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Asymmetric Polarization: The Perception that Republicans Pose Harm to Disadvantaged Groups Drives Democrats' Greater Dislike of Republicans in Social Contexts

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Author Note

We have no known conflict of interest.

Unless otherwise noted, all preregistration information, materials, data, and analysis scripts are available on the OSF page for this project,
https://osf.io/ewckm/?view_only=696438eb3a7d428c8cb4f341a2b095c1.

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Abstract

Given growing political polarization in recent years, partisan dislike—defined as the negativity that individuals display at the prospect of having close social relations with supporters of the other party—has received increasing attention. While traditional work in social and political psychology has held that conservatives display greater outgroup hostility than liberals, the worldview conflict perspective suggests that both groups similarly express hostility towards value incongruent outgroups. Contradicting both established perspectives, we present evidence across five preregistered studies (and two additional studies reported in the Supplements) conducted between 2022 and 2023—two social media field experiments ($N = 10,000$) examining actual behavior and five survey-based studies ($N = 2,443$) operationalizing partisan dislike in various ways (e.g., blocking on social media, rating the likability of various targets, and evaluating hiring suitability)—that Democrats (i.e., liberals) dislike Republicans (i.e., conservatives) more than vice versa. We provide a potential explanation for this phenomenon by extending the worldview conflict perspective to account for asymmetries in how moralized specific values are among two conflicting groups at a given point in time. Specifically, we theorize that in light of recent social trends in the modern-day U.S., the moralized belief that counter-partisans pose harm to disadvantaged groups has become an asymmetric contributor to partisan dislike among Democrats. We found support for our theory across both measurement-of-mediation and experimental-mediation approaches, and in both field experimental and survey data. Overall, this work advances research on ideology and outgroup hostility and extends the worldview conflict perspective to better explain partisan dislike.

Keywords: Partisan Dislike, Partisanship, Political Ideology, Political Polarization

Introductory + Discussion Sections Word Count: 4,603

Political polarization has been growing in many countries around the world (Adams et al., 2012; Boxell et al., 2020; Iyengar et al., 2019; Iyengar & Westwood, 2015; Pew Research Center, 2014, 2016b), with this issue being particularly severe in the United States (Finkel et al., 2020). In the two-party system in the U.S., scholars, political commentators, and politicians alike have widely recognized that the Democratic Party represents the liberal/left end of the political spectrum and the Republican Party represents the conservative/right end of the political spectrum (Levendusky, 2009). Accordingly, scholars have traditionally conceptualized polarization in terms of disagreement on policy preferences and ideological worldviews (Abramowitz & Saunders, 1998). However, recent decades have witnessed an arguably more worrying form of polarization in the U.S.—partisan dislike—whereby Democrats and Republicans in the general population respond increasingly negatively to the prospect of having close social relations with people who support the other party.

Partisan dislike has been found to influence social behaviors in numerous domains, including individuals' choice of friends (Iyengar et al., 2012), romantic partners (Huber & Malhotra, 2017), employers (McConnell et al., 2018), places of residence (Motyl et al., 2014), and the amount of time that people spend with family members who support the other party (Chen & Rohla, 2018). Such social tendencies are consequential for society since relatively slight preferences for forming ties with ingroups over outgroups can contribute to the creation of segregated communities (Clark & Fossett, 2008; Schelling, 1971; Zhang, 2004), such as “blue” versus “red” neighborhoods, businesses, and social media echo chambers.

Do Democrats (i.e., left-wing/liberal individuals) or Republicans (i.e., right-wing/conservative individuals) display higher levels of partisan dislike? There are two competing theories in the social and political psychology literatures that address this question.

On the one hand, the traditional view has been that right-wing individuals tend to exhibit greater prejudice against outgroups than left-wing individuals (Jost et al., 2009). There are a number of reasons that have been proposed for this, including higher levels of ingroup loyalty, greater threat sensitivity, and lower openness to experience among right-wing individuals (e.g., Duckitt & Sibley, 2007; Graham et al., 2009; Jost et al., 2009; Peterson et al., 1997).

In contrast, more recent work under the worldview conflict perspective suggests that both left-wing and right-wing individuals similarly display hostility and prejudice towards those embracing differing values from themselves (Brandt & Crawford, 2020; Hasson et al., 2018). Given that both sides are theorized to exhibit this tendency to a similar extent, the worldview conflict perspective suggests that left-wing and right-wing individuals are symmetric in their hostility towards outgroups whose values differ from themselves (Brandt et al., 2014; Chambers et al., 2013; Crawford et al., 2017).

Challenging both perspectives, we found evidence—across two pre-registered social media field experiments conducted between 2022 and 2023 examining actual behavior (Studies 1 and 5) and five survey-based studies employing diverse hypothetical scenarios (Studies 2, 3, 4, S2a, and S2b)—that Democrats display greater partisan dislike than Republicans. Our findings are consistent with recent nationally representative sample surveys finding that Democrats display greater partisan dislike than Republicans in domains such as friendship, dating decisions, and reactions to one’s child’s choice of spouse (Ballard, 2020; Brown, 2020; Cox, 2021; Seitz-Ward et al., 2018). Importantly, we did not find evidence of partisan asymmetry in feelings towards ingroup members, as Democrats and Republicans did not differ in how much they liked co-partisans.

From Moralization to Hostility

What might be contributing to this asymmetry in partisan dislike? Based on existing work in moral psychology and recent data on social/political attitudes, we developed a theoretically motivated hypothesis for a potential asymmetric contributor of partisan dislike among Democrats: the perception that Republicans are likely to cause harm to disadvantaged people (i.e., people belonging to “groups that are socially, culturally or financially disadvantaged compared to the majority of society”; Bonevski et al., 2014). Our theoretical model starts with the same fundamental premise as the worldview conflict perspective—that perceived disagreement with a target’s worldview plays a central role in shaping hostility towards the target (Brandt et al., 2014; Chambers et al., 2013; Crawford et al., 2017). However, we deviate from prior work under this perspective by questioning the assumption that groups on both sides of a worldview conflict are similarly motivated to exhibit hostility towards the other side.

Our model considers differences in value moralization—that is, the extent to which each group considers a value as central to questions of right or wrong (Skitka et al., 2005)—as crucial in understanding the nature of worldview-based conflict between groups. Research in moral psychology has long suggested that people and groups—including political parties—vary in the extent to which they moralize different values (Graham et al., 2009; Miller et al., 1990; Rai & Fiske, 2011; Skitka, 2010). Furthermore, the degree to which a value is moralized predicts hostility against targets who are perceived to disagree on the value in question (Garrett & Bankert, 2020; Skitka et al., 2015). For example, the more that someone moralizes issues of theft, the more they would condemn and punish acts of thievery. Thus, combining insights from the moral psychology literature with the worldview conflict perspective suggests that a value may be a source of hostility for one group against another group, to the extent that: (1) the value is moralized by the group, and (2) there is disagreement surrounding the value with the other

group. Therefore, it follows from our theoretical model that if a value is *more* moralized by one group than the other, that value will serve as an asymmetric contributor of outgroup hostility for the group that moralizes it more. In short, our model contrasts with prior work under the worldview conflict perspective, which has largely overlooked the influence of group differences in the moralization of specific values.

In this work, we propose that concern about harm to disadvantaged people is in the present day an asymmetric contributor to partisan dislike among Democrats because: (1) this value is more moralized by Democrats than by Republicans, and (2) there are differences on this value between the two groups. Indeed, as we discuss further below, recent years have seen a growth in both the moralization of this value among Democrats, and the differences between Democrats and Republicans on this value. Thus, concern about harm to disadvantaged people could be one potential mechanism explaining why Democrats currently express greater partisan dislike towards Republicans than vice versa.

Harm is central to most prominent theories of morality and moralization (e.g., Gray et al., 2012; Curry et al., 2019; Rai & Fiske, 2011), with existing work indicating that this is the most important moral concern among both left-wing and right-wing individuals (Hofmann et al., 2014; Schein & Gray, 2015, 2018). At the same time, other work clarifies that harm to disadvantaged people specifically (e.g., racial/ethnic minorities), is a value that is much more moralized by left-wing individuals than by right-wing individuals (Duckitt & Sibley, 2009; Jacoby, 2014; Jost et al., 2003, 2009; Lambert & Chasteen, 1997; Lucas & Kteily, 2018; Waytz et al., 2019). Moreover, the divide on this value is considered one of the core ideological differences between the two groups by prominent work in political psychology (e.g., Jost, 2017; Jost et al., 2003).

Importantly, political differences in the U.S. regarding concern for disadvantaged people seem to have grown following the rise of Donald Trump in 2016 and the killing of George Floyd in 2020, particularly when it comes to concern for racial/ethnic minorities. Indeed, the mass protests in the wake of George Floyd's death were the largest ever seen in the U.S., and various observers consider the Black Lives Matter movement to be the largest social movement in U.S. history (Buchanan et al., 2020). Democrats were much more likely to participate in these causes than Republicans (Horowitz et al., 2023), with existing work highlighting that attitude moralization is an important antecedent of political participation (Mooijman et al., 2018; Skitka & Bauman, 2008; Skitka & Morgan, 2014). This suggests that Democrats display higher levels of attitude moralization towards disadvantaged people than Republicans, particularly in the present day.

There is also evidence of widening political divergence on specific attitudes about disadvantaged people, highlighted by rapid shifts in the views of Democrats, with little to no change in the views of Republicans (Hout & Maggio, 2021). For example, one study found that the percentage of Democrats who agreed with the statement, "slavery and discrimination make it difficult for Black people to work their way out of the lower class," climbed from 51% in 2011 to 77% in 2020, whereas the percentage of Republicans who agreed with the statement stayed largely the same: 17% in 2011 and 16% in 2020 (Griffin et al., 2021). Similarly, this study also found that the percentage of Democrats favoring a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants rose from 57% in 2011 to 81% in 2020, whereas Republican attitudes were steadier, rising from 21% to 28% (Griffin et al., 2021). Summarizing recent data, a report from Pew Research Center notes that "perhaps no issue is more divisive than racial injustice in the U.S." (Pew Research Center, 2021).

From the point of view of Democrats, the hardship faced by disadvantaged people is an immediate and pressing societal problem that should be alleviated using various available means, including new government legislation (Reyna et al., 2006), shifts in business practices (Dang & Joshi, 2022), and broader cultural changes (Roussos & Dovidio, 2018), all of which Republicans are currently unsympathetic towards (Pew Research Center, 2016a). In other words, these value differences, as well as the greater moralization of this value among Democrats than among Republicans, likely contribute to the belief among Democrats that Republicans pose harm to disadvantaged people, in turn, asymmetrically driving partisan dislike among Democrats.

Research Overview

We tested our theoretical prediction—that the belief that counter-partisans are likely to harm disadvantaged people is a unique contributor of partisan dislike among Democrats in social situations—in a series of seven studies (two reported in the Supplements), including two social media field experiments. We employed both measurement-of-mediation (Studies 2, 3, S2a, and S2b) and experimental mediation (Studies 4 and 5) methods. In Study 3, we demonstrate that the asymmetric effect of perceived harm to disadvantaged people does not translate to other forms of harm (e.g., harm to self and others like the self), and persists even after accounting for controls including perceived general value incongruence with the target and moral condemnation of supporting the other political party's leaders. Study 3 also shows that Democrats morally condemn attitudes about racial/ethnic minorities prevailing among the opposite party to a greater extent than Republicans, and that this tendency helps explain Democrats' greater dislike of counter-partisans than Republicans. In Studies 4 and 5, we examined whether the Democrat/Republican divide in partisan dislike dissipates when Democrat and Republican participants encounter a counter-partisan target who displays attitudes towards disadvantaged

people that are aligned with the participant's own party. In sum, the present work questions key conclusions of prior work on political ideology and outgroup hostility and extends the worldview conflict perspective to better explain when, why, and for whom partisan dislike will be strongest.

Methods Statement

Ethics Approval

We received ethical approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at a research university in the Midwestern United States for all study procedures. We obtained a waiver for informed consent for the social media field experiments we conducted (Studies 1 and 5) and participants in each of the survey-based experiments provided informed consent at the outset of each survey.

Effect Size Measures

Throughout the article, as effect size measures, we report Cohen's d for t-tests, η^2 for analyses of variance, b for regression analyses, and Cohen's w for chi-squared tests.

Open Science Practices

All studies in the main manuscript were pre-registered and we report all measures, materials, conditions, and exclusions. Preregistration, materials, data, and code for all studies can be found at: https://osf.io/ewckm/?view_only=696438eb3a7d428c8cb4f341a2b095c1. We report preregistration deviations in Table S1 in the Online Supplemental Materials (OSM) following conventional guidelines for reporting deviations from pre-registration (Willroth & Atherton, 2024). Results of all preregistered analyses not included in the main manuscript, and descriptions of supplemental analyses, are included in the OSM.

