

THE CONFLICT-ORIENTED GROUP IDENTITY OF PARTISANSHIP

A Dissertation

by

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzes partisanship in America. I lay out a new theory of partisanship that shows that how strongly an American identifies with the Democrats or Republicans is due to how likely he or she is to take sides in a conflict *and* join groups generally. I use data from the American National Election Studies (ANES) and a variety of statistical techniques to demonstrate this. Behavior scholars know much about factors that pull Americans toward the Democrats or Republicans, but little (until now) about how *strongly* an American is pulled toward either party.

Strength of partisanship influences almost all aspects of political behavior. Pure independents, independents who lean toward one party, and weak and strong partisans vary considerably in turnout, vote choice, and political knowledge. My theory explains these differences and improves our understanding of political participation, attitudes, and elections. These findings provide answers for why some people are rabid partisans and others don't care much about their party, and why many Americans who favor one party prefer to remain nominally neutral.

Additionally, I use the conflict-oriented, group identity theory of partisanship to explain differences in strength of partisanship between women and men. I analyze ANES data, and use difference-of-means tests and logistic regression to compare partisanship between genders. I show that men's greater tendency to judge things and take sides in a conflict, and women's greater tendency to join groups, explain why women are more likely to identify as weak partisans and men are more likely to identify as independent leaners.

Finally, I explain gender differences in the social identity and rational choice theories of partisanship. I examine data from the ANES, National Annenberg Election Survey, and Cooperative Congressional Election Studies, and compare models of partisanship using regression techniques and model tests. Ideology and demographics both significantly influence an American's partisanship, but their relative importance

is different for women and men. The rational choice model is comparatively better for men, and the social identity model is comparatively better for women. These results increase our knowledge of the gender gap in political behavior.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. They love me, even when I am unlovely.

This dissertation is also dedicated to my Lord Jesus Christ. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me, and He loves each person who reads these words.

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## I INTRODUCTION

Partisanship is the most important feature of political behavior today. What party Americans identify with determines elections, who controls the Presidency, Congress, and the Supreme Court, what kinds of laws are passed and what we think of the, and public opinion on issues from anthropogenic global warming to Zionism. Party identification is related to a host of seemingly non-political phenomena too. Which party you identify with is linked to what you eat and drink, what you drive, where you shop, what neighborhood you live in, what entertainment media you watch, and even what your parents named you.

Today, the American dichotomy of party identification is incredibly meaningful. The duelling labels of Republican and Democrat are not empty symbols, but red and blue banners of enormous complexity. And those standards represent two sides in intense conflict over offices, policies, and values. Partisans on both sides often claim that they are fighting “for the future of America” or “The American Dream;” it is (often) not hyperbole. The direction the Democratic Party and rank-and-file Democratic voters would lead our country in *is* very different from the direction that Republicans and typical Republican partisans would lead us in.

Some pundits and political scientists, tired of partisan bickering, negative ads, and constant campaigns, wish for how things were in the 1950s, when partisanship was not as adversarial as it is in 2014. These commentators lament partisanship and wish for an end of parties or a nebulous moderation that trivializes the meaningful choices of politically active Americans.

I chose to do this dissertation because partisanship is so significant. Indeed, I doubt I would be a political scientist at all if it were not for the motivation of our very partisan politics. I certainly would not care much about politics without it. Like many strong partisans (as you will see), I tend to dualistically divide concepts,

objects, and ideas into the very good and very bad, and be engaged and energized by those I can categorize in such a bipolar way.

To enable social scientists and interested citizens to understand politics in America, particularly voting, elections, and public opinion, in this dissertation I create a new theory of partisanship. I analyze and defend a meaning of party identification that changes the way we understand strong Democrats, strong Republicans, and everything in between.

Partisanship is conflict-oriented group identity. In the first substantive section of this dissertation, I explain why two personality traits cause Americans identify as pure independents, independent leaners, weak partisans, or strong partisans are. These two traits, an individual's joiner status and Need to Evaluate, strongly influence strength of partisanship. These traits are independent from but related to both rational choice and social identity theories of partisanship, and help bridge the gap between them. My findings give political science a robust theory of strength of partisanship for the first time.

In the second body section, I demonstrate that men and women vary in their levels of Need to Evaluate and joiner status. Gender variation in these two traits creates a significant portion of the gender gap in strength of partisanship, with women more likely to identify as weak partisans and men more likely to identify as independent leaners.

In the last substantive section, I explain gender variation in the sources of partisanship. Ideology is a better predictor of partisanship than social group demographics for both men and women, but is comparatively better for men. Social group demographics are comparatively better at explaining partisanship for women. Additionally, the impact of demographic factors on partisanship varies for men and women. These results add to our knowledge of the gender gap in political behavior.

## II THE CONFLICT-ORIENTED GROUP IDENTITY OF PARTISANSHIP

### 2.1 Introduction

At first glance, political science seems to have thoroughly explained partisanship in the mass public. We know the factors that determine an American’s choice between the Republicans and Democrats, including parental inheritance (Niemi and Jennings 1992), income (Gelman et al. 2008), race (Abramowitz and Saunders 2006), region (Abramowitz and Saunders 2006), religiosity (Layman 2001), and ideology (Downs 1957), among many others. We know that partisanship is stable over time (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002), though Americans occasionally switch parties on the basis of their ideology (Carsey and Layman 2006). And we know that party ID, along with ideology/issue positions and candidate evaluations, is part of the “iron triangle” of factors critical to individual vote choice (Achen 1992, Jacoby 2010).

Beneath the surface, however, there is much about partisanship that political scientists do not understand. On academic surveys, we rigorously measure partisanship in terms of a seven-point scale<sup>1</sup> that divides partisans into strong and weak and independents into leaners and pure (see Bartels 2000 for one example), but we don’t fully understand these categories. We can’t explain the difference between weak partisans and leaning independents, for example. The most prominent analysis of leaning independents (Keith et al. 1992) tells us that leaning independents and weak partisans are similar in many ways, but doesn’t articulate how they are distinct, either theoretically or empirically. Furthermore, this topic has not been robustly re-examined in 20 years, and mass partisanship has changed a lot in the past two decades. Political scientists lack a general theory that explains the distinctions between strong and weak partisans, and pure independents and leaners as well.

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<sup>1</sup>The scale runs from Strong Democrat to Weak Democrat to Independent, Leans Democrat to Pure Independent to Independent, Leans Republican to Weak Republican to Strong Republican.

Thus, scholars are surprisingly ignorant about the concepts and scale that we are using to measure and analyze partisanship. This lack of understanding is due to a larger knowledge gap. Political scientists who study behavior know a lot about what determines whether a person leans to one side or the other, but relatively little about what influences how *strongly* someone is pulled toward one party or the other. Most of our record of investigating partisanship is in looking at why Democrat or Republican, not why partisan or not partisan in general. And we need this. What determines strength of partisan identification?

Political scientists must have a theory of party strength to complement theories of party direction. In this paper, I explain partisanship as a conflict-oriented group identity, and give us one. After describing why partisanship should be thought of as a conflict-oriented group identity, I argue that an American's Need to Evaluate (N2E) and tendency to be a "joiner" strongly influence this identity. I explain how these concepts can be measured, and demonstrate that they strongly affect an individual's strength of partisanship. Though their specific effects vary somewhat by party ID, N2E and joiner status influence strength of partisanship for *both* Republicans and Democrats; neither is significantly associated with favoring one party over the other. I show that these two personality traits distinguish between different levels of partisanship in theoretically expected ways. My theory generates specific predictions about what kind of people identify at each level of the strength of partisanship scale, and I find considerable support for these predictions. Finally, I create a two-by-two typology of four categories that shows how an American's tendency to be a joiner and N2E interact with one another and strength of partisanship, and demonstrate empirical support for these relationships. My conflict-oriented group identity theory provides much insight into strength of partisanship.

## 2.2 Literature Review

Contemporary scholarship offers two broad explanations for why people identify as partisans. The first, derived initially from work by Campbell et al. (1960), is generally focused around social factors like parental socialization (Niemi and Jennings 1992), group membership and affiliation (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002, Greene 2004), and generational cohort effects (Jennings and Markus 1984). The second, more rationalist explanation dates back to Downs (1957) and primarily analyzes mass partisanship in terms of ideology (Fiorina 1981, Abramowitz and Saunders 2006) and elite issue positions and cues (Carsey and Layman 2006). These two strains of research on partisanship can be generally labeled as “social identity” theories and “rationalist” theories, and have provided behavior scholars with a great deal of theoretical leverage.

Social identity theories, particularly as articulated by Green, Palmquist, and Schickler (2002), argue that individuals align with the party whose social group coalition is most similar to themselves. In effect, Americans are thought to choose the party that answers the question, “which party has people most like me?” The Democratic party, for example, has long been the home of unionized workers, the poor, and people who are not very religious, and so according to social identity theory, an agnostic poor member of the SEIU (Service Employees International Union) is expected to be a Democrat regardless of his or her political ideology. The partisanship of this individual’s parents and the party popular when this person became politically active (cohort effects) are also often argued to have some effects on an individual’s partisanship, but social identity theory asserts that the main determinant of partisanship is a party’s coalition of social groups.

For the most part, social identity theories provide a much richer description of partisans than they do of independents. In doing so, they lack a good understanding of the nature of partisanship. Independents are expected to identify only weakly with both parties, have few emotional reactions to candidates, be relatively uninterested in

politics, and be less politically active than partisans (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002).<sup>2</sup> Independents are people who do not fit well within either the Democratic or Republican social group coalition or whose group loyalties are split between the parties, such as Southern Jewish businesswomen.<sup>3</sup>

This simplistic explanation of partisanship has critical flaws. It says very little about why Americans whose social group affiliations line up well with one party, such as churchgoing white men with high incomes, would choose to be independent. Conversely, citizens who strongly identify with the GOP or Democrats but are uncharacteristic of the parties' typical social coalitions are a mystery for social identity theories. They do not account for why some Americans identify weakly with a party, and some strongly, or why most independents lean toward one party. In failing to explain these groups, which constitute a large chunk of the American electorate, social identity theories fail to fully understand the nature of partisanship. There is no social identity theory of strength of partisanship.<sup>4</sup>

Contemporary rationalist theories of partisanship are also incomplete. Rationalist explanations of partisanship (Downs 1957, Fiorina 1981, Franklin 1992, Abramowitz and Saunders 1998) argue that Americans choose the party (and candidate) with policy views closest to their own issue positions and ideology. Conservatives choose the Republican party, and liberals choose the Democratic party. The correlation between ideology and partisanship in the mass electorate has grown increasingly strong in recent years (Abramowitz and Saunders 1998), as has the relationship between specific issue positions and partisanship (Bafumi and Shapiro 2009). Consistent with rationalist theories of partisanship, ideology is a strong predictor of which party cit-

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<sup>2</sup>Green, Palmquist, and Schickler (2002, 40) also find evidence that independents move back and forth over time between independence and affiliation with one of the two parties, but do not attempt to explain this finding or incorporate it into their theory.

<sup>3</sup>These theories also assert that independents are likely to be the children of independents.

<sup>4</sup>What might one look like? Given the importance of social groups to social identity theories of party direction, a social identity theory of strength of partisanship might suggest that how strongly partisan an American is would depend on how well that person fit into each party's social group coalition. Pure independents would not fit at all in either party's coalition, leaning independents a little better, weak partisans a little better than that, and strong partisans best.

izens vote for (Abramowitz 2010) and which party they identify with (Abramowitz and Saunders 2006). Although a person's partisanship affects his or her issue positions due to party elite cues, people do seek out and even switch parties on the basis of their ideology (Carsey and Layman 2006). Furthermore, recent empirical evidence indicates that rationalist, ideology-based explanations of mass partisanship outperform social-identity-based explanations (Abramowitz and Saunders 2006).

Rationalist theories seem to explain the sources of directional partisanship quite well, but have no explicit theory of strength of partisanship.<sup>5</sup> According to rational choice theories of partisanship, individuals pick a party based on whichever party is ideologically closest to their positions. This explanation, however, does not distinguish between strong and weak partisans, or independent leaners and pure independents. In effect, rationalist theories treat partisanship only as a three-point ordinal variable<sup>6</sup>, even though political scientists often study strength of partisanship as a seven-point scale.<sup>7</sup>

It is not clear how rationalist theories would explain variation in strength of partisanship. According to rational choice theories of partisanship, behavior scholars should observe relatively few independents (both pure and leaners), since even a person who leans slightly left or right should choose the Democrats or Republicans respectively. For the most part, issue positions in American politics fall on one ide-

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<sup>5</sup>What might a hypothetical rational choice theory of strength of partisanship look like? It *might* expect more extreme ideology at each level of partisanship, with pure independents the most moderate and strong partisans the most liberal/conservative. However, moderates and the non-ideological do not comprise a supermajority of independents. Independents are often ideological. Recent Gallup polling finds that about 55% of independents identify as liberal or conservative (<http://www.gallup.com/poll/148745/Political-Ideology-Stable-Conservatives-Leading.aspx>). In addition, a rationalist theory of strength of partisanship *might* expect very few moderates among weak or strong partisans. However, significant minorities of Democrats and Republicans identify as moderate (39% and 24% respectively, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/148745/Political-Ideology-Stable-Conservatives-Leading.aspx>).

<sup>6</sup>This variable runs from Democrat to Independent to Republican.

<sup>7</sup>It runs from Strong Democrat to Weak Democrat to Independent, Leans Democrat to Pure Independent to Independent, Leans Republican to Weak Republican to Strong Republican. Some scholars have critiqued this scale for not sufficiently accounting for the social identity aspects of partisanship (see Greene 2002 and Huddy, Mason, and Aaroe 2010), but the seven-point scale remains the primary way that political scientists understand partisanship.

ological dimension (Poole and Rosenthal 1997), so spatial calculations of ideological distance are possible even among the mass public; a large and increasing percentage of the mass electorate is able to position the Democrats correctly to the left of the Republicans on an ideological scale (Abramowitz 2010). Yet, even though rationalist explanations of partisanship might expect independents to be a small percentage of the electorate, independents constituted between 35% and 45% of American public in 2011 (<http://www.gallup.com/poll/15370/party-affiliation.aspx>). Under rationalist explanations of partisanship, primarily people who are non-ideological or whose ideology is between that of the Republicans and Democrats (presumably some moderates) are expected to identify as independent.

Thus, both social identity theories and rationalist theories fail to fully explain partisanship. While useful, they view partisanship too simplistically, and do not account well for empirical deviation from their descriptions. More critically, they offer no real theory of strength of partisanship. Despite rationalist and social identity theories' specific explanations of what determines whether a person identifies as Democrat or Republican, their inadequacy regarding strength of partisanship leaves political scientists with a crucial gap in our understanding of political behavior. I now turn to expounding a theory of strength of partisanship.

### 2.3 Theory

To build a useful theory of strength of partisanship, it is essential to examine the nature of partisanship. Social identity theories have rightly pointed out that partisanship is inherently a group identity. Green, Palmquist, and Schickler (2002) assert that “party *identification*, however, concerns the way in which people *think of themselves* . . . What matters is one’s image of the social groups ‘Democrat,’ ‘Republican,’ and ‘Independent’ and whether one includes oneself among them” (137, italics theirs).

Green, Palmquist, and Schickler, however, do not fully understand how people form group attachments. In describing why people join parties, they write that “our model is agnostic about whether people seek to save time or even to form social attachments. We are satisfied by decades of social-psychological research on ‘minimal groups’ showing that people readily form group attachments even when there seems to be little or nothing at stake (Tajfel 1978)” (138). In other words, having valuably observed that people identify as Democrats or Republicans on the basis of group attachments, Green, Palmquist, and Schickler are content to accept that observation simply because people have a tendency to join groups. They do not investigate why this tendency to join is the case for political parties.

These authors not only refrain from theorizing about why people tend to join groups in the context of partisanship, but actively mischaracterize how people form group attachments. Green, Palmquist, and Schickler note that “given the human penchant for embracing group distinctions, it seems unnecessary and potentially misleading to explain party identification with reference to instrumentalities of various sorts” (138). They are effectively assuming here that people are equally likely to join groups or think of themselves as part of one. This idea is false. For example, libertarians are less socially connected to other people than liberals or conservatives (Iyer, Koleva, Graham, Ditto, and Haidt 2012). Norranders (1997) finds that women are more likely to be partisans than men because of “women placing a greater value on connections with others” (464).

### Partisanship and Joiners

Research on social capital and civic participation suggests that some people are inherently “joiners” and others are not (Putnam 2001). Joiners are predisposed towards becoming members of groups (e.g., bowling leagues, Bible studies, the American Heart Association, etc.) and participating in them, while non-joiners are not

(Putnam 2001).<sup>8</sup> Scholarship that draws on the concept of joiners typically measures it by observing whether or not a survey respondent is a member of at least one social group or observing the number of groups he or she is a part of (see Baldassarri 2011). This concept, though simple, has been shown to explain a variety of social phenomena, including an alleged decline of civic participation in America (Putnam 2001).<sup>9</sup>

Green, Palmquist, and Schickler's (2002) assumptions about the tendency of Americans to attach themselves to groups should therefore primarily hold for joiners. A rigorous explanation of party identification that draws from social identity theories should thus incorporate the idea of joiners vs. non-joiners in its theory of mass partisanship. Given what social scientists know about joiners, joiners should be more likely to be partisans than non-joiners. Non-joiners should be more likely to be independents, all else equal. In addition to whether a person is a joiner or not, the number of groups a joiner is part of should influence his or her degree of partisanship. The more groups a joiner is part of, the stronger that person's partisanship should be. There is some tentative evidence that this is the case (see Baldassarri 2011), but this idea has never been the primary subject of thorough empirical test.<sup>10</sup>

The explanatory power of the concept of joiners has yet to be fully incorporated into a general theory of strength of partisanship. Social identity theories point out that people have a tendency to form group attachments. However, this tendency varies widely based on the degree to which a person is a joiner or not. As a result, I believe an individual's joiner or non-joiner status should be a key difference

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<sup>8</sup>The concept of joiners has already begun to enter American popular culture. In the movie *Iron Man 2* (2010), for example, when it is suggested in a Congressional hearing that main character Tony Stark become part of America's military command structure, Stark responds by saying, "I'm not a joiner, but I will consider Secretary of Defense, if you ask nice."

<sup>9</sup>I say "alleged" because some authors are skeptical that the decline of civic participation includes political activities like voting (see McDonald and Popkin 2001 for one example).

<sup>10</sup>Baldassarri's (2011) initial findings are suggestive and useful, but are effectively an interesting side note to a tangentially-related analysis. Her evidence on joiners is not subjected to the kind of extensive testing necessary for it to be conclusive.

between partisans and independents, regardless of their demographic identifications (suggested by social identity theories) or ideology (suggested by rationalist theories).

Whether someone is a joiner or not should strongly influence whether they feel that they have a *stake* in a party and have some of claim of abstract ownership of it (as in, “**our** party is the party of free markets, and I’m doing my part by giving money and by telling undecided James that he should vote for us”). This idea of being a joiner being linked to feeling like a stakeholder and having a claim of ownership is similar to the way people speak when they are part of clubs like the Elks and Greek organizations. It is for this reason that we should expect that partisans who are joiners will have a party ID that is more resistant to change than others’ when the party is unpopular or seems incompetent. Partisan joiners will respond to poor performance or decisions they don’t like with thoughts like “I don’t like what our leaders in Congress are doing and think they are betraying the true spirit of our party, but they’ll get their heads turned around once they talk to the rest of us.”

These kinds of thoughts are typical of existing descriptions of strong partisans (see Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002). They can be disappointed with their party or speak out against it on a survey without disavowing their party or switching parties or becoming independent. The idea of joiners as predisposed to being partisans accounts for existing knowledge and improves our understanding of what partisanship is. It will take *a lot* of disagreement and disappointment with party leaders before people who are joiners abandon their party. To use the language of sports, partisan joiners not only root for the home team but feel that they are a part of it and have some claim to it.<sup>11</sup> Poor management of a team is going to lose fans who just root for the team (independent leaners) before it loses people who vaguely work for the franchise, like low-level talent scouts, boosters, and groundskeepers. Joiners will feel that they have buy-in to their party’s organization, and so they should be highly resistant to changing party ID or becoming independent leaners or true

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<sup>11</sup>For those not as familiar with sports, one could also think of partisanship as being part of a conflict-oriented tribe, like the Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland.

independents. Conversely, non-joiners' tendency to be independents should explain Green, Palmquist, and Schickler's interesting finding that independents are unstable, moving back and forth over time between independence and affiliation with one of the two parties. Independent non-joiners should not see themselves as stakeholders in their "team" or chosen identity, whether they are independent leaners or true independents. They will therefore be more likely to change their affiliation in response to external information or changing evaluations of party performance.

The latent individual trait of being a joiner is thus part of the nature of partisanship. In having a strong influence on whether a person identifies as a partisan or independent, it should account for a variety of political phenomena. These ideas will be elaborated on later. I now return to describing the other key aspect of strength of partisanship.

