

How Republicans Won on Voter Identification Laws: The Roles of Strategic Reasoning and Moral Conviction*

Pamela Johnston Conover, *The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

Patrick R. Miller, *University of Kansas*

Objectives. American political elites heatedly disagree over voter identification (ID) laws. Yet, the issue is not particularly polarizing at the mass level. Previous research mostly explores voter ID attitude correlates and how those policies shape turnout, but offers less insight into how average citizens understand the issue. We explore competing partisan frames on voter ID—voter fraud and voter suppression—that advance subtexts about partisan motivations and whom these laws benefit. *Method.* We use an original nationally representative survey to examine how partisan motivated reasoning, strategic reasoning, and moral conviction influence voter ID frame perceptions and policy support among partisans. *Results.* For average partisans, strategic reasoning and moral conviction significantly influence frame perceptions and voter ID attitudes, though not always along predicted party lines. Motivated reasoning proves inconsequential. *Conclusions.* Republicans have won the “framing war” over voter ID, largely neutralizing the Democratic voter suppression frame, even among average Democrats.

Voter identification (ID) laws present a puzzle. They have been one of the most contentious recent issues dividing partisan political elites (Bentele and O’Brian, 2013; McKee, 2015). Yet, there is *not* a strong partisan divide among the public around the laws. On the contrary, numerous polls show that a strong majority of Americans support voter ID laws; even a majority of Democrats and nonwhites favor the laws (Dapriale, 2015).

Public opinion on voter ID laws is quite anomalous given that elite political polarization is at its highest level in decades, fomenting divisive politics between party leaders (Mann and Ornstein, 2012). This contributes to citizens having strong partisan biases that produce selective perception and motivated reasoning on political issues (Bartels, 2002)—behaviors driven by citizens protecting their party’s perceived positive image (Huddy, Mason, and Aarøe, 2015). Recent accounts of partisanship stress its “expressive” nature (Huddy, Mason, and Aarøe, 2015), and emphasize how hostile feelings toward partisan opponents are “ingrained and automatic in voter’s minds” (Iyengar and Westwood, 2015:691). But, despite a heated elite debate around voter ID laws, there is no evidence of a partisan divide in the public that would fit this “primal” view of partisanship (Iyengar and Westwood, 2015:704). Why not?

*Direct correspondence to Pamela Johnston Conover, Department of Political Science, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 361 Hamilton Hall, CB#3265, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3265 (conover@email.unc.edu) or Patrick R. Miller, Department of Political Science, University of Kansas, 1541 Lilac Lane, Room 504, Lawrence, KS 66045-3177 (patrick.miller@ku.edu). Patrick R. Miller will share all data and coding for replication purposes upon request. The authors wish to thank the editor and anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments and suggestions. Authors are listed alphabetically to reflect that they share equally in any credit that might be due.

SOCIAL SCIENCE QUARTERLY

© 2017 by the Southwestern Social Science Association

DOI: 10.1111/ssqu.12410

Answering this question requires investigating how voter ID laws have been “framed” or depicted by politicians, the public’s motives in reacting to those frames, and the dynamics of competitive framing. Previous research has identified two key frames in the debate: supporters argue that “voter fraud” justifies the laws, while opponents claim the laws are “discriminatory” in their impact (Ansolabehere and Persily, 2008; Atkeson et al., 2014; Wilson and Brewer, 2016). But beyond specifying the basic correlates of each frame’s support, past work has seldom studied what motivates citizens’ evaluations of the frames, or how competition between the frames affects the debate and, ultimately, opinions on voter ID laws.

To address these remaining questions, our research goes beyond existing research in three key ways. First, we compare how two partisan-driven processes—motivated and strategic reasoning—are related to evaluations of voter ID laws. We find that partisan motivated reasoning is unrelated to voter ID attitudes, and strategic reasoning has a variable relationship. For Republicans, as predicted, strategic reasoning is associated with greater support for the party’s position; but for Democrats, strategic reasoning appears to backfire—those who favor strategic thinking are actually less likely to support their party’s position on voter ID laws. Second, we explore the moral basis of attitudes toward voter ID laws, and find that moral conviction is associated with greater support for voter ID laws for Republicans, but not Democrats. Finally, our analysis explores the dynamics of competitive framing, and the differential appeal of the frames to Republicans and Democrats.

Ultimately, we find that public opinion on voter ID is not as unusual as it first appears. Instead, it is the product of a successful public opinion campaign by the Republican Party: it effectively won over most Republican voters and convinced many of them that voter ID was the moral thing to do, while at the same time “persuading” large numbers of Democrats to think that supporting voter ID laws was consistent with their party’s interests. Thus, our research provides a more nuanced and in-depth understanding of the voter ID issue. We also contribute to the framing literature by exploring how strategic reasoning is a partisan alternative to motivated reasoning when party cues are weak. Likewise, we add to the growing literature on moral conviction and political issues.

Voter ID Laws

State legislatures in the last decade have been very active on voter ID laws (Bentele and O’Brien, 2013; Hicks et al., 2015; Wang, 2012; Weiser and Norden, 2012). After the 2000 election, voter ID laws were *not* viewed in deeply partisan terms (Hicks et al., 2015), but the debate changed quickly as Republicans and Democrats soon found themselves on opposing sides. Importantly, these polarized debates among state legislators structured the evolution of mass competition around the voter ID issue. First, elites from *both* parties agreed on which side of voter ID was a “winning” position for their respective parties. Consistently, Republicans introduced and supported voter ID laws, while Democratic legislators opposed them (Bentele and O’Brien, 2013; Hicks et al., 2015; McKee, 2015). Second, many Republican legislators supported the laws based on the strategic calculation that they would benefit Republican candidates by reducing turnout of potential Democratic voters—a strategy that Democratic legislators opposed and labeled “voter suppression” (Ash and Lamperti, 2013; Bentele and O’Brien, 2013; Wang, 2012:79).

The Voter Fraud Frame

Political elites shape thinking about issues by providing “frames” or interpretations of what they mean. Though strategic calculations of potential electoral benefits motivated Republican legislators to pass voter ID laws, this was *not* the rationale or frame they offered to the public. Instead, they gave voter ID laws a nonpartisan, “good government” justification: protecting elections from voter fraud (Fogarty et al., 2015; Minnite, 2010) to increase voter trust and participation (Ansolabehere and Persily, 2008).

For many reasons, “voter fraud” is a strong frame. Chong and Druckman (2007:640) argue that strong frames “emphasize available and applicable considerations.” The voter fraud frame meets both conditions. First, it treats voter ID laws as a “valence” issue that *all* citizens should endorse because the laws purportedly improve the integrity of the electoral process (Hicks et al., 2015). This allows Republicans to advocate for voter ID in the name of a public good and *not the Republican Party*, thus encouraging citizens to assume that political elites are *not* polarized on the issue. Second, by emphasizing moral concerns such as “obedience to the law” the frame depicts voter ID laws as not just a public good, but also a moral good. Third, the frame appeals to intuitive, “common-sense” logic (Lurie, 2014). For citizens who are accustomed to showing ID—when they bank, buy alcohol, or travel—it is much easier to assume that showing an ID to vote is just like those other activities rather than distinguish voting from them. Next, both “fraud” and “electoral integrity” should prompt emotional reactions, which strengthens the frame. Finally, the frame implicitly evokes racial bias (Banks and Hicks, 2016) because some partisans associate voter fraud with “illegal immigrants” and racial minorities (Bentele and O’Brien, 2013; Drier and Martin, 2010). This implicit racial coding should appeal to both Republicans who harbor antagonism toward racial minorities, and those Democrats who disagree with their party’s stances on immigration and minority rights.

From the beginning, many citizens believed the voter fraud frame, and perceptions of voter fraud positively predicted support for voter ID laws (Ansolabehere and Persily, 2008; Wilson and Brewer, 2013). What makes these effects remarkable is that the voter fraud frame is fundamentally misleading and false: voter fraud is extraordinarily rare and not a significant threat to the integrity of elections (Levitt, 2007). Nor, as sponsors claimed, do voter ID laws promote “good government” by increasing turnout or trust in government (Ansolabehere and Persily, 2008).

