

PARTISAN BIAS AMONG U.S. MILITARY
SERVICE MEMBERS AND VETERANS

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ABSTRACT

Scholars argue that growing partisanship among U.S. military service members and veterans erodes the military's apolitical social norms and threatens healthy civil-military relations. I investigate this question by examining how service members' and veterans' partisan attitudes and apolitical social norms affect their opinions about partisan political activities. In an original survey experiment, military service members and veterans were asked to judge the appropriateness of three political activities which benefitted either their preferred party, the opposing party, or an unspecified party. I find that service members and veterans judge political activities that benefit their preferred party to be more appropriate than activities that benefit the opposing party. Additionally, I find inconclusive evidence that apolitical social norms moderate this effect. These findings suggest that concerns about rising partisanship and political activism in the military may be warranted.

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Do or do not. There is no try.

—Yoda

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INTRODUCTION

The U.S. military's apolitical tradition is an integral part of American civil-military relations (Bacevich and Kohn 1997; Golby, Dropp, and Feaver 2012, 2013; Huntington 1957; Janowitz 1960; Kohn 2002; Liebert and Golby 2017; Owens 2015). Keeping the armed forces out of politics allows the U.S. to maintain a large, powerful military without it becoming a threat to the state it defends (Feaver 1996; Huntington 1957; Snider and Nielsen 2009). Yet, maintaining a politically neutral military is not simply a matter of restricting service members' political conduct. Members of the armed services are also citizens. It would be legally and normatively problematic to deny them all their political rights. So while the Department of Defense (DoD) does prohibit blatantly partisan conduct (US Department of Defense 2008; US Government 2016), the military's apolitical culture depends as much on *apolitical social norms* as it does on rules and regulations (Betros 2001; Brooks 2013, 2019; Golby, Dropp, and Feaver 2012; Holsti 2001, 2004; Kohn 2002; Liebert and Golby 2017). Military leaders cultivate and reinforce social norms to discourage service members from participating in political activities that might create the impression that the military has a partisan bias (Betros 2001; Kohn 2002).

Despite the importance of this apolitical tradition, few researchers have explored the partisan attitudes and political social norms of military service members. A handful of studies indicate that since the 1990s, some service members have become more partisan, more politically active, and less likely to conform to longstanding apolitical traditions (Betros 2001; Dempsey 2009; Feaver and Kohn 2001; Holsti 1998, 2001; Urban 2014, 2014, 2018). Civil-military relations scholars warn that these trends threaten to erode the military's apolitical ethos (Bacevich and Kohn 1997; Betros 2001; Golby, Dropp, and Feaver 2012, 2013; Kohn 2002; Liebert and Golby 2017; Owens 2015). Moreover, their concerns are not limited to current

service members. Some authors contend that political activism by veterans is also harmful to civil-military relations (Becker 2001; Cook 2008; Golby, Dropp, and Feaver 2012, 2013).

Though empirical evidence is lacking, there are nevertheless good reasons to believe that growing partisanship may affect service members' political decision making. Political scientists have amassed considerable evidence that partisanship strongly influences political attitudes and behavior (Bartels 2000, 2002; Campbell et al. 1960; Cohen 2003; Dalton 2016; Fiorina 2002; Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002; Huddy, Mason, and Aarøe 2015; Jacoby 1988; Nicholson 2012; Popkin 1994). Partisanship often dominates other considerations when it comes to political decision-making (Bolsen, Druckman, and Cook 2014; Cohen 2003; Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013; Mullinix 2018), distorts information processing and reasoning (Bolsen, Druckman, and Cook 2014; Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013; Taber, Cann, and Kucsova 2009; Taber and Lodge 2006), and can even affect people's normative judgments about right and wrong (Anduiza, Gallego, and Muñoz 2013; Beaulieu 2014; Cortina and Rottinghaus 2017; Walter and Redlawsk 2019).

Nonetheless, we do not know if—given the military's apolitical norms—partisanship is similarly influential among service members. This study takes a step toward filling this knowledge gap. In the sections that follow, I report the findings of an original three-condition survey experiment in which 728 service members and veterans were asked to judge the appropriateness of three political activities: attending a political campaign event, expressing support for a political party to others in the military, and encouraging others in the military to vote for a political candidate. I measure how party identification, strong partisanship, and strength of apolitical norms influence these judgments. I find that partisanship exerts a significant influence on service members' and veterans' attitudes. More specifically, service

members and veterans judge political activities that benefit their preferred party as more appropriate than activities that benefit the opposing party. Additionally, strong partisans are more supportive of political activity regardless of which party benefits. The evidence on the influence of apolitical norms, however, is inconclusive. Those who express strong support for the norms are not less biased in their judgments compared to those with weaker support for the norms. However, additional factors appear to influence the strength of apolitical norms, including the number of years spent in the military, the type of norm, and the type of political activity.

The results of this study show that scholars' concerns about partisanship among military service members and veterans are warranted. Increasing partisanship among service members and veterans is likely to have important consequences for civil-military relations and the military itself. A partisan military could undermine the military's relationship with political leaders who depend on military advice that is free from partisan motives (Bacevich and Kohn 1997). Political neutrality also helps the military retain the trust of the American people. The military is one of the most trusted institutions in America (Pew Research Center 2018, 2019). However, if Americans see the military as a partisan institution, their trust may polarize along partisan lines (Hetherington and Rudolph 2015). Avoiding overt partisanship is important within the military as well. Political neutrality preserves order, discipline, and teamwork in military units. Among the general public, there has been a troubling increase in the hostility, anger, and resentment partisans feel toward those from the "other" party (Iyengar et al. 2019). In a military context, this kind of partisan conflict could undermine unit cohesion and teamwork. Consequently, understanding how partisanship and apolitical norms influence service members' and veterans' political judgments is important not only to scholars but to military and political leaders as well.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Political Neutrality and Civil-Military Relations

Political neutrality is a central tenet of American civil-military relations (Bacevich and Kohn 1997; Huntington 1957; Janowitz 1960; Kohn 2002; Liebert and Golby 2017; Owens 2015). The importance of political neutrality stems from its essential role in managing what Peter Feaver calls the *civil-military problematique* (1996). The problematique is a paradoxical problem at the heart of civil-military relations. The state must have a military powerful enough to defend it, but a powerful military can also threaten the state it is meant to defend (Feaver 1996; Huntington 1957; Snider and Nielsen 2009). In the American case, the problematique was not as much of a concern before World War II. The military—especially the U.S. Army—was a small professional force that mobilized only in times of war. Things changed as a result of the Cold War. The American policy of containment required a large standing military to counter Soviet influence (Stewart 2009, 2010).

Concerned about the implications of this new civil-military reality, Samuel Huntington (1957) proposed what became a widely accepted theory of civil-military relations that purported to resolve the problematique (Snider and Nielsen 2009). Huntington's solution—which he called *objective military control*—was to strip the military of all political power in order to clearly separate the political and military spheres (1957). This solved the problematique by ensuring that the military did not interfere in the political sphere and remained subject to civilian control. In exchange, political leaders would allow the military to operate mostly autonomously within the military sphere. Essential to this arrangement was a *professional* officer corps, and for Huntington, political neutrality was a vital component of that professionalism.

Over the past half-century, the American civil-military establishment has widely embraced the view that a non-partisan military is essential for healthy civil-military relations (Bacevich and Kohn 1997; Golby, Dropp, and Feaver 2012, 2013; Janowitz 1960; Kohn 2002; Liebert and Golby 2017; Owens 2015). To some degree, political neutrality is maintained through formal rules and regulations that restrict blatantly partisan political activity (US Department of Defense 2008; US Government 2016). For example, service members may not participate in political fundraising, speak at a partisan gathering, or appear at a partisan event wearing a military uniform. Moreover, officers can be charged with a crime under the Uniform Code of Military Justice contemptuous speech against public officials.