#### Partisanship and Need to Evaluate

Partisanship in the mass public is inherently a group identity. It is not just a group identity, however; it is a *conflict-oriented* group identity.<sup>12</sup> This is a critical difference between partisanship in contemporary America and other kinds of group identities. Mass partisanship is conflict-oriented by virtue of the structure and characteristics of political competition in modern America. Federico (2007) notes that "like evaluations of conservatism and liberalism, evaluative attraction to the Republican and Democratic candidates – and the parties that field them – can potentially be organized in either a bipolar fashion or a bivariate fashion (Green, 1988; Weisberg, 1980)" (540). Nationally, there are effectively only two party choices in American politics, the Democrats or the Republicans.<sup>13</sup> As a result, choosing to identify as a

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<sup>12</sup>Communications scholars have argued that rhetorical identification is inherently conflictual; Burke (1969) notes that "identification implies division" (45) and "to begin with 'identification' is, by the same token, though roundabout, to confront the implications of division" (22).

<sup>13</sup>On the few occasions when 3rd-party Presidential candidacies have won notable amounts of support from the public, such as Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive Party candidacy in 1912 and

Republican or Democrat is equivalent to choosing a side in a conflict. Each party can be thought of as trying to win a zero-sum “game” in which it wants its candidates to win elections. However, each party’s goal is not satisfied solely by winning elections. In the contemporary United States, polarized party activists and political elites that are sharply divided along ideological lines want to enact policies that fit their ideology about what constitutes an ideal society.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, whether the winning party is able to do this is often dependent on winning not just the Presidency and majorities of Congress, but supermajorities (due to filibusters, veto overrides, Constitutional amendment requirements, etc.). Because laws and appointments can be changed, no triumph is ever final in politics; the conflict is ongoing and never ends.

These characteristics of party conflict in contemporary America make becoming a partisan different from joining most other kinds of social groups; affiliation with other social groups is not often conflict-oriented in the same zero-sum way. To understand this idea, consider the characteristics of other kinds of social groups. Being a “joiner” in general is not an act of conflict. Many groups are not in direct competition with another group, and are often centered around some task or activity that members enjoy or promote (e.g. bowling leagues, the Make-A-Wish Foundation, a Bible study, the Humane Society, Suncoast Sports Association, Random Acts of Kindness, etc.).

Even some kinds of social groups that at least indirectly compete with other groups for membership or support (Greek organizations and fraternal organizations like the Elks and Lions, among others) are usually not in direct conflict with each other. For example, if there are 10 fraternities at a university, they all compete for members among the student body or the subset of the male student body that is interested in joining a fraternity. However, each fraternity may selectively recruit different kinds of members (one is the football fraternity, one is the engineering

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Ross Perot’s Independent candidacy in 1992, their primarily personalist parties have lost relevance relatively quickly after their defeats.

<sup>14</sup>Party goals could include things like patronage as well.

fraternity, one is the nerd fraternity, one is the nice guy fraternity, etc.), such that many of them do not compete over the same prospective members. It is possible that one man could be a nerdy, engineer-major gentleman who also plays football, but it is unlikely. Therefore, joining a fraternity is not the same as choosing a side in the fraternity conflict. You may favor your fraternity over the others, and even have a specific “rival” fraternity, but joining one fraternity does not often imply hostility to all other fraternities.

These arguments are even true in the case of a small town with only 2 fraternal organizations, the Elks and the Lions. While the two clubs might compete over the scarce resources of members or money, both presumably want the respect of the community (not a finite good) and to raise money for charity and to promote gentlemanly brotherhood in the town. Thus, even though both the Elks and Lions in this case want to “win” this competition, their goals upon winning are virtually the same. Note how this similarity contrasts with the opposing victory goals of Democrats and Republicans.

Returning to the metaphor of sports, even being a fan of a sports team is not quite the same as joining a political party in a two-party political system. Similar to the Democrats and Republicans, the teams compete over scarce, excludable resources (good players, fans, money, etc.). Moreover, there are usually rival teams, and it is almost always better for your team to win than for your team to lose. However, it is rare that there are *only* two teams in a sport, as is effectively the case with the American two-party system. Joining the Republicans or Democrats in American politics always means opposing all the other people who choose to identify with a group except those in your party; being a Red Sox fan means rejecting the Yankees, but probably has no real bearing on views of the San Diego Padres. Furthermore, with sports teams, the ultimate goal is to win games. Once that goal is satisfied, the competition ends until the next season. The St. Louis Cardinals won the 2011 World Series and they have won it forever, but the whole competition starts entirely

anew in the next season. This stands in contrast to constant, never-ending party competition and partisan policy change after winning elections.

These comparisons between political parties and other social groups provide important theoretical leverage about the nature of partisanship. They tell us that mass partisanship in modern American politics is inherently conflict-oriented; joining the Democrats or Republicans is equivalent to characterizing one side as good and the other side as bad. Conversely, since affiliating with a party means joining a conflict, not picking a party can be thought of as remaining neutral. This is true even of independent leaners. Not joining a party allows them to remain socially neutral even though they prefer one party to the other, something existing research suggests leaners prize (Keith et al. 1992).

Thus, a close look at the nature of what it means to be partisan suggests not only that partisanship is essentially about group identity, something which should be strongly determined by a person's tendency to be a joiner. It also tells us that partisanship is inherently conflict-oriented, about picking a side and making distinctions between good and bad or remaining neutral between two opposing factions. Fortunately, existing research suggests that an individual's proclivity toward the conflict-oriented aspects of partisanship can also be measured.

A person's Need to Evaluate is a psychological trait first prominently described by Jarvis and Petty (1996). According to Nir (2011), those who have a high Need to Evaluate have a "chronic tendency" to "form evaluative thoughts and judgments (Jarvis and Petty 1996)," dislike remaining neutral, "would rather take a stand than remain noncommittal," and have strong affective intensity toward parties, candidates, and objects in general (pgs. 509 - 510). Furthermore, those high in Need to Evaluate are more likely to evaluate candidates and the Republican and Democratic parties and liberalism and conservatism in a bipolar, or diametrically opposing way (Federico 2007). The Need to Evaluate trait therefore captures the conflict-oriented aspects of partisanship very well.

Analyses using the Need to Evaluate scale have become increasingly prominent in scholarship on political behavior, with political scientists evaluating its impact on elite framing effects on issues (Druckman and Nelson 2003), extremity of issue positions (Federico 2004), political participation and voter turnout (Bizer, Krosnick, Holbrook, Wheeler, Rucker, and Petty 2004), candidate knowledge (Holbrook 2006), understanding of liberalism and conservatism (Federico 2007), personification of states (McGraw and Dolan 2007), ideological issue constraint (Federico and Schneider 2007), attitude strength (Chong and Druckman 2010), and motivated reasoning and citizens' perceptions of public opinion (Nir 2011).

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of Need to Evaluate in political science, several scholars suggest that its full potential for insight has not yet been realized. Druckman, Kuklinski, and Sigelman (2009) note that Need to Evaluate is one example of a concept from psychology that should be more rigorously incorporated into political science research. Similarly, Federico and Schneider (2007) point out that the relationship between Need to Evaluate and other explanatory variables needs to be explored further.

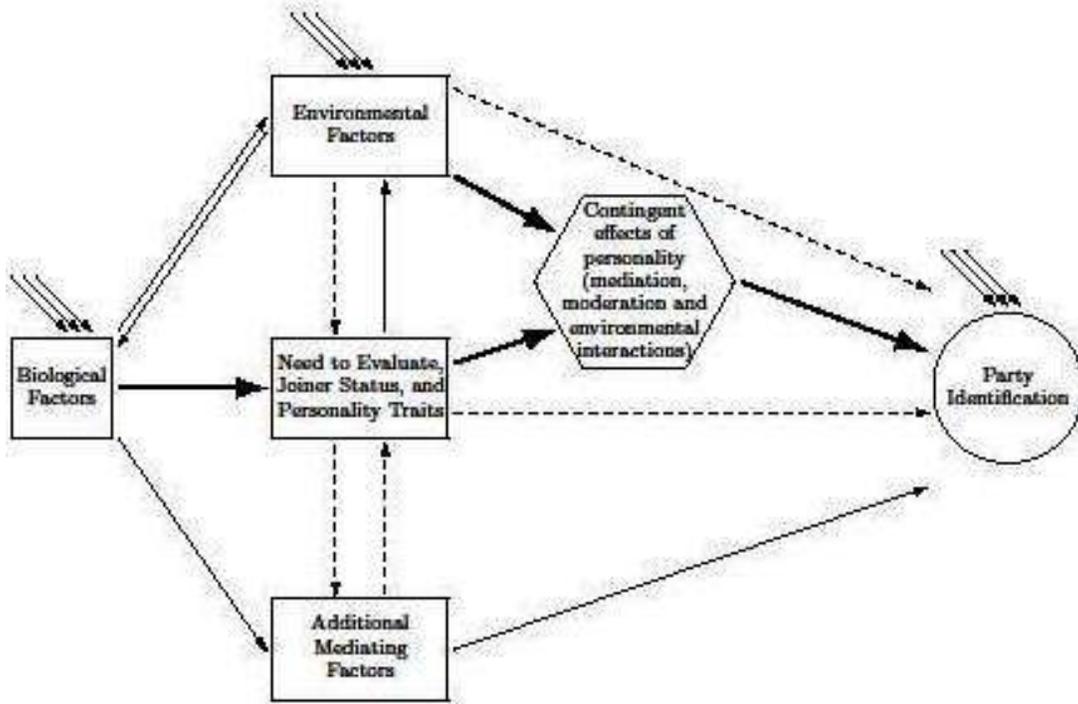
Since it seems strongly related to the nature of partisanship as a conflict-oriented group identity, an individual's Need to Evaluate should be a powerful determinant of the strength of his or her partisanship. Like a person's tendency to be a joiner, the Need to Evaluate is a latent personality trait that is conceptually prior to party identification. I expect both concepts to exert strong influence on a person's strength of partisanship, but the reverse is not true. It seems highly unlikely that partisanship influences these latent personality traits. This means that Need to Evaluate can be easily incorporated into statistical analyses of partisanship alongside important variables suggested by existing theories, such as group affiliation.

Figure 2.1 shows the theorized cognitive relationships between Need to Evaluate and joiner status and party ID.<sup>15</sup> The plot depicts how Need to Evaluate and joiner

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<sup>15</sup>This figure is from Mondak et al. (2010, 4) and was only slightly modified by me.

Figure 2.1: Cognitive Relationships Between N2E, Joiner Status, & Party ID



status fit into an adapted conceptual framework developed by Mondak et al. (2010, 4) for analyzing the relationship between personality traits and political behavior. Need to Evaluate and joiner status are personality traits like any other in Mondak et al.'s framework. As personality traits, Need to Evaluate and joiner status are causally influential on partisanship. They are also cognitively prior to other factors (suggested by the triple arrows above Party ID) that influence party identification (such as ideology, demographics, etc.). An American's Need to Evaluate, joiner status, and other personality traits are determined by biological/genetic factors, environmental factors, and other mediating factors.<sup>16</sup> In addition to their direct effects on party ID, Need to Evaluate and joiner status may have effects on partisanship that are

<sup>16</sup>For example, individuals who are isolated from others by their environment, rather than their own social choices, may have a strong tendency to join groups but will not have the opportunity to do so. If so, their joiner status would be measured as low when it is actually not.

contingent on certain environmental factors. For further details on the conceptual research framework depicted in Figure 2.1, see Mondak et al. (2010, 3-5).

### Joiners and Need to Evaluate

Federico and Schneider (2007) observe that “need to evaluate may have some of its most important effects in interaction with other social-cognitive variables . . . researchers have paid little attention to how the need to evaluate may interact with other factors to influence the organization of attitude and perceptions” (243). I expect that a person’s Need to Evaluate and tendency to be a joiner will combine to strongly influence strength of partisanship. However, their effects will function in different ways.

Political scientists often measure strength of partisanship in terms of a four-point scale (the folded version of the seven-point partisanship scale). This four-point scale runs from Pure Independent to Independent Leaner to Weak Partisan to Strong Partisan. As a result of its strong influence on group association, I expect a person’s joiner status to predict whether he or she identifies as a partisan or independent. Individuals who have a weak tendency to join groups should be Pure Independents or Independent Leaners, while those with a strong tendency to join groups should be Weak Partisans or Strong Partisans. Due to its relationship with how likely someone is to form positive and negative opinions and feelings about parties and remain neutral in a conflict, I expect someone’s Need to Evaluate to predict how strongly his or her partisanship favors one party over the other. Depending on joiner status, those high in Need to Evaluate should be Strong Partisans or Independent Leaners, while those low in Need to Evaluate should be Weak Partisans or Pure Independents.

Table 2.1 shows how Need to Evaluate and joiner status combine to predict strength of partisanship. Those low in Need to Evaluate and joiner status should be

Pure Independents, while those high in Need to Evaluate and low in joiner status should be Independent Leaners. Americans low in Need to Evaluate with a high likelihood of joining groups should be Weak Partisans. Those high in both Need to Evaluate and tendency to join groups should be Strong Partisans.

In this way, an individual’s Need to Evaluate and tendency to be a joiner should strongly determine the nature of his or her partisanship. The combination of these 2 social-psychological factors provides even greater theoretical leverage to explain strength of partisanship than either of these concepts alone. Their incorporation into existing knowledge allows me to generate an understanding of the differences between partisanship and independence that is overlooked by contemporary theories.<sup>17</sup>

Table 2.1: Two-by-Two Typology Between N2E, Joiner Status, and SPID

	High Need to Evaluate	Low Need to Evaluate
High Joiner Status	Strong Partisan	Weak Partisan
Low Joiner Status	Independent Leaner	Pure Independent

## 2.4 Designs for Assessing Theory

To assess whether an individual’s tendency to be a joiner and Need to Evaluate have a strong impact on strength of partisanship, I take advantage of the American National Election Studies’ (NES) 2008-2009 Panel Study. The NES 2008-2009 Panel Study includes the questions necessary to measure Need to Evaluate (see Bizer et al. 2004), joiner status (as measured in Baldassarri 2011), ideology, party ID and strength of party ID (measured to include strong/weak partisans, independent leaners, and pure independents), and standard demographic controls (race, income,

<sup>17</sup>I have no expectations that Need to Evaluate and joiner status will influence party direction, as opposed to party strength. I re-examine the findings of Bizer et al. (2004) by analyzing the effects of Need to Evaluate and joiner status on whether a person identifies as a Republican, and find no evidence they influence party direction.

education, religion, religiosity, marital status, age, region, and gender). I test the following hypotheses, which directly follow from the conflict-oriented, group identity theory of partisanship:

- **Hypothesis 1: An individual's Need to Evaluate and joiner status have a strong effect on partisanship, such that:**
  - **Hypothesis 1A: Americans with a higher Need to Evaluate have greater strength of partisanship.**
  - **Hypothesis 1B: Americans with a higher tendency to be a joiner have greater strength of partisanship.**
- **Hypothesis 2: Need to Evaluate and joiner status significantly explain the difference between different levels of strength of partisanship, such that:**
  - **Hypothesis 2A: Need to Evaluate significantly distinguishes between pure independents (lower Need to Evaluate) and leaners (higher).**
  - **Hypothesis 2B: Need to Evaluate significantly distinguishes between weak partisans (lower Need to Evaluate) and strong partisans (higher).**
  - **Hypothesis 2C: Joiner status significantly distinguishes between pure independents (lower joiner status) and weak partisans (higher).**
  - **Hypothesis 2D: Joiner status significantly distinguishes between leaners (lower joiner status) and strong partisans (higher).**
- **Hypothesis 3: Need to Evaluate and joiner status interact to influence an individual's strength of partisanship according to the typologies depicted in Table 2.1.**

- **Hypothesis 3A:** All else equal, individuals with a high joiner status and high Need to Evaluate are more likely to be strong partisans.
- **Hypothesis 3B:** All else equal, individuals with a high joiner status and low Need to Evaluate are more likely to be weak partisans.
- **Hypothesis 3C:** All else equal, individuals with a low joiner status and high Need to Evaluate are more likely to be independent leaners.
- **Hypothesis 3D:** All else equal, individuals with a low joiner status and low Need to Evaluate are more likely to be pure independents.

After testing these hypotheses and showing strong support for them, I provide additional findings as theory robustness checks in Appendix A. I show that, as reported in previous research and assumed by my theory, individuals with higher Need to Evaluate *are* significantly less ambivalent in their evaluations of the Democratic and Republican parties. I also demonstrate that an American’s Need to Evaluate is not the same as his or her level of political sophistication.

## 2.5 Data and Results

### Need to Evaluate, Joiner Status, and Effects on Strength of Partisanship

To test Hypotheses 1A and 1B, I run an ordered probit of folded strength of partisanship on Need to Evaluate, tendency to be a joiner, race, income, education, religion, religiosity, marital status, age, region, and gender. As is common on academic surveys, the NES 2008-2009 Panel Study measures partisanship on a

seven-point scale, from Strong Democrat to Weak Democrat to Independent Lean Democrat to Pure Independent to Independent Lean Republican to Weak Republican to Strong Republican. Folding this scale, I obtain a 4-point strength of partisanship scale that runs from Pure Independent to Independent Lean Republican/Democrat to Weak Republican/Democrat to Strong Republican/Democrat.

The NES 2008-2009 Panel Study measures Need to Evaluate robustly using just two questions.<sup>18</sup> The first question is: “Some people have opinions about almost everything; other people have opinions about just some things; and still other people have very few opinions. What about you? Would you say you have opinions about almost everything, about many things, about some things, or about very few things?” Following Bizer et al. (2004, 1005), I coded responses of “almost everything” as 1, “many things” as .66, “some things” as .33, and “very few things” as 0. The second question is: “Compared to the average person do you have fewer opinions about whether things are good or bad, about the same number of opinions, or more opinions? Would you say that you have a lot fewer opinions or just somewhat fewer opinions? Would you say that you have a lot more opinions or just somewhat more opinions?” Again following Bizer et al. (2004, 1005), I coded responses of “a lot more opinions” as 1, “somewhat more opinions” as .75, “about the same number of opinions” as .5, “somewhat fewer opinions” as .25, and “a lot fewer opinions” as 0. I then averaged the scores from each question to yield an semi-continuous scale that runs from 0 (lowest Need to Evaluate) to 1 (highest Need to Evaluate).

A person’s joiner status is measured by examining the number of organizations to which respondents to the 2008-2009 NES Panel Study said that they “currently belong.” The organizations that individuals could say that they currently belonged to included advocacy groups, amateur athletic organizations, arts associations, book reading clubs, business clubs, charitable organizations, churches and other houses of worship, religious clubs or groups, college or university-based clubs, Greek or-

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<sup>18</sup>See Bizer et al. 2004 for additional details on the measurement of Need to Evaluate.

ganizations, civic clubs, country clubs, fraternal orders, health clubs, local/district improvement organizations, political groups other than parties, social clubs, veterans clubs, and others. Following the coding in Baldassarri 2011 (19), tendency to be a joiner is coded as an ordinal scale ranging from 0 (member of no groups) to 1 (member of one group) to 2 (member of two or more groups).

A dummy variable measuring whether respondents identify as black is included, with the variable “Black” taking a value of 1 if the respondent identifies as black and 0 otherwise. Respondent income is coded as ordinal scale, ranging from 1 (respondent earns less than \$5,000 dollars a year) to 19 (respondent earns more than \$175,000 dollars a year). Education is also coded as an ordinal scale, ranging from 1 (respondent lacks a high school diploma) to 5 (respondent holds a graduate degree). I also include a dummy variable that measures if the respondent identifies as Catholic, such that “Catholic” takes a value of 1 if the respondent identifies as Catholic and 0 otherwise. Religiosity is a continuous variable that measures how many days per year the respondent reports attending religious services, not including weddings or funerals, and ranges from 0 days per year to over 300. I also include a dummy variable measuring a respondent’s marital status in my analysis; Married takes a value of 1 if the respondent is married and 0 otherwise. Age is coded as a continuous variable that ranges from 18 to 90 years. To account for the unique character of the South, I include a dummy variable (South) that measures whether a respondent lives in the South. South takes a value of 1 if the respondent lives in one of the states that fought for the Confederacy, and 0 otherwise. I also include a dummy variable measuring a respondent’s gender in my analysis; Male takes a value of 1 for men and 0 for women.

The results of my ordered probit analysis, regressing folded strength of partisanship on Need to Evaluate, joiner status, and a variety of controls, are depicted in Table 2.2. These results strongly support Hypotheses 1A and 1B. An American’s Need to Evaluate and tendency to join groups have strong effects on his or her

strength of partisanship, such that those with higher Need to Evaluate or tendency to join groups have greater strength of partisanship. Both of these effects are statistically significant at a .05 level, and are also highly substantively significant as well. Table 2.3 shows that these results hold when respondents are looked at separately by partisanship.<sup>19</sup> Need to Evaluate and joiner status have similarly strong effects on strength of partisanship for strong Democrats, weak Democrats, Democratic leaners, and pure independents only, and strong Republicans, weak Republicans, Republican leaners, and pure independents only, though some of the effects of other explanatory variables differ by partisanship.