The Voter Suppression Frame

A frame—even a false one—can enjoy considerable initial success if it lacks effective competition (Chong and Druckman, 2007). Though Democrats questioned the claims of voter fraud, they did not immediately offer the public an alternative way of thinking about voter ID laws. Without effective counterframing, voter ID laws initially had the aura of nonpartisan electoral reforms. But after the 2010 midterm elections, the flood of electoral reforms—including photo ID laws—introduced by newly Republican state legislatures pushed Democrats to promote a clear counterframe to the laws. Specifically, Democrats argued that voter ID laws were a Republican strategy to exclude certain voters—the young, the poor, and minorities—by making it more difficult for them to obtain voter IDs and thus to vote. Since these are typically Democratic voters, this was seen as a strategic, discriminatory attempt to suppress the vote for partisan gain (Atkeson et al., 2014; Wilson and Brewer, 2016).

The “voter suppression” frame is unlikely to be as strong as the “voter fraud” frame. It counters the idea that voter ID is a valence issue on which political elites agree, with the claim it is partisan—a move that reduces the frame’s universal appeal. Also, its complexity makes it less easily understood than the voter fraud frame because it requires explaining how targeted groups are disproportionately and unfairly affected by the cost and logistics of obtaining a voter ID (Lurie, 2014). And, the groups identified as “targets” of voter ID laws vary in vulnerability, and thus whether they trigger emotional reactions that are important to producing a strong frame (Aarøe, 2011). In this regard, there is some experimental evidence that information about the disenfranchising effects of voter ID laws disproportionately angers Democrats (Valentino and Neuner, 2017), which could motivate opposition to the laws.

Research shows that accepting the voter suppression frame is associated with opposition to voter ID laws (Atkeson et al., 2014), but most Americans reject the frame’s core idea that the laws discriminate (Rasmussen, 2013). Moreover, the impact of the suppression frame does, indeed, vary by which voters are depicted as being harmed, with African Americans provoking the largest decline in support for voter ID laws when they are the targets of voter suppression. But even then, a strong majority (61 percent) still supports such laws (Wilson and Brewer, 2016:396).

Understanding Citizens’ Reactions to Voter ID Frames and Laws

Generally, issue substance and party cues influence citizens’ reactions to policies (Bullock, 2011; Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus, 2013; Slothuus and de Vreese, 2010). But to explore citizens’ underlying motivations on the voter ID issue, we focus on two partisan mechanisms—motivated reasoning and strategic reasoning—and moral concerns.

Motivated reasoning is selective information processing that is automatic and affectively driven (Slothuus and de Vreese, 2010; Taber and Lodge, 2006). Because strong partisans want to defend the status of their party, they are less motivated by desires for accuracy in their thinking and more motivated by “directional goals” that reinforce existing beliefs (Slothuus and de Vreese, 2010:631). So, expressive partisanship leads partisans to process information automatically, rejecting it if it harms their party’s image and accepting it if it bolsters that image.

However, the mass-level political environment on voter ID laws has not been conducive to motivated reasoning. Citizens follow party cues in a polarized issue environment, but when it is not polarized, they do so only when parties offer equally strong “frames” (Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus, 2013; Bullock, 2011). The voter fraud frame came first, dominating the information environment, thus giving voter ID the appearance of a nonpolarized valence issue. By 2012, voter suppression—a more partisan and complex frame—was competing with the voter fraud frame. This produced a mass-level partisan debate, but not issue polarization (Rasmussen Polls, 2013). Therefore, we posit:

H1: Motivated reasoning will not affect perceptions of either of the two voter ID frames or voter ID attitudes.

The substance of the voter ID issue, rather than party cues per se, might trigger a more cognitive form of partisan information processing. Citizens could use “strategic reasoning” by relying on judgmental shortcuts or heuristics to simplify their political choices (Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock, 1991). Specifically, citizens might use a “winners vs. losers” heuristic to evaluate voter ID laws (Bowler and Donovan, 2007). To do so, they

need not consider specific details about voter ID laws. All they need to ask is whether the laws benefit or harm their political party: between Democrats and Republicans, who “wins” and who “loses” from voter ID laws?

But, even determining a party’s “winning” side on the voter ID issue requires some information. Accuracy matters: voters only benefit from using this heuristic if they have sufficient information to judge correctly. It need not be party cues; other information can suffice. And, citizens can “go beyond the information given” by making inferences from their stereotypes and identities to strategically reason what should be the winning side. For example, Republicans might infer that protecting against election fraud is desirable because, based on their stereotypes, groups that they assume are likely to commit fraud are unlikely to vote for Republicans. Voters vary in how motivated and capable they are in obtaining good information (Kuklinski and Quirk, 2000). Indeed, Achen and Bartels (2016) argue that citizens typically have very little real information, and therefore make often erroneous inferences about the facts that merely bolster their existing beliefs. If this is the case, even simple strategic reasoning might lead citizens astray by adopting a position inconsistent with their party’s stand on voter ID.

While the voter ID debate has not been conducive to motivated reasoning, it has been more favorable for strategic reasoning. The substance of issues elicits strategic reasoning about “winners vs. losers.” Specifically, institutional changes, such as electoral reforms, often trigger “winner” versus “loser” thinking (Bowler and Donovan, 2007; Smith, Tolbert, and Keller, 2010). Thus, given that voter ID laws are an electoral reform, we argue:

H2: For both parties, strategic reasoning will affect both perceptions of voter ID frames and voter ID attitudes.

Finally, citizens vary in whether they see their attitudes on the same issue as grounded in moral terms (Ryan, 2014; van Bavel et al., 2012); thus, some might view their attitudes on voter ID laws as based in their core beliefs about “right” and “wrong,” and others might not. When citizens “moralize” an issue in this way, their attitudes are said to reflect “moral convictions” (Skitka, 2010). Morally convicted attitudes focus policy evaluations on moral rules rather than the cost and benefits of policies; they also have important consequences for public debates because they tend to be strong stances that are less open to compromise than other attitudes (Skitka, 2010; Ryan, 2016). Both dispositional and situational factors shape moral convictions. In terms of dispositions, regardless of political ideology, people who are “information seekers” tend to moralize issues (Skitka, 2010). Thus, we argue:

H3: For both parties, following the news about voter ID will encourage morally convicted attitudes about the laws.

With respect to situational factors, elite framing may influence moralization on an issue, particularly when it emphasizes rules rather than consequences (Ryan, 2016; also Van Bavel et al., 2012). Thus, given that Republicans advocate the voter fraud frame that stresses right and wrong, and obedience to the law, which many view as a moral concern (Tyler, 2006), we posit:

H4: Moral conviction on voter ID attitudes will be significantly higher among Republicans than Democrats.

Data and Measures

Data

Our data come from an online survey of 1,040 American adults conducted by Qualtrics. It was self-funded by the authors and focused largely on voter ID. Qualtrics randomly sampled its large participant pool, yielding an opt-in rate of 76.81 percent to reach the target N . Data collection was from October 21 to 28, 2014. Respondents are reasonably representative of the U.S. adult population in terms of sex (50.4 percent female), race (21.6 percent nonwhite), and age ($M = 46.1$, $SD = 16.6$). The sample has a higher level of college education than the U.S. population, a common skew among survey respondents generally (Groves et al., 2009) (88.8 percent with at least a BA). It also yielded partisanship distributions similar to those Gallup reports via telephone samples (Democrats 29.8 percent, independents 47.7 percent, Republicans 22.5 percent). Thus, despite the typical education skew, the sample is actually more demographically representative of the U.S. population than many surveys conducted via the phone or web (Groves et al., 2009).

Voter Fraud Perceptions

Reactions to the voter fraud frame were measured by four questions: (1) “If you had to say, how common or rare is voter fraud during the typical election?” (2) “It is illegal to vote if you are not a U.S. citizen. How frequently do you think this occurs?” (3) “It is also illegal for a person to claim to be another person who is registered and to cast that person’s vote. How often do you think this occurs?” and (4) “Even if voter fraud occurs, how often do you think that it actually changes the outcome of elections?” All responses were scored on four-point scales: ranging from “very rare” to “very common” for the first question, and from “very rarely” to “very often” for the other three. The four items were combined into an additive fraud perception scale (scored 0–12; $\alpha = 0.88$; $M = 5.44$, $SD = 3.08$). Higher scores indicate that respondents perceive voter fraud to be a greater problem.

Voter Suppression Perceptions

Respondents were asked: “Some argue that photo ID requirements make it harder for certain citizens to vote, especially the young, the elderly, and racial minorities who are less likely to have proper ID. Others argue that ID requirements would not have such an effect and are fair to all voters. In your opinion, how likely is it that ID requirements would make it harder for some citizens to vote?” Responses were on a four-point scale ranging from 0, “not at all likely,” to 3, “extremely likely” ($M = 0.87$, $SD = 0.89$).