The sample sizes for all studies reported in the manuscript were determined before any data collection and were pre-registered. The sample size for the first social media field

experiment (Study 1) was roughly 1,000 per condition, whereas the sample size for the second social media field experiment (Study 5) was roughly 1,500 per condition. The sample sizes of the survey-based studies range in size from 100 to 300 participants per condition. We based the sample sizes of the survey-based studies on a priori calculations performed in G*Power 3.1 (Faul et al., 2009) to detect a small-medium effect size ($\eta_p^2 = .03$) for the hypothesized effect at power $> .90$. We increased the sample size whenever possible to maximize power.

Study 1

We conducted a social media field experiment on Twitter (now officially known as X) that allowed us to examine whether Democrats and Republicans differ in levels of partisan dislike in an ecologically valid setting where we can observe actual behavior. While the majority of prior work on partisan dislike has relied on survey-based methods, the participants in this study were unaware that they were part of a research study, which mitigates common concerns such as social desirability bias and experimenter demand effects (Mosleh et al., 2022). Moreover, Twitter is an important research context given the key role it plays in modern politics (Mooijman et al., 2018).

Method

Participants

We collected data from a politically balanced sample of Twitter users ($N = 4,000$; median 82 followers, 240 followed accounts, 50% Republican; 25 users were not active at the time of experiment thus couldn't be followed). First, we identified an equal number of Twitter users who shared recent posts from mainstream right-leaning (Fox News), hyper-partisan right-leaning (Breitbart), mainstream left-leaning (MSNBC), and hyper-partisan left-leaning (Occupy Democrats) outlets. We then estimated the political leaning of users based on the content they

shared (Eady et al., 2019; Mosleh et al., 2021) and randomly selected a politically balanced set of users. Specifically, we estimated user partisanship based on content users shared from right/Republican versus left/Democrat leaning news outlets (Eady et al., 2019; Mosleh et al., 2021). We excluded users who followed less than 10 accounts (i.e., likely inactive) or had over 15,000 followers (i.e., prominent users who are less likely to respond to the treatment). We estimated user gender by employing an algorithm developed by Wang and colleagues (Wang et al., 2019), and user age by using the software Face Plus Plus (www.faceplusplus.com), which found that 41% of users were estimated to be female and the average age was estimated to be 44.5 years.

Materials and Procedure

Participants in our sample were randomly assigned to be followed by one of six research accounts (3 Democrat, 3 Republican) created by the research team (see Figure 1). We could not have identical descriptions across profiles since we wanted to avoid detection by Twitter (i.e., X) during our field experiment for terms of use violations. However, pre-testing the information in the research accounts indicated no significant differences on dimensions such as perceived warmth and perceived political orientation (Nair et al., 2024). We assigned subjects to experimental conditions using randomization by blocking (Higgins et al., 2016) based on the following covariates: (1) partisanship/ideology, (2) log transform of number of followers, (3) number of days with at least one tweet in the past 14 days (to measure recent activity on the platform), and (4) reciprocity rate (number of mutual friendship divided by number of followers).

Each account included a unique (computer-generated) profile picture, unique name, and a bio with two unique hobbies/interests. The Democrat (Republican) profiles include “Proud

Democrat” (“Proud Republican”) in their bios. The research accounts also retweeted posts from partisan news sources (e.g., Fox News, MSNBC). From the participants’ point of view, the research accounts that followed them were either an account of a co-partisan or of a counter-partisan. Our independent variables of interest were participants’ political party preference (Democrat versus Republican), political mismatch (versus match) between the user and the research account that followed them, and the interaction between the two variables. Our dependent variables of interest involved two measures of participants’ behavior. Specifically, whether participants reciprocated social ties with the research account (i.e., followed-back), or broke social ties with the research account (i.e., blocked; Martel et al., 2024). These choices are largely unobserved by users outside of the dyad, which reduces concerns that our findings might be biased by self-presentational motives among our participants.

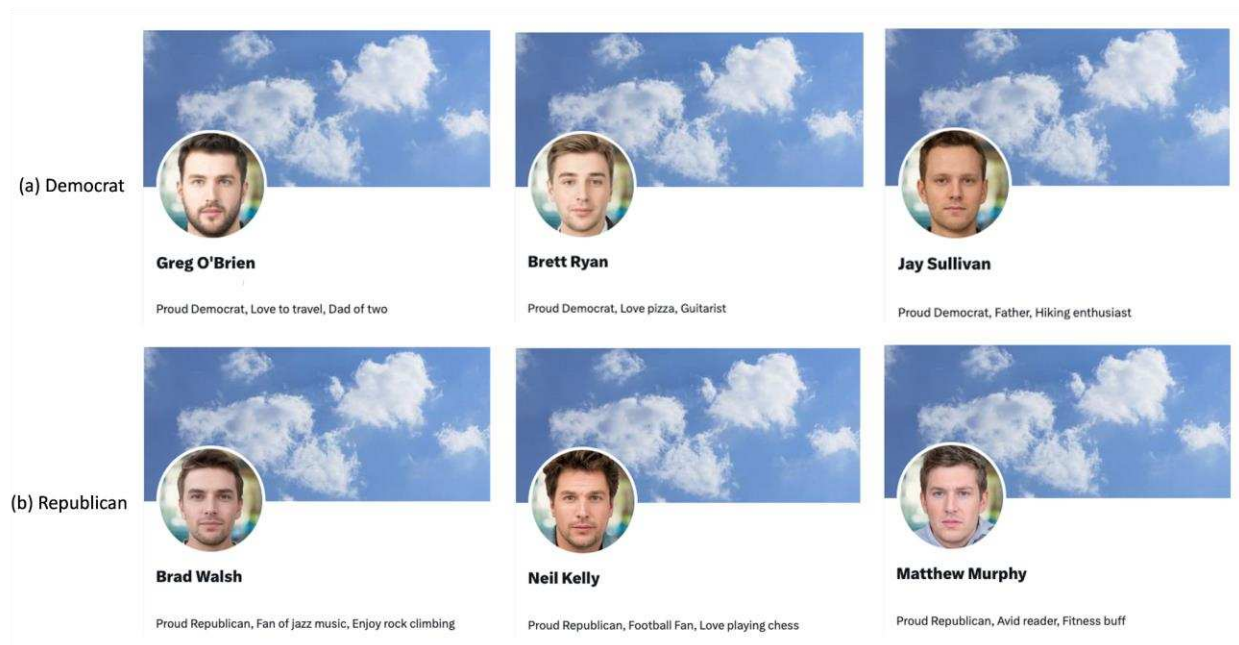


Figure 1: Research accounts used in Study 1. We created 6 accounts with facial images as profile pictures (3 per each experimental condition).

Results

Our results are reported graphically in Figure 2. When examining the probability that users reciprocated social ties with the research account with a linear probability model with party preference and party mismatch as predictors, we found that users' party preference had no significant effect ($b = -0.01$, $t(3,972) = 1.30$, $p = 0.20$, 95% CI [-0.03, .01]) whereas party mismatch had a significant negative effect ($b = -0.13$, $t(3,972) = 13.5$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.15, .11]). When adding the interaction between party preference and party mismatch to the model, the effect of party preference on the reciprocation of social ties was not significantly moderated by party mismatch ($b = -0.011$, $t(3,971) = -0.61$, $p = .539$, 95% CI [-0.05, .03]). However, we did find that when paired with counter-partisan accounts, Republicans were significantly more likely to reciprocate social ties than Democrats ($b = 0.018$, $t(1,993) = 2.08$, $p = .037$, 95% CI [.001, .035]), while the two groups did not significantly differ in their tendency to reciprocate social ties when paired with co-partisan accounts ($b = 0.006$, $t(1,978) = 0.38$, $p = .700$, 95% CI [-0.026, .039]).

Examining the probability that users broke social ties with the research account, we found that Democrats were more likely to break ties than Republicans ($b = 0.02$, $t(3,972) = 3.12$, $p = .002$, 95% CI [0.009, 0.039]) and that users who were mismatched with the target were more likely to break ties than users who were matched ($b = 0.09$, $t(3,972) = 12.02$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.08, 0.11]). When adding the interaction between the two variables to the model, we found that the effect of party preference on the breaking of social ties was moderated by party mismatch ($b = 0.044$, $t(3,971) = 2.88$, $p = .004$, 95% CI [.014, .074]). When users were paired with a counter-partisan research account, Democrats were more likely to break social ties than Republicans ($b = 0.046$, $t(1,993) = 3.27$, $p = .001$, 95% CI [.018, .073]), but when paired with a co-partisan research account there was no significant difference in breaking of social ties between

Democrats and Republicans ($b = 0.002$, $t(1,978) = 0.29$, $p = .769$, 95% CI [-0.010, .014]), (see Figure 2). Additional exploratory preregistered analyses from Study 1 such as controlling for ideological extremity (which did not affect our pattern of results) can be found in the OSM Section B-I.

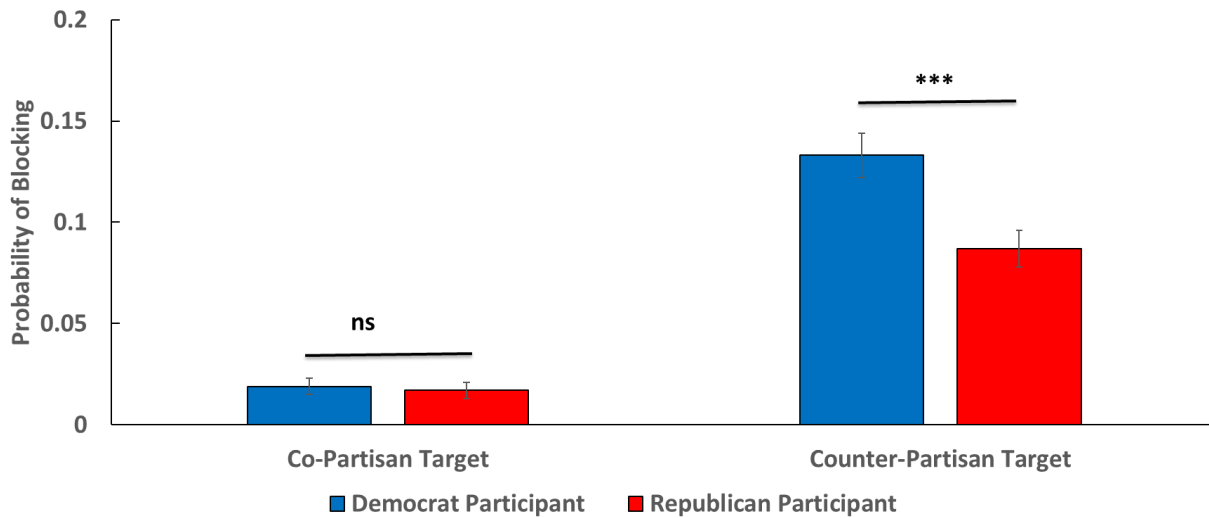


Figure 2: Probability of users blocking the research accounts (Study 1)

Thus, we found strong evidence in Study 1 of partisan asymmetry when examining the breaking of social ties, but not when examining the reciprocation of social ties. To investigate whether the breaking of social ties (i.e., blocking behavior) is actually predicted by how much participants disliked the target (as opposed to other factors, such as the perception that the target profile is a bot), we conducted a subsequent survey (Study S1, full details in the OSM Section C-I) recruiting 200 Twitter users (98 Democrats and 102 Republicans) who were randomly assigned to either a Democrat or Republican Twitter profile. We found in this survey: (1) that dislike predicted intention to break social ties more than the perception of the target as a “bot”

(i.e., a fake profile) and perceived norms surrounding the acceptability of blocking, and (2) Democrat/Republican asymmetries in the expected direction for both dislike, and intentions to break social ties with, a counter-partisan versus co-partisan account.

Discussion

Study 1 provides real-world evidence from observed behaviors showing that Democrats display greater partisan dislike than Republicans in their tendency to break social ties with counter-partisans on social media. However, this asymmetry was more limited when examining the tendency of Democrats and Republicans to reciprocate social ties with counter-partisans, consistent with the notion that blocking is more of an expression of dislike than choosing not to follow-back. An important shortcoming of Study 1's design was that it did not allow us to examine whether the belief among Democrats that Republicans pose harm to disadvantaged people could be contributing to the asymmetry in partisan dislike. We examine this proposition in our remaining studies.

Study 2

In Study 2, we examined whether: (1) the key finding from Study 1—that Democrats display greater partisan dislike than Republicans—would replicate in a different context, and (2) the perception that counter-partisans are likely to harm disadvantaged people contributes to the dislike that Democrats feel towards Republicans.