Table 2.2: Ordered Probit of SPID on N2E and Joiner Status

	Estimate	Std. Error
Need to Evaluate	.83*	.18
Joiner Status	.11*	.05
Male	-.20*	.07
Age	.00	.00
Education	.10*	.04
Income	-.01	.01
Black	.40*	.15
Religiosity	.00	.00
Catholic	.02	.09
South	-.01	.08
Married	.12	.08
Tau1	-.29	.21
Tau2	.39#	.21
Tau3	1.09*	.21
Residual deviance = 2522.253		
N of sample = 1018		
AIC = 2550.253		
# indicates $p < .1$		
* indicates $p < .05$		

<sup>19</sup>The effects of personality traits on political attitudes and behavior can vary by party ID. See Table 5 of Arceneaux and Vander Wielen 2013 for one example.

Table 2.3: Ordered Probit of SPID on N2E &amp; Joiner Status for Partisans

	GOP + Indies Only	Democrats + Indies Only
	Est. (SE)	Est. (SE)
Need to Evaluate	.88* (.24)	.92* (.24)
Joiner Status	.14* (.06)	.13* (.06)
Male	-.16 (.10)	-.17# (.10)
Age	-.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Education	.10* (.05)	.16* (.05)
Income	.01 (.02)	-.02# (.01)
Black	-1.38* (.36)	.74* (.17)
Religiosity	.00* (.00)	-.00* (.00)
Catholic	.11 (.12)	-.02 (.11)
South	.09 (.11)	-.09 (.12)
Married	.35* (.12)	.02 (.10)
Tau1	.43 (.30)	.19 (.27)
Tau2	.97* (.30)	.69* (.27)
Tau3	1.64* (.30)	1.29* (.28)
Residual Deviance	1395.80	1472.73
N of sample	547	589
AIC	1423.80	1500.73

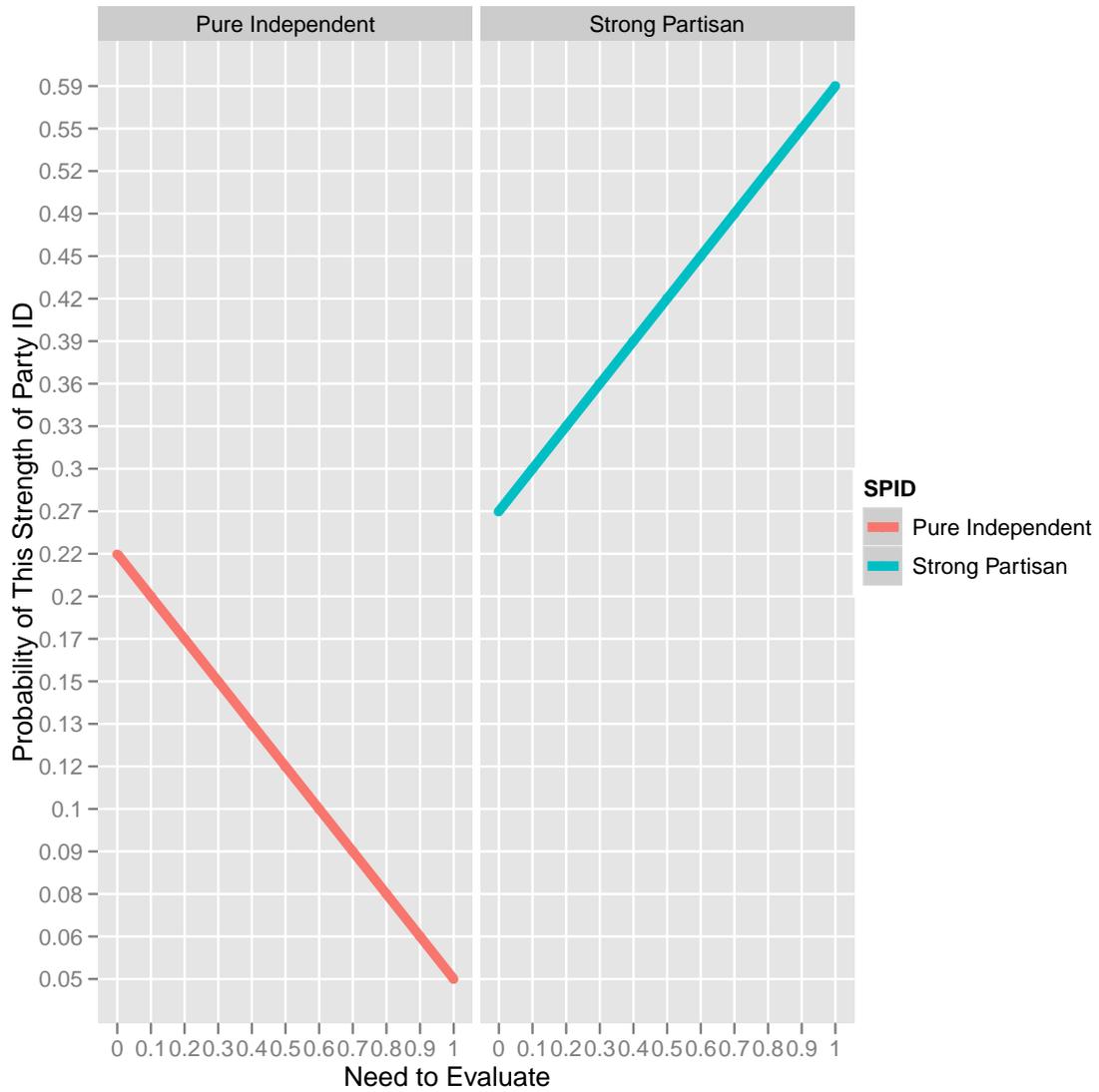
# indicates  $p < .1$

\* indicates  $p < .05$

Figure 2.2 shows how the predicted probabilities of being a pure independent or strong partisan change as a profile respondent's Need to Evaluate increases, all else equal. This profile respondent is the typical "median" respondent, and has her characteristics set at the sample median for all explanatory variables, except when Need to Evaluate and joiner status are allowed to vary. She is 51 years old, has some college education but no bachelor's degree, earns \$60,000 to \$74,999 per year, does not identify as black, is married and attends religious services 8 times per year, is not Catholic, does not live in the South, belongs to one group, and has a Need to Evaluate (.58) slightly above the scale midpoint (.5).

This median respondent's probability of being a pure independent is about 10%, and her probability of being a strong partisan is about 45%. All else equal, if her

Figure 2.2: Probability of SPID as N2E Varies for the Median Respondent



Need to Evaluate decreases to the minimum amount (0), her probability of identifying as a pure independent increases to approximately 22% and her probability of identifying as a strong partisan decreases to roughly 27%. If the profile respondent's Need to Evaluate increases to its highest amount (1), her probability of being a pure independent shrinks to only 5%, and her probability of being a strong partisan in-

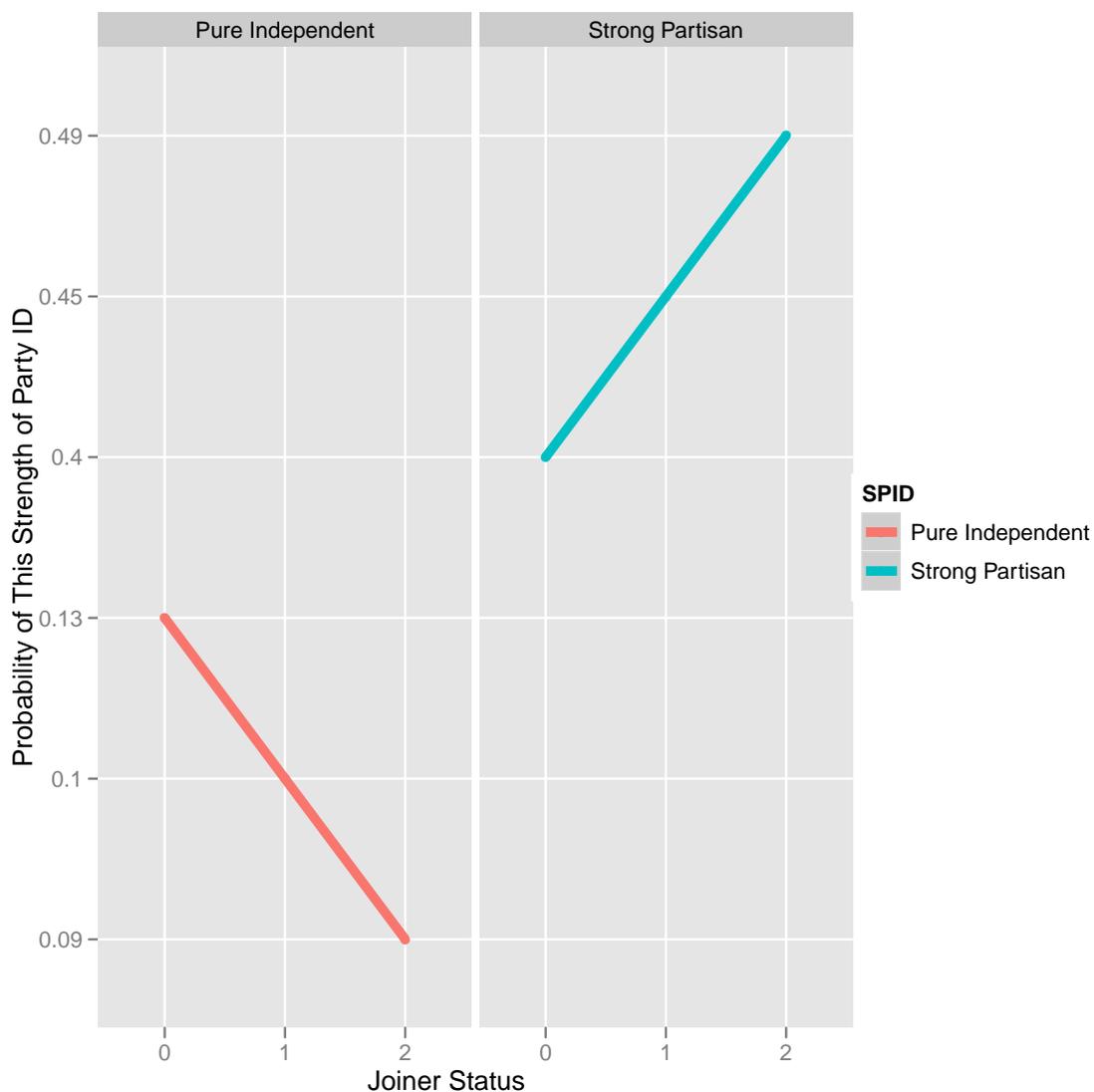
creases to a whopping 59%. These are huge effects, and show that Need to Evaluate is a strong determinant of partisanship. Moving from a very low Need to Evaluate to a very high one *doubles* the median respondent's probability of being a strong partisan, and *quarters* her probability of being a pure independent.

Joiner status also has a big effect on the median respondent's strength of partisanship, which is depicted in Figure 2.3. All else equal, if her tendency to join groups changes from its lowest level (0) to its highest level (2), her probability of identifying as a pure independent decreases from roughly 13% to about 9%. Her probability of identifying as a strong partisan increases from about 40% to roughly 49%. These are large effects, and show that tendency to join groups is also a strong determinant of partisanship. Moving from a low joiner status to a high one makes the median respondent about 25% less likely to be a pure independent, and roughly 25% more likely to be a strong partisan.

### Distinguishing Between Levels of Strength of Partisanship

Having demonstrated strong support for Hypotheses 1A-B, I now turn to testing Hypotheses 2A - 2D. Collectively, these hypotheses reflect the specific predictions of my theory about the effects of an American's tendency to join groups and Need to Evaluate on explaining the difference between different levels of strength of partisanship. Support for each of them individually provides evidence in favor of general Hypothesis 2. To test Hypotheses 2A - 2D, I use the same NES 2008-2009 Panel Study data that I used to test Hypotheses 1A-B and perform similar analyses that focus on only 2 categories of the folded strength of party ID scale at a time. For example, to determine whether Need to Evaluate significantly distinguishes between pure independents and leaners (Hypothesis 2A), I run a logit of leaner (1) or pure independent (0) SPID on Need to Evaluate, tendency to be a joiner, race, income, education, religion, religiosity, marital status, age, region, and gender for all respon-

Figure 2.3: Probability of SPID as Joiner Status Varies for Median Respondent



dents. I run similar logits for strong partisan (1) or weak partisan (0) SPID, weak partisan (1) or pure independent (0) SPID, and strong partisan (1) or independent leaner (0) SPID.

In addition, I run these logits separately for Democrats/Democratic leaners/pure independents and Republicans/Republican leaners/pure independents. This allows

me to examine how direction of partisanship and partisan differences affect these results, since the effects of personality traits on political attitudes and behavior can vary by party ID. My results in Table 2.4 provide mostly strong evidence for general Hypothesis 2.<sup>20</sup>

Table 2.4: Logits of 2 SPID Categories on N2E, Joiner Status, & Controls

	<b>Leaner or Pure Indie</b>	<b>Strong or Weak Partisan</b>	<b>Weak Partisan or Pure Indie</b>	<b>Strong Partisan or Leaner</b>
	Est. (SE)	Est. (SE)	Est. (SE)	Est. (SE)
N2E (All)	<b>1.39*</b> (.61)	<b>2.28*</b> (.44)	.45 (.60)	<b>.83#</b> (.44)
N2E (GOP+Indies)	<b>1.96*</b> (.78)	<b>2.45*</b> (.65)	.48 (.69)	.26 (.66)
N2E (Dems+Indies)	.68 (.76)	<b>2.11*</b> (.62)	.48 (.70)	<b>1.21#</b> (.63)
Joiner (All)	<b>.38*</b> (.17)	<b>.24*</b> (.11)	.17 (.16)	-.01 (.12)
Joiner (GOP+Indies)	<b>.48*</b> (.21)	<b>.51*</b> (.16)	-.07 (.18)	-.09 (.18)
Joiner (Dems+Indies)	.22 (.20)	-.02 (.16)	<b>.34#</b> (.19)	.08 (.17)

# indicates  $p < .1$

\* indicates  $p < .05$

Not only do the results in Table 2.4 strongly support Hypothesis 2A-C, but they also argue persuasively in favor of the idea that partisanship is a conflict-oriented group identity, and one that should be examined by strength *and* direction of partisanship.

As predicted by Hypothesis 2A, an American's Need to Evaluate strongly discriminates between whether he or she identifies as an independent leaner or pure independent, with those higher in Need to Evaluate more likely to be leaners. This finding holds for both all respondents, and Republicans, Republican leaners, and pure independents alone. Interestingly, an American's tendency to be a joiner has the same effect and for the same groups of respondents, with joiners more significantly more likely to be leaners than pure independents. While my theory makes no explicit predictions about joiner status discriminating between the two kinds of independents, this finding underscores the importance of joiner status. It also pro-

<sup>20</sup>Full results with controls available upon request from the author.

vides additional support for the theory that partisanship is a conflict-oriented group identity.

Table 2.4 also shows strong support for Hypothesis 2B. Need to Evaluate significantly distinguishes between strong partisans and weak partisans; those higher in Need to Evaluate are more likely to be strong partisans. This is true for all respondents and both partisan groups of respondents. Additionally, an American's tendency to join groups also has this effect for all respondents, and Republicans, Republican leaners, and pure independents. Individuals with higher joiner status are more likely to be strong partisans than weak partisans.

Hypothesis 2C is also supported in Table 2.4. An individual's joiner status significantly determines whether he or she is a weak partisan or pure independent, with those more likely to join groups more likely to be weak partisans. These results hold for Democrats, Democratic leaners, and pure independents alone, underscoring the importance of taking into account direction of partisanship when analyzing strength of partisanship.

Hypothesis 2D is only the component of general Hypothesis 2 that is not confirmed in Table 2.4. Joiner status has no statistically significant effect that distinguishes between leaners and strong partisans, for all respondents or either partisan group of respondents. However, although this specific prediction of my theory is not born out here, the components of the theory still discriminate between strong partisans and independent leaners. Need to Evaluate significantly distinguishes between strong partisans and leaners for all respondents, and Republicans, Republican leaners, and pure independents. Americans higher in Need to Evaluate are more likely to be strong partisans than independent leaners. Thus, Hypothesis 2 has considerable support. Table 2.4 shows that joiner status and Need to Evaluate can strongly discriminate between strength of partisanship categories; the conflict-oriented group identity theory of partisanship is very powerful.

## Need to Evaluate, Joiner Status, and Typology Effects on Strength of Partisanship

Having shown that Need to Evaluate and joiner status strongly explain the difference between levels of strength of partisanship in theoretically expected directions, I now turn to a stronger test of my theory. I show that joiner status and Need to Evaluate predict strength of partisanship according to the 2 by 2 typology depicted in Table 2.1, and demonstrate strong support for general Hypothesis 3.

In order to test Hypotheses 3A-3D, I assign cutpoints for “High” and “Low” joiner status and Need to Evaluate, and then create dummy variables representing the intersection of each pair. Individuals who are “High” in Need to Evaluate are those in roughly the top third of the sample in Need to Evaluate, and individuals who are “Low” in Need to Evaluate are approximately those in bottom third. Individuals who are “High” in joiner status are those who belong to three or more groups, and individuals who are “Low” in joiner status are those who belong to one group or no groups. This coding allows empirical representation of the Table 2.1’s four types with sufficient sample sizes for analysis.<sup>21</sup>

After creating dummy variables representing each of the four types of Americans in Table 2.1 (High Need to Evaluate/High Joiner Status, High Need to Evaluate/Low Joiner Status, Low Need to Evaluate/Low Joiner Status, and Low Need to Evaluate/High Joiner Status), I run logits of each of the four strength of partisanship categories on its theoretically influential Need to Evaluate/joiner status intersection dummy and controls.<sup>22</sup> Coefficient and standard error estimates are bootstrapped to increase their reliability. Once again, I examine these results for all respondents, and for strong and weak Democrats/Democratic leaners/pure independents, and strong

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<sup>21</sup>Further details of this typology coding are available upon request from the author. Any typology coding is to some degree arbitrary, and empirically faces a trade-off between conceptual specificity and sample size.

<sup>22</sup>The controls I use here are the same ones used in the rest of my analysis: Gender, age, education, income, black ID, religiosity, Catholic ID, Southern residence, and marital status.

and weak Republicans/Republican leaners/pure independents separately. Table 2.5 shows the results, which strongly support Hypotheses 3A-3D.

Confirming Hypothesis 3A, Americans who are high in Need to Evaluate and joiner status are significantly more likely to be strong partisans, all else equal. This relationship holds for all respondents, and both partisan groups. Table 2.5 also shows evidence supporting Hypothesis 3B, though only for strong and weak Republicans, Republican leaners, and pure independents; those high in joiner status but low in Need to Evaluate are more likely to be weak partisans.

I also corroborate Hypothesis 3C. Among all respondents, and strong and weak Republicans, Republican leaners, and pure independents, those high in Need to Evaluate but low in joiner status have a significantly greater likelihood of being independent leaners. Furthermore, Table 2.5 demonstrates that those with low joiner status and low Need to Evaluate are much more likely to be pure independents, for all respondents and for both partisan groups. This evidence strongly supports Hypothesis 3D. Having found empirical support for Hypotheses 3A-3D, my analysis substantially verifies general Hypothesis 3.

It's not clear why the dynamics in Hypotheses 3A-3D should hold more powerfully for the Republican group than the Democratic one. This may be due to unique characteristics of the sample, or some other factor may be at work. Nevertheless, Table 2.5 shows that my theory significantly explains strength of partisanship.

The significant effects presented in Table 2.5 are substantial. Among all respondents, the sample's median respondent is about 17 percentage points more likely to be a strong partisan if she is high in both Need to Evaluate and joiner status.<sup>23</sup> For strong and weak Republicans, Republican leaners, and pure independents, the median respondent is about 5 percentage points more likely to be a leaner if she is high in Need to Evaluate and low in joiner status, and approximately 12 percentage points more likely to be a weak partisan if she is low in Need to Evaluate and high

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<sup>23</sup>The demographic profile of this respondent is discussed previously.

Table 2.5: Logits of SPID Categories on Need to Typology Dummies

	<b>Strong Partisan</b>	<b>Weak Partisan</b>	<b>Independent Leaner</b>	<b>Pure Independent</b>
	Est. (SE)	Est. (SE)	Est. (SE)	Est. (SE)
High N2E/High Joiner (All)	<b>.68*</b> (.24)	-	-	-
Low N2E/High Joiner (All)	-	.11 (.31)	-	-
High N2E/Low Joiner (All)	-	-	<b>.36#</b> (.22)	-
Low N2E/Low Joiner (All)	-	-	-	<b>.76*</b> (.23)
High N2E/High Joiner (GOP+Indies)	<b>.81*</b> (.35)	-	-	-
Low N2E/High Joiner (GOP+Indies)	-	<b>.54#</b> (.33)	-	-
High N2E/Low Joiner (GOP+Indies)	-	-	<b>.43#</b> (.27)	-
Low N2E/Low Joiner (GOP+Indies)	-	-	-	<b>.90*</b> (.24)
High N2E/High Joiner (Dems+Indies)	<b>.51#</b> (.31)	-	-	-
Low N2E/High Joiner (Dems+Indies)	-	-.78 (.66)	-	-
High N2E/Low Joiner (Dems+Indies)	-	-	.27 (.31)	-
Low N2E/Low Joiner (Dems+Indies)	-	-	-	<b>.62*</b> (.27)
N (All)	1018	1018	1018	1018
N (GOP+Indies)	547	547	547	547
N (Dems+Indies)	589	589	589	589

# indicates  $p < .1$  after rounding  
 \* indicates  $p < .05$  after rounding  
 Estimates are bootstrapped, B=250  
 Control variables not shown  
 Full results available upon request

in joiner status. Among strong and weak Democrats, Democratic leaners, and pure independents, the median respondent is roughly 11 percentage points more likely to be pure independent if she is low in Need to Evaluate and joiner status. These strong substantive effects also provide supporting evidence for general Hypothesis 3.

