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# An Attribution-Emotion Approach to Political Conflict

Daniel Joel Northington

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LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY  
School of Behavioral Health  
in conjunction with the  
Faculty of Graduate Studies

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An Attribution-Emotion Approach to Political Conflict

by

Daniel Joel Northington

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A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of  
the requirements for the degree  
Doctor of Philosophy in Clinical Psychology

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September 2015

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Each person whose signature appears below certifies that this dissertation in his/her opinion is adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree Doctor of Philosophy.

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# CONTENT

Approval Page.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
List of Figures.....	vii
List of Tables.....	viii
List of Abbreviations.....	ix
Abstract.....	x
Chapter	
1. Introduction.....	1
The Ultimate Attribution Error.....	3
Applying Betancourt’s Attribution-Emotion Model of Conflict and Violence to the Ultimate Attribution Error.....	5
This Present Study.....	7
2. Methods.....	8
Participants.....	8
Measures.....	9
Political Affiliation.....	9
Vignette of Political Figure’s Antisocial Behavior.....	10
Social Attribution and Emotion Scale.....	10
Social Judgement and Voting Intentions Scale.....	11
Covariates.....	12
Deterring and Detecting Insufficient Effort and Repeat/Inappropriate Participants.....	13
Procedures.....	14
3. Results.....	16
Preliminary Analyses.....	16
Analysis of Covariates.....	20
Hypothesis 1: Mann-Whitney U Test.....	24
Hypothesis 2: Structural Equation Modeling.....	26

Test of the Hypothesized Model .....	27
Test of Configural Invariance .....	29
Test of Measurement Invariance.....	29
Test of Partial Measurement Invariance.....	30
Summary of Findings.....	32
4. Discussion .....	34
Implications.....	34
Directions for Future Research .....	38
Limitations .....	40
Suggested Interventions .....	42
References.....	46
Appendices	
A. Recruitment Materials .....	54
B. Scale Items .....	56

## FIGURES

Figures	Page
1. Final Model with Standardized Path Coefficients .....	28



## TABLES

Tables	Page
1. Demographic Characteristics for Participants by Study Condition .....	17
2. Covariate Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations with Research Variables as a Function of Study Condition .....	22
3. Intercorrelations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Research Variables by Study Condition .....	23
4. Median Differences Between Participants by Study Condition Using the Mann-Whitney U Test .....	25
5. Model Building Summary and Fit Indices for the Structure of Relations in the In-Group and Out-Group Samples .....	31

## ABBREVIATIONS

SAES	Social Attribution and Emotion Scale
$\alpha$	Cronbach's Alpha
$n$	Sample Size
$p$	Probability or Significance Level
$z$	$z$ -Statistic
$M$	Mean
$t$	$t$ -Statistic
$d$	Cohen's $D$ or Effect Size
$U$	Mann-Whitney $U$
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
$r$	Pearson Correlation
$S-B\chi^2$	Satorra-Bentler Chi-Square
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
LM	Lagrange Multiplier Test
$\chi^2$	Chi-Square
$\Delta$	Delta Statistic or Change
$df$	Degrees of Freedom
$R^2$	Variance Explained
$\beta$	Standardized Path Coefficient (Direct)
$\beta_{\text{indirect}}$	Standardized Path Coefficient (Indirect)

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

An Attribution-Emotion Approach to Political Conflict

by

Daniel Joel Northington

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Clinical Psychology  
Loma Linda University, September 2015  
Dr. Hector Betancourt, Chairperson

