

**Online Appendix to:  
The Electoral Consequences of Party Loyalty in Congress**

**Further Detail About the Experiment**

This Online Appendix provides additional detail about the experiments we ran. The purpose of these experiments was to complement our aggregate-level findings by finding evidence at the individual level that voters punish legislators for excessive party loyalty (and do so less, or not at all, for ideological extremity). The experiment was conducted on three samples—one of undergraduate students in political science classes at University X, a university in the northeastern U.S., a second of adults in the vicinity of University X, and a third which consisted of adults from Tallahassee, Florida. Both adult samples were recruited mainly by visiting professional offices or coffeehouses and asking for volunteers.

The second and third sample, of northern and then Tallahassee adults, were recruited for a specific reason: the student sample strongly supported the finding that lockstep partisanship drew punishment from voters while ideological extremity did not, but colleagues suggested that this might be specific to our (or perhaps any) student sample. In particular, readers of the student results suggested that the word “liberal” was not sufficiently toxic to a student sample. This led us to collect data from the two adult samples.

Replicating our results in three very different samples has greatly increased our confidence in our findings. For readers not accustomed to experimental findings, it is important to keep in mind the size of our samples. For example, once our adult sample is split up by region, it sometimes gets difficult for our results to achieve statistical

significance at the .05 level. Still, our hypotheses are supported time and again throughout the results presented below.

### **Experimental Design**

To the set-up of the experiment: Participants first answered a battery of questions about themselves, including their partisan and ideological self-placement (on 7-point items ranging from strong conservative or strong Republican to strong liberal or strong Democrat). They also indicated their level of “Partisan social identity” (Greene 1999) and “ideological social identity,” concepts to be discussed.

Each participant then read an explanation of what roll-call votes are, and learned that these votes, by members of the U.S. House of Representatives, are a matter of public record. The participants would shortly thereafter learn about certain (fictitious) legislators’ roll-call votes.

Participants were told that these roll-call votes could be characterized in either partisan terms or ideological terms. A vote “with the Republicans [or Democrats] and against the Democrats [or Republicans]” was easy enough to discern just by looking at roll calls and the party membership of the Representatives who voted. Whether a vote was “on the liberal side of the issue” or “on the conservative side” could also be determined, by making reference to “ratings by Americans for Democratic Action (ADA),” an organization which does exist and rates legislators on their degree of liberalism or conservatism. We made the fictitious claim that ADA had rated each roll-call vote as liberal or conservative, and that this was the information the participants would soon see.

Each participant was next exposed to two different make-believe legislators, said to be members of the U.S. House of Representatives standing for re-election. Participants underwent the same procedure for each Representative. That procedure consisted of:

1. Being introduced to the Representative by name and given bland, non- or barely-diagnostic information.<sup>1</sup>
2. Being asked, with the expressed understanding that they had very little to go on, to estimate on a 7-point scale, from “strongly support” to “strongly oppose,” their willingness to support the Representative’s re-election. This was our first measure of “electoral support.”
3. Being exposed to a page displaying 10 separate fictitious roll-call votes the Representative cast while in office. Each vote is characterized in either partisan terms or ideological terms—as will be explained further below.
4. Being given 3 distracter questions, such as self-judged personality or political knowledge questions.
5. Finally, answering a battery of questions about the Representative, indicating the participant’s estimation of him on a number of traits, such as independent-mindedness, toughness, and so forth; and again indicating their willingness to support his re-election using the same scale as in step #2. This was a second, “post-issue-exposure” measure of “electoral support.”

The purpose of recording the participant’s initial electoral support after exposure to bland information was to control for individual differences in a participant’s tendency to support any new politician at all, thereby making it easier to detect the helpful or harmful effects on electoral support of exposure to his roll-call votes.

Each subject saw one “partisan-described” legislator and one “ideology-described” legislator. Samples of a “partisan-described” and an “ideology-described” list of 10 votes are shown in Tables 1a and 1b. As is obvious, the list either characterizes all 10 of the Representative’s positions as a partisan vote, “with one party and against the other,” or all 10 of the votes as ideological—liberal or conservative. The substance of the vote itself— i.e., that the Representative supported rather than opposed abortion rights, opposed rather than supported building a weapons system, etc.—is not given.