## 2.6 Conclusion

I have demonstrated considerable support for general Hypotheses 1-3. The results of these analyses corroborate my conflict-oriented, group-identity theory of partisanship. While rational choice and social identity theories provide important insight on the direction of party identification, a complete understanding of partisanship, particularly strength of partisanship, requires analyzing Need to Evaluate and joiner status.

Americans perceive their parties as a part of themselves, and to be partisan they must be willing to embrace the identification of joining a group of “people like

me” or even join a group at all. They must be willing to accept distinctions between themselves and others, and their team and the opposing. Therefore, the role of joiner status to some degree fits with social identity explanations of partisanship. However, to join a party Americans must also be able *to see* distinction between themselves and others, to take stands on issue positions and evaluate their beliefs and those of others in a dualistic way. Need to Evaluate is a source of those preferences and distinctions. The role of Need to Evaluate is complementary to rationalist, ideology-based theories of partisanship; it supports the idea that preferences are important by arguing for the relevance of the sources of those preferences. Thus, Need to Evaluate, joiner status, and my conflict-oriented, group-identity theory of partisanship help reconcile existing theories and also build upon them.

These two social-psychological characteristics strongly influence strength of partisanship for independents and individuals of both parties. Furthermore, they effectively discriminate between levels of the under-studied strength-of-partisanship scale, something existing theories are unable to do. Americans can be effectively classified on the basis of their joiner status and Need to Evaluate into four types; these types correspond with the four categories of folded strength of partisanship and explain them surprisingly well.

The conceptual and empirical power of the conflict-oriented, group identity theory of partisanship rests on just two personality traits. Political behavior scholars have begun taking advantage of personality to generate insightful research (e.g., Mondak 2010), and the conclusions presented here suggest that we should do so even more. Since genetics determines personality to some degree, political scientists should analyze genetics and personality together going forward, at least to the extent that this is possible without compromising theory. My future work will build on this idea and examine whether Need to Evaluate and joiner status can explain observed gender differences in partisanship.

### III CONFLICT, GROUPS, AND THE GENDER GAP IN STRENGTH OF PARTISANSHIP

#### 3.1 Introduction & Research Question

Scholars of partisanship and elections have focused much attention on “gaps” in party ID and voting among a variety of American demographics in recent years (Olson and Green 2006), including the religion gap, age gap, and gender gap. The gender gap in particular has been found to be robust and multifaceted. Scholars have found persistent differences between men and women in Democratic identification (Box-Steffensmeier, De Boef, and Lin 2004), Policy Mood (Kellstedt, Peterson, and Ramirez 2010), and social welfare views (Kauffman and Petrocik 1999).

Many of the broad conclusions of political science research on the gender gap are widely known and have even been absorbed and transmitted by the popular press. However, there is an important aspect of the gender gap that is sometimes overlooked: Strength of partisanship.

Political scientists have known of a persistent gender gap in strength of partisanship since Norrander (1997), though scholars have been aware of it in various forms for decades (Norrander 1999). Norrander (1997) pointed out robust differences between men and women in strength of partisanship, with men more likely to identify as independent leaners (or “leaners”) and women more likely to identify as weak partisans. After demonstrating that these gaps had persisted over time and were not simply an artifact of demographic differences, Norrander suggested that the gaps might be due to women’s greater affinity for embracing others and groups or gender-based variation in psychological traits. However, she was unable to thoroughly test these explanations due to lack of available data.

I demonstrate that Norrander’s broad findings on the gender gap in strength of partisanship still hold. Women are still more likely to be weak partisans than

men, and men are still more likely to be leaners than women. I then apply the conflict-oriented, group identity theory of partisanship (see Ferguson 2013) to explain these differences. As Norrander suggested, women have a higher latent tendency to join groups than men, and this contributes to observed differences in strength of partisanship between men and women. Additionally, men are higher in a personality trait called Need to Evaluate, and this also contributes to the gender gap. I analyze how important Need to Evaluate and joiner status are for the gender gap in strength of partisanship separately for men and women, and show that they are important for both genders and that they significantly contribute to the gender gap in strength of partisanship.

### 3.2 Literature Review

Women are more likely than men to identify as Democrats (Box-Steffensmeier, De Boef, and Lin 2004), have more liberal Policy Mood than men (Kellstedt, Peterson, and Ramirez 2010), and have more liberal views on issues such as education, healthcare, social welfare, and defense (Conover 1988, Shapiro and Mahajan 1986). Scholars have provided some explanations for these differences, including women being more economically vulnerable in the past (Carroll 1988, Kellstedt, Peterson, and Ramirez 2010). Other explanations include variation in the percent of poor, single women in the American public (Box-Steffensmeier, De Boef, and Lin 2004), women's greater empathy than men (Gault and Sabini 2000, Brooks and Valentino 2011), and genetic factors (Hatemi, Medland, and Eaves 2009). Women may base their ideological identification on different issues than men as well (Norrander and Wilcox 2008). Men are also somewhat more interested in and informed about politics (Mondak and Anderson 2004), though it's not clear how this relates to these aspects of the gender gap. Importantly, women's greater liberalism and identification with the Democratic Party are *not* caused by abortion or women's equality issues (Kauffman, Petrocik, and Shaw 2008).

In contrast to the more well-known aspects of the gender gap, political scientists have not discovered the causes of women's greater propensity to identify as weak partisans and men's greater affinity for being independent leaners. Norrander (1997) finds that neither ideological proximity nor standard demographic differences between men and women are responsible for these differences. It is also not the case that women have more things they like about the political parties (Norrander 1997).

Norrander asks: "Does the independence gap stem from a more general difference in the manner in which men and women view the political world? Gilligan (1982) suggests that socialization leads men to value separateness and women to value connections with others. Men's preference for separateness might be expressed in political independence, while women's sense of belonging might lead them to partisanship" (1997, 471-472). However, she can't directly test these ideas, and is unable to provide an explanation for men's greater identification as leaners and women's greater identification as weak partisans.

Political scientists have had difficulty explaining the distinctions between independent leaners and weak partisans generally. Perhaps the most prominent work on leaners, Keith et al. 1992, primarily concludes that leaners are very similar to weak partisans. Until recently, behavior scholars lacked even a general theory of strength of partisanship, commonly measured on academic surveys as an ordinal scale that runs from Pure Independent to Independent Leaner to Weak Partisan to Strong Partisan. Without an understanding of what it means to be an independent leaner or a weak partisan, and the difference between them, explaining why men more often choose one and women more often choose the other is naturally challenging.

Fortunately, Ferguson (2013) lays out a theory of strength of partisanship that elucidates the distinction between independent leaners and weak partisans. His conflict-oriented, group identity theory of partisanship takes advantage of two personality traits, an individual's Need to Evaluate and joiner status. Described first by Jarvis and Petty (1996), people high in Need to Evaluate don't like remaining

neutral in conflicts, have a “chronic tendency” to “form evaluative thoughts and judgments (Jarvis and Petty 1996),” and tend to strongly like or dislike parties and candidates (Nir 2011, pgs. 509 - 510). Joiner status refers an individual’s latent tendency to join groups, which varies widely in the American public (see Putnam 2001 and Baldassarri 2011).

Ferguson (2013) shows that Need to Evaluate and joiner status significantly affect an American’s strength of partisanship and distinguish between levels of the four-point strength of partisanship scale. Independent leaners are those who have low joiner status and don’t join the partisan “team,” but have high Need to Evaluate and favor one party over the other. Weak partisans are those who have high joiner status and have joined the party, but have low Need to Evaluate and don’t strongly favor one party over the other. These differences are visualized in Table 3.1, replicated here from Ferguson (2013, where it appears as Table 2.1).

Table 3.1: Two-by-Two Typology for SPID, N2E, & Joiner Status

	High Need to Evaluate	Low Need to Evaluate
High Joiner Status	Strong Partisan	Weak Partisan
Low Joiner Status	Independent Leaner	Pure Independent

As depicted in Table 3.1, joiner status distinguishes between pure independents and weak partisans, and between leaners and strong partisans, depending on their Need to Evaluate. Need to Evaluate distinguishes between pure independents and leaners, and between weak and strong partisans, depending on their joiner status. This theory allow us understand the distinctions between independent leaners and weak partisans. I now turn to applying Ferguson’s conflict-oriented, group identity theory of partisanship to explain differences in strength of partisanship between men and women.

### 3.3 Theory

In order for the conflict-oriented, group identity theory of partisanship to explain why men are more likely to identify as leaners and women are more likely to identify as weak partisans, there must be gender differences relating to one or both of the theory's two key variables, joiner status and Need to Evaluate. One should expect this to be the case. Norrander (1997) suggests that there might be psychological "difference in the manner in which men and women view the political world" (471). Indeed, her discussion of male "preference for separateness" and female "sense of belonging" and "connections with others" seems to imply an inherent difference in joiner status between men and women, with women having higher joiner status than men.

One should also expect there to be significant differences between men and women in Need to Evaluate. In a pilot study of the 1998 American National Election Study, Bizer, Krosnick, Petty, Rucker, and Wheeler (2000, 41) demonstrate that men have higher Need to Evaluate than women (see Bizer et al.'s Table 3), though they do not provide a thorough explanation of this finding. Bizer, Krosnick, Holbrook, Wheeler, Rucker, and Petty (2004) provide additional evidence that men are higher in Need to Evaluate than women, although once again without summarizing why this might be the case. This may simply be an example of a "difference in the manner in which men and women view the political world" (Norrander 1997, 471). Regardless, we should expect men to be higher in Need to Evaluate than women.

If women are higher in joiner status than men, and men are higher in Need to Evaluate than women, Ferguson's (2013) conflict-oriented, group identity theory of partisanship should lead us to expect that men will favor different strengths of partisanship than women. Americans low(er) in joiner status and high(er) in Need to Evaluate are more likely to be independent leaners, and Americans high(er) in joiner status and low(er) in Need to Evaluate are more likely to be weak partisans (refer to Table 3.1, and see Ferguson 2013); we should expect more men to be leaners and

more women to weak partisans. Therefore, since the theory's two key explanatory factors vary between men and women in theoretically important and expected ways, we should expect that the conflict-oriented, group identity theory of partisanship should explain in part why men are more likely to be leaners and women are more likely to be weak partisans. In the rest of this paper, I show that this in fact true.

### 3.4 Designs for Assessing Theory

In order to demonstrate that the conflict-oriented, group identity theory of partisanship explains why women have a greater propensity to identify as weak partisans and men have a greater tendency to identify as independent leaners, I take advantage of the American National Election Studies' (NES) 2008-2009 Panel Study. The NES 2008-2009 Panel Study measures joiner status and Need to Evaluate (see Baldassarri 2011, Bizer et al. 2004, and Ferguson 2013), along with strength of partisanship (measured to include strong/weak partisans, independent leaners, and pure independents) and the usual demographics. This makes the NES 2008-2009 Panel Study ideal and unique.

First, I show that Norrander's (1997) findings on the gender gap in strength of partisanship continue to hold: Women are more likely to identify as weak partisans than men, and men are more likely to identify as leaners than women. Second, I show that as expected, women are significantly higher in joiner status than men, and men are significantly higher in Need to Evaluate than women. After demonstrating the expected differences in strength of partisanship, Need to Evaluate, and joiner status between men and women, I then turn to providing evidence that the conflict-oriented, group identity theory of partisanship explains much of the gender gap in strength of partisanship.

To do this, I demonstrate that Need to Evaluate and joiner status significantly discriminate between different levels of strength of partisanship in generally the same ways for men and women. Need to Evaluate discriminates between leaners and pure

independents for men by themselves and women by themselves, and between weak partisans and strong partisans for men by themselves and women by themselves. Joiner status discriminates between weak partisans and pure independents for men alone and women alone, and between leaners and strong partisans for women alone.

Specifically, I test the following general and specific hypotheses, which follow from the conflict-oriented, group identity theory of partisanship and discussion above:

- **Hypothesis 4: Men are more likely to be leaners because of their higher Need to Evaluate and/or lower joiner status.**
  - **Hypothesis 4A: Men are more likely to be leaners because their higher Need to Evaluate leads them to more often be leaners instead of pure independents than they otherwise would.**
  - **Hypothesis 4B: Men are more likely to be leaners because their lower joiner status causes them to more often be leaners instead of strong partisans than they otherwise would.**
  
- **Hypothesis 5: Women are less likely to be leaners because of their lower Need to Evaluate and/or higher joiner status.**
  - **Hypothesis 5A: Women are less likely to be leaners because their lower Need to Evaluate leads them to more often be pure independents instead of leaners than they otherwise would.**
  - **Hypothesis 5B: Women are less likely to be leaners because their higher joiner status causes them to more often be strong partisans instead of leaners than they otherwise would.**
  
- **Hypothesis 6: Men are less likely to be weak partisans because of their higher Need to Evaluate and/or lower joiner status.**

- Hypothesis 6A: Men are less likely to be weak partisans because their higher Need to Evaluate leads them to more often be strong partisans instead of weak partisans than they otherwise would.
- Hypothesis 6B: Men are less likely to be weak partisans because their lower joiner status causes them to more often be pure independents instead of weak partisans than they otherwise would.
- Hypothesis 7: Women are more likely to be weak partisans because of their lower Need to Evaluate and/or higher joiner status.
  - Hypothesis 7A: Women are more likely to be weak partisans because their lower Need to Evaluate leads them to more often be weak partisans instead of strong partisans than they otherwise would.
  - Hypothesis 7B: Women are more likely to be weak partisans because their higher joiner status causes them to more often be weak partisans instead of pure independents than they otherwise would.

I find support for general Hypotheses 4-7. These results show that Need to Evaluate and joiner status influence men and women's choice between identifying as leaners or pure independents and strong partisans, and between identifying as weak partisans or pure independents and strong partisans. This provides evidence that the causal mechanisms relating Need to Evaluate and joiner status to strength of partisanship are more or less the same for men and women.

I then analyze how much men and women's different levels of joiner status and Need to Evaluate lead them to choose differently between leaners or weak partisans, and other strengths of partisanship, for a profile median respondent. The results

provide some indication of *how much* of the observed gender gap in strength of partisanship is caused by gender differences in Need to Evaluate and joiner status. I find that these two traits, and the conflict-oriented, group identity theory of partisanship, are responsible for a considerable part of the gender gap in strength of partisanship. I then conclude by discussing the implications of these findings for future research.

### 3.5 Data and Results

To demonstrate the distinctions between women and men in strength of partisanship, and show that differences between women and men in Need to Evaluate and joiner status are partly responsible for these distinctions, I use data from the NES' 2008-2009 Panel Study. The Study measures partisanship using the familiar seven-point scale found on most academic surveys, which runs from Strong Democrat to Weak Democrat to Independent Lean Democrat to Pure Independent to Independent Lean Republican to Weak Republican to Strong Republican. Folding this seven-point scale allows me to measure strength of partisanship in a party-neutral way, so that it runs from Pure Independent to Independent Leaner to Weak Partisan to Strong Partisan.

Need to Evaluate is measured robustly with two questions (see Bizer et al. 2004). One question asks: "Some people have opinions about almost everything; other people have opinions about just some things; and still other people have very few opinions. What about you? Would you say you have opinions about almost everything, about many things, about some things, or about very few things?" Mirroring Ferguson (2013) and Bizer et al. (2004, 1005), I code responses of "almost everything" as 1, "many things" as .66, "some things" as .33, and "very few things" as 0. The next question asks: "Compared to the average person do you have fewer opinions about whether things are good or bad, about the same number of opinions, or more opinions? Would you say that you have a lot fewer opinions or just somewhat fewer opinions? Would you say that you have a lot more opinions or just

somewhat more opinions?” Again mirroring Ferguson (2013) and Bizer et al. (2004, 1005), I code responses of “a lot more opinions” as 1, “somewhat more opinions” as .75, “about the same number of opinions” as .5, “somewhat fewer opinions” as .25, and “a lot fewer opinions” as 0. I take the mean of the scores from each question to create a scale that runs from 0 (minimum Need to Evaluate) to 1 (maximum Need to Evaluate).

I measure an American’s joiner status by adding up the number of organizations to which respondents said that they “currently belong.” Organizations that people could say that they currently belonged to include: Amateur athletic organizations, arts associations, book reading clubs, business clubs, charitable organizations, churches and other houses of worship, religious clubs or groups, college or university-based clubs, Greek organizations, civic clubs, country clubs, advocacy groups, fraternal orders, health clubs, local/district improvement organizations, political groups other than parties, social clubs, veterans clubs, and a few more. I follow Baldassarri 2011 (19), and code joiner status as an ordinal scale that ranges from 0 (member of zero groups) to 1 (member of one group) to 2 (member of two or more groups). My analysis also includes several control variables. The variable “Black” takes a value of 1 if the respondent identifies as black and 0 otherwise. High School Graduate is a dummy variable that is a 1 if the respondent has graduated from high school and a 0 otherwise. Catholic takes a value of 1 if the respondent identifies as Catholic and 0 otherwise. Married is a dummy variable that I code as 1 if the respondent is married and 0 otherwise. I code Age as a continuous variable that ranges from 18 to 90 years.

Having explained the data I use, I now turn to my analysis. Table 3.2 shows the differences in strength of partisanship between men and women. Using the NES cumulative file, 1952-1994, Norrander (1997, 469) found that women were on average 5 percentage points less likely to identify as leaners than men and 5 percentage points more likely to identify as weak partisans than men. In contrast, Norrander found

that differences between men and women in pure independent and strong partisan identification were minimal. Table 3.2 presents Norrander’s findings alongside mine from the NES’ 2008-2009 Panel Study.

Table 3.2: Differences Between Men and Women in Strength of Partisanship

	Men	Women	Difference
NES, 1952-1994 (Norrander 1997)			
% Pure Independents	13	13	0
% <b>Leaners</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>5*</b>
% <b>Weak Partisans</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>-5*</b>
% Strong Partisans	30	30	0
# of cases	18,418	23,156	
NES 2008-2009 Panel Study			
% Pure Independents	13	12	0
% <b>Leaners</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>9*</b>
% <b>Weak Partisans</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>-6*</b>
% Strong Partisans	36	39	-3
# of cases	699	918	

\* indicates  $p < .05$

Significant differences are bolded.

Percentages are rounded.

NES 2008-2009 data are from Wave 1.

Table 3.2 shows that the differences in strength of partisanship between men and women revealed by Norrander sixteen years ago are still present, and may even be more pronounced. From the NES’ 2008-2009 Panel Study, I find that men are approximately 9 percentage points more likely to be independent leaners than women; a difference-of-proportions test indicates that this is a significant margin. Women are a statistically-significant 6 percentage points more likely to be weak partisans than men. Similar to Norrander, I also find no statistically significant difference between men and women in pure independent or strong partisan identification. Thus, the gender gap in strength of partisanship, with men more likely to be leaners and women more likely to be weak partisans, remains an interesting gender puzzle.

In addition to their divergent choices in strength of partisanship, women and men are also divided by Need to Evaluate and joiner status. Table 3.3 shows that, on average, men have 4 percentage points higher Need to Evaluate and women have 6.5 percentage points higher joiner status. Student's t-tests indicate that these differences are statistically significant. I will now test Hypotheses 4-7 and show that these gender-based differences in Need to Evaluate and joiner status account for a significant chunk of the gender gap in strength of partisanship.

Table 3.3: Need to Evaluate and Joiner Status for Men and Women

	Men	Women	Difference (In % of Variable Range)
Average Need to Evaluate	.60	.56	4.0* (.04/1)
Average Joiner Status	1.09	1.22	-6.5* (.13/2)

\* indicates  $p < .05$

Means are rounded.

I now test Hypotheses 4-7 and determine how joiner status and Need to Evaluate lead men and women to choose different strengths of partisanship. I run eight probits that show that Need to Evaluate and/or joiner status distinguish between levels of strength of partisanship in theoretically expected ways and demonstrate why men are more likely to be leaners, women are less likely to be leaners, women are more likely to be weak partisans, and men are less likely to be weak partisans.

To test Hypothesis 4A, I regress a dummy dependent variable measuring whether the male respondent identifies as an independent leaner (1) or a pure independent (0) on Need to Evaluate and a variety of controls. The results in Table 3.4 show that Need to Evaluate does distinguish between male leaners and pure independents, such that men with higher Need to Evaluate are more likely to identify as leaners. These results provide support for Hypothesis 4A. Men are more likely to be leaners because of Need to Evaluate. Not only does Need to Evaluate distinguish between leaners and pure independents for men, but men's higher Need to Evaluate leads them to be

more likely to identify as leaners than would be the case if they had the lower levels of Need to Evaluate that women do. If men had the lower average Need to Evaluate that women do, more men would be pure independents and fewer would be leaners.