Voter ID Support

Respondents were asked: “Voter ID laws require individuals to show a form of photo ID when they attempt to vote. Do you favor or oppose photo ID requirements?” Responses were on a seven-point scale ranging from +3, “favor strongly,” to –3, “oppose strongly,” with a neutral midpoint ($M = 1.51$, $SD = 1.71$).

Party

We grouped respondents as Democrats, Republicans, and independents via a seven-point partisanship scale. Independents include pure independents only. Partisans include strong and weak partisans, plus independents leaning to that party. Leaners are often “closet partisans” with strong affective ties to one party, and their political behavior commonly demonstrates more partisan consistency than that of weak identifiers (Petrocik, 2009).

Partisan Identity

To evaluate motivated reasoning requires a measure of partisan identity. The ANES party ID item is inadequate because it only measures how people label themselves, and not their level of partisan identity (Huddy, Mason, and Aarøe, 2015). Thus, we employ a measure of partisan identity rather than ANES-style partisan strength. Using the party variable described above, respondents answered two identity items matched to their party: (1) “Being a (Democrat/Republican) is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am,” and (2) “I have a strong attachment to other people who are (Democrats/Republicans).” Responses are scored on seven-point scales from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” with a neutral midpoint. Both items are added into a partisan identity scale with higher values indicating stronger partisan attachment (scored ± 6 ; $\alpha = 0.83$; $M = 1.63$, $SD = 2.75$). Because they lack party identities to guide partisan motivated reasoning, pure independents are dropped from our analyses.

Strategic Reasoning

To assess their willingness to use strategic reasoning, respondents were asked a hypothetical question about their use of the “winners vs. losers” heuristic on voter ID laws: “Imagine that photo voter ID laws give *your party* a political advantage over the other party. How strong of a reason would that be for you to favor photo ID laws?” Responses were on a five-point scale ranging from 0, “not very strong,” to 4, “extremely strong,” with higher scores indicating a willingness to engage in strategic reasoning ($M = 0.90$, $SD = 1.14$).

Moral Conviction

Respondents were asked two standard moral conviction questions: (1) “To what extent are your opinions on photo voter ID laws deeply connected to your fundamental beliefs about right or wrong?” and (2) “To what extent are your opinions on photo voter ID laws a reflection of your core moral beliefs and convictions?” (see Skitka, 2010). Responses were on five-point scales ranging from “not at all” to “very much.” The two items were combined into an additive moral conviction scale on which higher scores indicated greater moral conviction (scored 0–8; $\alpha = 0.86$; $M = 4.43$, $SD = 2.50$).

Ideology

Respondents placed themselves on a standard ANES ideology scale with responses ranging from 1, “very liberal,” to 7, “very conservative” ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 1.62$).

Following Voter ID Laws

Respondents were asked the following question: “Many states are debating laws that would require voters to show voter photo identification (photo ID) in order to vote. How closely are you following news about photo ID issues in US elections?” Responses were scored on a four-point scale from 0, “not at all closely,” to 3, “very closely” ($M = 1.59$, $SD = 0.93$).

State Law

To account for state contextual effects, National Conference of State Legislatures records were used to categorize respondents’ states at the time of the survey as having either strict (1) or nonstrict (0) voter ID laws dictating whether voters can cast nonprovisional ballots if they lack acceptable ID ($M = 0.19$, $SD = 0.39$).

Racial Resentment

Racial resentment is an established predictor of voter ID attitudes (Wilson and Brewer, 2013, 2014) and a key subtext in our analysis. We measure it using two standard racial resentment items: (1) “I disapprove of any special considerations that racial minorities like African Americans and Hispanics receive, such as in college admissions or in the workplace, because it’s unfair to other Americans”; and (2) “Racial minorities like African Americans and Hispanics bring up race only when they need to make an excuse for their failure.” Responses were on seven-point scales from “agree strongly” to “disagree strongly,” and re-coded such that higher scores indicated more racially resentful answers. The two items were then combined into an additive racial resentment scale (scored ± 6 ; $\alpha = 0.81$; $M = 1.26$, $SD = 3.51$).

Demographics

All models included the following: age in years ($M = 46.1$, $SD = 16.6$), education level (1, “less than high school graduate,” to 7, “postgraduate degree”; $M = 3.63$, $SD = 1.37$), household income (1, “less than \$20,000 annually,” to 8, “more than \$200,000 annually”; $M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.68$), race (0, nonwhite, 1, white; $M = 0.69$, $SD = 0.46$), and sex (0, male, 1, female; $M = 0.50$, $SD = 0.50$).

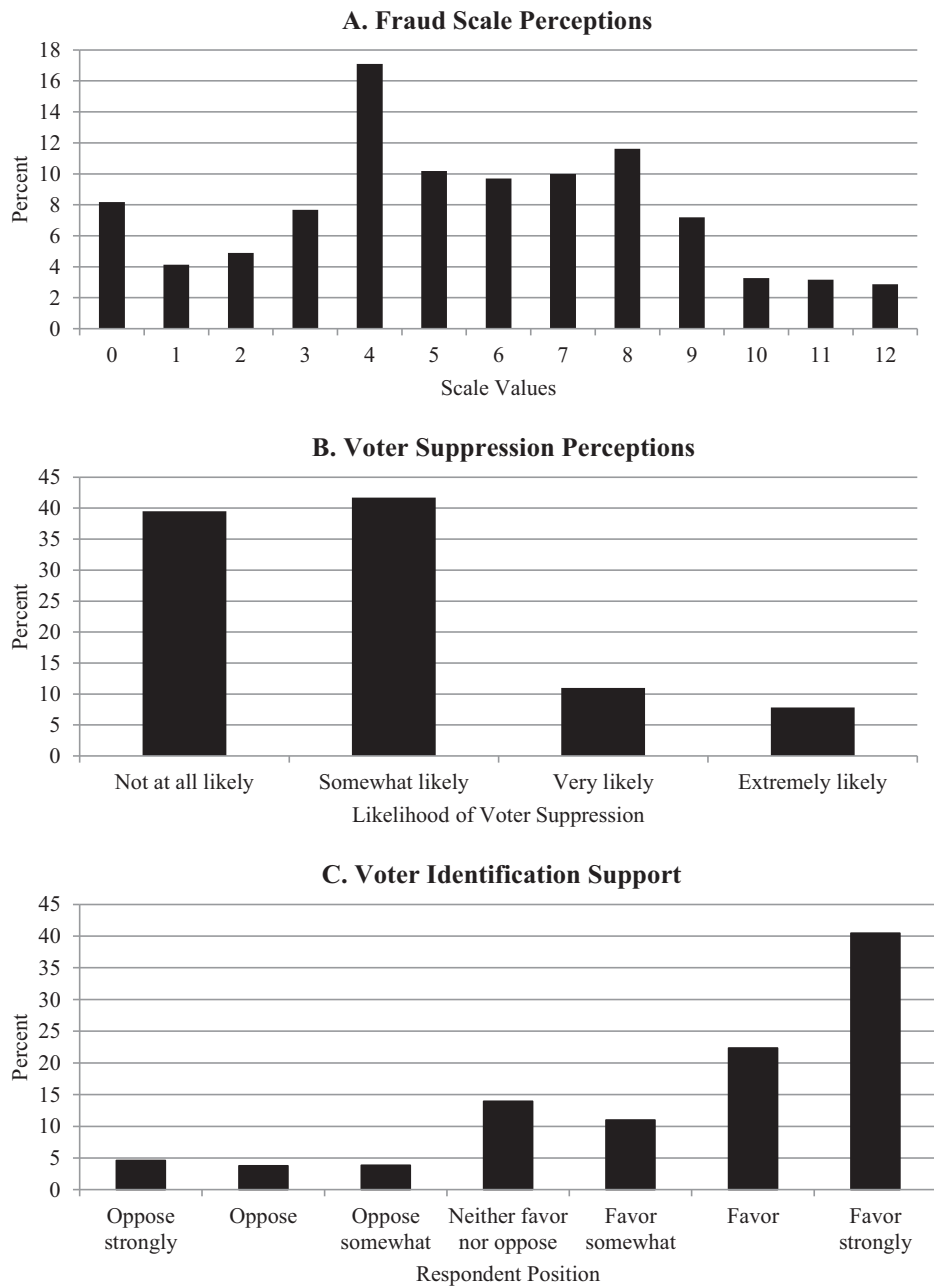
Results

We first examine how the public thinks about the two frames on the voter ID issue, then whether the voter ID issue is moralized, and finally attitudes toward the issue itself. Since Democrats and Republicans should be motivated differently by the competitive framing of the voter ID issue, in each case we analyze the two parties separately so that we can better understand the dynamics within each party.