Nevertheless, these formal restrictions are necessarily limited. Service members are still American citizens with political rights. It would be legally problematic and normatively troubling to deny service members all access to the political process or comprehensively restrict their political speech. Consequently, there are many political activities which, although permitted by DoD regulations, could nevertheless create an impression that the military prefers one party over another (US Department of Defense 2008). For example, service members can write a letter to a newspaper editor in which they clearly identify themselves as a service member as long as they include a short disclaimer. They can also join partisan clubs, display partisan bumper stickers, and attend partisan rallies.

Because of this substantial “gray area” surrounding service members’ political conduct, military leaders and civil-military relations scholars have recognized the importance of cultivating and sustaining *apolitical social norms* (Betros 2001; Brooks 2013, 2019; Golby, Dropp, and Feaver 2012; Holsti 2001, 2004; Kohn 2002; Liebert and Golby 2017). Social norms are informal or “unwritten” rules that influence behavior (Bicchieri 2005; Cialdini, Reno, and

Kallgren 1990). *Descriptive* social norms define what typical or normal behavior is, whereas *injunctive* norms are “rules or beliefs as to what constitutes morally approved and disapproved conduct” (Cialdini, Reno, and Kallgren 1990, 1015). In other words, the military’s apolitical norms tell service members what everyone else “is” doing and what “ought” to be done regarding professionalism and partisan politics.

Senior military leaders have endeavored to embed both types of social norms into the military’s culture (Betros 2001; Holsti 2001; Owens 2015). Examples of injunctive norms include the idea that the military has an obligation to defend all Americans regardless of their political beliefs, that it must be loyal to the Constitution rather than a leader or political party, and it must remain subordinate to democratically elected officials no matter their political party. Military leaders emphasize that the military is and will remain a non-partisan institution, and they discourage service members from participating in any political activity that might create the impression that the military favors one political party (Cooper 2018; Garamone 2016).

Military leaders have also tried to create descriptive apolitical norms—often by role modeling apolitical behavior that goes beyond the regulations (Bacevich and Kohn 1997; Betros 2001; Kohn 2002). One of the most admired American military leaders of World War II, General George C. Marshall, refused to vote even though there was (and still is) no prohibition against it (Uldrich 2005). Indeed, abstention from voting was a widely held social norm among senior military officers in the years following World War II (Van Riper and Unwalla 1965). General and later Secretary of Defense James Mattis emphasized that he never registered with a political party (Cooper 2018). Retired Army General David Petraeus told reporters he does not vote and tries to remain apolitical even in retirement (Shelbourne 2016). Secretary of Defense Mark Esper

recently sent a memorandum to all DoD employees which urged them to maintain the Department's "longstanding tradition of remaining apolitical" (Esper 2020).

Despite military leaders' efforts, scholars have repeatedly warned civil-military relations are under threat from an increasingly partisan and politically active military (Bacevich and Kohn 1997; Betros 2001; Golby, Dropp, and Feaver 2012, 2013; Kohn 2002; Liebert and Golby 2017; Owens 2015). Though many authors have sounded this alarm, few have explored these assertions empirically to determine if the military is indeed becoming more partisan, and if so, whether increased partisanship is eroding apolitical norms.

How Partisan is the Military?

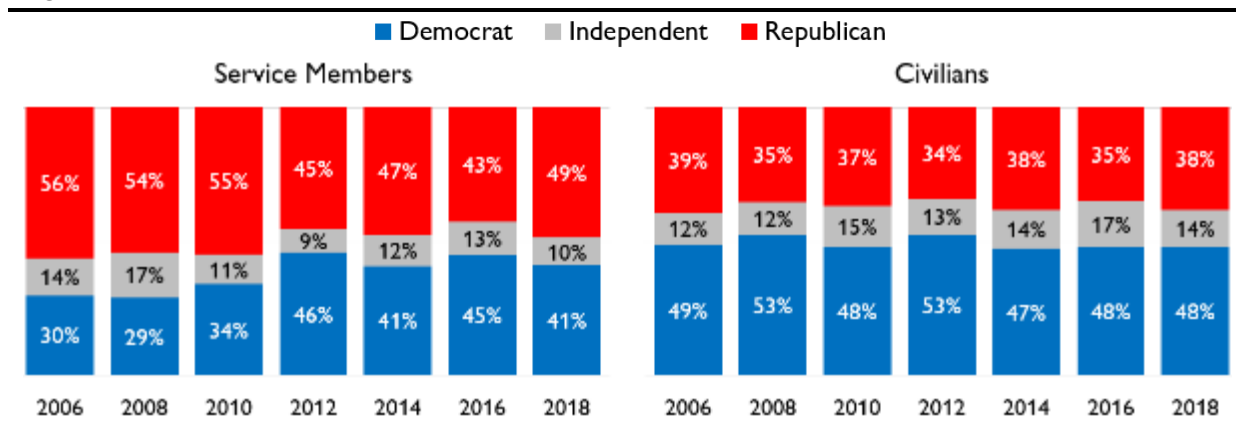
Our understanding of partisan attitudes among military service members is incomplete at best, and what has been done focuses mostly on military officers. A series of surveys from 1976-1999 found that officers were, over time, becoming gradually more partisan (Feaver and Kohn 2001; Holsti 1998, 2001). In 1976, 46% of military officers identified as Independents. But by 1999, that number dropped to 22%. More recent studies find that officer partisanship persisted in the 2000s (Dempsey 2009; Liebert and Golby 2017; Urban 2014). Research is even more limited on partisanship among enlisted service members. Dempsey (2009), however, finds that enlisted service members are less likely to identify as Republican or Democrat than officers or civilians, but that higher ranking enlistees are more likely to identify as partisans. While these studies hint at increasing partisanship in parts of the military, more definitive evidence is needed.

To paint a clearer picture of service members' partisan attitudes, I analyzed data from the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (2020). The CCES is a national stratified sample survey of over fifty thousand people administered by YouGov. Beginning in 2006, the CCES identified service members by asking respondents if they are currently serving in the U.S.

military. Although the CCES data do not distinguish between officers and enlistees, they nevertheless provide a more complete sense of how military attitudes have changed over time and how they compare to civilians.

First, I examined whether military respondents in the CCES are more Independent than the public. Earlier studies argue that declining numbers of Independent military officers is a sign of increasing partisanship (Feaver and Kohn 2001; Holsti 1998, 2001). The CCES data confirm that the number of Independent service members has decreased by 4% since 2006. Moreover, military service members are not more Independent than the general public. In 2018, 10% of active duty service members identified as non-leaning Independents compared to 14% of civilians (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Party Identification: Service Members and Civilians, 2006-2018



Note 1: Independents who lean Republican or Democrat are counted as partisans consistent with previous findings that “leaners” are closer to copartisans than to Independents (Petrocik 2009; Theodoridis 2017).

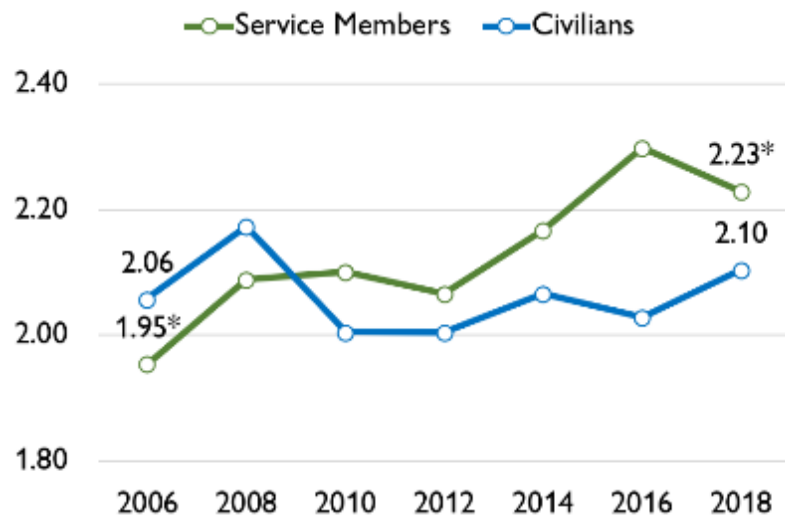
Note 2: “Not Sure” omitted.