To test Hypothesis 4B, I regress a dummy dependent variable measuring whether the male respondent identifies as a strong partisan (1) or an independent leaner (0) on joiner status and a variety of controls. The results in Table 3.5 show that joiner status does not distinguish between male strong partisans and leaners. It is *not* the case that more men are leaners because their lower average joiner status leads them to be more likely to identify as leaners than strong partisans. These results fail to support Hypothesis 4B. Thus, Need to Evaluate appears primarily responsible for why men are more likely to be leaners than they otherwise might be.

Table 3.4: Probits of Leaners (1) and Pure Independents (0) By Gender

	Men	Women
Intercept	.06 (.70)	-1.60** (.53)
<b>Need to Evaluate</b>	<b>.74* (.44)</b>	<b>.95** (.48)</b>
Age	-.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)
High School Graduate	.18 (.58)	.83** (.37)
Black	-.30 (.43)	-.11 (.37)
Catholic	-.20 (.23)	.37 (.24)
Married	-.08 (.21)	.14 (.19)
AIC	249.21	268.70
Residual Deviance	235.21	254.70
N of observations	190	199

\*\* indicates  $p < .05$

\* indicates  $p < .1$

All numbers rounded to 2 decimal places.

Standard errors in parentheses.

Need to Evaluate is also one reason why women are less likely to identify as leaners. I regress a dummy dependent variable measuring whether a female respondent identifies as an independent leaner (1) or pure independent (0) on Need to Evaluate and controls. Table 3.4 shows that Need to Evaluate explains much of the difference

Table 3.5: Probits of Strong Partisans (1) and Leaners (0) By Gender

	Men	Women
Intercept	.12 (.51)	.22 (.45)
<b>Joiner Status</b>	<b>.01 (.09)</b>	<b>.19** (.08)</b>
Age	.00 (.01)	-.00 (.00)
High School Graduate	-.32 (.43)	.05 (.40)
Black	-.06 (.39)	.65** (.27)
Catholic	.13 (.19)	-.14 (.17)
Married	.33** (.17)	.10 (.15)
AIC	409.66	428.02
Residual Deviance	395.66	414.02
N of observations	302	350

\*\* indicates  $p < .05$

\* indicates  $p < .1$

All numbers rounded to 2 decimal places.

Standard errors in parentheses.

between female leaners and pure independents; women with higher Need to Evaluate are more likely to be leaners. However, because women have lower levels of Need to Evaluate than men, women are as a group less likely to identify as leaners than they otherwise would be. These results provide support for Hypothesis 5A.

Joiner status also explains why women are less likely to identify as independent leaners than men are. Testing Hypothesis 5B, I run a probit of whether a female respondent identifies as a strong partisan (1) or an independent leaner (0) on joiner status and controls. The results are presented in Table 3.5. Women are less likely to be leaners because of joiner status. Joiner status distinguishes between strong partisans and leaners for women, and women with higher joiner status are more likely to identify as strong partisans rather than leaners. If women had the lower average joiner status that men have, more women would identify as leaners and fewer would be strong partisans. Thus, I find support for Hypothesis 5B.

Having shown that both Need to Evaluate and joiner status account for some of the difference between men and women in independent leaner identification, I now

evaluate their effects on gender differences in weak partisan identification. To test Hypothesis 6A, I run a probit of whether a male respondent identifies as a strong partisan (1) or a weak partisan (0) on Need to Evaluate and controls. Table 3.6 shows that Need to Evaluate significantly distinguishes between strong and weak partisans for men; men with higher Need to Evaluate are more likely to be strong partisans. If men had the lower levels of Need to Evaluate that women do, more men would be weak partisans and fewer would be strong partisans. Therefore, Hypothesis 6A is supported and Need to Evaluate partly explains why fewer men identify as weak partisans.

Joiner status also explains why fewer men identify as weak partisans. To test Hypothesis 6B, I regress a dummy dependent variable measuring whether a male respondent identifies as a weak partisan (1) or a pure independent (0) on joiner status and a variety of controls. As is evident in Table 3.7, joiner status significantly distinguishes between male weak partisans and pure independents. Men with higher joiner status are more likely to be weak partisans. If men had the higher average joiner status that women do, more men would be weak partisans and fewer would be pure independents. Hypothesis 6B is confirmed.

Need to Evaluate and joiner status also explain why women are more likely to be weak partisans. To test Hypothesis 7A, I regress a dummy dependent variable measuring whether a female respondent identifies as a strong partisan (1) or a weak partisan (0) on Need to Evaluate and controls. Results are presented in Table 3.6. As expected, Need to Evaluate significantly distinguishes between female strong and weak partisans. Women with higher Need to Evaluate are more likely to be strong partisans. However, because women have a lower levels of Need to Evaluate than men, more women identify as weak partisans than would otherwise be the case. These results confirm Hypothesis 7A.

To test Hypothesis 7B, I run a probit of whether a female respondent identifies as a weak partisan (1) or a pure independent (0) on joiner status and controls. Table

Table 3.6: Probits of Strong (1) and Weak Partisans (0) By Gender

	Men	Women
Intercept	-.34 (.65)	-1.40** (.38)
<b>Need to Evaluate</b>	<b>1.15** (.35)</b>	<b>1.63** (.31)</b>
Age	.00 (.00)	.01 (.00)
High School Graduate	-.23 (.55)	.30 (.30)
Black	-.02 (.41)	.64** (.20)
Catholic	-.16 (.17)	-.10 (.14)
Married	-.03 (.18)	-.11 (.12)
AIC	445.5	671.16
Residual Deviance	431.50	657.16
N of observations	329	510

\*\* indicates  $p < .05$

\* indicates  $p < .1$

All numbers rounded to 2 decimal places.

Standard errors in parentheses.

Table 3.7: Probits of Weak Partisans (1) & Pure Independents (0) By Gender

	Men	Women
Intercept	.26 (.66)	-.47 (.43)
<b>Joiner Status</b>	<b>.24** (.12)</b>	<b>.17* (.10)</b>
Age	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)
High School Graduate	-.27 (.56)	.57* (.33)
Black	-.42 (.46)	-.06 (.31)
Catholic	-.00 (.22)	.40* (.22)
Married	.19 (.22)	.47** (.17)
AIC	245.83	323.27
Residual Deviance	231.83	309.27
N of observations	189	285

\*\* indicates  $p < .05$

\* indicates  $p < .1$

All numbers rounded to 2 decimal places.

Standard errors in parentheses.

3.7 shows that joiner status significantly distinguishes between weak partisans and pure independents for women; women with higher joiner status are more likely to be

weak partisans. Women's greater average joiner status leads them to be more likely to identify as weak partisans than would be the case if they had the lower average amount of joiner status that men do; Hypothesis 7B is supported.

My analysis reveals strong support for general Hypotheses 4-7. Need to Evaluate and joiner status partly explain why men are more likely to be leaners and less likely to be weak partisans, and why women are more likely to be weak partisans and less likely to be leaners. Generally, I find that both Need to Evaluate and joiner status are responsible for these differences, and all but one of specific Hypotheses 4A - 7B is confirmed. The conflict-oriented, group identity theory of partisanship explain part of the gender gap in strength of partisanship. Nonetheless, it is important to quantify to some degree how much of this gap that Need to Evaluate and joiner status explain.

To demonstrate quantitatively how important Need to Evaluate and joiner status are for the gender gap in strength of partisanship, I use predicted probabilities for the profile median respondent. Similar to what I did for men and women separately, I run probits of the choice between leaner (1) and pure independent (0), strong partisan (1) and leaner (0), strong partisan (1) and weak partisan (0), and weak partisan (1) and pure independent (0) on Need to Evaluate/joiner status (as appropriate) and controls for all respondents. The results are depicted in Table 3.8, and are similar to those in Tables 3.4-3.7, with Need to Evaluate and joiner status significantly influencing the choice between different strengths of partisanship in expected ways.<sup>1</sup>

Using the sample's median respondent, I calculate this respondent's probability of identifying as an independent leaner or weak partisan for each of the four probits depicted in Table 3.8. The sample's median respondent is a 51-year-old, married,

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<sup>1</sup>For those who want to see this analysis performed separately for men and women, using the probit results from Tables 3.4-3.8, I provide these results in the "Assessing How Much Need to Evaluate and Joiner Status Affect the Gender Gap, Separately for Men and Women" section of Appendix B in Table B-1, along with a brief discussion.

Table 3.8: Probits of 2 SPID Categories on N2E or Joiner Status

	<b>Leaner or Pure Indie</b>	<b>Strong or Weak Partisan</b>	<b>Weak Partisan or Pure Indie</b>	<b>Strong Partisan or Leaner</b>
	Est. (SE)	Est. (SE)	Est. (SE)	Est. (SE)
Intercept	-1.01** (.40)	-1.12** (.32)	-.24 (.35)	.19 (.33)
<b>Need to Eval. Joiner Status</b>	<b>.83** (.32)</b>	<b>1.43** (.23)</b>	-	-
Age	.00 (.00)	.01** (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
High School Grad.	.70** (.30)	.17 (.25)	.33 (.28)	-.14 (.29)
Black	-.24 (.28)	.48** (.16)	-.15 (.25)	.51** (.21)
Catholic	.09 (.16)	-.12 (.11)	.22 (.15)	-.01 (.13)
Married	.06 (.14)	-.05 (.10)	.34** (.13)	.18* (.11)
AIC	512.10	1108.40	563.66	835.69
Residual Deviance	498.10	1094.4	549.66	821.69
N of observations	389	839	474	652

\*\* indicates

$p < .05$

\* indicates

$p < .1$

non-black respondent who is not Catholic and who has graduated from high school. The sample's male average Need to Evaluate is .6 and female average Need to Evaluate is .56. The sample's female average joiner status is 1.22, and male average joiner status is 1.09 (see Table 3.3).

I compare this median respondent's probability of identifying as an independent leaner or weak partisan using the sample's male average Need to Evaluate/joiner status (as if this median respondent were male) and sample's female Need to Evaluate/joiner status (as if this median respondent were female). These probabilities, and the difference between them, are depicted in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9: Median Probabilities of Leaner & Weak Partisan Identification

	<b>With Mean Male Traits</b>	<b>With Mean Female Traits</b>	<b>Gender Difference</b>
Pr(Leaner Over Pure Independent)	66.5%	65.5%	1%
Pr(Leaner Over Strong Partisan)	33.5%	33%	.5%
Pr(Weak Partisan Over Strong Partisan)	44%	46%	2%
Pr(Weak Partisan Over Pure Independent)	74.5%	75.5%	1%

Consistent with the gender gap in strength of partisanship in general (see Table 3.2), Table 3.9 shows that the sample's (male) median respondent with average male Need to Evaluate/joiner status is predicted to identify as a leaner more often overall than his (female) counterpart with average female Need to Evaluate/joiner status. The sample's (female) median respondent with average female Need to Evaluate/joiner status is predicted to choose to be a weak partisan more often than her male counterpart.

Table 3.9's distinctions in predicted strength of partisanship between these two median respondents are entirely caused by the male and female differences in average Need to Evaluate and joiner status. These trait differences, equivalent to only 4% of Need to Evaluate's range<sup>2</sup> and 6.5% of joiner status' range<sup>3</sup>, have considerable effects. Due to Need to Evaluate and joiner status, the (male) median respondent is 1% more likely to identify as a leaner instead of a pure independent, and .5% more likely to identify as a leaner instead of a strong partisan. Average gender differences in Need to Evaluate and joiner status cause a total gender gap in leaner identification for the median respondent of 1.5%.<sup>4</sup> Given that the overall gender gap in leaner identification (see Table 3.2) in the entire sample is only 9%, 1.5% is not an inconsiderable amount.

Need to Evaluate and joiner status cause the (female) median respondent to be 2% more likely to identify as a weak partisan instead of a strong partisan, and 1% more likely to identify as a weak partisan instead of a pure independent. Average gender differences in Need to Evaluate and joiner status cause a total gender gap in weak partisan identification for the median respondent of 3%.<sup>5</sup> Since the overall gender gap in weak partisan identification (see Table 3.2) in the entire sample is only 6%, 3% is a large amount! Thus, gender distinctions in average joiner status and

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<sup>2</sup>  $\frac{.6-.56}{1} = .04$   
<sup>3</sup>  $\frac{1.22-1.09}{2} = .065$   
<sup>4</sup>  $1\% + .5\% = 1.5\%$   
<sup>5</sup>  $2\% + 1\% = 3\%$

Need to Evaluate account for a considerable part of the gender gap in strength of partisanship.

### 3.6 Discussion and Conclusion

The gender gap in strength of partisanship demonstrated by Norrander (1997) persists, with men more likely to identify as independent leaners and women more likely to identify as weak partisans. Additionally, women and men are divided by two personality traits related to strength of partisanship, with women having higher joiner status and men having higher Need to Evaluate. The conflict-oriented, group identity theory of partisanship explains a significant part of the persistent gender gap in strength of partisanship. Need to Evaluate and joiner status generally influence male and female strength of partisanship in the same ways, but gender differences in these traits lead men and women to tend toward different partisan identities.

As Norrander (1997) suggested, gender differences in tendency to join groups lead women to be more likely to identify as weak partisans and less likely to choose to be leaners. Persistent distinctions in male and female Need to Evaluate influence men to be more likely to identify as independent leaners and less likely to be weak partisans. For the sample's median respondent, the amount of gap in strength of partisanship created by gender differences in average joiner status and Need to Evaluate is illustrative. These two key traits are a significant reason why men are more likely to identify as leaners and women are more likely to identify as weak partisans, even though the average gender differences in these traits are only about 4-7% of their ranges.

Need to Evaluate and joiner status help us understand some of the reasons why men are more likely to identify as leaners and women are more likely to identify as weak partisans. It's not clear what other factors account for the rest of the gender gap in strength of partisanship. Personality traits obviously account for some of the gender gap, but perhaps genetic factors play some role as well. Gender differences in

the relative importance of social identity and rational choice explanations of partisan direction may play some role as well. Future research will build upon the results presented here and work a toward a comprehensive explanation of the gender gap.

## IV RATIONAL CHOICE, SOCIAL IDENTITY, AND DIFFERENCES IN HOW WOMEN AND MEN IDENTIFY AS PARTISANS

### 4.1 Introduction & Research Question

Research on partisanship in America has advanced two predominant explanations of partisanship in the mass public: Social identity theory and rational choice theory (Franklin and Jackson 1983, Abramowitz and Saunders 2006). Rational choice theories explain partisanship as a combination of ideology and issue positions, while for social identity theories, partisanship is determined by membership in demographic groups.

Each theory has been shown to have explanatory power in different circumstances. However, Abramowitz and Saunders (2006) demonstrate that rational choice explanations of partisanship outperform social identity explanations of partisanship for most Americans. Recent scholarship has often accepted this aggregate-level finding without qualification.

This casual scholarly acceptance of the superiority of rational choice explanations of partisanship without much exploration of potential variation in this finding is surprising. It seems unlikely that rational choice outperforms social identity to the same degree for all groups or in all circumstances. Broad groups of Americans vary considerably in both the rational choice and social identity factors that determine partisanship, including ideology, income, and racial identification (among many others). Americans who identify as Hispanic, for example, are much more likely not to use ideology terms like liberal, moderate, and conservative to describe themselves than other groups (Abrajano and Alvarez 2011).

The explanatory power of rational choice and social identity theories should be different for men and women. Women and men are noticeably distinct in several kinds of political behavior, and scholars have done extensive research on the multi-faceted

“gender gap” (Chaney, Alvarez, and Nagler 1998, Box-Steffensmeier, De Boef, and Lin 2004, Olson and Green 2006, Kellstedt, Peterson, and Ramirez 2010, Lawless and Fox 2013, Kanthak and Woon 2014). This gender-based variation includes several factors that influence partisanship or strength of partisanship, including issue positions and political attitudes (Shapiro and Mahajan 1986, Kauffman and Petrocik 1999, Atkeson and Rapaport 2003, Morton, Tyran, and Wengstrom 2011), Policy Mood (Kellstedt, Peterson, and Ramirez 2010), and personality traits (Chapman et al. 2007, Wang 2013).

In this paper, I demonstrate gender differences in the applicability of rational choice and social identity theories of partisanship. We should expect ideology and demographics to both significantly influence an American’s partisanship, but their relative power to differ for women and men. I show that this is the case.

Rational choice models of partisanship are better than social identity models for men and women. They are more related to partisanship, explain partisanship more accurately, predict more Americans’s party IDs correctly, and create better models of partisanship.

However, the rational choice and social identity models of partisanship are significantly different for women and men, and the strength of their key explanatory factors varies by gender. The explanatory advantage of rational choice models is substantially bigger for men than it is for women. Ideology is a more important cause of partisanship for men. For women, social identity models of partisanship are comparatively better than they are for men. Demographics and group membership are a more important part of partisanship for women, and repeatedly have different effects on partisanship than they do for men.

These findings demonstrate an additional aspect of the gender gap: the applicability of rational choice and social identity theories of partisanship. The causes of party ID overlap for women and men, but are not the same. These findings demon-

strate the importance of evaluating theories at multiple levels of analysis, and suggest future areas of research in which this practice will be fruitful.

## 4.2 Literature Review

Political scientists' explanations of partisanship have primarily derived from rational choice or social identity theories. Rational choice theory views partisanship as a function of ideology and the sum of an individual's issue positions (Downs 1957). Consequently, it expects Americans to identify with the party (Democratic or Republican) whose ideology and issue positions are closest to their own. In practice, political behavior scholars typically analyze the rational choice model of partisanship by analyzing the relationship between an individual's self-reported ideology and his or her partisanship (Fiorina 1977, Franklin and Jackson 1983, Abramowitz and Saunders 1998, Shreckhise and Shields 2003).<sup>1</sup>

Social identity theory views partisanship as a group identity (Huddy, Mason, and Aaroe 2010); you are a part of your party, and it is part of you. This theory traces its lineage back to Campbell et al. (1960), and argues that an individual's partisanship reflects both how he or she sees the world, and his or her place in it. Social identity theory expects Americans to examine the Democratic and Republican party's social group coalitions, and identify with the party whose coalition most resembles themselves. In practice, political scientists usually evaluate the social identity model of partisanship by examining the relationship between an American's partisanship and a wide variety of demographic attributes, including age, income, religion, religiosity, racial identification, region of residence, education, and marital status (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002, Greene 2004). Other influential social identity factors such as union membership or parental party identification are less common on major surveys, but are examined when available.

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<sup>1</sup>In the *The American Voter Revisited*, Lewis-Beck et al. (2008) additionally summarize partisan voting according to the rational choice model as: "Which party the person votes for is determined in a pure rational-choice model by which party's ideological position is closest to the voter's" (27).

Both rational choice and social identity theories have contributed greatly to our understanding of partisanship (Abramowitz and Saunders 2006, Bafumi and Shapiro 2009). However, in recent years scholars have become interested in which theory provides the better model of partisanship (Abramowitz and Saunders 2006). Because each theory is part of a powerful and far-reaching broader body of theory, knowing which one gives us the most realistic model of how Americans identify as Democrats or Republicans is not a pedantic exercise. Whether social identity or rational choice theory generally more accurately represents reality tells us much about how individuals receive political information (Gerber and Green 1999, Bartels 2002), when and how individuals change parties or realignment occurs (Layman, Carsey, and Horowitz 2006), how partisanship shapes views of politicians and events (Fiorina 1981, Zaller 1992), and how candidates succeed in elections (Markus and Converse 1979, Edlin, Gelman, and Kaplan 2007), among other things.

There is some consensus that rational choice theory overpowers social identity theory and better explains partisanship for most Americans (Abramowitz and Saunders 2006, Ellis 2010, Sniderman and Stiglitz 2012, Medeiros and Noel 2013).<sup>2</sup> This general agreement, while empirically justified, is surprisingly free of depth or nuance. We have not extensively investigated how well social identity theory and rational choice theory describe partisanship across recent elections or social groups.<sup>3</sup>

Political scientists are often interested in differences in political behavior between politically important groups, including those that differ by ideology (Lupia, Levine, Manning, and Sin 2007), racial identification (Gerber, Huber, Doherty, Dowling, and Ha 2010), region of residence (Feller, Gelman, and Shor 2012), income (Gelman, Shor, Bafumi, and Park 2008), and personality (Gerber, Huber, Doherty, and

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<sup>2</sup>Sniderman and Stiglitz (2012) may put it best: “These partisans who appear on the pages of *The American Voter* and its successor, *The New American Voter*, remain a political force. Yet, as an *overwhelming* body of research now testifies, a signature fact of contemporary American electoral politics is the conjunction or fusion of party identification and policy preferences” (emphasis mine).

<sup>3</sup>Laudably, Abramowitz and Saunders (2006) do this in a limited fashion in their seminal article (see Table 7), but following research has failed to expand upon their blueprint.

Dowling 2012). This is *especially* true when those groups vary in how well they are characterized by a particular theory or implied phenomena, such as economic voting (Gelman, Shor, Bafumi, and Park 2008), valence perceptions of candidates (Fulton 2013), or political information reception (Parker-Stephen 2013). Since the predictions of good theories are borne out in reality, understanding when the accuracy of theories is different for important social groups is *essential* to a generalized understanding of the political world.