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<sup>1</sup> Examples of low-diagnostic information given are age, marital status, number and age of children, hobbies, and charitable interests.

The Representative's votes could be 60%, 70%, 80%, 90% or 100% aligned with either a party or an ideology (with the remainder of the votes obviously on the opposite side). This, of course, created variation in the amount of "lockstep voting," either partisan or ideological, a representative displayed, which became our primary independent variable of interest.<sup>2</sup>

### **Careful Randomization**

Care was taken so that the following aspects of the presentation were randomized for each subject: whether the partisan-described legislator was predominantly a Democrat or a Republican; whether the ideology-described legislator was predominantly liberal or conservative; on which issues the legislator was shown to "deviate" from his party or ideological camp; on how many issues the legislator deviated; whether the partisan-described or the ideology-described legislator was shown first; and the order in which the 10 issues were confronted by the participant.

The extensive randomization was necessary to ensure that we obtained as pure as possible a measure of the effect of partisan-lockstep or ideologically extreme voting on our participants' expressions of

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<sup>2</sup> Note that nowhere on the politician page does it say, explicitly, that the politician took a side any certain percentage of the time. Subjects were left to gather this perception simply by looking at the issue positions one-by-one.

**Tables 1a and 1b. Examples of (a) an ideology-described legislator (70% liberal) used in the experiment; and (b) a partisan-described legislator (90% Republican)**

**A.**

**Robert Allen, U.S. Representative**

- \* On a bill which would cut taxes on income derived from investments such as stocks and bonds, and which would eliminate inheritance taxes altogether, Rep. Allen was rated by ADA as casting his vote on the *liberal* side of the issue.
- \* On a bill which proposed a general increase in military spending, including outlays for several new weapons systems and increased spending on the strategic defense initiative, the controversial anti-ballistic missile system, Rep. Allen was rated by ADA as casting his vote on the *liberal* side of the issue.
- \* On bills that have proposed to expand the availability of government-provided health care or government-paid health insurance to take the place of health coverage provided by private insurance companies, Rep. Allen was rated by ADA as casting his vote on the *conservative* side of the issue.
- \* On the issue of how much the federal government should use its regulatory powers to make U.S. automobile manufacturers improve the fuel efficiency of their cars, Rep. Allen was rated by ADA as casting his vote on the *liberal* side of the issue.
- \* On a bill which would increase funding for food stamps, unemployment benefits, and child care assistance for low-income Americans, Rep. Allen was rated by ADA as casting his vote on the *conservative* side of the issue.
- \* On the issue of whether states should be allowed to permit their residents access to marijuana for medicinal purposes, Rep. Allen was rated by ADA as casting his vote on the *liberal* side of the issue.
- \* On the issue of whether the federal government should financially support, or even allow, research on embryonic stem cell research, on a consistent basis Rep. Allen was rated by ADA as casting his vote on the *liberal* side of the issue.
- \* On a bill which proposed that public schools which receive federal funding must allow students to attend, if they so choose, an optional 15-minute prayer session in the morning, which could be led by a school official, Rep. Allen was rated by ADA as casting his vote on the *conservative* side of the issue.
- \* On the issue of the extent to which gun ownership and access to guns should be regulated by the federal government, Rep. Allen was rated by ADA as casting his vote on the *liberal* side of the issue.
- \* On a federal bill which would have recognized nationally the right of gay and lesbian couples to marry and have that marriage recognized in all 50 states, Rep. Allen was rated by ADA as casting his vote on the *liberal* side of the issue.

## B.

### **Jason O'Donnell, U.S. Representative**

\* On a bill which would cut taxes on income derived from investments such as stocks and bonds, and which would eliminate inheritance taxes altogether, Rep. O'Donnell voted *with the Republicans* and *against the Democrats*.

\* On a bill which provides no funding for building a proposed fence between the U.S. and Mexico and which emphasizes providing a legal route for illegal immigrants to achieve citizenship status while de-emphasizing the rounding up of illegals and sending them home, Rep. O'Donnell voted *with the Republicans* and *against the Democrats*.

\* On a federal bill which would have recognized nationally the right of gay and lesbian couples to marry and have that marriage recognized in all 50 states, Rep. O'Donnell voted *with the Republicans* and *against the Democrats*.

