

# Source Cues, Partisan Identities, and Political Value Expression

**Paul Goren** University of Minnesota  
**Christopher M. Federico** University of Minnesota  
**Miki Caul Kittilson** Arizona State University

*This article examines the conditions under which partisan identities shape the positions people express on four political values: equal opportunity, self-reliance, moral traditionalism, and moral tolerance. The theoretical framework posits that (1) party source cues activate latent partisan biases in the minds of citizens, which in turn affect the degree to which individuals express support for these values; (2) out-party cues are more powerful motivators of value expression than in-party cues; (3) value shifts are more pronounced when liberal-conservative identities reinforce partisan sentiments; and (4) partisan cues promote horizontal constraint among these values. These hypotheses are tested using data from a set of experiments appearing on a novel national survey. The empirical results generally support these theoretical expectations.*

Party identification represents the most stable and influential political predisposition in the belief systems of ordinary citizens. As Campbell and his colleagues put it many years ago, “party has a profound influence across the full range of political objects to which the individual voter responds” (1960, 128). The influence of party over short-term political objects is well established. Accumulated research demonstrates that party shapes judgments about the economy, presidential approval, candidate evaluations, voter choice, and policy preferences (Bartels 2002; Green and Palmquist 1990; Goren 2002; Layman and Carsey 2002). Does party also shape evaluations of more abstract and enduring objects such as political values? And do party cues promote constraint among political values? If the answer to each of these questions is yes, then the influence of partisanship over political judgment may be even more profound than Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes imagined.

This article seeks to strengthen the case for partisan influence by examining whether partisan source cues (1) lead party identifiers to modify their expressions of support for a series of political values and (2) enhance

constraint between these values in mass belief systems. We make two fundamental theoretical claims. First, we identify conditions under which party cues should affect support for political values. Our theory holds that party source cues activate latent partisan biases in the minds of individuals, which in turn affect their willingness to express support for several core political values—equal opportunity, self-reliance, moral traditionalism, and moral tolerance; that out-party cues manifest stronger influence than in-party cues; and that these effects are most pronounced among ideologically congruent partisans. Second, our theory maintains that party cues augment value constraint. In this way, value structure can be seen as a partial function of partisan cue taking.

We utilize data from a series of experiments embedded within a national survey to demonstrate that when given party source cues, Democrats and Republicans move farther apart in their expressions of support for political values. We further show that opposition-party cues produce larger effects than in-party cues and that value polarization is especially pronounced among ideologically pure partisans. Finally, we find that the

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Paul Goren is Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455 (pgoren@umn.edu). Christopher M. Federico is Associate Professor of Psychology and Political Science, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455 (federico@umn.edu). Miki Caul Kittilson is Associate Professor of Political Science, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ 85287 (Miki.Kittilson@asu.edu).

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influence of party extends to leading individuals to hold more tightly constrained value systems. Put simply, party identification shapes the positions citizens take on discrete political values and promotes constraint in political value systems.

## The Nature of Partisan Influence

We begin by defining the key concepts and then explain why cues pertaining to party identification can be expected to shape core political values individually and collectively. Party identification represents an enduring sense of psychological attachment to a political party. Its importance in models of preference formation and political behavior arises from findings that partisan identities are the most stable predisposition in political belief systems; that they color a wide range of short-term political perceptions; and that they lie beyond the influence of most short-term perceptions (Campbell et al. 1960).<sup>1</sup> Core political values are abstract normative beliefs about desirable end-states or modes of conduct that operate in the political domain (Feldman 1988; Rokeach 1973; Schwartz 1994). They, too, are quite stable and guide preferences on short-term political controversies and the issues of the day.

The first theoretical question to address is how party identification shapes political perception and judgment. Political parties serve as reference groups for citizens by providing them with a simple evaluative basis for rendering judgments about political communications (Campbell et al. 1960; Jacoby 1988). Although Democrats and Republicans in the electorate may sometimes spontaneously process political information in a partisan fashion, they are more likely to do so when primed by the parties and their leaders to think in partisan terms (Zaller 1992). When someone hears a recognizable partisan source advocating some position, her partisan leanings are activated, which in turn lead her to evaluate the message through a partisan lens. If the cue giver and recipient share a party label, the latter will trust the former and accept the message without reflecting much on message content. But if the cue giver and recipient lie across the partisan divide, the recipient will mistrust the source and reject the message, again without much reflection. In sum, when it comes to political communications most people do not analyze systematically the messages they encounter. Instead, they usually turn to simple heuristics, such as whether or not they like or trust

<sup>1</sup>Some issue preferences affect partisan loyalties among narrowly defined issue publics. Even here, the effects of party eclipse those of issues (Carsey and Layman 2006).

the source, when evaluating a message (Carmines and Kuklinski 1990; Mondak 1993).

The proposition that party sources lead partisans to modify their positions on short-term perceptions like the state of the economy or presidential popularity rests on a firm empirical foundation (Bartels 2002). We posit that political values are susceptible to partisan influence as well. Thus, the second theoretical question we must address concerns why partisan bias should influence political values, which, conventional theorizing holds, are more durable and resistant to change than short-term perceptions. Put simply, we believe that partisan identities are more central and enduring elements in mass belief systems than political values.<sup>2</sup> Partisan identities are grounded in group attachments, which are easier to develop and understand than normative beliefs about what should be done in a given policy domain. In light of this, we suspect that partisan identities precede political belief in the developmental sequence. Green, Palmquist, and Schickler capture this sentiment well: "When people feel a sense of belonging to a given social group, they absorb the doctrinal positions that the group advocates" (2002, 4). Just as religious adherents often accept matters of belief and faith without much critical thought, so too should partisan adherents accept party doctrine on fundamental political questions.

Recent evidence is consistent with this point. Goren (2005) asks whether party ties shape political values or vice versa. He compares the partisan-influence hypothesis, which holds that group identities shape value positions, with the values-influence hypothesis, which posits that values shape partisan loyalties. These hypotheses are tested by applying structural equation modeling techniques to two- and three-wave NES panel data to estimate a series of cross-lagged models between party identification and equal opportunity, limited government, family values, and moral tolerance. The results suggest that party identification is more temporally stable than these values and that it dynamically constrains values, without being simultaneously constrained by them. In addition, research by McCann (1997) uses NES panel data to show that beliefs about equality and traditional morality are dynamically constrained by candidate evaluations, but do not manifest comparable influence over candidate evaluations. Given that candidate evaluations are grounded heavily in partisan biases, McCann's results yield indirect evidence that partisanship shapes value positions. In conjunction, these two studies provide solid justification for

<sup>2</sup>To be clear, we are talking about values that have become politicized. We make no claims regarding less political, more personal values.

positing that party identification has temporal priority over, and thus, the ability to shape, some political values.

