

Partisan Bridging And Its Gendered Dimensions

by

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Political Science
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

Over the last few years, anyone tuning into the nightly news would likely assume that bipartisan compromise in Congress is a thing of the past. It often seems as if politicians are more concerned with tearing down or stalling the other party's policy goals than providing real solutions for the American citizenry. Although scholars, politicians, and political commentators alike frequently cite a desire to see more compromise on the floor of Congress (and in the state houses), research on bipartisanship - why it occurs, how it occurs, and when - remains limited. This dissertation seeks to fill this gap by asking two questions: (1) How can we predict when legislators will cross the partisan aisle to engage in partisan compromise? (2) Does a legislator's gender condition his or her ability to engage in compromise? Through individual level analyses of sponsorship and vote choice, an aggregate level analysis of policy diffusion, and two original survey experiments, this dissertation develops a theory of "partisan bridging" that aims to help scholars better understand when and why compromise might occur. The results suggest that *personal preferences* can lead legislators to view the benefits of crossing the aisle as greater than the potential costs, particularly preferences grounded in a sense of group membership. However, the results also (unexpectedly) suggest that women legislators may face greater costs when engaging in compromise on "woman-owned" issues. Thus, women legislators may face the highest costs for engaging in compromise in exactly those areas on which they may feel most compelled to compromise.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Over the past decade, the rise in partisan polarization and its consequences for legislative decision-making have become increasingly evident to anyone tuning into the nightly news. Politicians on either side of the aisle speak as if the other party is the enemy, and it often seems as if tearing down or stalling the other party's policy goals is more important to politicians than actually producing practical solutions for the multitude of problems facing the American public. Yet we should not give up hope that bipartisan compromise can occur. It does, and not merely on inconsequential matters. For instance, in 2013, Senators Susan Collins (R-ME), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), and Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) started a bipartisan working group to negotiate the framework for a Senate deal to reopen the federal government after a two-week shutdown. That same year, Congress reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act, despite having failed to do so in 2012. The 2013 bill had seven Republican cosponsors, 52 Democratic cosponsors, and was backed by every female senator regardless of party. More recently, in 2018 a group of senators from both parties came together to introduce a bipartisan gun control bill that would require authorities to alert state law enforcement officials within 24 hours after an individual prohibited from buying guns failed a background check.

Still, although bipartisanship clearly continues to occur, there is certainly less

of it than in previous eras, and scholars, politicians, and political commentators alike frequently cite a desire to see more compromise on the floor of Congress (and in state houses as well). Yet, within political science, scholarship on bipartisanship – why it occurs, how it occurs, and when – remains quite limited (but see Harbridge 2009, 2015; Harbridge et al. 2014). The first goal of this dissertation is to help fill this gap by developing a theory of bipartisanship to help predict when and why certain legislators might be willing to cross the partisan aisle. Predicting bipartisan behavior is presumably something of great interest to policy advocates at both the state and national level and, furthermore, knowing how to predict bipartisanship should also help us understand how to encourage it.

The second goal of this dissertation is to better understand the role that legislator gender plays when it comes to bipartisan compromise. Women legislators, and women in general, are often portrayed as better at – and more likely to engage in – consensus building than men. Indeed, women legislators themselves sometimes encourage this perception. When asked about women’s role in ending the 2013 government shutdown, Senator Klobuchar suggested that it was the relationships among the 20 women in the Senate that would make a difference in securing a long-term budget deal, while Senator Collins suggested it was “[no] coincidence that women were so heavily involved in trying to end this stalemate.”¹ Yet while there seems to be a general consensus that women legislators are themselves (often) the source of consensus, there is very little systematic research examining the gendered dimensions of compromise (but see Bauer et al. 2017). This dissertation begins to address this gap by considering the unique benefits women legislators may gain, as well as the unique costs they may face, in crossing the partisan aisle.

¹ “Men Got Us Into the Shutdown, Women Got Us Out.” October 16, 2013. *Huffington Post*.

1.1 Developing The Theory

Chapter two begins by laying down the theoretical bones of this project. I build upon the work of Burden (2007), who finds that legislators' personal preferences are important determinants behind legislators' behavior in office, to argue that personal preferences can also lead some legislators to cross the aisle to side with the opposing party. Think, for example, of Senator McCain's explanation for why he chose to vote against the "Skinny Repeal." After casting his vote, along with a thumbs down (which made for an unusually dramatic moment on C-SPAN), McCain explained that one reason he joined with the Democrats (in an act that my theory terms negative bridging) was his belief that the process behind the bill was too partisan and one-sided, and that Congress needed "to return to the correct way of legislating." Of course, the preferences that drive legislators will not always be preferences for bipartisanship itself, nor will those preferences always result in an act of bipartisanship that stalls, rather than produces, a legislative outcome. But the general point is that politicians have preferences, both about how policies are made and the types of policies that result. And it is these preferences that might lead them to be willing to put in the hard work of negotiating, of the give and take, that compromise requires. I argue that when a legislator is willing to do so, she is choosing to act as a "partisan bridge."

Chapter two provides a first test of my theory by turning to the literature on women's representation. A long line of scholarship has demonstrated that women legislators often exhibit a strong preference for representing the needs of their female constituents, and I hypothesize that as a result, women legislators will be more likely to invest the time and effort to craft bipartisan compromises on women-centered policy issues. That is, I suggest women legislators will be more likely to serve as

“partisan bridges” on these issues because their preferences lead them to do so. I test this expectation by examining the role Republican women played in the diffusion of contraceptive coverage at the state level in the late 1990s and early 2000s. I find strong evidence that moderate Republican women were willing to serve as partisan bridges on the issue of coverage. That is, although the charge for contraceptive coverage may have been led by Democratic women, Republican women at time served as critical actors in the pursuit for coverage.

1.2 The Consequences (or Costs) of Bridging

Chapter three shifts the focus away from legislator’s motivations for bridging to constituents’ reactions to bridging. Understanding how constituents respond to acts of partisan bridging is equally as important as understanding why legislators may wish to cross the aisle, because constituents’ (predicted) reactions are part of a legislator’s cost-benefit analysis when deciding whether or not to bridge. Although Americans routinely report that they want to see more bipartisan compromise among their representatives, it is not so clear that they will react positively when a legislator responds to their calls with real bipartisan action. Today’s America is more divided along ideological lines than at any point in the last two decades, and animosity between partisan groups has similarly been increasing. For example, in the lead up to the 2016 election, 46% of Republicans and 47% of Democrats reported that the opposing party made them feel angry, while 49% of Republicans and 55% of Democrats reported that the opposing party made them feel afraid. Even more troubling, 45% of Republicans in 2016 viewed Democratic policies as a threat to the nation, with 41% of Democrats believing the same about Republican policies.² Thus,

² “Partisanship and Political Animosity in 2016: Highly Negative Views of the Opposing Party - And Its Members.” June 22, 2016. *Pew Research Center*

politicians gazing outward at the electorate might doubt the sincerity of constituents' calls for bipartisanship and worry about potential blowback from working with the "enemy." The first goal of chapter two, then, is to determine if legislators are likely to suffer a cost for choosing to bridge.

The second goal of the chapter is to consider the ways in which a legislator's gender might condition the costs legislators face when bridging. Numerous studies show that constituents utilize gender stereotypes when evaluating candidates' issue competencies (Alexander and Andersen 1993; Burrell 1994; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Kahn 1994; Koch 2000; Bauer et al. 2017). Persistent gender stereotypes portray female politicians as better able to handle so called "compassion" issues (poverty, education, child-related), as well as women-centered issues (abortion). Conversely, female politicians are viewed as less able to deal with issue areas that are typically perceived as more in the purview of men: business, the military, or defense (Lawless 2004). Taken together, the results of past studies suggest that women legislators will face fewer costs when bridging on women-centered issue areas because constituents will be more likely to give women legislators the benefit of the doubt.

Chapter three presents the results from an original survey experiment, conducted in the summer of 2018, designed to explore these competing – and intersecting – expectations regarding constituent reactions to partisan bridging. The experiment breaks down the concept of bridging into two constituent categories: positive bridging, whereby a legislator crosses the aisle to advance a policy championed by the opposing party, and negative bridging, wherein a legislator crosses the aisle to vote against a policy championed by her own party. Briefly, the results suggest that, despite their stated preferences for bipartisanship, constituents do, on average, penalize legislators who engage in bridging. However, it is also clear that partisan identity plays an important mediating role; highly identified partisans react negatively to

partisan bridging, while weakly identified partisans respond either neutrally (to negative bridging) or favorably (to positive bridging). Surprisingly, and contrary to expectations, it appears that gender stereotypes portraying women as better suited to handle women-centered issues work against female legislators who bridge. When a female legislator engages in negative bridging in an issue area “owned” by her gender, she suffers a cost in approval almost twice that of her gender counterpart.

1.3 Explaining Bridging

Chapter four considers the ways in which female legislators’ explanations for bridging might temper constituent reactions. As “single-minded seekers” of reelection, legislators are certainly thinking about how to explain away the votes that displease their constituents (or at least deflect attention away from them). Indeed, both Fenno (1978) and Kingdon (1989) find that legislators view explanations for particular rollcall votes as important, or even more important, than the votes themselves. I hypothesize that female legislators will receive more favorable evaluations from constituents when bridging if they emphasize any gendered motivations for bridging rather than providing more gender-neutral explanations.

To test this hypothesis, I conducted a survey experiment in August of 2018 that took advantage of the (at the time) very real possibility that certain senators of either major party might defect on the upcoming confirmation vote for Justice Brett Kavanaugh’s Supreme Court nomination. By manipulating legislators’ expected explanation for defecting on the confirmation vote, I was able to test whether or not an explanation grounded in a female legislator’s policy preferences on a woman-owned issue – abortion – was more or less effective than an explanation grounded in more gender-neutral considerations such as ideological preferences or a desire to win reelection.

Overall, the results of the study are mixed. I find that the female legislator actually receives significantly lower favorability ratings when her decision to bridge is explained by her stance on abortion than when her decision is framed as a matter of ideology or reelection. This is also true when it comes to the level of anger respondents report at the prospect of the female senator bridging. However, while a female senator's choice of explanation for her decision to bridge appears to impact how constituents *feel* about her, it does not seem to influence their (predicted) behavior at the ballot box. Respondents were uniformly unlikely to report that the senator who bridges should be reelected in the upcoming midterms. Yet, though the results may be slightly mixed as to whether a gendered explanation harms a female legislator who bridges, it is clear that it does not help her, regardless of which party she represents.

Chapter 2

Partisan Bridges to Bipartisanship in a Polarized World: The Case of Women's Contraceptive Coverage

Over the past decade, the rise in partisan polarization and its consequences for legislative decision-making has been one of the most important topics in the American politics literature. Across a number of measures, the story is the same: the parties in government, particularly at the congressional level, are becoming more internally homogenous while simultaneously moving farther apart from each other on major policy issues (Bond and Fleisher, 2000; Stonecash et al., 2003; Sinclair, 2000; McCarty et al., 1997; Poole and Rosenthal, 2001; Jacobson, 2000). The negative¹ consequences of polarization - an increase in the negative political discourse among legislators (Sinclair, 2002; Jamieson and Falk, 2000; Uslander, 1996), an increase in stalemate and gridlock in the policy process (Binder, 2003; Jones, 2001), and a dwindling supply of political consensus (Sinclair, 1997; Bond and Fleisher, 2000) - have been

¹ Of course, polarization is not necessarily all bad. In the past, the American party system has been criticized for failing to provide much distinction between the major parties. In 1950, the Committee on Political Parties of the American Political Science Association wrote that “alternatives between the parties are defined so badly that it is often difficult to determine what the election has decided even in broadest terms” (American Political Science Association 1950, pp.3-4). Presumably, the ideal state of events is one somewhere between two indistinct parties and two parties that are so loathe to compromise they would rather shut the government down than make policy concessions.

pointed to by scholars, politicians, and political commentators alike as evidence of a desperate need for a renewal of bipartisan policy making and compromise.

Yet, scholarship on bipartisanship – why it occurs, how it occurs, and when – remains quite limited. This chapter seeks to help fill this gap by developing a theory of partisan bridging that helps predict when and why certain legislators might be willing to cross the partisan aisle. I build upon the work of Burden (2007), who finds that legislators’ personal preferences are important considerations when they make voting decisions and/or allocate resources to various policy proposals, to argue that personal preferences can also lead some legislators to cross the aisle in search of consensus. I introduce the concept of a partisan bridge – an individual who, through sponsorship, amendments, voting, and even lobbying partisan colleagues - works to generate more bipartisan consensus for a policy than might otherwise exist.

Although my theory is not gender specific, I test its implications by turning to the literature on women’s representation. A long line of scholarship has demonstrated that women legislators often exhibit a strong preference for representing the particular needs of their female constituents and that this leads them to place a greater focus – relative to their male counterparts - on producing women-centered policies. Such work suggests that women legislators should be more likely than male legislators to invest the time and effort necessary to craft bipartisan compromise on women-centered policy issues. I test this expectation by examining the role of Republican women in the diffusion of contraceptive coverage at the state level between 1998 and 2010. Using two different approaches – an individual level analysis of sponsorship and vote choice and an aggregate level analysis of policy diffusion – I find that moderate Republican women were (1) more likely to bridge on the issue of women’s contraceptive coverage than their male counterparts and (2) had a substantive impact on policy outcomes. These findings are important for two reasons. First, they suggest that we might be able to predict when bipartisan behavior will occur

– presumably something that is of great interest to policy advocates. Second, they add to our understanding of Republican women’s role in representing women in the states – it was not just Democratic women who helped advance prescription equity at the state level.

2.1 Personal Preferences and Compromise: A Theory of Partisan Bridging

As Burden (2007) has noted, “researchers tend to assume that legislators either work only on behalf of their constituents or as foot soldiers for their political parties,” thereby leaving little room for personal preferences and/or motivations to shape legislative behavior (Burden, 2007, 14).² Yet, focusing only on constituent or partisan preferences as the main motivators behind legislators’ actions provides an incomplete picture of legislative behavior, one that can be improved upon if we take into account more personal motivations. Burden argues that legislators’ personal preferences, which are based on their unique life experiences, play an important role in legislators’ voting decisions and choices concerning time allocation. For instance, “personal concerns over health-related issues can override a legislator’s partisan and ideological commitments” (Burden, 2007, 18). When Barbara Vucanovich (R-CO) discovered she had breast cancer at 61, she sponsored legislation that would extend Medicare coverage for mammograms in older women (Burden, 2007, 18). Similarly, religious beliefs clearly motivate legislators on certain issues; Senators Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Gordon Smith (R-OR), both conservative Republicans, “bucked the party line when their church suggested that stem cell research might be acceptable” (Burden,

² A clear exception would be Fenno (1973, 1978), who distinguishes between three different goals representatives might have: winning reelection, securing power in the chamber, and the production of good public policy. The desire to produce good public policy could be seen as synonymous with personal policy preferences.

2007, 19).

In addition to partisan and constituent preferences, then, the personal preferences of legislators have the potential to influence their choice of policy pursuits. In today's polarized political environment, legislators may be under greater pressure to follow the preferences of the larger party, but this does not mean that legislators' own personal preferences have been completely subsumed. This is likely particularly true at the state level, where the level of polarization varies across legislatures (Shor and McCarty, 2011).³ The question worth asking, I argue, is whether or not we can predict when personal preferences might encourage bipartisan behavior.

We would expect moderate legislators (to the degree that they exist in today's political arena) to be, all else equal, those most likely to seek a bipartisan consensus.⁴ Personal preferences can also motivate more conservative or liberal legislators to cross the aisle, but we might expect them to do so less frequently than their moderate colleagues. We also know that moderates (and legislators in general) do not invest their time and resources on every possible policy initiative. Legislators are strategic when it comes to allocating their finite time and resources to particular policy goals; they will not, in general, spend time and effort pursuing policy initiatives for which they feel they have no chance of securing or for which the payoff will be low (Hall, 1998).

We can generate some basic expectations then, about when a legislator might choose to bridge the partisan divide. First, she must be able to conceive of a possible policy solution that would generate support on both sides of the aisle. If there is no

³ We can assume that in less polarized legislatures constituency and personal preferences play a larger role in legislative behavior.

⁴ This in turn implies that party leaders would be less likely to bridge, as they are less likely to be moderates. Additionally, if one is a leader of the party one is presumably focused on maintaining the party "brand."

possible policy solution that could generate such support, then a legislator will divert her energy elsewhere. Second, she must perceive the costs of pursuing such a policy solution to be less than the perceived benefits of doing so. One's personal preferences and/or motivations, presumably, play a key role in determining the amount of utility a legislator receives from pursuing bipartisan compromise; deeply held preferences should translate to an expectation of greater benefits than less salient preferences.

The costs of serving as what I will term a "partisan bridge" can stem from many sources; potential electoral and/or party sanctions almost certainly play a role. As the major parties have become more polarized, the costs of defecting from the party line have risen. Such defections are much more visible than in the past, and party leaders and constituents may be less willing to tolerate them. Here it is advantageous to recall Bianco's (1994) notion of trust and voting leeway. Bianco points out that while constituents want their representatives to take actions that are consistent with their preferences across policy outcomes, constituents also place a degree of trust in their representatives, trust that gives a legislator room to vote as she sees fit without fear of electoral sanction, at least some of the time or on certain issues.⁵ Although Bianco conceptualized voting leeway as generated by constituents, we might also expect party leaders to allow their party members some leeway at certain times or on certain issues. For example, party leaders may allow more voting leeway if a member faces a tough reelection and suspects voting for (or against) a specific policy proposal could have a substantive impact on her chances. Or, perhaps a legislator can claim a sort of issue ownership and/or expertise on a policy area and thus credibly

⁵ State level or even district level factors might influence a legislators' perception of voting leeway. For instance, in more polarized state legislatures legislators may view themselves as possessing very little leeway in voting against their party, particularly those legislators who represent very liberal or very conservative districts.

argue against leaders' preferences.⁶ ⁷ Whether or not a legislator's party is in the minority might also matter; a minority party member might have greater leeway to cross the aisle than a majority party member. In any case, a legislator's perception of the degree of voting leeway available to him or her on a given policy issue is likely a key factor in any decision to bridge.

Additionally, the costs of bridging are partly determined by the type of action a legislator takes.⁸ Sponsoring and/or lobbying for a bipartisan bill are actions that are costlier than simply casting a supportive vote come roll call time. By sponsoring one takes credit for bringing an issue onto the agenda; lobbying often occurs behind the scenes, but can sometimes require a considerable investment of both time and energy. Similarly, offering amendments to a bill in order to garner more support also involves greater costs than voting, if only in terms of the time spent drafting the amendment. We would expect that those legislators with deeply held preference for a policy outcome are more likely to undertake the costlier forms of bridging than are

⁶ Such leeway may be especially likely to be given to certain types of legislators on certain (corresponding) types of legislation. Numerous studies, for example, find that voters believe female politicians are better able to handle education, family, and women's issues (Alexander and Andersen, 1993; Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993; Kahn and Fridkin, 1996), while McDermott (1998) finds evidence that voters view black candidates as more likely to focus on minority or racial issues. Voting leeway could also be considered a form of earned political capital. Swers (2006) found evidence suggesting that Congresswoman Nancy Johnson's willingness to be a team player at critical times helped her to generate capital to undertake efforts that ran counter to her party's agenda.

⁷ It is also possible that legislators who operate within term limits face greater pressure to produce results in a shorter time period and thus are more willing to bridge regardless of the amount of leeway they might receive. Term-limit advocates have argued that term limits encourage legislators to spend less time campaigning for reelection and more time on legislative activities. Carey et al. (1998) find some evidence in support of this hypothesis in a 1995 survey of nearly 3,000 state legislators, but less evidence of this in their more recent (2002) 50-state survey.

⁸ Institutional factors might matter as well. It is possible, for instance, that state legislators receive greater voting leeway than members of Congress due to the lower visibility of state legislative office and/or due to the types of issues considered at the state level versus the national level. However, it is also possible that state legislators do not receive greater voting leeway, as state politics, being "close to home" for constituents, are still quite salient for voters. This would be particularly true on issues that are particularly important to particular voters or groups of voters (abortion, for instance).

those to whom the policy is less salient. To review, if a legislator both believes in the possibility of a bipartisan policy solution and believes the benefits of pursuing such a policy outweigh the costs, I argue that we can expect that legislator to then contribute time and effort into pursuing that policy's passage, i.e. serve as a partisan bridge. Because moderate legislators are already in the ideological center, we would expect moderates to be those most likely to conceive of a bipartisan solution. Further, we would expect different degrees of bridging to occur based on legislators' calculation of costs and benefits. A legislator's level of commitment to a certain policy issue will influence the amount of time and energy she invests in pursuing compromise.