Source: CCES Common Content 2006-2018 (Cooperative Congressional Election Study 2020)

Next, I examined partisanship strength. Some authors suggest that fewer Independent service members are not a concern because most are weak partisans (Betros 2001; Hooker 2004; Urban 2013, 2014). The CCES data, however, do not support this argument. Using the same data

from 2006-2018, I coded strong partisans (3), weak partisans (2), leaning partisans (1), and true independents (0), then calculated the weighted mean each year for service members and civilian respondents. I also tested for significant differences between the two in the first and last years of the data using the Wald test. The results (Figure 2) show that in 2006, service members were weaker partisans than the general public ($F(1, 28,701) = 4.18, p = 0.0408$). However, this is no longer true—as of 2018, service members were slightly *stronger* partisans than their civilian counterparts ($F(1, 51,168) = 3.86, p = 0.0496$).

Figure 2. Partisan Strength Change: Service Members and Civilians, 2006-2018



Note: Adjusted Wald tests significant at $*p < .05$

Source: CCES Common Content 2006-2018 (Cooperative Congressional Election Study 2020)

Implications for Civil-Military Relations

The preceding analyses indicate that military service members are neither more Independent nor weaker partisans than the general public, as some authors argue. Although this provides a better understanding of service members' partisan attitudes, the consequences for the military's apolitical tradition remain unclear. Partisanship is not antithetical to political neutrality

per se unless it gives rise to actions that harm civil-military relations. Ideally, apolitical norms should prevent this from happening.

Yet, there are only a few studies that examine the interaction of partisanship and apolitical norms, and their findings are mixed. Some authors argue that military partisanship is mostly benign because partisan service members are not very politically active (beyond voting) and do not hold ideologically extreme positions. (Dempsey 2009; Dowd 2001; Feaver and Kohn 2001; Urben 2013, 2014). Other findings, however, hint at cracks in the military's apolitical culture (Urben 2013, 2018). Urben (2013), for example, asked Army officers about their attitudes on criticizing political leaders—a long-held social norm. She finds that although most officers still believe it is wrong, fewer supported the norm in Urben's study compared to previous research. Urben's subsequent study of social media use by military officers and cadets finds that "a striking percentage of those surveyed indicated their military friends...engaged in insulting, rude, or disdainful comments directed at politicians, elected officials, and the President" (2018, 39).

In sum, scholars and military leaders have long recognized that the military must remain non-partisan, and that the military's apolitical norm is central to that effort. Yet, CCES survey data show that military service members are neither less Independent nor weaker in their partisan attitudes than the general public. An important question, then, is whether these partisan attitudes conflict with the military's apolitical norms.

Partisanship, Party Cues, and Motivated Reasoning

Partisanship is among the most powerful influences on citizens' political attitudes and behavior (Bartels 2000, 2002; Campbell et al. 1960; Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002; Huddy, Mason, and Aarøe 2015; Popkin 1994). When people identify as Republicans or

Democrats, that partisan identity often overwhelms other considerations when it comes to political decision-making (Bolsen, Druckman, and Cook 2014; Cohen 2003; Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013; Mullinix 2018). Partisanship can distort information processing and reasoning (Bolsen, Druckman, and Cook 2014; Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013; Taber, Cann, and Kucsova 2009; Taber and Lodge 2006), and can even affect people's normative judgments about right and wrong (Anduiza, Gallego, and Muñoz 2013; Beaulieu 2014; Cortina and Rottinghaus 2017; Walter and Redlawsk 2019). Given the dominant influence of partisanship among the general public, it is reasonable to suspect that it shapes service members' attitudes as well—potentially in ways that conflict with the military's apolitical ethos.

For example, the presence of *partisan cues* may blunt the influence of nonpartisan norms when it comes to making decisions about whether political activities are normatively appropriate. Partisan cues are one of the primary means by which partisanship exerts its considerable influence (Cohen 2003; Dalton 2016; Fiorina 2002; Jacoby 1988; Nicholson 2012; Popkin 1994). For many citizens, partisan cues help them make political choices without investing much time in learning the details of policy proposals or candidate platforms. Instead, people simply support the policies that are endorsed by their party and oppose policies endorsed by the other party. (Bolsen, Druckman, and Cook 2014; Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013; Goren 2002; Nicholson 2012; Ramirez and Erickson 2014).

Although partisan cues make for quick and easy political choices, they can also bias decision-making (Bolsen, Druckman, and Cook 2014; Cohen 2003; Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013; Kraft, Lodge, and Taber 2015). In a classic study on partisan cues, Cohen (2003) found that partisans abandoned their ideological positions and followed their party's cue when they were told that their party supported an ideologically opposite policy. It is plausible that

partisan service members might abandon apolitical norms in a similar fashion when partisan cues are present.

Motivated reasoning is another way partisanship might structure service members' decision making. Motivated reasoning refers to the ways that people shape reasoning processes to reach their preferred conclusions (Kunda 1990). Motivated reasoning can be beneficial when *accuracy* is the goal. In that case, people are motivated to reach a "correct" conclusion without error or bias. Frequently, however, people are motivated by a *directional* goal. That is, they try to reach a *particular* conclusion that is consistent with their prior beliefs or social identities, and it does not matter if the conclusion is accurate or objective.

Scholars argue that biased judgments like the ones seen in Cohen's (2003) study are the result of *partisan motivated reasoning* (Bolsen, Druckman, and Cook 2014; Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013; Taber, Cann, and Kucsova 2009; Taber and Lodge 2006). Partisan motivated reasoning is a type of directional reasoning in which partisans seek to reach conclusions consistent with their partisan beliefs and identity. Partisans search for and accept evidence which confirms their existing beliefs while devaluing or disregarding contradictory facts (Kunda 1987, 1990; Rudolph 2006; Taber, Cann, and Kucsova 2009; Taber and Lodge 2006), or they selectively interpreting facts in ways that fit their preferred partisan viewpoints (Bisgaard 2019).

If the limit of partisan motivated reasoning was to bias policy and candidate preferences, partisanship among military members would not be of much concern. However, recent scholarship has found that partisan motivated reasoning can influence normative political judgments as well (Anduiza, Gallego, and Muñoz 2013; Beaulieu 2014; Cortina and Rottinghaus 2017; Walter and Redlawsk 2019). For example, partisans are more forgiving of political corruption when the perpetrators are copartisans (Anduiza, Gallego, and Muñoz 2013), and they

express less concern about voter fraud when they think it might help their preferred candidate win (Beaulieu 2014). Moreover, partisans tend to be more lenient toward politicians from their own party who commit moral violations (Walter and Redlawsk 2019). When participants in one study were presented with manufactured evidence of illegal acts by President Obama, Democrats continued to approve of the president while Republicans called for his impeachment (Cortina and Rottinghaus 2017). Since service members' political decisions are ostensibly informed by apolitical normative considerations, partisan motivated reasoning is a potentially serious threat to apolitical norms.

In sum, there is good reason to believe that partisanship may conflict with the military's apolitical norms. When service members make decisions about political activities, their partisan identities may push them in one direction while apolitical norms pull them in another. The literature reviewed above suggests three expectations for this study. First, I expect service members to evaluate political activity differently depending on which party benefits. The presence of a same party cue should make service members more supportive of political activity, whereas an opposing party cue should make them less supportive (Cohen 2003).

Hypothesis 1. Military service members and veterans will view partisan activities that benefit their preferred party as more appropriate and will view activities that benefit the opposing party as less appropriate.