The current political system in the United States is marked by extreme levels of partisan hostility and polarization, which has not only resulted in a dysfunctional congress, but also increasing conflict between partisan groups in the general electorate. While political scientists have offered various explanations for this phenomenon, social-psychological theories provide opportunities for empirical investigation of psychological explanatory factors. This study applied Betancourt's attribution-emotion model of conflict and violence to the ultimate attribution error in order to develop a contemporary and comprehensive understanding of the psychological factors relevant to partisan-based intergroup relations. Five hundred sixty-four participants from various demographic backgrounds were recruited using snowball convenience sampling. When participants read a hypothetical news article involving a congressperson from an opposing political party acting in an antisocial manner, the congressperson's behavior was attributed as more intentional than when participants read an identical news article involving a congressperson from the same political party. Structural equation modeling also confirmed that attributions of intentionality and controllability influenced social judgments and voting intentions directly, and indirectly through anger. These findings are discussed in terms of implications for studying political polarization and bipartisan

cooperation from a social-psychological perspective, as well as contributions to the body of knowledge regarding attribution theory in general, and the ultimate attribution error in specific.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

For 18 days in the fall of 2013, the US government shutdown due to an inability to reach a bipartisan funding agreement on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Ferraro & Younglai, 2013). This is one of many examples that reflect an ongoing pattern of partisan-based hostility, conflict, and polarization within the current political system of the United States (The Pew Research Center, 2012). This pattern not only results in a dysfunctional and paralyzed congress (Harbridge & Malhotra, 2011), but it also contributes to increased hostilities between partisan groups in the general electorate (Brewer, 2005). Historically, bipartisan cooperation has allowed a number of pivotal, yet previously immobilized, bills to be voted into law, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Hospital Insurance for the Aged (Medicare), and the Welfare Reform Act of 1996 (Voteview, 2012). Without cooperation between political parties at both the congressional and electoral level, important legislation may be unnecessarily delayed, or at worst, completely obstructed.

Despite these divisive patterns of interaction between political parties, numerous studies cite the general public's desire for a more collaborative and bipartisan political climate (Harbridge, 2013). In fact, since studies suggest political involvement declines during times of increased partisan conflict (Ulbig & Funk, 1999), it is unsurprising that only 58% of eligible American citizens voted in the most recent presidential election, compared to 62% in 2008 (McDoland, 2012). A recent Gallup poll in January 2015 even suggests only 16% of voters approve of the way congress is handling its job (up seven percentage points since the government shutdown in November 2013), yet many elected

officials continue to behave in a manner that promotes political gridlock rather than compromise.

These concerning trends raise a series of important questions about how these political disagreements are created and maintained. Political scientists have proposed a variety of explanations, including minimal political incentives for politicians to develop more civil dialogue and bipartisan legislation (Harbridge & Malhotra, 2011), a lack of political representation by one's elected officials (Fiorina & Abrams, 2012), and critical events in our country's political history that created fewer intragroup hostilities and more intergroup hostilities (Brewer, 2005). Undoubtedly, this is a political problem that requires a political solution. However, since psychological barriers can prevent negotiation, conflict resolution, and political solutions from occurring in the first place (Kelman, 1987; Rosenberg & Wolfsfeld, 1977), this issue is particularly relevant from a social-psychological perspective. For instance, in his analysis of ongoing Palestinian and Israeli conflicts, Kelman (1983) proposed each group misinterpreted the behavior of the other, thereby preventing successful communication and negotiation from occurring. This case study revealed that cognitive processes, such as attributions of causality, might explain why Israelis dismissed productive Palestinian movements towards negotiation as being motivated by ulterior motives and harmful intentions, and vice versa. In a similar manner, attribution theory provides a relevant conceptual framework that can be used to formulate theory-based hypotheses designed to untangle the complicated nature of current intergroup conflicts in the US political system (Greene, 2004; Munro, Weih, & Tsai, 2010). Attribution theory proposes a causal sequence between peoples' cognitive explanations (attributions) for a given interpersonal event, related emotions (e.g.,

empathy and anger), and aggression or helping behavior (Rudolph, Roesch, Greitemeyer, & Weiner, 2004). Attribution theory has also identified cognitive biases that are particularly relevant to intergroup relations (Weiner, 2006).