To be clear, we are not claiming that core political values are akin to other short-term perceptions. We believe, like many others, that political values are central elements in mass belief systems. Nor do we expect that partisan influence will produce wholesale value change. Instead, partisan forces should affect values at the margins, essentially leading identifiers to become a little bit more or less enamored of a given value.

To summarize our first theoretical claim: since partisan identities are more basic orientations than political values and partisan biases are activated easily in the presence of partisan source cues, we anticipate that the expression of political values will move in response to partisan appeals. This theoretical framework leads to the following pair of expectations. Our first hypothesis is that the relationship between individual partisan identities and positions on political values will become more pronounced in the presence of party source cues. Our second hypothesis is that when political values are endorsed by Democrats, support will rise among Democratic identifiers and fall among Republicans. Similarly, values accompanied by Republican endorsements should see a rise in support among GOP partisans and declining support among Democrats.

Two refinements are necessary to establish some boundary conditions for our theory. First, there are grounds for suspecting that source cues will have asymmetrical effects on value expression. Specifically, party cues should produce larger changes in value support among opposition partisans compared to like-minded partisans. In other words, a type of negativity bias should be present. The superior power of negative information over positive information is firmly established in psychological literatures (for a review, see Baumeister et al. 2001). Although several explanations exist as to why negative information is more powerful, the most relevant, in our view, is the “figure-ground” explanation. This perspective holds that negative information is more consequential for information processing and judgment than equally extreme, positive information because it stands out against a positive background (Lau 1985).

Since political values are quite popular, the perceptual background surrounding them is positive. Hence, when perceivers encounter a value message with an out-party endorsement, the negative valence of the out-party cue will contrast with the positive valence of the value. However, for perceivers who share a party label with a source, the entire message is positive. The net result is that out-partisans, who confront some negative information, should move more than in-partisans, who encounter en-

tirely positive information. To illustrate, Democratic endorsement of equal opportunity should diminish Republican support more than it enhances Democratic support. This leads to our third hypothesis. When a political value is sanctioned by a political party, the drop in expressed support for the value among opposition partisans will be greater than the rise in expressed support among like-minded partisans.<sup>3</sup>

Our next theoretical refinement centers on the role liberal-conservative identification likely plays in the process. We define this construct as a sense of psychological attachment to an ideological label based on feelings about liberal or conservative groups, ideas, or symbols (Conover and Feldman 1981). We think that the influence of the party source cue will be stronger among ideologically congruent partisans (i.e., liberal Democrats) than when ideologically congruent and incongruent partisans are grouped together (i.e., liberal and moderate and conservative Democrats).

Why should this be so? Imagine a pair of Democrats identical in all respects save that the first is conservative, the second liberal. Upon hearing that conservative Republicans support the principle of self-reliance, their reactions may differ. The liberal Democrat confronts reinforcing pressures—one partisan, one ideological—to cool her enthusiasm for self-reliance. In contrast, the conservative Democrat is cross-pressured: partisanship dictates less enthusiasm, ideology more. It seems plausible that the liberal Democrat will express less support for self-reliance than the conservative Democrat. When we compare responses for liberal Democrats alone to those of liberals and moderates and conservatives inclusive, the ideologically “pure” should prove more responsive to source cues than the ideologically “mixed.” Thus, our fourth hypothesis predicts greater shifts in value endorsement among ideologically congruent partisans versus the ideologically pure and cross-pressured.

To repeat, the first major prediction our theory makes is that party cues will condition the impact partisan loyalties have on political values under varying circumstances. In addition to shaping individual value positions, we expect party cues will influence how discrete values are organized into broader value systems. More succinctly, our final hypothesis predicts that party cues will enhance

<sup>3</sup>Note that we are looking for negativity bias in situations where it should be most likely to obtain. For instance, Democratic endorsement of equal opportunity should produce stronger negative reactions for Republicans than positive reactions for Democrats. For reasons to be discussed below, we are not looking at what happens if Republicans praise equality. In this case, one might expect GOP support for equal opportunity to rise while Democratic support holds steady. That is to say, negativity bias would not be present.

constraint between political values. In his classic essay, Converse defines constraint “to mean the success we would have in predicting, given initial knowledge that an individual holds a specified attitude, that he holds certain further ideas and attitudes” (1964, 207). To illustrate for the case of political values, imagine knowing someone who favors equal opportunity. Armed with this knowledge, one might further predict she favors moral tolerance. If she holds these two positions, we can conclude that her values are horizontally constrained. Constraint, in other words, denotes left-right cognitive organization.

Why should party cues enhance value constraint? When individuals hear that Democrats favor one set of values and Republicans another, they should modify their expressed value positions for the reasons discussed above. This is the first-order effect of partisanship. Because of this, value positions will become more polarized, the result of which will be stronger left-right constraint among all the values. This is the second-order effect. In this manner, party cues help people organize their political values more tightly, just as they promote attitude constraint on specific issues (Layman and Carsey 2002; Tomz and Sniderman 2005). Insofar as this is the case, we can infer that the influence of partisanship extends beyond simply shaping value expressions.

## The Partisan Influence Experiments

We tested our hypotheses by carrying out survey experiments that manipulated whether or not respondents received source cues when answering a series of questions about political values. The survey was administered using random digit dialing techniques to the U.S. voting age population in the 48 contiguous states and was conducted from February 11 to April 26, 2006, by the Institute for Social Science Research at Arizona State University. A total of 1,201 interviews were completed. We restrict our attention to respondents in three of the four conditions as described below, which yields a sample of 899.<sup>4</sup> Given our interest in the influence of partisanship on expressed value support, we emphasize the internal validity of our results over their external validity throughout the analyses.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>The fourth condition provides liberal/conservative source cues without reference to the parties. Given our interest in partisan influence, we do not use respondents from this group.

<sup>5</sup>Our sample is representative of the broader U.S. public in many respects, though it is not a perfect reflection of the population due primarily, we suspect, to a low response rate (AAPOR RR3 =

The key questions ask respondents how strongly they agree with statements about four important values in American political culture: equal opportunity, self-reliance, moral traditionalism, and moral tolerance. We selected these values because they represent fundamental lines of political cleavage in two of the major policy domains in contemporary American society. First, in the social welfare domain political conflict has long centered on how best to strike a balance between equal opportunity on one hand and self-reliance on the other (McClosky and Zaller 1984). In a similar vein, political conflict in the cultural-moral issues domain has focused on the tension between the defense of traditional values and the acceptance of progressive alternatives (Layman 2001). Finally, each of these value conflicts maps onto the party system in identifiable ways. The Democratic Party places more emphasis on equal opportunity and moral tolerance while the GOP stresses self-reliance and traditional morality.