Voter Fraud Frame

Panel A in Figure 1 shows the distribution of the voter fraud scale. Partisans collectively perceive voter fraud as a moderately serious problem, as indicated by the overall mean

FIGURE 1
Dependent Variable Distributions Among Partisans



of 5.44, a middle score given the 0–12 scale range. While both parties score reasonably close to the middle of the scale, consistent with earlier research (Ansolabehere and Persily, 2008; Wilson and Brewer, 2013), Republicans perceive voter fraud as a significantly greater problem than do Democrats (Republican $M = 6.64$; Democratic $M = 4.60$; $t(788) = -9.57, p = 0.00$].

Table 1 uses ordinary least squares (OLS) regression to model voter fraud scale scores among partisans as a function of partisan identity (an indicator of motivated reasoning), strategic thinking, following the voter ID issue in the news, racial resentment, and demographic controls. Our analysis here focuses on the differences between the OLS models in the patterns of statistical significance and substantive effects of the predictors. Looking first at Democrats, supporting H1, there is no evidence of motivated reasoning. Partisan identity is not a statistically significant predictor. Were motivated reasoning an important influence, strong partisan identifiers should more strongly echo the party message and, thus, reject the idea of voter fraud. But, that is not the case.

Consistent with H2, strategic reasoning is significantly related to how Democrats perceive voter fraud, and is the second most important predictor for them ($\beta = 0.21$). However, Democrats who are the most willing to apply a “winners vs. losers” heuristic to voter ID actually score 2.21 units *higher* on the fraud scale than those who are the least willing, meaning that Democrats who favor strategic reasoning believe voter fraud is more serious. Thus, to the extent that Democrats who engaged in strategic thinking on a hypothetical voter ID issue also engaged in it when faced with the same issue in real life, this finding implies that they have erred in their reasoning since supporting the voter fraud frame runs contrary to their party’s interest. One possible explanation is that information does not influence Democrats’ judgments: following the voter ID issue in the news is unrelated to their perceptions of voter fraud, nor does it moderate the impact of strategic thinking on voter fraud when the two are interacted statistically (not shown). This pattern of findings—Democrats’ support for the voter fraud frame, their likely flawed strategic reasoning, and the null relationship between following the issue and support for the frame—points to the failure of Democratic elites to communicate a clear message that voter fraud was rare. So if not information, what shaped fraud perceptions of Democrats? Achen and Bartels (2016) suggest people often use their other beliefs to guide their inference of facts. For Democrats, the more conservative they were, the more likely they were to perceive serious voter fraud. Also, more racially resentful Democrats were more vulnerable to Republican framing of substantial voter fraud—framing that often was racially coded (Drier and Martin, 2010; Wilson and Brewer, 2013).

Turning to the Republicans, again supporting H1, there is no evidence of motivated reasoning: support for the voter fraud frame is not related to how strongly Republicans identify with their party. Second, H2 is again supported: Republicans who are the most willing to engage in strategic thinking about voter ID score 1.25 units *higher* on the fraud scale than those who are the least willing, with strategic thinking also ranking as one of the more substantively important predictors for this group. But, unlike Democrats, Republicans who are more prone to strategic thinking *support* their party’s position. One likely reason is because “following the news” about voter ID strongly influences how Republicans think about voter fraud: Republicans who follow the news “very closely” score 1.56 units higher on the fraud scale than those who follow the news “not at all closely.” And as with Democrats, both more conservative and more racially resentful Republicans are also more likely to perceive serious voter fraud.

In sum, neither Democrats nor Republicans engaged in partisan motivated reasoning about voter fraud. This fits with the nonpartisan nature of the voter fraud frame, which

TABLE 1
Voter Fraud Perceptions

	Democrats		Republicans	
	<i>B</i>	β	<i>b</i>	β
Partisan attachment	0.076 (0.051)	0.075	-0.018 (0.071)	-0.018
Strategic thinking	0.553*** (0.136)	0.207	0.313* (0.134)	0.135
Racial resentment	0.242*** (0.043)	0.300	0.182** (0.059)	0.179
Follow issue	0.065 (0.148)	0.020	0.521** (0.162)	0.171
Ideology	0.334** (0.099)	0.166	0.378** (0.126)	0.170
State law	0.237 (0.339)	0.031	0.116 (0.410)	0.017
Age	-0.020* (0.009)	-0.101	-0.024 (0.015)	-0.116
Education	-0.001 (0.084)	-0.001	-0.184 (0.111)	-0.088
Female	0.392 (0.275)	0.066	-0.205 (0.298)	-0.035
Income	-0.040 (0.065)	-0.023	-0.074 (0.079)	-0.046
White	-0.423 (0.328)	-0.071	0.179 (0.514)	0.022
Constant	3.289** (0.939)	—	4.668*** (1.094)	—
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	0.202		0.158	
<i>F</i>	14.230***		7.200***	
<i>N</i>	462		294	

NOTES: *b* are weighted unstandardized OLS coefficients; β are standardized coefficients; *SE* in parentheses; cluster-corrected *SEs* are employed based on state of residence.
+*p* < 0.1, **p* < 0.05, ***p* < 0.01, ****p* < 0.001.

de-emphasized party cues. Still, the substance of voter ID laws—an electoral reform—could have motivated partisans to think strategically about voter fraud. In so doing, both groups may have been influenced by their ideology and racial biases. But only Republicans appear to have used the available information to make accurate choices consistent with thinking strategically; by paying attention to the news, they learned enough to conclude “correctly” that limiting voter fraud benefited their party.

Voter Suppression Frame

Panel B in Figure 1 shows the distribution of responses on whether respondents believe voter ID laws suppress the vote. Overall, 81.18 percent of partisans respond that it is “not at all likely” or just “somewhat likely” that voter ID does so, whereas just 18.82 percent believe that it is “very” or “extremely” likely that voter ID laws suppress the vote. Indeed, nearly 40 percent deny any likelihood that voter ID deters turnout. Thus, as in past research (Wilson and Brewer, 2016), partisans generally reject the idea of voter suppression, a complex frame that Democrats offered to compete with the successful Republican voter

TABLE 2
Voter Suppression Perceptions

	Democrats		Republicans	
Fraud perceptions	—	-0.158** (0.053)	—	-0.068 (0.046)
Partisan attachment	0.046 (0.039)	0.058 (0.038)	0.028 (0.043)	0.030 (0.044)
Strategic thinking	-0.037 (0.093)	0.040 (0.088)	0.137 (0.191)	0.160 (0.106)
Racial resentment	-0.113** (0.036)	-0.078* (0.034)	-0.035 (0.042)	-0.024 (0.043)
Follow issue	0.315** (0.093)	0.316** (0.094)	-0.409** (0.150)	-0.384** (0.146)
Ideology	-0.274*** (0.075)	-0.230** (0.081)	-0.224* (0.105)	-0.205 (0.125)
State law	-0.243 (0.159)	-0.225 (0.157)	0.313 (0.214)	0.321 (0.206)
Age	0.005 (0.006)	0.002 (0.006)	-0.007 (0.009)	-0.008 (0.008)
Education	0.105 (0.083)	0.106 (0.084)	-0.154* (0.075)	-0.164* (0.077)
Female	-0.261 (0.170)	-0.208 (0.195)	0.164 (0.226)	0.151 (0.226)
Income	-0.060 (0.057)	-0.065 (0.054)	-0.141** (0.052)	-0.146** (0.053)
White	0.406* (0.192)	0.333 (0.192)	-0.655 (0.412)	-0.658 (0.410)
τ_1	-1.229	-1.847	-3.130	-3.484
τ_2	1.213	0.666	-0.839	-1.188
τ_3	2.323	1.824	0.014	-0.334
Pseudo- R^2	0.068	0.086	0.072	0.076
LR	155.910***	183.430***	72.910***	77.430***
N	461	461	294	294

NOTES: Entries are weighted unstandardized ordinal logistic regression coefficients; SE in parentheses; cluster-corrected SEs are employed based on state of residence.

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

fraud frame. This rejection holds comparing the means of the two parties. The 0.51 Republican average and the 1.12 Democratic average indicate that both parties tend to believe that voter ID laws do not suppress turnout, though Democrats are slightly less likely to think so ($t(785) = 10.24, p = 0.00$).