2.2 Women Legislators: Potential Bridges

Testing this theory of partisan bridging undeniably poses challenges. Legislators do not typically provide us with a detailed explanation for their every legislative action; it is not always clear whether it was partisanship, constituent pressures, or personal policy goals (or all three) that led a legislator to behave in one way or another. While interviewing legislators about their motivations for bipartisan behavior is one avenue of investigation, in this chapter I turn to the extensive literature on descriptive and substantive representation to test the implications of my theory. Although, theoretically, any legislator, at some time or another, or with respect to one policy or another, has the potential to serve as a bridge, the existing research on descriptive and substantive representation already provides significant evidence that personal preferences – grounded in the experiences of a shared (and often marginalized) identity – often motivate the policy pursuits of descriptive representatives of that identity.⁹

⁹ Because I focus on women legislators here, it is important to consider the possibility that women, as marginalized legislators, might face greater costs than men because they may need to adhere more strictly to institutional norms to maintain legitimacy. This is possible, but it is also possible that women face less costs than their male counterparts. Conventional feminine stereotypes portray

For instance, studies of women in Congress and the states find that women are more active sponsors and cosponsors of women’s issue legislation (Osborn, 2012; MacDonald and O’Brien, 2011; Gerrity et al., 2007; Dodson et al., 2006; Swers, 2002; Wolbrecht, 2002; Reingold, 1992; Bratton and Haynie, 1999; Thomas, 1994; Saint-Germain, 1989), are more likely to indicate support for policies on “issues of special concern to women” (Burrell, 1996; Diamond, 1977; Leader, 1977; Lilie et al., 1982; Thomas, 1989; Dodson, 1991; Barrett, 1995; Swers, 1998; Epstein et al., 2005), and are more likely to list policies concerning women’s issues as accomplishments that give them the most satisfaction and pride (Thomas and Welch, 1991). In other words, there is a great deal of evidence that women legislators often exhibit a strong preference to represent the specific needs of their female constituents.

These findings suggest that women legislators should be motivated to bridge on women’s policy issues and that they should be more likely to do so than their male counterparts.¹⁰ That is, although both male and female legislators presumably wish to address the concerns of their female constituents, women legislators’ status as - and awareness of being - a descriptive representative should lead (at least some of) them to place greater utility in pursuing policies for women. This might in turn lead them to view the benefits of bipartisan behavior as outweighing the costs, and to do so at a greater rate than might their male colleagues. Ideology matters, of course,

women as more compromising, while research by Volden et al. (2013) finds that women legislators are more likely to engage in consensus building. It is possible that societal stereotypes about women as consensus builders provides women legislators with greater voting leeway when it comes to compromising. I address this possibility in a separate chapter.

¹⁰ This is not to say that all women legislators prioritize women’s issues, or even that women legislators all agree as to just what a “woman’s issue” is. The mixed findings with respect to the impact of the much theorized “critical mass” of women in legislatures, as well as Osborn’s (2012) extensive exploration of the mediating impact of partisanship on women legislators’ approaches to women’s representation, have shown us that expectations of an essentialist link between sex and representation are flawed. But, we know that women legislators often serve as “critical actors” when it comes to the pursuit of women centered policies (Celis et al., 2008), and thus it is worth considering the role they have played in bipartisan compromise.

and so we would also expect that moderate women legislators should be more likely to bridge than more conservative or liberal women legislators.¹¹

Although bridging can occur in either direction,¹² I focus in this chapter on the potential for women legislators on the right to bridge leftward. Because it is the Democratic Party that has more heavily (and explicitly) incorporated the policy goals of the Women’s Movement, such as greater access to abortion, greater access to contraceptive services, and an emphasis on securing equal pay, it is more likely that women on the right side of the spectrum will bridge left than vice versa. That is, a preference for increasing women’s social, economic, and political equality is more likely to drive a Republican woman legislator leftward than a Democratic woman legislator rightward.

- **Hypothesis 1:** Republican women legislators are more likely to bridge on a women’s policy issue than are male Republican legislators.
- **Hypothesis 2:** Moderate Republican women are more likely to bridge than are more conservative Republican women.

One could examine Republican women’s potential for bridging on a number

¹¹ Although earlier scholarship did not take into account ideological differences among women legislators, recent scholarship has explicitly acknowledged the ways in which partisanship and ideology may impact women’s representation. Osborn (2012) argues that political parties fundamentally shape the pursuit of women’s policies; when women legislators represent women, they do so as partisans. Work by Carroll (2003) and Thomsen (2015) suggests that – although in the past Republican women tended to be more liberal than their male partisans – this is not likely to be true for much longer. Carroll (2003) finds that the population of Republican women state legislators has become more conservative over the past few decades, while Thomsen’s (2015) theory of candidate selection suggests that moderate Republican women are increasingly finding themselves out of step with the Republican party (and thus choosing not to run for office). Thomsen focuses on candidate selection to Congress, but it is possible this trend is occurring at the state level as well.

¹² By this I mean that we would expect both Republican and Democratic legislators to have reason to bridge left or right, dependent on personal preferences and the policies in question.

of issues, but I choose to focus on contraceptive coverage in the states. I do so for three reasons. First, focusing on contraceptive coverage – a controversial and hot button issue - allows for a stronger test of my theory than would focusing on more consensus-generating issues such as breast cancer or domestic abuse. The issue of women’s access to contraceptives has been a prominent matter of debate for more than two decades. Insurance coverage of contraceptives first became salient in 1994 after research by the Alan Guttmacher Institute, presented at a public senate hearing, showed that most private insurers did not cover prescription contraceptives. This was so despite nearly universal coverage of most other medications. When Viagra was approved by the Federal Drug Administration in 1998 and then immediately incorporated into insurance plans, women’s health advocates were quick to argue that this was a clear example of gender inequity in the healthcare system, and efforts to equalize coverage took off at both the state and congressional levels. Yet, conservative groups pushed back against these attempts, arguing that insurance mandates had become too ubiquitous and that requiring employers to cover contraception costs would undermine religious liberty. Just recently, the Trump Administration enacted a rule that severely weakened the Affordable Care Act’s contraceptive provision.

Second, work at the congressional level (Dodson 2006; Swers 2002; Gertzog 2004) shows that moderate Republican women have played an important, if under recognized role in the pursuit of contraceptive equity. Senator Olympia Snowe (R-ME) was one of the original sponsors of the Equity in Prescription Insurance Coverage Act of 1997, while Representative Nancy Johnson (R-CT), by speaking out

on the House floor¹³ and by successfully lobbying Speaker Newt Gingrich to throw his support behind comprehensive coverage, played a key role in securing the passage of Representative Nita Lowey's (D-NY) contraceptive coverage amendment to a 1998 annual appropriations bill. Although coverage was limited to federal employees, proponents of women's health still viewed the amendment as a major success.

By the passage of the Affordable Care Act in 2010, the issue of contraception had become extremely partisan, undoubtedly making it tougher for moderate Republicans to come out in support of the policy. Yet, Senators Snowe and Collins continued to do so. Both spoke out in support of the contraceptive provision,¹⁴ while Snowe was the only Republican to vote against Senator Roy Blunt's (R-MO) amendment to a highway funding bill, an amendment that would have allowed not only religious employers but any employer with moral objections to opt out of the coverage requirement.¹⁵ In 2014, Collins, along with senators Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Mark Kirk (R-IL), voted in support of a Democratic bill that would have essentially reversed the Supreme Court's ruling in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby* that closely held, for-profit, religious corporations were exempt from the contraceptive mandate.¹⁶

¹³ Conservative Republicans argued that certain contraceptive drugs were synonymous with abortion. Johnson pushed back, stating: "For us to imagine here tonight it is either right or proper for the [opposition] to impose [such restrictions on device type]... on others at this level is extraordinary. As a Republican who believes that government should stay out of our lives, I oppose this amendment with everything in me" (Gertzog, 1995, 133).

¹⁴ Senators Snowe and Collins originally side with their party against the inclusion of coverage because there was no religious exemption. Once the exemption was included, both Senators gave their support. <http://www.ibtimes.comobama-contraception-mandate-gop-sens-collins-snowe-back-revision-410036>

¹⁵ Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) voted in favor of the amendment. Senator Collins admitted to being "conflicted" over her vote and hoping that its flaws would be addressed, while Senator Murkowski later admitted to regretting her vote, stating "I have never had a vote where I have felt that I let down more people that believed in me." This is important to note because it demonstrates that the decision to bridge may not be a constant one and that even those who have bridges on an issue previously may find the costs too high at a later date.

¹⁶ Senators Collins and Murkowski have also been strong proponents of Planned Parenthood. The

Third, although we have evidence of Republican women serving as bridges at the congressional level,¹⁷ we know very little about Republican women’s role in the diffusion of contraceptive coverage at the state level. Yet, until the passage of the Affordable Care Act, insurance regulation was very much the domain of the states. Indeed, while EPICC stalled at the congressional level, progress towards prescription equity was already occurring in the states. Between 1998 and 2010, 28 states passed laws requiring insurers who cover prescription drugs to also cover FDA approved contraceptive devices. Thus, examining Republican women’s role in the diffusion of coverage in the states not only allows me to test the implications of my theory, but also allows me to contribute to the existing literature on women’s representation in the states (Thomas & Welch 1991; Carroll 1992; Reingold, 1992; Swers 1998; Rosenthal, 1998; Bratton & Haynie 1999; Poggione, 2004; Osborn 2012).

2.3 Examining Contraceptive Coverage in the States

My theory of partisan bridging would suggest that Republican women legisla-

most recent example of their commitment to women’s reproductive healthcare came in the summer of 2017, when the Republican controlled Congress attempted to pass a “skinny” repeal of the 2010 Affordable Care Act. The attempt failed when Senators Collins, Murkowski, and McCain chose to vote against the party line. While Senator McCain’s vote came as a surprise, Senators Collins and Murkowski had been clear in the buildup to the vote that they had major concerns with the repeal bill, particularly the provision defunding Planned Parenthood.

¹⁷ An important issue to consider here is the possibility that Republican women were bridging on women’s issues not because their personal preferences led them to, but because they were receiving more pressure from constituents and/or advocates on contraception than their male counterparts. However, we find ourselves in a chicken and egg type scenario. Presumably, constituents or advocates choose to focus on moderate Republican women because they assume that such women’s preferences – as women – would lead them to be amenable to supporting contraceptive coverage in the first place. For the purposes of my argument here, it is not necessary to distinguish between the potential origins of women legislators’ preferences on women-centered outcomes. Such preferences could come from their own experiences as women (descriptive representation) or from interactions with women’s groups/advocates (Mansbridge (1995): accountability through identity). Indeed, it is likely a combination of both.

tors were likely to support contraceptive coverage at the state level and that they were more likely to do so than their male Republican colleagues. The following section tests this implication by examining Republican men and women’s sponsorship and vote choice with respect to contraceptive coverage at the state level. However, of interest here is not just whether Republican women were more likely to serve as partisan bridges on this policy, but also whether or not such bridging had an impact on policy outcomes. In the second section, I use an event history approach to determine whether the willingness of (some) Republican women to bridge played a significant role in the diffusion of contraceptive coverage mandates.

2.3.1 Did Republican Women Bridge?

I first focus on sponsorship and vote choice with respect to contraceptive coverage. If my theory of partisan bridging is correct, we should find that Republican women legislators were more likely to sponsor and vote for coverage. This expectation is grounded in an extensive literature showing that women legislators are often motivated to provide women-centered policy outputs. However, because ideology is an important determinant in policy preferences, we should also find that that more moderate Republican women were more likely to sponsor and support coverage than their more conservative female partisans. We should also find that, even among male and female Republican moderates, women were more likely to support coverage. While moderate Republican men might find contraceptive coverage just as appealing (from a policy perspective) as do moderate Republican women, we would expect them to have less vested personal interest in the issue and also face less constituent pressure on the issue. This should lead them to be less willing to expend political capital in an effort to bridge.

- **Hypothesis 1:** Republican women will be more likely to sponsor coverage than Republican men.

- **Hypothesis 2:** Republican women will be more likely to vote for coverage than Republican men.
- **Hypothesis 3:** Moderate Republican women will be more likely to sponsor coverage than moderate Republican men.
- **Hypothesis 4:** Moderate Republican women will be more likely to vote for coverage than moderate Republican men.
- **Hypothesis 5:** More conservative Republican women will be less likely to sponsor coverage than more moderate Republican women.
- **Hypothesis 6:** More conservative Republican women will be less likely to vote for coverage than more moderate Republican women.

2.3.2 Data and Measurement

Until recently, scholars studying women’s representation were stymied by a lack of appropriate individual level data, i.e. a measure of women’s self-placement on an ideological scale that was comparable across states. For my analyses, I take advantage of legislator ideology scores (NPAT), created by Shor and McCarty (2010), which that are comparable across the states.¹⁸ I added a gender variable to the data for the 1998-2010 period¹⁹ and then matched these scores to roll-call and sponsorship data for 26 out of the 28 contraceptive coverage bills passed since 1998 (the first year a

¹⁸ Shor et al. (2010) introduce a new data set of state legislative roll call votes that covers all state legislative bodies over approximately a decade. By using a survey of all legislative candidates at the state and federal level of a number of years – with identical questions across state and time – Shor and McCarty were able to create a data set that allows for cross-state, cross-chamber, and over time comparisons.

¹⁹ To code for gender, I first coded all “clear” male and female names such as Mary or Michael. I then used yearly lists of all female state legislators from the Center for American Women and Politics to code all remaining female legislators and to double check my earlier coding. I then coded all remaining observations as male.

state mandated coverage).²⁰ This provides me with a dataset of 3,905 individual legislators, of which 3,833 have recorded sponsorship status and 3,400 have recorded votes.²¹

2.3.3 Analysis & Results

In the bill sponsorship models, the dependent variable is a dichotomous dummy indicating whether a legislator served as a sponsor (1) or not (0); in the vote choice models, a yes vote is coded as 1 while a no vote is coded as 0. In both the sponsorship and voting models, I focus on the role of partisanship, ideology, and gender in legislative behavior. All models are logit models with state fixed effects and I include a host of controls for legislator and state characteristics, including state legislative chamber, party leader, minority party status, membership within the committee that considered coverage, party control, chamber polarization, state culture, and women's socioeconomic and political status within the state.

Table 2.1 presents the results of the sponsorship models. Column 1 shows that, as we would expect, more liberal legislators and female legislators were more likely to sponsor Contraceptive coverage bills. Of greater concern, however, are columns 2, 3, and 4, which consider sponsorship among Republicans, Republican moderates,

²⁰ Sponsorship and roll call data was collected through a search of state legislative websites and journals, and by emailing the staff of various legislative libraries. Washington and Wisconsin both mandated contraceptive coverage as part of larger bills; unlike the other bills, roll-call votes for these bills do not represent a yes or no answer to the question of mandating contraceptive coverage and thus are not included in the dataset.

²¹ There are 3,905 individuals in the dataset. No roll call votes were recorded for the Maine Senate (34 individuals). No roll call votes were recorded for the Vermont House (168 individuals). There were 224 legislators (across the 26 states) listed on the roll call sheets as absent, not voting, or excused. This results in a total of 426 individual legislators for which a 0-1 vote score could not be included. Additionally, there were 22 legislators (across IL, MA, MD, MO, NY, and TX) that were listed as members of the legislature but whose names did not appear on the roll-call list. These individuals were excluded from the analysis, as it is likely that they came into office after the bills in question were voted upon.

Table 2.1: Sponsorship of Contraceptive Coverage

	DV = Sponsor			
	All	Republicans	Rep. Moderates	Rep. Women
Legislator Ideology	1.27** (0.14)	1.43** (0.35)	-0.85 (0.94)	0.63 (0.49)
Female Legislator	1.46** (0.11)	2.04** (0.24)	1.72** (0.43)	
Republican Legislator	0.34 (0.22)			
Senator	0.16 (0.13)	0.63* (0.27)	1.04* (0.50)	0.52 (0.41)
Leadership Position	0.20 (0.18)	-0.01 (0.37)	-0.20 (0.56)	-0.22 (0.63)
Majority Party Member	0.40* (0.17)	0.94** (0.30)	1.90** (0.58)	0.01 (0.46)
Committee Member	0.51** (0.16)	0.71* (0.30)	0.56 (0.50)	0.55 (0.50)
Committee Chair	0.15 (0.32)	-0.05 (1.01)		0.71 (1.15)
Republican Controlled (Legislature)	-0.93† (0.51)	-1.26 (0.84)	-1.47 (1.28)	0.18 (1.00)
Chamber Polarization	0.72* (0.35)	2.52** (0.85)	3.86** (1.18)	0.07 (0.80)
% Rep. Women (Legislature)	-0.00 (0.06)	-0.02 (0.07)	0.02 (0.08)	-0.03 (0.06)
Women's Status (State)	0.23 (0.29)	0.46 (0.36)	0.85† (0.52)	0.04 (0.32)
State Culture	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.05 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.04)
Constant	-2.68 (1.93)	-4.56† (2.69)	-9.19* (4.15)	0.47 (2.54)
Observations	3,871	1,592	406	328
Log Likelihood	-1,189.62	-329.08	-129.63	-140.32

Note: State fixed effects included in all models.

†p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

and Republican women respectively. I hypothesized that Republican women would be more likely to sponsor contraceptive coverage than Republican men, and indeed this is the case as shown in column 2. The probability that a Republican woman will sponsor contraceptive coverage is .26 compared to only .06 for a Republican man. However, it is possible these findings simply reflect the fact that Republican women tend to be more liberal than Republican men. Column 3 shows that even among moderate Republicans, Republican women were more likely to sponsor coverage. The probability that a moderate Republican woman will sponsor contraceptive coverage is .60, compared to .32 for a moderate Republican man.

Interestingly, my hypothesis that more moderate Republican women would be

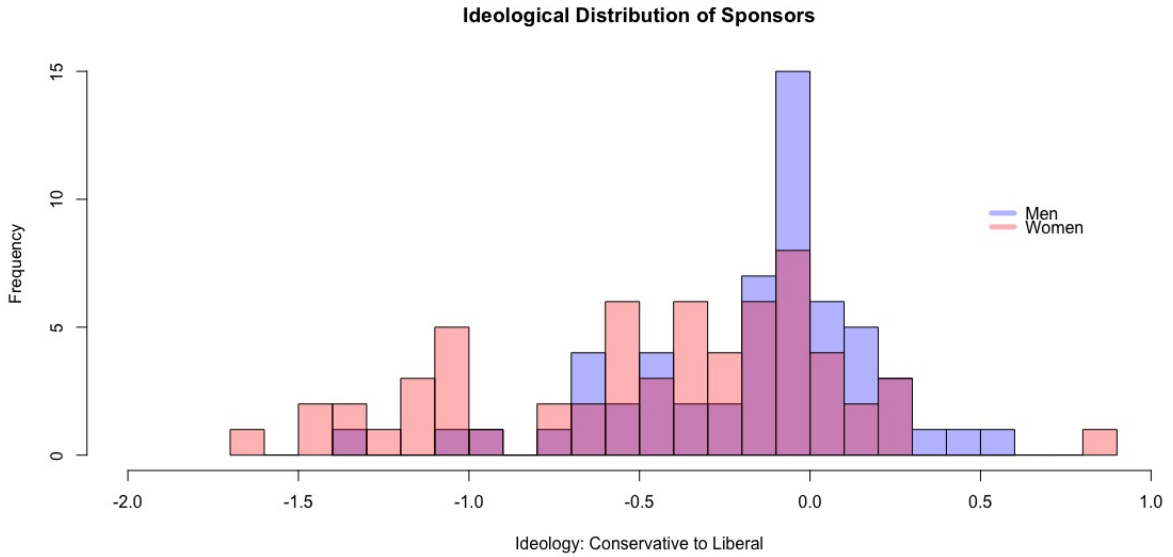


FIGURE 2.1: Ideological Distribution of Republican Sponsors

more likely to sponsor coverage than more conservative Republican women does not find support. Ideology was not a significant predictor of sponsorship among Republican women. Indeed, if we look at Figure 2.1, which plots the ideological distribution of Republican sponsors, we can see that there were a number of quite conservative Republican women choosing to serve as sponsors. Rather than contradicting my theory, however, this finding strongly suggests that personal preferences may have overridden ideological preferences, particularly given that we can see more conservative *women* chose to serve as sponsors than conservative *men*.²² More conservative women chose to serve as sponsors than conservative men.

Table 2.2 presents the results of the vote choice models which, for the most part, mirror the results of the sponsorship models. As with sponsorship, an exam-

²² Another important factor is the potential role of religious preferences. In my discussion, I focus on ideologically conservative women, but one could also focus on religiously conservative women. It is quite likely that religiously conservative women (on either the Democratic or Republican side) were less likely to support coverage than less religious women.

ination of vote choice across all legislators shows that more liberal legislators and female legislators were more likely to vote for contraceptive coverage. Among Republicans, women were much more likely to vote for coverage than men (column 2). The probability of a Republican woman voting for coverage is .77, compared to .56 for a Republican man. When focusing only on moderate Republicans (column 3); the probabilities increase to .96 and .80 respectively. In contrast to the sponsorship models, where ideology was not significant among Republican women, more moderate Republican women were more likely to vote for coverage than more conservative Republican women. For instance, the probability of voting for coverage for a conservative Republican woman, such as Betty Brown, who served in the Texas Assembly from 1999-2010 and who was praised for her conservative voting record by several conservative organizations, is .46.²³ In contrast, the probability of voting for coverage for a moderate Republican woman, such as Linda Binder, who served in the Arizona House from 1999-2003 and who received a 100% rating from Planned Parenthood for each year she served, is .96.