Each of these principles represents an abstract belief about a desirable end-state or mode of conduct. Equal opportunity is the belief that everyone should have the same chance to succeed and prosper in life. Self-reliance represents the idea that each person should rely on individual initiative and self-discipline to get ahead. Moral traditionalism reflects the degree to which one favors customary or traditional codes of moral behavior and conduct, particularly with respect to family structures. Finally, moral tolerance is the idea that the good and just society accepts individuals and groups whose beliefs and behaviors regarding right and wrong differ from those of the mainstream (Feldman 1988; Goren 2005). Respondents were asked to rate how strongly they agree with propositions regarding each value on a 0–10 scale (higher scores reflect more support). We employ three statements per value to enhance measurement validity and reliability. Question wording for each statement appears in Table 1.

Respondents in the control group received the “Some people believe” cue in each value question. In the party treatment group, respondents were informed that “Democrats believe” in equal opportunity and moral tolerance and “Republicans believe” in self-reliance and moral traditionalism. In the ideology-plus-party treatment group, respondents were told that “Liberal

.182). Most notably, our sample is more educated than the broader population. According to Current Population Survey data, roughly 25% of the public has a college degree compared to 44% in our sample. While this undermines the representativeness of our sample to some extent, it makes it harder to demonstrate that partisan biases shape value positions because the politically sophisticated are less likely to use partisan cues than the unsophisticated (Kam 2005; Lau and Redlawsk 2006).

**TABLE 1 Question Wording for the Value Items**

**Equal Opportunity**

- Item 1: [Some people / Democrats / Liberal Democrats] believe that we need to do a lot more to make sure everyone has an equal chance to get ahead in life.
- Item 2: [Some people / Democrats / Liberal Democrats] believe that our country would be much better off if people were treated more equally.
- Item 3: [Some people / Democrats / Liberal Democrats] believe that our society should do whatever is necessary to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.

**Self-Reliance**

- Item 1: [Some people / Republicans / Conservative Republicans] believe that individuals should depend more on themselves and less on others in order to get ahead in life.
- Item 2: [Some people / Republicans / Conservative Republicans] believe that our country would be much better off if there were more emphasis on self-reliance.
- Item 3: [Some people / Republicans / Conservative Republicans] believe that our society would benefit greatly if people were more self-sufficient.

**Moral Traditionalism**

- Item 1: [Some people / Republicans / Conservative Republicans] believe that our country would be much better off if there were more emphasis on traditional family ties.
- Item 2: [Some people / Republicans / Conservative Republicans] believe that non-traditional lifestyles are contributing to the breakdown of our society.
- Item 3: [Some people / Republicans / Conservative Republicans] believe that there should be a lot more respect for traditional family values.

**Moral Tolerance**

- Item 1: [Some people / Democrats / Liberal Democrats] believe that the world is always changing and we should adjust our views of moral behavior to those changes.
- Item 2: [Some people / Democrats / Liberal Democrats] believe that we should be more tolerant of people who choose to live according to their own moral standards.
- Item 3: [Some people / Democrats / Liberal Democrats] believe that society should be more accepting of individuals whose values or behaviors are very different from most.

*Note:* After each statement, respondents were asked to rate how much they agree with it on a 0–10 scale.

Democrats believe” in equal opportunity and moral tolerance and “Conservative Republicans believe” in self-reliance and traditional values. After hearing these cues, respondents were asked about their own positions on each value. In sum, control group respondents received no cues across the 12 value questions while treatment group respondents encountered six Democratic/liberal Democratic and six Republican/conservative Republican cues.

**Statistical Analyses and Substantive Results**

**Measuring the Value Constructs**

We use confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to estimate the degree to which the value items are valid and reliable indicators of our value constructs (all variables have

been normed to 0.00–1.00 scale).<sup>6</sup> The model we estimate has four factors—one for each value—with the items for each value loading onto the respective factors. For each factor, the loading for the first item is set to 1.00. Factors are coded so higher scores reflect stronger endorsement of the value. We report the standardized factor loading of each indicator on each factor, Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  reliability coefficient for the respective multi-item scales, and standard global fit statistics. The measurement analyses are restricted to control group respondents since their answers to the value items are not contaminated by source cues.

The Table 2 estimates reveal that the observed value items do a good job tapping latent values. First, all of the

<sup>6</sup>All latent variable models are estimated in Mplus 4.21. Given the nonnormality of the data, the mean-corrected robust weighted least squares (WLSM) estimator is used, with the value items specified as right-censored (Muthen and Muthen 2007). A second estimator for nonnormal data (Satorra-Bentler maximum-likelihood estimation with robust standard errors) yields similar results.

**TABLE 2** Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Value Items

	Equal Opportunity	Self-Reliance	Moral Tradition	Moral Tolerance
<b>Standardized Factor Loadings</b>				
$\lambda_1$ Equal opportunity item 1	.90			
$\lambda_2$ Equal opportunity item 2	.77			
$\lambda_3$ Equal opportunity item 3	.76			
$\lambda_4$ Self-reliance item 1		.70		
$\lambda_5$ Self-reliance item 2		.80		
$\lambda_6$ Self-reliance item 3		.94		
$\lambda_7$ Moral traditionalism item 1			.87	
$\lambda_8$ Moral traditionalism item 2			.69	
$\lambda_9$ Moral traditionalism item 3			.88	
$\lambda_{10}$ Moral tolerance item 1				.56
$\lambda_{11}$ Moral tolerance item 2				.86
$\lambda_{12}$ Moral tolerance item 3				.77
<b>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math></b>	.79	.81	.82	.76
<b>Model Fit</b>				
Mean-corrected Robust WLS $\chi^2$		160.15		
Degrees of freedom		47		
p value		<.001		
CFI		.99		
TLI		.99		

Notes: N = 294 (control sample). Mean-corrected robust WLS estimation is used, with the values items specified as right-censored. All factor-loading estimates are significant at  $p < .01$ . Factor variances, error variances, and error covariances omitted for clarity.

Source: 2006 author survey.

items are valid indicators of their respective constructs with item-factor correlations ranging from a low of .56 to a high of .94.<sup>7</sup> Next, the individual items are quite reliable as well (as determined by squaring the item-factor correlations): latent egalitarianism explains 58–81% of the observed variance in its items, latent self-reliance accounts for 49–88% of the observed item variance, latent moral traditionalism explains 48–77% of the variance in its items, and latent moral tolerance accounts for 31–74% of the observed variance. The respective multi-item scales are also highly reliable, with Cronbach's  $\alpha$  equaling .79 for equality, .81 for self-reliance, .82 for traditionalism, and .76 for tolerance. Also, while the model  $\chi^2$  is significant, the other indices reveal excellent global model fit (e.g., CFI = .99, TLI = .99).