Therefore, building on recent research findings that have investigated attribution theory and interpersonal behavior within applied settings (Betancourt, Flynn, & Ormseth, 2011; Coleman, 2013; Flynn et al., 2015; Munro et al., 2010; Tucker, 2008), the purpose of this study was to examine the impact of attribution-emotion processes and political affiliation on intergroup conflict using the case of US political phenomena. Specifically, it is expected that Betancourt's attribution-emotion model of conflict and violence (Betancourt & Blair, 1992) will provide a comprehensive, contemporary, and empirically-sound framework to extend the ultimate attribution error, and understand the way in which political affiliation influences attribution-emotion processes, social judgments, and related behaviors. The literature pertinent to the rationale for this proposition will be reviewed, including the empirical evidence on the ultimate attribution error, and the relevant attribution theory research that provides a conceptual basis for applying Betancourt's attribution-emotion model to the ultimate attribution error. By generating research evidence relevant to the present state of the US political system, and contributing to the body of knowledge through the study of social-psychological theories, researchers can gain insight into the current understanding of intergroup relations, as well as address specific strategies for reducing partisan-based gridlock.

### **The Ultimate Attribution Error**

In addition to the well-established psychological biases of the fundamental

attribution error (Ross, 1977) and the actor-observer bias (Jones & Nisbett, 1971), which are both known to influence interpersonal judgments, the ultimate attribution error is an attributional bias that was first proposed by Pettigrew in 1979 and has since received little empirical attention among American social psychologists despite its relevance to intergroup relations and prejudice. The ultimate attribution error is based on social identity theory, which suggests individuals derive value, emotional significance, self-concept, and socially shared systems of belief from membership in social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), such as political affiliation (Brewer, 2001; Greene, 2004). As such, the ultimate attribution error is the tendency to explain (attribute) events in a way that favors members of an in-group and derogates members of an out-group. Specifically, this attributional bias was formulated using the attributional dimension of locus. In the case of observing an out-group member's behavior, negative acts are attributed to internal characteristics of the individual (internal locus), while positive acts are attributed to external or uncommon circumstances (external locus). In the case of observing an in-group member's behavior, negative acts are attributed to external or uncommon circumstances (external locus), while positive acts are attributed to internal characteristics of the individual (internal locus). In the context of intergroup conflict, social psychologists have proposed that the ultimate attribution error is one of the roots of prejudice (attitudes) and discrimination (behavior) because it relies on social-cognitive factors, such as stereotypes and heuristics (Bordens & Horowitz, 2001).

Evidence for the ultimate attribution error has been found in a variety of interpersonal and intergroup situations, including interactions between racial (Duncan, 1976; Hewstone, 1990; Pettigrew, 1979), religious (Khan & Liu, 2008), and political



groups (Coleman, 2013). Recent evidence even suggests the ultimate attribution error is more likely to occur between groups that have experienced prior conflict (Whitley & Kite, 2009), as well as when individuals are experiencing negative emotional activation (Coleman, 2013; Munro, Zirpoli, Schuman, & Taulbee, 2013). Given the previously cited research regarding increasing political polarization, hostility, and emotionally-charged ideological discussions, these findings suggest the possibility of a vicious attributional cycle within the current political system whereby social judgments are not only exaggerated by previous conflict with a given partisan group and an individual's emotional activation, but are also based on beliefs about political groups rather than the actual behavior of individuals who identify as members of these groups. In turn, these processes may create psychological roadblocks to finding solutions to political problems or encouraging political cooperation.

### **Applying Betancourt's Attribution-Emotion Model of Conflict and Violence to the Ultimate Attribution Error**

Since the late 1970s, when the ultimate attribution error was first formulated, developments in attribution theory have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms by which attributional processes impact behavior. These developments include the role of dimensional attributional properties more directly relevant to interpersonal relations and social judgment, as well as the role of emotions that mediate the relationship between attributions and behavior (Weiner, 2008). When the ultimate attribution error was originally proposed, it was based on the attributional dimension of locus (internal versus external locus). However, attribution theory has since

identified up to four additional dimensional properties, or categories, of attributions (Wood & Lockwood, 1999), each related to a specific behavioral phenomenon or domain (Weiner, 1995). For instance, some attributional dimensions are associated with interpersonal violence (e.g., intentionality and controllability), while others are more relevant to achievement motivation (e.g., stability and locus). The dimension of globality has been found to influence helplessness and depression-related behavior, but may not be relevant to interpersonal conflict or violence (Seligman, Abramson, Semmel, & Von Baeyer, 1979). Therefore, research is needed to test other attribution-emotion processes besides locus in relation to the ultimate attribution error and its role in intergroup relations.