2.3.4 Did Bridging Matter?

The results of the individual level analyses suggest that moderate Republican women were those most likely to serve as partisan bridges on the issue of contraceptive coverage. These are important findings, particularly given that voting is a legislative activity that is heavily influenced by partisanship and ideology, and thus an area where we would expect descriptive characteristics to have the least influence. However, of interest is not just whether or not Republican women were those most likely

²³ Brown was recognized for her voting record by the Free Enterprise PAC of Dallas, the Eagle Forum, and the Texas Association of Business and Chambers of Commerce. While in office she also served as a member of the board of directors for the Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute. <https://www.texastribune.org/directory/betty-brown/#ui-tabs-1>

Table 2.2: Vote Choice and Contraceptive Coverage

	DV = Vote			
	All	Republicans	Rep.Moderates	Rep.Women
Legislator Ideology	2.38** (0.17)	2.40** (0.25)	0.97 (1.13)	2.70** (0.64)
Female Legislator	1.12** (0.16)	1.13** (0.19)	1.83** (0.60)	
Republican Legislator	0.14 (0.21)			
Senator	-0.14 (0.14)	-0.06 (0.18)	-0.50 (0.46)	0.21 (0.56)
Leadership Position	0.45* (0.19)	0.40† (0.24)	0.89 (0.55)	-0.97 (0.66)
Majority Position	0.32 (0.21)	0.24 (0.23)	0.22 (0.48)	1.15 (0.71)
Committee Member	0.55** (0.17)	0.68** (0.21)	0.85 (0.55)	1.15† (0.63)
Committee Chair	0.01 (0.51)	0.70 (0.87)		13.69 (418.05)
Republican Controlled (Legislature)	1.99* (0.91)	0.56 (1.11)	1.98 (1.71)	-0.59 (1.52)
Chamber Polarization	1.93** (0.51)	1.88** (0.60)	1.26 (1.12)	0.71 (0.97)
% Rep. Women (Legislature)	0.11† (0.06)	0.15* (0.06)	0.11 (0.07)	0.11 (0.07)
Women's Status (State)	-0.35 (0.32)	-0.12 (0.31)	0.47 (0.34)	0.08 (0.38)
State Culture	0.04 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.04)	0.04 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.06)
Constant	-4.40† (2.46)	-2.90 (2.64)	-6.89* (3.38)	1.94 (3.47)
Observations	3,447	1,395	298	294
Log Likelihood	-1,093.77	-684.37	-122.17	-113.43

Note: State fixed effects included in all models.

†p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

to bridge, but also whether such bridging had a substantive effect on policy outcomes. In the following section, I consider the potential policy impact of Republican women's bridging. I use an event history approach to see if the presence of moderate Republican women in a legislature influences the probability of a state mandating coverage.²⁴ If moderate Republican women played a significant role as bridges in securing coverage, we would expect that the number of moderate Republican women

²⁴ There is an extensive literature on policy diffusion in the United States. In addition to a series of classic studies (Crain, 1966; Gray, 1973), scholars have focused on the diffusion of same-sex marriage bans (Haider-Markel, 2001), abortion (Mooney and Lee, 1995), and the death penalty (Mooney and Lee, 1999), among many others.

(i.e. potential bridges) in a state would be positively related to the probability of that state mandating coverage

2.3.5 Event History Analysis: Data and Measurement

I capture the variation in contraceptive mandate adoption across the 50 states with a dichotomous indicator, yielding a dependent variable with 26 states coded as “1” and 24 coded “0.” I am interested in the propensity for a given state to adopt a contraceptive mandate, and thus the unit of analysis is the state-year, with 50 states observed for (up to) 11 time periods from 1998-2010. The dependent variable is coded “0” for a given state in a given year if a contraceptive mandate was not adopted in that period. States that did adopt coverage are coded “1” in the year of adoption, and then exit the dataset. The main variables of interest are the percentage of democrats in the legislature, counts of potential male and female bridges in the legislature, and the proportions of potential male and female bridges (relative to the republican party) in a legislature. I define a (potential) bridge as a Republican whose ideology score falls within the first quartile of the total distribution (across state and time) of Republican’s ideological spread, again using Shor and McCarty’s (2010) NPAT scores.²⁵ I control for whether or not Republicans held the majority (more than 50% of seats in the legislature), the level of polarization within the legislature, and whether or not a state is in the south. Additional models controlling for state

²⁵ I could have chosen to tailor the definition of a moderate Republican to each state legislature. Doing so, however, would not truly be picking up on the type of moderate Republican I am interested in. For instance, a legislator might be considered a moderate Republican in Mississippi because his or her colleagues are extremely conservative – on the far end of the ideological distribution – but this does not necessarily mean that the legislator in question is actually moderate. I am interested in those Republicans who are to the left of the majority of the Republican party at large. Of course, simply being a moderate does not mean one is fated to serve as a bridge. It is just that moderate legislators will be more likely, all else equal. If I find that moderate Republican women, but not moderate Republican men, were likely to serve as bridges, this suggests that preferences also played a role.

culture (Berry et al. 1998) and women’s general political and socioeconomic status in each state (IWPR) are included in the appendix.^{26 27}

2.3.6 Analysis & Results

To account for the temporal structure of the data analytically, I rely on the event history approach (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones, 1997). Event history analysis is able to account for both non-time varying and time-varying covariates, and is often used in analyses of policy adoption because of its ability to incorporate both internal and external determinants of state policy adoption. Such a model is well suited to modeling policy shifts, as it allows one to “conceive of a program or policy adoption by a state as an event that may or may not occur in any given time period” (Berry and Berry 1999). In a non-repeating events discrete time model, which I use here, the period of analysis is divided into a set of distinct units (years) and the “risk set,” or set of individuals (states) at risk of experiencing an event, decreases over time.²⁸ Note, using the event history approach means that I am estimating the probability that a given state adopts a contraceptive mandate in a given year conditional on not having adopted such a policy up to that point in time.

Table 2.3 presents the results. The first model in column 1 simply examines

²⁶ Controlling for state culture or women’s status in the states is an important additional step because it is possible that the factors that lead a state to elect a higher number of moderate Republican women make it more likely for a state to pass contraceptive coverage as well.

²⁷ Berry and Berry (2018) develop state-level measures of citizen and institutional ideology using interest group ratings of members of Congress supplemented with election returns for congressional races and data on the party composition of state legislatures and party affiliations of governors. This data extends only to 2006, thereby limiting the timeframe considered. Results including this measure are included in the appendix. The Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR)’s state level data on women’s socioeconomic, political, and reproductive status is only available for 1998-2003. The analysis including these measures (aggregated into one score) is thus limited to the 1998-2003 time period. The results are included in the appendix.

²⁸ Note, this implies that the probability of passage is assumed to increase over time for any given state.

the role of Democratic and Republican women in the diffusion of contraceptive coverage. While the percentage of Democratic women in a legislature has a positive and significant impact on the probability a state will adopt contraceptive coverage, the percentage of Republican women has no effect. This is unsurprising given recent work by Osborn (2012), as well as Swers (2002) and Dodson (2006), that shows partisanship shapes women legislators' policy goals. However, columns 2 and 4, which substitute the percentage of Republican women for a count of the number of potential bridges and the proportion of potential bridges (relative to the Republican party) respectively, suggest that Republican women did play a role in contraception adoption. Both a count of potential bridges and the proportion of potential bridges are positively related to the probability a state adopts coverage, although it is the proportion of potential bridges relative to the total number of Republicans in a legislature that has the strongest effect. This suggests that – while Democratic women may have led the charge - moderate Republican women were also important proponents of coverage. Importantly, columns 3 and 5 show that similar measures for potential male bridges are not significant predictors for passage. This suggests that, despite similar ideological preferences, moderate Republican men were less likely to advance contraceptive coverage than were moderate Republican women.

2.4 Discussion and Conclusion

In a time of increasing political polarization, scholars are paying more and more attention to understanding when and why bipartisan behavior might occur. In this chapter, I introduced a theory of partisan bridging, which suggests that personal preferences can lead legislators to cross the aisle in search of certain policy outcomes. I turned to the literature on women's representation to test the implications of my theory, hypothesizing that Republican women's preferences for representing women

Table 2.3: Event History Analysis: Partisan Bridges and Contraceptive Coverage

	Policy Passage		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Count of Potential Bridges		5.84 [†] (3.33)	
Proportion of Potential Bridges			19.32* (7.61)
Percent Republican Women	6.48 (6.51)		
Percent Democratic Women	14.67** (4.43)	11.65* (4.74)	14.34** (4.60)
House Polarization	-1.20* (0.52)	-0.11 (0.72)	-0.41 (0.58)
Republican Controlled Legislature	-1.19 [†] (0.63)	-0.80 (0.55)	-0.95 [†] (0.54)
Southern State	-0.14 (0.61)	0.33 (0.70)	0.41 (0.68)
Constant	-3.28** (0.91)	-4.21** (1.18)	-4.31** (1.11)
Observations	377	377	377
Log Likelihood	-81.90	-80.76	-79.46

[†]p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

might lead them to engage in bipartisan behavior at a higher rate than their male counterparts. Using two different methodological approaches, I find strong evidence that moderate Republican women were willing to serve as partisan bridges on the issue of contraceptive insurance coverage at the state level. More specifically, I find that moderate Republican women were more likely to sponsor and vote for contraceptive coverage bills, even relative to moderate Republican men. Aggregate level analyses also suggest that the presence of female Republican moderates, but not male Republican moderates, increased the probability a state would mandate coverage.

These findings are important for three reasons. First, they suggest that we might be able to predict when bipartisan behavior will occur – presumably something that

is of great interest to policy advocates at both the state and national level. Second, although critical mass theory has been rightfully critiqued for its assumption the number of women in a legislature is the key determinant of their behavior, my findings suggest that a critical mass of (moderate Republican) women within a party can embolden them to act as partisan bridges. Indeed, although not discussed here, the passage of contraceptive coverage in Arizona in 2002 was primarily due to a large contingent of moderate Republican women who felt a special desire to represent women's interests, particularly women's health.²⁹ Thus, although we should not assume that numerical strength translates to women's representation, we should remain open to the possibility that "critical groups" of certain types of women can lead to substantive policy outcomes.

Finally, my results add to our understanding of Republican women's role in representing women in the states. Just as women such as Susan Collins and Lisa Murkowski have crossed the aisle in support of women-centered policies in Congress, so too have Republican women in the states. The charge for contraceptive equity may have been led by Democratic women, but Republican women at time served as critical actors in the pursuit for coverage. Future work on women and legislative politics should continue to pay attention to the differences among women and the ways in which such differences impact representation.

²⁹ In 2002, Republican Linda Binder sponsored a contraceptive coverage bill in the Arizona House. She was joined by nine other Republican women, many of whose legislative activities demonstrated a strong preference for providing women-centered policies. Co-sponsors Carol Somers and Deb Gullet, for instance, also sponsored bills aimed at creating a task force for sexual assault victims and a bill negating time limits for sexual assault reporting. Co-sponsors Susan Gerard and Toni Hellon introduced bills that would require schools to teach students about contraception and sexually transmitted diseases and/or use medically accurate language in sex education classes.

Chapter 3

The Costs of Crossing the Aisle: Constituent Reactions to Bridging

In the previous chapter, I developed a theory of “partisan bridging” to explain why we might expect personal preferences to lead some legislators to cross the aisle on particular policy initiatives. In this chapter, I consider the costs, as well as the benefits, legislators might face when they break away from the party line by shifting my focus from legislators’ motivations for bridging to constituents’ reactions to bridging. Understanding how constituents respond to acts of partisan bridging is equally as important as understanding why legislators may wish to cross the aisle, because constituents’ (predicted) reactions are part of a legislator’s cost-benefit analysis when deciding whether or not to bridge. If a legislator suspects she will be heavily penalized by her constituents for bridging, she may choose not to do so. On the other hand, if a legislator believes her constituents will respond favorably to her bridging, then doing so should be more appealing.

Just how constituents will respond to partisan bridging is not particularly clear. On the one hand, public polling has consistently found that Americans value bipartisan compromise in the legislative process, eschewing political wins for bipartisan solutions. A 2009 CBS poll, for instance, found that 73% of respondents wanted Democrats, the majority party at the time, to pass legislation with Republican sup-

port, while only 17% wanted Democrats to forge ahead alone.¹ This would suggest constituents should be favorable to partisan bridging on the part of their representatives. On the other hand, there is also an increasing amount of evidence that the American public is characterized by affective polarization. That is, Americans are increasingly sorting themselves into partisan “camps” or “tribes,” and recent studies suggest such sorting leads Americans to value party “wins” over bipartisan solutions. (Iyengar et al., 2012; Mason, 2013; Haidt and Hetherington, 2012; Iyengar et al., 2012). This line of research would suggest constituents, particularly those who identify strongly with their party, should be quite unhappy when their legislators choose to bridge towards (i.e. defect to) the opposing “camp.”

It is also possible that how constituents respond to partisan bridging is not only influenced by preferences for bipartisanship versus party “wins,” but by who is doing the bridging and for what type of issue. In chapter one, I found that moderate Republican women’s decision to bridge on contraceptive coverage was a significant factor in the passage of coverage mandates at the state level. I suggested that Republican women might face lower costs than Republican men when bridging on contraceptive coverage, because numerous studies show that constituents utilize gender stereotypes when evaluating politicians’ issue competencies (Alexander and Andersen, 1993; Burrell, 1996; Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993; Kahn, 1994; Koch, 2000; Bauer et al., 2017). That is, past studies suggest that women legislators may be viewed more favorably when bridging in those policies areas that they are viewed as “owning,” with the same being true for men.

The goal of this chapter is to explore these competing – and intersecting – expectations regarding constituent reactions to partisan bridging. I do so through an original survey experiment, conducted in the summer of 2018, which manipulated

¹ “Poll: Public Conflicted Over Health Care.” 2009, July 29. *CBS News*.

legislator behavior, legislator gender, and issue area. Importantly, I consider not only cases where a legislator crosses the aisle to advance a policy championed by the opposing party, as many moderate Republican women did in pursuit of contraceptive coverage, but also cases where a legislator crosses the aisle to vote against a policy championed by her own party. While both types of behavior fall under my definition of bridging, I term the former “positive bridging” and the latter “negative bridging.”

The results suggest that, on average, constituents do penalize legislators who engage in bridging. Despite Americans’ consistent insistence for bipartisanship, the legislator who bridges – either positively or negatively – suffers a cost for doing so. Respondents prefer a legislator who remains loyal to her party by choosing to vote for a bill she is not entirely certain about; the legislator who engages in bridging, either positive or negative, generates a significantly lower approval rating. This pattern appears even among those respondents who indicated they prioritized bipartisan compromise. However, it is also clear that the strength of a respondent’s party identity conditions how he or she responds to partisan bridging. While the legislator who bridges suffers significant costs for bridging among strongly identified partisans, regardless of whether she engages in positive or negative bridging, a legislator gains in approval among more weakly identified constituents when she engages in positive bridging. Indeed, weakly identified partisans are most approving of a legislator who engages in positive bridging, even more so than a legislator who chooses to remain loyal to her party despite her misgivings.

Additionally, it appears that the legislator’s gender and the issue area play an important mediating role in constituents’ evaluations of bridging. When a legislator engages in negative bridging in an issue area “owned” by his or her gender, he or she suffers a cost in approval almost twice that of her gender counterpart. This trend is true also for legislators who engage in positive bridging in an area owned by their gender, but here the costs are even greater. These results are unexpected

given previous research on gender stereotypes, and suggest that gender stereotypes concerning issue ownership work against women when they choose to bridge.

These findings are important for two reasons. First, they suggest that legislators who bridge will face costs for doing so, at least among those constituents who are most strongly identified with the party (and perhaps also those most likely to vote). Assuming legislators accurately predict constituent reactions, these findings suggest that a legislator's personal policy preferences will need to be quite strong in order to outweigh the costs of bridging. Second, these results suggest that women legislators may face high costs for engaging in compromise in exactly those areas they may feel compelled to pursue. Women legislators routinely report that they feel particularly motivated to work on women-centered policies, but when it comes to bipartisan compromise, they may find themselves facing an electoral penalty for following their policy preferences.

3.1 Bipartisanship vs. Partisan Teams? Party Identity as a Mediating Factor

When it comes to predicting constituent reactions to acts of partisan bridging, we are faced with competing theoretical expectations. On the one hand, national surveys routinely find that large numbers of Americans prefer bipartisanship and compromise over political bickering and grandstanding. In 2009, 6 in 10 respondents in a CBS news poll reported that they preferred that the majority in Congress try to pass legislation with bipartisan support as opposed to passing legislation along party lines (CBS News, 2009). Likewise, a 2012 Pew Research Center report found that 8 in 10 Americans agreed with the statement, "I like political leaders who are willing to make compromises in order to get the job done," while a 2017 Pew poll found that 58% of Americans said they liked "elected officials who make compromises with

people they disagree with.”²³ Indeed, even during the 2016 election, when partisan tensions were particularly high, the National Election Survey found that 64% of respondents preferred a government official who compromises to one that sticks to his or her principles no matter what.⁴

In addition to such survey results there exists a sizeable literature that suggests the public values a fair decision-making process and that peoples’ evaluations of legal and political authorities are shaped by how fair they believe the decision-making process to be (Tyler and Caine, 1981; Tyler et al., 1989, 1985; Tyler, 1994). Tyler (1994), for instance, finds that individuals’ perceptions about the fairness of the decision-making process used by a (fictional) congressional committee to form policy recommendations influenced evaluations of the committee, as well as willingness to vote for congressional members who supported the committee’s recommendations. This was true even when controlling for respondents’ prior policy beliefs, indicating that respondents were not evaluating the committee simply on the basis of their agreement or disagreement with its position.

Such preferences for bipartisanship and procedural fairness raise the possibility that constituents will react favorably to bridging, both positive and negative. If citizens prefer that legislation be produced through bipartisan agreement, with (at least some) support from both sides of the aisle, then they may view legislators’ decision to break party ranks as desirable. This is particularly likely for positive bridging because the bipartisan nature of such behavior is very overt. When a legislator engages in positive bridging – by co-sponsoring with an opposing party

² “The Tone of Political Debate, Compromise With Political Opponents.” April 26, 2018. *Pew Research Center*.

³ “Poll: Sharp Increase in Partisan Divides Among Americans.” June 4, 2014. *Los Angeles Times*.

⁴ Question V161171 on the 2016 ANES: “Would you prefer a government official who compromises to get things done, or who sticks to his or her principles no matter what?”

legislator, offering amendments to bring a bill closer to her party's position, or by casting a supportive roll call vote – he or she is clearly signaling a willingness to work beyond party lines to produce a tangible policy output.⁵ Although negative bridging occurs when a legislator blocks her own party's bill from passing, we might still expect constituents to respond positively. If a majority party cannot garner enough support from even its own members, such that some choose to defect, perhaps constituents interpret this as a sign the policy is too extreme. Past research has already shown that constituents punish representatives for ideological and/or party extremism. Ansolabehere et al. (2012), Erikson and Wright (1997), and Canes-Wrone et al. (2002), for instance, all find that congressional candidates' vote share is inversely related to ideologically extreme voting, while Carson et al. (2010) find that House members' vote share declines the more they vote with their party on issues that divide the two major parties. Thus, it is possible that constituents are not all that angered by partisan bridging, even negative bridging.

- **Hypothesis 1.1:** Partisan Constituents' preferences for bipartisanship will lead them to respond to legislators who engage in partisan bridging favorably, both positive and negative.
- **Hypothesis 1.2:** Partisan constituents' preferences for bipartisanship will lead them to respond more favorably to a legislator who engages in positive bridging than one who engages in negative bridging.

However, while Americans consistently say that they want bipartisan compromise, we have good reason to believe this preference is not a particularly strong one

⁵ In the previous chapter, I theorized that legislators might bridge also by lobbying their partisan colleagues to support a particular bill. This form of bridging may generate less credit from constituents, since it typically occurs behind the scenes.

in practice. “Compromise – especially bipartisan compromise – comes with a price,” for in order to reach an agreement “either one or both parties must sacrifice some of their goals or ideas” (Klar and Krupnikov, 2016, 134-35). Experimental work has shown that citizens seem unwilling to make such sacrifices when push comes to shove. Harbridge et al. (2014), for example, find that when the extent of a party’s compromise is made explicit, bipartisan legislation is preferred less than partisan outputs because the bipartisan outcome is seen as a loss for the party. Similarly, a 2013 Pew survey found that a majority of both Republicans (54%) and Democrats (58%) wanted to see a compromise to end the current government shutdown but felt it would be unacceptable for their own party to give ground in the debate.^{6 7}

This unwillingness to make concessions to the other side is likely particularly prevalent in today’s polarized political environment. Although political scientists continue to be divided over whether or not the mass electorate is polarized on the issues, there is growing agreement that “affective polarization” or “behavioral polarization” is real (Iyengar et al. 2012; Mason 2013). Democrats and Republicans increasingly view their political opponents with distaste (Haidt and Hetherington 2012; Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012), and studies show that not only are partisans increasingly imputing negative traits to the rank-and-file of the opposing party, but they do so in an ingrained and automatic way (Iyengar and Westwood, 2015).⁸ Mason (2013, 2018) argues that this heightened animosity has much to do with

⁶ “Public Wants Compromise, But Not On Issues They Care About.” October 10, 2013. *Pew Research Center*.

⁷ Individuals are even less willing to see their “team” make concessions on particularly salient issues. A 2007 Pew study found that only 25% of respondents felt leaders who shared their views on abortion should compromise, while 75% felt leaders should stick to their position. See “Broad Support for Political Compromise in Washington: But Many Are Hesitant to Yield on Contentious Issues.” January 22, 2007. *Pew Research Center*.

⁸ Indeed, Iyengar and Westwood show that partisans discriminate against opposing partisans to a degree that exceeds discrimination based on race.

the partisan-ideological sorting that has occurred in recent decades (see Levendusky (2009) for a discussion). What was once a nation of cross-cutting partisan identities is now a nation of aligned partisan identities, and as a result those aligned partisan identities are much stronger. Indeed, Theodoridis (2013, 2017) demonstrates that voters now associate themselves with their party at a visceral level.