For comparison, we also estimated several alternative models. First, we examined a simple model in which all 12 value items were taken as indicators of a single value dimension. This alternative model fit the data very poorly ( $\chi^2_{53} = 1423.90$ ,  $p < .0001$ , CFI = .92, TLI = .86),

<sup>7</sup>We follow Bollen's (1989, 199) definition of validity, which equates it with the correlation between the observed indicator and the latent construct it is designed to measure.

with a  $\chi^2$  difference test indicating that the one-factor model provided a significantly worse fit than our four-factor model ( $\Delta\chi^2_6 = 396.53$ ,  $p < .0001$ ).<sup>8</sup> Second, we examined the possibility that equality and self-reliance might be oppositely valenced indicators of a common "economic values" dimension and that moral traditionalism and tolerance might be oppositely valenced indicators of a common "social values" dimension. This two-factor model—which constrained the equality and self-reliance items to load on one factor and the traditionalism and tolerance items to load on the other—also fit poorly ( $\chi^2_{52} = 1113.31$ ,  $p < .0001$ , CFI = .94, TLI = .89), with a  $\chi^2$  difference test indicating that the model provided a significantly worse fit compared to our four-factor model ( $\Delta\chi^2_5 = 258.59$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Finally, we considered an alternative two-factor model that grouped the values by their left-right flavor. In this model, the equality and tolerance items were allowed to load on a common "left" factor, while the self-reliance and

<sup>8</sup>The comparison of robust WLS  $\chi^2$  statistics requires the use of a correction factor (Muthen and Muthen 2007). As such, the actual  $\Delta\chi^2$  statistics do not equal the simple difference between the chi-squares for the compared models.

**TABLE 3 The Impact of Source Cues on the Partisanship-Value Relationship**

	No Cue	Party Cue	Party + Ideology Cue
<b>Effect of Partisanship On</b>			
Equal opportunity	-.49	-.63	-.75
Self-reliance	.25	.38	.62
Moral traditionalism	.45	.45	.74
Moral tolerance	-.24	-.41	-.59
<b>Fit Statistics Unconstrained Multi-group Model</b>			
Mean-corrected Robust WLS $\chi^2$		656.79	
Degrees of freedom		266	
p value		<.01	
CFI		.99	
TLI		.99	

Notes: N = 899 across cells. Variables coded so higher scores denote Republican partisanship and support for listed value. All entries are unstandardized path coefficients; all estimates shown are significant at the  $p < .01$  level. Mean-corrected robust WLS estimation is used, with the values items specified as right-censored. Factor loadings, factor variances, error variances, and error covariances omitted for clarity. All variables on 0.00–1.00 scale.  
 Source: 2006 author survey.

traditionalism items were allowed to load on a common “right” factor. This model also provided a significantly worse fit than the four-factor model ( $\chi^2_{52} = 664.84, p < .001, CFI = .96, TLI = .94; \Delta\chi^2_5 = 151.54, p < .001$ ). In general, then, the results suggest that a four-factor value structure most adequately describes the data, and that each set of items provides a valid, reliable measure of a key political value.

**The Impact of Source Cues on the Party Identification-Values Relationship**

Our first hypothesis maintains that partisan source cues activate Democratic-Republican identifications in the minds of citizens which lead them to take somewhat different value positions. If this is to hold empirically, then expressed value positions should depend more heavily on partisan identities in the party and party-plus-ideology treatment groups relative to the control group. We test this prediction using structural equation modeling techniques in which the four latent values—measured using the items as indicated in Table 2—are regressed on latent partisanship in each of the three experimental groups. Latent partisanship is measured with three indicators. The first is the standard NES 7-point self-categorization scale. The second and third measures are feeling thermometers for the Republican and Democratic parties, with the latter reverse-coded. These items are scaled from 0 to 10, “with 10 meaning a very warm, favorable feeling, 0 meaning a very cold, unfavorable feeling, and 5 meaning not

particularly warm or cold.” Higher scores on latent partisanship denote stronger Republican attachments.<sup>9</sup> Note finally that all variables have been normed to run from 0.00 to 1.00.

The estimates for the structural model in each condition are reported in Table 3. The second column represents the impact of latent partisanship on each value in the no-cue condition; the third column estimates the impact of party on each value in the party-cue condition (i.e., “Democrats believe” for equal opportunity and moral tolerance and “Republicans believe” for self-reliance and moral traditionalism); the fourth column does the same for the party-plus-ideology cues (i.e., “Liberal Democrats believe” for equal opportunity and moral tolerance and “Conservative Republicans believe” for self-reliance and traditional values). Let us begin with the party identification–equal opportunity relationship. As one would expect, increasing GOP partisanship is negatively related to beliefs about equal opportunity in each group. In the control group, movement from the Democratic to the Republican extreme on latent partisanship is associated with a .49 unit decline in support for equal opportunity. Next, in the party-cue group comparable movement on latent partisanship leads to a .63 unit decline in support. Finally, in the party-plus-ideology group movement across latent partisanship is associated with a .75 unit decline. To sum up, the impact of party ties on

<sup>9</sup>Note that the party identification questions preceded the value questions in the survey.

equal opportunity rises monotonically in the presence of increasingly explicit party source cues.

A similar pattern of results holds for self-reliance and moral tolerance and, to a lesser extent, moral traditionalism. First, Republican partisanship is positively associated with support for self-reliance in all three conditions. The structural coefficient for latent partisanship equals .25 in the control group, .38 in the party-cue group, and .62 in the party-plus-ideology group. Second, Republican ties are inversely related to moral tolerance, with the effect rising in magnitude from  $-.24$  to  $-.41$  to  $-.59$  across the respective conditions. Third, moral traditionalism is positively related to Republican partisanship. Its dependence on partisanship is the same in the control and party-cue groups; however, when respondents hear that conservative Republicans endorse family values, the impact of partisan loyalties on value positions grows from .45 to .74.

Broadly speaking, the Table 3 estimates suggest that partisan source cues lead individuals to rely more heavily on partisan identities to vertically constrain their core political principles. Likewise, the differences in the magnitudes of the party coefficients across the conditions are in the expected direction and substantively significant. To formally test whether the party identification coefficients differ across the groups, we estimate two additional models in which the coefficients for the effect of party identification are constrained to equality for (1) no-cue and party-cue respondents and (2) no-cue and party-plus-ideology cue respondents. Robust WLS  $\chi^2$  difference tests indicate that the constraints produced a significant decrease in fit for the no-cue versus party comparison (overall fit:  $\chi^2_{270} = 654.04$ ,  $p < .01$ , CFI = .99, TLI = .99;  $\Delta\chi^2_4 = 9.17$ ,  $p = .057$ ) and for the no-cue versus party-plus-ideology comparison (overall fit:  $\chi^2_{270} = 866.72$ ,  $p < .01$ , CFI = .99, TLI = .99;  $\Delta\chi^2_4 = 31.48$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In conjunction, these estimates reveal that partisan cues strengthen vertical connections between partisan loyalties and beliefs about equal opportunity, self-reliance, moral tolerance, and, to a lesser extent, moral traditionalism, thereby supporting our first hypothesis.<sup>10</sup>