In line with these developments (Weiner, 2006; Weiner, 2008), Betancourt and colleagues developed an attribution-emotion model of conflict and violence based on attributions of perceived intentionality of an act, controllability of its cause, and related emotions of anger and empathy (Betancourt, 1990; Betancourt, 2004a; Betancourt & Blair, 1992). Attributions of controllability refer to the victim's cognitive appraisal that a perpetrator had the ability to inhibit the actions which caused a given event, while attributions of intentionality refer to the victim's cognitive appraisal that a perpetrator deliberately took part in a socially inappropriate behavior despite having knowledge of its harmful consequences (Weiner, 2006). Thus, when an observer witnesses someone else commit an antisocial act, this theory suggests cognitive (attributional) processes combine with emotional factors to influence social judgments of the actor's behavior and thereby and shape the observer's subsequent behavior towards the actor. In other words, the more an individual perceives a provocation as intentional or controllable (rather than

unintentional and uncontrollable), the more likely the individual will experience anger, assign responsibility to the individual, and create a behavioral predisposition for hostility. The model also suggests that the more an individual experiences empathic emotions (compassion and sympathy), the less responsibility will be assigned, and the less likely the individual will engage in a hostile response. Although it can be difficult to experience empathy towards an individual who acts in an antisocial manner, and is identified as an adversary or an out-group member, empathic emotions can modulate social judgments and the way in which an actor's behavior is attributed or explained by an observer (Betancourt, 1990; Betancourt, 2004a; Smith, 2004; White, 1986).

### **The Present Study**

First, since the ultimate attribution error suggests group membership (social identity) impacts psychological processes in a way that favors in-group members and derogates out-group members, it was hypothesized that the political affiliation of a congressperson who behaves in an antisocial manner will impact attributions of intentionality and controllability of the causes to which participants attribute the congressperson's behavior. Second, in a manner consistent with Betancourt's attribution-emotion model of conflict and violence (Betancourt & Blair, 1992), it was also hypothesized that attributions of intentionality and controllability of the causes to which participants attribute a congressperson's antisocial behavior are expected to influence social judgments and voting intentions directly, and indirectly through anger and empathic emotions.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **METHODS**

This study was part of a larger research project designed to investigate the role of cultural and psychological factors in political hostility, polarization, and bipartisan cooperation.

#### **Participants**

After obtaining approval from Loma Linda University's Institutional Review Board (IRB, protocol # 5130406), internet-based convenience sampling and snowball sampling were used to obtain participants from diverse demographic backgrounds. These participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire about political values and opinions, which was constructed using Qualtrics (a private online survey company sanctioned by Loma Linda University). Compared to some conventional sampling methods in psychology that typically involve a restricted demographic range of undergraduate students, this sampling approach is considered superior in terms of establishing external validity, limiting potential threats to internal validity, and reducing cost per participant recruited (Best, Krueger, Hubbard, & Smith, 2001; Wright, 2006). Participants were recruited via Facebook, based on existing occupational, academic, familial, or personal relationships with the investigators. Potential participants were contacted using both direct solicitation (personal message), and status announcements. This contact included a request to participate in the survey, a hyperlink to the online questionnaire, and a request to promote this study among family and friends. Suggested guidelines for distribution, including a sample script and information on how to obtain

higher response rates, were provided (see appendix A for complete script). This sampling approach resulted in a sample of 609 participants from 39 different states who were recruited over three months. In order to meet eligibility criteria to participate in the study, participants needed to electronically acknowledge that they were at least 18 years old, under 70 years old, eligible to vote in US elections, and able to read and respond in English to the questions presented in the research instrument.