Method

Participants

We recruited 600 participants through the survey platform Prolific, out of whom 572 passed pre-registered comprehension checks ($M_{\text{age}} = 40.08$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 13.04$; 282 females; 111

racial/ethnic minorities; median income: \$35,001-\$50,000; median education: bachelor's degree). Our sample included 284 Democrats and 288 Republicans.

Materials and Procedure

Participants in Study 2 were placed in a hypothetical scenario in which they were asked to imagine that a new neighbor had recently moved into their neighborhood and they had not met the neighbor yet. Participants were presented with this person's Facebook profile (see Figure S1 OSM Section E-I and Figure S2 in the OSM Section E-II) with two randomized between-subjects conditions, a Democrat neighbor condition and a Republican neighbor condition ($N_{Dem\ condition} = 287$, $N_{Rep\ condition} = 285$). The Democrat (Republican) profile included a Facebook "like" for the group "Democrats for America" ("Republicans for America") and a post in which the target describes being excited from listening to a Joe Biden (Donald Trump) speech. We chose to include presidential candidate preference as an indicator of party preference given how closely presidential candidate preference and party preference are tied in the U.S. (e.g., exit polls from the 2020 Presidential Election show that roughly 94% of Democrat voters and Republican voters voted for Joe Biden and Donald Trump, respectively; New York Times, 2020). We pre-tested these Facebook profiles to ensure that the Democrat and Republican profiles we created did not differ in terms of perceived political party extremity (see OSM Section B-II).

We coded participants based on their *party match* with the target. Specifically, we coded Democrat participants in the Democrat condition and Republican participants in the Republican condition as in the *co-partisan* condition, and we coded Democrat participants in the Republican condition and Republican participants in the Democrat condition as in the *counter-partisan* condition.

After viewing the profile, participants responded to our key dependent variable, and mediator, which measured how likable they found the target, and how likely they thought it would be that the target would harm disadvantaged individuals, respectively. We also included exploratory control variables after the dependent variables, including measures such as partisan attachment extremity, ideological extremity, and perceived value fit with the target. Subsequently, participants also completed two comprehension checks asking them to identify which politician (Joe Biden, Donald Trump, or neither) and which political party (the Democratic Party, the Republican party, or neither) the person supported. Finally, participants completed our demographic measures.

Likability. The neighbor's perceived likability was measured using a 4-item liking/Interpersonal attraction scale (adapted from Roth et al., 2020; all items from $1 = \textit{Strongly Disagree}$; $7 = \textit{Strongly Agree}$; $\alpha = .97$). Sample items include: "Having Ben as a neighbor would likely be a pleasure." and "I would likely get along well with Ben."

Belief that the target is likely to harm disadvantaged people. We measured participants' belief that the neighbor will harm disadvantaged people using a 7-item scale (all items from $1 = \textit{Not at all Likely}$; $7 = \textit{Extremely Likely}$; $\alpha = .97$). Sample items include: "How likely do you think it is that Ben would do something that would hurt people who are, in general, disadvantaged or less privileged?" and "How likely do you think it is that Ben would act unfairly towards people who are, in general, disadvantaged or less privileged?"

Perceived value fit. We measured how much participants believed that their values aligned with the neighbor using three items (all items from $1 = \textit{Strongly Disagree}$; $7 = \textit{Strongly Agree}$; $\alpha = .98$). Sample items include: "My personal values match Ben's values." and "Ben's values are a good fit with the things that I value in life."

Political identity centrality. We measured participants' political identity centrality by adapting the centrality scale of Black identity (Sellers et al., 1997; all items from 1 = *Strongly Disagree*; 7 = *Strongly Agree*; $\alpha = .92$). Sample items include: "My destiny is tied to the destiny of other people who hold my political views," and "I have a strong attachment to others who hold my political views."

Party attachment extremity. We measured party attachment extremity by recoding an item measuring party attachment (7-point scales; 1 = *Strongly Democrat*; 7 = *Strongly Republican*) such that 1 and 7 on this scale was recoded as 4; 2 and 6 on this scale was recoded as 3; 3 and 5 on this scale was recoded as 2; and 4 was recoded as 1.

Ideological extremity. We measured ideological extremity by recoding two items and taking the mean of these items. First, social conservatism and fiscal liberalism (both measured on 7-point scales; 1 = *Very Liberal*; 7 = *Very Conservative*, $\alpha = .74$) were recoded as social ideology extremity and fiscal ideology extremity (following the same approach as creating party attachment extremity). Second, we computed the means of these two scales to construct the ideological extremity scale.

Frequency of Interactions with Democrats; Frequency of Interactions with Republicans. We measured frequency of interactions with Democrats and frequency of interactions with Republicans using single-item measures: "How frequently do you have interactions with Democrats [Republicans] in your personal life that last more than ten minutes?" (1 = *Almost never*, 2 = *At least once a year*, 3 = *At least once a month*, 4 = *At least once a week*, 5 = *Pretty much every day*).

Results

Using linear regression, we found that participants' party preference significantly predicted perceived likability such that Democrats expressed lower liking in general than Republicans ($b = -.80$, $SE = 0.10$, $t(569) = 7.92$, $p < .001$, 95% CI $[-1.00, -0.60]$), and party mismatch significantly negatively predicted perceived likability ($b = -1.91$, $SE = 0.10$, $t(569) = -18.87$, $p < .001$, 95% CI $[-2.10, -1.71]$). Next, we examined the interaction between party preference and party mismatch on liking of the target (using PROCESS Model 1 in SPSS; Hayes, 2012). Qualifying the main effects, we found that the effect of party preference on perceived likability was significantly moderated by party mismatch (see Figure 3; $b = -1.47$, $SE = 0.19$, $t(568) = -7.63$, $p < .001$, 95% CI $[-1.85, -1.09]$). When participants evaluated co-partisans, there was no significant difference in liking of the target between Democrats ($M = 5.71$, $SD = 0.85$) and Republicans ($M = 5.81$, $SD = 0.97$; $t(301) = -0.98$, $p = .328$, $d = -0.11$). However, when the participants evaluated counter-partisans, Democrats ($M = 3.06$, $SD = 1.42$) rated the target much more negatively than Republicans did ($M = 4.63$, $SD = 1.32$; $t(271) = 9.46$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.15$).

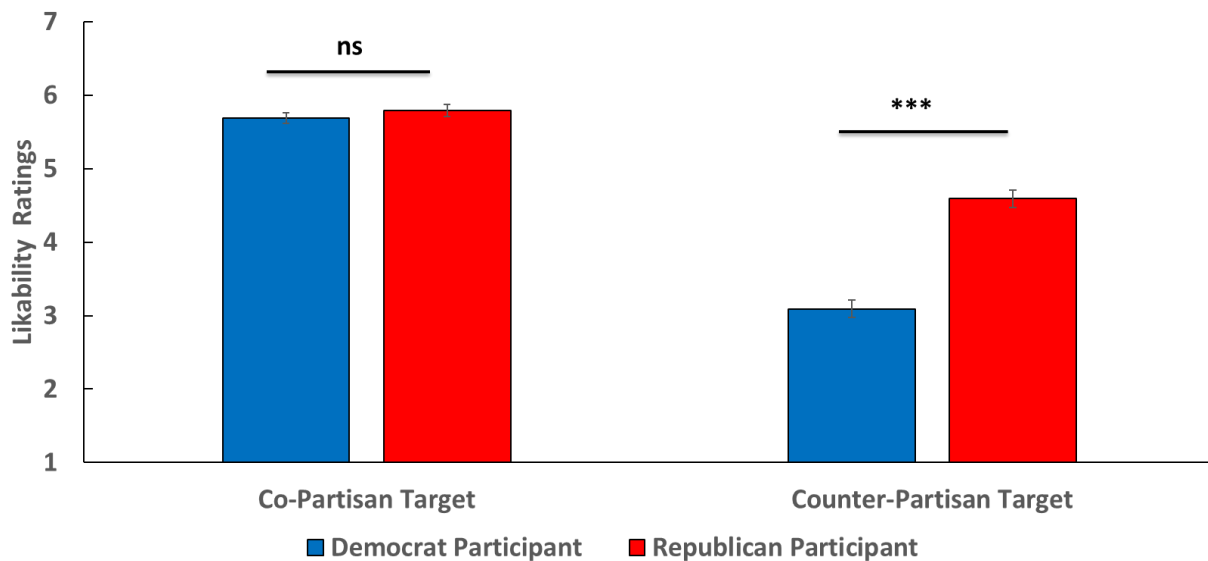


Figure 3: Conditional Means for Likability Ratings (Study 2)

In the same manner, we next examined whether the perception that counter-partisans are likely to harm disadvantaged people helps explain the documented asymmetry in partisan dislike (Figure 4). We found that Democrats perceive greater harm to disadvantaged people than Republicans $b = 1.15$, $SE = 0.11$, $t(569) = 10.55$, $p < .001$, 95% CI (0.94, 1.36), and that participants perceived more harm to disadvantaged people from counter-partisans than co-partisans, $b = 1.60$, $SE = 0.11$, $t(569) = 14.67$, $p < .001$, 95% CI (1.39, 1.82). When including the interaction between party preference and party misfit to the model, we found that these main effects were qualified by a significant interaction, $b = 2.47$, $SE = 0.19$, $t(568) = 12.82$, $p < .001$, 95% CI (2.09, 2.85). Specifically, we found that when the target and the participant shared the same party preference, Democrats ($M = 1.85$, $SD = 0.75$) and Republicans ($M = 1.87$, $SD = 1.03$) did not significantly differ in how much they viewed the target as likely to harm disadvantaged people ($t(301) = 0.18$, $p = .855$, $d = -0.02$). However, when the target and the participant differed in their party preference, Democrats ($M = 4.69$, $SD = 1.58$) rated the target as significantly more likely to harm disadvantaged people than Republicans did ($M = 2.24$, $SD = 1.14$; $t(271) = 14.63$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.78$).

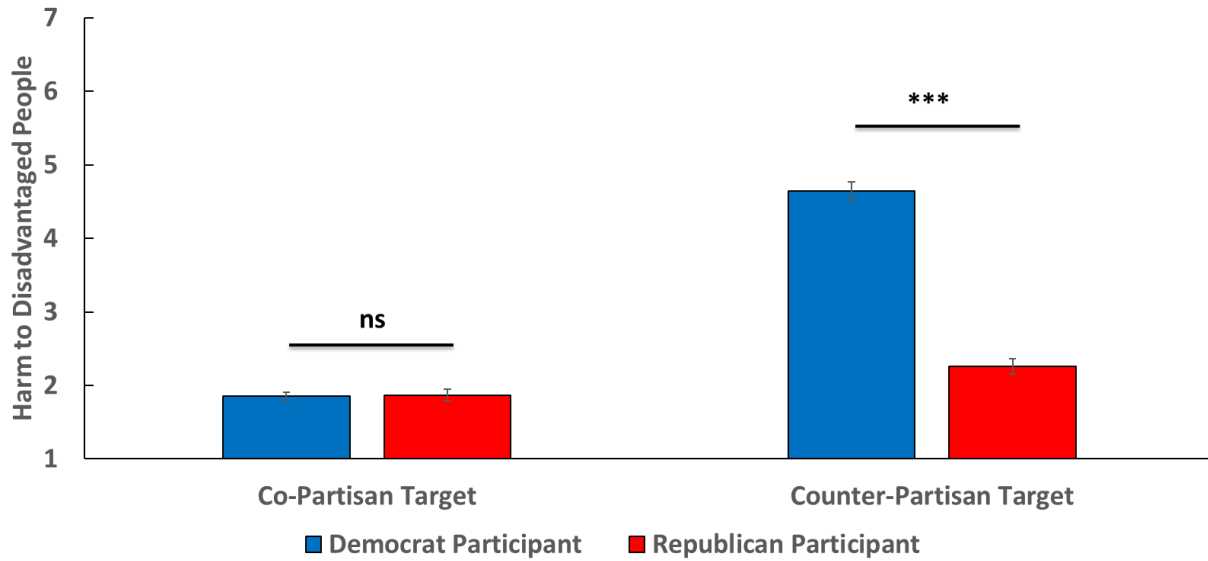


Figure 4: Conditional Means for Belief that the Target is Likely to Harm Disadvantaged People (Study 2)

Finally, to more directly test whether the belief that counter-partisans pose harm to disadvantaged people could help explain why Democrats display greater partisan dislike than Republicans, we conducted a moderated mediation analysis (using PROCESS Model 8 in SPSS; Hayes, 2012). We found that Democrats displayed greater dislike than Republicans when evaluating opposite-party targets (conditional direct effect: 1.52, $SE = 0.13$, 95% CI [1.28, 1.77]), with no significant difference when evaluating same-party targets (conditional direct effect: -0.08, $SE = 0.11$, 95% CI [-0.29, 0.13]). Critically, we also found a conditional negative indirect effect of party preference (Democrat vs. Republican) on perceived likability through the perception of the target as likely to harm disadvantaged people (index of moderated mediation = -1.45, $SE = 0.16$, 95% CI [-1.78, -1.15]). When the target was from the opposing party, the lower likeability perceived by Democrats (vs. Republicans) was significantly mediated through the judgment of the target's likelihood of harming disadvantaged people ($b = -1.44$, $SE = 0.15$, 95% CI [-1.74, -1.16]). When the target was from the same party, there was no significant indirect

effect on perceived likability through participants' perception of the target as likely to harm disadvantaged people ($b = .01$, $SE = .06$, 95% CI [-0.11, 0.13]). For additional information about the moderated mediation model, please see "Additional Analyses" in the OSM.