In these analyses, we rely on omnibus tests since we are interested in across-group differences in the overall relationship between partisanship and the group of values as a whole. However, in order to see what relationships were

<sup>10</sup>As a final comparison, we estimated a model constraining the party identification coefficients in the control group to equal the average of the corresponding party identification coefficients in the two treatment groups. This model examines whether the coefficients in the cued treatment conditions differ from those in the control, pooling across conditions. Robust WLS  $\chi^2$  difference tests indicate that this constraint also significantly decreased the fit of the model ( $\Delta\chi^2_4 = 28.16$ ,  $p < .001$ ), lending further support to our first hypothesis.

most implicated in these across-group differences, we also conducted analyses that constrained the party-value coefficients to equality across groups one at a time. For the control versus party comparison, these tests indicated the omnibus difference was driven primarily by group differences in the effects of partisanship on self-reliance ( $p < .10$ ) and tolerance ( $p < .05$ ). For the control versus party-plus-ideology comparison, these tests indicate the omnibus difference was driven by group differences in the effects of partisanship on all four values, but especially self-reliance and tolerance ( $p < .06$  for equality;  $p < .001$  for self-reliance;  $p < .06$  for traditional values;  $p < .001$  for tolerance).

### In-Party versus Out-Party Cues

The next step is to test the negativity bias prediction that out-party cues will produce bigger net changes in value orientations than in-party cues. We cannot use structural equation modeling techniques here because the sample sizes in some cells are too small ( $\approx 25$ – $50$ ) to generate stable parameter estimates. Instead, a series of dummy variable regression models are specified whereby the independent variables reflect different configurations of party identification and experimental conditions. In estimating these models, we also account for the possibility that the high level of endorsement for some values may have created a situation where responses were “right-censored” or subject to a ceiling effect. Many respondents endorsed each value to the maximum possible extent. This “bunching” at the top end of the scale suggests that the scale itself may have imposed an artificial ceiling on responses and that respondents at the maximum observed point may actually differ in terms of latent support for the value, with some endorsing it more than others. In cases like this, the use of ordinary least squares can produce inconsistent parameter estimates biased toward zero (Greene 2003; Long 1997). Therefore, we estimate our models using right-censored maximum-likelihood tobit regression, which is appropriate for dependent variables where a ceiling effect is suspected (Greene 2003). This approach “fills in” the missing information about variance in the dependent variable at its ceiling by incorporating information about different cases’ probability of being censored at the top of the scale, thereby producing consistent estimates of the effects of the independent variables (Long 1997).<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Right-censored tobit regression allows predicted values to exceed the upper bound of the original dependent variable (i.e.,  $\hat{y} > 1.00$ ). These estimates indicate what the predicted value would be if the responses were not censored at the upper bound. Some of our Tables 4–5 results confirm that ceiling effects are present, as the tobit estimates generate predicted values in excess of 1.00.



The critical question is whether Republicans respond more forcefully than Democrats when cued that “Democrats believe” in equal opportunity and moral tolerance, and whether Democrats respond more vigorously than GOP partisans when hearing that “Republicans believe” in self-reliance and moral traditionalism.<sup>12</sup> If negativity bias is present, then the absolute value of the decrease in expressed value support for partisans getting the out-party cue should exceed the increase among the cue giver’s fellow partisans.<sup>13</sup> We explore these patterns for partisans in general (i.e., strong, weak, and leaning identifiers on the 7-point self-categorization scale) and extreme partisans (i.e., strong identifiers on the 7-point scale).

Table 4 presents the predicted mean level of expressed support for each value (on a 0.00–1.00 scale) among identifiers in the control and party-cue groups. We begin with equal opportunity. For Democrats the equal opportunity mean is .89 in the uncued group and .93 in the cued group, indicating that the Democratic source cue enhances expressed support among Democratic partisans ( $p < .10$ ). As predicted, the source cue proves more consequential among Republicans as their expressed support for equal opportunity declines from .73 in the control group to .63 in the treatment group ( $p < .05$ ).<sup>14</sup> The same pattern holds for strong partisans. When strong Democrats hear that Democrats believe in equal opportunity, their expressed support rises from .96 in the uncued group to 1.02 in the cued group ( $p < .10$ ). When strong Republicans receive what is for them a negatively valenced cue, expressed support for equal opportunity falls from .70 to .60 ( $p < .05$ ). In short, the Democratic source cue produces a bigger net change in value endorsement among Republicans than among Democrats.

<sup>12</sup>Recall that negativity bias will be present when the perceptual background is evaluated positively and is accompanied by a negatively valenced cue. We assume that in-party/out-party cues are positively/negatively valenced for those partisans. Moreover, our analysis shows that the mean level of support for each value is positively valenced (i.e., value mean  $\geq .50$ ) for Democratic and Republican identifiers (leaners counted as partisans) in the control condition in 13 of the 16 group comparisons we make in Tables 4–5. The exceptions are strong Republicans, conservative Republicans, and strong conservative Republicans on moral tolerance.

<sup>13</sup>Our experimental design only allows us to test whether differences in cue valence *across* partisan categories influence expressed value support (e.g., the impact a Democratic endorsement has on Democratic and Republican value positions). We cannot explore whether differences in cue valence *within* partisan categories produces asymmetrical responses (e.g., the impact Democratic and Republican sanctions have on Democratic value positions). Once again, ours is not a complete test of the negativity bias hypothesis.

<sup>14</sup>All results remain very similar in form, magnitude, and significance when controls for age, income, gender, education, and race are included.

Does the same pattern obtain when Republican sources endorse self-reliance? When Democrats receive this message, expressed support declines from .72 in the control group to .63 in the treatment group ( $p < .01$ ). The decline is even more pronounced among strong Democrats as the Republican cue yields a .77 to .61 decline ( $p < .01$ ). In contrast, the Republican endorsement does not systematically affect positions taken by Republican identifiers. The cue leads to a decline in expressed support among Republicans ( $p < .05$ ); however, this counterintuitive effect vanishes among strong partisans (.91 vs. .90, ns). More broadly, the self-reliance experiment demonstrates that out-party cues have more potent effects on identifiers’ expressed values than in-party cues.

The results for the moral traditionalism experiments appear in the third panel of Table 4. Here we find more limited evidence that party cues motivate changes in expressed value support among opposition partisans. To elaborate, Republican endorsement of family values has no effect in the larger partisan groups. Cued Democrats are no less willing to endorse family values than uncued Democrats (.61 vs. .62, ns); the same holds true for GOP identifiers (.86 vs. .84, ns). When attention turns to strong partisans, Republican endorsement of traditional morality drives expressed Democratic support down from .68 to .59 ( $p < .10$ ) and has no effect on the views of ardent Republicans (.98 vs. .96, ns). In short, negativity bias seems to emerge only among strong partisans.