## **Measures**

### ***Political Affiliation***

Based on previously established procedures for identifying political affiliation in similar studies (Merritt, 1984), participants indicated their political affiliation by selecting one of the following categories: *democrat*, *republican*, *independent (democrat-leaning)*, *independent (republican-leaning)*, *libertarian*, or *other*. Then, because evidence suggests independent voters with ideological beliefs similar to democrats or republicans are susceptible to the same cognitive biases as voters who explicitly identify as democrats or republicans (Lau & Redlawsk, 2001), subsequent analyses combined independents from their respective political leanings into the same primary affiliation group. In other words, in order to create the in-group and out-group experimental condition for this study while also increasing statistical power, independents who identified as republican-leaning were classified as republicans, and independents who identified as democrat-leaning were classified as democrats.

### ***Vignette of Political Figure's Antisocial Behavior***

Using similar methodologies to those used in previous research on political decision making, attribution theory, and intergroup conflict (Bertolotti, Catellani, Douglas, & Sutton, 2013; Coleman, 2013; Doherty, Dowling, & Miller, 2011; Weiner, Graham, Peter, & Zmuidinas, 1991), a hypothetical news article vignette was developed that described a recent political event whereby a prominent congressperson is criticized for spending \$8000 per month “entertaining” influential citizens (see appendix B). Based on a review of the relevant literature, pilot tests of other possible vignettes, and input from a panel of expert judges (comprised of members from the Culture and Behavior Laboratory at Loma Linda University), the most effective vignette involved an ambiguous situation not related to any political issues traditionally associated with democrats or republicans (e.g., increasing taxes to support social welfare programs). Participants were asked to read this article carefully and think about this situation as they answered subsequent questions about attributions for the event, related emotions, social judgments, and associated behaviors.

### ***Social Attribution and Emotion Scale***

According to previous instrument development by Betancourt and colleagues, and in line with recent research investigating the ultimate attribution error within the political system (Coleman, 2013), the *Social Attribution and Emotion Scale* (SAES) was used to measure attributional and emotional variables consistent with Betancourt's attribution-emotion model of interpersonal conflict and violence (Betancourt & Blair, 1992). A total of nine items comprised four subscales, and were developed to measure attributions of

intentionality, controllability of the causes, anger, and empathic emotions related to reading the news article (see appendix B). The attributions of intentionality scale included items such as, “Congressperson Taylor’s inappropriate spending of taxpayer dollars was an intentional act.” The controllability of the causes scale asked participants to identify a reason for the congressperson’s behavior, then consider this reason when answering items such as, “This reason is something Congressperson Taylor could have controlled.” Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each attribution-related item, as rated on a seven-point Likert scale from *strongly disagree* (one) to *strongly agree* (seven). These attribution-related subscales demonstrated strong internal reliability for participants in both the in-group,  $\alpha = .80$ , and out-group condition,  $\alpha = .84$ . In order to identify related emotions, participants were asked the extent to which they experienced anger and/or empathic emotions as a result of thinking about the political figure’s inappropriate spending of taxpayer dollars. These items were placed on a seven-point Likert scale with anchors from *not at all* (one) to *very much* (seven). These emotion-related subscales of the measure demonstrated strong internal reliability for participants in both the in-group,  $\alpha = .86$ , and out-group condition,  $\alpha = .80$ .