To ensure the robustness of these effects, we conducted a series of additional moderated mediation models including different control variables. The pattern of results was consistent when controlling for participants' ethnic minority status (0 = White, 1 = Minority), age, income, gender, and education (index of moderated mediation = -1.47, $SE = 0.16$, 95% CI [-1.80, -1.17]); when controlling for frequency of interactions with Democrats, frequency of interactions with Republicans, perceived value (in)congruence with the target, the strength of participant's ideological extremity, party attachment extremity, and political identity centrality (index of moderated mediation = -0.38, $SE = 0.08$, 95% CI [-0.54, -0.24]); and when including all controls simultaneously (index of moderated mediation = -0.38, $SE = 0.08$, 95% CI [-0.55, -0.24]). The fact that these findings are consistent when accounting for perceived value (in)congruence with the target is particularly important, as it highlights that these effects are not explained by general perceived differences in values with Republicans among Democrats. As an additional robustness check to account for the role of potential interactive effects between party mismatch and perceived value (in)congruence and between party mismatch and participant ethnic minority status, we also conducted a moderated mediation model where we controlled for these interactions. We again found support for our theory in this additional model (see OSM Section B-II for full details).

Discussion

Taken together, Study 2 replicates the finding from Study 1 that Democrats express greater dislike towards counter-partisans than Republicans. Study 2 additionally shows that this

difference is, in part, statistically explained by the belief among Democrats that Republicans pose harm to disadvantaged people. Perceived harm to disadvantaged people continued to explain greater partisan dislike among Democrats when controlling for perceptions of value (in)congruence with the counter-partisan target, indicating that this asymmetric dislike is not explained by a greater tendency among Democrats than Republicans to perceive general value differences with counter-partisan targets. We found no asymmetry in how much Democrats and Republicans liked co-partisans. We conducted two conceptual replications (Studies S2a and S2b, reported in the OSM Section C-II), providing further support for our theorized model.

Study 3

In Study 3 we expand on the findings from the prior studies in several ways. First, we examine partisan dislike in a new context: hiring in the workplace. Second, we examine whether the belief that counter-partisans pose harm to disadvantaged people continues to be an asymmetric contributor to partisan dislike among Democrats when examining other forms of perceived harm. Past work suggests that Democrats are more likely to view Republicans as posing overall harm than vice versa (Casey et al., 2023)—we thus examined perceived harm to a variety of targets to determine whether perceived harm to disadvantaged people specifically, versus perceived harm in general, influences Democrats' partisan dislike. Third, we not only operationalize perceived harm to disadvantaged people directly in terms of person-perception (as in Study 2), but also indirectly in terms of moral condemnation of attitudes common among Democrats and Republicans (e.g., related to racism, immigration, and transgender rights). This latter approach allowed us to examine whether Democrats and Republicans differed in how much they morally condemned prototypical attitudes related to disadvantaged people held by

counter-partisans and whether this mechanism asymmetrically contributes to partisan dislike among Democrats.

Method

Participants

We recruited 400 participants who have a full-time job through CloudResearch ($M_{\text{age}} = 39.66$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 10.83$; 192 females; 83 racial/ethnic minorities; median income: \$50,001-\$65,000; median education: bachelor's degree). Our sample included 200 Democrats and 200 Republicans. Like Study 2, the preregistration for Study 3 included exclusion based on comprehension questions. However, we decided to report results with the full sample in the main text because removing participants who failed the comprehension checks led to a large loss in power (i.e., in this study 103 out of 400 participants failed the comprehension questions). We report the analyses (i.e., when excluding participants based on comprehension questions) in OSM (Section B-III) and critically, the patterns of results are consistent after excluding participants who failed our comprehension checks.

Materials and Procedure

All participants were asked to imagine themselves as an employee at an organization and that the HR department of the organization is asking for their input on a potential hire who is being considered for a similar position as the participant. As such, participants were asked to perform a resume evaluation task with two randomized between-subjects conditions, a Democrat applicant condition and a Republican applicant condition ($N_{\text{Dem condition}} = 195$, $N_{\text{Rep condition}} = 205$). As in Study 2, participants were coded as co-partisan or counter-partisan based on their own party preference and the party preference of the target they were assigned to. The resumes that participants read in the two conditions were identical aside from two lines which varied

based on condition. In the Democrat (Republican) applicant condition, participants saw that the applicant is an advisor for the Young Democrats (Republicans) of America at Ohio University, their alma mater, and that the applicant worked as a polling analyst for Joe Biden's (Donald Trump's) 2020 Presidential Campaign from 2019 to 2020. After viewing the resume, participants completed the dependent measures, along with two comprehension check items: Participants were asked to identify which presidential campaign (Joe Biden, Donald Trump, or neither) and which organization (Young Democrats of America, Young Republicans of America, or neither) the person worked for (see OSM Section B-III for analyses excluding participants that failed at least one of the comprehension check items).

Resume Evaluation. The applicant's perceived suitability to fill the position was measured using a 5-item scale (McElroy et al., 2014; all items 1 = *Strongly Disagree*; 7 = *Strongly Agree*; Cronbach's $\alpha = .93$). Sample items include: "I would like to see this person interviewed for the position as my coworker," and "This person should be on the 'short list' of candidates for the position as my coworker".

Belief that the target is likely to harm different targets. We measured participants' belief that the job applicant will harm disadvantaged employees with a single item: "If the applicant is hired as your coworker, how likely do you think it is that this person would do something that harms employees in the organization who are less fortunate or privileged than you?" (1 = *Not at all Likely*; 7 = *Extremely Likely*). We measured participants' belief that the job applicant will harm them and other employees like them with a single item: "If the applicant is hired as your coworker, how likely do you think it is that this person would do something that harms you and other employees like you in the organization?" (1 = *Not at all Likely*; 7 = *Extremely Likely*). We measured participants' belief that the job applicant will harm the organization with a single item:

“If the applicant is hired as your coworker, how likely do you think it is that this person would do something that harms the organization?” (1 = *Not at all Likely*; 7 = *Extremely Likely*).

Moral Condemnation. We measured participants’ moral condemnation of support for four different targets/issues (from 1 = *Not morally wrong*, 7 = *Completely morally wrong*). Three of these items measured moral condemnation of the other party’s position on issues related to disadvantaged people: support for the opposite party’s general stance on racism (“Supporting the view that racism is [not a major problem/one of the most important problems] facing the US”); support for the opposite party’s general stance on immigration (“Supporting the view that immigrants who come to the U.S. illegally should [be immediately deported/have a path to citizenship]”); and support for the opposite party’s general stance on transgender rights (“Supporting the view that transgender people should be [required to use public restrooms that are consistent with the gender they were born as/allowed to use public restrooms of their choice]”). A final item measured moral condemnation of support for the opposite party’s political leaders (“Supporting political leaders from the [Republican/Democratic] party”). We control for this final measure in our analyses examining moral condemnation related to specific issues having to do with disadvantaged people to account for general moral condemnation of counter-partisan politics.

Other Measures. We measured perceived value fit, partisan attachment extremity, political ideological extremity ($\alpha = .71$), political identity centrality ($\alpha = .90$), frequency of interactions with Democrats, and frequency of interactions with Republicans, using the same items as Study 2 with slight adaptations to the wording to fit this experimental context.

Results

As in Study 2, we began by examining whether there was an asymmetry in partisan dislike between Democrats and Republicans. We found a significant main effect of party preference on perceived applicant suitability, with Democrats in general making lower ratings than Republicans ($b = -0.39$, $SE = 0.13$, $t(397) = 3.06$, $p = .002$, 95% CI $[-0.64, -0.14]$); party mismatch also significantly negatively predicted perceived applicant suitability ($b = -1.32$, $SE = 0.13$, $t(397) = 10.33$, $p < .001$, 95% CI $[-1.57, -1.07]$). When including the interaction between party preference and party misfit to the model, we found that the effect of party preference on perceived applicant suitability was significantly moderated by party mismatch (see Figure 5; $b = -1.10$, $SE = 0.25$, $t(396) = -4.41$, $p < .001$, 95% CI $[-1.59, -0.61]$). When the job applicant and participant shared the same party preference, there was no significant difference between Democrats ($M = 5.88$, $SD = 0.80$) and Republicans ($M = 5.73$, $SD = 1.04$) in how they evaluated the target ($t(201) = 1.99$, $p = .232$, $d = 0.17$). However, when the job applicant and participant differed in their party preference, Democrats ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 1.58$) rated the target significantly more negatively than Republicans did ($M = 4.96$, $SD = 1.41$; $t(199) = -4.45$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.63$). These findings from a workplace context are consistent with findings from the prior two studies in the context of social media behavior and neighbor relations.

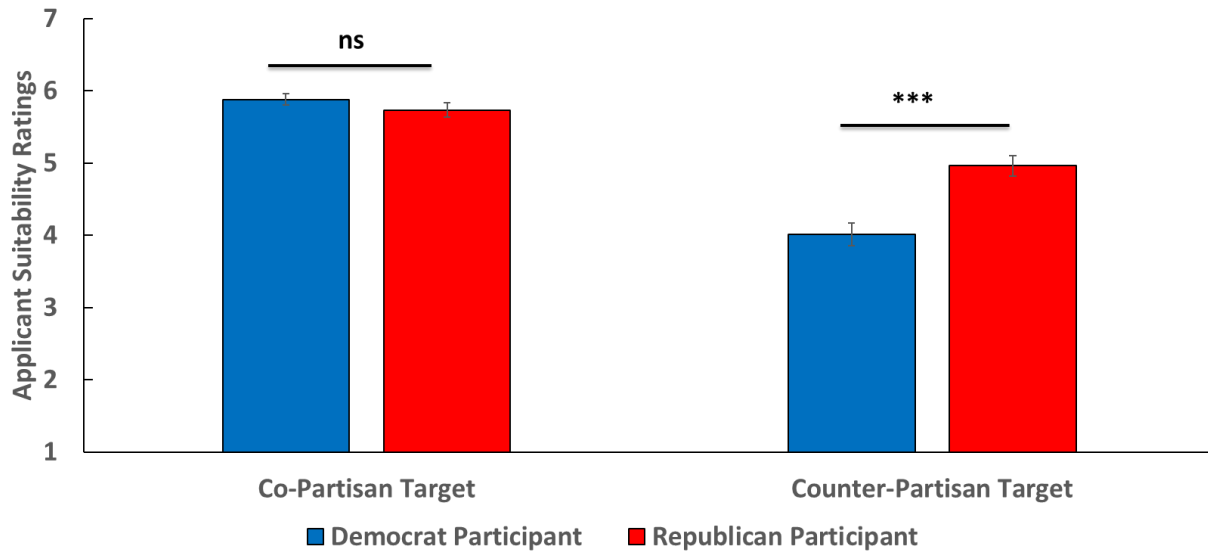


Figure 5: Conditional Means for Applicant Suitability Ratings (Study 3)

Belief that the Target is Likely to Harm Disadvantaged People

Next, we examined whether the belief that the target would harm disadvantaged people is an asymmetric contributor of partisan dislike among Democrats (see Figure 6). There was a significant main effect of party preference such that Democrats rated the target as greater on perceived likelihood of harm to minorities than Republicans, $b = 0.34$, $SE = 0.17$, $t(397) = 1.97$, $p = .05$, 95% CI (0.0005, 0.67), and also a significant effect of partisan misfit, $b = 0.72$, $SE = 0.17$, $t(397) = 4.22$, $p < .001$, 95% CI (0.39, 1.06). However, when including an interaction term between the two variables to the model, we found that these main effects were qualified by a significant interaction, $b = 0.84$, $SE = 0.34$, $t(396) = 2.45$, $p = .01$, 95% CI (0.17, 1.50). Specifically, we found that when the job applicant shared the participant's party preference, Democrats ($M = 2.18$, $SD = 1.49$) and Republicans ($M = 2.26$, $SD = 1.56$) did not significantly differ in how much they viewed the target as likely to harm disadvantaged people ($t(201) = -0.37$, $p = .716$, $d = .05$). However, when the job applicant and participant differed in their party preference, Democrats ($M = 3.32$, $SD = 1.99$) rated the target as significantly more likely to harm

disadvantaged people than Republicans did ($M = 2.57$, $SD = 1.72$; $t(199) = 2.87$, $p = .004$, $d = .41$).