Moral tolerance is the final value under consideration. These experiments do not support our expectations. First, the Democratic source cue does not appear to influence expressed value support among Democrats or Republicans. Second, among strong identifiers the source cue effect is again limited to one side of the spectrum, in this case increasing expressed support among those on the left. When strong Democrats are told their copartisans believe in tolerating those with diverse moral viewpoints, tolerance scores rise from .68 to .78 ( $p < .05$ ). Strong Republicans, in contrast, prove unresponsive, with those in the cued group as cool toward tolerance as those in the uncued group (.45 vs. .43, ns).

To summarize the results so far, out-party cues produce larger effects on expressed value support among partisans in general on two of four values (equal opportunity and self-reliance) and among strong partisans on three of four values (equal opportunity, self-reliance, and moral traditionalism). So far, then, the negativity bias hypothesis receives real if not overwhelming support. However, as we shall see shortly, evidence on its behalf is even stronger when analysis is confined to ideologically congruent partisans.

**TABLE 4 Predicted Support for Political Values among Partisans**

	No Cue	Party Cue	Cue-No Cue
<b>Equal Opportunity</b>			
Democrats	.89	.93	.04 <sup>+</sup>
Republicans	.73	.63	-.10*
Rep – Dem	-.16**	-.30**	
-2LL = 269.06, $\chi^2(3) = 123.79$ , $p < .001$ ; $n = 577$			
Strong Democrats	.96	1.02	.06 <sup>+</sup>
Strong Republicans	.70	.60	-.10*
Rep – Dem	-.26**	-.42**	
-2LL = 56.58, $\chi^2(3) = 106.42$ , $p < .001$ ; $n = 206$			
<b>Self-Reliance</b>			
Democrats	.72	.63	-.09**
Republicans	.90	.85	-.05*
Rep – Dem	.18**	.22**	
-2LL = 117.76, $\chi^2(3) = 118.98$ , $p < .001$ ; $n = 581$			
Strong Democrats	.77	.61	-.16**
Strong Republicans	.91	.90	-.01
Rep – Dem	.14**	.29**	
-2LL = 86.84, $\chi^2(3) = 50.74$ , $p < .001$ ; $n = 213$			
<b>Moral Traditionalism</b>			
Democrats	.62	.61	-.01
Republicans	.84	.86	.02
Rep – Dem	.22**	.25**	
-2LL = 336.62, $\chi^2(3) = 92.56$ , $p < .001$ ; $n = 581$			
Strong Democrats	.68	.59	-.09 <sup>+</sup>
Strong Republicans	.98	.96	-.02
Rep – Dem	.30**	.37**	
-2LL = 168.46, $\chi^2(3) = 56.84$ , $p < .001$ ; $n = 212$			
<b>Moral Tolerance</b>			
Democrats	.67	.70	.03
Republicans	.51	.48	-.03
Rep – Dem	-.16**	-.22**	
-2LL = 103.76, $\chi^2(3) = 80.47$ , $p < .001$ ; $n = 571$			
Strong Democrats	.68	.78	.10*
Strong Republicans	.43	.45	.02
Rep – Dem	-.25**	-.33**	
-2LL = 59.56, $\chi^2(3) = 64.67$ , $p < .001$ ; $n = 210$			

<sup>+</sup>  $p < .10$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ .

Notes: Democratic cue present for equal opportunity and moral tolerance; Republican cue present for self-reliance and moral traditionalism. Cell entries represent predicted means generated from dummy variable tobit-regression equations. All variables on 0.00–1.00 scale.

Source: 2006 author survey.

## The Role of Ideological Congruence

The next step in the analysis is to test the hypothesis that the interaction between source cues and partisan loyalties is stronger for ideologically pure partisans than for partisan groups containing those of all ideological stripes. We

test this hypothesis by estimating tobit regression models for self-identified liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans in the control group (i.e., no cue) and second treatment group (i.e., the “Liberal Democrats” or “Conservative Republicans” cues) and comparing these results with those reported for the ideologically mixed samples in Table 4.

Liberal-conservative identification is measured using a 7-point self-categorization scale.<sup>15</sup> We use responses to both the party and ideology self-identification scales to classify individuals into the following comparative groups: (1) liberal Democrats versus conservative Republicans and (2) strong liberal Democrats versus strong conservative Republicans. The first pairing distinguishes anyone on the left or right side of both divides; the second distinguishes those at the left or right extremes.

Table 5 contains the value means for all relevant groups. Overall, the results are by and large consistent with expectations. First, changes in expressed value support are typically larger for ideologically congruent partisans compared to ideologically mixed partisans. To take one example, in the presence of a left-wing cue, support for equal opportunity falls more among the ideologically pure strong Republicans in Table 5 (from .67 to .52,  $p < .01$ ) compared to the ideologically mixed strong Republicans in Table 4 (from .70 to .60,  $p < .05$ ). To take another example, when the GOP endorses traditional morality, support from strong liberal Democrats in Table 5 falls more (.50 to .33,  $p < .01$ ) than that of the ideologically mixed Democrats in Table 4 (.68 to .59,  $p < .10$ ). The point is clear. Generally speaking, source cues produce more substantial changes in expressed value support when citizens' liberal-conservative leanings reinforce their party loyalties. These results lend solid support to our fourth hypothesis.

The second point to emphasize is that out-party cues again prove more powerful than in-party cues. To illustrate, the "liberal Democrats" cue for equal opportunity leads to big declines in expressed support for this value among conservative Republicans (from .71 to .58,  $p < .01$ ) and strong conservative Republicans (from .67 to .52,  $p < .01$ ). In contrast, liberal Democrats and strong liberal Democrats hold steady in their expressed value support (.90 to .92, ns, and 1.05 to 1.05, ns, respectively). To take another case, the conservative Republican cue for self-reliance significantly reduces expressed liberal Democratic support (.69 to .60,  $p < .01$ ) and does not influence the support offered by conservative Republicans (.89 vs. .91, ns). Furthermore, the cue produces a much larger drop in expressed support among strong liberal Democrats (.71 to .53,  $p < .01$ ) versus the smaller rise in expressed support among strong conservative Republicans (.93 to 1.02,

<sup>15</sup> Respondents were asked, "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a liberal, a conservative, a moderate, or haven't you thought much about this?" Those selecting "liberal" or "conservative" received a follow-up query: "Would you call yourself a strong [liberal/conservative] or a not very strong [liberal/conservative]?" Everyone else is asked, "Do you think of yourself as closer to liberals or closer to conservatives?"