Second, I expect strong partisans to be more responsive to party cues than weak partisans and leaners since strong partisans are more likely to directionally reason consistent with their partisan identity (Bullock 2011; Cohen 2003; Lavine, Johnston, and Steenbergen 2012).

Hypothesis 2. Military service members and veterans who are strong partisans will exhibit more partisan bias when judging the appropriateness of partisan activities.

Finally, I expect that those with strong apolitical norms will be less likely to exhibit partisan bias regardless of which party they prefer (Bicchieri 2005; Cialdini, Reno, and Kallgren 1990).

Hypothesis 3. Military service members and veterans with stronger apolitical social norms will be less likely to exhibit partisan bias when judging the appropriateness of partisan activities.

DATA AND MEASURES

Data

To test these hypotheses, I analyze data from an original survey experiment fielded by Qualtrics from January 17-29, 2020. Qualtrics contacted 2,535 respondents, and 1075 (42%) completed the survey. The target population was service members and veterans; thus, the sample was gathered using a quota system to reflect the military and veteran population while also including enough individuals from underrepresented groups in order to test for heterogeneous treatment effects. The race (70% white, 15% black, 15% other/multiracial) and gender (80% male, 20% female) quotas were based on 2018 DoD demographics data (Department of Defense 2018). Partisanship quotas were based on the 2018 CCES data which showed that service members and veterans skew Republican (Schaffner, Ansolabehere, and Luks 2019). The resulting sample was 40% Democrats and 60% Republican and was roughly evenly split between service members and veterans. Although I am primarily interested in service members, including veterans allows me to analyze whether apolitical norms persist after leaving the military. Additionally, some scholars have suggested that political activism by veterans—particularly retired senior officers—may affect public perceptions of the military (Becker 2001; Cook 2008; Golby, Dropp, and Feaver 2012, 2013). Thus, the political attitudes of veterans are important to civil-military relations.

This study was embedded in a larger survey experiment. In that study, 345 participants received a psychological prime related to the military's apolitical norm. Those respondents, as those with critical missing data, are omitted from this analysis. The resulting sample consisted of 728 participants. The sample demographics are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Sample Demographics.

	Coding	Mean	Std. Dev.
Military Status	0=Veteran, 1=Service Member	.47	.50
Party Identification	1 (Strong. Dem) to 6 (Strong. Rep)	3.92	2.05
Ideology	1 (Extremely Lib) to 7 (Extremely Cons)	3.98	1.99
Education	1 (<High School) to 6 (Doctoral Degree)	4.27	1.37
Age	In Years, Min=18, Max=81	42.85	16.54
Gender	0=Male, 1=Female	.24	.43
Race	0= White, 1=Non-White	.40	.49

Method

Treatments. The treatments were designed to trigger motivated reasoning in participants' judgments by manipulating the presence and direction of a party cue. Participants were randomly assigned one of three conditions. In each condition, participants were asked to judge how appropriate is it for military service members to participate in three types of partisan political activities. The only difference between the conditions was which party benefitted from the political activities. In the control condition, no party was specified. In the same party condition, the political activities benefitted the participant's preferred party. In the other party condition, the political activities benefitted the opposing party. (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Party Cue Treatment

How appropriate or inappropriate is it for military service members to engage in the following political activities?

- Attend a [political / Democratic / Republican] campaign event as a spectator in civilian clothes?
 - Express support for [a political / the Democratic / the Republican] party to others in their unit?
 - Encourage others in their unit to vote for a [political / Democratic / Republican] candidate?
-

Procedure. The treatments were embedded in an online survey experiment. First, participants provided military service, demographic, and partisanship information. Next, participants were randomly assigned to one of the experimental conditions and asked to make their judgments. Finally, participants answered a series of four questions that measured how strongly they identify with the military's apolitical norm.¹

Measures

Appropriateness. This is the dependent variable. It measures participants' attitudes about the appropriateness of political activity by military members. For each political activity, participants judged whether it was appropriate for service members to participate in that activity using a 5-point scale from very inappropriate (0) to very appropriate (4). I measured the responses each of these questions separately: *Attend Event* (M=2.62, SD=1.18), *Express Support* (M=2.22, SD=1.26), and *Encourage Others* (M=2.04, SD=1.32). I also combine all three to form an additive index measure (*Appropriateness*) that ranges from 0 to 12 (M=6.88, SD=3.12, $\alpha=0.77$).

¹ This experiment was embedded within another survey experiment. Subjects were randomly assigned to treatment groups in both experiments. A regression model including the previous treatment shows no statistically significant ($p<.05$) effect of the previous treatment. See Appendix Table A8 for a detailed description.

Party Cue. This variable is based on which treatment the participant received; same party cue ($n=250$), other party cue ($n=235$), or neutral (unspecified party) ($n=243$).

Norms Strength. Participants answered four questions to measure how strongly they identified with the military's apolitical norms. Bicchieri (2005) suggests that social norms consist of factual beliefs, personal normative beliefs, and social expectations. Additionally, Kam (2007) and Mullinix (2018) argue that civic norms—a type of social norm associated with normative conduct in political affairs—corresponds with an *obligation to others*. Accordingly, I constructed four questions to measure each of these aspects (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Apolitical Norms Measures

Personal Normative Beliefs	How important is it for the U.S. military to stay out of politics?
Social Expectations	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the American people trust the U.S. military because it is above partisan politics?
Factual Beliefs	To what extent do you agree or disagree that U.S. military service members should comply with the lawful orders of elected leaders regardless of whether those leaders are Democrats or Republicans?
Obligation to Others	To what extent do you agree or disagree that U.S. military service members have an obligation to the American people to stay out of politics?

I coded each response separately. *Personal Beliefs* ($M=3.51$, $SD=1.30$) was measured on a 5-point Likert scale. The other three responses were measured on a 7-point scale: *Social Expectations* ($M=5.26$, $SD=1.52$), *Factual Beliefs* ($M=5.67$, $SD=1.53$), and *Obligation to Others* ($M=5.03$, $SD=1.75$). I also created a composite measure using all four responses. A factor analysis found only one Eigenvalue > 1.00 and all four questions sufficiently loaded on a single factor (loadings ≥ 0.69). Since the norms measures were not scaled identically, I used a factor score to build the composite measure *Norms Strength* which ranges from -3.12 to 1.46 ($M=0$, $SD=1$).

Partisan Strength. Participants were first asked, “Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?” Those who selected Independent were prompted with a follow-up about whether they felt “closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?” Consistent with previous literature, leaning independents are treated as partisans (Petrocik 2009; Theodoridis 2017). I used these responses to create an ordinal variable of partisan strength with a range of 1 (leaners) to 3 (strong partisans) ($M=2.49$, $SD=.79$).

Military Variables. I included three military-specific variables to capture any differences between unique subgroups. *Military Status* denotes veteran (0, $n=387$) or active duty (1, $n=341$). *Rank* ranges from 1 (junior enlisted) to 6 (senior officers) ($M=2.24$, $SD=1.27$). Finally, *Years of Active Service* denotes the number of years spent on active duty.

Demographic Controls. In addition to the independent variables listed above, I estimated models using common demographic control variables; party identification, ideology, race, gender, age, income, and education (Table A2).