Importantly, conceptualizing partisanship as a social identity allows us to take advantage of the many insights generated by social identity theory (Tajfel et al., 1979).⁹ Work in this paradigm has shown that when people are strongly identified with a group they exhibit in-group favoritism and out-group bias (Tajfel and Turner 1979), are more likely to take actions in support or defense of the group (Huddy 2001), and are also more likely to react with strong emotions to any threats to the group (Clore and Centerbar, 2004; Mackie et al., 2000; Ortony et al., 1988; Smith et al., 2007). This should have important consequences for how constituents react to partisan bridging because, as Harbridge et al. (2014) suggest, the legislative process almost certainly activates constituents' partisan identities. Indeed, the American two-party system often makes it quite easy for partisans to perceive group conflict in the legislative process: at times, the ability of one party to enact its preferred policy agenda depends on the other party's giving way.

This line of research suggests that partisans will not respond favorably to partisan bridging. First, if partisans want their party to win – i.e., produce party-centric solutions – they will be displeased when witnessing behavior that appears to give ground to the opposing party. Second, if partisans simply do not like opposing par-

⁹ Of course, conceptualizing partisan identity as a social identity is not new. In *The American Voter*, Campbell and his colleagues at the University of Michigan described partisan identification as a “psychological identification,” one that entailed an emotional sense of belonging that could influence the actions of partisans. But even Campbell and colleagues were unlikely to anticipate the degree to which partisan identities seem to have divided the electorate.

tisans, they will not want to see their own legislators working hand-in-hand with them. This should be true for any type of bridging (sponsoring, lobbying, proposing amendments, etc.), but particularly true when a legislator’s bridging is expressed through a decisive roll-call vote.¹⁰ The partisan stakes should be clear to constituents in such a situation because members of their “team” will have – metaphorically and literally – aligned themselves on opposite sides of the aisle; there will be no doubt as to which “team” will benefit from the act of bridging. For instance, constituents likely had no trouble interpreting the partisan implications of John McCain’s dramatic no vote on the 2017 “skinny repeal” attempt, and this was not simply because of the loud gasps that followed his thumbs down.¹¹ With every Democrat voting against the repeal, and only three Republicans defecting (i.e., engaging in negative bridging), it was obvious that the two parties were (almost) diametrically opposed. Thus, a defection from the party line was a clear threat to party goals.¹²

Of course, not all partisans are affectively polarized. Although some will prefer that their party win no matter what, others will have strong preferences for bipartisan outcomes. I suggest here that when a constituent witnesses a (decisive) act of bridging, the competitive nature of the policy process is highlighted, thereby activating an individual’s sense of party identity. More strongly identified partisans

¹⁰ The clearest example of bridging is the situations in which one legislator’s vote alone stalls her party’s bill or advances another party’s bill. I term this “decisive” bridging. But, as demonstrated by the “skinny repeal” attempt, a small number of legislators can engage in joint acts of bridging, making it impossible to pinpoint a singular “decisive” vote while still making it clear that consequential defections had occurred. Also, at some number of bridges we move from acts of bridging to simply a situation in which the party does not possess a consensus. At what point that dividing line is reached is difficult to pinpoint.

¹¹ Of course, in this example there were actually three acts of bridging, and I do not mean to discount Senators Collins and Murkowski’s decisions to vote against the “skinny repeal” by focusing on Senator McCain’s more dramatic (deliberately so) defection.

¹² It is also possible that when only a very few or even a single legislator engages in bridging such as this, constituents do not in fact view it as an act of bipartisanship but instead view it as an act of disloyalty.

are more likely to view bridging – positive or negative - as a threat to the partisan in-group and are therefore more likely to react negatively to it, regardless of any abstract preferences for bipartisanship. More weakly identified partisans, on the other hand, should feel less threatened by the act of bridging, such that preferences for bipartisanship may win out. That is, we might expect weakly identified partisans to react positively to positive bridging, given its overtly bipartisan nature. However, even a weakly identified partisan might be aggravated by a legislator’s decision to block her own party’s bill.

- **Hypothesis 2.1:** Affective polarization will lead constituents to penalize legislators who engage in bridging, whether positive or negative.
- **Hypothesis 2.2.:** Strongly identified partisans will be more likely to penalize a legislator who engages in bridging than weakly identified partisans.
- **Hypothesis 2.3:** Strongly identified partisans will evaluate legislators who engage in negative and positive bridging similarly.
- **Hypothesis 2.4:** Weakly identified partisans will evaluate a legislator who engages in positive bridging more positively than one who engages in negative bridging.

Although scholars have yet to examine how party identity influences constituent evaluations of bridging, work by Harbridge and Malhotra (2011) and Flynn and Harbridge (2016) lends support to these hypotheses. Harbridge and Malhotra (2011) find that strong partisans are much less supportive of congressional members who espouse a bipartisan image than are weak partisans and independents, while Flynn and Harbridge (2016) find that, although strong partisans significantly prefer a party win over compromise, weak partisans view these two outcomes similarly.

3.2 Legislator Gender & Issue Area: Smaller Costs in Defecting?

I have suggested that, although Americans say they want partisan compromise, the increasing “behavioral” polarization of the electorate indicates that constituents may in fact penalize legislators who bridge. An important follow up question to this proposition is: are all partisan bridges treated alike? The answer is likely no. We have reason to suspect that some legislators will suffer fewer costs from bridging than others. As noted in the previous chapter, Bianco (1994) argues that while constituents want their representatives to take actions that are consistent with their preferences across policy outcomes, constituents also place a degree of trust in their representatives, trust that gives a legislator at least some room to vote as she sees fit with less fear of electoral sanctions.

How do constituents decide to trust a given legislator? Bianco argues that constituents make the sensible and rational choice to use stereotypes as information short-cuts. In Popkin’s (1991) terms, this “low-information” reasoning allows voters to draw relatively informed conclusions about their representatives’ motivations, conclusions which might ameliorate their dissatisfaction with the legislator’s vote choice. Although stereotypes can stem from many sources, both Popkin and Bianco suggest that a representative’s personal traits can provide constituents with usable information. In fact, Popkin suggests that personal characteristics of a representative might be weighted more heavily than other data, such as political party, because “it is easier [for voters] to take personal data and fill in the political facts and policies than to start with the political facts and fill in the personal data” (Popkin, 1994, 78).

I focus here on gender because this dissertation seeks to better understand the role gender plays in the legislative process. Neither Popkins nor Bianco focus on the

ways in which a representative's gender might matter for constituent evaluations, but numerous other scholars have shown that gender stereotypes can play a significant role in citizens' evaluations of politicians. Persistent gender stereotypes portray female politicians as better able to handle so-called "compassion" issues (poverty, education, child-related, and health policy issues), as well as women-centered policy issues (Alexander and Anders 1993; Burrell 1994; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Kahn 1994; Koch 2000). At the same time, female politicians are viewed as less able to deal with issue areas such as business, the military, or defense – areas typically perceived as more in the purview of men (Lawless, 2004). Further research suggests voters use gender to infer candidate ideology as well. Koch (2000) finds that female legislators – Republican and Democratic alike – are perceived as more liberal than their male co-partisans, while Sanbonmatsu and Dolan (2009) find that voters view women legislators – again of either party – to be more liberal on issues of abortion.

Evidence suggests that such stereotypes matter come election time (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993; McDermott, 1998; Sanbonmatsu, 2002; Dolan, 2010),¹³ but we know little about the ways in which gender stereotypes might impact constituents' evaluations of candidates once they have secured political office. In one of the few studies to look at how gender stereotypes condition evaluations of politicians' behavior in office, Bauer et al. (2017) examine whether or not female legislators are treated differently from male legislators when refusing to compromise with the opposing party. They find evidence of a conditional relationship between legislator gender and issue area, such that female legislators are more likely to be punished for not

¹³ McDermott (1998) and Sanbonmatsu (2002) find that voters use gender cues in their vote decisions, while Huddy and Terkildsen (1993) find a preference among voters for "male" traits in candidates running for higher levels of office. Similarly, Dolan (2010) finds that women candidates benefit the most when they are viewed as competent on typically "male" issues such as the economy or terrorism.

compromising on “non-female owned” issues, while male legislators are more likely to be punished for failing to compromise on “female-owned” issues. These results suggest that constituents are more likely to trust a legislator’s actions when his or her gender aligns with the issue under consideration.¹⁴

Given this, it is possible that constituents may be less likely to disapprove of female legislators when they bridge on female-owned issues than when they bridge on non-female owned issues. Constituents might assume that a female legislator has a good reason for bridging on a female-owned issue, perhaps because she possesses information the constituent does not have access to. Or, perhaps constituents expect a particular issue to be particularly important to a female legislator, thus increasing her willingness to compromise in order to secure policy change. Conversely, constituents may be less favorable to a female legislator who bridges on a non-female owned issue, as gender stereotypes may lead constituents to be less confident their legislator has a superior understanding of the issue. It is also possible that female legislators are evaluated similarly regardless of issue area, but that they are evaluated differently relative to their male colleagues. As Bauer et al. (2017) note, women legislators are often viewed as more likely to engage in consensus building, and so perhaps constituents are less surprised (or angered) by a female legislator’s decision to side with the opposing party.

- **Hypothesis 3.1:** Female legislators will be penalized less than their male counterparts when bridging on a female-owned issue.
- **Hypothesis 3.2:** Female legislators will be penalized more than their male

¹⁴ Bauer and colleagues also consider the ways in which gender matters in respondents’ evaluations of legislators from the opposing party, finding that gender may have a greater effect on evaluations of compromise for legislators of the participant’s own party. However, I am interested here only in partisans’ evaluations of legislators of their own party.

counterparts when bridging on a male-owned issue.

- **Hypothesis 3.3.:** Female legislators who bridge are penalized less than their male counterparts, regardless of issue area.

3.3 Experimental Design

In order to explore constituent reactions to partisan bridging, I designed and implemented an original survey experiment in the summer of 2018. All respondents were presented with a short vignette describing the recent vote choice of a state representative of their own party, but each was randomly assigned to one of three legislative behavior conditions.¹⁵ In the loyalty condition, respondents read about a legislator who, despite having his or her own misgivings with respect to the legislation considered, chose to support his or her party. In doing so, he or she provided the decisive vote allowing the party's legislation to pass. In the positive bridging condition, respondents read about a legislator who chose to vote with the opposing party. In doing so, he or she provided the necessary vote to allow the opposing party's legislation to pass. In the negative bridging condition, respondents read about a legislator who chose to vote against his or her party and, by doing so, caused the party's sponsored legislation to fail.

In each scenario it was reported whether the legislation was sponsored by a Republican or Democrat, and all three scenarios featured a closely divided legislature, such that the representative's vote choice proved essential in causing the legislation to either pass or fail. The goal was to make it clear that the legislator in question (Representative Bennett) either remained loyal to his/her party despite misgivings,

¹⁵ Partisanship was measured with the traditional 7-point scale. Respondents who indicated they were independents were asked which party they felt closest to, and then assigned to read about a politician from that party.

provided the opposing party a win, or provided his/her party a loss. The loyal legislator condition serves as the point of comparison for both the positive and negative bridging conditions. If respondents penalize legislators for bridging, we would expect the difference between the loyalty and bridging scenarios to be significant, such that the legislator suffers a decrease in approval for bridging. In contrast, if respondents are pleased to see a legislator engage in bridging, we should expect the bridging conditions to generate greater approval than the loyal legislator condition, thereby resulting in an increase in approval. I conceptualize the difference in approval towards the loyal legislator and the bridging legislator (either positive or negative) as either the “cost” or “benefit” of bridging.¹⁶

In addition to legislator behavior, the gender of the legislator (male/female) and the policy area (education/energy) were manipulated. I followed Bauer et al. (2017) in choosing education and energy as the policy issues, as they found that education was viewed by respondents to be a “female-owned” issue while energy was seen as a more “male-owned” issue.¹⁷

Treatment Vignettes

Loyalty Condition

House Representative [Kimberly/Robert] Bennett is a Democratic state legislator representing a district that is fairly liberal. Last week Representative Bennett provided the decisive vote to pass a Democratic sponsored bill that would reform the state’s [early childhood education policy/energy policy]. [Her/His] vote came somewhat as a surprise because, like the two of [her/his] Democratic colleagues who

¹⁶ It is, of course possible, though unlikely, that respondents evaluate all three conditions similarly.

¹⁷ Bauer et al. (2017) conducted a pre-test to establish the gender ownership of the two policy issues and found that 94% of respondents reported that a female politician would be better at handling childhood education policy while 60% reported that a male politician would be better at handling energy policy. (Bauer et al. 2017, 287)

ultimately voted against the bill, Representative Bennett had earlier expressed concerns about the specifics of the proposed reforms. However, after the vote [her/his] office released a statement explaining that although Representative Bennett felt the bill was not perfect, [she/he] felt it was [her/his] duty to support [her/his] party's attempt to improve the state policy.

Negative Bridging Condition

House Representative [Kimberly/Robert] Bennett is a Democratic state legislator representing a district that is fairly liberal. Last week Representative Bennett was the only Democrat to vote against a Democrat sponsored bill that would reform the state's [early childhood education policy/energy policy]. Because the legislature is almost evenly divided between the two parties, Representative Bennett's vote was decisive in preventing the bill from passing the House. In response to strong criticisms by many of [her/his] fellow Democrats, Representative Bennett said that [she/he] felt the potential costs outweighed the benefits.

Positive Bridging Condition

Representative [Kimberly/Robert] Bennett is a Democratic state legislator representing a district that is fairly liberal. Last week Representative Bennett was the only Democrat to vote in support of a Republican sponsored bill that would reform the state's [early childhood education policy/energy policy]. Because the legislature is almost evenly divided between the two parties, Representative Bennett's vote was decisive in allowing the bill to pass the House. In response to strong criticisms by many of [her/his] fellow Democrats, Representative Bennett said that she felt the bill accomplished important policy goals.

3.4 Measures

Before reading the vignette, respondents were asked to indicate their gender, racial identification, religious identification, level of education, ideological stance, and partisan identification.¹⁸ In order to better measure partisanship as a social identity, grounded in group membership, I included a multi-item scale designed to assess the internalized sense of respondents' party membership.¹⁹ This scale asked respondents to report how important being a Republican/Democrat was to them, how well the term Republican/Democrat described them, how often they used "we" when talking about Republicans/Democrats, and the extent to which they thought of themselves as a Republican/Democrat.²⁰ Respondents were then asked to indicate how warm or cold they felt towards various political leaders and groups on a 0-100 point scale (The Republican Party, The Democratic Party, President Trump, Nancy Pelosi, Paul Ryan, Mitch McConnell, and Chuck Schumer) and to rank the following list from least important to most important with respect to their party's goals: Fighting for what Republicans/Democrats believe in, compromising with the Democrats/Republicans, making sure to spend money to help those who need it, proposing new legislation, and repealing existing legislation. These questions were included in order to measure respondents' level of affective polarization and preferences for bipartisan compromise.

After reading the vignette, respondents were asked to evaluate Representative Bennett on various dimensions, including favorability, job approval, and ideology.

¹⁸ Individuals who did not indicate a partisan preference were asked to indicate which party they felt closest to. The complete questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

¹⁹ Huddy et al. (2015) argue that "measuring gradations in social identity strength is crucial to identifying individuals who react most strongly to collective threat, feel the strongest emotions, and are most likely to take action in defense of their political party" (Huddy et al., 2015, 14).

²⁰ Exact question wording can be found in Appendix One.

Favorability was measured by asking respondents how favorable they felt towards Representative Bennett on a seven-point scale ranging from “Extremely unfavorable” to “Extremely favorable.” Job approval was measured by asking respondents where they fell on a seven-point scale ranking Representative Bennett’s job approval from “Strongly disapprove” to “Strongly approve.” Ideology was measured by asking respondents to place Representative Bennett on the traditional 7-point ideology scale. Respondents were also asked to indicate how angry they felt about Representative Bennett’s vote choice on a four-point scale ranging from “Not at all angry” to “Very angry.” In discussing the results, I focus on respondents’ approval rating of the legislator, although largely similar patterns were found using the favorability measure.

3.5 Sample

Participants were recruited through Amazon MTurk.²¹ The study was fielded on June 3, 2018. The total sample size was 1, 211, with 59% of respondents identifying as Democrats (or as feeling closer to the Democratic party) and 41% of respondents identifying as Republican (or as feeling closer to the Republican party). The sample was 53% male, 82% white, 9% black, and 11% Hispanic.²²

²¹ A “hit” is a single task on MTurk. Users can post tasks – including surveys – that are known as “hits” for other MTurk users to complete. MTurk is a useful source of data for social scientists because of its large participant pool and relatively cheap compensation rates. Studies of MTurk participant pools have shown that (1) MTurk participants are slightly more demographically diverse than standard internet samples (and significantly more diverse than college samples) and (2) the data obtained from MTurk users are at least as reliable as those obtained via traditional methods (Buhrmester et al., 2011). Articles using data generated from Amazon MTurk have been published in leading political science journals, such as the *American Journal of Political Science* (e.g. Grose, Malhotra, and Parks Van Houweling 2015) and the *American Political Science Review* (Huber et al., 2012). Berinsky et al. (2012) demonstrate that MTurk subjects are not widely out of line on several variables compared to interviewed conducted by the American National Election Studies.

²² These racial percentages total more than 100% because the survey allowed for an individual to identify with as many racial categories as he or she felt appropriate.

3.6 Expectations

As noted earlier, consistent polling results suggest that Americans want to see bipartisan compromise in the legislative process, which would lead us to expect that respondents who prioritize bipartisanship will evaluate the legislator who bridges more positively (or perhaps equally positively) than the legislator who simply votes with her party (H:1.1). The legislator who engages in positive bridging, in particular, should be evaluated similarly or perhaps even more favorably than the loyal legislator (H:1.2). The legislator who engages in negative bridging may generate slightly less positive reactions, given her act of bipartisanship also stalls her party's bill, but should still suffer few costs from bridging.

On the other hand, a great deal of recent research tracking affective polarization in the public, as well as work on partisan identities, strongly suggest that respondents will evaluate the legislator who bridges much more negatively than the loyal legislator, regardless of whether the legislator is engaged in positive or negative bridging (H:2.1). We would expect this to be particularly true for strongly identified partisans because, in the eyes of a strongly identified partisan, bridging provides a win to the opposing party (either by helping pass the opposing party's bill or by ensuring that their own party's bill falters) and thus constitutes a threat to their own party (H:2.2 & H:2.3). Weakly identified partisans, on the other hand, may respond more favorably to positive bridging (H:2.4).

Finally, legislator gender may play a mediating role here. Repeated studies have shown that constituents use gender stereotypes when evaluating political candidates, while the more recent work by Bauer et al. (2017) suggests constituents continue to employ such stereotypes once candidates enter office. If constituents employ such stereotypes when deciding whether or not to sanction a legislator for bridging, women legislators may suffer fewer costs for bridging on education policy,

while male legislators may suffer fewer costs when bridging on energy policy. (H:3.1, H:3.2) It is also possible that female legislators simply suffer fewer costs in general, since studies show that women are viewed as more likely to engage in compromise than men (H:3.3).

3.7 Results

In analyzing respondent reactions to bridging, and the potential conditional relationships between party identity, legislator gender, and issue area, I focus specifically on the costs legislators may face from crossing the aisle. I do so by using the loyal legislator as the baseline and comparing the way participants evaluate the very same legislator when he or she engages in bridging. As noted earlier, I term the difference between the evaluation of the same legislator when he or she remains loyal to the party and when he or she engages in bridging as the “cost” or “benefit” of bridging.

Preferences for Bipartisanship or Party Wins?

The first set of analyses focuses on the overarching question of the chapter. Do respondents respond favorably (H:1.1) or negatively (H:2.2) to acts of partisan bridging? As demonstrated by Figure 3.1, which reports the mean approval rating of the different behavior conditions, respondents reacted less favorably to the legislator who engaged in bridging – both positive and negative – relative to the loyal legislator. The legislator in the loyal condition received a mean approval rating of .58, while the legislator in the negative and positive bridging conditions received approval ratings of .50 and .54 respectively ($p=.00$ for all pairwise comparisons). This lends support to hypothesis 2.1, i.e., that whatever preferences respondents have for bipartisan compromise are outweighed by the effects of affective polarization.