\* On the issue of the extent to which gun ownership and access to guns should be regulated by the federal government, Rep. O'Donnell voted *with the Republicans* and *against the Democrats*.

\* On the issue of whether education should be improved using free-market solutions such as government vouchers for attending other schools, including private or religious schools, or by focusing on simply improving existing public schools through enhanced facilities and teacher pay, Rep. O'Donnell voted *with the Republicans* and *against the Democrats*.

\* On the issue of whether the federal government should financially support, or even allow, research on embryonic stem cell research, on a consistent basis Rep. O'Donnell voted *with the Republicans* and *against the Democrats*.

\* On bills that have proposed to expand the availability of government-provided health care or government-paid health insurance to take the place of health coverage provided by private insurance companies, Rep. O'Donnell voted *with the Republicans* and *against the Democrats*.

\* On the issue of whether states should be allowed to permit their residents access to marijuana for medicinal purposes, Rep. O'Donnell voted *with the Republicans* and *against the Democrats*.

\* On the issue of how much the federal government should use its regulatory powers to make U.S. automobile manufacturers improve the fuel efficiency of their cars, Rep. O'Donnell voted *with the Republicans* and *against the Democrats*.

\* On the issue of whether or not states would be allowed to have, if they choose, their own laws permitting physicians to assist terminally ill patients to end their lives, Rep. O'Donnell voted *with the Democrats* and *against the Republicans*.

electoral support. Thus we avoided confounds, such as the possibility that participants might base their support only on politicians' votes on the first and/or last issue presented, or on representatives' deviations from ideological or partisan orthodoxy on particular issues of systematically greater import to the participants in the sample.

Hundreds of 10-vote “politician pages” of the sort shown in Tables 1a and 1b were created. On each politician page, the 10 issues were derived from a list of 12 possible, meaning not every participant saw the same 10 issues, but most of the issues were the same across participants. The 12 issues were balanced between fiscal issues (such as taxation), moral issues (such as gay marriage), and other kinds of issues (support for the military, support for assertive foreign policy, and so forth). After 2 of the original 12 issues were randomly chosen to be ejected, for each page the remaining 10 were randomly ordered for presentation. Next, depending on how many out of the 10 issues had the politician “breaking ranks” with his party or ideological similars, those issues were also chosen randomly. So, when the politician page for a “70% liberal” was created, after the 10 issues were randomly ordered, 3 issues were randomly chosen on which the Representative was to vote “on the conservative side.” All the randomization was conducted using Stata 9’s random number generator. Additionally, several dozen names were attributed to the Representatives—all male names, mostly chosen to sound more or less “Anglo.” These names were randomly assigned to politicians across the various conditions of ideology or partisanship.

Randomization was carried out with the caveat that the probability of a participant seeing a “full lockstep voter”—that is, a politician who was a 90% or 100% ideologue or partisan, was exactly .5, rather than the .4 which would have been the case had the percentages from 60 to 100 been equally likely. This ensured that we had plenty of subjects who encountered each of the two legislator types we were interested in.

The distracter questions (mentioned above in step 4) were included because we thought showing the politician page and immediately asking for a revised measure of

electoral support would encourage basing support for a candidate too directly on the exact number of Republican or Democratic positions taken (or liberal or conservative). We did *not* want participants to simply count up roll-call votes and then express support for the politician based on the percentage of the times the politician agreed with “their side,” as we thought this was too unlike the way people actually make up their minds about politicians. Rather, we wanted to allow the subjects time to “forget” the exact number out of ten, and to express support for the politician based on the *impression* they got from his roll-call votes. This more closely approximates – though is obviously a long way from – what actually happens as real voters learn about legislators’ behavior during the course of their tenure in office and re-election campaigns.

After exposure to roll-call votes and distracter questions, participants expressed electoral support as part of the battery of questions outlined in Step 5, which also included 10 perceived traits of the politician. The order of questions in this list was also randomized for each subject, so that no systematic question order-induced influences would emerge amongst the various trait ratings or between the trait ratings and the electoral support rating.