To our credit, political scientists have done an excellent job with this in researching the “gender gap.” Differences in the strength of theories and political phenomena between men and women are often well-documented, well-researched, and even well-publicized to a broad audience. This is true of issue positions (Conover 1988, Shapiro and Mahajan 1986), movement in Policy Mood (Kellstedt, Peterson, and Ramirez 2010), voter turnout (McDonald 2007), willingness of quality candidates to run for office (Kanthak and Woon 2014), political knowledge (Mondak and Anderson 2004), and strength of partisanship (Ferguson 2014).

However, political scientists have not effectively analyzed any potential gender gap in the two canonical theories of partisanship, rational choice theory and social identity. There is some work that touches on this idea (Norrander 1997, Greene and Elder 2001), but no thorough analysis. Both the popular press and scholars are well aware of differences in partisanship and ideology between men and women (Sabato 2013)<sup>4</sup>, and yet political scientists have not looked carefully at how these might be related to gender distinctions in our two canonical theories of partisanship.

Scholars need to examine gender differences in the applicability of rational choice and social identity theories of partisanship for two reasons. First, examining variation in the robustness of the two broad theories of partisanship between important social groups is necessary to build generalizable knowledge of real political world. Second, analyzing differences in the rational choice and social identity theories of partisanship

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<sup>4</sup>Indeed, these differences were echoed interminably during the 2012 Presidential election.

is critical for deepening research on the gender gap. The results in this paper are highly relevant to both these ideas.

### 4.3 Theory

I have now shown why analyzing potential variation in the applicability of theories of partisanship for men and women is important. However, this analysis is not just warranted as a *possibility*. We should *expect* gender differences in the strength of rational choice and social identity theories of partisanship.

Ferguson (2013) has shown the importance of two personality traits, Need to Evaluate and joiner status, for determining an American's strength of partisanship. Furthermore, Ferguson (2014) has also shown the significant differences between women and men in these traits (See Table 4.1, reproduced from Ferguson's Table 3.3).<sup>5</sup> Men are higher in Need to Evaluate, and women have greater joiner status. Ferguson (2014) shows that this explains a large part of why men are more likely to identify as independent leaners and women are more likely to identify as weak partisans.

Table 4.1: Average Need to Evaluate and Joiner Status for Men and Women

	Men	Women	Difference (In % of Variable Range)
Average Need to Evaluate	.60	.56	4.0* (.04/1)
Average Joiner Status	1.09	1.22	-6.5* (.13/2)

\* indicates  $p < .05$

Means are rounded.

<sup>5</sup>Bizer, Krosnick, Petty, Rucker, and Wheeler (2000, 41) also show that men have higher average Need to Evaluate than women, and Bizer, Krosnick, Holbrook, Wheeler, Rucker, and Petty (2004) additionally corroborate this finding.

Gender differences in Need to Evaluate and joiner status should lead us to expect gender differences in the applicability of rational choice and social identity theories of partisanship. While these two traits are directly related to strength of partisanship (Ferguson 2013), they should also be indirectly related to partisanship. An American's Need to Evaluate is a personality trait that is fundamentally about preferences and the source of preferences. Ferguson (2013) writes:

“According to Nir (2011), those who have a high Need to Evaluate have a “chronic tendency” to “form evaluative thoughts and judgments (Jarvis and Petty 1996),” dislike remaining neutral, “would rather take a stand than remain noncommittal,” and have strong affective intensity toward parties, candidates, and objects in general (pgs. 509 - 510). Furthermore, those high in Need to Evaluate are more likely to evaluate candidates and the Republican and Democratic parties and liberalism and conservatism in a bipolar, or diametrically opposing way (Federico 2007).”

In other words, individuals high in Need to Evaluate are more likely to both have strong preferences on many things *and* apply them to related concepts. Those concepts include ideology and partisanship. Thus, we should expect that individuals high in Need to Evaluate will be more likely to apply their ideology to their partisanship. The core of the rational choice theory of partisanship is that an individual's ideology and issue positions determine his or her partisanship. Therefore, individuals higher in Need to Evaluate should be more accurately described by the rational choice theory of partisanship. Because men tend to have higher Need to Evaluate than women, the rational choice theory of partisanship should be a comparatively better model of partisanship for men than it is for women.

Along with Need to Evaluate, an individual's joiner status should also be indirectly related to partisanship. An American's joiner status reflects his or her latent tendency to join groups, of any kind. Those high in joiner status report that they are part of many groups. Some people tend to be “joiners” who are a part of many groups, while others simply are not (Putnam 2001). Group membership is important for Americans who are high in joiner status. We should expect, therefore,

that Americans who are high in joiner status should be more likely to connect their group membership with their partisanship. The essence of the social identity theory of partisanship is that an individual's group membership determines his or her partisanship. Thus, individuals higher in joiner status should be more accurately described by the social identity theory of partisanship. Since women tend to have higher joiner status than men, the social choice theory of partisanship should be a comparatively better model of partisanship for women than it is for men.<sup>6</sup>

These gender differences in how well the two theories describe partisanship should lead to the causes of partisanship influencing male and female partisanship in significantly different ways. The rational choice theory of partisanship should apply comparatively more to men than women, and the social identity theory of partisanship should apply comparatively more to women than men. Nevertheless, given the strong empirical evidence supporting it, the rational choice theory of partisanship should be superior (in absolute terms) to the social identity theory for both men and women. Contemporary American parties are strongly ideological, both in Congress (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006) and at a mass level (Abramowitz 2010), and this should be reflected among men and women as well as the American public as a whole (as it is in Abramowitz and Saunders 2006). In the rest of this paper, I show support for these expectations.

#### 4.4 Designs for Assessing Theory

To robustly demonstrate gender differences in the applicability of theories of partisanship, I take advantage of several datasets. These datasets span multiple recent election years, two different types of election years (Presidential and Congressional midterm), and have a combined N of respondents of over 100,000 Americans. The

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<sup>6</sup>There are certainly other potential reasons why the social identity model of partisanship would apply more for women than men. For example, modern American political candidates and parties often encourage women to think of themselves as a group, in ways that they typically do not for men. The analysis here is focused on demonstrating the empirical differences in partisanship between women and men, however, not on arguing for a unique theoretical cause of those differences.

2006 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES), American National Election Studies' (NES) 2008-2009 Panel Study, 2008 online National Annenberg Election Study (NAES), and 2010 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) each include the variables necessary to model partisanship according to the rational choice and social identity theories.

The rational choice theory of partisanship is typically operationalized for analysis using regressions of respondent partisanship on a variable measuring respondent ideology.<sup>7</sup> Each of these 4 datasets measures respondent partisanship and ideology. The social identity theory of partisanship is usually operationalized for study by regressing self-reported partisanship on a variety of demographic variables, including age, education level, income, racial identification, religion, religiosity, region of residence, marital status, and union membership and parental identification (when available). Franklin and Jackson (1983) use almost this exact model (see Tables A.2-A.4), except for marital status and religiosity, which were only subsequently discovered to be strong causes of partisanship.<sup>8</sup> The 2006 CCES, 2008-2009 NES Panel Study, 2008 NAES, and 2010 CCES all have questions that measure these concepts.<sup>9</sup> In addition, each of these four surveys measures respondent gender.

Each the explanatory variables in the social identity model is theoretically motivated. Age has long been related to partisanship through cohort effects. Level of education has had a strong relationship with partisanship in recent years, though that relationship appears to be non-linear (motivating the use of dummy variables for level of education rather than a scale). Income has long been a well-known partisan

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<sup>7</sup>This model is explicitly described by Franklin and Jackson (1983), who summarize the rational choice model of partisanship as: The “Downsian model took voters’ issue positions as exogenous to party preference. In this structure party identification was a summary of policy preferences” (958) indicated by ideology.

<sup>8</sup>Weisberg (1987) first prominently described the “marriage gap” in partisan voting. The relationship between religiosity and partisanship, at least in America, did not become general knowledge until at least Layman and Carmines (1997) or possibly Layman (2001). Layman and Carmines (1997, see Table 2) use a similar model of partisanship as well.

<sup>9</sup>Except parental identification and union membership, which are not commonly included on surveys and are not included in all of these datasets.

cleavage, with higher-income voters more likely to identify as Republican, though Gelman, Shor, Bafumi, and Park's (2008) research adds considerable nuance to this relationship.

In contemporary America, racial identification and party ID are closely related, with respondents who identify as black or Hispanic significantly more likely to be Democrats. Religion matters for party identification because Protestants and Catholics tend to be somewhat more likely to be Republicans than those who have another religion or no religion. Religiosity, or how devout someone is regardless of religion, has been shown to strongly influence partisanship (see Layman 2001). In the last decade or two, Southerners have identified as more Republican than the rest of the country, and so a dummy variable for South is included in the analysis. Marital status has been an influential factor on partisanship since the 1980s (see Weisberg 1987), with married Americans more likely to be Republican and single Americans more likely to be Democrats.

All of explanatory variables used in the social identity model are theoretically motivated. This theoretical basis makes the use of these explanatory variables desirable, even though including them all is not parsimonious. Furthermore, as noted above, the explanatory variables used in this social identity model are very similar to those used in well-cited, top-tier research.

Researchers who primarily study the social identity model of partisanship might critique my social identity model analysis below because it does not include a variable measuring a respondent's parental party identification. I certainly would like to include this variable in my analysis; maternal and paternal partisanship do influence the offspring's party identification. Parental partisanship is unfortunately not available in all these data sets.

Nevertheless, I do not expect the absence of parental party identification to significantly affect my social identity model results. Other demographic variables in the model partially capture the expected influence of parental partisanship. Parental

and child party ID are positively correlated, but so are parental and child education level, parental and child income, parental and child religion, parental and child racial identification, and parental and child region of residence. In that sense, several of the other variables in the social identity capture some of the expected influence of parental party ID.

Some research has also suggested that the influence of parental partisanship on child partisanship may not always be due to social identity reasons. It is not necessarily the case that parental party ID influence child party ID because of shared group membership and familial ties. Achen (2002) shows how the influence of parental partisanship on child partisanship may be the result of a process of information updating and learning about politics during youth, instead of social identity. If so, then parental partisanship should not be treated as a purely “social identity” variable, and perhaps does not belong in the social identity model of partisanship at all. Therefore, while I would prefer the option of including parental party ID in my social identity model of partisanship, its influence is captured in part through other variables in the model and it may not be able to be treated as a purely social identity factor. I am confident that the absence of parental partisanship does not seriously change my social identity model results.

Using the 2006 CCES, 2008-2009 NES Panel Study, 2008 NAES, and 2010 CCES, I first show that the general, aggregate wisdom about the superiority of the rational choice theory holds for each gender. The rational choice model of partisanship outperforms the social identity model for both women and men in all datasets.

Next, I demonstrate that a closer examination of the data reveals considerable gender differences in the rational choice and social identity models of partisanship. As expected, the rational choice model is comparatively better for men, and the social identity model is comparatively better for women. These findings hold across all four datasets.

Finally, I show that these gender differences in the sources of partisanship are considerable. Chow tests indicate that the rational choice model of partisanship for men is always significantly different than the rational choice model for women, and the social identity model for women is always significantly different than the social identity model for men. However, these differences in models are not merely statistical. For the social identity model, these differences are demonstrably substantive as well. The significance of several demographic variables and their *directions of effect* on partisanship vary by gender; these variables include age, level of education, religion, and marital status.

I test the following general and specific hypotheses:

- **Hypothesis 8: The rational choice model of partisanship is a better model of partisanship than the social identity model of partisanship.**
  - **Hypothesis 8A: For men, the rational choice model of partisanship is a better model of partisanship than the social identity model of partisanship.**
  - **Hypothesis 8B: For women, the rational choice model of partisanship is a better model of partisanship than the social identity model of partisanship.**
- **Hypothesis 9: There are considerable gender differences in how well the rational choice and social identity models explain partisanship.**
  - **Hypothesis 9A: The rational choice model of partisanship explains partisanship comparatively better for men than women.**
  - **Hypothesis 9B: The social identity model of partisanship explains partisanship comparatively better for women than men.**
- **Hypothesis 10: The sources of partisanship are significantly different for women and men.**

- **Hypothesis 10A: The rational choice model of partisanship is significantly different for women and men.**
- **Hypothesis 10B: The social identity model of partisanship is significantly different for women and men.**

I demonstrate support for general Hypotheses 8-10, and specific Hypotheses 8A, 8B, 9A, 9B, 10A, and 10B. The results show that the rational choice theory of partisanship explains party ID better for men and women. However, women and men vary considerably in how *well* the rational choice and social identity models describe partisanship. For women, the rational choice model outperforms the social identity model, but not by much. Social identity and demographic factors are comparatively more influential and related to party ID for women than they are for men. In contrast, I find that the rational choice model is a *much* better model of partisanship for men than the social identity model. Ideology is a more important cause of party ID for men than women.

I then provide a variety of evidence demonstrating these substantial gender differences in model performance. Not only does the explanatory power of these models vary by gender, but Chow tests reveal that the rational choice and social identity models are always significantly different for men and women.

These findings show that the sources of partisanship for men and women, though overlapping, are different. I conclude by discussing the implications of these findings for future research.

#### 4.5 Data and Results

To demonstrate support for Hypotheses 8-10, I take advantage of data from the 2006 CCES, 2008-2009 NES Panel Study, 2008 NAES, and 2010 CCES. Each of these surveys measures Partisanship using the seven-point scale common on many academic surveys. This scale runs from Strong Democrat to Weak Democrat to

Independent Lean Democrat to Pure Independent to Independent Lean Republican to Weak Republican to Strong Republican.

All of these surveys contain a measure of respondent ideology, which is necessary to model partisanship according to the rational choice theory. Ideology is measured using the “traditional” NES seven-point scale on the 2008-2009 NES Panel and the 2008 NAES. The traditional NES scale runs from Extremely Liberal to Liberal to Slightly Liberal to Moderate to Slightly Conservative to Conservative to Extremely Conservative.

For the 2010 CCES data, Ideology is measured using a slightly different seven-point scale, which runs Very Liberal to Liberal to Somewhat Liberal to Middle of the Road to Somewhat Conservative to Conservative to Very Conservative. The 2006 CCES has a five-point Ideology scale, which runs from Very Liberal to Liberal to Moderate to Conservative to Very Conservative. Because the 2006 CCES, 2008-2009 NES Panel Study, 2008 NAES, and 2010 CCES data are analyzed separately (not pooled), using these different (though conceptually similar) measures of Ideology is an asset and provides evidence of construct validity and generalizability across different data sets.

Each of these four surveys also includes the variables needed to operationalize the social identity model of partisanship. Male is a dummy variable that takes a value of 1 for men and 0 for women for all datasets. I use three dummy variables to capture a respondent’s level of education. Post-Grad Degree is a 1 if the respondent has a post-baccalaureate degree, and a 0 otherwise. Only College Degree takes a value of 1 if respondent has a college degree, but no advanced degree, and 0 otherwise. No HS Degree is a 1 if the respondent has not finished high school and 0 otherwise. The Age variable captures how old a respondent is. It ranges from 18 to 95 for the 2006

CCES, 18 to 100+ for the 2008 NAES<sup>10</sup>, 18 to 90 for the 2008-2009 NES Panel, and 18 to 91 for the 2010 CCES.

A respondent's Income is measured in a couple of different ways. The 2006 CCES and 2010 CCES code Income as an ordinal scale that ranges in level from 1 (respondent earns less than \$10,000 per year) to 14 (respondent earns \$150,000 or more). The 2008-2009 NES Panel and 2008 NAES measure Income as an ordinal scale that ranges from 1 (respondent earns less than \$5,000 dollars per year) to 19 (respondent earns more than \$175,000 dollars per year). The racial identification of respondents is captured in 2 dummy variables. The variable Black codes Americans as 1 if they identify as Black, and 0 otherwise.<sup>11</sup> The variable Hispanic codes Americans as 1 if they identify as Hispanic, and 0 otherwise.

On all of these surveys, the dummy variable Married has a value of 1 if the respondent is married and 0 otherwise. The religion of respondents captured in two dummy variables. Protestant is coded as 1 if the respondent identifies as part of any Protestant Christian denomination, and 0 otherwise. Catholic is coded as 1 if the respondent identifies as Catholic, and 0 otherwise. For each of these surveys, a respondent's region of residence is measured using South, a dummy variable. South takes a value of 1 if the respondent lives in one of the states that fought for the Confederacy, and 0 otherwise.

The variable Religiosity measures respondent religiosity, and varies somewhat by survey. For the 2006 CCES, Religiosity is an ordinal scale that ranges from 1 to 4 and captures how often the respondent attends religious services. It ranges from Almost Never or Never to Less Than Once a Month to A Few Times a Month to Once a Week or More. On the 2008 NAES, Religiosity is an ordinal scale that

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<sup>10</sup>I truncated the Age variable at 100 due to a suspicious number of age responses over 109. There were 7 respondents who said they were 109 and 8 who said they were 110, which is incredibly unlikely in a survey with less than 35,000 respondents. This is statistically near-impossible through sampling, since only 341 people in America were alive past 110 in 2010 (see: <http://phys.org/news194881239.html>).

<sup>11</sup>On the 2008-2009 NES Panel and 2008 NAES, respondents are coded as 1 if they identify as non-Hispanic Black, and 0 otherwise.

ranges from 1 to 6 and captures how often the respondent attends religious services. It ranges from Never to Once a Year or Less to A Few Times a Year to Once or Twice a Month to Once a Week to More Than Once a Week. For the 2008-2009 NES Panel, Religiosity is a continuous variable that measures how many days per year the respondent reports attending religious services, not including weddings or funerals, and ranges from 0 days per year to over 300. On the 2010 CCES, Religiosity is an ordinal scale that ranges from 0 to 5 and captures how often the respondent attends religious services, not including weddings or funerals. It ranges from Never to Seldom to A Few Times a Year to Once or Twice a Month to Once a Week to More Than Once a Week. Taken together, these variables allow us to operationalize the social identity theory of partisanship very well.

Having described the data that I use, I now turn to my analysis. To test Hypothesis 8, I run OLS regressions that represent the rational choice and social identity models of partisanship. As is discussed in the “Designs for Assessing Theory” section previously, these models are conventionally used and accepted in literature. For the rational choice model of partisanship, I regress the seven-point Partisanship scale on the Ideology scale for men and women separately for all datasets. To model the social identity theory of partisanship, I regress the Partisanship scale on Age, No HS Degree, Post-Grad Degree, Only College Degree, Income, Black, Hispanic, Protestant, Catholic, South, Married, and Religiosity for women and men separately for all datasets.

Table 4.2 displays the results of these regressions for men, and Table 4.3 has the results of these regressions for women. Both Table 4.2 and Table 4.3 also include each regression model’s  $R^2$  (adjusted), Root Mean-Squared Error (RMSE), average absolute-valued error (or mean absolute error), % of respondents classified to within .5 of their true partisanship, and % of respondents classified over 3 categories away from their true partisanship, along with AIC, Small-Sample AIC (AICc), and BIC.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Because the N of respondents is different for the rational choice and social identity models in all data sets, the AIC, AICc, BIC presented in these Tables are from different rational choice and

Table 4.2: OLS Regressions of Models for Men

	2006 CCES	2008-2009 NES Panel	2008 NAES	2010 CCES
<b>Rational Choice</b>				
Intercept	-.39** (.04)	-.62** (.13)	-.05 (.06)	-.04 (.02)
Ideology	1.40** (.01)	.82** (.03)	.96** (.01)	.91** (.00)
$R^2$	.46	.47	.44	.58
RMSE	1.55	1.64	1.66	1.41
Mean Absolute Error	1.25	1.25	1.34	1.13
% Predicted Correctly	27.31	25.58	19.84	24.61
% Predicted Poorly	4.04	8.56	6.28	3.44
AIC	14193.86	511.37	7139.64	18491.13
AICc	56397.93	1957.90	25593.52	85983.52
BIC	56420.75	1970.55	25613.86	86007.75
N of observations	16,664	1,122	8,068	25,810
<b>Social Identity</b>				
Intercept	3.02** (.08)	2.09** (.52)	2.95** (.15)	2.76** (.07)
Age	-.01** (.00)	-.01 (.01)	-.00* (.00)	.01** (.00)
No HS Degree	.14 (.09)	-1.21* (.64)	-.37** (.13)	-.06 (.10)
Post-Grad Degree	-.20** (.06)	-.97** (.25)	-.42** (.08)	-.70** (.04)
Only College Degree	.21** (.05)	-.26 (.23)	.05 (.06)	-.22** (.03)
Income	.05** (.01)	.06** (.03)	.03** (.01)	.03** (.00)
Black	-1.69** (.06)	-2.35** (.49)	-2.46** (.10)	-2.11** (.05)
Hispanic	-.60** (.06)	-.99** (.49)	-.65** (.11)	-.58** (.05)
Protestant	.63** (.04)	.76** (.22)	.35** (.07)	.79** (.03)
Catholic	.29** (.05)	.76** (.25)	-.17** (.07)	.49** (.04)
South	.08** (.04)	.52** (.21)	.22** (.06)	.21** (.03)
Married	.54** (.04)	.19 (.24)	.28** (.06)	.39** (.03)
Religiosity	.28** (.01)	.01** (.00)	.26** (.02)	.19** (.01)
$R^2$	.14	.14	.15	.17
RMSE	1.96	2.05	2.06	2.01
Mean Absolute Error	1.66	1.74	1.78	1.69
% Predicted Correctly	16.70	14.59	12.35	18.14
% Predicted Poorly	11.68	12.45	13.49	13.00
AIC	20816.31	774.96	9424.15	34149.48
AICc	63020.41	2222.29	27878.09	101641.9
BIC	63126.88	2280.70	27972.94	101755
N of observations	14,539	514	6,403	23,169

\*\* indicates  $p < .05$

\* indicates  $p < .1$

Standard errors in ( )

Numbers rounded to  
2 decimal places.