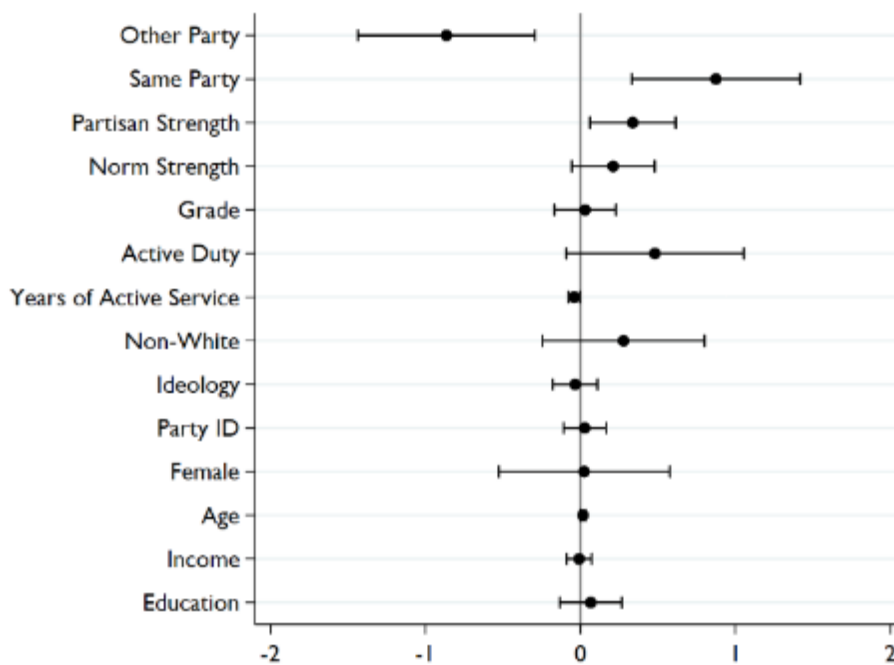
RESULTS

The main question this study seeks to answer is how partisanship and apolitical norms affect how military members judge the appropriateness of partisan political activities. To test the hypotheses, I used OLS regressions which I report in Table 2. The base model includes the independent variables of interest. The second model adds three military-specific control variables. Finally, the full model includes demographic variables. A coefficients plot of model 3 is shown in Figure 5. The results of these analyses suggest that partisanship significantly influences service members’ and veterans’ attitudes. They judge political activities that benefit their preferred party to be more appropriate than activities that benefit the opposing party. I find mixed evidence, however, for the effects of strong partisanship and apolitical norms.

Table 2. Effects on Appropriateness Judgments

	Base Model	+ Military	Full Model
Party Cue			
Other Party	-0.951*** (0.281)	-0.957*** (0.280)	-0.864** (0.291)
Same Party	0.812** (0.268)	0.808** (0.268)	0.874** (0.277)
Partisan Strength	0.349* (0.137)	0.343* (0.139)	0.338* (0.140)
Norms Strength	0.206 (0.124)	0.257* (0.124)	0.211 (0.136)
Rank	—	0.0220 (0.0924)	0.0304 (0.101)
Military Status = Active Duty	—	0.224 (0.233)	0.481 (0.292)
Years of Active Service	—	-0.0351 (0.0180)	-0.0406* (0.0186)
Race = Non-White	—	—	0.278 (0.266)
Ideology	—	—	-0.0339 (0.0734)
Party Identification	—	—	0.0282 (0.0696)
Gender = Female	—	—	0.0248 (0.281)
Age	—	—	0.0164 (0.00855)
Income	—	—	-0.00851 (0.0412)
Education	—	—	0.0668 (0.102)
Constant	6.058*** (0.374)	6.217*** (0.415)	5.066*** (0.790)
Observations	728	728	728
R-squared	0.065	0.073	0.079
OLS regressions with robust standard errors in parentheses Two-tailed tests significant at *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$			

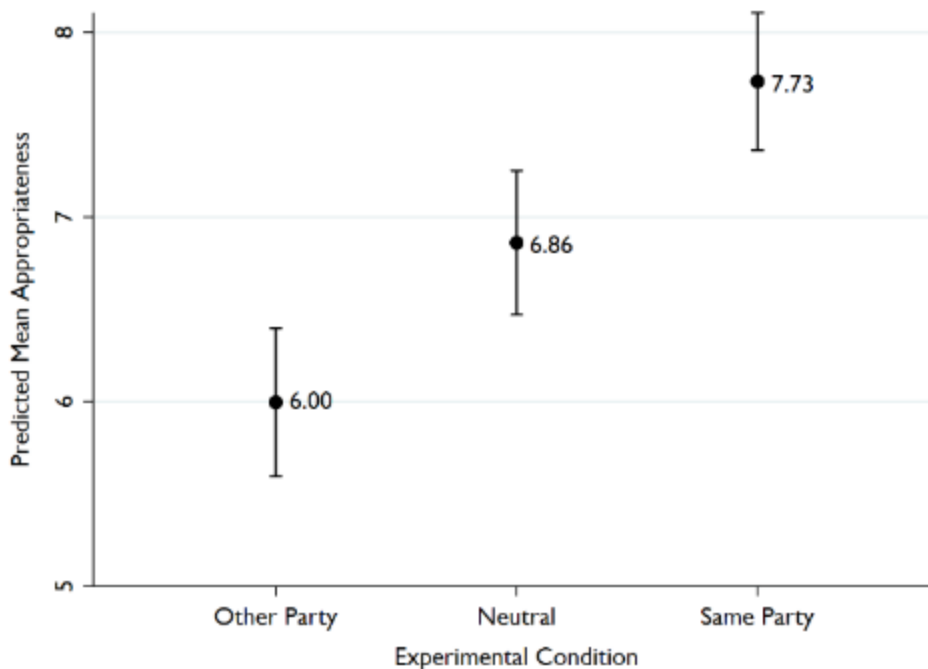
Figure 5. Effects on Appropriateness Judgments



Note: 95% confidence intervals.

Hypothesis 1. The results of the analysis strongly support the hypothesis that service members' and veterans' partisanship produces biased judgments about political activity. When partisan political activities benefit their preferred party, service members and veteran see them as more appropriate. However, they see activities benefitting the opposing party as much less appropriate. Figure 6 shows the significant differences between the mean appropriateness judgments in the three experimental conditions.