### **Additional Analyses**

#### **Using an Ordinal Instead of a Dichotomous Measure of Lockstep Voting**

In the paper, we report results in which we code a legislator’s non-extremity and extremity dichotomously, but of course we can code these variables so that a finer-grained measure of extremity is obtained—i.e., 1 for 60% partisan/ideologue, 2 for 70%, 3 for 80%, 4 for 90%, and 5 for 100%. When we do this for the students (recoding the ideological extremity variable or partisan lockstep variable to range from 0 to 1), we get

the results shown in Tables 2a and 2b: an increase from minimal lockstepping or ideological extremity to maximal (that is, from voting with the same side 6 out of 10 times to all 10 times), controlling for a voter's level of self-identification in the opposite party of the legislator, brings a significant penalty of almost 1 full scale point of electoral support when the votes are cast in partisan terms, but a nonsignificant reward when the votes are cast in ideological terms.

**Table 2a. Pre/post difference in electoral support regressed on 5-point measure of partisan lockstep voting, student sample**

	coefficient (s.e.)	p-value (2-tailed)
Partisan lockstep voting	-0.98 (.36)	0.007
Voter's self-ID in opposing party	-2.65 (0.36)	0.000
Constant	1.34 (0.29)	0.000
N	129	
R <sup>2</sup>	0.34	

**Table 2b. Pre/post difference in electoral support regressed on 5-point measure of legislator's ideological consistency, student sample**

	coefficient (s.e.)	p-value (2-tailed)
Ideological extremity	0.54 (.40)	0.175
Voter's self-ID in opposing ideology	-1.23 (0.47)	0.01
Constant	-0.05 (0.36)	0.665
N	121	
R <sup>2</sup>	0.07	

When we run the regression in this way for the adult sample—coding lockstep voting not dichotomously, but in 5 steps—the results change slightly but do not detract substantially from the finding and do not support the possibility that ideological voting is a decisive factor or that “liberal” is a toxic word outside of our student sample.

These results are shown in Tables 3a and 3b. In broad outline, the results are the same: controlling for a voter’s party identity as opposite the legislator, partisan lockstepping brings punishment, while ideological extremity brings (a slight and nonsignificant) reward. Here, however, the small sample makes it difficult to achieve significance. A shift from minimal to maximal lockstepping brings a punishment of 0.54 scale points of electoral support but this is not quite significant ( $p=.13$ ) in a one-tailed test.

Why, besides a small sample, is the finding different in the adult sample? It is because there was a spike of electoral punishment for partisan legislators who voted with a party 8 out of 10 times. Indeed, voting with a party 8 out of 10 times brought, in the adult sample, nonsignificantly more punishment than voting with a party 9 or 10 out of 10 times.

However, we don’t believe there is any reason to draw from this a suggestion that extreme lockstepping with a party brings no punishment. If the regression is re-run dropping legislators who voted with party 8 out of 10 times, thereby comparing the relatively non-lockstepping legislators who supported a party 6 or 7 out of 10 times against those who supported a party 9 or 10 out of 10 times, the results in Table 4 are

obtained, indicating partisan lockstepping draws a near-significant and similar-sized penalty ( $p = .07$ , one-tailed).

**Table 3a. Pre/post difference in electoral support regressed on 5-point measure of legislator’s partisan lockstep voting, adult sample**

	coefficient (s.e.)	p-value (2-tailed)
Partisan lockstep voting	-0.54 (.49)	0.268
Voter’s self-ID in opposing party	-2.16 (0.46)	0.000
Constant	0.67 (0.40)	0.094
N	92	
R <sup>2</sup>	0.22	

**Table 3b. Pre/post difference in electoral support regressed on 5-point measure of legislator’s ideological consistency, adult sample**

	coefficient (s.e.)	p-value (2-tailed)
Ideological extremity	0.45 (.50)	0.370
Voter’s self-ID in opposing ideology	-3.03 (0.49)	0.000
Constant	0.95 (0.43)	0.03
N	95	
R <sup>2</sup>	0.30	

**Table 4. Pre/post difference in electoral support regressed on 5-point measure of legislator’s partisan lockstep voting, adult sample, omitting subjects who saw 80% partisan legislators**

	coefficient (s.e.)	p-value (2-tailed)
Partisan lockstep voting	-0.61 (.41)	0.147
Voter’s self-ID in opposing party	-2.80 (0.41)	0.000
Constant	1.18 (0.34)	0.001
N	81	
R <sup>2</sup>	0.40	

In sum, then, the adult sample replicated the results of the student sample broadly, but because the 11 adult subjects who saw politician voting with his party 8 out of 10 times had an unexpected spike of disapproval, the results were less clean when the lockstep voting was treated as continuous rather than dichotomous. However, again there is absolutely no support for the notion that all adults, or just Southern adults, are treating the world “liberal” as toxic or that they are punishing politicians for extreme ideological voting – the coefficient for ideological extremity is uniformly positive in the adult samples as it is in the student sample.