However, the “costs” of bridging are not that large. The legislator engaged

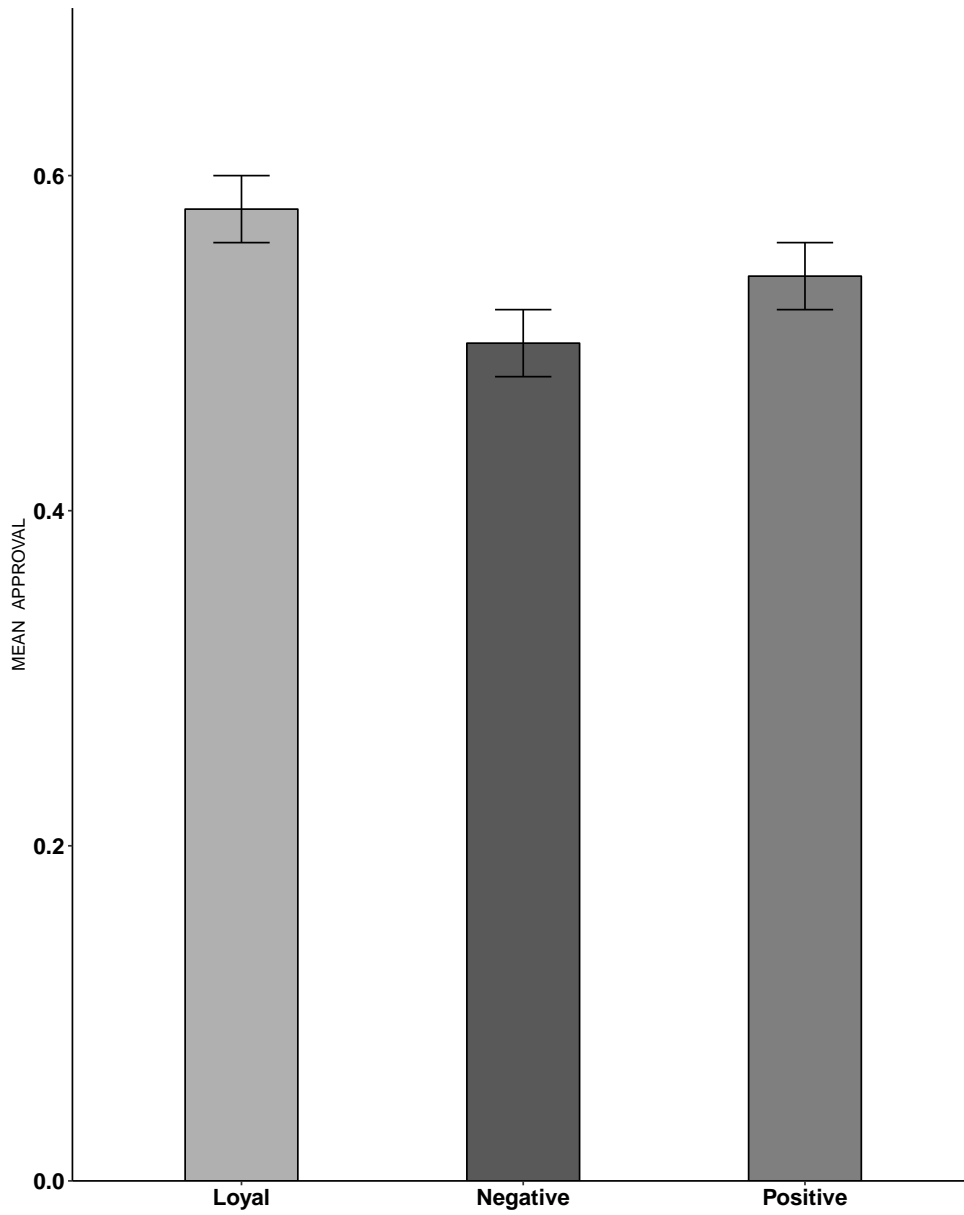


FIGURE 3.1: Mean Approval Ratings by Behavior Treatment

in negative bridging suffered an 8% drop in approval while the legislator engaged in positive bridging suffered a 4% drop in approval. The fact that respondents are significantly more favorable ²³ to the legislator who engages in positive bridging – the type of bridging that is most overtly bipartisan – lends some support to hypotheses 1.1 and 1.2, which suggested partisans’ preferences for bipartisanship will lead them to respond favorably to bridging, particularly positive bridging. Perhaps if we focus specifically on respondents who indicate a prioritization for bipartisanship, we will find stronger support for the bipartisanship hypotheses. Figure 3.2 therefore presents the mean approval ratings of the different behavior conditions among those respondents who indicated their top priority for their party was “compromising with the [opposing party].”²⁴ In contrast to expectations, those respondents who indicated compromise was their top priority do not respond more favorably to the legislator who engages in bridging. In fact, the legislator who bridges suffers fairly significant costs for doing so among these respondents: the legislator who engages in positive bridging sees a drop in approval of 10% ($p=.00$) while the legislator who engages in negative bridging sees a drop in approval of 16% ($p=.00$).²⁵ It would seem that respondents’ stated preferences for bipartisanship in the abstract are at odds with how they actually evaluate those legislators who seek it out.

So far, then, the results seem to support the affective polarization hypothesis more so than the bipartisanship hypothesis. However, we can pursue this question in

²³ Comparing the different costs suffered for bridging through a difference in difference test shows that the 4% difference in cost is significantly different at $p=.00$.

²⁴ Remember, constituents were asked to rank the following list from least important to most important with respect to their party’s goals: Fighting for what Republicans/Democrats believe in, compromising with the Democrats/Republicans, making sure to spend money to help those who need it, proposing new legislation, and repealing existing legislation. Figure 3.2 looks at those individuals who indicated “compromising with the Democrats (Republicans)” was most important. Out of the entire sample, 20.31% (246) indicated that bipartisan compromise was their top priority.

²⁵ The 6% difference in cost is significant at $p=.00$.

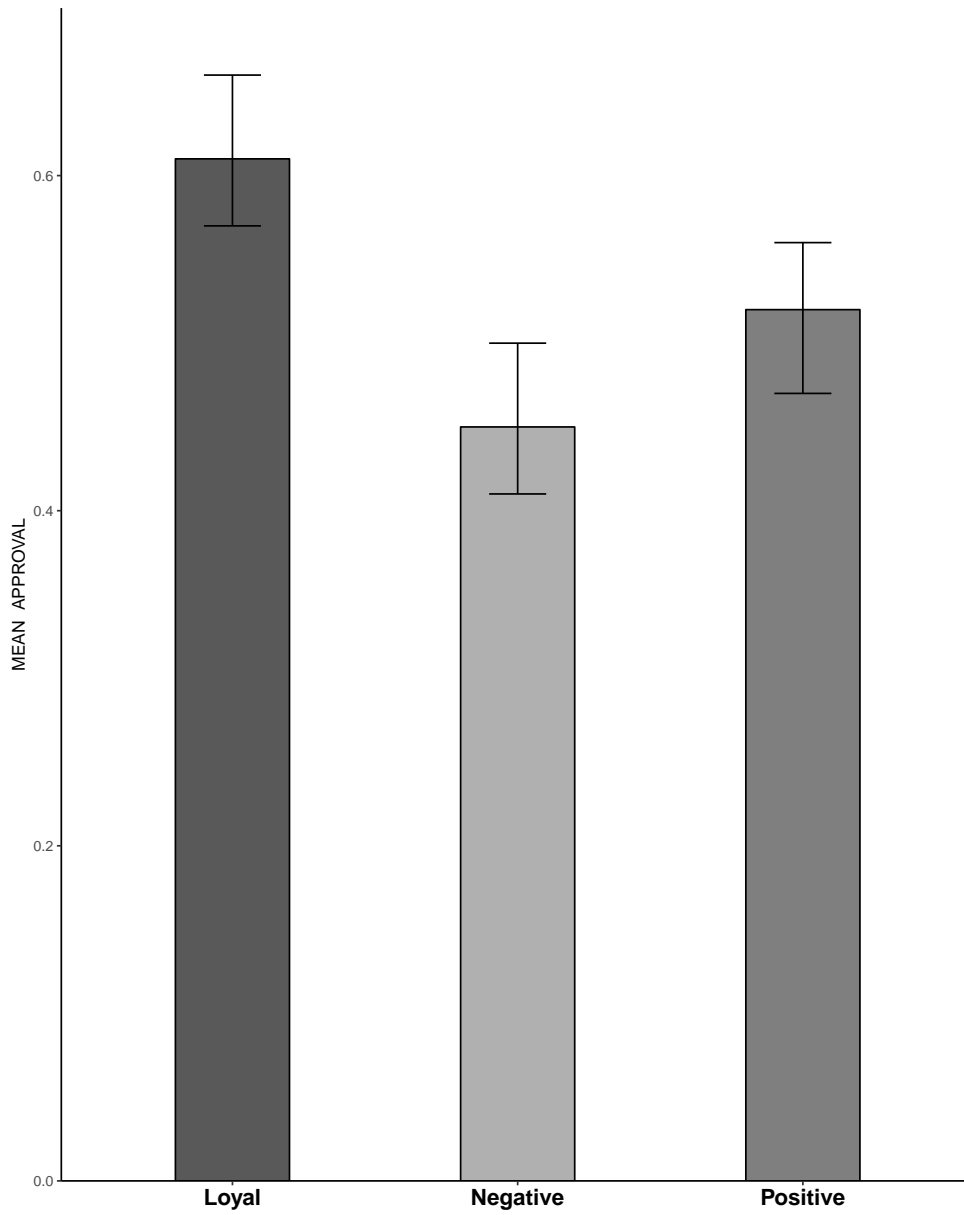


FIGURE 3.2: Mean Approval Ratings Among Respondents Prioritizing Compromise

greater depth. The first obvious question is, whether respondents in my sample are affectively polarized by affect? Figure 3.3 suggests that the answer is yes. Respondents were asked to evaluate both of the major parties, and it is clear that partisans rate the opposing party quite negatively. In fact, only 11% of the sample rates the opposing party warmly (that is, at above the midpoint of the thermometer scale) while 19% of the sample places the opposing party at the zero-point of the scale. These patterns are repeated in respondents' evaluations of major party leaders. The vast majority of partisans rank the opposing party's leaders quite coldly, although more Republicans than Democrats are willing to rank opposing party leaders warmly. About 16% of Republican respondents rank Nancy Pelosi or Chuck Schumer above the midpoint of the scale, while only 8% and 6% of Democrats rank Paul Ryan and Mitch McConnell above the midpoint.

As discussed earlier, some scholars have argued that the affective polarization of the American public is a result of previously cross-cutting partisan identities gradually aligning, such that partisan identity is a social identity comparable in strength to racial identity. I hypothesized that strongly identified partisans would be more likely to penalize a legislator who engages in bridging than weakly identified partisans (H:2.2) and that while strongly identified partisans would view both types of bridging as equally distasteful (H:2.3), weakly identified partisans would respond more favorably to positive bridging than negative bridging (H:2.4).²⁶ I find support for these hypotheses, as shown in Figure 3.4.

²⁶ Weakly and strongly identified partisans are operationalized as those individuals falling in either the 25th or 75th percentiles.

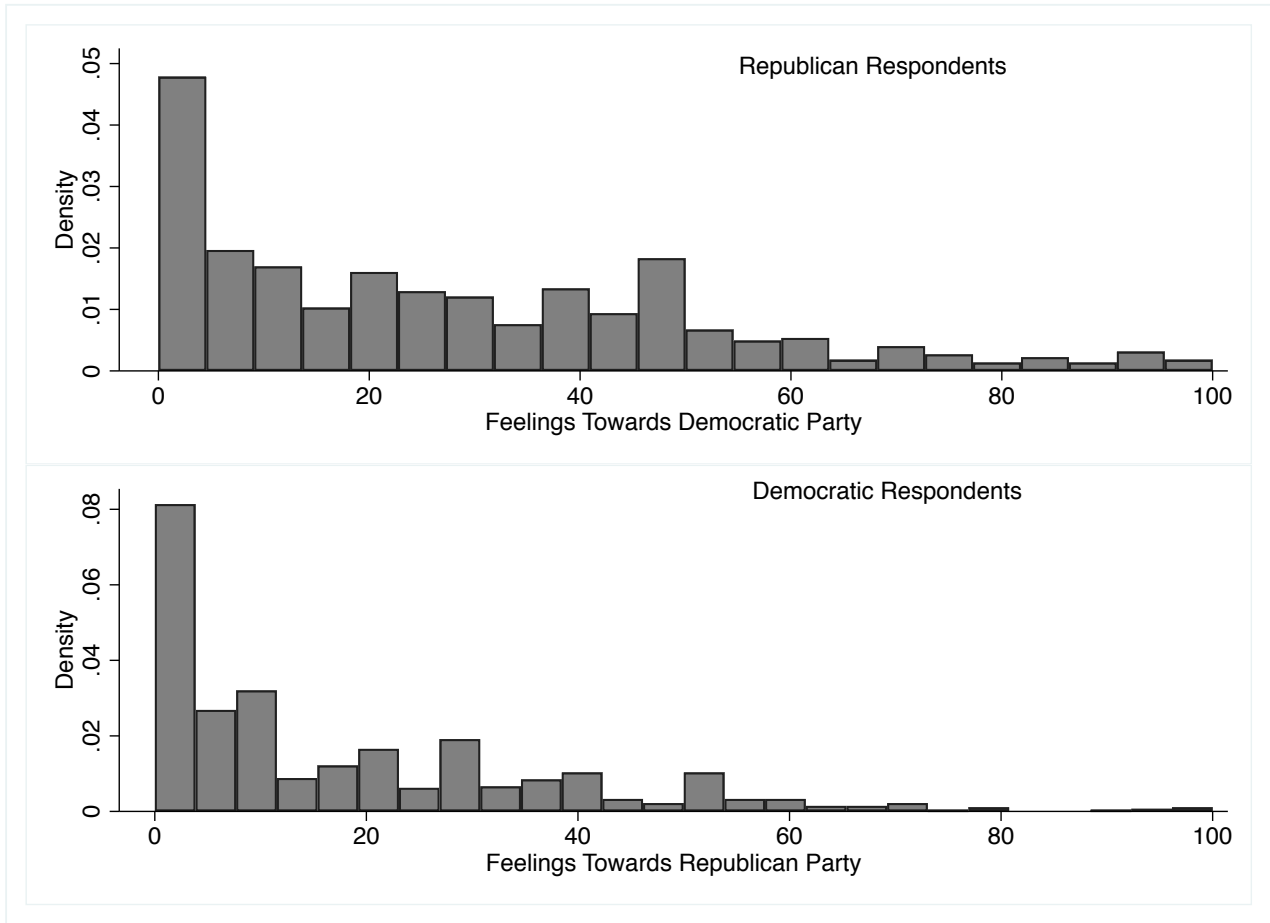


FIGURE 3.3: Attitudes Towards Opposing Party

Relative to their evaluation of the loyal legislator, strongly identified partisans do penalize the legislator engaging in bridging (positive or negative) much more severely than do weakly identified partisans. Among strongly identified partisans, a legislator suffers a 17% cost in approval rating when engaging in negative bridging ($p=.00$), but among weakly identified partisans the legislator engaging in negative bridging is viewed no differently than the loyal legislator. When engaging in positive bridging, the legislator receives a 13% drop in approval rating ($p=.00$) among strongly identified partisans, but actually gains 8% in approval among weakly identified partisans ($p=.00$). These findings support hypothesis 2.2, and suggest that while legislators are likely to suffer fairly significant costs for bridging among strongly identified partisan constituents, either by providing a loss to their own party or a win to the opposing party, they may gain in approval among more weakly identified constituents when they provide a win to the opposing party.

I also find support for hypotheses 2.3, which suggests that strongly identified partisans will evaluate the legislator who engages in bridging similarly regardless of whether she engages in positive or negative bridging. The legislator who engages in negative bridging receives a mean approval rating of .45 among strongly identified partisans, while the legislator who engages in positive bridging receives a mean approval rating of .49, and the difference is not significant ($p=.21$). Thus, strongly identified partisans are simply displeased by bridging, whether or not it produces or stalls a policy output.

Weakly identified partisans, on the other hand, as predicted by hypothesis 2.4, evaluate the legislator who engages in positive bridging more positively than the legislator who engages in negative bridging. In fact, they rate the legislator who engages in positive bridging much more positively than even the loyal legislator. Among weakly identified partisans, the legislator who engages in positive bridging receives a mean approval rating of .60, while the loyal legislator and legislator engaged

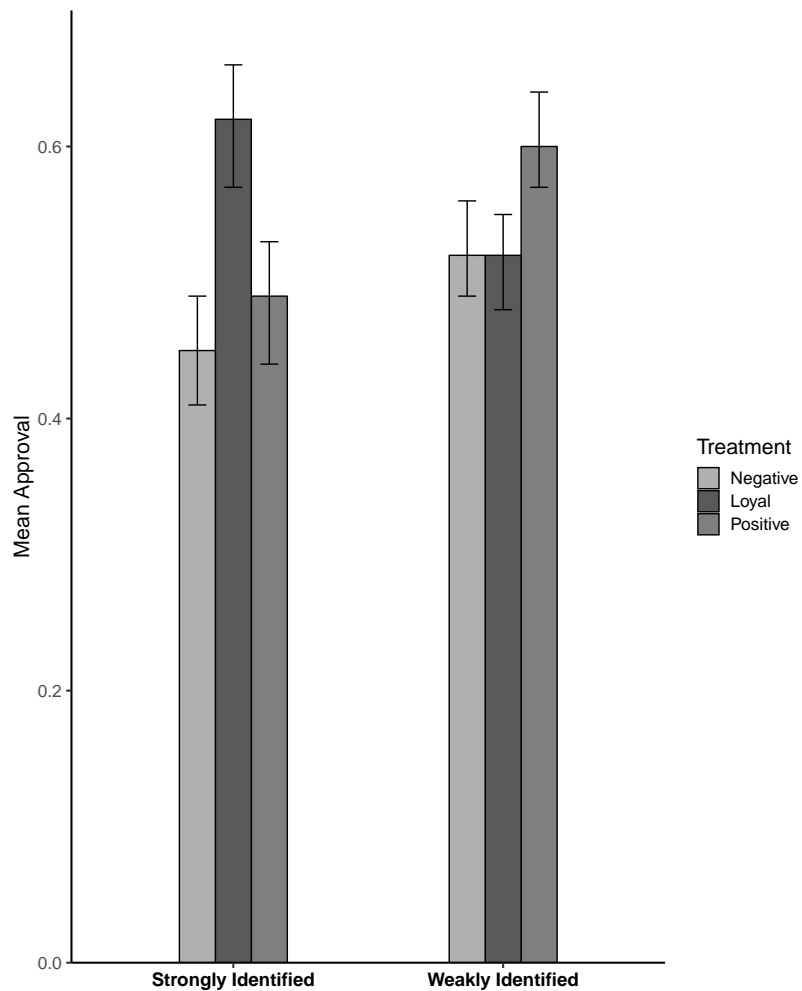


FIGURE 3.4: Mean Approval by Treatment, Across High and Low Party Identifiers

in negative bridging receive mean approval ratings of .52 and .53 respectively ($p=.00$ for both the loyal-positive and loyal-negative comparisons). This means that the legislator who engages in positive bridging receives an 8% boost in approval relative to the loyal or negative bridging conditions. He or she is rewarded for bridging, not punished. Significantly, weakly identified partisans rate the legislator who engages in positive bridging just as highly as strongly identified partisans rate the loyal legislator, suggesting that while strongly identified partisans prefer a legislator who

sticks to her “team” regardless of her personal policy preferences, weakly identified partisans prefer a legislator who crosses the aisle to produce a bipartisan policy output.

3.7.1 Legislator Gender and Issue Area

I next turn to considering how legislator gender and issue area influence respondents’ reactions to bridging. Past research on gender stereotypes and constituent evaluations of political candidates has suggested that constituents view male and female legislators as possessing greater issue competence in certain areas, and so I hypothesized that a female legislator would suffer lower costs than her male counterpart when bridging on education policy, with the reverse being true when bridging on energy policy. Figure 3.5, which graphs the costs of bridging by gender and issue area, demonstrates that, in fact, we find the exact opposite patterns.

Looking first to education policy and the negative bridging condition, I find that, contrary to hypothesis 3, the female legislator sees a larger drop in approval when she provides a loss to her party on education than does her male counterpart. The female legislator suffers an 11% drop in approval, while her male counterpart sees only a 6% drop in approval ($p=.03$). When the issue area is energy (H:3.2), however, this pattern is reversed. It is the male legislator who sees the larger drop in approval when providing a loss to his party on energy; the male legislator suffers a 9% drop in approval while the female legislator suffers a 5% drop ($p=.12$). In other words, when a legislator provides a loss in an issue area “owned” by his or her gender, he or she suffers a cost in approval almost twice that of his or her gender counterpart. Both the female and male legislator see smaller drops in approval when they provide a win to the opposing party, but it is the female legislator once again who sees a larger drop in approval on education reform (6% versus 2%, $p=.02$) while it is again the male legislator who suffers a larger drop in approval on energy reform

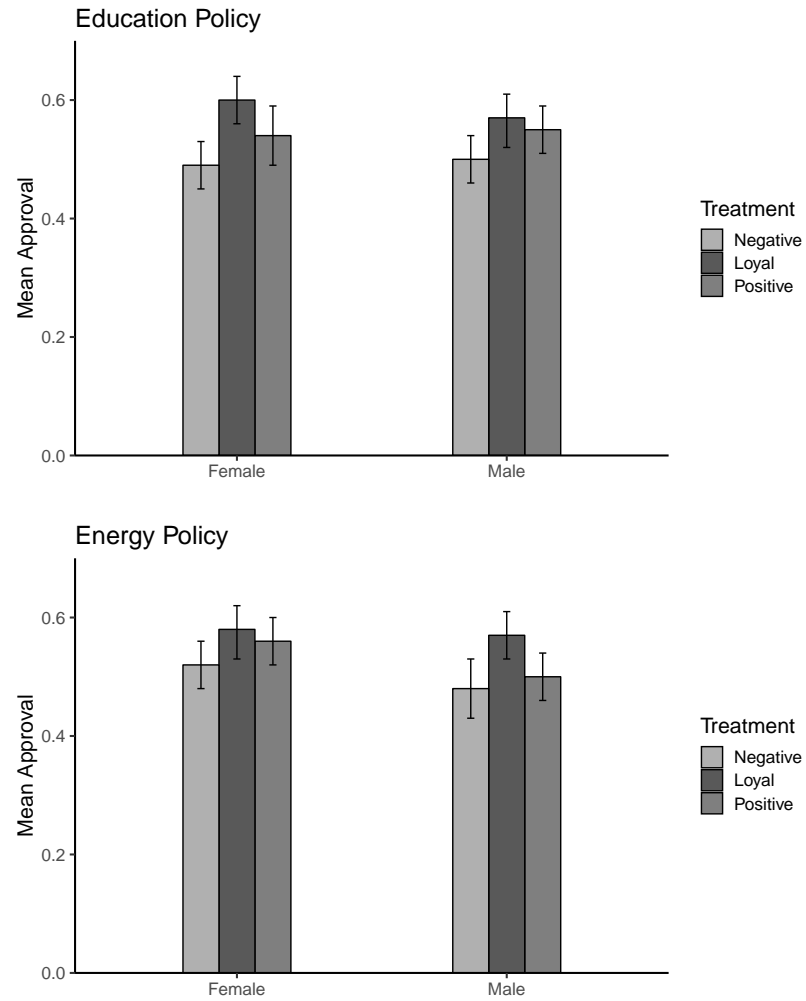


FIGURE 3.5: Mean Approval By Legislator Gender and Policy Area

(7% versus 2%, $p=.00$).