We additionally examined the effect of participants' belief that the target is likely to harm them and other employees like themselves, and of participants' belief that the target is likely to harm the organization, on partisan dislike (see Figures 7 and 8). We found a significant main effect of party misfit for both beliefs (harm them and other employees like themselves: $b = 0.71$, $SE = 0.17$, $t(397) = 4.22$, $p < .001$, 95% CI (0.38, 1.04); harm the organization: $b = 0.67$, $SE = 0.16$, $t(397) = 4.09$, $p < .001$, 95% CI (0.35, 0.98). However, we did not find significant main effects of party preference for either set of beliefs (harm them and other employees like themselves: $b = 0.16$, $SE = 0.17$, $t(397) = 0.94$, $p = .35$, 95% CI (-0.17, 0.49); harm the organization: $b = 0.23$, $SE = 0.16$, $t(397) = 1.41$, $p = .16$, 95% CI (-0.09, 0.55). There were no significant interactions between party preference and partisan misfit for beliefs that the target is likely to harm them and other employees like themselves ($b = 0.17$, $SE = 0.34$, $t(396) = 0.51$, $p = .61$, 95% CI (-0.49, 0.83)) nor beliefs that the target is likely to harm the organization ($b = 0.13$, $SE = 0.33$, $t(396) = 0.41$, $p = .68$, 95% CI (-0.51, 0.77)). Thus, contrary to prior work suggesting that Democrats are more likely to view Republicans as posing overall harm than vice versa (Casey et al., 2023), we found—consistent with our theory—that the asymmetry in perceived harm is specific to the perception of harm to disadvantaged people.

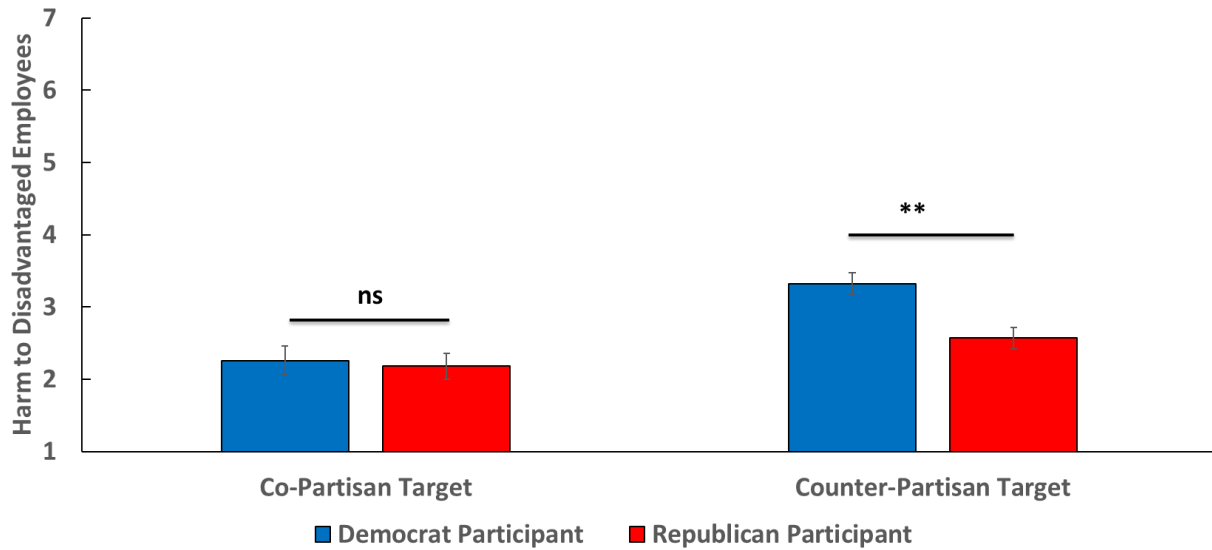


Figure 6: Conditional Means for Belief that the Target is Likely to Harm Disadvantaged Employees (Study 3)

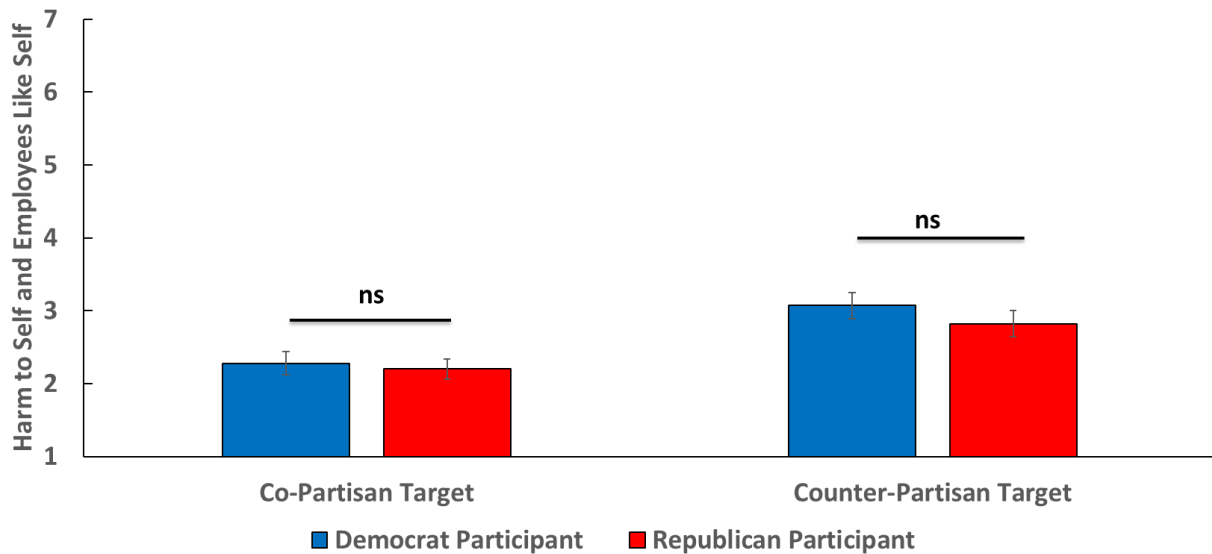


Figure 7: Conditional Means for Belief that the Target is Likely to Harm Self and Employees Like Self (Study 3)

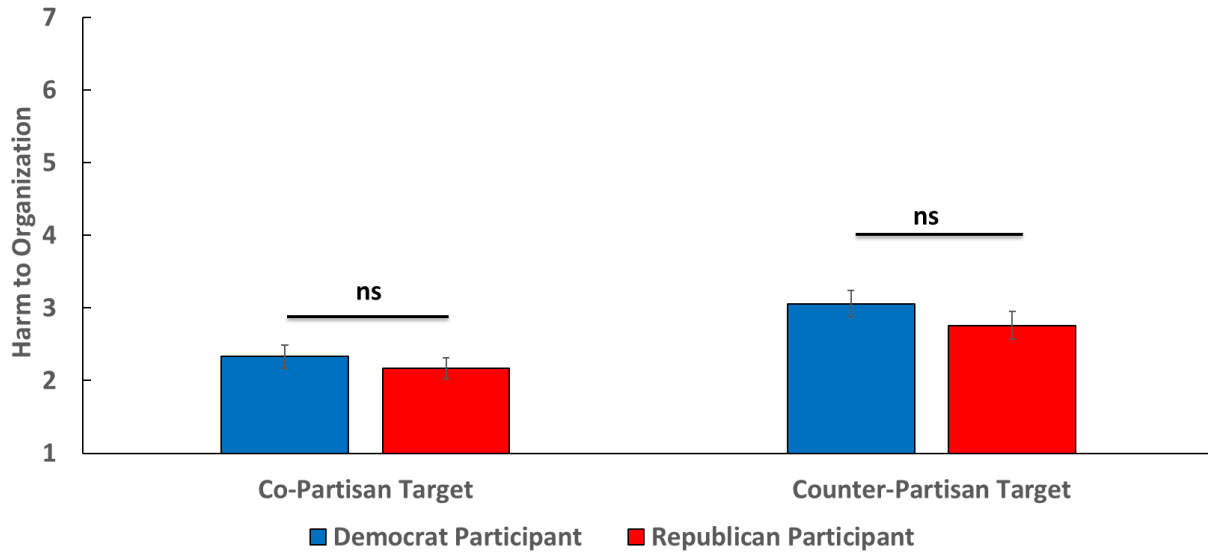


Figure 8: Conditional Means for Belief that the Target is Likely to Harm Organization (Study 3)

Similar to Study 2, we conducted a moderated mediation model using PROCESS Model 8 (Hayes, 2012) with 10,000 bootstrapped samples. Replicating our previous results, we found that Democrats evaluated that the target was less suitable for the position than Republicans when evaluating cross-party targets (conditional direct effect: -0.71 , $SE = 0.16$, 95% CI $[-1.03, -0.39]$), with no significant difference when evaluating same-party targets (conditional direct effect: 0.13 , $SE = 0.16$, 95% CI $[-0.18, 0.45]$). Critically, we also found a conditional negative indirect effect of participants' party preference (Democrat vs. Republican) on perceived applicant suitability through the perception of the target as likely to harm disadvantaged employees (index of moderated mediation = -0.26 , $SE = 0.11$, 95% CI $[-0.49, -0.05]$). We found that the Democrat versus Republican contrast has a negative indirect effect on perceived applicant suitability through participants' perception of the target as likely to harm disadvantaged employees when the applicant was a counter-partisan ($b = -0.23$, $SE = 0.09$, 95% CI $[-0.42, -0.07]$) and no significant indirect effect on perceived applicant suitability through perception of the target as likely to harm disadvantaged employees when the applicant was a co-partisan ($b = 0.02$, $SE =$

0.07, 95% CI [-0.10, 0.16]). For additional information about the moderated mediation model, please see OSM Section B-III.

As in Study 2, we conducted several additional models to examine the robustness of the moderated mediation effect through the perception that the applicant would harm disadvantaged employees. We continued to find significant moderated mediation when controlling for participants' race/ethnicity, age, income, education, and gender (index of moderated mediation = -0.25, $SE = 0.11$, 95% CI [-0.49, -0.04]); when controlling for frequency of interactions with Democrats, frequency of interactions with Republicans, political identity centrality, the strength of participant's ideological extremity, party attachment extremity, and perceived value incongruence with the target (index of moderated mediation = -0.17, $SE = 0.09$, 95% CI [-0.35, -0.004]); and marginally when including all controls in the same model (index of moderated mediation = -0.15, $SE = 0.09$, 90% CI [-0.29, -0.01]). As in Study 2, we also conducted a model controlling for the interaction between party mismatch and both perceived value (in)congruence and participant ethnic minority status (see OSM Section B-III for full details), finding marginally significant moderated mediation (index of moderated mediation = -0.16, $SE = 0.10$, 90% CI [-0.32, -0.001]). This provides some evidence, although somewhat weak, that the belief that Republicans pose harm to disadvantaged people helps explain the Democrat/Republican asymmetry in partisan dislike above and beyond value fit.

As alternative mediators, we examined the perception that the applicant will likely harm participants and employees like the participant and the perception that the applicant will likely harm the organization. However, we found no significant conditional indirect effect for either perception (harm employees like themselves, index of moderated mediation = -0.06, $SE = 0.12$,

95% CI [-0.31, 0.18]; harm to the organization, index of moderated mediation = -0.05, $SE = 0.12$, 95% CI [-0.29, 0.18]).

Moral Condemnation of Counter-Partisan Positions Related to Disadvantaged Groups

As an additional test of our hypothesis that perceived harm to disadvantaged people contributes to the asymmetry in partisan dislike, we examined whether Democrats and Republicans differed in the extent to which they morally condemn the counter-partisan position (i.e., the political position prototypical of the opposing party) on issues affecting disadvantaged groups (see Figure 9), and whether this asymmetry could help explain why Democrats display greater partisan dislike than Republicans. Comparing Democrats' and Republicans' condemnation of counter-partisan positions, we found that Democrats morally condemned counter-partisan positions more than Republicans on racism (Democrats, $M = 5.44$, $SD = 1.86$; Republicans, $M = 3.45$, $SD = 2.09$; $t(398) = 10.06$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.01$) and immigration (Democrats, $M = 5.03$, $SD = 1.82$; Republicans, $M = 3.72$, $SD = 2.19$; $t(398) = 6.48$, $p < .001$, $d = .65$). However, we did not find significant differences in moral condemnation when it came to transgender rights (Democrats, $M = 4.63$, $SD = 2.11$; Republicans, $M = 4.62$, $SD = 2.27$; $t(398) = 0.02$, $p = .98$, $d < .01$) or supporting the opposite party's leaders (Democrats, $M = 3.66$, $SD = 1.97$; Republicans, $M = 3.57$, $SD = 2.13$; $t(398) = 0.44$, $p = .66$, $d = .04$).