And, if we look at Southern Conservatives only, a rather small subsample, our findings are consistently strong. Among the sample of 18 self-identified conservatives in Tallahassee, partisan extremity is – as is the case in every subsample we have looked at – punished ( $\beta = -.89, p = 0.12$ ). Thus, the coefficient is approximately the same size as in the full sample and only the tiny size of the subsample prevents the attainment of significance, while ideological extremity is, again, nonsignificantly rewarded.

## **What Causes People to Punish Hyper-partisanship and Not Ideological Extremity?**

We inserted into our experiment several instruments designed to help determine what might drive voters to punish hyper-partisanship more harshly than ideological extremity. This is a classic exercise in political psychology as we are essentially addressing a failure of rational, spatial voting behavior.

Unfortunately, the results of this portion of our study provide only a small portion of the answer. We report their broad outlines in this Online Appendix, however, in hopes of providing better direction for further research.

First, we wished to determine whether people punish the legislative extremity of legislators of the opposite party more than that of “same-party-as-voter” legislators (or perhaps whether people actually reward lockstep voting when legislators are in, or vote most of the time with, their own party). The result, shown in Table 5, is that voters do punish the lockstep behavior of opposite-party legislators significantly, and they appear likely to punish lockstep behavior of same-party legislators too, but do so not quite significantly; the Wald test that the sum of partisan lockstep voting (the condition under which legislators are in the opposite party from voters) and the interactive term (the additional effect of partisan lockstep voting when voters *are* in the legislators’ party) is not quite significantly different from zero. And the interactive term is not quite significant either, indicating that a difference between levels of punishment for same- and opposite-party legislators seems likely, but the data are not conclusive on this point. So the results do suggest that voters punish hyper-partisanship more strongly in politicians of the opposite party, but probably punish hyper-partisanship mildly even for politicians of their own party.

**Table 5. Pre/post difference in electoral support regressed on partisan lockstep voting, separately for voter-legislator in same party and voter-legislator in opposite party. Full sample.**

	coefficient (s.e.)	p-value (2-tailed)
Partisan lockstep roll-call voting	-1.12 (.32)	0.001
Partisan lockstep roll-call voting X voter-legislator in same party	0.65 (0.44)	0.145
Voter & legislator in same party	1.26 (0.36)	0.001
Constant	-0.73 (0.27)	0.008
N	221	
R <sup>2</sup>	0.28	
Wald test that (partisan lockstep voting + interaction term) = 0	F=2.40, $p = 0.12$	

For ideology, the differences between voters' reactions to same-ideology versus opposite-ideology legislators are not illuminating at all. In results not shown in detail here, when the legislator is of the opposite ideology as the voter, the voter nonsignificantly rewards his extremity ( $\beta = 0.34$ ). When the legislator is of the *same* ideology, the voter rewards the politician's extremity even less—and, of course, again nonsignificantly ( $\beta = 0.14$ ).

### **Trait Perceptions as an Explanation**

We investigated whether particular trait perceptions of the legislators mediated the effect of their lockstep voting on electoral support in ways that those same perceptions might not mediate the effect of ideological extremity. For example, does partisan lockstep voting (and not extreme ideological voting) cause voters to see