$p < .10$ ). When we take a step back to consider the bigger picture, the tobit estimates reveal that out-party cues produce bigger shifts on three of four values for both ideologically pure partisans (equal opportunity, self-reliance, and moral tolerance) and strong ideologically pure partisans (equal opportunity, self-reliance, and moral traditionalism).<sup>16</sup> In conjunction, the results from Tables 4 and 5 support the negativity bias hypothesis in 11 of 16 tests.<sup>17</sup>

## Value Constraint

Our final hypothesis predicts that levels of constraint among political values will rise in the presence of party source cues. If we can demonstrate that party cues strengthen our ability to predict support for one value from another, then we can be more confident that the changes produced by the cues have important effects beyond shaping expressed value positions. To test this prediction, we estimate a multigroup version of the four-factor model shown in Table 2 for the control group, the party group, and the party-ideology group. The key estimates we need are the correlations between the latent factors in each experimental group. These estimates are reported in Table 6.

A quick glance at the factor correlations reveals that core political values are indeed more strongly interrelated—in the predicted directions—in the two treatment groups. While the mean of the absolute value of the correlations in the no-cue condition is .27, the equivalent averages in the party-cue and party-plus-ideology cue conditions are .45 and .41, respectively. These results suggest that most of the increase in value constraint is

<sup>16</sup> In Tables 4–5, one might ask whether each observed difference between the Cue-No Cue means for Democrats and Republicans is significant (e.g., in Table 4, equality opportunity panel, is the .04 difference across conditions for Democrats significantly different from the  $-.10$  difference across conditions for Republicans). We find that the preponderance of the evidence continues to support our claims. To elaborate, additional analysis (available from the authors upon request) revealed that of the 13 differences highlighted in Tables 4–5, eight of these are statistically significant and two more approach significance. Note that in some cases where significance levels were marginal or insignificant, sample sizes are quite small (i.e.,  $n \approx 100$ –200). Hence, the results continue to support our claims in 10 of the 13 tests. Moreover, the supplemental analyses continue to show that larger cue effects emerge in the party + ideology cue compared to the party-cue condition.

<sup>17</sup> Recall from note 12 that the moral tolerance control group mean is less than .50 for strong Republicans, conservative Republicans, and strong conservative Republicans. Since negativity bias should operate when the perceptual background is positive, a case can be made that we should not expect negativity biases to be present in these three instances. If we adopt this position, our results yield evidence of negativity bias in 10 of 13 tests.

**TABLE 5 Predicted Support for Political Values among Ideologically Congruent Partisans**

	No Cue	PID + Ideo. Cue	Cue-No Cue
<b>Equal Opportunity</b>			
Liberal Democrats	.90	.92	.02
Conservative Republicans	.71	.58	-.13**
Rep – Dem	-.19**	-.34**	
-2LL = 126.72, $\chi^2(3) = 109.49$ , $p < .001$ ; $n = 372$			
Strong Liberal Democrats	1.05	1.05	.00
Strong Conservative Republicans	.67	.52	-.15**
Rep – Dem	-.38**	-.53**	
-2LL = 23.40, $\chi^2(3) = 69.91$ , $p < .001$ ; $n = 99$			
<b>Self-Reliance</b>			
Liberal Democrats	.69	.60	-.09**
Conservative Republicans	.89	.91	.02
Rep – Dem	.20**	.31**	
-2LL = 90.06, $\chi^2(3) = 111.28$ , $p < .001$ ; $n = 379$			
Strong Liberal Democrats	.71	.53	-.18**
Strong Conservative Republicans	.93	1.02	.09 <sup>+</sup>
Rep – Dem	.22**	.49**	
-2LL = 52.26, $\chi^2(3) = 45.92$ , $p < .001$ ; $n = 105$			
<b>Moral Traditionalism</b>			
Liberal Democrats	.52	.50	-.02
Conservative Republicans	.87	.89	.02
Rep – Dem	.35**	.39**	
-2LL = 126.72, $\chi^2(3) = 148.81$ , $p < .001$ ; $n = 376$			
Strong Liberal Democrats	.50	.33	-.17*
Strong Conservative Republicans	1.00	.96	-.04
Rep – Dem	.50**	.63**	
-2LL = 55.50, $\chi^2(3) = 74.40$ , $p < .001$ ; $n = 103$			
<b>Moral Tolerance</b>			
Liberal Democrats	.73	.74	.01
Conservative Republicans	.48	.39	-.09**
Rep – Dem	-.25**	-.35**	
-2LL = 126.72, $\chi^2(3) = 154.01$ , $p < .001$ ; $n = 371$			
Strong Liberal Democrats	.72	.86	.14 <sup>+</sup>
Strong Conservative Republicans	.39	.33	-.06
Rep – Dem	-.33**	-.53*	
-2LL = 8.00, $\chi^2(3) = 59.98$ , $p < .001$ ; $n = 102$			

<sup>+</sup>  $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ .

Notes: Liberal Democratic cue present for equal opportunity and moral tolerance; Conservative Republican cue present for self-reliance and moral traditionalism. Cell entries represent predicted means generated from dummy variable tobit-regression equations. All variables on 0.00–1.00 scale.

Source: 2006 author survey.

driven by the party cue. To formally test whether the factor correlations differ in magnitude across the groups, we estimate two additional models in which the correlations are constrained to equality for (1) no-cue and party-cue respondents and (2) no-cue and party-plus-ideology cue respondents. Robust WLS  $\chi^2$  difference tests indicate that

the constraints produced highly significant decreases in fit for the no-cue versus party-cue comparison (overall fit:  $\chi^2_{163} = 619.09$ ,  $p < .001$ , CFI = .99, TLI = .99;  $\Delta\chi^2_6 = 29.63$ ,  $p = .001$ ) and the no cue versus party-plus-ideology comparison (overall fit:  $\chi^2_{163} = 723.98$ ,  $p < .001$ , CFI = .99, TLI = .99;  $\Delta\chi^2_6 = 41.81$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

**TABLE 6 Group Differences in Factor Correlations Between Values**

	Equal Opportunity	Self-Reliance	Moral Tradition	Moral Tolerance
<b>No Cue</b>				
Equal Opportunity	1.00			
Self-Reliance	-.02	1.00		
Moral Traditionalism	-.13 <sup>+</sup>	.50***	1.00	
Moral Tolerance	.46***	-.09	-.42***	1.00
<b>Party Cue</b>				
Equal Opportunity	1.00			
Self-Reliance	-.29***	1.00		
Moral Traditionalism	-.50***	.66***	1.00	
Moral Tolerance	.62***	-.14*	-.50***	1.00
<b>Party + Ideology Cue</b>				
Equal Opportunity	1.00			
Self-Reliance	-.34***	1.00		
Moral Traditionalism	-.15**	.59***	1.00	
Moral Tolerance	.59***	-.29***	-.50***	1.00
<b>Fit Statistics Unconstrained Multi-group Model</b>				
Mean-corrected Robust WLS $\chi^2$		517.47		
Degrees of freedom		157		
p value		<.001		
CFI		.99		
TLI		.99		

<sup>+</sup>p < .10; \*p < .05; \*\*p < .01; \*\*\*p < .001.