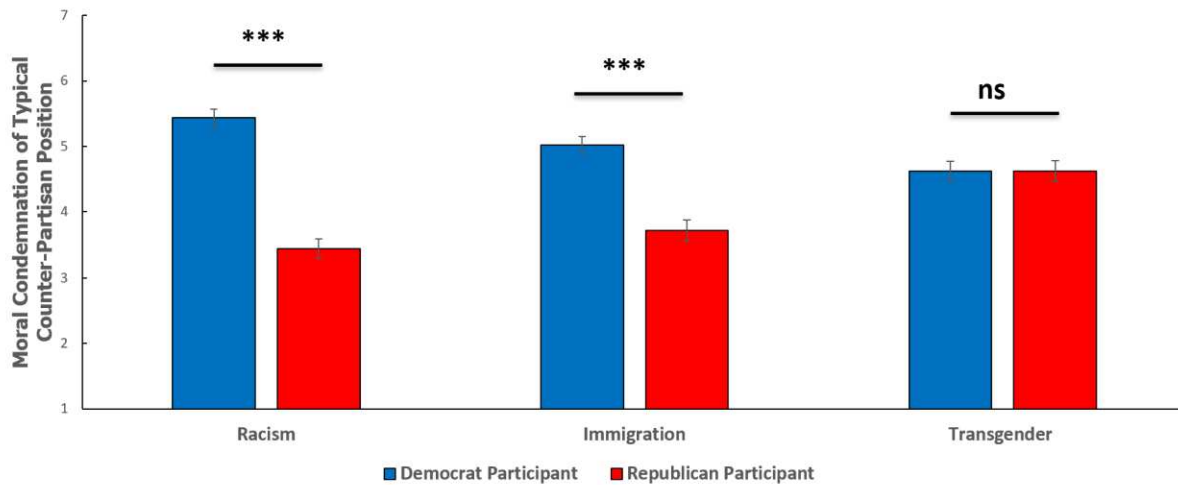


Figure 9: Means for Moral Condemnation of Counter-Partisan Positions (Study 3)

Next, we examined whether greater moral condemnation of the counter partisan position on racism and on immigration could help explain Democrats' more negative evaluation of counter-partisans by running moderated mediation analyses predicting applicant suitability (PROCESS Model 15; Hayes, 2012) using a bootstrapping approach with 10,000 resamples. In both models, party preference (Democrat versus Republican) was the independent variable and party mismatch (versus match) was the moderator. In the first model, we examined moral condemnation of the counter-partisan position on racism as the mediator. Replicating our previous results, we found that Democrats evaluated the target as less suitable for the position than Republicans when evaluating cross-party targets (conditional direct effect: -0.64 , $SE = 0.19$, 95% CI $[-1.02, -0.26]$), with no significant difference when evaluating same-party targets (conditional direct effect: 0.16 , $SE = 0.20$, 95% CI $[-0.22, 0.55]$). Consistent with our theorizing, we also found a conditional negative indirect effect of party preference (Democrat vs. Republican) on perceived applicant suitability through moral condemnation of the counter-partisan position on racism (index of moderated mediation = -0.32 , $SE = 0.13$, 95% CI = $[-0.48, -$

0.06]). We found that the Democrat versus Republican contrast has a negative indirect effect on perceived applicant suitability through moral condemnation of the counter-partisan position on racism when the applicant is from the opposing party from the participant ($b = -0.33$, $SE = 0.11$, 95% CI [-0.55, -0.11]) and no indirect effect on perceived applicant suitability through moral condemnation of the counter-partisan position on racism when the applicant is from the same party as the participant ($b = 0.01$, $SE = 0.07$, 95% CI [-0.14, 0.13]).

In the second model, we examined moral condemnation of the counter-partisan position on immigration as the mediator. Replicating our previous results, we found that Democrats evaluated the target as less suitable for the position than Republicans when evaluating cross-party targets (conditional direct effect: -0.75 , $SE = 0.18$, 95% CI [-1.11, -0.38]), with no significant difference when evaluating same-party targets (conditional direct effect: 0.19 , $SE = 0.18$, 95% CI [-0.17, 0.54]). Similar to the effects on racism, we also found significant moderated mediation (index of moderated mediation = -0.28 , $SE = 0.13$, 95% CI [-0.06, -.54]). We found that the Democrat versus Republican contrast has a negative indirect effect on perceived applicant suitability through moral condemnation of the counter-partisan position on immigration when the applicant is from the opposing party from the participant ($b = -0.26$, $SE = 0.11$, 95% CI [-0.49, -0.06]) and no indirect effect on perceived applicant suitability through moral condemnation of the counter-partisan position on immigration when the applicant is from the same party as the participant ($b = 0.03$, $SE = 0.05$, 95% CI [-0.08, 0.13]).

The pattern of results was consistent when controlling for participants' race/ethnicity, age, income, education, and gender (racism: index of moderated mediation = -0.53 , $SE = 0.19$, 95% CI = [-0.93, -0.18]; immigration: index of moderated mediation = -0.29 , $SE = 0.13$, 95% CI = [-0.57, -0.06]); when controlling for the frequency of interactions with Democrats, frequency of

interactions with Republicans, political identity centrality, the strength of participant's ideological extremity, party attachment extremity, and the extent to which participants morally condemned support for the other party's political leaders (racism: index of moderated mediation = -0.40, $SE = 0.16$, 95% CI [-0.73, -0.11]; immigration: index of moderated mediation = -0.23, $SE = 0.11$, 95% CI [-0.46, -0.05]); and when including all controls in one model (racism: index of moderated mediation = -0.41, $SE = 0.16$, 95% CI [-0.75, -0.11]; immigration: index of moderated mediation = -0.24, $SE = 0.11$, 95% CI [-0.48, -0.04]). The fact that our findings hold when controlling for the extent to which participants morally condemned support for the other party's political leaders suggests that our effects are not explained by differences between Democrats versus Republicans in morally condemning conservative/Republican politics versus liberal/Democratic politics more broadly.

Discussion

Overall, Study 3 provides additional evidence that Democrats display greater partisan dislike than Republicans in a different social context (i.e., the workplace) and that this greater dislike is statistically explained by the perception among Democrats that Republicans are likely to harm disadvantaged people—both operationalized in terms of: (1) person perception, and (2) moral condemnation of the prototypical counter-partisan position on ethnicity/race. As in Study 2, Democrats and Republicans did not differ in how positively they evaluated co-partisans. We also found that the asymmetric role of the perception that the target poses harm to disadvantaged people in contributing to partisan dislike among Democrats does not extend to other targets of perceived harm (i.e., perceived harm to the self and others like the self, perceived harm to the organization), and some evidence—albeit somewhat weak—that it persists when controlling for perceived value fit (as in Study 2). Moreover, when examining moral condemnation, there was

an asymmetry in moral condemnation of support for counter-partisan positions on ethnicity/race, but not on transgender rights, suggesting that our findings are restricted to perceptions of harm to ethnic/racial minority groups. This is a point we cover in more detail in the Discussion and Limitations and Future Research section of the manuscript.

Study 4

Using a measurement-of-mediation approach, Studies 2, 3, S2a, and S2b found that the belief among Democrats that Republicans are likely to harm disadvantaged people helps explain why Democrats display greater partisan dislike than Republicans. However, the measurement-of-mediation approach has limitations in terms of causal inference; that is, it is not clear whether this belief among Democrats causally drives their asymmetric partisan dislike (Pirlott & MacKinnon, 2016). We address this shortcoming in Study 4 by employing an experimental mediation approach. Specifically, all participants considered a counter-partisan target and we experimentally manipulated whether the counter-partisan target's behavior was misaligned or aligned with the participant's party's position on helping disadvantaged people. If our theory is correct, we would expect that the Democrat/Republican divide on partisan dislike would dissipate when the counter-partisan target is aligned with the participant's party's position on helping disadvantaged people.

Methods

Participants

We recruited 797 participants through CloudResearch ($M_{\text{age}} = 39.99$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 11.19$; 342 females; 189 racial/ethnic minorities; median income: \$50,001-\$65,000; median education: bachelor's degree). To be eligible for participation, participants needed to complete an attentional filter at the start of the survey: Participants were given instructions to select "Red"

from different options for a question asking what color the sky is. We did not include any comprehension checks in this study, consistent with our preregistration. Our sample included 400 Democrats and 397 Republicans.

Materials and Procedure

Participants were placed in a hypothetical scenario in which a branch manager of a bank is responsible for allocating money towards six different task forces, which included a diversity task force. Diversity initiatives, sometimes referred to as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, are policies and practices devised with the goal of ameliorating the experiences and outcomes of people from disadvantaged groups. Participants read that the diversity task force was responsible for the following: “review and improve practices to reduce prejudice and discrimination” and conducting “seminars for diversity training and minority-mentoring programs.” We created this experimental paradigm as a way of representing the manager’s attitude towards helping disadvantaged people based on how they allocate the funds. All participants saw a counter-partisan target such that Democratic (Republican) participants saw that the target voted for Republican Party (Democratic Party) candidates in elections.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of two randomized, between-subjects conditions ($N_{not\ help\ disadvantaged} = 399$, $N_{help\ disadvantaged} = 398$). They saw either that the counter-partisan branch manager, compared to other branch managers in the bank, allocated a: (1) lower proportion of funds to diversity initiatives (See Figure S3 in the OSM Section E-III), or (2) a higher proportion of funds to diversity initiatives (See Figure S4 in the OSM Section E-IV). The other task forces that managers allocated money to included: technology/IT, legal, finance/operations, marketing/sales, and accounting. Democratic participants who saw a counter-partisan (Republican) branch manager who allocated a lower proportion of funds to diversity

initiatives, and Republican participants who saw a counter-partisan (Democrat) branch manager who allocated a higher proportion of funds to diversity initiatives, were coded as *misaligned*.

Democratic participants who saw a counter-partisan (Republican) branch manager who allocated a higher proportion of funds to diversity initiatives, and Republican participants who saw a counter-partisan (Democrat) branch manager who allocated a lower proportion of funds to diversity initiatives, were coded as *aligned*. After seeing the information about the target, participants completed the primary measures and then the manipulation check items.

Our dependent variable was the likability of the target, measured using the same scale as in Studies 2, S2a, and S2b ($\alpha = .96$). We also included two manipulation check items: “How likely do you think it is that Greg [i.e., the branch manager] would be dismissive towards people who are, in general, disadvantaged or less privileged?” and “How likely do you think it is that Greg would do something that would hurt people who are, in general, disadvantaged or less privileged?” ($\alpha = .91$).

Results

We began by examining the main effects of participant’s party preference and condition on likability. We found that Democrats rated the counter-partisan target more negatively ($b = -0.41$, $SE = 0.10$, $t(794) = 4.11$, $p < .001$, 95% CI $[-0.60, -0.21]$) and that participants in the aligned condition rated the counter-partisan target more positively ($b = 0.85$, $SE = 0.10$, $t(794) = 8.56$, $p < .001$, 95% CI $[0.65, 1.04]$) on the target’s rated likability. Critically, when including the interaction between the two variables to the model, these main effects were qualified by our hypothesized interaction between party preference and condition (see Figure 10; $b = 1.02$, $t(793) = 5.23$, $p < .001$, 95% CI $[0.64, 1.40]$). Consistent with our expectation, we found that although Democrats ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.50$) liked the counter-partisan target significantly less than

Republicans ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 1.49$) in the misaligned counter-partisan condition ($p < .001$, $d = 0.63$), Democrats ($M = 4.82$, $SD = 1.27$) and Republicans ($M = 4.74$, $SD = 1.24$) did not differ in how much they liked the counter-partisan target in the aligned counter-partisan condition ($p = .520$, $d = 0.06$). In short, the Democrat/Republican asymmetry in partisan dislike dissipated when the counter-partisan target shared the participant's party's orientation towards disadvantaged people.

