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PROPOSAL FOR ANES 2016 PILOT STUDY:
Affective Polarization and Partisan Hatred

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Overview of Proposed Items. The proposed research seeks to *develop and test a measure of partisan hatred (*see p. 6 below) that builds on existing ethnic hatred measures. Using these newly developed measures, I seek to better *understand the <u>sources</u> of partisan hatred* by taking the newly developed partisan hatred measure as my dependent variable and conducting multivariate analyses that:

a) test for a correlation between <u>partisan hatred</u> and <u>key individual-level characteristics</u> such as socio-demographic indicators (age, education, income, race/ethnicity, sex), religious preferences (especially religiosity), ideological identification/intensity, and partisan identification/intensity. *Current research* documents a connection between these characteristics and much of the documented issue-based and affective polarization.

b) test the hypotheses that those who pay <u>more attention to politics</u> and possess <u>more political knowledge</u> exhibit <u>higher levels of partisan hatred</u>. Based on *existing studies* showing that those who are more attentive and knowledgeable about politics tend to have more information on which to form opinions, including dislike for partisan opponents.

Further, the proposed measures will be used to *examine the potential <u>consequences</u> of partisan hatred* by taking the newly developed partisan hatred measure as an independent variable and testing each of the following hypotheses, while controlling for relevant additional variables:

a) those expressing <u>more partisan hatred</u> will be more likely to engage in <u>electoral behavior aimed at supporting</u> the traditional political system such as registering to vote, voting, and donating time and money to campaigns. The mobilizing power of polarization has been argued by some to drive down voter engagement and participation, and by others to energize the electorate.

b) those expressing <u>more partisan hatred</u> are more likely to engage in <u>behavior aimed at protesting</u> the traditional political system, such signing a petition, protesting a government action, attending a political rally, or supporting the Tea Party movement. Evidence suggests people are drawn to activities such as these, in part, because they have become dissatisfied with the priorities, issue positions, and performance of the major parties.

c) those expressing <u>more partisan hatred</u> are less likely to express support for <u>political bargaining/policy compromise</u> and will be <u>less likely to accept an unfavorable policy outcome as legitimate</u>. Scholarly and popular attention to polarization rests, in part, on the argument that it is leading to political gridlock.

Relevant Literature. The proposed items address the ongoing debate about the degree of political polarization among the American public. Despite the common perception of widespread polarization among everyone from the highest officeholders to rank-and-file citizens, academic debate about the type and extent of polarization continues. While existing research establishes the growing partisan and ideological polarization in the U.S. Congress (e.g., Garner & Palmer 2010; Poole & Rosenthal 1997, 2001), scholarly opinion remains more divided about the degree and consequences of polarization among the mass public.

Some argue that, in response to the growing divisions among political elites, the ideological chasm between Democrats and Republicans in the electorate has increased over time, noting a growing ideological awareness and the increasingly distinctive issue stances taken by Democratic and Republican voters have over the past 30 years as evidence (e.g., Abramowitz & Saunders 2005, 2008; Brewer 2005; Fleisher & Bond 2001; Hetherington 2001; Jacobson 2004; Layman & Carsey 2002; Levendusky 2009; Lindaman & Haider-Markel 2002; White 2003). Others counter that the degree to which elite polarization has infected the masses remains minimal (e.g., Evans et

al. 2001; Fiorina et al. 2005). Pointing to the fact that more people, including (somewhat surprisingly) almost half of self-identified Democrats and Republicans, still consider themselves to be ideologically middle-of-the-road (or non-ideological) rather than extremely liberal or conservative (Hetherington & Rudolph 2014), and the many policy preferences shared by residents of "Red" and "Blue" states, even on seemingly controversial issues (e.g., Fiorina, et al 2005; Fiorina & Abrams 2009; Garner & Palmer 2010), these researchers argue that ideological polarization has remained largely an elite phenomenon.

Most recently, evidence of an affective mass polarization, one "rooted in how people *feel* rather than where they stand" (Hetherington & Rudolph 2014: 17), has emerged. People have become increasingly likely to say they would be upset if their child married someone from the other party (Iyengar, Sood, & Lelkes 2012), to offer negative opinions about the opposite party (Doherty 2014), and to express a preference for living in a place where most people share their political views (Pew Research 2014). As striking as these findings are, researchers have yet to explore the sources of these sentiments.

Theoretical Basis. I argue that such negative feelings among the public have their roots in a deep seated dislike of the opposite party that grows out of a social identity as a partisan. Much the same way that ethnic/racial animosities can breed intolerance and disrespect for, as well as violence toward, other demographic groups (Haidt et al., 2003, Mullen & Skitka, 2006; Parker & Janoff-Bulman 2013; Skitka et al., 2005), partisan hatred can lead to denigration of partisan opponents and an unwillingness to engage the other side in a meaningful way.