What explains Democrats rejecting their party's voter suppression frame? In Table 2, the first ordinal logistic regression model indicates that partisan motivated reasoning is irrelevant to Democrats' attitudes on this frame, again supporting H1. Also, contrary to H2, strategic thinking has no impact on Democrats' reactions to the frame. However, unlike with the voter fraud frame, following the news about voter ID does influence Democrats' perceptions of the voter suppression frame; indeed, it is the most important predictor substantively in the model (standardized coefficient = 1.33). Democrats who do not follow voter ID issues at all have a cumulative predicted probability of only 16.71 percent of saying that it "very" or "extremely likely" that voter ID suppresses votes, but that total increases to 34.07 percent for Democrats who follow the issue most closely. Still, while gaining information may push Democrats to accept the voter suppression

frame, overall the effects of information are not strong enough to produce widespread Democratic support for their party's frame. Both conservatism and racial resentment may encourage Democrats to reject their party's elite-level messaging about suppression given their negative effects in the model. But, even the most liberal Democrats and least racially resentful Democrats still have only, respectively, 17.08 and 58.33 percent chances of saying that it is highly likely that voter ID laws disenfranchise voters. Why?

Party elites have been ineffective in convincing rank and file Democrats of their voter suppression frame in part due to direct competition from the voter fraud frame. Model 2 adds voter fraud perceptions to Model 1 from Table 2. Democrats scoring at the fraud scale minimum have a 17.29 percent (CI: 11.66, 22.92) predicted probability of answering that it is "highly likely" that voter ID laws disenfranchise voters, whereas Democrats at the scale maximum have a negligible 3.05 percent chance (CI: 0.07, 6.04). Thus, the more Democrats think that voter fraud is a problem, the less likely they are to believe that voter ID laws suppress the vote. But, even those Democrats who most reject the Republican fraud frame do not endorse the Democratic frame strongly. This pattern may be a temporal effect of Democrats first being exposed to and somewhat accepting the fraud frame, thus making them resistant to their party's later attempts to reframe voter ID laws as voter suppression. Or, Democrats may simply not understand that the fraud and suppression arguments are two opposing, party-endorsed framings of voter ID laws.

As with Democrats, among Republicans neither motivated nor strategic reasoning relate to rejecting the voter suppression frame. And unlike for Democrats, racial resentment is irrelevant to voter suppression perceptions among Republicans. Information is the key substantive predictor for Republicans. Those who are more attentive to voter ID news are more likely to take their party's position. Among the least attentive Republicans, there is a 44.32 percent (CI: 30.77, 57.88) predicted probability that they believe it is "not at all likely" that voter ID suppresses voting, but that increases to 73.07 percent (CI: 63.71, 82.43) for the most attentive.

Moralization of Voter ID Laws

As with many issues (Ryan, 2014), partisans vary in whether they moralize the voter ID issue: while 24.25 percent fall in the bottom third of the moral conviction scale range, 37.15 percent score in the top third. As predicted in H4, Republicans tend to moralize the voter ID issue more than Democrats (Republican $M = 5.02$; Democratic $M = 4.30$; $t(785) = -3.96$, $p = 0.00$). Is moralization related to following the news or framing?

To address this question, Table 3 models moral conviction on voter ID laws by party (OLS), first using the basic model employed in Tables 1 and 2, and then adding the voter fraud and suppression frames. As predicted in H3, both Democrats and Republicans who follow voter ID news have significantly higher levels of moralization on the issue, though the attention effect is 39 percent stronger for Republicans than Democrats in the basic model. This positive attention effect confirms that "moralizers are information seekers" (Skitka, 2010:278). Older partisans of both sides also tend to moralize the issue, whereas ideology and racial resentment exhibit partisan differences: conservatism and racial resentment push Republicans toward moral conviction, while the opposite is true for Democrats.

Adding the two frames to the Table 3 models shows the influence of partisan framing on moral convictions. The fraud frame has no impact among Democrats, but greater acceptance of the suppression frame increases their moral conviction on voter ID. Democrats who say suppression is "extremely likely" score 0.91 units higher on moral conviction than

TABLE 3
Moral Conviction of Voter Identification Law Attitudes

	Democrats			Republicans		
	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	β	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	β
Fraud perceptions	—	−0.018 (0.036)	−0.022	—	0.126* (0.048)	0.142
Suppression perceptions	—	0.303* (0.148)	0.114	—	−0.070 (0.170)	−0.021
Partisan attachment	0.051 (0.041)	0.049 (0.042)	0.057	0.077 (0.049)	0.080+ (0.047)	0.089
Strategic thinking	0.135 (0.104)	0.140 (0.112)	0.063	0.024 (0.139)	−0.013 (0.140)	−0.006
Racial resentment	−0.081** (0.028)	−0.061* (0.027)	−0.091	0.135** (0.042)	0.111* (0.044)	0.121
Follow issue	0.401* (0.158)	0.358* (0.161)	0.132	0.557** (0.164)	0.484** (0.167)	0.180
Ideology	−0.155* (0.075)	−0.105 (0.080)	−0.063	0.316** (0.107)	0.262* (0.107)	0.133
State law	0.173 (0.196)	0.180 (0.204)	0.031	0.328 (0.262)	0.315 (0.252)	0.051
Age	0.025** (0.008)	0.023* (0.008)	0.134	0.025* (0.011)	0.027* (0.012)	0.152
Education	−0.048 (0.086)	−0.074 (0.086)	−0.042	−0.094 (0.137)	−0.075 (0.138)	−0.040
Female	−0.178 (0.190)	−0.153 (0.200)	−0.031	−0.308 (0.333)	−0.273 (0.330)	−0.053
Income	0.090 (0.102)	0.112 (0.099)	0.076	0.040 (0.090)	0.045 (0.094)	0.031
White	0.286 (0.234)	0.245 (0.224)	0.049	−0.271 (0.348)	−0.319 (0.351)	−0.043
Constant	2.383** (0.655)	2.186** (0.658)	—	0.936 (0.751)	0.486 (0.870)	—
Adjusted R^2	0.096	0.109		0.192	0.210	
F	5.940***	6.990***		10.770***	11.710***	
N	458	458		292	292	

NOTES: *b* are weighted unstandardized OLS coefficient; β are standardized coefficients; *SE* in parentheses; cluster-corrected *SEs* are employed based on state of residence.

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

those calling it “not at all likely.” For Republicans the opposite is true: while the suppression frame is insignificant, Republicans who see voter fraud as most prevalent score 1.51 units higher on moral conviction than those labeling it nonexistent. More Republicans likely moralized the voter ID issue both because the fraud frame evokes moral considerations such as obeying the law, and the frame figured prominently in the debate, which following the news would have made apparent. But, does this moralization matter to support for voter ID laws?

Support for Voter ID Laws

Panel C in Figure 1 shows the pattern of support for voter ID laws. Only 12.23 percent of partisans oppose voter ID, roughly the same low levels of support found in public opinion

TABLE 4
Voter Identification Law Support

	Democrats			Republicans		
	<i>b</i>	β	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	β	<i>b</i>
Fraud \times Suppression	—	—	0.034 ⁺ (0.018)	—	—	0.097** (0.030)
Fraud perceptions	0.134*** (0.024)	0.206	0.089* (0.035)	0.073* (0.029)	0.172	0.023 (0.029)
Suppression perceptions	-1.033*** (0.068)	-0.502	-1.174*** (0.106)	-0.554*** (0.123)	-0.339	-1.178*** (0.276)
Moral conviction	0.035 (0.033)	0.044	0.041 (0.033)	0.143*** (0.023)	0.299	0.139*** (0.023)
Partisan attachment	0.023 (0.023)	0.035	0.022 (0.023)	-0.009 (0.023)	-0.021	-0.012 (0.024)
Strategic thinking	0.288*** (0.064)	0.166	0.266*** (0.066)	0.064 (0.060)	0.067	0.051 (0.050)
Racial resentment	0.087*** (0.019)	0.166	0.082*** (0.019)	-0.004 (0.026)	-0.009	-0.004 (0.026)
Follow issue	-0.073 (0.061)	-0.035	-0.061 (0.064)	0.134* (0.059)	0.104	0.159* (0.069)
Ideology	0.055 (0.042)	0.042	0.060 (0.041)	0.014 (0.046)	0.015	0.037 (0.046)
State law	0.227 (0.160)	0.046	0.204 (0.153)	0.015 (0.111)	0.005	0.021 (0.107)
Age	-0.004 (0.006)	-0.028	-0.004 (0.006)	-0.007 (0.004)	-0.079	-0.007 ⁺ (0.004)
Education	-0.024 (0.052)	-0.018	-0.025 (0.053)	-0.053 (0.048)	-0.060	-0.043 (0.042)
Female	0.198 (0.122)	0.051	0.214 ⁺ (0.122)	0.102 (0.107)	0.041	0.107 (0.103)
Income	0.024 (0.043)	0.021	0.029 (0.043)	0.047 (0.037)	0.068	0.042 (0.037)
White	-0.228 ⁺ (0.132)	-0.059	-0.204 (0.137)	0.285 (0.213)	0.081	0.197 (0.202)
Constant	1.004** (0.355)	—	1.184** (0.345)	0.999* (0.402)	—	1.266** (0.411)
Adjusted R^2	0.538		0.541	0.361		0.397
<i>F</i>	186.170***		189.140***	16.940***		31.190***
<i>N</i>	458		458	291		291

NOTES: *b* are weighted unstandardized OLS coefficient; β are standardized coefficient; *SE* in parentheses; cluster-corrected *SEs* are employed based on state of residence.

