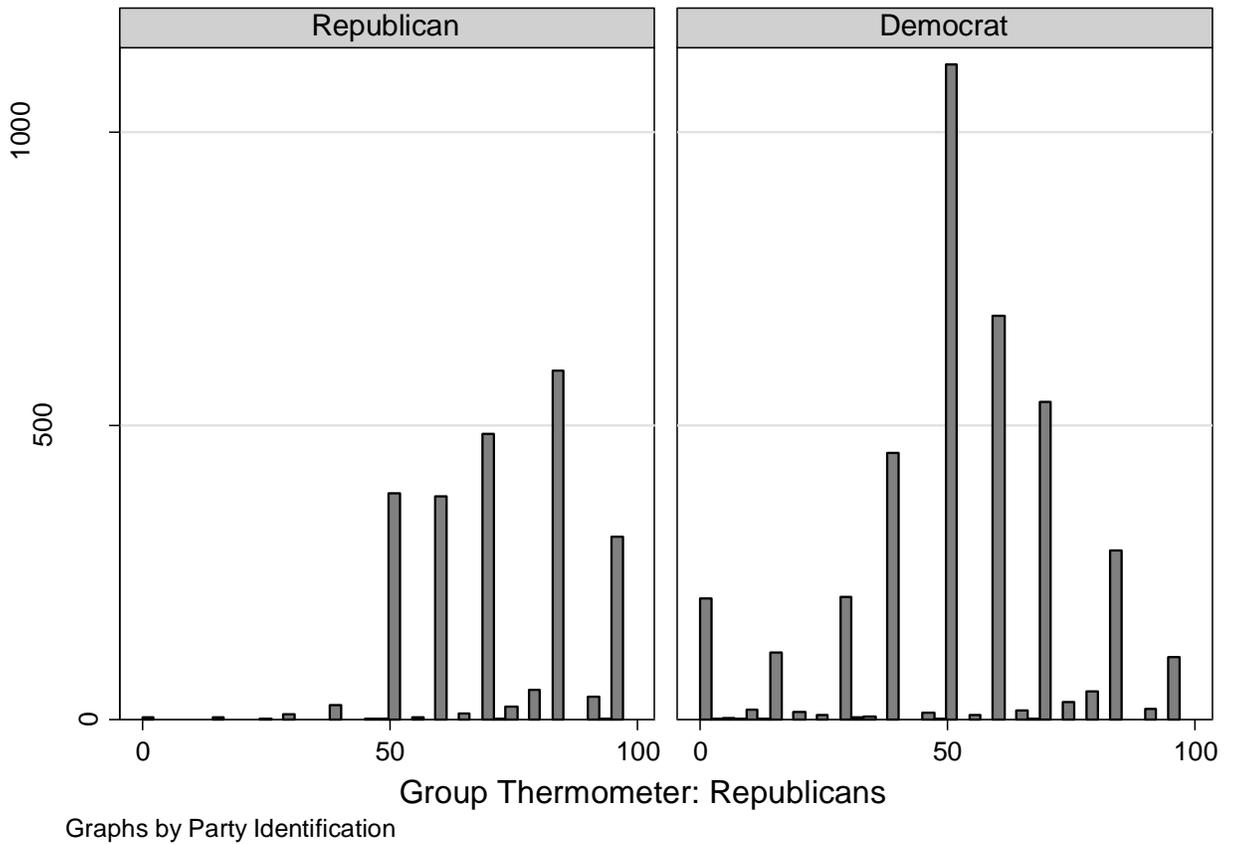


Figure 6. Histogram, group thermometer rating for Republican Party members by rated self-party identification of ANES respondent.

H3 Findings

The third hypothesis of the study was that negative partisanship is equal between the two major parties. The box plot in Figure 7 compares the distributions of negative partisanship as based on the assessments of the other party’s members (as opposed to the other party as an abstract institution). The 95% confidence interval of mean negative partisanship (party members) for Democrats was between -32.493 and -31.233, whereas the 95% confidence interval of mean negative partisanship (party members) for Republicans was between -26.278 and -24.909. Therefore, at $p < .001$, there was a statistically significant difference between Republican and Democrat ANES respondents,

such that Democrats expressed more negative partisanship vis-à-vis members of the Republican Party than Republicans expressed vis-à-vis members of the Democratic Party.