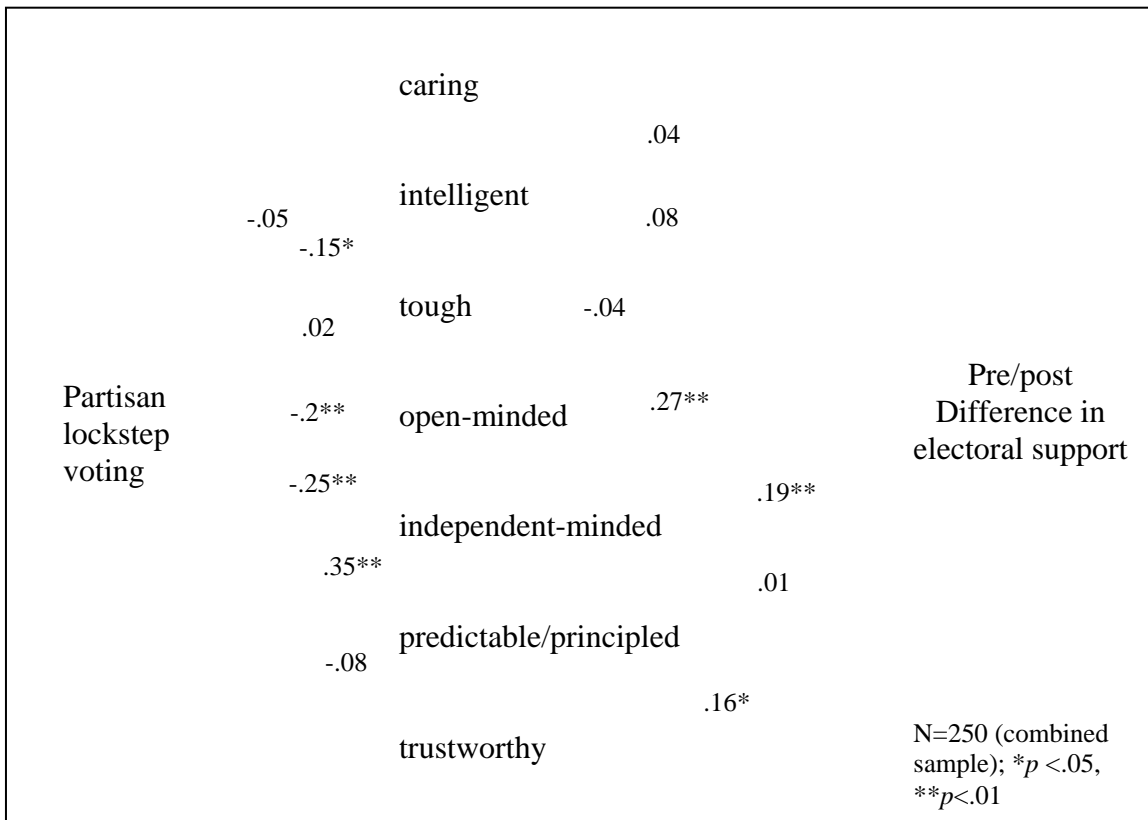
legislators as insufficiently independent-minded, with consequent effects on voting? Are they seen as closed-minded or untrustworthy?

These trait-perception questions were asked of all subjects along with (and in an order randomized along with) the post-exposure electoral support question. In particular, we asked participants to rate the politicians as to how caring, intelligent, tough, open-minded, independent-thinking, trustworthy, and predictable the legislator seemed after participants had seen his roll-call votes. The predictability question characterized “predictability” not pejoratively, but instead asked whether the participant gets “the impression that this candidate relies on ideological principles, so that you know what to expect” of him. This wording intended to test for our suspicion that ideological extremity in a legislator might cause voters to see the legislator as principled, whereas partisan lockstepping might produce an impression not of principle but of a failure to be independent-minded (a suspicion which turned out to be incorrect).

For a quick look at the potential for trait-based mediating effects, we present simple path diagrams in Figures 1a and 1b in which we display the results of regressing the pre/post difference in electoral support—our typical dependent variable—on all these trait perceptions in a multiple regression, along with regressions of each trait perception on the dichotomous version of partisan lockstep voting or ideological extremity. The paths are marked with standardized coefficients.

It is clear from the first path model that some of the effect of partisan lockstep voting on electoral support is indeed explained by two likely related trait perceptions: voters see lockstep voting as indicative of a lack of independent-mindedness and open-mindedness, both of which traits have positive and fairly strong effects on electoral