Notes: All entries are standardized factor correlations. Mean-corrected robust WLS estimation is used, with the values items specified as right-censored.

Source: 2006 author survey.

Hence, the cues provided to our respondents not only induce changes in their expressed value positions, but also induce changes in the deeper structure of their values. In the presence of cues about “who” supports different values, mass belief systems become more tightly constrained.

### Conclusions, Qualifications, and Implications

For nearly half a century research on party identification has trod along familiar grounds. Most studies estimate statistical models using nonexperimental NES data to gauge how partisan loyalties shape retrospective judgments, candidate evaluations, and other short-term perceptions (e.g., Bartels 2002; Goren 2002). A few works utilize experimental designs to isolate the causal impact party ties have on short-term perceptions (Rahn 1993; Lau and Redlawsk 2006). To the best of our knowledge no prior work employs experimental designs to assess

the causal impact party identification has on long-term predispositions.

We have argued that partisan source cues in general—and opposition-party cues in particular—evoke partisan biases in the minds of citizens that subsequently influence expressed support for equal opportunity, self-reliance, moral traditionalism, and moral tolerance. We further posited that the source cue–party identity effects will be more pronounced when ideological sentiments reinforce partisan leanings. Finally, we expected party cues to promote horizontal constraint among these values. These propositions were tested via a series of novel survey experiments administered to an adult cross-section of the U.S. population.

Four compelling findings have emerged from the analyses. First, the relationship between individual partisan identities and expressed value support is stronger in the presence of party source cues. Second, out-party cues typically prove more powerful than in-party cues in shaping expressed value support. Third, these relationships are usually more pronounced among ideologically

congruent partisans than among partisans of all ideological stripes. Fourth, party cues promote horizontal constraint among these values. The source cues did not always interact with political identities in the manner predicted and some of the reported effects are of modest magnitude; nevertheless, the general pattern of results suggests that partisanship has the power to shape expressed support for—and the cognitive organization of—political values under a variety of conditions.

As is the case for most survey experiments, questions can be raised about the generalizability of our results beyond the research setting. Our work shows that the presence of party cues leads partisans to alter their responses to value questions in the context of a single survey. It does not demonstrate that party cues lead to fundamental changes in latent value positions that endure over the long haul. Repeated exposure to consistent partisan messages on party-value linkages would be necessary to produce lasting value change. Of course, if the latter type of change is to occur at all, we must observe precisely the types of changes in value expression we have found here.

We believe the results of our survey experiments have real-world analogues for the following reasons. If partisan political elites take consistent positions on political principles for an extended period of time, it seems fair to posit that the movements we uncovered in our experiments will occur in the minds of citizens outside the survey context. Although our work cannot speak directly to this, some evidence corroborates our claim. With respect to political elites, work on polarization indicates that the national parties have taken increasingly distinct ideological profiles in recent years. Democratic elites have moved to the left, Republicans to the right, on most issues (Hetherington 2001; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006). Presumably, this holds for the types of values discussed here. Insofar as elite cues compel ordinary citizens to think in partisan terms, one might expect that citizens use their partisan ties to update their value positions. As mentioned above, this is precisely what Goren (2005) finds. He shows that party identification leads to value changes two-to-four years out. Although Goren does not test for the underlying mechanism driving these results, the claim that elite influence is paramount seems highly plausible. In sum, since our experimental findings are consistent with those generated by nonexperimental research situated over much longer time frames, we have some confidence that our results represent more than experimental artifacts.

Another objection to our claim is that party cues induce nothing more than a temporary change in value expression based on how people interpret value messages. To elaborate, political values may be vulnerable

to the influence of source cues because they lack the cognitive support necessary to inoculate them from attack (Maio and Olson 1998a, 1998b). Since values are self-evidently good, there is no need to develop reasons for supporting them. This renders political values susceptible to short-term partisan influence because citizens can use the source cues to fill in the missing information.<sup>18</sup> To illustrate, a declaration that “some people” support equal opportunity may imply something different from a claim that “some Democrats” support equal opportunity. The first statement represents a fundamental component of the American political creed. In the second statement, respondents may interpret the party cue as implying support for helping African Americans and then use this information to guide their value expressions. The source cue, in essence, supplies the missing cognitive support (cf. Kuklinski and Hurley 1994). However, once the persuasive attempt has passed, the value expression is forgotten and the latent value resets to its default position.

Although this represents a plausible account as to what occurs in a single instance, we do not believe that it undermines our fundamental conclusion. In isolation, one cue is unlikely to produce lasting change. In conjunction, a series of reinforcing cues should chip away at the initial value position precisely because this position lacks much in the way of cognitive justification. The key to the process, then, would be for the parties and their spokespersons to take consistent left-right positions on political values. The polarization research cited above suggests that they have done so in recent decades. Again, even if citizens’ interpretations of party-cued value messages lead to short-term changes in political value expression rather than in latent value positions, the cumulative impact of a series of party cues over time should lead to long-term modification of core political principles.

Next, we reiterate that partisanship does not motivate citizens to abandon their political values. Our findings suggest partisanship influences value support at the margins rather than inducing wholesale change. Republicans do not reject equal opportunity when informed that Democrats believe in it, nor do Democrats abandon self-reliance when told that Republicans are for it; instead, expressed support for these values cools slightly. Hence, no claim is made that political values are nonessential elements in mass belief systems, on par with judgments about presidential performance or evaluations of the economy. Our claim is simply that the political value positions citizens are willing to endorse depend partly on Democratic-Republican identifications.

<sup>18</sup>We thank an anonymous reviewer for bringing this point to our attention.

We conclude by noting some of the broader implications our findings have for the study of public opinion and political psychology. First, the findings complement nonexperimental studies documenting partisan bias over a wide range of other political attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors (Bartels 2002; Green and Palmquist 1990). Our contribution on this score is showing that party affects normative political beliefs. Second, the evidence that out-party cues exert more influence over value judgments than in-party cues complements a large body of research documenting negativity bias in politics across diverse areas, such as evaluations of political candidates (e.g., Goren 2002), evaluations of political institutions (e.g., Grosskopf and Mondak 1997), and retrospective voting (Hetherington 1996), to name but a few. It seems clear that “bad” party cues are stronger than “good” party cues (Baumeister et al. 2001). Finally, our results speak to questions regarding the nature of human belief. While it is true that people can work out what they believe is best for society irrespective of their group loyalties, it seems fair to say that group attachments usually weigh rather heavily on such beliefs (Greene 1999). In the domain of public affairs, a citizen’s commitment to a particular vision of the good and just society may be swayed by what partisan friends and foes believe.

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