These additional statistics and model criteria allow for robust comparisons of these models in a variety of ways.

The mean absolute error, % of respondents classified to within .5 of their true partisanship, and % of respondents classified over 3 categories away from their true partisanship are three statistics that are not commonly included in OLS model regression social identity models with the same (smaller) N of respondents that are not displayed. The models with less respondents are not substantively different from those presented.

Table 4.3: OLS Regressions of Models for Women

	2006 CCES	2008-2009 NES Panel	2008 NAES	2010 CCES
<b>Rational Choice</b>				
Intercept	-.63** (.04)	-.76** (.11)	-.32** (.05)	-.03 (.02)
Ideology	1.42** (.01)	.81** (.02)	.99** (.01)	.87** (.01)
$R^2$	.42	.44	.42	.50
RMSE	1.70	1.76	1.74	1.61
Mean Absolute Error	1.39	1.39	1.42	1.28
% Predicted Correctly	19.61	19.13	16.80	20.84
% Predicted Poorly	6.07	9.99	7.22	6.51
AIC	12960.54	664.83	8310.16	20455.43
AICc	49471.83	2659.06	29766.51	82416.8
BIC	49494.22	2672.69	29787.3	82440.78
N of observations	17,091	1,542	10,476	26,438
<b>Social Identity</b>				
Intercept	2.70** (.08)	2.37** (.41)	2.91** (.12)	2.71** (.06)
Age	-.01** (.00)	-.03** (.01)	-.01** (.00)	-.00 (.00)
No HS Degree	.02 (.10)	.04 (.38)	-.23** (.11)	.05 (.10)
Post-Grad Degree	-.65** (.07)	-.79** (.23)	-.85** (.07)	-.80** (.05)
Only College Degree	-.05 (.05)	-.65** (.21)	-.26** (.06)	-.30** (.03)
Income	.03** (.01)	.09** (.02)	.01** (.01)	.02** (.00)
Black	-1.75** (.06)	-2.17** (.28)	-2.65** (.07)	-2.27** (.04)
Hispanic	-.48** (.06)	-.93** (.34)	-.75** (.09)	-.65** (.05)
Protestant	.52** (.04)	.82** (.19)	.20** (.05)	.67** (.03)
Catholic	.03 (.05)	.14 (.22)	-.29** (.06)	.31** (.04)
South	.19** (.04)	.50** (.19)	.36** (.05)	.31** (.03)
Married	.47** (.04)	.53** (.18)	.46** (.05)	.35** (.03)
Religiosity	.38** (.01)	.01** (.00)	.31** (.01)	.24** (.01)
$R^2$	.16	.22	.21	.20
RMSE	2.03	2.07	2.04	2.01
Mean Absolute Error	1.74	1.74	1.77	1.72
% Predicted Correctly	14.57	13.92	12.47	14.88
% Predicted Poorly	12.23	14.20	12.19	12.58
AIC	18118.31	1019.20	10952.35	30626.71
AICc	54629.63	3014.00	32408.76	92588.1
BIC	54734.07	3077.15	32505.73	92699.96
N of observations	14,392	697	8,804	23,906

\*\* indicates  $p < .05$

\* indicates  $p < .1$

Standard errors in ()

Numbers rounded to

2 decimal places.

sults, but each provides a valuable comparison. Like the RMSE, the mean absolute error is a statistic that captures how distant the model's predicted values are from the true values of the dependent variable. However, the average absolute error is more intuitively meaningful and easier to describe, since it simply measures in absolute terms how far off on average the model's predicted values are from the true ones.

The model statistic of % of respondents classified to within .5 of their true partisanship (the dependent variable) is included as a way of assessing how good the model is at predicting the "correct" values of partisanship. Partisanship is measured as a seven-point scale of integer values, but the model predicts decimal values (such as 5.73 or 2.4) that are not meaningful on that seven-point Partisanship scale. However, one can round the predicted values to the nearest whole integer and have a meaningful prediction of partisanship (such as rounding 5.73 to 6). In that sense, predicting a respondent's partisanship to within .5 of its true value is equivalent to predicting that person's partisanship "correctly." By measuring the percentage of respondents "correctly" classified by the model, I have another way of evaluating how well the model naively predicts partisanship without including other factors. This is valuable because it allows me assess how well the operationalization of each partisanship theory stands on its own.

Similarly, measuring the % of respondents classified over 3 categories away from their true partisanship gives me an additional useful statistic on model power. The partisanship of each of these respondents is predicted terribly by the model, such that the model actually guesses incorrectly as to the mere *direction* of their partisanship. Since the model's prediction is more than 3 categories away from the truth on a seven-point scale, it means that respondents are, at minimum, expected to favor a party that they do not.<sup>13</sup> These respondents are deemed to be "Predicted Poorly." The

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<sup>13</sup>Ex. Weak Democrats are predicted to be Republican Leaners or more Republican, Democrat Leaners are predicted to Weak Republicans or more Republican, Pure Independents are predicted to be Strong Democrats or Strong Republicans, Strong Republicans are predicted to be on the Democratic side of Independent, etc.

% Predicted Poorly by each model tells us how often each model gets partisanship completely wrong.

The results depicted in Table 4.2 strongly support Hypothesis 8A.<sup>14</sup> For *every* statistic and model criteria displayed, the rational choice model of partisanship for men is superior to the social identity model. The  $R^2$  of the rational choice models for all datasets is much higher (ranging from .44 to .58) than the  $R^2$  for the social identity models for all datasets (ranging from .14 to .17). Ideology is more correlated with partisanship than demographics for men, and the rational choice model accounts for a greater amount of the variance in male partisanship than the social identity model does.

Furthermore, the rational choice model has consistently lower RMSE and mean absolute error than the social identity model for men. On average, the rational choice model's predictions of respondent partisanship are closer to their true values. In fact, for the 2010 CCES, the rational choice model typically predicts a respondent's partisanship to within about one category away from its true value! The social identity model's predictions are never as close. Additionally, the rational choice model "correctly" predicts a much higher percentage of male partisans. The rational choice model "correctly" predicts between 19.84% and 27.31% of male respondents, or often about one in every four. The social identity model, in contrast, only "correctly" predicts between 12.35% and 18.14% of male respondents, or around one in every six. The rational choice model predicts less "poorly" as well. Only between 3.44% and 8.56% of male respondents are predicted "poorly" by the rational choice model, in contrast to between 11.68% and 13.49% predicted "poorly" by the social identity model.

Important model criteria all choose the rational choice models over the social identity models for men. The rational choice models' lower AIC and Small-Sample

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<sup>14</sup>Due to abnormally few respondents being asked their Religiosity, in the 2008-2009 NES Panel Study, the N of respondents for the 2008-2009 NES Panel social identity model is only about half the N of the comparable rational choice model. These differences in N for the two models for the 2008-2009 NES Panel are present in Tables 4.2 and 4.3.

AIC suggest that the rational choice model is less distant from the true model of partisanship than the social identity model. The rational choice models also have lower BIC than the social identity models; this indicates that the rational choice model is more likely to be the true model of partisanship than the social identity model.

On the basis of Table 4.2, I conclude that the casual wisdom about the rational choice and social identity models holds at a deeper level: The rational choice model of partisanship is a much better model of partisanship for men than the social identity model. The evidence in Table 4.2 strongly support Hypothesis 8A.

Table 4.3 provides evidence that strongly supports Hypothesis 8B. The rational choice model outperforms the social identity model for women on every measure. For all datasets, the rational choice model's  $R^2$  (ranging from .42 to .50) is substantially higher than the social identity model's  $R^2$  (ranging from .16 to .22) for women. The rational choice model captures a greater amount of the variation in female partisanship than the social identity model. Similar to the way it is for men, ideology is more correlated with party ID for women than demographics are.

The rational choice model for women is also better at knowing the truth. On average, the rational choice model guesses female party ID considerably closer to its true value than the social identity model does. The RMSE and mean absolute error are consistently lower for the rational choice model (the RMSE ranges from 1.61 to 1.76, the mean absolute error ranges from 1.28 to 1.42) for women than the social identity model (the RMSE ranges from 2.01 to 2.07, the mean absolute error ranges from 1.72 to 1.77). The closest rational choice model's (the 2010 CCES') predictions are only off on average by a category and a quarter, the closest social identity model's (the 2010 CCES') predictions are typically off by closer to 2 categories.

Furthermore, the rational choice model usually predicts about one in five women's partisanship "correctly," while the social identity model for women typically only predicts about one in seven women's party ID "correctly." The rational choice model

predicts less “poorly” for women, too. Between 6.07% and 9.99% of female respondents are predicted “poorly” by the rational choice model, while between 12.19% and 14.20% are predicted “poorly” by the social identity model. All the relevant model criteria choose the rational choice model over the social identity model for women, for all data sets. The AIC, AICc, and BIC are lower for the rational choice model than the social identity model in all cases. Therefore, I can confidently confirm Hypothesis 8B on the basis of Table 4.3. As expected, the aggregate knowledge that the rational choice model outperforms the social identity model of partisanship holds for women only.<sup>15</sup>

I now move to testing Hypothesis 9. The rational choice model explains partisanship better than the social identity model for both women and men, as expected. However, we should expect there to be substantial gender differences in how well these two models explain party ID.

Table 4.4 shows support for this idea. The rational choice model of partisanship is comparatively much better for men than women, and the social identity model is comparatively better for women than for men. Table 4.4 displays model fit statistics from Tables 4.2 and 4.3 side by side, so that they can more easily be compared across model and gender. It also displays, for each gender, the absolute-valued difference between the rational choice and social identity model statistics. This highlights the contrast for men and women in the difference between the two models.

For men, the rational choice model is a *much* better model of party ID than the social identity model. The *difference* between the models in  $R^2$  ranges from .29 to .41, underscoring that ideology is much more correlated with partisanship for men than

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<sup>15</sup>One might additionally consider the overlap in model predictive power. Of the respondents’ partisanship “correctly” predicted by one model, how many of them are also predicted correctly by the other model? The rational choice model “correctly” guesses more of the respondents “correctly” predicted by the social identity model than the social identity model does of those “correctly” classified by rational choice. In other words, the rational choice model “correctly” identifies the partisanship of a higher percentage of respondents that would not be “correctly” predicted by the other model. This pattern is depicted in Table C-1 in Appendix C, and holds for women and men in all four data sets.

Table 4.4: Statistics and Comparison of Models of Partisanship By Gender

## Men

	2006 CCES	2008-2009 NES Panel	2008 NAES	2010 CCES
<b>Rational Choice</b>				
$R^2$	.46	.47	.44	.58
RMSE	1.55	1.64	1.66	1.41
Mean Absolute Error	1.25	1.25	1.34	1.13
% Predicted Correctly	27.31	25.58	19.84	24.61
% Predicted Poorly	4.04	8.56	6.28	3.44
<b>Social Identity</b>				
$R^2$	.14	.14	.15	.17
RMSE	1.96	2.05	2.06	2.01
Mean Absolute Error	1.66	1.74	1.78	1.69
% Predicted Correctly	16.70	14.59	12.35	18.14
% Predicted Poorly	11.68	12.45	13.49	13.00
<b> Difference in Models </b>				
$R^2$	.32	.33	.29	.41
RMSE	.41	.41	.4	.6
Mean Absolute Error	.41	.49	.44	.56
% Predicted Correctly	10.61	10.99	7.49	6.47
% Predicted Poorly	7.64	3.89	7.21	9.56

## Women

	2006 CCES	2008-2009 NES Panel	2008 NAES	2010 CCES
<b>Rational Choice</b>				
$R^2$	.42	.44	.42	.50
RMSE	1.70	1.76	1.74	1.61
Mean Absolute Error	1.39	1.39	1.42	1.28
% Predicted Correctly	19.61	19.13	16.80	20.84
% Predicted Poorly	6.07	9.99	7.22	6.51
<b>Social Identity</b>				
$R^2$	.16	.22	.21	.20
RMSE	2.03	2.07	2.04	2.01
Mean Absolute Error	1.74	1.74	1.77	1.72
% Predicted Correctly	14.57	13.92	12.47	14.88
% Predicted Poorly	12.23	14.20	12.19	12.58
<b> Difference in Models </b>				
$R^2$	.26	.22	.21	.30
RMSE	.33	.31	.30	.40
Mean Absolute Error	.35	.35	.35	.44
% Predicted Correctly	5.04	5.21	4.33	5.96
% Predicted Poorly	6.16	4.21	4.97	6.07

Numbers rounded to  
2 decimal places.

demographics. There is also a large difference in how close each model's predicted values are to the respondents' true partisanship. The *difference* in RMSE and average absolute error for the two models for men is large, with the rational choice model's predictions typically off by half a category less than the social identity model. Since the models are predicting categories on a seven-point scale, that is a big distinction.

The percent of "correct" predictions best illustrates how much better the rational choice model is than the social identity model for men. The rational choice model describes male partisanship a lot better, predicting as many as 11% more respondents' party ID "correctly." That is 11% in absolute terms;<sup>16</sup> percentage-wise, the rational choice model for men is as much as 75% better<sup>17</sup> at "correctly" predicting respondent partisanship than the social identity model. Thus, the difference between the rational choice and social identity models for men is stark.

In contrast, for women the rational choice model is better, but not as much as it is for men. The social identity model is more important for women than the social identity model is for men. The difference in  $R^2$  between the social identity and rational choice models for women (ranging from .21 to .30) is not as large as it is for men (ranging from .29 to .40); the difference is consistently about .1 lower than it is for men. Similarly, the rational choice model predicts partisanship better for women than the social identity model, but not as much as it does for men. The RMSE and mean absolute error are still lower (indicating the model's fitted values are closer to the truth) for the rational choice model for women than they are for the social identity model, but the difference between them is not as much as it is for men. For women, the rational choice model's fitted values are usually about a third of a category closer to the respondent's true partisanship than the social identity model's fitted values; for men this difference is about half a category.

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<sup>16</sup>For the 2008-2009 NES Panel, the absolute difference in percent "correctly" predicted by the rational choice model over the social identity model is  $25.58 - 14.59 = 10.99\%$ .

<sup>17</sup>For the 2008-2009 NES Panel, the percentage difference in percent "correctly" predicted by the rational choice model over the social identity model is  $25.58/14.59 = 1.75$ , or a 75% increase.

The social identity model for women is also comparatively better at “correctly” predicting respondent partisanship than it is for men. The difference between the social identity and rational choice models for women in “correctly” predicting respondent party ID only ranges from 4.33% to 5.96%. This is much less than the male difference in “correct” prediction between the two models (which ranges from 6.47% to 10.99%). These pattern is evident in the percentage of respondents predicted “poorly” as well. While the difference between the social identity and rational choice models for women in “poorly” predicting respondent party ID ranges from 4.21% to 6.16%, the difference for men ranges from 3.89 to 9.56. This indicates that the social identity and rational choice models for women are generally more alike in the % of respondents whose partisan direction they predict wildly inaccurately. For men, the rational choice model classifies respondents “poorly” more noticeably less than the social identity model.

The conclusion to draw from these comparisons is that even though the rational choice model is better at explaining partisanship than the social identity model for both men and women, there is a substantial gender difference in how much better it is. For men, the rational choice model is much better at accounting for partisanship than the social identity model. Ideology is much more important for male party ID than demographics. For women, however, the rational choice model is better than the social identity model, but not by that much. Ideology is only somewhat more important for female partisanship than demographics.

The evidence in Table 4.4 supports Hypothesis 9A. The social identity model is comparatively better for women than men, because for women it more favorably compares to the competing rational choice model. The findings in Table 4.4 confirm Hypothesis 9B.

Table 4.4 shows that the causes of partisanship, though similar for men and women, vary in importance by gender. Both ideology and demographics significantly explain partisanship for men and women. However, ideology is comparatively more

important for male party ID, and demographics are comparatively more important for female partisanship.

These gender variations in the applicability of the social identity and rational choice models underscore the fact that the models themselves are significantly different for women and men. This is something one should expect if the causes of partisanship are different for the two genders.

Table 4.5 demonstrates that this is the case. Chow tests show that the rational choice model regression coefficients (the same as those depicted in Tables 4.2 and 4.3) for men are statistically distinct from those for women, and the social identity model regression coefficients for women are significantly different from those for men. These differences hold across all four datasets, and support Hypotheses 10A and 10B.

Though statistically distinct, the rational choice model regressions for men and women are similar in that Ideology has the same significant direction of effect on partisanship for both genders. However, the social identity regressions for men and women are substantively different as well as statistically distinct. Table 4.5 shows that there are demographics in all four datasets, including Age, No HS Degree, Only College Degree, Catholic, and Married, which have significantly different effects on male and female partisanship. Some of these demographics are significant for one gender but not the other. Others are significant and take one direction of effect for one gender, but insignificant with the opposite effect for the other gender.

These instances are highlighted in bold in Table 4.5. They provide further evidence that the causes of male and female partisanship are different.<sup>18</sup> It is unlikely that these distinctions in the effects of demographics on male and female partisanship occurred by chance. Differences in the effects of Only College Degree are present in three of the four data sets, and differences in the effects of Age and Catholic identification occur in two of the four.

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<sup>18</sup>As a side note, Table 4.5 also suggests that the potential for these differences in the causes of male and female partisanship may be greater in small samples. Many of the differences in the causes of male and female partisanship occur in the 2008-2009 NES Panel Study, which has the smallest N of these datasets.

These repeated variations in the impact of social identity demographics demonstrate that the social identity models for women and men are not just statistically different, but substantively different as well. In particular, the gender differences in the effects of level of education warrant further investigation. The influence of education on party ID generally is not as well understood as many scholar would believe. For example, the effects of increasing education are often assumed to monotonically cause greater Republican identification, but in fact these effect are non-linear.<sup>19</sup> The effects of age on partisanship should also be investigated more fully. All these findings demonstrate that while the causes of partisanship for women and men overlap, they are not the same.

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<sup>19</sup>Having a college degree increases a respondent's chances of identifying as Republican relative to having lower education, but having an advanced degree increases a respondent's chances of identifying as a Democrat relative to having lower education.

Table 4.5: Variable Differences & Chow Tests of Models for Men & Women

<b>Rational Choice</b>				
	2006 CCES	2008-2009 NES	2008 NAES	2010 CCES
<b>Men</b>				
Intercept	-.39** (.04)	-.62** (.13)	-.05 (.06)	-.04 (.02)
Ideology	1.40** (.01)	.82** (.03)	.96** (.01)	.91** (.00)
<b>Women</b>				
Intercept	-.63** (.04)	-.76** (.11)	-.32** (.05)	-.03 (.02)
Ideology	1.42** (.01)	.81** (.02)	.99** (.01)	.87** (.01)
<b>Chow Test F-Statistic</b>	<b>40.89**</b>	<b>3.59**</b>	<b>19.18**</b>	<b>95.65**</b>
<b>Social Identity</b>				
<b>Men</b>				
Intercept	3.02** (.08)	2.09** (.52)	2.95** (.15)	2.76** (.07)
<b>Age</b>	-.01** (.00)	<b>-.01 (.01)</b>	-.00* (.00)	<b>.01** (.00)</b>
<b>No HS Degree</b>	.14 (.09)	<b>-1.21* (.64)</b>	-.37** (.13)	-.06 (.10)
Post-Grad Degree	-.20** (.06)	-.97** (.25)	-.42** (.08)	-.70** (.04)
<b>Only College Degree</b>	<b>.21** (.05)</b>	<b>-.26 (.23)</b>	<b>.05 (.06)</b>	-.22** (.03)
Income	.05** (.01)	.06** (.03)	.03** (.01)	.03** (.00)
Black	-1.69** (.06)	-2.35** (.49)	-2.46** (.10)	-2.11** (.05)
Hispanic	-.60** (.06)	-.99** (.49)	-.65** (.11)	-.58** (.05)
Protestant	.63** (.04)	.76** (.22)	.35** (.07)	.79** (.03)
<b>Catholic</b>	<b>.29** (.05)</b>	<b>.76** (.25)</b>	-.17** (.07)	.49** (.04)
South	.08** (.04)	.52** (.21)	.22** (.06)	.21** (.03)
<b>Married</b>	.54** (.04)	<b>.19 (.24)</b>	.28** (.06)	.39** (.03)
Religiosity	.28** (.01)	.01** (.00)	.26** (.02)	.19** (.01)
<b>Women</b>				
Intercept	2.70** (.08)	2.37** (.41)	2.91** (.12)	2.71** (.06)
<b>Age</b>	-.01** (.00)	<b>-.03** (.01)</b>	-.01** (.00)	<b>-.00 (.00)</b>
<b>No HS Degree</b>	.02 (.10)	<b>.04 (.38)</b>	-.23** (.11)	.05 (.10)
Post-Grad Degree	-.65** (.07)	-.79** (.23)	-.85** (.07)	-.80** (.05)
<b>Only College Degree</b>	<b>-.05 (.05)</b>	<b>-.65** (.21)</b>	<b>-.26** (.06)</b>	-.30** (.03)
Income	.03** (.01)	.09** (.02)	.01** (.01)	.02** (.00)
Black	-1.75** (.06)	-2.17** (.28)	-2.65** (.07)	-2.27** (.04)
Hispanic	-.48** (.06)	-.93** (.34)	-.75** (.09)	-.65** (.05)
Protestant	.52** (.04)	.82** (.19)	.20** (.05)	.67** (.03)
<b>Catholic</b>	<b>.03 (.05)</b>	<b>.14 (.22)</b>	-.29** (.06)	.31** (.04)
South	.19** (.04)	.50** (.19)	.36** (.05)	.31** (.03)
<b>Married</b>	.47** (.04)	<b>.53** (.18)</b>	.46** (.05)	.35** (.03)
Religiosity	.38** (.01)	.01** (.00)	.31** (.01)	.24** (.01)
<b>Chow Test F-Statistic</b>	<b>27.70**</b>	<b>1.74**</b>	<b>15.33**</b>	<b>56.63**</b>

#s rounded to 2 decimals

\*\* indicates  $p < .05$

\* indicates  $p < .1$

Standard errors in ()

## 4.6 Discussion and Conclusion

The rational choice and social identity theories of partisanship are broadly descriptive and have important implications for American political behavior. Both theories explain much about how Americans come to identify with the Democrats or Republicans, and the meaning of partisanship for the average person. However, the ability of each theory to accurately model the real world varies, both by time and circumstance.<sup>20</sup> As such, it is critical for scholars to understand when each theory better describes empirical phenomena.