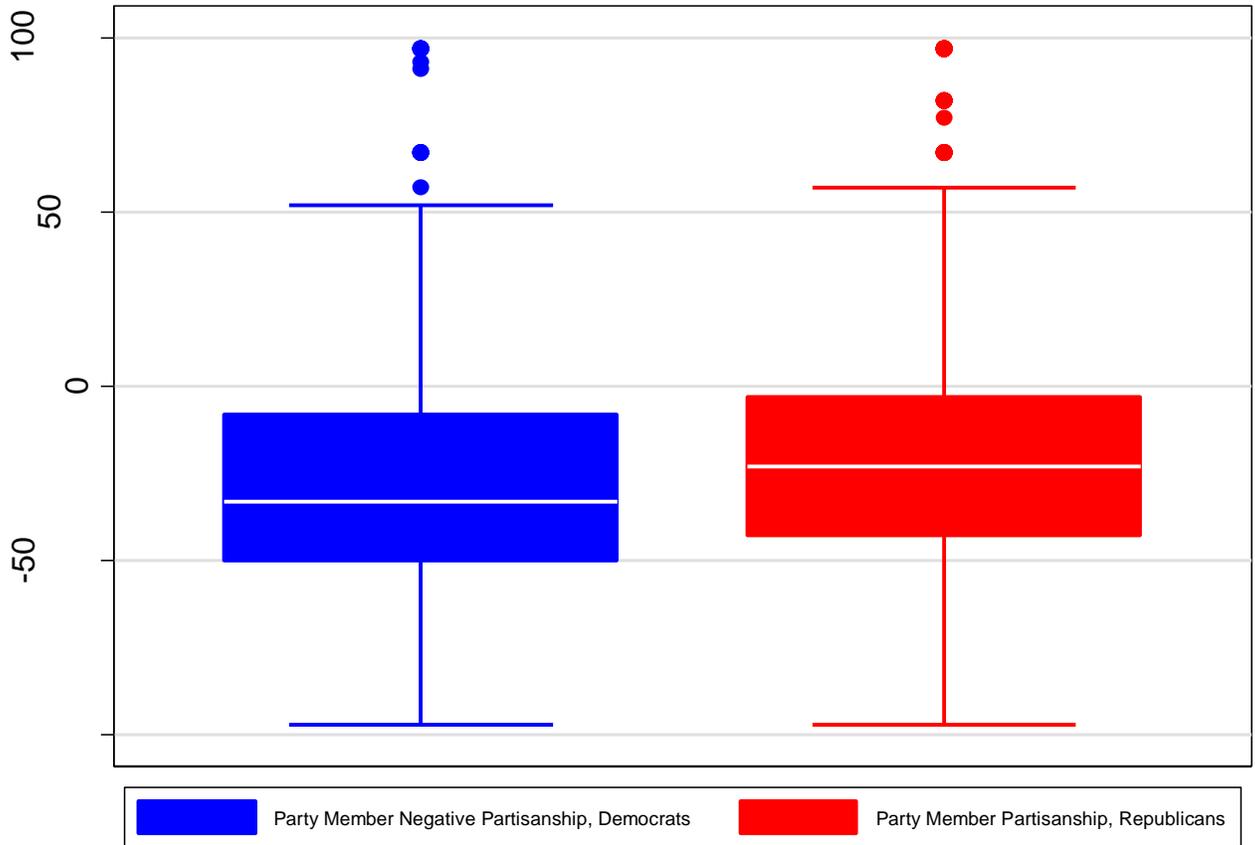


Figure 7. Box plots, negative partisanship (party membership) for Democrats and Republicans.

Next, the same analyses were carried out for negative partisanship as related to party (rather than party member) assessment. The 95% confidence interval of mean negative partisanship (party) for Democrats was between -16.595 and -15.732, whereas the 95% confidence interval of mean negative partisanship (party) for Republicans was between -11.805 and -10.899. Therefore, at $p < .001$, there was a statistically significant difference between Republican and Democrat ANES respondents, such that Democrats expressed

more negative partisanship vis-à-vis the Republican Party than Republicans expressed vis-à-vis the Democratic Party.