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

polling. But 73.80 percent favor voter ID laws to some extent, with “favor strongly” being the modal response (40.46 percent). Just 13.97 percent of partisans are neutral on voter ID laws. Though both Democrats and Republicans on balance support voter ID, the Democratic mean of 1.06 indicates marginally lower support than the 2.25 Republican mean ($t(7857) = -9.83$, $p = 0.00$).

Table 4 models support for voter ID laws as a function of the competing party frames (OLS), moral conviction, plus the basic model used in analyses thus far. Our previous analyses indicate that both voter fraud and suppression perceptions are partly functions of our other predictors, but there is little evidence that adding them to the models

substantially mediates any other relationships to voter ID support; thus, we only model direct relationships to the dependent variable. Among Democrats, the two frames work logically. Democrats perceiving more voter fraud favor voter ID laws more: those at the fraud scale maximum score 1.61 units higher on voter ID support than those at the minimum. Conversely, Democrats perceiving voter suppression as “extremely likely” score 3.10 units lower in voter ID support than those believing that suppression is “not at all likely.” While both frames show large cumulative substantive effects, their standardized coefficients show that the suppression frame (-0.50) has a stronger predictive effect on voter ID attitudes among Democrats than the fraud frame (0.21): it alone among the predictors significantly motivates opposition to the laws when most Democrats favors them.

Beyond the fraud frame, motivated reasoning, as predicted, has no impact on Democratic attitudes toward voter ID laws; however, strategic reasoning does, and the effect is again counterintuitive. Democrats who are more willing to engage in strategic thinking on this issue are more supportive of voter ID laws—even though the laws are likely to harm the their party—than those who are less willing to think strategically. Specifically, Democrats who rate party advantage as an “extremely strong” reason to favor a hypothetical voter ID law score 1.15 units higher in their support for actual voter ID laws than those rating it as a “not very strong” reason. As with voter fraud perceptions, Democrats’ likely erroneous strategic thinking is coupled with the failure of information to affect their attitudes in the model. Rather, racial resentment shapes their policy preferences as the more racially resentful they are, the more Democrats support voter ID laws. Thus, the voter ID issue is racialized for Democrats (Bentele and O’Brien, 2013; Wilson and Brewer, 2014). Finally, moral conviction has no impact on voter ID attitudes among Democrats. Though, as Table 3 suggests, Democratic leaders’ ethical appeals about unjust and discriminatory disenfranchisement of vulnerable groups—the suppression frame—likely encouraged some Democrats to moralize the voter ID issue, clearly not enough did so to make moral conviction itself a significant predictor.

Among Republicans, the directional impacts of the two frames are similar to those for Democrats. Those perceiving the most serious voter fraud score 0.88 units higher in voter ID support than Republicans at the fraud scale minimum. For voter suppression, Republicans perceiving it as the “least likely” are 1.66 units lower in their voter ID support than those ranking it as the “most likely.” As with Democrats, standardized coefficients show that voter suppression perceptions (-0.34) are stronger than voter fraud perceptions (0.17) in explaining Republican opinions.

What else explains Republican’s support of voter ID laws? Unlike Democrats, following news about voter ID laws matters: more attentive Republicans are more supportive of their party’s pro-voter ID position. Also unlike Democrats, the more Republicans view voter ID as a matter of moral conviction, the more supportive they are of the laws, with a 1.00 unit difference in support separating Republicans who moralize the issue the most and the least. Recall, the fraud frame influences Republicans to moralize the voter ID issue (see Table 3). Unsurprisingly, then, moral conviction on voter ID attitudes works in conjunction with the voter fraud frame to produce Republican support for voter ID laws. To elaborate, separate interaction terms of moral conviction and the two frames were added to the first models in Table 4 for both parties (not shown), but only the fraud scale and moral conviction interaction for Republicans yielded any statistically significant moderating effect. Indeed, it showed that the greatest voter ID support was concentrated among Republicans who jointly believed voter fraud to be the most prevalent *and* held the strongest moral conviction about voter ID.

Still, the picture is not complete. Both frames affect voter ID support independently, though the suppression frame is actually more influential all else equal. Why, then, do so few voters oppose voter ID laws? Roughly 53 percent of partisans accept *both* frames to some degree, so it is useful to consider how the two frames compete and possibly moderate each other's attitudinal effects. Table 4 provides the models for these interactions, and the Appendix provides more detailed discussion and a visual plot of the fraud and suppression scale interaction by party. For both partisan groups, there is a moderating effect between the two frames. For Democrats, the interaction of the two frames mostly yields *support* for voter ID laws. Remarkably, *only* when Democrats report both the highest likelihood that suppression occurs *and* the lowest perceived levels of voter fraud are they predicted to oppose voter ID laws. Thus, Democrats' embrace of the Republican fraud frame bolsters their support for voter ID laws, while crippling the effect of their own party's suppression frame, making opposition to the laws unlikely.

For Republicans, the moderating effect between the two frames manifests somewhat differently than for Democrats, who at least remain responsive to both frames. For Republicans, the interaction *always* yields support for voter ID laws: at no point are Republicans predicted to oppose them, no matter how strongly they jointly reject the fraud frame and accept the suppression frame. Moreover, the fraud frame is very effective among Republicans: the more that average Republicans accept their party's frame, the more resistant they are to any decline in voter ID support resulting from accepting the Democratic suppression frame. This is consistent with our argument that moral conviction matters in understanding the intensity and nature of Republican support: Republicans who view voter ID laws as a moral conviction are likely to be uncompromising and unreceptive to arguments like voter suppression that would undermine their support (see Ryan, 2016).

Discussion

Voter ID laws are a political curiosity. They are very polarizing between partisan elites, but not among the partisan masses. This is perplexing given that we live in an uncivil era of "primal" partisan identities that typically bias how citizens perceive political issues (Iyengar and Westwood, 2015). So why do voter ID laws not divide the public? The simple answer is Republicans have overwhelmingly won the "framing war." Their argument that voter fraud is a serious problem that should be remedied with voter ID laws has been very persuasive, unsurprisingly among Republicans but also among Democrats. Moreover, for both Democrats and, especially, Republicans, believing in the existence of serious voter fraud has largely rendered the Democratic voter suppression argument powerless to elicit substantial opposition to voter ID laws. Only when citizens believe that voter fraud is *not at all* a problem have both Democrats and Republicans been open to the voter suppression argument, and even when they believe voter suppression is highly likely that still does not necessarily result in opposition to voter ID. But this begs the question: What has motivated Democrats and Republicans in how they respond to the elite framing of the voter ID issue?

Our research has addressed that important deficit in our knowledge. We explored three possible factors that could shape voter ID attitudes: partisan motivated reasoning, strategic reasoning, and moral conviction. Generally, the data supported H1–H4. As predicted, we found no evidence that partisans are adopting attitudes on voter ID out of simple motivated reasoning; stronger partisans do not echo the party line more closely than weaker partisans. Such findings keep with previous research on framing that suggests the impact of party cues will be weaker in nonpolarized issue environments and where there is substantial

information about an issue (Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus, 2013; Bullock, 2011). Instead, we found evidence for strategic reasoning and moral conviction.