Social identity theory argues that deeply held inter-group prejudices spring from the human instinct to define both ourselves and others in terms of the social groups with which we most closely identify. Tajfel and Turner (1979) offer a three-staged process by which social identities

are formed and operate. We first process the world we encounter by placing both ourselves and others into social categories based on recognizable characteristics such as race, gender, or socio-economic status. In doing so, we then create social identities for ourselves and others (see e.g., Brewer 2001; Tajfel & Turner 1979, 1986). Finally, in much the same way groups might fight over tangible resources such as food or water, rival social group members compete with one another in order to maintain self-esteem. Individuals compete by using their social identities to compare themselves to others, focusing on the positive aspects of the in-group to which they belong and the negative aspects of the out-group to which they compare themselves (e.g., Brewer 2005; Gibson 2006). Since the social identity process serves as a primary means of childhood and cultural socialization (Weldon 2006), social identities form early and endure over a lifetime, gaining reinforcement from repeated favorable comparisons to out-groups, and often lead to prejudice and discrimination against out-group members (Tajfel & Turner 1979).

The development and persistence of partisan identification in both the United States (Gerber & Green 1998; Greene 1999; Green, Palmquist, & Shickler 2002) and abroad (e.g., Duck, Hogg, & Terry 1995) has been described in much the same manner. An emotional attachment, partisan identification develops through early childhood socialization and tends to persist over a lifetime (Campbell, et al 1960). In the same way comparisons of social identity lead to negative feelings toward a competing group, comparisons based on partisan identities result in negative affect toward the opposing party; and even those who identify as non-partisan (pure Independent) express negativity toward the competing partisan groups of Democrats and Republicans (Greene 1999). Just as repeated group comparisons strengthen social identities, partisan identities have been argued to become more stable over the lifespan as a result of continued social reinforcement (see e.g., Alwin, Cohen, & Newcomb 1991; Krosnick & Alwin 1989; Sears & Funk 1999). Further,

the very issues that animate much of the American political scene – fights over relative partisan power, economic issues, and moral/cultural battles – have been argued as underlying many social identity group conflicts (Esman 2004; Jesse & William 2011.

Proposed Measures. Building on existing measures in the field of ethnic hatred, I seek to develop a multi-dimensional measure of partisan hatred. Scholars in this area have identified two dimensions of hatred: longer-term, stable emotional sentiment and more powerful, "burning" feelings (see Halperin & Gross 2011). The latter, *immediate hatred*, is an acute reaction to stimuli, while the former, *chronic hatred*, represents a more highly stable standing disposition (Ekman 1992; Halperin, Canetti, & Kimhi 2012). Extreme and short-range, immediate hatred usually arises in response to a particular incident, whereas chronic hatred is an on-going emotional attitude that totally rejects all members of the out-group (Halperin, Canetti, & Kimhi 2012). I will build on the Halpern, Canetti, & Kimhi ethnic hatred measures to construct a partisan hatred measure that targets partisan out-groups instead of ethnic ones. Specifically, the following items are proposed for inclusion in the 2016 ANES Pilot Study (self-identified partisans asked about opposite party and pure Independents asked about both parties):

Chronic Hatred: Additive index of eight measures: "How much do you agree with each of the following statements?" 1=strongly agree; 2=agree; 3=disagree, 4=strongly disagree.

(1) "The actions of the [Democratic/Republican/Democratic and Republican] Party have offended me and/or members of my party over a long period of time."
(2) "Some of the actions of the [Democratic/Republican/Democratic and Republican] Party and its leaders are a result of a 'bad' internal character."
(3) "Some of the actions of the [Democratic/Republican/Democratic and Republican] Party and its leaders are a result of an intentional desire to harm me and members of your party."
(4) "The thought of the [Democratic/Republican/Democratic and Republican] Party gives rise to negative feelings in me."
(5) "The actions of [Democrats/Republicans/Democrats and Republicans] and leaders of their party are just and legitimate."
(6) "I would be glad to socialize more with members of the [Democratic/Republican/Democratic and Republican] Party."

(7) "[Democrats/Republicans/Democrats and Republicans/Democrats and Republicans] are a threat to the nation's well-being."

(8) "I would be glad to know more [Democrats/Republicans/Democrats and Republicans]."

Immediate Hatred: Additive index of six measures: "When you are in the presence of [Democrats/Republicans/Democrats and Republicans], how often do you:" 1=almost never; 2=sometimes; 3=frequently; 4=almost all the time.

(1) experience unpleasant physical feelings (e.g., increased blood flow or pulse rate, sweating, muscle tension, chest pains).

(2) have extreme feelings toward [Democrats/Republicans].

(3) have thoughts of a desire to get rid of or destroy [Democrats/Republicans] in any kind of manner.

(4) feel a desire to take action in order to take revenge on [Democrats/Republicans] and their leaders.

(5) imagine a violent action against [Democrats/Republicans].

(6) feel negative and hard feelings toward [Democrats/Republicans].