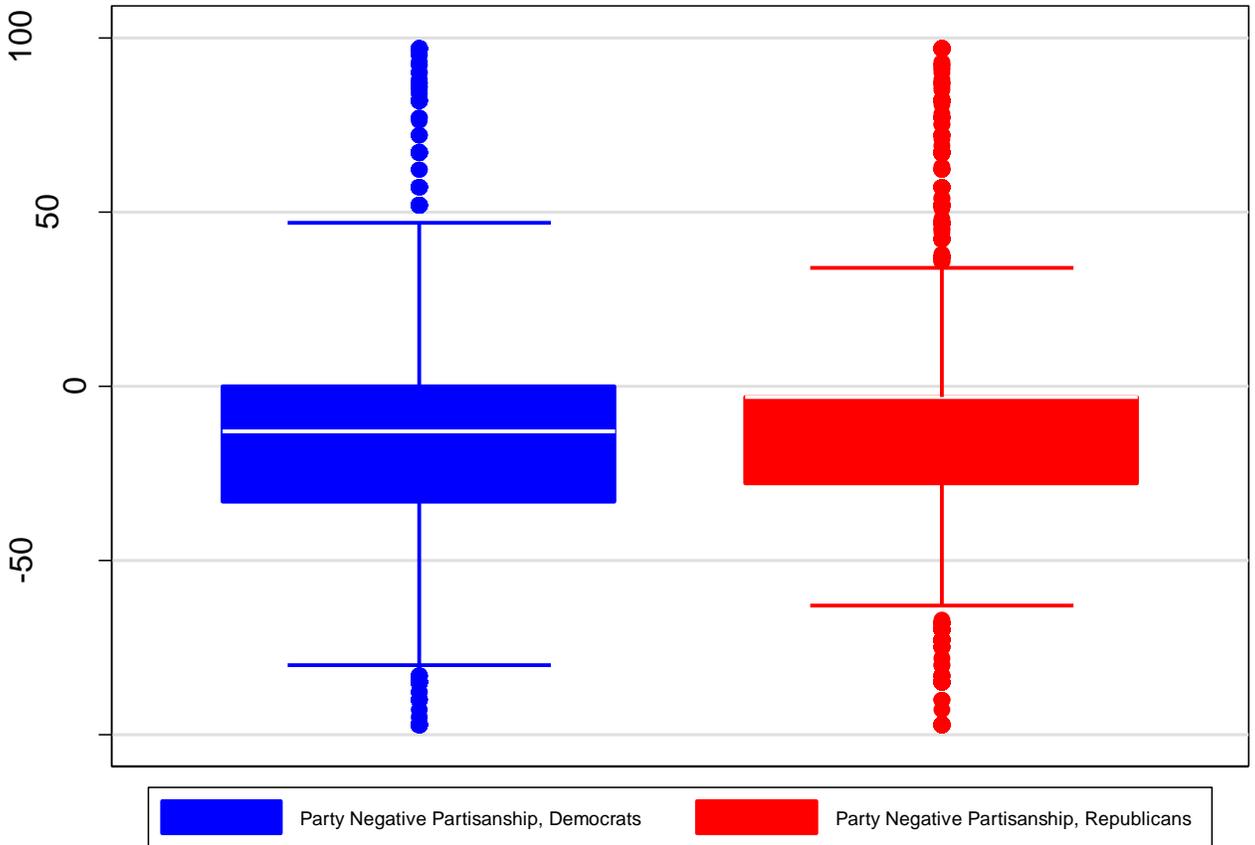


Figure 8. Box plots, negative partisanship (parties) for Democrats and Republicans.

Thus, overall, negative partisanship appeared to be more widespread among Democrats than among Republicans.

H4 Findings

The fourth hypothesis of the study was that the degree of negative partisanship influences the odds of voting for the self-identified party. In order to perform this analysis, the dependent variable of voting in the ANES dataset was first stripped of all responses other than Democrat or Republican; non-answers (such as “don’t know”) were

turned into missing values. There were over 21,000 observations in the dataset in which either Democrat or Republican were the answers given to the question of which party respondents voted for. Next, arbitrarily, voting Republican was coded as 1 and voting Democratic was coded as 0. Finally, the four measures of negative partisanship created for this study were regressed on the dependent variable of voting in a logistic regression model that reported the odds ratio (OR) rather than the coefficient value. This approach also included the covariates of urban residence, age, gender, race, education, income, employment, religion, and whether or not the respondent was in the South.

The only value of negative partisanship that was significant in the logistic regressions was that of the negative partisanship of Democrats as measured against the Republican Party as an institution (as opposed to individual members of the Republican Party). The full results of this logistic regression model have been provided in Table 3 below. In this logistic regression, Democrats' negative partisanship against the Republican Party was associated with a significantly ($p < .0001$) greater likelihood of voting Democratic; because voting Democratic was coded as 0 in the dataset, and because negative partisanship was itself a negative value, the fact that the OR for Democrats' negative partisanship against the Republican Party was significantly less than 1 indicates that negative partisanship against Republicans raised the likelihood of self-identified Democrats voting Democratic. However, this effect was extremely minuscule, as can be gauged by the span of the 95% confidence interval (see Table 3 below), and it was barely statistically significant, $p = .049$.