On electoral reforms, like voter ID laws, some citizens try to act on their party's behalf by engaging in strategic thinking (Bowler and Donovan, 2007). Indeed, for Democrats, strategic reasoning had a significant impact on their perceptions of voter fraud and their opinions on voter ID. But, astonishingly, the Democrats who were most willing to think strategically were the same ones most likely both to believe that voter fraud was a serious problem and to support voter ID laws—the *opposite* of the Democratic positions. At first, these findings make no sense. But in the context of the framing of the issue *and* our understanding of how citizens “think,” they make perfect sense. The voter fraud argument was framed in nonpartisan terms and designed to appeal to “commonsense,” with a subtext of racial cues; it was a powerful message, while the counterargument of rare voter fraud was weaker. So “following the news” did not help Democrats decipher their party's position with respect to either the frame or the laws. Therefore, Democrats may have fallen back on their own beliefs to generate the needed “facts” for their strategic calculations. As Achen and Bartels (2016: 294–95) explain, citizens often act as though they are “thinking” when in reality they are making faulty inferences based on folk wisdom and other biases—essentially “pseudo-thinking” that results in inaccurate conclusions. Democrats may have thought that they were reasoning strategically about the voter ID issue, but instead they were victims of their own ignorance and the successful framing of the Republican Party, as many let their ideologically conservative identities and racial biases dictate their “thinking.”

Strategic reasoning also significantly influenced how some Republicans reacted to the voter fraud frame. But they got it “right”: Republicans who were willing to think strategically were also more likely to adopt the Republican position that voter fraud is a serious problem. Republicans were not necessarily more competent at strategic thinking than Democrats, so much as the information environment made it much easier for them to be accurate—to guess “right”—in their reasoning. The strong voter fraud frame flooded the airways (Fogarty et al., 2015), making it simple for Republicans who followed the news to understand its “common-sense” arguments. Like Democrats, they assumed that this must be “*their*” party's argument, and they were right.

Moral conviction was also important in leading Republicans to support voter ID laws. By emphasizing enforcing the law and preventing illegal voting, the fraud frame drew attention to the moral concerns at stake in the debate. This helps explain both why Republicans tended to moralize the voter ID issue, and then why their support was so resistant to the Democrats' voter suppression frame (Ryan, 2014; Van Bavel et al., 2012). Once citizens begin to think about an issue in moral terms, they become unwilling to compromise (Ryan, 2016). So, to the extent the initial voter fraud frame encouraged people to moralize the voter ID issue, it likely made them largely immune to later arguments such as voter suppression. This appears to have been the case, especially for many Republicans. These findings on moral conviction not only elucidate the voter ID debate, but they also provide a powerful demonstration of how framing can shape the moral construal of issues, and thus moral convictions and public opinion.

Overall, our research highlights the need for scholars to investigate more deeply questions of partisan motivation around important issues such as voter ID laws. Previous research has emphasized the role of partisan motivated reasoning. But we have shown how strategic reasoning and moral conviction become part of partisan battles, shaping how citizens respond to elite messages or frames. Both merit more attention in the future.

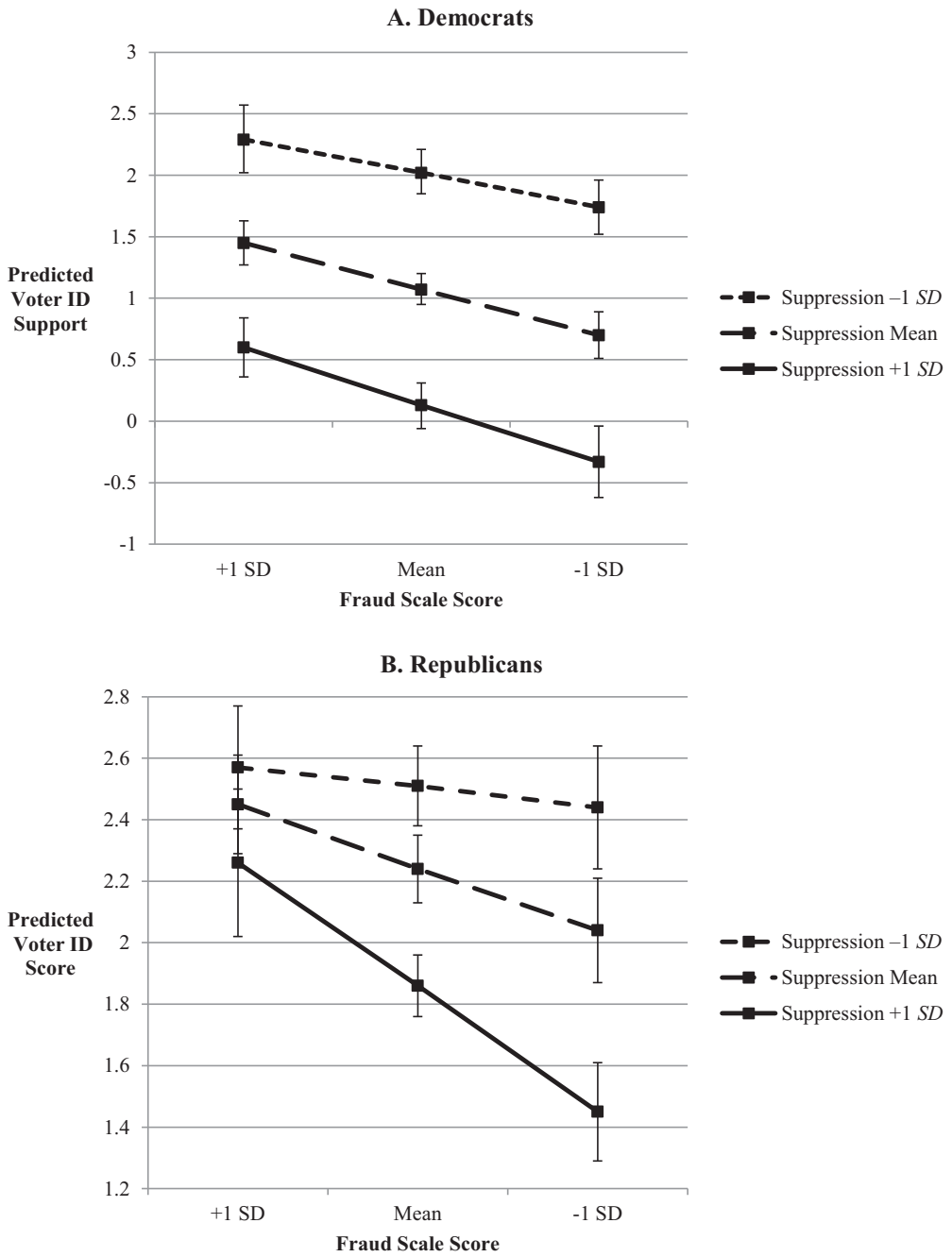
Appendix: Interaction of Frames

This appendix provides further information regarding the interaction of the voter fraud and voter suppression frames modeled in Table 4. Panel A in Figure A1 plots the interaction among Democrats. The x -axis represents fraud scale values at their mean ± 1 SD among Democrats ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 2.91$). Predicted voter ID support values are represented on the y -axis. Perceptions of voter suppression are factored into the interaction also at that variable's mean ± 1 SD among Democrats ($M = 1.15$, $SD = 0.92$).

For Democrats who perceive roughly no likelihood of voter suppression—indicated at -1 SD on voter suppression—the predicted support for voter ID laws declines by only 0.57 units as they move from high to low ($+1$ to -1 SD) perceptions of the severity of voter fraud. As Democrats perceive a higher chance of voter suppression, the same 2 SD high to low comparison across voter fraud perceptions produces a larger decline in voter ID support. That drop increases to 0.74 units at the voter suppression mean, and 0.98 units at the $+1$ SD value that indicates a moderate perceived likelihood of voter suppression. But most important is that the interaction of the two frames generally produces *support* for voter ID. Notably, *only* when Democrats jointly report the highest likelihood that suppression occurs *and* the lowest perceived severity of voter fraud does their predicted support score place them in opposition to voter ID laws; even then, their predicted opposition is mild given that a -3 score indicates the most intense opposition to voter ID. So, among Democrats, the interaction shows a moderated effect of the two frames on voter ID support: Democrats' acceptance of the Republican fraud frame increases their support for voter ID laws, while reducing the effect of their own party's suppression frame, thus making opposition unlikely.