Figure 6. Predicted Mean Appropriateness Judgments Based on Party Cue

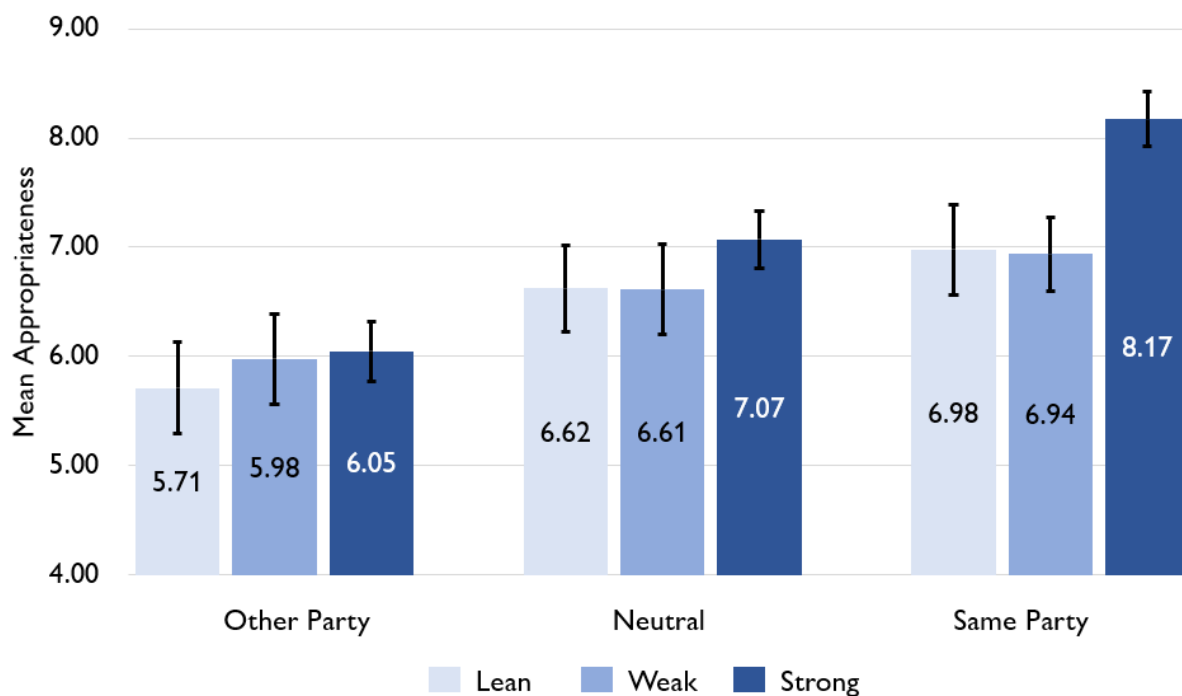


Note: 95% Confidence Intervals

Hypothesis 2. There was mixed evidence for the hypothesis that strong partisans exhibit more extreme partisan bias. The *partisan strength* variable is significant and positive in all three models. However, Hypothesis 2 predicts that strong partisanship will amplify the effects of the party cues. Thus strong partisans should be *less* supportive of political activity when an opposing party cue is present. The analysis does not support this conclusion. Instead, it suggests that strong partisans are generally more supportive of political activities in all conditions. To confirm this finding, I performed a one-way ANOVA test using the group means from the nine combinations of party cue and partisan strength. The results (Figure 7) confirm that the strong partisans were, on average, more supportive of political activity than the weak and leaning partisans in the same condition. While there are statistically significant differences between some of the groups ($F(8,719) = 6.43, p < 0.001$), a Scheffe posttest shows no significant differences

between strong partisans and weak or leaning partisans within each party cue condition. Notably, the strong partisan mean is well above weak and leaning partisans in the same party condition. Although not statistically significant, this pattern is consistent with other studies which find that partisans are sometimes reluctant to punish or discriminate against people from the other party but are more tolerant of favoritism for copartisans (Engelhardt and Utych 2018; Lelkes and Westwood 2017; McConnell et al. 2018; Ramirez and Erickson 2014; Shafranek 2020).

Figure 7. Mean Appropriateness by Party Cue and Partisan Strength



Note: Shown with standard errors.

Hypothesis 3. The final hypothesis—that military service members and veterans with stronger apolitical social norms will be less likely to exhibit partisan bias—is not supported. Apolitical norms strength has no statistically significant effect on participants’ judgments about

the appropriateness of political activity in the base model or the full model. In the second model, it was unexpectedly positive. I explore this finding further in the next section.

Additional Analyses

Given partisanship's dominant influence on many citizens' political attitudes, it is unsurprising to find the same pattern among military service members and veterans. The failure of strong norms to influence service members' and veterans' judgments, however, is unexpected and merits further investigation. In this section, I consider three additional questions to that end. First, I analyze the different factors that influence the strength of apolitical norms by estimating a series of models using norms measures as the dependent variables. Next, I examine how context matters and whether service members and veterans interpret and invoke norms differently as the context changes. Finally, I explore if individual norms have different effects on political judgments.

What Influences Norms? To better understand why norms strength had little influence on participants' judgments, I first analyzed which factors predict stronger norms. Accordingly, I estimated another OLS regression model using norms strength as the dependent variable. I also estimated ordered logistic models for each of the individual norms measures. The results are shown in Table 3 and Table 4, respectively.

In both analyses, older participants with higher incomes and more years of military service express stronger support for apolitical norms. Notably, years of military service are also significant and negative in the full model from the main analysis. The model also shows that several variables, though not significant for the overall norms strength measure, are significant for individual norms measures. Republicans identify more strongly with social expectations than do Democrats, whereas liberals are stronger than conservatives when it comes to supporting the

military's obligation to the public. Additionally, males identify more strongly with social expectations and factual beliefs compared to females.

While there is not enough evidence here to draw definitive conclusions, one explanation for these findings is that older service members and veterans with more years of service may have internalized the norms to a greater degree because they have spent more time being exposed to them. Another possibility is that there are generational differences in how service members and veterans interpret apolitical norms. The findings for party identification, ideology, and gender indicate that service members' and veterans' other social identities may impact the way they view and apply social norms. Though these conclusions are tentative, they indicate interesting avenues for future research.

Table 3. Predictors of Norms Strength

	Norms Strength
Rank	0.00249 (0.0295)
Military Status = Active Duty	0.0961 (0.0939)
Years of Active Service	0.0160** (0.00545)
Partisan Strength	0.0294 (0.0419)
Party Identification	0.0372 (0.0214)
Ideology	-0.0312 (0.0205)
Race = Non-White	-0.0976 (0.0842)
Gender = Female	-0.175 (0.0914)
Age	0.0134*** (0.00268)
Income	0.0463*** (0.0133)
Education	0.0812* (0.0341)
Constant	-1.450*** (0.240)
Observations	728
R-squared	0.174

OLS regression with robust standard errors in parentheses
Two-tailed tests significant at *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Table 4. Predictors of Individual Apolitical Norms

	Personal Beliefs	Social Expectations	Factual Beliefs	Obligation to Others
Rank	-0.0749 (0.0590)	0.0960 (0.0562)	-0.0119 (0.0588)	0.0120 (0.0533)
Military Status = Active Duty	0.341* (0.160)	-0.0281 (0.177)	0.0788 (0.179)	0.196 (0.179)
Years of Active Service	0.0265* (0.0105)	0.0309** (0.00988)	0.0149 (0.0102)	0.0379*** (0.0106)
Partisan Strength	0.133 (0.0815)	0.132 (0.0802)	-0.0722 (0.0891)	0.00361 (0.0848)
Party Identification	0.0272 (0.0414)	0.141*** (0.0414)	0.0540 (0.0397)	-0.00299 (0.0414)
Ideology	-0.0777 (0.0441)	-0.0661 (0.0404)	0.0920* (0.0414)	-0.0804* (0.0409)
Race = Non-White	0.0405 (0.166)	-0.0523 (0.160)	-0.242 (0.165)	-0.134 (0.171)
Gender = Female	-0.227 (0.171)	-0.381* (0.177)	-0.477** (0.174)	-0.0435 (0.164)
Age	0.0271*** (0.00516)	0.00786 (0.00513)	0.0238*** (0.00563)	0.0178*** (0.00529)
Income	0.0711** (0.0257)	0.0843*** (0.0250)	0.0589* (0.0254)	0.0710** (0.0254)
Education	0.122 (0.0650)	0.0683 (0.0636)	0.0565 (0.0674)	0.128* (0.0611)
τ_1	0.0791 (0.477)	-1.645*** (0.484)	-2.099*** (0.560)	-1.063* (0.504)
τ_2	1.196* (0.482)	-0.916* (0.461)	-1.175* (0.534)	-0.354 (0.494)
τ_3	2.239*** (0.489)	-0.0246 (0.441)	-0.459 (0.522)	0.203 (0.489)
τ_4	3.466*** (0.502)	1.283** (0.439)	0.653 (0.515)	1.213* (0.497)
τ_5	—	2.177*** (0.445)	1.275* (0.517)	1.962*** (0.503)
τ_6	—	3.408*** (0.458)	2.422*** (0.521)	3.110*** (0.508)
Observations	728	728	728	728

Ordered logistic regressions with robust standard errors in parentheses

Two-tailed tests significant at *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Does Context Matter? One factor that may help explain the null effects of apolitical norms is that context matters in when and how service members and veterans interpret and invoke them. Service members responded to three individual political activities, and norms might influence judgments differently for each activity. To explore this possibility, I estimated an ordered logistic regression for each of the three political activities using the other independent variables from the full model. The results are shown in Table 5.