Therefore, overall, negative partisanship did not appear to be a practical factor in determining how ANES respondents voted, even though it was, for Democrats,

statistically significant. This finding, and the other findings of the study, have been discussed in greater detail in the conclusion, with particular emphasis on the unexpected finding that, based on the scale definition and analyses carried out in this study, negative partisanship appears to be declining rather than increasing.

Table 3

Logistic Regression Results, Democrats' Negative Partisanship (npid2) Vis-à-vis the Republican Party

| vote | Odds Ratio | Std. Err. | z | P> z | [95% Conf. Interval] |
|------------------------------|------------|-----------|-------|-------|----------------------|
| npid2 | .9886167 | .0022382 | -5.06 | 0.000 | .9842396 .9930131 |
| urban | | | | | |
| 2. Suburban areas | 1.550256 | .227671 | 2.99 | 0.003 | 1.162508 2.067337 |
| 3. Rural, small towns | 1.343515 | .2125925 | 1.87 | 0.062 | .9852625 1.832033 |
| age | | | | | |
| 35 or Above | .859329 | .1130462 | -1.15 | 0.249 | .664022 1.112081 |
| gender | | | | | |
| Female | .9112739 | .1062289 | -0.80 | 0.425 | .7251416 1.145183 |
| race | | | | | |
| White | 2.956407 | .4760219 | 6.73 | 0.000 | 2.1563 4.053398 |
| educ | | | | | |
| College Degree | .5202456 | .0774723 | -4.39 | 0.000 | .3885544 .6965703 |
| south | | | | | |
| 2. Nonsouth | .6138286 | .0786987 | -3.81 | 0.000 | .4774357 .789186 |
| income | | | | | |
| 2. 17 to 33 percentile | .9963136 | .2157658 | -0.02 | 0.986 | .6517129 1.523126 |
| 3. 34 to 67 percentile | 1.397699 | .2722154 | 1.72 | 0.086 | .9541874 2.047356 |
| 4. 68 to 95 percentile | 1.685249 | .3519279 | 2.50 | 0.012 | 1.119204 2.537577 |
| 5. 96 to 100 percentile | 2.611045 | .8183877 | 3.06 | 0.002 | 1.412602 4.826241 |
| employment | | | | | |
| 2. Not employed | .6918997 | .1748421 | -1.46 | 0.145 | .4216437 1.135378 |
| 3. Retired | .9636161 | .158861 | -0.22 | 0.822 | .6975505 1.331167 |
| 4. Homemaker | 1.069506 | .2103076 | 0.34 | 0.733 | .7274493 1.572401 |
| 5. Student | .539556 | .2936079 | -1.13 | 0.257 | .1857127 1.567586 |
| 9. DK; NA; no Pre IW | 1 | (empty) | | | |
| religion | | | | | |
| 1. Protestant | 1.362018 | 1.46609 | 0.29 | 0.774 | .1651739 11.23116 |
| 2. Catholic [Roman Catholic] | 1.221659 | 1.317521 | 0.19 | 0.853 | .1475557 10.11449 |
| 3. Jewish | .7283169 | .8197466 | -0.28 | 0.778 | .0802163 6.612688 |
| 4. Other and none | .9111299 | .9928192 | -0.09 | 0.932 | .107662 7.710776 |
| _cons | .047717 | .0525003 | -2.77 | 0.006 | .0055226 .4122884 |

Discussion and Conclusion

As a summary, the following findings were obtained in the study.

First, for Democrats, negative partisanship (vis-à-vis the Republican Party, not

Republican Party members, who were assessed in H2) declined by 0.530 points a year ($b = 0.530$, $SE = 0.073$, $t = 7.240$, $p < .001$), $R^2 = .801$. For Republicans, negative partisanship (vis-à-vis the Democratic Party) declined by 0.490 points a year ($b = 0.490$, $SE = 0.113$, $t = 4.340$, $p = .001$), $R^2 = .561$.

Second, for Democrats, negative partisanship (vis-à-vis Republican Party members, not the Republican Party) declined by 0.664 points a year ($b = 0.664$, $SE = 0.116$, $t = 5.740$, $p = .001$), $R^2 = .825$. For Republicans, negative partisanship (vis-à-vis members of the Democratic Party) decreased by 0.700 points a year ($b = 0.700$, $SE = 0.184$, $t = 3.790$, $p = .007$), $R^2 = .672$.