Panel B in Figure A1 plots the interaction among Republicans, again calculated for the mean ± 1 SD for the voter fraud ($M = 6.65$, $SD = 2.83$) and suppression ($M = 0.50$, $SD = 0.73$) frames among these partisans. For Republicans reporting no likelihood of voter suppression (-1 SD)—those who totally reject the Democratic suppression frame—their voter ID support is relatively impervious to changes in the perceived severity of voter fraud in elections. Specifically, their predicted voter ID support declines just 0.14 units comparing ± 1 SD from their fraud frame mean, with support remaining roughly at a high value of 2.5 units despite that decline. As Republicans rank voter fraud from high to less severe, there is a 0.41 unit decline in voter ID support at the voter suppression mean, and that decline increases to 0.81 units at $+1$ SD on the suppression item—roughly a moderate perceived likelihood of voter suppression. Thus, a moderating effect between the two frames is again observed, though it manifests differently for Republicans. As panel B shows, the more that typical Republicans believe their party's fraud frame, the more immune they are to effects from accepting the Democratic suppression frame. This makes sense given that Republicans moralize the voter ID issue, and moralization makes attitudes less open to compromise and challenge (Ryan, 2016). And, it is in contrast to Democrats for whom the plotted effects in panel A are more clearly parallel to and statistically distinguishable from one another. Moreover, at no point are Republicans predicted to oppose voter ID laws, no matter how strongly they jointly reject the fraud frame and accept the suppression frame.

FIGURE A1
Support for Voter ID Laws, Fraud Scale \times Vote Suppression Interactions



REFERENCES

- Aarøe, Lene. 2011. "Investigating Frame Strength: The Case of Episodic and Thematic Frames." *Political Communication* 28(2):207–26.
- Achen, Christopher H., and Larry M. Bartels. 2016. *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Ansolabehere, Stephen, and Nathaniel Persily. 2008. "Vote Fraud in the Eye of the Beholder: The Role of Public Opinion in the Challenge to Voter Identification Requirements." *Harvard Law Review* 121:1738–74.
- Ash, Arlene S., and John W. Lamperti. 2013. "Elections 2012: Suppressing Fraud or Suppressing the Vote?" *Statistics, Politics, and Policy* 4(1):14–28.
- Atkeson, Lonna Rae, R. Michael Alvarez, Thad E. Hall, and J. Andrew Sinclair. 2014. "Balancing Fraud Prevention and Electoral Participation: Attitudes Toward Voter Participation." *Social Science Quarterly* 95(5):1381–98.
- Banks, Antoine J., and Heather M. Hicks. 2016. "Fear and Implicit Racism: Whites' Support for Voter ID Laws." *Political Psychology* 37(5):641–58.
- Bartels, Larry M. 2002. "Beyond the Running Tally: Partisan Bias in Political Perceptions." *Political Behavior* 24(2):117–51.
- Bentele, Keith G., and Erin E. O'Brien. 2013. "Jim Crow 2.0? Why States Consider and Adopt Restrictive Voter Access Policies." *Perspectives on Politics* 11(4):1088–1116.
- Bowler, Shaun, and Todd Donovan. 2007. "Reasoning About Institutional Change: Winners, Losers and Support for Electoral Reforms." *British Journal of Political Science* 37(3):455–76.
- Bullock, John G. 2011. "Elite Influence on Public Opinion in an Informed Electorate." *American Political Science Review* 105(3):496–515.
- Chong, Dennis, and James N. Druckman. 2007. "Framing Public Opinion in Competitive Democracies." *American Political Science Review* 101(4):637–55.
- . 2013. "Counterframing Effects." *Journal of Politics* 75(1):1–16.
- Daprice, Lucas. 2015. *Scott Walker Says Most Americans Support Voter ID Laws, Which Make it Easier to Vote Harder to Cheat*. Available at (<http://www.politifact.com/wisconsin/statements/2015/jun/29/scott-walker-scott-wal>).
- Dreier, Peter, and Christopher R. Martin. 2010. "How ACORN Was Framed: Political Controversy and Media Agenda Setting." *Perspectives on Politics* 8(3):761–92.
- Druckman, James N., Erik Peterson, and Rune Slothuus. 2013. "How Elite Polarization Affects Public Opinion Formation." *American Political Science Review* 107(1):57–79.
- Fogarty, Brian J., Jessica Curtis, Patricia Frances Gourzien, David C. Kimball, and Eric C. Vorst. 2015. "News Attention to Voter Fraud in the 2008 and 2012 US Elections." *Research & Politics* 2(2):1–8.
- Groves, Robert M., Floyd J. Fowler, Jr., Mick P. Couper, James M. Lepkowski, Eleanor Singer, and Roger Tourangeau. 2009. *Survey Methodology*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons.
- Hicks, William D., Seth C. McKee, Mitchell D. Sellers, and Daniel D. Smith. 2015. "A Principle or a Strategy? Voter Identification Laws and Partisan Competition in the American States." *Political Research Quarterly* 68(1):18–33.
- Huddy, Leonie, Lilliana Mason, and Lene Aarøe. 2015. "Expressive Partisanship: Campaign Involvement, Political Emotion, and Partisan Identity." *American Political Science Review* 109(1):1–17.
- Iyengar, Shanto, and Sean J. Westwood. 2015. "Fear and Loathing Across Party Lines: New Evidence on Group Polarization." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(3):690–707.
- Kuklinski, James H., and Paul J. Quirk. 2000. "Reconsidering the Rational Public: Cognition, Heuristics, and Mass Opinion." Pp. 153–82 in Arthur Lupia, Matthew McCubbins, and Samuel Popkins, eds., *Elements of Reason: Cognition, Choice and the Bounds of Rationality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Levitt, Justin. 2007. *The Truth About Voter Fraud*. The Brennan Center for Justice. Available at (<https://www.brennancenter.org/publication/truth-about-voter-fraud>).
- Lurie, Stephen. 2014. "Democrats, Stop Fighting Voter ID Laws." *Washington Post* May 30.

- Mann, Thomas E., and Norman J. Ornstein. 2012. *It's Even Worse Than it Looks: How the American Constitutional System Collided with the New Politics of Extremism*. New York: Basic Books.
- McKee, Seth C. 2015. "Politics Is Local: State Legislator Voting on Restrictive Voter Identification Legislation." *Research & Politics* 2(3):1–7.
- Minnite, Lorraine C. 2010. *The Myth of Voter Fraud*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Petrocik, John. 2009. "Measuring Party Support: Leaners Are Not Independents." *Electoral Studies* 28(4):562–72.
- Rasmussen Polls. 2013. "59% Believe Voter Id Laws Do Not Discriminate." October 2. Available at (http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/general_politics/september_2013/59_believe_voter_id_laws_do_not_discriminate).
- Ryan, Timothy J. 2014. "Reconsidering Moral Issues in Politics." *Journal of Politics* 76(2):380–97.
- . 2016. "No Compromise: Political Consequences of Moralized Attitudes." *American Journal of Political Science*, Online First. Available at (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ajps.12248/full>).
- Skitka, Linda J. 2010. "The Psychology of Moral Conviction." *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 4(4):267–81.
- Slothuus, Rune, and Claes H. de Vreese. 2010. "Political Parties, Motivated Reasoning, and Issue Framing Effects." *Journal of Politics* 72(3):630–45.
- Smith, Daniel A., Caroline A. Tolbert, and Amanda M. Keller. 2010. "Electoral and Structural Losers and Support for a National Referendum in the U.S." *Electoral Studies* 29(3):509–20.
- Sniderman, Paul, Richard A. Brody, and Philip E. Tetlock. 1991. *Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Taber, Charles S., and Milton Lodge. 2006. "Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs." *American Journal of Political Science* 50(3):755–69.
- Tyler, Tom R. 2006. *Why People Obey the Law*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Valentino, Nicholas A., and Fabian G. Neuner. 2017. "Why the Sky Didn't Fall: Mobilizing Anger in Reaction to Voter ID Laws." *Political Psychology* 38(2):331–50.
- Van Bavel, J. J., D. J. Packer, I. J. Haas, and W. A. Cunningham. 2012. "The Importance of Moral Construal: Moral Versus Non-Moral Construal Elicits Faster, More Extreme, Universal Evaluations of the Same Actions." *PLoS One* 7(11):e48693.
- Wang, Tova Andrea. 2012. *The Politics of Voter Suppression: Defending and Expanding Americans' Right to Vote*. Ithaca, NY: Century Foundation, Cornell University Press.
- Weiser, Wendy R., and Lawrence Norden. 2012. *Voting Law Changes in 2012*. Brennan Center for Justice. Available at (https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/Democracy/VRE/Brennan_Voting_Law_V10.pdf).
- Wilson, David C., and Paul R. Brewer. 2013. "The Foundations of Public Opinion on Voter ID Laws." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 77(4):962–84.
- . 2014. "Racial Imagery and Support for Voter ID Laws." *Race and Social Problems* 6(4):365–71.
- . 2016. "Do Frames Emphasizing Harm to Age and Racial-Ethnic Groups Reduce Support for Voter ID Laws?" *Social Science Quarterly* 97(2):391–406.