These results are surprising, as past findings suggested that female legislators would receive greater leeway from constituents when bridging on a female-owned issue. The results are particularly unexpected given recent work by Bauer et al. (2017), which found that female legislators were less likely to be punished for failing to compromise on issues that are female-owned while male legislators were more likely to pay a higher cost for failing to compromise on a female-owned issue. In the Bauer et al. study, however, respondents were presented with a mock newspaper article reporting that Congress was preparing to vote on a critical piece of legislation that required compromise from both Republicans and Democrats in order to pass. The article suggested that legislative gridlock was likely to occur if a compromise was not reached. Thus, in the Bauer study respondents read about a scenario in which the outcome was either legislative compromise or legislative gridlock, while in the current study respondents were presented with a legislator who remained loyal to her party despite her own misgivings or a legislator who decided to cross the aisle to aid the other party's efforts. The results across the two studies suggest that constituents may be less willing to give legislator leeway when he or she chooses to cross the aisle in an issue area he or she is viewed as owning than they are to provide leeway to a legislator who stands her ground in that area (along with her party).

These findings also provide some additional nuance to the findings in chapter 1. There I found that moderate Republican women were more likely to bridge on the issue of contraceptive coverage than male Republicans. Although I suggested that female legislators might have faced fewer costs for doing so than their male colleagues (thus influencing their cost-benefit analysis), the results in this chapter suggests that those female Republicans might in fact have faced higher costs than their male colleagues. And yet they bridged in significant numbers so as to make a difference in the passage of coverage, suggesting that personal preferences for policy

outcomes – particularly those grounded in a social identity – may have been more important than legislators’ perceptions of potential electoral costs.

3.8 Discussion and Conclusion

In this chapter I continued to develop my theory of partisan bridging by considering the ways in which constituents respond to acts of partisan bridging. I further refined the concept of partisan bridging to include both positive and negative bridging, with the former referring to situations in which a legislator crosses the aisle to advance a policy championed by the opposing party and the latter referring to situations where a legislator crosses the aisle to vote against a policy championed by her own party. I find that, on average, constituents penalize legislators who engage in bridging. It seems that Americans’ consistent insistence for bipartisanship may simply be talk, for they seem unwilling to “walk the walk” if it means their representative must make concessions to the other side. However, it is also clear that the strength of a respondent’s part identity conditions how she or he responds to partisan bridging. While the legislator who bridges suffers significant costs for bridging among strongly identified partisans – for either positive or negative bridging – a legislator gains in approval among more weakly identified constituents when she bridges.

Additionally, both legislator gender and the issue area at hand play an important mediating role in constituents’ evaluations of bridging. Despite my hypotheses to the contrary, I find that when a legislator engages in negative bridging in an issue “owned” by his or her gender, he/she suffers a cost in approval almost twice (three times) that of her/his gender counterpart when he/she engages in negative (positive) bridging. This was a particularly surprising finding, given past work suggesting the when a legislator “owns” an issue area, constituents are more likely to give him or her the benefit of the doubt.

There are a few potential explanations for these unexpected results. First, to ordinary citizens, the concept of “bridging” might be more about finding cooperative grounds on which to build a truly bipartisan policy rather than simply crossing the aisle to provide a “win” or “loss” to one party or another. Thus, respondents might be interpreting the treatments as less of a matter of compromise and more as a matter of party defections, and perhaps defecting on an issue area that one owns is seen as particularly offensive. Second, and relatedly, constituents might expect legislators to stand their ground on issue areas that they “own” and to refuse to compromise at all. This may be truer for male legislators, since women legislators are often portrayed as more willing to compromise and engage in consensus-building. On the other hand, it’s also possible that part of the cost accruing to the female legislator in my experiment was due to constituents’ perception that she was violating that particular stereotype. That is, perhaps some respondents viewed the female legislator’s decisive act of bridging as an inability to generate a more desirable compromise.

In moving forward, I plan to field an experiment in which (1) the legislator is portrayed as bringing some of his or her colleagues across the aisle with him and (2) the policy result is framed more as a compromise than a win for one party or the other. It may be that respondents are much more favorable to such policy outcomes than those they considered here. However, that is the work of future days. The following chapter continues to focus on situations in which only one legislator crosses the aisle to cast a decisive vote. It considers the role legislators explanations for bridging might play in decreasing, or increasing, the costs they face among constituents for doing so.

Chapter 4

Decreasing the Cost of Bridging for Female Legislators: The (In)Efficacy of Gendered Explanations?

In chapter two, I developed a theory of “partisan bridging” to explain why we might expect personal preferences to motivate (some) legislators to cross the aisle on particular policy initiatives. In chapter three, I explored constituents’ reactions to acts of partisan bridging, and distinguished between negative and positive bridging. In both chapters, legislator gender played an important theoretical role, first as a proxy for policy preferences and second as a potentially important determinant of the costs of bridging. The goal of this third chapter is to consider the ways in which female legislators’ explanations for bridging might temper constituent reactions.

When contemplating whether to defect from the party line, a legislator is certainly thinking about how she would explain such a defection and whether or not her explanation would be accepted by constituents. Indeed, legislators commonly report that how they explain their votes matters as much or more than roll calls themselves (Fenno, 1978; Kingdon, 1989). The question posed in this chapter is, are certain types of explanations more effective for female legislators than others?

Past work on the role of gender stereotypes and candidate evaluations leads to the hypothesis that female legislators will receive more favorable evaluations from constituents when bridging if they emphasize gendered motivations for bridging over more gender-neutral motivations for bridging. However, the results from chapter three suggest that constituents are actually less likely to give women legislators the benefit of the doubt when they choose to bridge on women-centered issues. Those findings suggest that women legislators might in fact do best when de-emphasizing gendered reasons for bridging.

I explore the role of explanations through an original survey experiment conducted in August of 2018 that took advantage of the (at the time) very real possibility that certain senators of either party might defect on the upcoming confirmation vote for Justice Brett Kavanaugh's Supreme Court nomination.¹ By manipulating legislators' expected explanation for defecting on the confirmation vote, I was able to test whether or not an explanation grounded in a female legislator's policy preferences on a woman-owned issue – abortion – was more or less effective than an explanation grounded in more gender-neutral considerations, such as ideological preferences or a desire to win reelection.

The results of the study are mixed. I find that the female senator receives more positive evaluations from respondents when her decision to bridge is framed in more gender-neutral terms: the female senator receives significantly lower favorability ratings when her decision to bridge is explained by her stance on abortion than when her decision is framed as a matter of ideology or reelection concerns. This is true also when it comes to the level of anger respondents report at the prospect of the female senator bridging. However, there are two important qualifications. First, when it

¹ My study was completed prior to the revelation of the sexual assault allegations against Justice Kavanaugh.

comes to the more concrete question of voting, the female senator’s explanation for bridging does not seem to impact respondents’ willingness to agree that their fellow partisans should vote for the senator in the upcoming midterm; respondents are uniformly unlikely to feel the senator who bridges should be reelected. Second, the favorability results are being driven by Republican respondents only; Democratic respondents treat the male and female senator who bridges due to abortion policy similarly.

There are a number of important take-aways from these results. First, a female senator’s choice of explanation for her decision to bridge does impact how constituents feel about her; more gender-neutral explanations may be a safer choice for female legislators who want to ameliorate negative affective responses among their constituents. Second, while the female legislator’s choice of explanation might impact how respondents *feel* about her, the results suggest it may be less effective at influencing their *behavior* at the ballot box. Finally, although the results may be slightly mixed as to whether a gendered explanation harms a female legislator who bridges, it is clear that it does not help her, regardless of which party she represents.

4.1 Explaining Bridging

The traditional model of representation is that of a principal-agent relationship, one where the ballot box is a key mechanism of accountability. Politicians make certain promises to constituents when campaigning for office, and constituents vote for the politician whose predicted behavior (or past behavior in office) is most appealing in light of their preferences. As Mansbridge (1995) notes, the representative is seen as “responsible to,” “answerable to,” “bound,” and even “bound by” those voters once he or she is voted into office (Mansbridge 2003, 516). There are normative reasons

for conceptualizing the constituent-representative relationship this way,² but also practical reasons. Because many empirical scholars believe legislators are “single-minded seekers of reelection,” we expect them to strive to hew to as many of their campaign promises as possible in order to ensure a repeat win at the ballot box.

Of course, it is not always possible for a legislator to redeem all her promises, or to avoid displeasing at least some constituents. For one thing, a legislator cannot anticipate all of the issues that may become salient during her tenure; when a certain issue becomes unexpectedly salient, the legislator may have no relevant prior promises to conform to. The decisions she makes on that issue may displease constituents who anticipated she would take different actions based on related campaign promises. Further, legislators do not represent homogenous constituencies, no matter how deeply red or blue their district may be. Constituents’ policy preferences may align on many issues, but perfect agreement will not occur, and thus whatever position a legislator takes on an issue is certain to be contrary to at least some constituents’ preferences.³⁴

The upshot of all of this is that legislators often need to develop explanations for the choices they make while in office. We know that legislators do this; indeed, they commonly report that how they explain their votes matters as much or more

² As Mansbridge notes, “empirical work has often been motivated by normative convictions that one [view of representation] is better than another” (Mansbridge 2003, 515). Mansbridge argues that the traditional principle-agent model of representation, which Mansbridge terms “promissory” representation, “comes closer than any other model to an ideal in which the simple imprint of the voter’s will is transmitted through institutions to an equal exertion of power on the final policy” (Mansbridge 2003, 515).

³ Grose et al. (2015) point to the “increasing disconnect” between the polarized views of legislators and the moderate views of constituents (as found by Fiorina and Abrams (2012)) and suggest that as legislators’ voting records have become more extreme and partisan, the range of votes that could become electoral liabilities has grown (Grose et al. 2015, 727).

⁴ There is a considerable amount of research, however, exploring legislators’ responses to constituents once contacted (Bergan, 2009; Broockman, 2013; Butler and Broockman, 2011; Butler et al., 2011; Richardson and John, 2012).

than roll calls themselves (Fenno 1978; Kingdon 1989). Yet, despite Fenno’s famous observation that “political scientists should spend a little less of our time explaining votes and a little more of our time explaining explanations,” systematic explorations of legislator explanations and their efficacy remain limited (Fenno 1978, 141). Scholars have focused much more heavily on the other two components of Fenno’s “home style” – allocation of resources and presentation of self (Adler, 2000; Adler et al., 1998; Evans, 2004; Fiorina and Rohde, 1991; Grimmer et al., 2012; Grimmer, 2013; Grose, 2011).

Work by McGraw and colleagues in the 1990s represents an important exception. In a series of experiments, they examined the effectiveness of a number of different explanations under a variety of circumstances (McGraw, 1991; McGraw et al., 1993; McGraw, 1990; McGraw and Hubbard, 1996), finding that principled explanations – appeals to normative principles as the determinants of a roll-call vote – consistently emerged among the most effective in appeasing respondents. Such explanations resulted in higher levels of satisfaction among respondents and more positive evaluations of the official than other types of explanations. Explanations that attempted to diffuse responsibility (either horizontally or vertically) or plead ignorance were considerably less effective (McGraw 1991).⁵

A more recent advance in the study of explanations is work by Grose et al. (2015). They argue, and find, that legislators strategically tailor their explanations to constituents in order to compensate for policy choices that are incongruent with constituent preferences. When replying to a letter from a constituent who disagreed with the senator on immigration reform, senators often made a point of mentioning

⁵ McGraw and colleagues also found that an individual’s acceptance of a legislator’s explanation was an important determinant of policy judgments (McGraw et al., 1995). That is, acceptance of a representative’s attempt to deny that the policy consequences of a bill were negative resulted in more positive opinions about the policy.

Washington activities of theirs that were in line with the constituent's preferences, while omitting discussion of other, less congruent activities. In a follow up experiment using a representative selection of real explanations from senators, Grose and colleagues found that such targeting not only increased respondents' favorability rating of the senator, but also increased the likelihood of the respondent voting for the senator.

While these previous studies have made important contributions to our understanding of legislators' ability (or inability) to "explain away" unpopular votes, no study has considered the way in which legislator gender might condition the effectiveness of particular explanations for disfavored rollcall votes. As noted in chapter three, Bianco (1994) argues that constituents make the sensible and rational choice to use stereotypes as information short-cuts when deciding whether or not to trust their legislator's decisions and therefore to extend some degree of voting leeway. Prior work on gender stereotypes, which consistently finds that female politicians are viewed as better able to handle "compassion" issues and women-owned policy issues, would suggest that female legislators can assuage constituents' dissatisfaction with particular rollcall votes if they can justify their vote choice in gendered terms (Alexander and Andersen 1993; Burrell 1994; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Kahn 1994; Koch 2000; Bauer et al. 2017). That is, constituents may be more willing to trust their legislator's decision and extend voting leeway to their legislator when she grounds her explanation in gendered-terms because they believe women are better equipped to handle (presumptively) gendered policy issues.

- **Hypothesis 1:** A female legislator who justifies her decision to bridge in gendered terms will face lower constituent disapproval than a female legislator who justifies her decision in more gender-neutral terms.

However, the results from my second chapter shed do shed some doubt on

this expectation; women legislators were penalized more heavily when bridging on women-owned issues as opposed to gender-neutral issues. It is possible, however, that women legislators simply need to explicitly emphasize the gendered nature of their explanation in order to generate voting leeway. Although the vignettes in chapter three’s experiment did include explanations for bridging, they were uniformly gender-neutral and thus could shed no light on the efficacy of gendered explanations.

4.2 Justice Kavanaugh’s Nomination to the Court & A Survey Experiment

The 2018 confirmation of Justice Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court provides a particularly useful lens for examining the way in which legislator gender might condition the effectiveness of particular explanations for disfavored rollcall votes. Justice Kavanaugh’s confirmation was widely recognized as certain to cement a conservative majority on the court for the foreseeable future, thereby having implications for a wide swath of legal questions, including affirmative action, voting restrictions, campaign finance regulations, the Affordable Care Act, and transgender rights.⁶ His confirmation was also viewed as a significant threat to abortion rights, with organizations such as the National Women’s Law Center, the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL), and Planned Parenthood vehemently opposing his confirmation.⁷

⁶ “The Fate of the ACA Could Turn on Judge Kavanaugh’s Appointment.” July 23, 2018. *Vox*. “The Stakes Are Astronomical: Brett Kavanaugh’s Confirmation Hearing Will Be a Battle Royale.” September 3rd, 2018. *The Guardian*. “Abortion, Race, Gay Rights, Death Penalty: Nominee Brett Kavanaugh Could Make the Difference.” August 19, 2018. *USAToday*. “How Brett Kavanaugh Would Change the Supreme Court.” 2018, July 9. *FiveThirtyEight*. “Brett Kavanaugh is the Antidote to Corporate America’s Worries About Trump.” July 12, 2018. *The Atlantic*

⁷ “Senate Must Reject Supreme Court Nominee Brett Kavanaugh.” July 12, 2018. *The Atlantic*; “Anti-Choice SCOTUS Nominee Kavanaugh Will Gut Roe v. Wade, Criminalize Abortion.” July 9, 2018. *Pro-Choice America*. “NWLC Responds to Nomination of Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme

In the buildup to the confirmation vote, the media and political commentators focused heavily on a small number of Senators, from both parties, who were seen as key to the success or failure of Justice Kavanaugh’s confirmation.⁸ Although Republicans controlled the senate, they did so by only two seats, and thus it would only take a few defections from either party to threaten or cement the confirmation. For example, Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) were seen as potential no votes for a number of reasons: their history of bucking the party on abortion-related bills, their status as ideological moderates, and their need to win reelection in 2020.⁹ Senators Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) and Joe Manchin (D-VA), on the other hand, were seen as potential yes votes because each of these two red-state Democrats was likely to face a tough election battle in the looming 2018 congressional midterms.¹⁰

The media’s attention on these senators, and in particular commentators’ attempts to predict the explanations senators might give if they voted against their party on the confirmation, created a timely opportunity for a survey experiment aiming to understand how gender might condition the effectiveness of particular explanations among constituents. Prior work on gender stereotypes would suggest Sen-

Court.” July 9, 2018. *National Women’s Law Center*.

⁸ “Where The Key Senators Stand on Kavanaugh’s Nomination.” October 5, 2018. *ABC News*. “Key Senators Face Intense Pressure to Decide the Kavanaugh Vote.” September 28, 2018. *Time*. “These Senators Could Make or Break Kavanaugh’s Nomination.” September 17, 2018. *CNN*. “Key Senators Already Face Campaign-Like Blitz on Kavanaugh’s Confirmation Fight.” July 10, 2018. *NBC News*. “Factbox: Handful of U.S. Senators Hold Key to Kavanaugh Supreme Court Bid.” July 16, 2018. *Reuters*.

⁹ “Sen. Susan Collins, Potential Swing Vote, To Meet With Supreme Court Nominee Kavanaugh.” August 21, 2018. *PBS*. “Collins and Murkowski are Pivotal Votes in the Supreme Court Fight. Here are Their Reactions to Brett Kavanaugh.” July 9, 2018. *Vox*. “Kavanaugh: Alaskans Set Stakes for Murkowski.” July 31, 2018. *Alaska Public*.

¹⁰ “Supreme Court: Key Red-State Democratic Senators Donnelly and Heitkamp Meet with Kavanaugh.” August 15, 2018. *USA Today*. “Trump is Starting to Pressure Red-State Democrats to Support his Supreme Court Pick.” July 9, 2018. *Vox*.

ators Collins and Murkowski could better justify a decision to vote with Democrats by highlighting their pro-choice beliefs. If constituents are more likely to give female legislators the benefit of the doubt when bridging on women-centered issues, then a female senator who wished to bridge on the confirmation vote, i.e. vote with the opposing party, should emphasize any gendered policy reasons for doing so. More specifically, if Senator Collins (or Murkowski) were to vote against Justice Kavanaugh’s confirmation, an explanation grounded in her pro-choice values should generate more positive reactions among constituents than an explanation grounded in her pro-choice values.¹¹

4.3 Experimental Design

To test these theoretical expectations, I recruited 1,336 participants¹² through Qualtrics. The experiment was fielded on August 23rd, 2018.¹³ Respondents were presented with a short vignette consisting of two paragraphs. The first paragraph was identical across all treatment groups: it informed respondents that President Trump had nominated Brett Kavanaugh to be an associate justice of the Supreme Court, that the Senate would need to vote to confirm or reject Kavanaugh’s nomination, and that Republicans held a slim majority in the Senate. The second paragraph was intended to lead respondents to believe that one of their party’s senators was viewed

¹¹ Although this chapter focuses on female legislators, the results of chapter 2 suggest that the opposite might be true for male legislators, since male legislators suffered the greatest cost of bridging on the more gender-neutral policy issue.

¹² 54% of respondents identified as Democrats and 46% identified as Republican. The sample was 44% male, 67% white, 19% black, and 12% Hispanic.

¹³ Importantly, this was prior to the public revelation of Dr. Christine Blasey Ford’s letter to Senator Dianne Feinstein regarding an alleged sexual assault by Justice Kavanaugh and thus we do not need to worry that respondents’ attitudes towards the allegations colored responses to the survey.

as likely to defect from the party line and cross the aisle.¹⁴ For Democrats, this meant reading about a senator from their party who was portrayed as likely to cross the aisle in order to advance the Republican party's preferred nominee. This would be an instance of positive bridging. Republican respondents, on the other hand, read about a senator from their party who was portrayed as likely to cross the aisle to vote with Democrats in an attempt to block the Republican party's preferred nominee. This would be an instance of negative bridging. Democrats were randomly presented with a vignette featuring either Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) or Joe Manchin (D-WV), while Republicans were randomly presented with a vignette featuring either Susan Collins (R-ME) or Lamar Alexander (R-TN).¹⁵

Respondents were randomly presented with one of three different explanations for the legislator's decision to bridge: the legislator's stance regarding abortion, the legislator's moderate ideological position, or the legislator's desire to win reelection. I expect that evaluations of Collins and Heitkamp will be highest when either is portrayed as bridging for reasons of abortion policy, and I also expect that evaluations of Collins and Heitkamp in the abortion condition will be higher than those of Alexander and Manchin in the same condition.

- **Hypothesis 2:** The female legislator will be evaluated more positively when her expected explanation centers on her abortion stance than when her explanation centers on her moderate ideological preferences or her desire for reelection.

¹⁴ For three of the four senators used in this experiment, this was not a deception on my part. Heidi Heitkamp, Joe Manchin, and Susan Collins were all seen as potential defectors on the confirmation vote. The final senator, Lamar Alexander, was not, but he was chosen because he is one of the most bipartisan Republican members of the Senate and because he previously broke from the Republican party when he supported Sonia Sotomayor's confirmation to the Supreme Court in 2009.

¹⁵ The majority of respondents (93.86%) identified as either Republican or Democrat. The 4.79% identifying as independent and the 1.35% identifying as other were asked to indicate which party they felt closest to and then randomly assigned to a treatment with a legislator from that party.

- **Hypothesis 3:** The female legislator will be evaluated more positively than her male counterpart when the expected explanation centers on abortion policy.