**Figure 1a. Path model for partisan-characterized legislators**

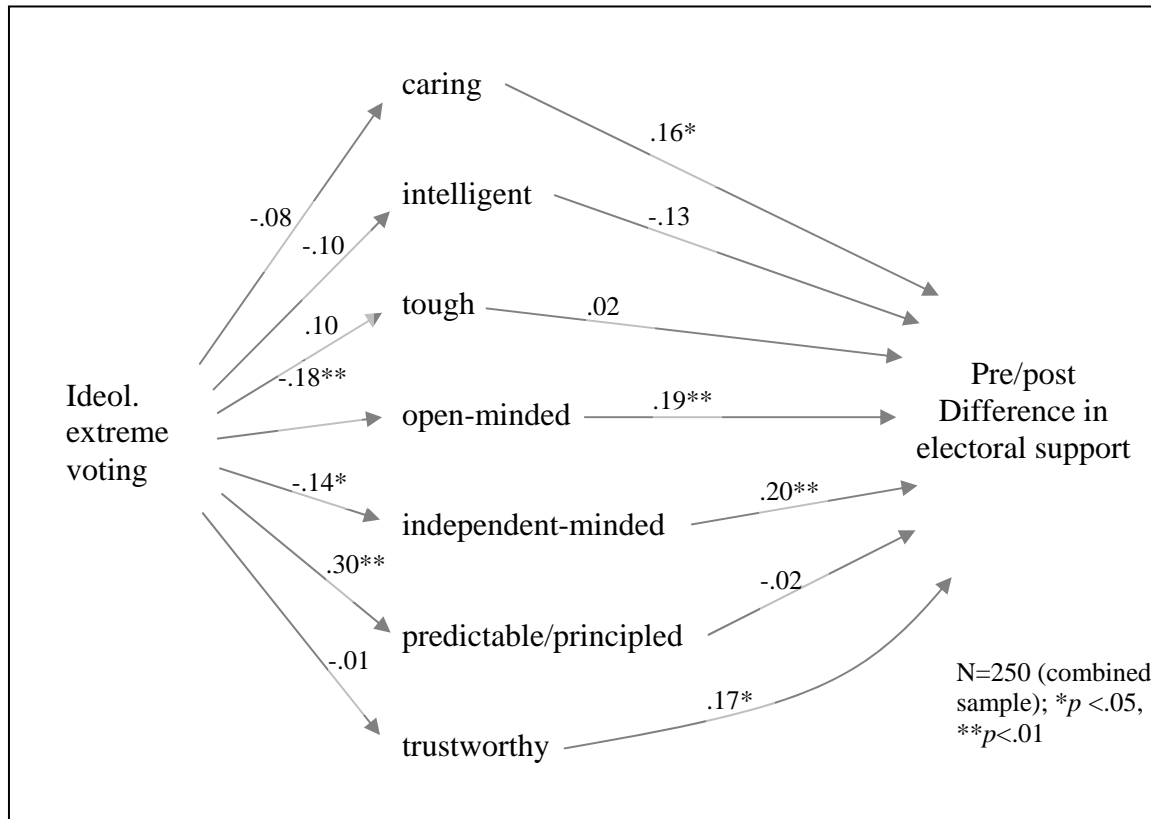


support. Indeed, *only these two traits* are simultaneously significantly affected by partisan lockstep voting while also significantly affecting electoral support.

The mediation does appear weaker for ideologue legislators, but the contrast between the effect of traits across the two conditions—partisanship and ideology—is simply not strong enough for us to make strong conclusions about *why* we see the effects we do. For ideology-characterized legislators, too, the only fully significant paths are through independent-mindedness and open-mindedness. Although the coefficients are smaller both before and after the trait perception, this second path diagram suggests that ideological extremity should be harming legislators just as partisan lockstepping does, only perhaps less severely. There is no hint that any trait perception rewards ideological

extremity (no support, for example, for the “ideological extremity equals principled predictability” thesis) or, at the very least, mitigates the punishment effect.

**Figure 1b. Path model for ideology-characterized legislators**



The data do at least somewhat suggest, however, that the difference in voters’ reactions to hyper-partisans and hyper-ideologues is at least partially explained by perceptions that the legislators lack the ability to think for themselves.

### A Search for Social Identity Effects

Another theoretical possibility was that voters *socially* identify more strongly with parties than with ideologies, and that a “social identity” effect was driving their voting behavior. This effect is based on Social Identity Theory (Tajfel 1981, Tajfel and Turner 1979), which suggests people, in an attempt to boost a self-esteem that’s intimately connected with feeling favorable toward their in-group, should support (vote for) a group

strongly when they feel emotionally attached to that group, or perhaps punish an out-group strongly to boost the relative standing of their in-group. If voters feel emotionally attached to parties but not to ideologies, this could help explain the behavior we observed.