It is immediately evident that one of these activities—attending a partisan rally—is different from the other two. Unlike in the full model, party cues and partisan strength do not influence judgments about attending a partisan rally. Moreover, this is the only activity in which apolitical norms are positive. This suggests that service members and veterans may think differently about attending a partisan rally versus talking politics within military units. The reason for this may be the nature of the activities themselves. Attending a political event differs from the other two in that the activity and its consequences are external to military units. In other words, partisan rallies are “off duty” political activism, and the potential consequence of attending them is that it could give the impression to the public that the military writ large prefers one party. But there would likely be little immediate impact on a military unit.

In contrast, the latter two activities take place *within* military units, and the consequences would be internal as well. Service members who promote political parties or candidates to others at work might create tension, discomfort, or conflict in close-knit military units. The differences in appropriateness judgments may indicate that service members and veterans are more sensitive to activities that could damage military unit cohesion and less sensitive to activities with less immediate consequences.

Table 5. Predictors of Appropriateness for Individual Political Activities

	Attend Event	Express Support	Encourage Vote
Party Cue			
Other Party	-0.300 (0.175)	-0.563** (0.171)	-0.418* (0.168)
Same Party	0.303 (0.166)	0.462** (0.167)	0.543*** (0.162)
Partisan Strength	0.0641 (0.0843)	0.170* (0.0850)	0.327*** (0.0871)
Norms Strength	0.315*** (0.0832)	0.108 (0.0874)	0.0270 (0.0804)
Rank	-0.0433 (0.0606)	0.0235 (0.0570)	0.0679 (0.0578)
Military Status = Active Duty	0.0882 (0.175)	0.388* (0.179)	0.305 (0.168)
Years of Active Service	-0.0132 (0.0109)	-0.0218 (0.0113)	-0.0269* (0.0113)
Race = Non-White	-0.0710 (0.161)	0.160 (0.162)	0.261 (0.162)
Ideology	0.0659 (0.0423)	-0.0435 (0.0468)	-0.0801 (0.0450)
Party Identification	-0.0272 (0.0394)	0.0204 (0.0435)	0.0601 (0.0402)
Gender = Female	0.0395 (0.167)	0.129 (0.172)	-0.0930 (0.168)
Age	0.0104 (0.00534)	0.0115* (0.00509)	0.00269 (0.00511)
Income	-0.0157 (0.0265)	0.0129 (0.0244)	-0.0111 (0.0249)
Education	-0.0128 (0.0615)	0.0306 (0.0640)	0.0833 (0.0616)
τ1	-2.291*** (0.473)	-0.886 (0.483)	-0.399 (0.499)
τ2	-1.186* (0.472)	0.120 (0.481)	0.663 (0.503)
τ3	-0.0937 (0.471)	1.370** (0.485)	1.727*** (0.510)
τ4	1.513** (0.475)	2.758*** (0.499)	3.101*** (0.525)
Observations	728	728	728
Ordered logistic regressions with robust standard errors in parentheses			
Two-tailed tests significant at *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$			

Do Individual Norms have Different Effects? Finally, I consider whether the individual dimensions of apolitical norms differ in their influence on service members' and veterans' judgments. I estimated four modified versions of the full regression model from the main analysis. In each of these new models, I substituted an individual norm variable in place of the norms strength measure. The results are reported in Table 6 below. For ease of comparison, the original model is shown in the rightmost column.

The revised models yield two notable results. First, *social expectations* and *factual beliefs* are significant but unexpectedly positive. Those who express more support for these two norms also tend to view political activities as more appropriate. Interestingly these two norms are closer to descriptive norms (what is), whereas the other two norms are closer to injunctive norms (what ought to be). Although I can only speculate, this finding may indicate that some service members understand what society expects from them vis-à-vis political behavior, but those expectations are different from their personal normative beliefs.

A second interesting observation is that years of military service are significant and negative for the same two norms. Recall that years of service is a positive predictor of norms strength and a negative predictor of appropriateness judgment. Thus, it seems years of military service is an important differentiator between those who report strong norms but whose behavior does not follow suit, and those who report strong norms *and* invoke them in their political decision-making. This finding is also consistent with the idea proposed previously that service members and veterans with more years of service have internalized political neutrality more than those with fewer years of service.

Table 6. Effects of Individual Norms on Appropriateness

	1	2	3	4	Full Model
Party Cue					
Other Party	-0.812** (0.290)	-0.874** (0.288)	-0.874** (0.291)	-0.835** (0.291)	-0.864** (0.291)
Same Party	0.881** (0.277)	0.832** (0.273)	0.869** (0.276)	0.879** (0.277)	0.874** (0.277)
Partisan Strength	0.352* (0.140)	0.318* (0.138)	0.351* (0.139)	0.344* (0.140)	0.338* (0.140)
Norms Strength	—	—	—	—	0.211 (0.136)
Personal Beliefs	-0.119 (0.0971)	—	—	—	—
Social Expectations	—	0.298*** (0.0831)	—	—	—
Factual Beliefs	—	—	0.255** (0.0784)	—	—
Obligation to Others	—	—	—	-0.0196 (0.0739)	—
Rank	0.0256 (0.102)	0.00462 (0.100)	0.0369 (0.101)	0.0311 (0.101)	0.0304 (0.101)
Military Status = Active Duty	0.525 (0.294)	0.504 (0.287)	0.468 (0.290)	0.505 (0.295)	0.481 (0.292)
Years of Active Service	-0.0353 (0.0190)	-0.0432* (0.0185)	-0.0391* (0.0185)	-0.0367 (0.0189)	-0.0406* (0.0186)
Race = Non-White	0.264 (0.266)	0.281 (0.265)	0.319 (0.264)	0.259 (0.266)	0.278 (0.266)
Ideology	-0.0471 (0.0749)	-0.0270 (0.0726)	-0.0546 (0.0734)	-0.0417 (0.0744)	-0.0339 (0.0734)
Party Identification	0.0381 (0.0701)	0.00592 (0.0691)	0.0248 (0.0694)	0.0358 (0.0701)	0.0282 (0.0696)
Gender = Female	-0.0299 (0.281)	0.0855 (0.275)	0.0705 (0.280)	-0.0137 (0.281)	0.0248 (0.281)
Age	0.0214* (0.00840)	0.0171* (0.00822)	0.0144 (0.00849)	0.0196* (0.00847)	0.0164 (0.00855)
Income	0.00633 (0.0409)	-0.0164 (0.0402)	-0.00848 (0.0403)	0.00225 (0.0408)	-0.00851 (0.0412)
Education	0.0955 (0.103)	0.0671 (0.100)	0.0605 (0.101)	0.0875 (0.103)	0.0668 (0.102)
Constant	4.964*** (0.796)	3.699*** (0.810)	3.745*** (0.790)	4.807*** (0.792)	5.066*** (0.790)
Observations	728	728	728	728	728
R-squared	0.078	0.094	0.089	0.075	0.079

OLS regressions with robust standard errors in parentheses

Two-tailed tests significant at *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study takes a first step toward filling an important gap in the civil-military relations literature. Scholars have long warned that rising partisanship in the military could erode the military's apolitical ethos (Bacevich and Kohn 1997; Betros 2001; Golby, Dropp, and Feaver 2012, 2013; Kohn 2002; Liebert and Golby 2017; Owens 2015). Yet, empirical evidence for this assertion has been in short supply. This study partially remedies this shortcoming and suggests that warnings about partisanship in the military have merit. Service members and veterans appear to exhibit the same partisan biases as do other citizens, and these biases influence decision making where, ideally, apolitical norms would act to preserve the military's apolitical tradition.

Analysis of public survey data shows that service members are not more politically independent nor weaker partisans than the general public. Moreover, the results of a survey experiment demonstrate that service members' and veterans' attitudes toward political activity are significantly influenced by their partisan identities. They judge political activities that benefit the opposing party as less appropriate, but view activities supporting their preferred party as more appropriate. Partisan strength matters as well. Strong partisans were generally more supportive of political activity than weak or leaning partisans.