Preliminary Analyses.   In the Spring of 2015, a convenience sample of 827 undergraduate students enrolled in introductory government courses at a regional state university completed an online survey that included proposed measures of partisan hatred, as well as traditional measures of political attitudes and key demographics. While respondents in this sample expressed more agreement with the chronic hatred items than with the immediate hatred statements, relatively high levels of animosity still emerge on the immediate hatred measures as well.

Structure of the Attitude. While Halpern, Canetti, & Kimhi (2012) isolate only two dimensions of ethnic hatred – chronic and immediate, the findings here suggest a different structure for the attitude of partisan hatred. Exploratory factor analysis here revealed four factors: one encompassing the six immediate hatred measures and three different dimensions of chronic hatred. The *immediate hatred* items mirrored earlier, ethnic hatred findings. These items seem to constitute a single dimension of hate that exhibited strong factor loadings and high internal index cohesion (Cronbach's alpha = 0.86). The chronic hatred items, however, presented a different picture. In contrast to the findings with regard to ethnic hatred, the findings here suggested there might be

more than one dimension of chronic hatred at play in the American political context.

The first four items of the Halpern, Canetti, & Kimhi (2012) chronic ehtnic hatred index (items 1-4 above) loaded strongly on a *second factor*. With strong inter-correlations and high internal cohesion these four items, which I term *chronic personal hatred,* focus on the ways in which the motivations for actions taken by the opposing party, as well as the actions themselves, offend the respondent (or the respondent's group). These items exhibited strong inter-correlations and index cohesion (Cronbach's alpha=0.78). The items (items 6 & 8 above) loading on a *third factor*, described here as *chronic social hatred*, emphasize reactions to socializing with members of the opposing party. These items also exhibited strong inter-correlations and index cohesion (Cronbach's alpha=0.72).

The last two items (5 and 7), which I label *chronic national hatred*, ask for assessments of the legitimacy of the opposing party's actions and perceptions of whether those actions are threatening to the nation as a whole, and loaded on a *fourth factor*. Though similar to the items loading on the second factor, these last two items take a less personal referent than those comprising chronic personal hatred above. Though showing strong factor loadings, these items exhibited much lower inter-correlation and index cohesion (Cronbach's alpha=0.28) than those loading on the other factors. While I am skeptical of the validity or usefulness of an index built with these two items, I constructed one for purposes of exploratory analysis.

Overall, the results here suggest four possible dimensions of partisan hatred: immediate hatred, chronic personal hatred, chronic social hatred, and chronic national hatred. As expected, these indices positively correlate with one another. Since an individual feels personally threatened by members of an opposing party who they believe have malicious motives would likely also feel immediately threatened by the party and its members, it is not surprising that immediate hatred

appears to be most strongly related to chronic personal hatred (r=0.375; p<0.00). Similarly, chronic personal hatred also shows significant, positive relationships with the chronic social hatred (r=0.169; p<0.00). Those who harbor personal hatred toward the opposing party also appear to dislike the idea of socializing with members of that party and say they view the actions of that party as unjust, illegitimate, and a threat to the nation. At the same time, the chronic national hatred index, while positively correlating with the other indices, failed to show statistically significant relationship with them.

Correlates of Partisan Hatred. Bivariate correlations suggested that while race is likely unrelated to expressions of partisan hatred, ethnicity and gender probably play a part in explaining such feelings. Men appear to more readily admit to immediate hatred and chronic national hatred. Latinos are more reluctant to express immediate, chronic personal, or chronic social hatred of their partisan opponents than Anglos or African-Americans. And, as expected, ideological moderates express less hatred on every dimension of hatred and strong partisans harbor more immediate, chronic personal, and chronic social hatred than their less partisan and ideological counterparts. Further, those who are most politically interested also express more immediate, chronic personal, and chronic national hatred.

Partisan Hatred and Affective Polarization. The newly created hatred indices correlated as expected with previously used measures of affective polarization. Those who express more immediate, chronic personal, and chronic social hatred are more likely to rate the opposing party and the party's presidential representative in a more extreme manner. Similarly, those expressing these forms of hatred also express more desire to live in a place where people share their political views and to be unhappy if a close family member married across party lines. The chronic national hatred measure, however, does not perform in the same manner. It performed more poorly in this

correlational setting than the other indices.

Consequences of Partisan Hatred. I examined the ways in which partisan hatred might work to reduce support for making political compromises (e.g., Halperin 2011; Halperin, et al 2011). Multivariate logistic regression analyses revealed that respondents expressing more partisan hatred were less willing to arrive at an equitable compromise with their partisan opponents. In particular, feelings of chronic personal hatred and chronic social hatred appear to most strongly predict a more extreme compromise point.

Conclusion. Inclusion of the proposed measures on the 2016 ANES pilot study would provide a means for conducting much for rigorous tests, with a far superior sample, of these potentially useful measures.

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