We measured participants' level of "partisan social identity" and "ideological social identity" using 4-question indices—questions such as "When I talk about liberals, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they'"—scored on five-point strongly agree-to-strongly disagree scales. The final "partisan social identity" and "ideological social identity" scales were recoded to range from 0 to 1. The mean level of "socially identifying" with one's own preferred party (as determined by the ordinary party-ID question) was .6825, while the mean level of socially identifying with one's preferred ideology was 0.6675. This tiny-appearing difference is actually significant in a sample of  $N=252$  ( $t = 2.05$ ,  $p = 0.04$ , 2-tailed). Moreover, people's level of socially identifying with the *opposite* party of their preference is nonsignificantly *lower* ( $t = 1.19$ ,  $p = 0.23$ ) than their level of socially identifying with the opposite ideology.

Social identity might therefore appear to be a promising aid to explaining the effects outlined in our paper, but there is a rather large problem with this explanation: voters who strongly identify socially with their parties do not punish extreme partisanship more than those who identify less strongly in a split-half analysis. If we divide the sample into those whose partisan social identity is above the mean and those whose partisan social identity is below the mean and regress pre/post difference in electoral support on legislative extremity/consistency, the results (not shown here) simply replicate what we've seen: strong *and* weak partisan social identifiers significantly punish party-

lockstepping (coefficients are -.75 and -.90), while strong *and* weak ideological social identifiers nonsignificantly reward ideological extremity.

So if levels of emotional attachment (or aversion) to parties are driving the partisan-punishment effect, we aren't seeing any strong evidence of it in responses to our survey questions.

### **Are Voters Ill-equipped to Use Ideology?**

A final possible explanation of our results is that participants simply do not know what positions the politicians are taking on the issues when they are characterized in ideological terms. That is, voters do not understand what “liberal” and “conservative” mean as translated into policy positions, but they *do* understand the policy positions of the parties.

There is no evidence, however, that the participants in our samples are better able to use partisanship to understand issue positions. We asked participants their opinions on 17 separate political issues, and sought to determine whether their declared party ID did a better job of predicting their positions on these issues than their ideological identification. Using simple correlations, the answer is a resounding *no*. Both party identification and ideological self-ID generally performed well in explaining issue positions: The average absolute value of the correlation between a participant's issue positions and his or her self-identified party identification is 0.35; and the average for ideology is 0.38. Ideology does a marginally better job of predicting policy position, so it would appear, at least on cursory inspection, that people *do* understand what the various roll-call votes mean when characterized by ideology, or at least understand as well as when the votes are characterized by party.

## Conclusions About What Drives the Effect

Voters are punishing politicians for hyper-partisanship, not hyper-ideology. But our attempts to explain what psychological mechanisms lie behind this met with limited success, and clearly more work is needed to understand the effect. For now, we can say confidently that party has a closer connection with voters' punitive behavior and that this effect is evident in data at both the individual-level and the congressional election level.

We suspect that for most voters party labels are connected to more meaningful behavioral triggers than are ideological labels. That voters' level of social identity is strictly higher for party than for ideology, and that voters seemed to use trait perceptions slightly more strongly when those perceptions were generated by partisan votes, may at least provide a suggestion of what's going on. At a very general level, voters may simply understand politics more clearly through a partisan lens than they do through an ideological one. If asked to think in terms of ideology, they are often capable of doing so, as in connecting policy positions to their own self-identifications as liberal or conservative. But behavior may often be driven by subconscious motives, motives which may be associated more deeply with partisan, even tribal, concepts. Voters can apply conscious thought to ideological concepts competently, but *act* more on partisan labels when deciding whether they like politicians, and when deciding whether a politician is the right choice for them.

This may simply be a habit born of the more frequent use of party labels in the media to describe and understand politicians, or it may be the result of the fact that parties are "real groups" while ideologies are just descriptions of policy positions, thereby allowing voters to generalize more easily about what kind of person a politician

is if he is “Republican” than if he is “conservative.” When voters are asked to quickly make a judgment about a candidate they know just a little about, that candidate’s partisan behavior is simply more useful as a heuristic: the voter *feels* as though he or she has learned more, and more that’s useful, about a politician from his partisan behavior than from his ideological behavior.

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