In contrast, those who report strong military norms are no different in their partisan biases than those who report weaker norms. While most participants in this study expressed relatively strong support for apolitical norms, those with more years of military service were more likely to apply those norms in their political judgments. Additional analyses, however, suggest that apolitical social norms are complex. Other social identities may influence how strongly service members and veterans identify with different norms. Additionally, different

contexts may change the way service members and veterans invoke apolitical norms. Finally, apolitical norms are both injunctive and descriptive, and they comprise several constituent beliefs—each of which may influence judgment and decision making differently.

This study has three limitations. First, it relies on a combination of active duty and veteran participants. Although there were no significant differences between these two groups in this analysis, subsequent work might uncover systematic disparities. Second, this study relied on a limited number of situations to gauge participants' judgments. There are many more situations in which partisanship and military social norms might interact. Some partisan activities may create tension between service members and within military units. Other activities may cause the public to view the military as more partisan. Still others may influence the relationship between military leaders and civilian elites. The relative influence of partisanship and apolitical norms may differ widely across these contexts. A third limitation is that the norms measure used here is quite simple, but apolitical norms seem to be multi-dimensional and their invocation contextually dependent. Consequently, this study should not be interpreted to mean that apolitical norms do not play a role in service members' and veterans' political attitudes. Rather, it suggests that a better understanding of apolitical norms is needed.

Future studies could expand upon these findings in several ways. First, we must increase our understanding of the military's apolitical norms. Despite their importance, we know little about their dimensionality, how or why service members internalize them, or how they are embedded and sustained in military culture. Second, researchers should more closely examine how partisanship and apolitical norms interact with different types of political activity. As highlighted above, there are many situations in which partisanship and apolitical norms may collide. Finally, more work needs to be done on the consequences of partisanship among military

service members and veterans. For example, we need to understand if and to what degree the Americans' high trust in the military is related to their perception that the military is non-partisan. Moreover, we should explore how public political activism by active service members and veterans affects public perceptions of the military. We should also investigate to what degree, if any, partisanship—and more specifically, partisan conflict—impacts military unit cohesion.

Partisanship in the military is an important issue. Although military leaders do their best to cultivate apolitical norms, many service members—like their civilian counterparts—are strongly influenced by their partisan identities. Though it remains uncertain to what extent this imperils unit cohesion and civil-military relations, it certainly raises normative concerns. Considering the strong political polarization among the American public, it is important that military and political leaders understand to potential negative effects that partisanship may have on military units and civil-military relations.

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APPENDIX

Table A1. Military, Veteran, and Civilian Party Identification, CCES 2006-2018

	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018
Active							
Strong Democrat	11%	14%	21%	15%	24%	34%	22%
Weak Democrat	8	8	6	11	8	3	12
Lean Democrat	10	6	6	18	7	6	3
Independent	14	16	11	9	11	12	9
Lean Republican	14	11	17	7	14	7	10
Weak Republican	20	14	14	13	8	14	14
Strong Republican	22	28	23	25	23	21	21
Not sure	0	3	2	2	5	2	7
N=	317	241	294	223	367	625	324
Veteran							
Strong Democrat	14	19	16	15	16	18	17
Weak Democrat	9	7	8	9	8	10	6
Lean Democrat	12	9	8	14	8	7	7
Independent	13	13	15	15	15	17	13
Lean Republican	15	14	20	14	18	15	18
Weak Republican	13	10	11	11	11	13	11
Strong Republican	23	27	21	22	22	19	26
Not sure	1	1	2	1	2	2	1
N=	7,133	5,359	10,746	9,250	7,912	7,464	6,690
Civilian							
Strong Democrat	21	28	22	22	23	23	24
Weak Democrat	14	12	14	12	13	13	12
Lean Democrat	13	10	10	17	9	10	9
Independent	12	12	15	13	14	16	13
Lean Republican	9	7	11	8	10	8	9
Weak Republican	11	9	10	10	11	11	10
Strong Republican	18	17	14	16	16	14	18
Not sure	2	5	5	1	4	4	4
N=	28,385	26,253	42,938	42,579	45,180	54,390	50,845

Note: Percentages are weighted, counts are not.

Source: CCES Common Content 2006-2018 (Cooperative Congressional Election Study 2020)

Table A2. Sample Demographics.

	Coding	Mean	Std. Dev.
Military Status	0=Veteran, 1=Service Member	.47	.50
Party Identification	1 (Strong. Dem) to 6 (Strong. Rep)	3.92	2.05
Ideology	1 (Extremely Lib) to 7 (Extremely Con)	3.98	1.99
Education	1 (<High School) to 6 (Doctoral Degree)	4.27	1.37
Age	Years	42.85	16.54
Gender	0=Male, 1=Female	.24	.43
Race	0= White, 1=Non-White	.40	.49

Table A3. Sample Party Identification

	Strong Dem	Weak Dem	Lean Dem	Lean Rep	Weak Rep	Strong Rep	Total
Veteran	90 23.26%	32 8.27%	42 10.85%	44 11.37%	51 13.18%	128 33.0%7	387 100.00%
Active Duty	86 25.22	22 6.45	20 5.87	30 8.80	32 9.38	151 44.28	341 100.00
Total	176 24.18	54 7.42	62 8.52	74 10.16	83 11.40	279 38.32	728 100.00

Table A4. Sample Active Duty and Veteran Rank Summary

	Veteran	Active Duty	Total
Junior Enlisted	168 66.40%	85 33.60%	253 100.00%
Non-Commissioned Officers	131 56.47	101 43.53	232 100.00
Warrant Officers	42 31.34	92 68.66	134 100.00
Junior Officers	22 61.11	14 38.89	36 100.00
Senior Officers	23 32.86	47 67.14	70 100.00
Not Provided	1 33.33	2 66.67	3 100.00
Total	387 53.16	341 46.84	728 100.00

Table A5. Appropriateness Measures

	Obs	Mean	Std.Dev.	Min	Max
Attend Campaign Event	728	2.624	1.178	0	4
Express Support	728	2.223	1.263	0	4
Encourage Others	728	2.036	1.322	0	4

Table A6. Individual Norms Measures

	Obs	Mean	Std.Dev.	Min	Max
Personal	728	3.514	1.301	1	5
Social	728	5.261	1.515	1	7
Factual	728	5.692	1.526	1	7
Obligation	728	5.025	1.75	1	7

Table A7. Norm Index Measure

	Obs	Mean	Std.Dev.	Min	Max	Skew.	Kurt.
Norms Strength	728	0	1	-3.194	1.459	-.341	2.4

Effects of Previous Experiment.

In the previous experiment, participants were divided into three groups. The control group received a news article on a topic unrelated to politics and was prompted to write about a non-political topic. The American prime group received an article that discussed different reasons why people love America. They were then asked to write what they thought was the most important reason people like America and why they were proud to be an American. The apolitical prime group (omitted from this study) received an article about the importance of the military remaining politically neutral. They were then asked to write about why they thought the military's political neutrality was important. The American prime had null effects on the dependent variable (Table A8).

Table A8. Effects of Previous Experiment

	(1)
Previous Experiment = American Prime	0.354 (0.223)
Party Cue = Other Party	-0.901** (0.291)
Party Cue = Same Party	0.844** (0.277)
Partisan Strength	0.363** (0.140)
Norm Strength	0.214 (0.136)
Rank	0.0231 (0.0999)
Military Status = Active Duty	0.464 (0.290)
Years of Active Service	-0.0397* (0.0183)
Race = Non-White	0.261 (0.266)
Ideology	-0.0324 (0.0730)
Party Identification	0.0196 (0.0696)
Gender = Female	0.0223 (0.279)
Age	0.0155 (0.00849)
Income	-0.00549 (0.0410)
Education	0.0683 (0.101)
Constant	4.913*** (0.785)
Observations	728
R-squared	0.082
OLS regressions with robust standard errors in parentheses	
Two-tailed tests significant at *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$	