Third, it was found that the 95% confidence interval of mean negative partisanship (party members) for Democrats was between -32.493 and -31.233, whereas the 95% confidence interval of mean negative partisanship (party members) for Republicans was between -26.278 and -24.909. Therefore, Democrats expressed more negative partisanship vis-à-vis members of the Republican Party than Republicans expressed vis-à-vis members of the Democratic Party. The 95% confidence interval of mean negative partisanship (party) for Democrats was between -16.595 and -15.732, whereas the 95% confidence interval of mean negative partisanship (party) for Republicans was between -11.805 and -10.899. Therefore, Democrats expressed more negative partisanship vis-à-vis the Republican Party than Republicans expressed vis-à-vis the Democratic Party.

Fourth, the only value of negative partisanship that was significant in the logistic regression of partisanship on voting Republican was that of the negative partisanship of Democrats as measured against the Republican Party as an institution (as opposed to

individual members of the Republican Party), $p < .001$, OR 95% confidence interval = 0.984 to 0.993.

The findings of the study called into question the argument (Abramowitz & Webster, 2016; Caruana et al., 2015) that negative partisanship (a) exists and (b) is growing into consensus. Arguably, the phenomenon interpreted as rising negative partisanship by numerous scholars is either rising partisanship, as hypothesized by Stanga and Sheffield (1987), or convergence to zero partisanship, as hypothesized by Burnham (1970) and Wattenberg (1984). The statistical methods applied in the study are incapable of differentiating between these two possibilities (or their combination). The use of a measure of asymmetry to calculate negative partisanship means that, if the values of negative partisanship become less negative over time (a trend that can be observed in Figures 1 and 2), this change could be for the following reasons.

First, it could be that individuals are becoming increasingly symmetrical in their preference of parties (such that, for example, there is a convergence between an affinity value n points greater than the group thermometer mean for one's party and an antipathy value k points lower than the group thermometer mean for the other party). This scenario corresponds with the zero-partisanship hypothesis advanced by Burnham (1970) and Wattenberg (1984).

Second, it could be that individuals are becoming increasingly asymmetrical in their preferences, but in a manner that favors traditional partisanship rather than negative partisanship (such that, for example, the affinity value n for one's party is increasing away from the group thermometer mean faster than the antipathy value k for the other party is declining from the group thermometer mean). This scenario fits Stanga and

Sheffield's (1987) concept of traditional partisanship as a large gap between affinity and antipathy values.

Third, it could be that there is some mixture of the zero partisanship and traditional partisanship effects outlined above, in which case both the zero partisanship and traditional partisanship hypotheses would be supported.

In the United States, problems such as gridlock (Binder, 1999, 2003; Brady & Volden, 1998; Jones, 2001; Saeki, 2009; Woon & Cook, 2015) and the deterioration of a civil political culture (Bennett, 2012; Goren, 2005; Shea & Sproveri, 2012; Sobieraj & Berry, 2011), are both problems that can be imputed to traditional or negative partisanship. To the extent that empirical analysis can help to clarify the nature and dynamics of both traditional and negative partisanship, the problems that emerge from partisanship can, *ipso facto*, be better understood and perhaps resolved. Despite the centrality of partisanship to democratic politics, not only in the United States but also globally, the existing data on partisanship are extraordinarily limited. The ANES dataset—which, in the context of the United States, provides the most reliable window on the attitudes, identifications, and preferences of the past electorate—contains data that allow both traditional and negative partisanship to be measured in novel ways. As political scientists come to rely on more complex statistical models, the ANES dataset remains a helpful source of insights. For example, given the large number of variables in the ANES dataset, it seems that some kind of partisanship-anchored factor analysis could yield substantial insight into the affective, behavioral, and cognitive infrastructure of partisanship. Whatever approaches are taken, the combination of the ANES's rich data and the relative paucity of compelling data mining or even exploratory statistical projects

in the political science literature means that numerous exciting discoveries about the nature of partisanship—both traditional and negative—remain to be made.