### ***Social Judgment and Voting Intentions Scale***

A four-item scale was developed to measure the participant’s social evaluation of the congressperson’s inappropriate spending of taxpayer funds, and the outcome behavior of reduced intentions to vote for this congressperson in a subsequent election. Items for this scale were developed by reviewing other social judgment scales used in related social-psychological research (Betancourt & Blair, 1992; Doherty et al., 2011),

consulting a panel of expert judges (comprised of members from the Culture and Behavior Laboratory at Loma Linda University), as well as theoretical considerations. This scale reflects a premise in attribution theory, which suggests an observer's social judgment of an actor's behavior is a composite construct containing cognitive and emotional antecedents, as well as a direct relationship to intended or actual behavior (Weiner, 2006). This scale contains items related to the extent to which the participant felt the congressperson deserved to be re-elected, how severely the congressperson should be punished (Weiner, Graham, & Reyna, 1997), the extent to which the congressperson should be held accountable for his or her actions, and the extent to which the congressperson's behavior reduces the participant's likelihood of voting for the congressperson in future elections. Each item was presented as a statement, such as "Congressperson Taylor does not deserve to be re-elected," and participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement by responding to items on a seven-point Likert scale from *strongly disagree* (one) to *strongly agree* (seven). Six items originally comprised this scale, but principle axis exploratory factor analysis revealed a one-factor solution and suggested that three items be removed from the scale (one item related to forgiving the congressperson, one item related to if the congressperson should be punished, and one item related to overall intentions to vote in the next election regardless of the candidates). The internal reliability of this scale was adequate for participants in both the in-group,  $\alpha = .76$ , and out-group condition,  $\alpha = .77$ .

### *Covariates*

Before testing the study hypotheses, an examination of potential covariates was



conducted in an effort to reduce potential confounds and threats to internal validity. Variance from significant covariates was partitioned from the research variables, which controls for the effects of these covariate relationships on subsequent analyses prior to testing the study hypotheses. In EQS, this approach maintains simplified structural equation models without using up model degrees of freedom (Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003). Therefore, because partisanship can be considered a cultural phenomenon that reflects demographic factors and socially-shared systems of values, beliefs, expectations, and so forth (Betancourt & Flynn, 2009; Greene, 2004), the effects of age, education, income, social conservatism (Henningham, 1996), intensity of political identity (Greene, 1999; Mael & Tetrick, 1992), political engagement (Andolina, Keeter, Zukin, & Jenkins, 2003) and social desirability (Reynolds, 1982) were examined based on a method used in prior research (Betancourt et al., 2011; Flynn et al., 2015). This method involves a linear regression analysis in which the research variable of interest is identified as the independent variable and the covariates are identified as dependent variables. The resulting unstandardized residuals are centered at zero and then transformed into meaningful scores by adding the mean of the original research variable into the covariate-controlled variable. This method does not change the scale or distribution of the original variable.

### ***Deterring and Detecting Insufficient Effort and Repeat/Inappropriate Participants***

Given that inattentive and or unmotivated responses can compromise the quality of data obtained from internet-based questionnaire research, this study incorporated a variety of previously recognized strategies for detecting and deterring insufficient effort

in participant responses (Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, & John, 2004; Paolacci, Chandler, & Ipeirotis, 2010). In addition to including empirically supported cautionary statements derived by Huang and colleagues (2012) to discourage insufficient responding, the internet-based survey software (Qualtrics) was programmed to track how long participants spent on each webpage, and “trick” questions were incorporated throughout the instrument that reflected blatant inattention or inaccurate responding, such as “I have never had a fatal heart attack while watching television.” Another concern of internet-based research relates to the use of financial incentives. Although financial incentives increase overall response rates (Singer & Ye, 2013), the use of financial incentives may also increase the possibility that participants will try to complete the study more than once, and/or participants who do not meet eligibility criteria may try to enroll in the study. Although it was not possible to completely eliminate this concern in the present study due to the practical limitations of convenience sampling and the internet-based questionnaire platform, safeguards were used to deter and detect inappropriate and repeat participants. These safeguards included using CAPTCHA verification to prevent automated (non-human) responses, asking demographic information in multiple formats, automatically discontinuing participants who entered demographic information contrary to inclusion criteria, and asking enough demographic information to monitor and track participants without obtaining identifying information, such as “please provide the first three letters of your last name and the four digits of your birth month and day.”