Additionally, because the results from chapter three suggest that constituents react more favorably to positive bridging as opposed to negative bridging, I expect to find differences in the evaluations of Democratic and Republican respondents. I expect Democratic respondents to evaluate the senator more favorably than Republican respondents, since the Democratic senators are engaging in positive bridging and the Republican senators are engaging in negative bridging.

- **Hypothesis 4:** Because the Democratic senators are engaged in positive bridging while the Republican senators are engaged in negative bridging, Democratic respondents' evaluations should be more favorable, on average, compared to Republican respondents' evaluations.

Treatment Vignettes

Republican Vignette

As you may know, President Trump has nominated Brett Kavanaugh to be an associate justice of the Supreme Court. According to the constitution, the United States Senate must vote to confirm Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court. The current Senate consists of 51 Republicans, 47 Democrats, and 2 Independents who vote with the Democrats.

Given Republicans' slim majority, there has been a great deal of attention on those Republicans who are seen as most likely to break from their party and vote against Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation. In particular, [Susan Collins (R-ME)/Lamar Alexander (R-TN)] is seen as likely to vote against Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation because of [her/his stance on abortion/because he/she is an ideological

moderate and often votes with the Democrats/because he/she represents a moderate state and she/he wants to be reelected in the fall.]

Democratic Vignette

As you may know, President Trump has nominated Brett Kavanaugh to be an associate justice of Supreme Court. According the constitution, the United States Senate must vote to confirm Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court. The current Senate consists of 51 Republicans, 47 Democrats, and 2 Independents who vote with the Democrats.

Given Republicans' slim majority, Democrats have a chance of blocking the nomination if they can vote as a unified block and gain support from Republican moderates. A great deal of attention is now on the Democratic Senators representing more conservative states who are seen as the most likely to break from their party and vote in favor of Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation. In particular, [Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND)/Joe Manchin (D-WV)] is seen as likely to vote in favor of Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation because of [her/his stance on abortion/because he/she is an ideological moderate and often votes with the Republicans/because he/she represents a moderate state and she/he wants to be reelected in the fall.]

4.3.1 Measures

Before reading the vignette, respondents were asked to indicate their gender, racial identification, religious identification, level of education, ideological stance, and partisan identification.¹⁶ Individuals who did not indicate a partisan preference were asked to indicate which party they felt closest to. Respondents were also asked a number of social identity-based measures to assess identity-based partisanship (Huddy

¹⁶ Complete survey can be found in Appendix Two.

et al. 2015).¹⁷

Following the vignette, respondents were first asked whether or not they thought Brett Kavanaugh should be confirmed as a Supreme Court Justice. They were then asked how angry they would be if their legislator voted to reject or confirm Brett Kavanaugh and how favorable they would feel towards that legislator if he or she voted to reject or confirm Brett Kavanaugh. As in chapter three, the response options for the anger measure ranged from “not angry at all” to “very angry” on a four-point scale, while the favorability measure ranged from “very favorable” to “very unfavorable” on a seven-point scale. The survey ended with a question asking respondents whether Republicans (Democrats) should vote for the senator were he (she) to vote against (in favor of) confirming Justice Kavanaugh.

4.3.2 Results

Before turning to my hypotheses, I consider an important control question: a respondent’s stance towards Justice Kavanaugh’s confirmation.¹⁸ As Figure 4.1 demonstrates, the majority of Republicans supported Justice Kavanaugh’s confirmation, while the majority of Democrats opposed it. However, a substantial percentage of partisans on either side took a contrary position. A quarter of Democrats (25.6%) indicated that they thought Justice Kavanaugh should be confirmed to the Supreme Court, while 17% of Republicans felt he should not be.

¹⁷ Respondents were also asked to rank the following items from least important to most important with respect to their party’s goals: Fighting for what Republicans/Democrats believe in, compromising with the Democrats/Republicans, making sure to spend money to help those who need it, proposing new legislation, and repealing existing legislation. Following these questions, respondents were asked to indicate how much attention they paid to politics, whether they voted in the 2016 presidential primary, whether they intended to vote in the 2018 congressional primary, whether they had a chance to read a newspaper the previous day, and whether they had watched a news program the previous day.

¹⁸ An important question that was not included, unfortunately, was one tapping the respondent’s stance on abortion.

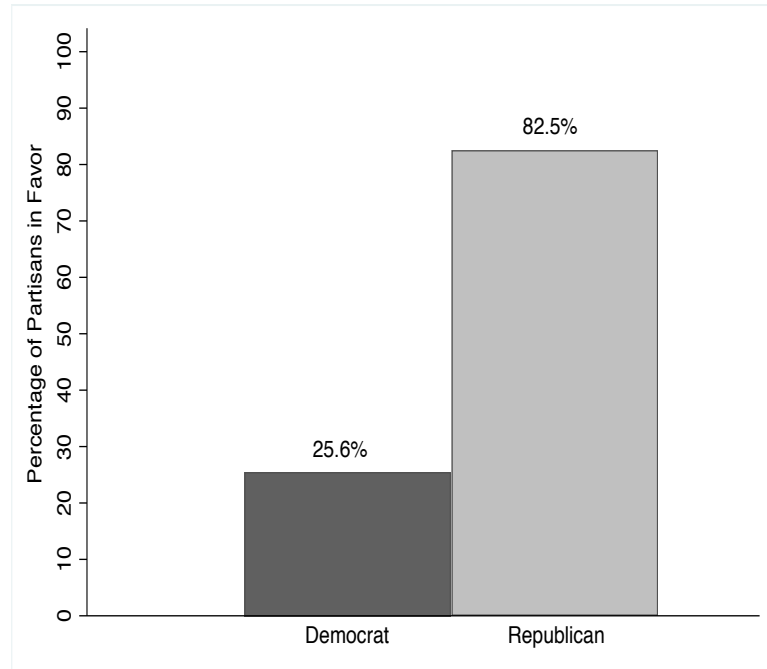


FIGURE 4.1: Partisan Support for Justice Kavanaugh’s Confirmation

Not surprisingly, these respondents’ evaluations of the defecting legislator were considerably higher than those respondents whose attitudes towards the confirmation fell along expected party lines. The mean favorability rating among those who took a contrary position to the majority of their party was .68, while the mean favorability rating among the remainder of the sample was almost half of that: .36. Because I am interested in respondents’ reactions to unwanted partisan bridging, the following analyses exclude those individuals whose preferences aligned with the legislator’s predicted vote.¹⁹

Before focusing in on gender, Figure 4.2 sets the stage by providing an overview of the three explanation treatments. It is clear that, across the board, respondents felt quite unfavorable towards the legislator who chose to cross the aisle and vote

¹⁹ This left me with a remaining sample size of 1,044.

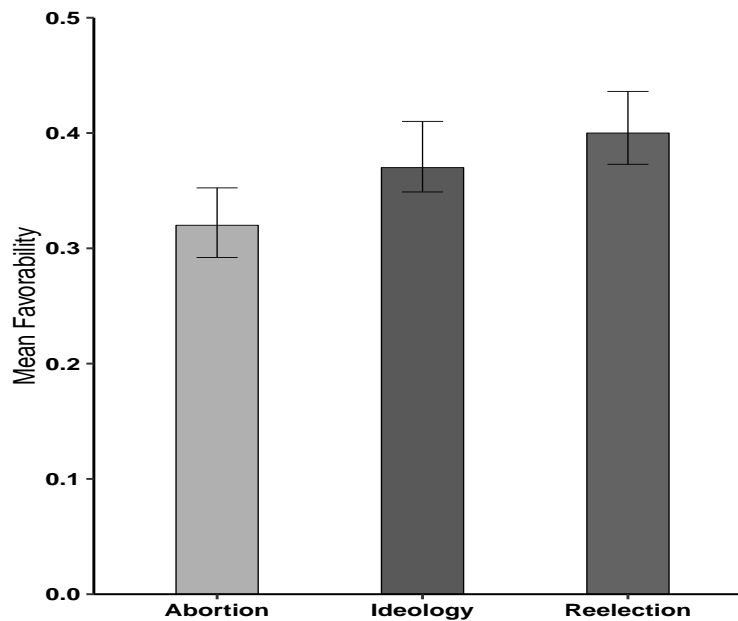


FIGURE 4.2: Mean Favorability Across Explanation Treatment Groups

with the opposing party. However, it is the legislator in the abortion condition who received the lowest favorability rating. He or she saw a significant 5% and 8% drop in favorability, relative to the ideology and reelection conditions ($p=.00$ for both comparisons), while the legislators portrayed as defecting on ideology and reelection were evaluated similarly ($p=.26$). These results make sense given (1) that Justice Kavanaugh’s confirmation was widely seen as potentially leading to the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, an outcome that, in general, is feared by those on the left and hoped for by those on the right, and (2) that polls find that a majority of Americans feel it is either “very important” or “somewhat important” that future nominees to the Court share their views on abortion.²⁰

The question of particular interest here, however, is whether or not legislator

²⁰ In Depth: Topics A To Z: Abortion. *Gallup*. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1576/abortion.aspx>

gender conditioned how respondents reacted to the various treatment conditions. I hypothesized that the female legislator would receive more positive reactions from respondents if her decision to bridge was framed in respect of her pro-choice values, as opposed to more gender-neutral terms of ideological preferences or desire for reelection. I also hypothesized that the female legislator would receive higher approval ratings in the abortion condition than her male counterpart. The next three figures consider these hypotheses by examining respondents' responses to the favorability, anger, and voting measures.

Favorability

Figure 4.3, which reports the results of the favorability measure broken down by explanation treatment and legislator gender, like in chapter three, contradict my expectations. First, the female legislator received a lower rating in the abortion condition (.28) than in either the ideology (.36) or reelection conditions (.40), and the difference is significant ($p=.01$ and $p=.00$, respectively). Second, although the male and female legislator are evaluated similarly in the ideology and reelection conditions ($p=.4$ and $p=.9$, respectively), the female legislator is evaluated more negatively when it comes to abortion. The female legislator receives a mean favorability score of .28 in the abortion condition, while the male legislator receives a 7% higher mean score of .35 ($p=.01$). This suggests then, that women legislators might not want to emphasize gendered-policy concerns when bridging and focus instead in framing their vote in more gender-neutral terms.

Anger

Figure 4.4 considers how angry respondents were at the prospect of the senator bridging on Kavanaugh's confirmation. Again, in contrast to expectations, respondents are more angered by the female senator's decision to bridge when it is explained in terms of her stance on abortion (.49) than when it is explained in terms of ideology (.42) or reelection (.41), and the differences are significant ($p < .05$). However,

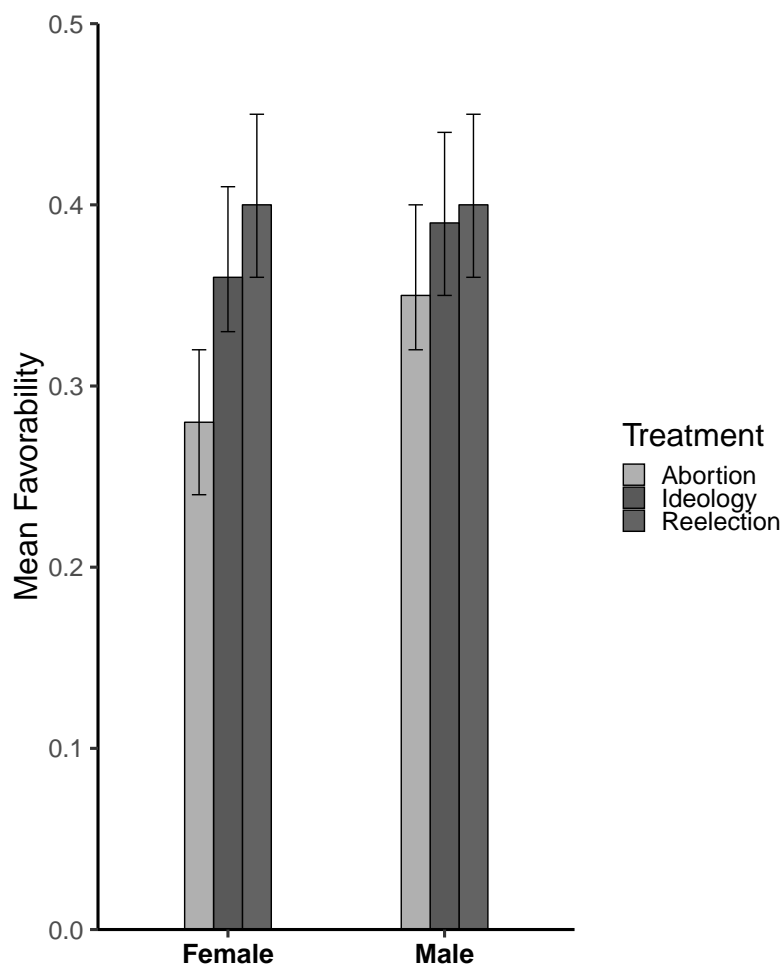


FIGURE 4.3: Mean Favorability by Explanation Treatment & Legislator Gender

respondents are not more angered by the female senator who bridges due to abortion policy than the male senator who does so (H:4); both senators generate the same level of anger (.49). And, focusing just on the male senator, it seems that he generates about the same level of anger regardless of how his decision to bridge is framed. Still, these results, taken together with the favorability results, suggest that women legislators should not emphasize gendered reasons for the decision to bridge. The more neutral explanations result in higher favorability ratings and lower levels

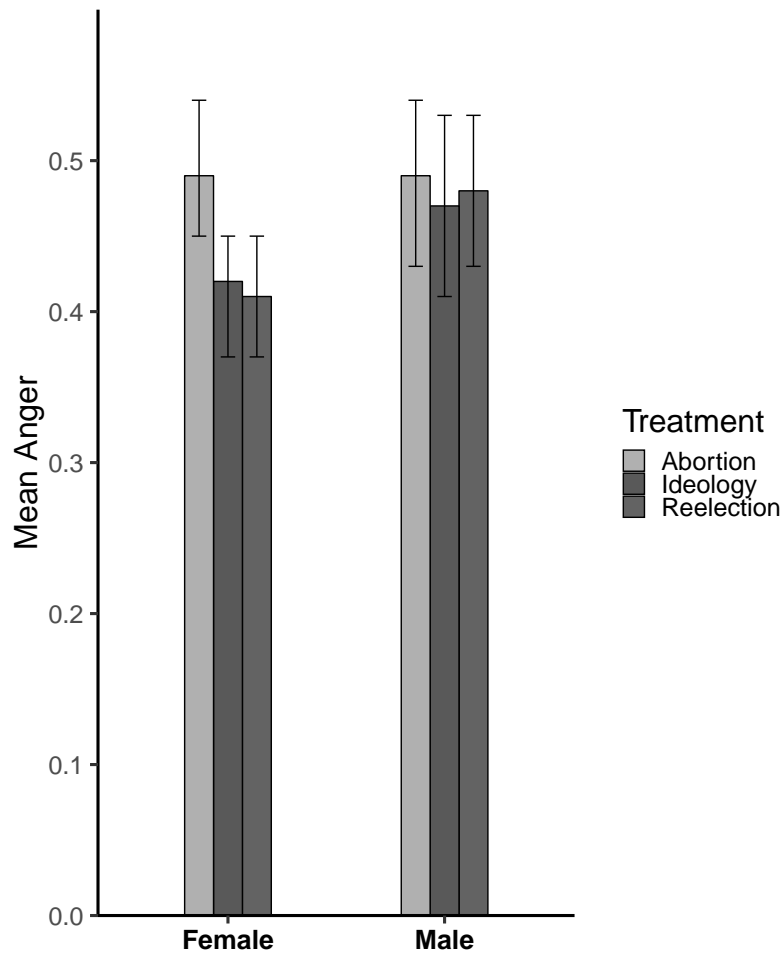


FIGURE 4.4: Mean Anger Rating by Explanation Treatment & Legislator Gender

of reported anger.

Voting

Legislators, of course, are not merely concerned with how constituents feel about their voting decisions but how constituents will respond to those decisions at the voting booth. Figure 4.5 considers whether the senator who bridges faces an electoral cost for doing so. Not surprisingly, the low favorability ratings and sense of anger that respondents report translate to a low willingness to report that their

fellow partisans should vote for the bridging senator in the upcoming midterm. Yet, on this measure I find that explanations seem not to matter.

Although the percentage of respondents reporting that their fellow partisans should vote for the legislator is lower for the female legislator in the abortion condition (.22) compared to that of the female legislator in the ideology (.24) and election conditions (.28), the differences are not significant. And when we compare the percentage of respondents indicating that co-partisans should vote for the female (.22) and male legislator (.27) in the abortion condition, the difference is also not significant. This seems to suggest that while a female legislator's use of a gendered or non-gendered explanation may impact how constituents feel about her, it seems to matter less when it comes to the more concrete question of voting.

Positive Versus Negative Bridging

Finally, although I hypothesized that Democratic and Republican respondents would evaluate the senator differently due to the types of bridging they read about, with Democrats evaluating the senator more positively, breaking the results down by partisanship (see Figure 4.6) shows that (1) my hypothesis was incorrect and (2) partisanship interacted with legislator gender in an unexpected way with respect to the abortion condition. First, in almost every treatment condition, Republicans are significantly more favorable to the legislator engaging in negative bridging. Whereas the mean evaluation among Democrats across all the conditions hovers around .30, the mean evaluation among Republicans is .43 ($p=.00$). This is unexpected, both because the results in chapter three suggested that positive bridging tends to result in more positive reactions among constituents and because one might expect Republican respondents – faced with the potential prize of control of the Supreme Court – to be very displeased at the thought of what could be portrayed as a true betrayal of the party line. Yet, it is the Democrats who evince the greatest dissatisfaction.

Second, and more importantly, the only condition where Republicans and

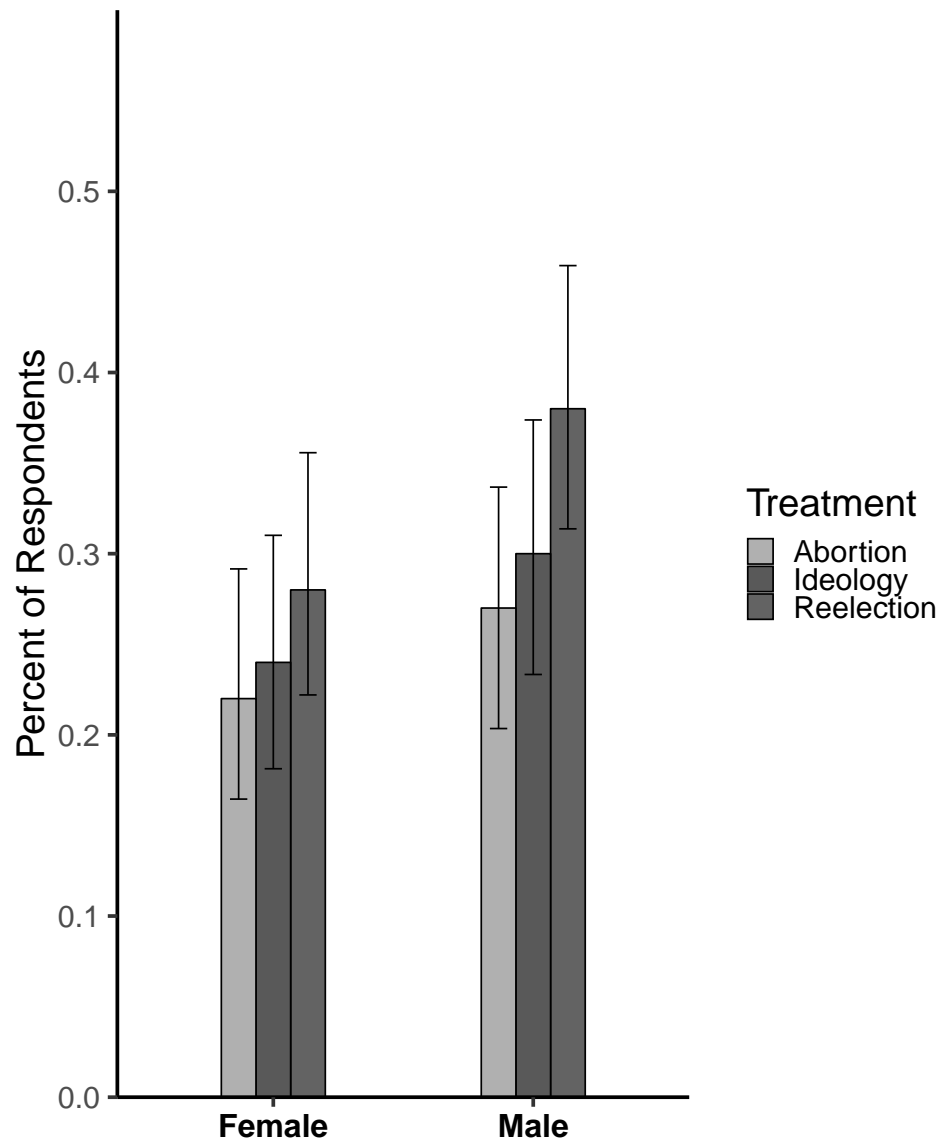


FIGURE 4.5: Percent of Respondents Saying Partisans Should Vote for Bridge in Midterms