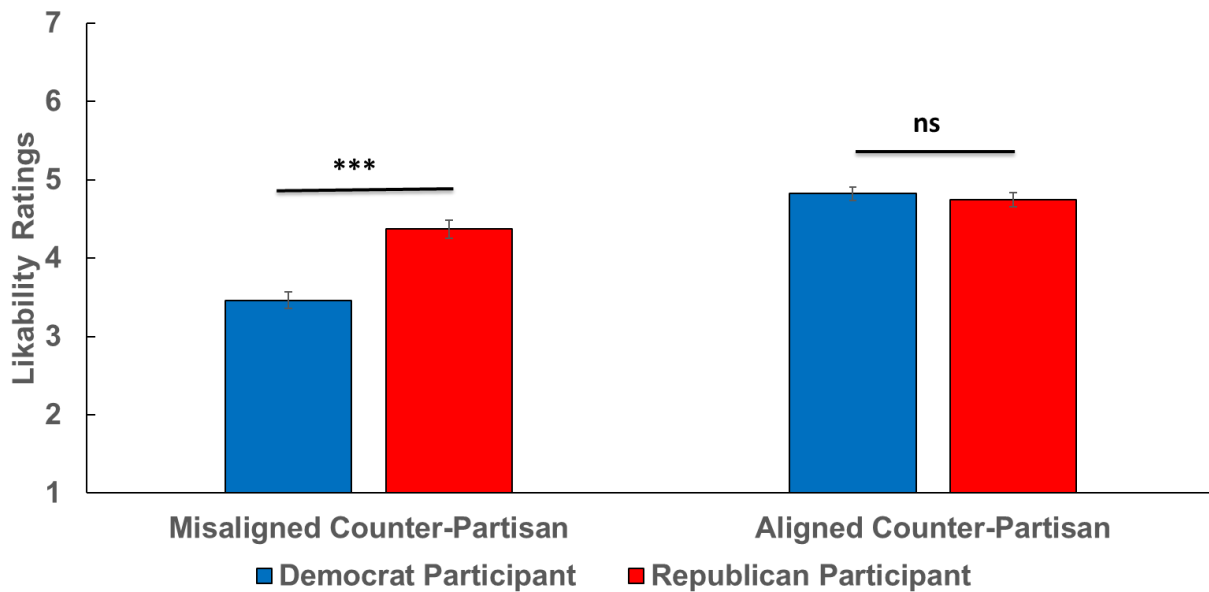


Figure 10: Conditional Means for Likability Ratings (Study 4)

Next, we examined whether the manipulation reduced differences between Democrat and Republican participants in their view that the counter-partisan is likely to harm disadvantaged people. We began by examining the main effects of party preference and condition. We found that Democrats rated the target as more likely to harm disadvantaged people ($b = 1.21$, $SE = 0.11$, $t(794) = 10.62$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.99, 1.44]) and that participants rated the target as more likely to harm disadvantaged people in the misaligned condition ($b = -0.72$, $SE = 0.11$, $t(794) = 6.34$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.95, -0.50]). When adding the interaction between party preference and

condition to the model, we found a significant interaction effect ($b = -1.74$, $t(793) = -7.89$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-2.17, -1.30]). When examining the conditional means (See Figure 11), we found, as expected, that differences between Democrats and Republicans in the perception of the counter-partisan target as likely to harm disadvantaged people became much lower in the aligned counter-partisan condition ($p = .019$, $d = 0.23$; Democrats, $M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.76$; Republicans, $M = 2.95$, $SD = 1.56$) than in the misaligned counter-partisan condition ($p < .001$, $d = 1.49$; Democrats, $M = 4.93$, $SD = 1.39$; Republicans, $M = 2.81$, $SD = 1.46$).

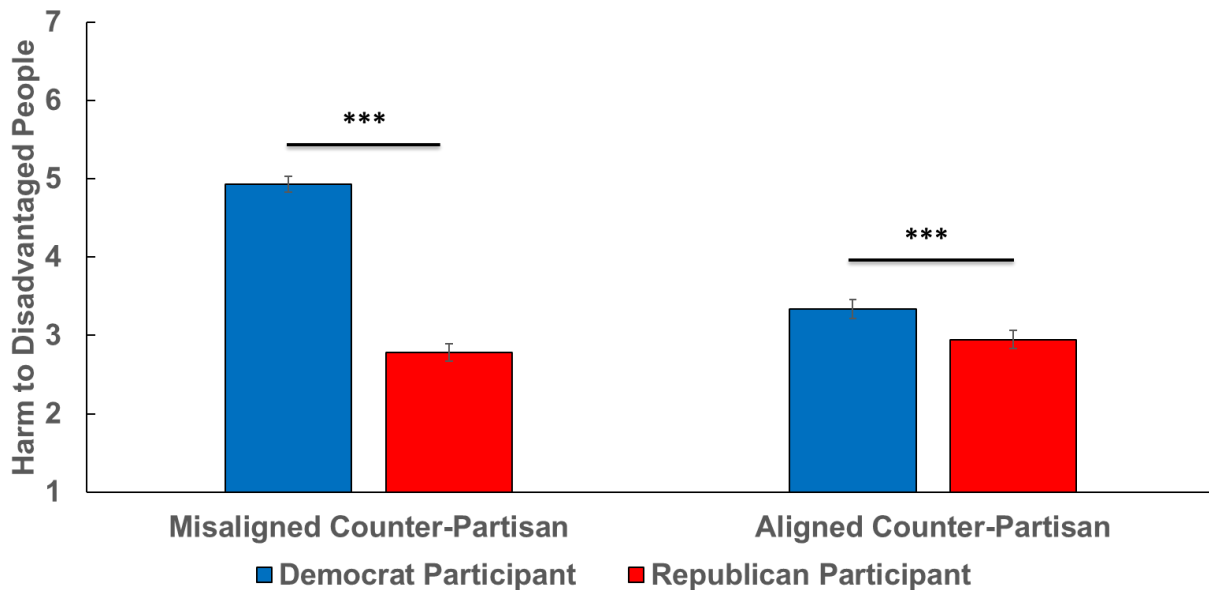


Figure 11: Conditional Means for Belief that the Target is Likely to Harm Disadvantaged People (Study 4)

Discussion

In sum, this study employed an experimental mediation design and found causal evidence that Democrats' concerns regarding the perceived harm that Republicans pose to disadvantaged

people helps explain the documented asymmetry in partisan dislike. Our finding that the manipulation shifted Democrats' partisan dislike to a much greater extent than Republicans' partisan dislike is consistent with our theory that the belief that counter-partisans pose harm to disadvantaged people is an asymmetric contributor of partisan dislike among Democrats that helps explain why Democrats dislike Republicans more than vice versa, and argues against alternative explanations for our findings (e.g., that our manipulation simply shifted perceived value alignment).

Study 5

Expanding on the survey results (i.e., in Studies 2-4) and conceptually replicating Study 4, we conducted an additional social media field experiment on Twitter employing experimental mediation to examine whether the mechanism explaining the Democrat/Republican asymmetry in partisan dislike (i.e., the perception among Democrats that Republicans pose harm to disadvantaged people) holds in an ecologically valid setting.

Method

Participants

We estimated user partisanship, assigned subjects to experimental conditions, and excluded users based on the same approach as in Study 1. The subject pool included $N = 6,000$ Twitter users (subjects in our experiment; median 338 followers, 730 followed accounts, 50% Republican; 143 users were not active at the time of the experiment and thus couldn't be followed). Employing the same method as Study 1, we estimated that 41% of users were female; their average age was 48.9.

Materials and Procedure

Consistent with Study 1, we created research accounts that appeared to be real users (with a unique name and bio and two unique hobbies/interests) and randomly assigned them to follow a politically balanced sample of Twitter users ($N = 6,000$).

However, unlike Study 1, all participants were followed by a counter-partisan research account, and we experimentally manipulated whether the counter-partisan research account supported or did not support disadvantaged people. We created a total of 16 research accounts—4 Republican accounts and 4 Democrat accounts that supported disadvantaged people; and 4 Democrat accounts and 4 Republican accounts that did not support disadvantaged people. We ensured that no picture was repeated within each profile type (i.e., Democrat supporting disadvantaged, Democrat not supporting disadvantaged, Republican supporting disadvantaged, and Republican not supporting disadvantaged) but that each of the four pictures were repeated across profile types. Research accounts that supported disadvantaged people had a cover picture with the phrase "Black Lives Matter," and a bio with the phrase "Racism is a major issue in this country, we would be better off if we give it more attention in our society." Research accounts that did not support disadvantaged people had a cover picture with a red "X" over the phrase "Black Lives Matter" and a bio with the phrase "Racism is NOT a major issue in this country, we'd be better off if we give it less attention in our society."

To indicate partisanship, the Democrat (Republican) profiles included "Proud Democrat" ("Proud Republican") in their bios and a pinned Tweet emphasizing support for the Democratic Party (Republican Party) in the 2024 election. Unlike the profiles we used in Study 1 which included retweets from partisan news sources, these profiles included retweets from neutral news sources (e.g., Reuters) so as not to draw attention away from the banner image and profile bio, which manipulated whether the account signaled support for disadvantaged people.

Democrat users followed by a Republican research account supporting disadvantaged people and Republican users followed by a Democrat research account not supporting disadvantaged people were coded as *aligned*; Democrat users followed by a Republican research account not supporting disadvantaged people and Republican users followed by a Democrat research account supporting disadvantaged people were coded as *misaligned*. After following 2,107 users, Twitter flagged one of our accounts. As a result, we stopped following users from the other accounts that used the same profile picture as the flagged account. After following 5,009 users, Twitter suspended another research account and we removed all accounts using the same profile picture as the suspended account and followed the rest of the users using two accounts per condition.

Our independent variables of interest were users' political party preference (i.e., Democrat versus Republican), condition (i.e., aligned versus misaligned counter-partisan), and the interaction between the two variables. Our dependent variables of interest were whether users broke social ties with (i.e., blocked) the counter-partisan research account that followed them (Martel et al., 2024), and whether users reciprocated social ties with (i.e., followed-back) the counter-partisan research accounts that followed them (Mosleh et al., 2021).

Results

Examining the probability that users broke social ties with (counter-partisan) research accounts (see Figure 12 for a visual depiction of the results) using a linear probability model with party affiliation and condition as predictors, we found that Democrat users displayed a greater tendency to break social ties than Republican users ($b = 0.033$, $t(5,997) = 6.41$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.023. .043]). There was a negative effect of condition on breaking social ties, such that users were less likely to break ties in the aligned condition ($b = -0.026$, $t(5,997) = -5.12$, $p < .001$, 95%

CI [-0.036, -0.016). Importantly, when adding the interaction between party preference and condition to the model, we found that the effect of party preference on breaking social ties was moderated by condition ($b = -0.028$, $t(5,996) = -2.73$, $p = .006$, 95% CI [-0.048, -0.008]), such that differences between the Democrat and Republican users in breaking social ties was substantially lower when users were paired with an aligned counter-partisan ($b = 0.019$, $t(3,003) = 3.12$, $p = .002$, 95% CI [0.007, 0.031]) than when they were paired with a misaligned counter-partisan ($b = 0.047$, $t(2,993) = 5.66$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.030, 0.063]).

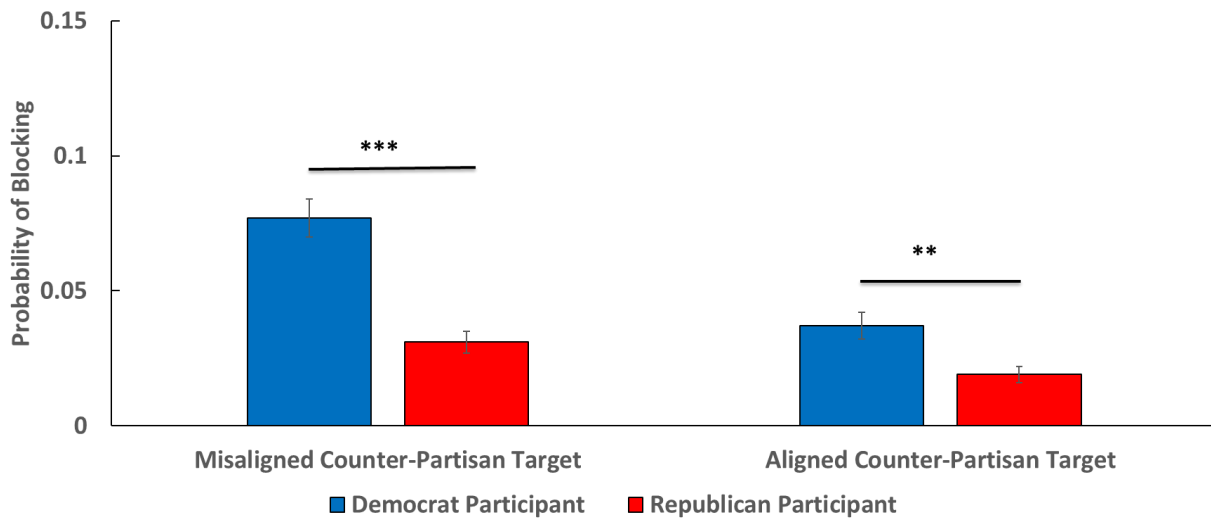


Figure 12: Probability of Users Blocking our Research Accounts (Study 5)

Evaluating the probability of users reciprocating social ties with our (counter-partisan) research accounts, we found that Democrat users were less likely to reciprocate social ties ($b = -0.022$, $t(5,997) = -3.20$, $p = .001$, 95% CI [-0.036, -0.009]) and that aligned users were more likely to reciprocate social ties ($b = 0.029$, $t(5,997) = 4.12$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.015, .0442]). When including the interaction term to the model, similar to Study 1, we found no significant

moderation by condition on the effect of party preference on reciprocating social ties ($b = -0.008$, $t(5,996) = -0.58$, $p = .563$, 95% CI $[-0.035, 0.019]$). For other preregistered analyses for this study, see OSM Section B-IV.