References

- Abramowitz, A. I., & Webster, S. (2016). The rise of negative partisanship and the nationalization of US elections in the 21st century. *Electoral Studies, 41*, 12-22.
- Bankert, A., Huddy, L., & Rosema, M. (2017). Measuring partisanship as a social identity in multi-party systems. *Political Behavior, 39*(1), 103-132.
- Bennett, W. L. (2012). The personalization of politics: Political identity, social media, and changing patterns of participation. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 644*(1), 20-39.
- Binder, S. A. (1999). The dynamics of legislative gridlock, 1947–96. *American Political Science Review, 93*(03), 519-533.
- Binder, S. A. (2003). *Stalemate: Causes and consequences of legislative gridlock*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Brady, D. W., & Volden, C. (1998). *Revolving gridlock: Politics and policy from Carter to Clinton*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Burnham, W. (1970). *Critical elections and the mainspirings of American politics*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton.
- Campbell, A. (1960). *The American voter*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Carsey, T. M., & Layman, G. C. (2006). Changing sides or changing minds? Party identification and policy preferences in the American electorate. *American Journal of Political Science, 50*(2), 464-477.
- Caruana, N. J., McGregor, R. M., & Stephenson, L. B. (2015). The power of the dark side: Negative partisanship and political behaviour in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Political Science, 48*(4), 771-789.

- Crewe, I. (1976). Party identification theory and political change in Britain. In I. Budge, I. Crewe, & D. Farlie (Eds.), *Party identification and beyond: Representations of voting and party competition* (pp. 33-62). London, UK: Wiley.
- Dalton, R. J., Beck, P. A., & Huckfeldt, R. (1998). Partisan cues and the media: Information flows in the 1992 presidential election. *American Political Science Review*, 92(1), 111-126.
- Goren, P. (2005). Party identification and core political values. *American Journal of Political Science*, 49(4), 881-896.
- Hibbs, D. A. (1992). Partisan theory after fifteen years. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 8(3), 361-373.
- Jennings, M. K., & Markus, G. B. (1984). Partisan orientations over the long haul: Results from the three-wave political socialization panel study. *American Political Science Review*, 78(4), 1000-1018.
- Jones, D. R. (2001). Party polarization and legislative gridlock. *Political Research Quarterly*, 54(1), 125-141.
- Ladner, M., & Wlezien, C. (2007). Partisan preferences, electoral prospects, and economic expectations. *Comparative Political Studies*, 40(5), 571-596.
- Maggiotto, M. A., & Piereson, J. E. (1977). Partisan identification and electoral choice: The hostility hypothesis. *American Journal of Political Science*, 21(4), 745-767.
- Markus, G. B., & Converse, P. E. (1979). A dynamic simultaneous equation model of electoral choice. *American Political Science Review*, 73(4), 1055-1070.
- McCann, J. A., & Chávez, K. A. N. (2016). Partisanship by invitation: Immigrants respond to political campaigns. *The Journal of Politics*, 78(4), 1196-1210.

- Medeiros, M., & Noël, A. (2014). The forgotten side of partisanship: negative party identification in four Anglo-American democracies. *Comparative Political Studies*, 47(7), 1022-1046.
- Michael McGregor, R., Caruana, N. J., & Stephenson, L. B. (2015). Negative partisanship in a multi-party system: The case of Canada. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, 25(3), 300-316.
- Page, B. I., & Jones, C. C. (1979). Reciprocal effects of policy preferences, party loyalties and the vote. *American Political Science Review*, 73(4), 1071-1089.
- Rogowski, J. C., & Sutherland, J. L. (2016). How ideology fuels affective polarization. *Political Behavior*, 38(2), 485-508.
- Saeki, M. (2009). Gridlock in the government of the United States: Influence of divided government and veto players. *British Journal of Political Science*, 39(3), 587-607.
- Shea, D. M., & Sproveri, A. (2012). The rise and fall of nasty politics in America. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 45(3), 416-421.
- Sobieraj, S., & Berry, J. M. (2011). From incivility to outrage: Political discourse in blogs, talk radio, and cable news. *Political Communication*, 28(1), 19-41.
- Stanga, J. E., & Sheffield, J. F. (1987). The myth of zero partisanship: Attitudes toward American political parties, 1964-84. *American Journal of Political Science*, 31(4), 829-855.
- Uslaner, E. M. (2015). What's the matter with Palm Beach County? *Politics and Religion*, 8(4), 699-717.
- Wagner, M., & Meyer, T. M. (2015). Negative issue ownership. *West European Politics*, 38(4), 797-816.

Wattenberg, M. P. (1984). *The decline of American political parties, 1952-1984*.

Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Woon, J., & Cook, I. P. (2015). Competing gridlock models and status quo policies.

Political Analysis, 23(3), 385-399.