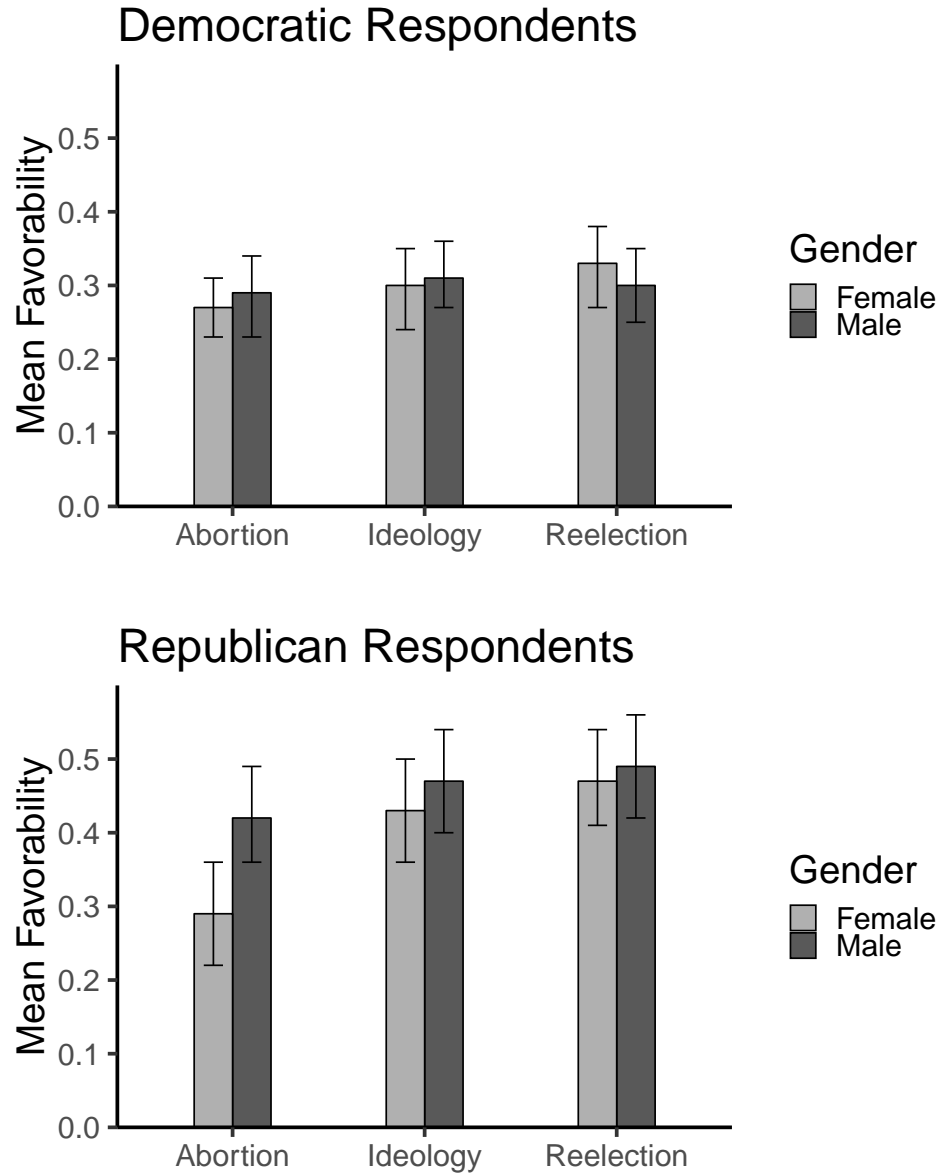


FIGURE 4.6: Mean Favorability by Legislator Gender & Treatment Among Partisans

Democrats report the same level of dissatisfaction is the condition where the female legislator's decision to bridge is framed in terms of her stance on abortion policy. Republican respondents show a steep drop in approval for the female legislator who explains her decision to bridge in relation to her stance on abortion. Among Republicans, the female legislator receives a mean favorability rating of .29, a rating that is a full 13% lower than her male counterpart ($p=.00$). Among Democrats, on the other hand, the male and female legislator who bridge due to abortion concerns are treated similarly and, indeed, no differently than the male and female legislators in the other conditions. These results shed some nuance on Figure 4.3, since it seems that Republicans were driving the results. Clearly, something unique was occurring among Republican respondents. It is possible that these results are a factor of choosing Susan Collins as the Republican female. Senator Collins is a well-known senator, and perhaps respondents' personal understandings of her played a role. It is also possible that Republican respondents, since they are both more conservative and religious than Democratic respondents, are more likely to employ gender stereotypes than Democratic respondents. Parsing out these potential explanations will require further follow up experiments.

4.4 Conclusion

In this final chapter I considered the ways in which female legislators' explanations for bridging might temper constituent reactions. Based on past studies, I hypothesized that female legislators should emphasize any gendered explanations for bridging and avoid framing their decision to bridge in gender-neutral terms. To test that hypothesis, I conducted an original survey experiment that took advantage of the 2018 confirmation of Justice Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court. I was able to test whether or not an explanation grounded in a female legislator's policy preferences

on a woman-owned issue – abortion – was more or less effective than an explanation grounded in more gender-neutral considerations.

The results of my study are mixed. I find that the female legislator receives more positive evaluations from respondents when her decision to bridge is framed in more gender-neutral terms: the female legislator receives significantly lower favorability ratings when her decision to bridge is explained by her stance on abortion than when her decision is framed as a matter of ideology or reelection concerns. This is true also when it comes to the level of anger respondents report at the prospect of the female legislator bridging. Yet there are two important qualifications.

When it comes to favorability, it seems that it is only the Republican woman who gains by using a gender-neutral explanation for her decision to bridge. Although it is possible that this finding is a unique artifact of choosing Susan Collins and Heidi Heitkamp as female senators, it may also indicate that Republican constituents employ gender stereotypes differently than Democratic constituents. And this, in turn, might mean that Republican and Democratic female legislators face different cost-benefit analyses when deciding whether to bridge.

Further, when it comes to the more concrete question of voting, the female legislator's explanation for bridging does not seem to impact respondents' willingness to agree that their fellow partisans should vote for the senator in the upcoming midterm; respondents are uniformly unlikely to feel the senator who bridges should be reelected. This last finding, however, may be partly due to the extremely salient nature of the rollcall vote considered in this experiment, i.e. a Supreme Court nomination. Any explanation for the decision to bridge on such an important topic may have been unable to overcome respondents' irritation. This may not be true on less salient votes. Determining whether or not that is true will be the focus of future projects.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The first goal of this dissertation was to contribute to the literature on bipartisanship by developing a theory to help predict when and why certain legislators might be willing to cross the partisan aisle. In today's polarized political environment, bipartisanship may often seem like a remnant of bygone eras, but in fact it still occurs. I have argued that, while legislators may now be under greater pressure to follow the preferences of the larger party, legislators' *personal preferences* can still lead them to cross the aisle to side with the opposing party. Many representatives run for office because they care deeply about certain policy areas or because they want to make a real difference in their communities; such preferences can lead them to work with members of the opposing party if doing so is the most effective way to achieve their goals.

Because the second goal of my dissertation was to help scholars better understand the role that legislator gender plays in bipartisan compromise, I chose to test the implications of my theory by focusing specifically on women legislators' experiences in pursuing bipartisan compromise. In chapter two, I considered whether women legislators might be more likely to bridge on certain types of issues than men. Women legislators (and women in general) are often portrayed as more likely to engage in compromise than men, and there's also a great deal of evidence that

women legislators are motivated to represent the particular needs of their female constituents. I hypothesized that women legislators would be more likely to bridge on women-centered issues, and I tested that hypothesis by examining the role of Republican women in the diffusion of contraceptive coverage at the state level. I found that moderate Republican women (1) were more likely to bridge on the issue of women's contraceptive coverage and (2) had a substantive impact on policy outcomes.

In chapter three, I considered the costs that female legislators might face in bridging on particular issues, and in chapter four I considered the role different types of explanations might play in ameliorating (or exacerbating) such costs. Both chapters were grounded in the theory developed in chapter one and, in particular, the long line of research showing that voters employ gender stereotypes when evaluating male and female candidates. Although past work strongly suggested that women legislators would suffer fewer costs among constituents when bridging on so-called "women-owned issues," I found the opposite to be true in my experimental studies. Women legislators who were depicted as bridging on a women's issue were evaluated less positively than a male legislator bridging on the same issue, while a female legislator's use of a gendered policy explanation generated less positive evaluations among constituents than a female legislator's use of more gender-neutral policy explanations.

The findings of chapters three and four were unexpected; they serve as the starting point for future work. Why is it that I find women legislators suffer higher costs when *bridging* on women-centered issues when past work by Bauer et. al (2017) found that women legislators suffer lower costs when *refusing* to compromise on women-centered issues? One possibility is that because women legislators are viewed as "owning" women-centered issues, their decision to work with members of the opposing party is seen as more of a betrayal than such a decision on a more gender-neutral issue. The design of my experiments may have contributed to such

an effect (if there was, indeed, such an effect) because in both experiments the legislator who bridged did so alone or with the possibility of only a very few co-partisans joining. Perhaps constituents did not view this as true “bipartisanship” but rather as an instance of “party disloyalty.”

In future experimental studies I hope to tease out the potential distinction between acts of “bridging” and acts of “party disloyalty” by presenting respondents with a greater variety of vignettes, and in particular vignettes that highlight the different aspects of bridging: lobbying, sponsorship, and efforts to bring multiple co-partisans along the path to bipartisanship. It is very possible that respondents will employ gender stereotypes differently when presented with more explicit acts of bipartisanship. It may be that the line between compromise and defection is a paper thin one, and one that constituents are particularly attune to in today’s more polarized climate.

Appendix A

Appendix to Chapter Two

Table A.1: Event History Analysis: Including State Culture Measure

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Policy Passage		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Count of Potential Bridges		6.733*	
		(3.123)	
Proportion of Potential Bridges			20.695**
			(6.734)
Percent Republican Women	7.967		
	(5.953)		
Percent Democratic Women	20.928**	18.308**	20.786**
	(5.425)	(5.593)	(5.509)
House Polarization	-0.972 [†]	0.179	-0.142
	(0.532)	(0.693)	(0.587)
Republican Controlled Legislature	-0.788	-0.376	-0.639
	(0.643)	(0.537)	(0.540)
State Culture	0.213*	0.287*	0.283*
	(0.117)	(0.127)	(0.124)
Constant	-5.903**	-7.136**	-7.083**
	(1.483)	(1.702)	(1.619)
Observations	364	364	364
Log Likelihood	-78.403	-76.927	-75.475
Akaike Inf. Crit.	168.807	165.854	162.950

[†]p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table A.2: Event History Analysis: Including Women's Status and State Culture Measures

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Policy Passage		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Count of Potential Bridges		6.684*	
		(3.067)	
Proportion of Potential Bridges			12.250 [†]
			(7.174)
Percent Republican Women	-6.777		
	(6.918)		
Percent Democratic Women	12.301 [†]	9.622	12.607 [†]
	(6.702)	(6.820)	(6.820)
House Polarization	-0.745	-0.064	-0.410
	(0.543)	(0.672)	(0.623)
Republican Controlled Legislature	0.414	-0.128	-0.301
	(0.704)	(0.555)	(0.573)
Women's Status in the State	0.825**	0.758**	0.668**
	(0.242)	(0.220)	(0.226)
State Culture	0.505**	0.562**	0.500**
	(0.163)	(0.164)	(0.158)
Constant	-8.518**	-9.846**	-8.996**
	(1.934)	(2.082)	(1.951)
Observations	227	227	227
Log Likelihood	-51.239	-49.496	-50.391
Akaike Inf. Crit.	116.477	112.991	114.782

[†]p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Appendix B

Appendix to Chapter Three

Study Questionnaire

You are invited to participate in a research project conducted by Bailey K. Sanders, a PhD candidate at Duke University. You will be asked a series of questions about your political positions and state legislators' policy positions, as well as a number of demographic questions. Your participation will require approximately 10 minutes. There are no known risks or discomfort associated with this survey. Taking part in this survey is completely voluntary.

Your responses will be kept strictly confidential, and digital data files will be stored in secure computers. If you have any questions about the research, please contact Bailey Sanders at bailey.sanders@duke.edu or Dr. John Aldrich at aldrich@duke.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, please contact the Duke University Campus IRB at campusirb@duke.edu or 919-684-3030.

- 1. What is your gender?
 - Male
 - Female

- 2. What is your race? Check all that apply.
 - White

- Black or African American
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
 - Other
- 3. Do you identify as Hispanic?
 - Yes
 - No
- 4. What is your highest level of education or the highest degree you have earned?
 - Some high school
 - High school
 - Some college, no degree
 - College degree
 - Graduate degree
 - Other
- 5. Which of the following religious (or non-religious) identities best describes you?
 - Baptist
 - Presbyterian
 - Pentecostal

- Catholic
- Episcopalian
- Mormon
- Other Christian
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Atheist
- Agnostic
- Other

- 6. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?

- Republican
- Independent
- Democrat
- Other

- 7. If Selected Other or Independent for Question 6. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic Party (If you had to choose)

- Closer to Republican Party
- Closer to Democratic Party

- 8. If Selected Democrat for Question 6. Would you consider yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?
 - Strong Democrat
 - Not very strong Democrat

- 9. If Selected Republican for Question 6. Would you consider yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican?
 - Strong Republican
 - Not very strong Republican

- 10. How important is being a (Republican/Democrat) to you?
 - Extremely important
 - Very important
 - Not very important
 - Not important at all

- 11. How well does the term (Republican/Democrat) describe you?
 - Extremely well
 - Very well
 - Not very well
 - Not at all

- 12. What talking about (Republicans/Democrats), how often do you use “we” instead of “they?”
 - All of the time

- Most of the time
 - Some of the time
 - Rarely
 - Never
- 13. To what extent do you think of yourself as being a (Republican/Democrat)?
 - A great deal
 - Somewhat
 - Very little
 - None at all
- 14. We hear a lot of talk these days about conservatives and liberals. Here is a 7-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place yourself on the scale, or haven't you thought much about it?
 - Extremely liberal
 - Liberal
 - Slightly liberal
 - Moderate, middle of the road
 - Slightly conservative
 - Conservative
 - Extremely conservative
- 15. I'd like to get your feelings towards some of our political leaders and groups. I'll show you the name of a person or a group and I'd like you to rate

that person/group using something we call the feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the person/group. Ratings between 0 and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorable toward the person/group and you don't care too much for that person/group. You would rate the person at the 50 degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward the person/group.

- The Republican Party
 - The Democratic Party
 - President Trump
 - Nancy Pelosi (Democratic Leader in the U.S. House)
 - Paul Ryan (Republican Leader in the U.S. House)
 - Mitch McConnell (Republican Leader in the U.S. Senate)
 - Chuck Schumer (Democratic Leader in the U.S. Senate)
- 16. What do you think should be the (Republican Party's/Democratic Party's) most important priorities? Please rank the following items from one (MOST important) to five (LEAST important) (by dragging the items up or down.
 - Fighting for what Republicans/Democrats believe in
 - Compromising with the Democrats/Republicans
 - Making sure to spend money to help those who need it
 - Proposing new legislation
 - Repealing existing legislation
- 17. Some people don't pay much attention to politics. How about you? Would you say you are:

- Very interested in politics
- Somewhat interested in politics
- Not much interested in politics
- 18. Did you vote in the 2016 presidential primary election?
 - Yes
 - No
- 19. Do you plan to vote in the 2018 congressional primaries?
 - Yes
 - No
- 20. Now thinking about yesterday, did you get a chance to read a daily newspaper or no?
 - Yes
 - No
- 21. Did you watch the news or a news program on television yesterday or no?
 - Yes
 - No

Next you will be provided with a short description of a politician and asked to provide your evaluation. Please read the description carefully.

[Randomly assigned vignette]

- 22. How favorable or unfavorable do you feel towards Representative Bennett?
 - Extremely unfavorable

- Unfavorable
 - Slightly unfavorable
 - Neutral
 - Slightly favorable
 - Favorable
 - Extremely favorable
- 23. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Representative Bennett is doing in the state legislature?
 - Strongly disapprove
 - Somewhat disapprove
 - Slightly disapprove
 - Neither approve nor disapprove
 - Slightly approve
 - Somewhat approve
 - Strongly approve
- 24. How angry does Representative Bennett’s vote choice make you feel?
 - Not angry at all
 - A little bit angry
 - Angry
 - Very Angry
- 25. How well does the following statement describe Representative Bennett?
“Representative Bennett is a good representative of constituent opinions.”

- Very well
- Well
- Somewhat well
- Somewhat poorly
- Very poorly

- 26. Please indicate what you believe to be Representative Bennett's general ideological stance.

- Extremely liberal
- Liberal
- Slightly liberal
- Moderate, middle of the road
- Slightly conservative
- Conservative
- Extremely conservative

Appendix C

Appendix to Chapter Four

- 1. What is your gender?
 - Male
 - Female

- 2. What is your race? Check all that apply.
 - White
 - Black or African American
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
 - Other

- 3. Do you identify as Hispanic?
 - Yes
 - No

- 4. What is your highest level of education or the highest degree you have earned?

- Some high school
 - High school
 - Some college, no degree
 - College degree
 - Graduate degree
 - Other
- 5. Which of the following religious (or non-religious) identities best describes you?
- Baptist
 - Presbyterian
 - Pentecostal
 - Catholic
 - Episcopalian
 - Mormon
 - Other Christian
 - Jewish
 - Muslim
 - Buddhist
 - Hindu
 - Atheist
 - Agnostic
 - Other

- 6. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?
 - Republican
 - Independent
 - Democrat
 - Other

- 7. If Selected Other or Independent for Question 6. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic Party (If you had to choose)
 - Closer to Republican Party
 - Closer to Democratic Party

- 8. If Selected Democrat for Question 6. Would you consider yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?
 - Strong Democrat
 - Not very strong Democrat

- 9. If Selected Republican for Question 6. Would you consider yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican?
 - Strong Republican
 - Not very strong Republican

- 10. How important is being a (Republican/Democrat) to you?
 - Extremely important
 - Very important

- Not very important
 - Not important at all
- 11. How well does the term (Republican/Democrat) describe you?
 - Extremely well
 - Very well
 - Not very well
 - Not at all
- 12. What talking about (Republicans/Democrats), how often do you use “we” instead of “they?”
 - All of the time
 - Most of the time
 - Some of the time
 - Rarely
 - Never
- 13. To what extent do you think of yourself as being a (Republican/Democrat)?
 - A great deal
 - Somewhat
 - Very little
 - None at all
- 14. We hear a lot of talk these days about conservatives and liberals. Here is a 7-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place yourself on the scale, or haven’t you thought much about it?

- Extremely liberal
 - Liberal
 - Slightly liberal
 - Moderate, middle of the road
 - Slightly conservative
 - Conservative
 - Extremely conservative
- 16. What do you think should be the (Republican Party’s/Democratic Party’s) most important priorities? Please rank the following items from one (MOST important) to five (LEAST important) (by dragging the items up or down.
 - Fighting for what Republicans/Democrats believe in
 - Compromising with the Democrats/Republicans
 - Making sure to spend money to help those who need it
 - Proposing new legislation
 - Repealing existing legislation
- 17. Some people don’t pay much attention to politics. How about you? Would you say you are:
 - Very interested in politics
 - Somewhat interested in politics
 - Not much interested in politics
- 18. Did you vote in the 2016 presidential primary election?
 - Yes

– No

- 19. Do you plan to vote in the 2018 congressional primaries?

– Yes

– No

- 20. Now thinking about yesterday, did you get a chance to read a daily newspaper or no?

– Yes

– No

- 21. Did you watch the news or a news program on television yesterday or no?

– Yes

– No

Next you will be provided a short description of a politician and asked to provide your evaluation. Please read the description carefully.

[Randomly assigned to vignette]

- 21. Do you think Brett Kavanaugh should be confirmed as a Supreme Court justice?

– Yes

– No

- 22. How angry would you be if Senator [assigned] voted to [reject/confirm] Brett Kavanaugh?

– Not angry at all

- A little bit angry
- Angry
- Very angry

- 23. How favorable would you feel towards Senator [assigned] if [he/she] voted to [reject/confirm] Brett Kavanaugh?

- Very favorable
- Favorable
- Somewhat favorable
- Neutral
- Somewhat unfavorable
- Unfavorable
- Very unfavorable

- 24. If Senator [assigned] voted to [reject/confirm] Brett Kavanaugh, do you think [Republicans/Democrats] should vote for [him/her] in the midterm congressional elections this fall?

- Yes
- No

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Biography

Bailey Sanders graduated *summa cum laude* and Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Alabama in 2010 with a B.A. in International Relations and minors in Spanish, Italian, and Creative Writing. Throughout her four years at Alabama, she was a member of the Varsity Women's Rowing Team and was a three-time recipient of the Collegiate Rowing Scholar Athlete Award, a three-time member of the SEC Academic Honor Roll, and a 2010 Academic All-American.

In 2013, she received a teaching assistant position at the University of Georgia and began pursuing a Master's degree in Political Science. During the summer of 2012, she received the Janet Box-Steffensmeier Scholarship to attend the University of Michigan's Summer Program in Quantitative Methods. She graduated in 2013 and subsequently began her doctoral studies at Duke University after being awarded a Dean's Graduate Fellowship. While pursuing her doctorate, she was selected to be a Graduate Fellow at the Kenan Institute for Ethics and also received a National Science Foundation Dissertation Improvement Grant. Her first solo-authored article was published in 2018 in *Legislative Studies Quarterly*.

In the fall of 2018, Bailey began pursuing her law degree at the Duke University School of Law after receiving a Dean's Scholarship. During her first semester of law school, she secured a 3.7 GPA, including a 4.1 in Criminal Law. She looks forward to working as an intern at the Children's Law Clinic in the summer of 2019 and as an intern at the North Carolina Solicitor General's Office in the fall of 2019.

Bailey aspires to secure a joint position in Political Science and Law upon graduation.