Discussion

Overall, similar to Study 4, we found that the Democrat/Republican asymmetry in partisan dislike (i.e., breaking of social ties with counter-partisan targets) was smaller when individuals encountered a counter-partisan who is aligned with the participant's party's position on disadvantaged people. We did not find this effect when examining the tendency to reciprocate social ties. The strong evidence for an asymmetry in partisan dislike with breaking (but not reciprocating) social ties in Studies 1 and 5 may suggest that breaking of social ties is a stronger manifestation of partisan dislike than the reciprocation of social ties.

General Discussion

Across two social media field experiments and five survey-based studies (two reported in the OSM) conducted in 2022 and 2023, we present evidence showing that Democrats express greater dislike towards Republicans than vice versa across various social contexts including real-world social media behavior, neighbor relations, workplace hiring, and leader evaluation. These findings challenge established theories in the social and political psychology literature on the link between political orientation and outgroup hostility. The asymmetry we found in our work only applies to evaluations of counter-partisans—Democrats and Republicans were similar in their evaluations of co-partisans (Studies 1, 2, and 3).

The documented asymmetry in partisan dislike highlights the importance of better understanding what factors might uniquely fuel partisan dislike among Democrats. To arrive at one potential explanation, we sought to revise and extend the worldview conflict perspective.

Specifically, we combined insights from the worldview conflict perspective with the moral psychology literature to theorize that a value may be a source of hostility against a specific outgroup to the extent that there is disagreement surrounding the value between one's own group and the outgroup, and the value is moralized by one's own group. Based on this framework, we further theorized that beliefs regarding harm to disadvantaged groups is an asymmetric contributor of partisan dislike among Democrats against Republicans in the present day since: (1) this concern is moralized more by Democrats than by Republicans, with this gap increasing in recent years, and (2) a recent growth in divergence on this concern among Democrats versus Republicans.

Consistent with our theory, we found that higher levels of partisan dislike among Democrats is at least partially explained by the unique belief among Democrats that counter-partisans (i.e., Republicans) are likely to harm disadvantaged people, a finding that was consistent when employing both measurement-of-mediation (Studies 2, 3, 4) and experimental mediation (Studies 4 and 5) methods. Importantly, we found some evidence that this asymmetric effect persisted when accounting for general perceived value (in)congruence with the target (Studies 2 and 3), highlighting that these findings are generally not explained by a tendency among Democrats to perceive greater overall value differences with counter-partisan targets than Republicans. Our findings were also consistent when operationalizing harm to disadvantaged people in terms of moral condemnation of prototypical attitudes held by counter-partisans related to racial/ethnic minorities (Study 3). At the same time, consistent with our theory, the asymmetric effect of perceived harm to disadvantaged people did not extend to other types of harm (e.g., harm to the self and others like the self). This asymmetric effect also did not extend to moral condemnation of prototypical attitudes held by counter-partisans related to transgender

people (Study 3). Additionally, when the counter-partisan target was aligned with the participant's own political party on helping disadvantaged people, the Democrat/Republican asymmetry in partisan dislike diminished (Studies 4 and 5).

Theoretical Insights

The present research makes several key contributions. First, this work documents a current asymmetry in partisan dislike across various social domains (i.e., social media behavior, neighbor relations, hiring in the workplace, leader evaluation). Notably, these patterns were consistent across survey experiments (Studies 2, 3, 4), as well as in field experiments examining ecologically valid behavior among participants who were unaware they were part of a research study (Studies 1 and 5). These findings contradict the traditional view in social and political psychology theorizing that right-wing individuals display greater outgroup hostility than left-wing individuals (Badaan et al., 2023; Badaan & Jost, 2020), and the worldview conflict perspective as conceptualized in prior work, which predicts that left-wing and right-wing individuals dislike value incongruent outgroups to a similar extent (Brandt & Crawford, 2020). However, they are very much in line with recent data from nationally-representative surveys (Ballard, 2020; Brown, 2020; Cox, 2021; Seitz-Ward et al., 2018).

Second, our research helps reconcile the present findings with prior work showing different patterns by theorizing and showing that the greater dislike that Democrats currently display towards Republicans (than vice versa) is fueled, at least in part, by: (1) the belief among Democrats that Republicans differ from them on a core value—the treatment of disadvantaged people, particularly, racial/ethnic minorities—and (2) greater moralization of this value by Democrats than Republicans. These findings are contrary to recent work suggesting that negative affect towards counter-partisans represents a “nonideological type of polarization” devoid of

values and policy attitudes (Finkel et al., 2020; Iyengar et al., 2012). But they are consistent with our revised version of the worldview conflict perspective, which holds that greater moralization of a value by a given side can lead disagreements on that value to be an asymmetric contributor of partisan dislike for that side.

Importantly, our theory and accompanying findings suggest that, all else being equal, if the political divide on attitudes related to disadvantaged people, or alternatively, how much Democrats moralize these attitudes relative to Republicans, were to decrease, we would expect the documented asymmetry in partisan dislike to become smaller. If other attitudes become asymmetrically moralized by Democrats or by Republicans in the future, these could become asymmetric contributors of partisan dislike for each side. Thus, what contributes to partisan dislike on each side of the aisle can vary temporally as the extent to which certain values are moralized by each group wax and wane. In short, unlike the traditional view on ideology and prejudice (which suggest that Republicans display greater partisan dislike than Democrats), and prior work on worldview conflict (which suggests that Democrats and Republicans are symmetric in how much partisan dislike they display), our theoretical model suggests that whether Democrats or Republicans display greater partisan dislike will vary based on social and cultural factors that change over time.

It is also important to emphasize that our theoretical model speaks to intergroup conflict more broadly (e.g., Finkel et al., 2020; Iyengar et al., 2019; Kubin et al., 2021; Waytz et al., 2014). Specifically, our model suggests that the extent to which a given value contributes to outgroup hostility among one group against the other depends both on the degree of disagreement on the value, and how moralized the value in question is for the focal group. Thus, shifts in perceived value disagreements, as well as shifts in value moralization, can lead to shifts

in how much the value in question drives outgroup hostility among each group. We discuss potential applications of our model beyond partisan politics further below.

Limitations and Future Directions

Our work has limitations, like any scholarly endeavor, which highlight opportunities for future research that critically examines the theory proposed in our work (see Table 1). First, our research focused on the U.S. context and during a specific snapshot of time, but prevailing values and value moralization will vary between groups and within the same group over time (Hohm et al., 2024). Thus, we encourage replications and extensions of our research in other sociopolitical contexts and in subsequent years. Relatedly, it is currently unclear the extent to which the theoretical framework we proposed in our research can explain outgroup hostility in the presence of value conflicts in less politically partisan domains. Thus, it would be beneficial for future research to examine the applicability of our framework to such contexts. As just one example, our theory predicts that if animal rights activists moralize their attitudes towards animal testing to a greater extent than scientists conducting animal testing, this disagreement would be a greater contributor of outgroup hostility for animal rights activists than for scientists conducting animal testing.

Second, we provided evidence for one specific psychological explanation for Democrats' higher levels of partisan dislike than Republicans, but we acknowledge that there are likely to be others. Thus, we encourage scholars to examine potential other explanations for this phenomenon. Moreover, given that both Democrats and Republicans display hostility towards supporters of the other party, we encourage future research into the potentially unique contributors of partisan dislike for Republicans. Third, as a methodological consideration, although we used a variety of methods and samples, we consistently operationalized partisan

hostility as interpersonal dislike between supporters of the two major U.S. political parties. Future research should examine the relationship between different measures of partisan hostility, including the commonly-used “feeling thermometer” (e.g., Ganzach & Schul, 2021) which has been found to more closely capture individuals’ feelings towards political leaders/elites than towards supporters of the two parties in the general population (Druckman & Levendusky, 2019).

Third, we found that attitudes related to transgender people (a historically disadvantaged group in the U.S. and many other countries) were not moralized more by Democrats than by Republicans and were not an asymmetric contributor of partisan dislike for Democrats. One potential explanation for our findings is that transgender-related issues—which can connect with attitudes relating to sexuality—may fuel purity/sanctity moral concerns among Republicans (Haidt et al., 2009; although see Gray et al., 2023), which in turn, could fuel moralization among Republicans. This possibility should be examined in future research.

Conclusion

In sum, our research documented a current asymmetry in partisan dislike that contradicts established theories on the link between political orientation and outgroup hostility in the social and political psychology literatures. Consistent with our own revised version of the worldview conflict perspective—that takes group differences in moralization of values into consideration—we found that this asymmetry in partisan dislike is explained by the unique belief among Democrats that counter-partisans are likely to harm disadvantaged people, particularly racial/ethnic minorities.

Table 1
Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Description of limitation	Suggestions for future research
<p>Participants in our studies were U.S.-based and from a specific snapshot of time (2022 to 2023); our findings are likely affected by unique characteristics of the U.S. political and cultural context, as well as the time period in which our work was conducted.</p>	<p>Future research should examine the extent to which the theoretical framework proposed in our work explains partisan hostility in countries with different cultural values (e.g., more collectivistic cultures), countries with different political systems (e.g., multiparty systems), and even within the U.S. in the future.</p>
<p>We examined outgroup hostility between supporters of the two major U.S. political parties. Thus, it is currently unclear the extent to which the theoretical framework we proposed in our research can explain outgroup conflicts in the presence of value conflicts in less politically partisan domains.</p>	<p>Future research should examine whether our theoretical framework could be extended to explain levels of perceived hostility towards outgroups in the presence of value conflicts that do not clearly fall along left/right political lines, but are likely characterized by asymmetries in moralization between the two groups (e.g., animal rights activists versus scientists who experiment with animals).</p>
<p>We provide evidence for one potential explanation for why Democrats currently display greater partisan dislike than Republicans, but there are likely to be additional explanations. We also did not examine potential unique contributors of partisan dislike on the Republican side.</p>	<p>Future research should examine other unique contributors of partisan dislike among Democrats (especially if Democrats continue to display greater partisan dislike than Republicans in future data). Future research could also examine potential unique contributors of partisan dislike among Republicans, following a similar theoretical approach to determine which issues are highly moralized by Republicans. For example, values related to harm to country might be more moralized among Republicans (e.g., disrespecting the American flag) since respect for country is a greater moral concern among Republicans than among Democrats (Graham et al., 2009).</p>

We operationalized partisan hostility in terms of dislike between supporters of the two parties in social domains (e.g., social media behavior, neighbor relations, workplace hiring, leader evaluation). Future research should replicate the patterns we uncovered in our work to feeling thermometer measures (which employ items asking participants how warm/cold they feel towards the Democratic Party, liberals, etc.).

Future work can examine the extent to which the findings of our work extend to feeling thermometer measures, especially given evidence that these latter measures better capture feelings towards leaders/elites of the parties rather than towards supporters of the parties that individuals are likely to encounter in their daily life (Druckman and Levendusky, 2019). More broadly, future research can also investigate the relation between judgments of specific partisan individuals (as in our studies) and judgments of larger partisan groups.

While we found: a) substantive asymmetries in how much Democrats moralized attitudes related to ethnic/racial minorities relative to Republicans, and b) that greater moralized attitudes among Democrats helped explain greater partisan dislike among Democrats, we did not find these patterns for attitudes related to transgender people.

It is possible that transgender-related issues—which intersect with attitudes related to gender and sexuality—can fuel purity/sanctity concerns among Republicans (Haidt, Graham, and Joseph, 2009), which in turn, can fuel the moralization of Republicans' attitudes on these issues. Thus, Democrats and Republicans may both moralize transgender-related issues, albeit with different sets of moral concerns and perceived harms. We believe this is an interesting avenue for future research.

The samples relied on convenience sampling or random sampling (field studies).

While our key finding that Democrats display greater partisan dislike has been corroborated in recent nationally representative surveys from different organizations as discussed in the manuscript, future research should replicate our proposed theoretical explanation using representative samples.

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