Aggregate studies of political behavior (Abramowitz and Saunders 2006) have found that the rational choice theory generally outperforms the social identity theory in explaining partisanship. It is valuable that this conclusion has been rapidly transmitted throughout the scholarly community. However, this finding has been received too casually and without deeper consideration. Political scientists have needed to thoroughly analyze when the rational choice theory, effective at the aggregate level, describes partisanship less accurately among important segments of the American public. Abramowitz and Saunders (2006) gave us one example already (Americans who identify as black), and it would be astonishing if there were not more.

It is not surprising, then, that this analysis reveals substantial differences in the causes of partisanship for women and men. The rational choice model explains partisanship better than the social identity model for both men and women, which is expected given the strongly ideological character of contemporary American parties.

However, there is considerable variation between genders in how *much* better the rational choice model is. For men, the rational choice model far outstrips the social identity model in its ability to explain partisanship. It is more correlated with

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<sup>20</sup>Ideology and the associated rational choice theory have become much more related to partisanship over time (Abramowitz and Saunders 1998, Abramowitz and Saunders 2008, Bafumi and Shapiro 2009, Abramowitz 2010). Recall that early political studies of mass political behavior like *The American Voter* found that partisanship usually had little relationship with Americans' ideology and issue positions (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960).

party ID, has fitted values substantially closer to the true values, and is better at “correctly” predicting individuals’ partisanship. Ideology is much more important for male partisanship than demographics.

For women, the rational choice model is better than the social identity model, but not by that much and not nearly as much as it is for men. The social identity and rational choice models are closer in their ability to account for female partisanship. Demographics are more related to party ID and better at predicting individual partisanship for women, and thus a more important part of partisanship for women.

Thus, the social identity model is comparatively better for women and the rational choice model is comparatively better for men. The causes of partisanship for men and women are overlapping, but not the same. Chow tests show that rational choice models for women and men are significantly different, and social identity models for women and men are distinct as well. Additionally, while ideology’s relationship with partisanship is similar for men and women, with comparable significance and direction of effect, that is not the case for various demographics. The relationship between partisanship and age, level of education, Catholicism, and marital status vary by gender in significance and direction of effect.

These findings are critical to explaining how partisanship functions in the real world. Ultimately, if political scientists are going to understand voting, elections, public opinion, and many other phenomena, we have to be able to thoroughly explain partisanship, the “unmoved mover” (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960). This paper provides two important conclusions about partisanship that should spur new research.

The first is that the causes of partisanship are different for men and women. This finding adds to the growing literature on the gender gap, and provides a basis for further analysis. Future research should incorporate the idea that partisanship means different things for men and women into both theory and empirical analysis,

since party ID influences many other kinds of political behavior that men and women have been found to vary in.

However, while the causes of partisanship are different for women and men, they overlap considerably.<sup>21</sup> This conclusion fits well with research like Kellstedt, Peterson, and Ramirez (2010) and others, which show that while political behavior often varies between men and women, the underlying processes that cause such behavior are similar. There is sufficient gender variation to warrant separate analyses in many cases, but also much in common to justify aggregate evaluations.

The second essential conclusion of this paper is that distinctions in levels of analysis are crucial. Evaluating political behavior at an aggregate level is important, but so is analyzing it among important subgroups of the American population. Given the differences between men and women in how well the rational choice and social identity models explain partisanship, to infer that one model or the other is simply superior in all cases presents a serious risk of ecological fallacy. As political scientists, we are often too quick to make inferences about subgroups based on aggregate data.<sup>22</sup> In the past, this might have been acceptable due to the lack of sufficient data to examine relationships among important subgroups of the American population. Now, however, with great big data sources like the CCES, NAES, and others (such as Catalyst data), this kind of analysis is both possible and imperative.

How well the rational choice and social identity models explain partisanship varies between large segments of the American public. The relationship between relevant

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<sup>21</sup>Interestingly, while the causes of partisanship overlap a lot for men and women, the causes themselves *don't*. Respondents whose partisanship is “correctly” predicted by either the rational choice model or social identity model are highly likely *not* to be identified “correctly” by the other model! Across genders and all four data sets, the probability of a partisan being “correctly” identified by both models ranges from about one in thirty five (less than 2.86%) to one in thirteen (less than 7.70%). Table C-1 in Appendix C has these results. This finding is more than just a casual curiosity. It suggests that Sniderman and Stiglitz (2012) are correct: Contemporary American politics features a sizable group of social-identity, *American Voter*-like partisans and an even larger group of rational-choice, ideology-based partisans, and *these are generally distinct groups*.

<sup>22</sup>The reverse tendency can also be a problem. When political scientists focus overzealously on analyzing subgroups of the American population, it becomes very difficult to build general theories.

demographics and partisanship is not as clear as we might believe it to be, especially for age and education. What holds true in the aggregate, or for one group, may not hold true for another. Gelman, Shor, Bafumi, and Park (2008) famously demonstrate that this is true of income and partisan vote choice. Future research should robustly examine the relationships between demographics and partisanship among important subgroups, and determine when the aggregate, bird's-eye view of these relationships is true and when it is not. My future research will analyze the implications of these conclusions.

## V CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation gives us a new theory of partisanship. By taking into account personality traits, I provide a clear but profound explanation for why some people identify as pure independents, independent leaners, weak partisans, and strong partisans. These categories tell us a great deal about how likely someone is to turnout to vote, vote for a particular party, seek out partisan news sources, and be politically informed, among many other things, so being able to explain them is incredibly valuable.

My conflict-oriented, group identity theory fits very well between existing rational choice and social identity theories of partisanship. Like rational choice, it places emphasis on the individual preferences and the source of those preferences. Similar to social identity theories, my theory considers joining groups to be crucial. However, my theory is neither a purely rational choice or social identity theory, and as a result is able to transcend both.

There are many potential implications of the conflict-oriented group identity theory. One of those implications is explored and analyzed in this dissertation. I show here that male and female differences in Need to Evaluate and joiner status are responsible for a considerable part of the gender gap in strength of partisanship. Nevertheless, there are certainly other implications of this theory, which has changed the way I view partisanship. Joiner status and Need to Evaluate might influence what kinds of political participation individuals are predisposed to, what campaign tactics will be most effective on them, and when they will switch parties.

These two traits also, of course, provide an explanation for the gender gap in sources of partisanship demonstrated above. One potential reason that the rational choice model of partisanship is a comparatively better model of partisanship for men is higher male Need to Evaluate. A plausible reason that the social identity model

of partisanship is a comparatively better of partisanship for women is higher female joiner status.

In this dissertation, I demonstrate support for interesting findings about the relationship between social group demographics and male and female party identification. However, these results are by no means exhaustive. If anything, my conclusions exhort political scientists to do more research on the causes of partisanship, both at an aggregate level and among important subgroups of the American population.

Why an American identifies as a strong or weak Republican or Democrat, or pure or leaning independent cannot always be explained, even by that person. In this dissertation, though, I expound a powerful theory of partisanship helps minimize our ignorance. May this greater knowledge increase our respect for one of our greatest choices.

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APPENDIX A  
SUPPORTING INFORMATION FOR “THE CONFLICT-ORIENTED GROUP  
IDENTITY OF PARTISANSHIP”

To provide verification of conceptual and theoretical validity, I present the results of additional analyses here. Those not familiar with research on Need to Evaluate may wonder if it is the same as political sophistication. It is not. Need to Evaluate is a social-psychological personality trait, and exists above and beyond political interest or sophistication. A person high in Need to Evaluate, for example, would also be expected to have strong preferences toward film, food, and consumer goods. Someone high in Need to Evaluate may not even like politics!

To show that this is the case, I compare the correlations between Need to Evaluate and several measures of political information and political sophistication. Table A-1 shows the results. Talking Politics measures the number of days per week that respondents talk about politics. Watching TV News is the number of days per week that respondents watch TV news. Views Internet News is the number of days per week that respondents view Internet news. Political Interest measures how interested respondents are in information about government and politics, and ranges from “Not interested at all” to “Slightly interested” to “Moderately interested” to “Very interested” to “Extremely interested.” Structural Political Knowledge is the number of correct answers that a respondent gives to six questions about the structure of American government. The measure includes questions about the length of terms in the House, Senate, and Presidency, as well as questions about the number of Senators from each state, Presidential succession, and veto override percentages. Campaign Political Knowledge is the number of correct answers that a respondent gives to six questions about the 2008 Presidential campaign. The measure includes questions about McCain and Obama’s home states, religions, and occupations prior to entering politics. Presidential Debates Watched is the number of Presidential debates that respondents watched in 2008.

Table A-1 shows that Need to Evaluate is definitively not the same as political knowledge or political sophistication. Need to Evaluate does have correlations over .3 with Talking Politics and Political Interest, which are large correlations for behavioral variables. However, these correlations are nowhere near a level that would suggest that Need to Evaluate and political sophistication are the same concept. Need to Evaluate is not conceptually or theoretically the same as political sophistication or information, and the correlations displayed in Table A-1 show that Need to Evaluate is not empirically the same either.

In addition to demonstrating that Need to Evaluate is not the same as other explanatory variables important for analyzing political behavior, I show that Need to Evaluate has theoretically expected relationships with other important variables

Table A-1: Correlations Between Need to Evaluate and Several Measures of Political Information/Sophistication

	Need to Evaluate
Talking Politics	.32*
Watches TV News	.10*
Views Internet News	.13*
Political Interest	.36*
Structural Political Knowledge	.19*
Campaign Political Knowledge	.13*
Presidential Debates Watched	.20*

# indicates  $p < .1$   
\* indicates  $p < .05$

in political behavior. Specifically, I find further evidence that having a high Need to Evaluate leads an American to evaluate the Republican and Democratic parties in a bipolar, or diametrically opposing way (see Federico 2007). Table A-2 shows that having a high Need to Evaluate leads to lower levels of ambivalence between the two parties.

In Table A-2, I display the results of a linear regression of Lack of Party Ambivalence on Need to Evaluate and control variables. Lack of Party Ambivalence is a nine-point scale, measured so that the more positive a respondent is about one party and more negative he or she is about the other, the higher the scale value. The results in Table A-2 show that Need to Evaluate has a statistically and substantively significant effect on Lack of Party Ambivalence. All else equal, a respondent that moves from the median value of the Need to Evaluate scale (.5) to the highest value (1) is expected to be over a point less ambivalent on the nine-point Lack of Party Ambivalence scale.

Need to Evaluate and joiner status are also not the same as any of the other explanatory variables used in my analyses, and there are no problems of perfect collinearity that could confound the results I displayed earlier. Table A-3 displays the correlations between Need to Evaluate, joiner status, and these explanatory variables. None of the correlations are anywhere close to high enough to cause concerns about multicollinearity.

For interested readers, I also provide the results for one of my key analyses with an additional control variable included. Table A-4 depicts the results of an ordered probit of strength of partisanship on Need to Evaluate, joiner status, strength of ideology, and controls. This model is the same as the one depicted in Table 2.2, but with strength of ideology included as an additional control variable. Strength of ideology should not be included as an explanatory variable in a model that has

Table A-2: OLS Regression of Lack of Party Ambivalence Scale on Need to Evaluate and Controls

	Estimate	Std. Error
Intercept	.8*	.38
Need to Evaluate	2.2*	.32
Male	-.06	.13
Age	.00	.00
Education	.22*	.07
Income	-.01	.02
Black	.33	.26
Religiosity	-.00	.00
Catholic	-.33*	.16
South	-.02	.15
Married	-.03	.15
Residual standard error = 2.132		
N of sample = 1124		
Adjusted $R^2$ = .06		
# indicates $p < .1$		
* indicates $p < .05$		

strength of partisanship as its dependent variable, since partisanship significantly determines ideology (Carsey and Layman 2006) and this creates endogeneity problems through reverse causality. As a result, strength of ideology is not included in the model reported in the main body of the paper, and should not be.

Table A-3 shows that the correlation between Need to Evaluate and strength of ideology is not nearly high enough to suspect high multicollinearity or that the two variables are empirically the same in the data. Nonetheless, I include the model results in Table A-4 in Appendix A so readers can see that inappropriately including strength of ideology in this model does not wash out the influence of Need to Evaluate. The results presented in Table A-4 show that Need to Evaluate remains a highly significant predictor of strength of partisanship even when strength of ideology is improperly included in the model.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Joiner status remains marginally significant at  $p < .11$ .

Table A-3: Correlation Between Need to Evaluate, Joiner Status, and Explanatory Variables

	Need to Evaluate	Joiner Status
Need to Evaluate	-	.08*
Joiner Status	.08*	-
Male	.1*	-.08*
Age	.02	.17*
Education	.11*	.28*
Income	.06*	.2*
Black	-.01	.01
Religiosity	-.02	.33*
Catholic	-.07*	.02
South	.00	.02
Married	-.01	.11*
Strength of Ideology	.18*	.15*
Ideology	-.04#	.05#

# indicates  $p < .1$

\* indicates  $p < .05$

Table A-4: Ordered Probit of SPID on Need to Evaluate, Joiner Status, & Controls  
& Strength of Ideology

	Estimate	Std. Error
Need to Evaluate	.46*	.18
Joiner Status	.08	.05
Male	-.28*	.07
Age	.00	.00
Education	.06	.04
Income	-.02#	.01
Black	.62*	.16
Religiosity	-.00	.00
Catholic	.01	.09
South	-.05	.08
Married	.18*	.08
Strength of Ideology	.53*	.04
Tau1	-.13	.22
Tau2	.64*	.22
Tau3	1.42*	.22

Residual deviance = 2331.31

N of sample = 1018

AIC = 2361.31

# indicates  $p < .1$

\* indicates  $p < .05$

APPENDIX B  
SUPPORTING INFORMATION FOR “CONFLICT, GROUPS, AND THE  
GENDER GAP IN STRENGTH OF PARTISANSHIP”

Assessing How Much Need to Evaluate and Joiner Status Affect the Gender Gap,  
Separately for Men and Women

Using the profile median male and female respondent, I compare their probabilities of identifying as independent leaners and weak partisans given their gender’s average Need to Evaluate and joiner status with what those probabilities would be if they had the average levels of Need to Evaluate and joiner status of the whole sample. This allows me to compare how different male and female strength of partisanship would be if men and women had the same average Need to Evaluate and joiner status with how different male and female strength of partisanship are given their different average Need to Evaluate and joiner status. The sample’s median respondent is a 51-year-old, married, non-black respondent who is not Catholic and who has graduated from high school. The sample average Need to Evaluate is .58 and sample average joiner status is 1.16.

To assess how much of the gender gap in strength of partisanship that Need to Evaluate and joiner status explain, I use predicted probabilities. Using the profile median male and female respondent, I compare their probabilities of identifying as independent leaners and weak partisans given their gender’s average Need to Evaluate and joiner status with what those probabilities would be if they had the average levels of Need to Evaluate and joiner status of the whole sample. This allows me to compare how different male and female strength of partisanship would be if men and women had the same average Need to Evaluate and joiner status with how different male and female strength of partisanship are given their different average Need to Evaluate and joiner status. The sample’s median respondent is a 51-year-old, married, non-black respondent who is not Catholic and who has graduated from high school. The sample average Need to Evaluate is .58 and sample average joiner status is 1.16.

Table B-1 shows that the sample’s median respondent, if male and with the average male Need to Evaluate, will choose to identify as a leaner instead of a pure independent about 70% of the time. If that same median respondent is female, with the average female Need to Evaluate, she will only choose to be a leaner instead of a pure independent 62% of the time. Of this 8% difference, approximately 12.5% of

it (1% out of 8%) is caused by the difference in the average level of male and female Need to Evaluate.<sup>2</sup>

Joiner status does not explain as much of the difference in leaner identification as Need to Evaluate does. Table B-1 depicts that the sample's median respondent, if male and with the average male joiner status, will choose to identify as a leaner instead of a strong partisan about 36.5% of the time. If that same median respondent is female, with the average female joiner status, she will only choose to be a leaner instead of a strong partisan 29.5% of the time. About 7% of this 7% difference is caused by the difference in the average level of male and female joiner status.

Both Need to Evaluate and joiner status account for a larger part of why men are less likely to identify as weak partisans than women. The sample's median respondent, if male and with the average male Need to Evaluate, will identify as a weak partisan instead of strong partisan approximately 40% of the time. In contrast, if that same median respondent is woman, with the average female Need to Evaluate, she will identify as a weak partisan instead of a strong partisan about 49% of the time. The difference in average male and female Need to Evaluate explains a whopping 28.5% of this identification gap!

Joiner status also accounts for why men are less likely to identify as weak partisans than women. The sample's median respondent, if male and with the average male joiner status, will identify as a weak partisan instead of pure independent about 70.5% of the time. If the sample median respondent is instead a woman, with the average female joiner status, she will choose to identify as a weak partisan instead of pure independent about 79.5% of the time. The difference in average male and female joiner status explains about 11% of this 9 percentage point gap.

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<sup>2</sup>This is derived by calculating the predicted probabilities of identifying as a leaner instead of a pure independent for the male and female median respondents if they both have the same Need to Evaluate, the sample average (.58), instead of their gender's average Need to Evaluate (.6 and .56 respectively). The gap between the sample median male and female respondents' probability of identifying as a leaner instead of a pure independent if they have the sample average Need to Evaluate (69.5% - 62.5% = 7%) instead of their gender's average Need to Evaluate is then subtracted from the (greater) probability gap if they have their gender's average Need to Evaluate (70% - 62% = 8%). The remaining percent (8% - 7% = 1%) is the fraction of the gap (1%/8% = 12.5%) explained by the difference in the average male Need to Evaluate and average female Need to Evaluate.

Table B-1: Sample Median Respondent's Probabilities of Leaner & Weak Partisan Identification for Women and Men, the Difference Between Them, & % of Difference Explained by Gender Differences in Need to Evaluate and Joiner Status

	Male	Female	Difference	% of Difference Explained
Pr(Leaner Over Pure Independent)	70%	62%	8%	12.5% (by N2E)
Pr(Leaner Over Strong Partisan)	36.5%	29.5%	7%	7% (by joiner status)
Pr(Weak Partisan Over Strong Partisan)	40%	49%	9%	28% (by N2E)
Pr(Weak Partisan Over Pure Independent)	70.5%	79.5%	9%	11% (by joiner status)

APPENDIX C

SUPPORTING INFORMATION FOR “RATIONAL CHOICE, SOCIAL  
IDENTITY, AND DIFFERENCES IN HOW WOMEN AND MEN IDENTIFY AS  
REPUBLICANS OR DEMOCRATS”

Table C-1: Overlap in “Correct” Partisanship Predictions Between Rational Choice and Social Identity Models

**Men**

	2006 CCES	2008-2009 NES Panel	2008 NAES	2010 CCES
% of Social Identity’s Correct Predictions That Rational Choice Gets Right	37.48	37.50	24.61	41.60
% of Rational Choice’s Correct Predictions That Social Identity Gets Right	22.37	18.90	16.42	28.02
% of Total Respondents’ Partisanship Correctly Predicted By <i>Both</i> Models	5.86	4.72	2.89	6.66

**Women**

	2006 CCES	2008-2009 NES Panel	2008 NAES	2010 CCES
% of Social Identity’s Correct Predictions That Rational Choice Gets Right	36.52	47.27	23.32	33.53
% of Rational Choice’s Correct Predictions That Social Identity Gets Right	21.41	27.96	16.03	25.26
% of Total Respondents’ Partisanship Correctly Predicted By <i>Both</i> Models	5.35	7.41	2.84	5.42

Numbers rounded to 2 decimal places.