### **Procedures**

Before beginning the Qualtrics questionnaire, a cover page was presented to each

participant that explained the objectives of the study, and the risks and benefits associated with participation. Participants were given a point of contact for any questions or concerns that might arise during their participation, and informed consent was electronically acknowledged at the end of the cover page. After participants answered various questions relating to their demographic characteristics, they were randomly assigned to read a news article in which either a republican or democratic congressperson was critiqued for inappropriate spending of taxpayer funds. Participants were then asked to keep the details of this news article in mind as they indicated the extent to which they attributed the congressperson's behavior as intentional and/or the causes of this behavior as controllable, and the extent to which they experienced anger and/or empathic emotions related to thinking about this event. Finally, participants were asked to indicate their social judgments related to the congressperson's behavior, such as the extent to which the congressperson deserves to be held accountable or re-elected, how severely the congressperson should be punished, and the extent to which the congressperson's behavior decreased the participant's likelihood of voting for this congressperson in subsequent elections. In order to compensate participants for their involvement in the study, every individual who completed the questionnaire was given an opportunity to win one of ten \$50 gift cards to Amazon.com.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESULTS

#### Preliminary Analyses

Of the original 609 participants, 59 participants were affiliated with a non-partisan or unidentified independent political party, and were therefore excluded from the analyses since creating an in-group or out-group experimental condition with these participants was not conceptually feasible. Three participants were excluded from the analyses due to not meeting inclusion criteria. An additional 23 participants were removed from the sample due to various patterns of inattentive responding, such as spending less than 15 minutes completing the questionnaire (average completion time was 34 minutes after removing significant outliers), consistent non-variable scores on sequential Likert items (15 *somewhat agree* consecutive responses), and/or blatantly irrelevant answers to text-box entry questions, such as “my little pony,” “care bears,” and “G.I. Joe.” The final sample ( $n = 524$ , Table 1) contained 260 participants randomly assigned to the in-group condition and 264 participants randomly assigned to the out-group condition. There were no concerns regarding missing data since all item-responses were required to progress through the online questionnaire.

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics for Participants by Study Condition.**

	In-Group (n = 260)	Out-Group (n = 264)	Total (n = 524)
	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	96 (36.0)	103 (39.0)	199 (38.0)
Female	163 (62.7)	161 (61.0)	324 (61.8)
Other	1 (0.4)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.2)
<b>Race or Ethnicity</b>			
Anglo American (non-Latino White)	184 (70.8)	183 (69.3)	367 (70.0)
African American	7 (2.7)	6 (2.3)	13 (2.5)
Latino/Hispanic American	27 (10.4)	29 (11.0)	56 (10.7)
Asian American/Pacific Islander	11 (4.2)	15 (5.7)	26 (5.0)
Native American	1 (0.4)	2 (0.8)	3 (0.6)
Other	30 (11.5)	29 (11.0)	59 (11.3)
<b>Education*</b>			
Less than High School (< 12 Years)	1 (0.4)	2 (0.8)	3 (0.6)
High School (12 Years)	20 (7.7)	21 (8.0)	41 (7.8)
Some College (13-15 Years)	45 (17.3)	60 (22.7)	105 (20.0)
College (16 Years)	53 (20.4)	71 (26.9)	124 (23.7)
> 4 years College ( $\geq$ 17 Years)	141 (54.2)	110 (41.7)	251 (47.9)
<b>Annual Household Income</b>			
\$0 - \$14,999	19 (7.3)	18 (6.8)	37 (7.1)
\$15,000 - \$24,999	13 (5.0)	16 (6.1)	29 (5.5)
\$25,000 - \$39,999	26 (10.0)	32 (12.1)	58 (11.1)
\$40,000 - \$59,999	47 (18.1)	34 (12.9)	81 (15.5)
\$60,000 - \$79,999	41 (15.8)	14.8 (14.8)	80 (15.3)
\$80,000 - \$99,999	31 (11.9)	15.2 (1.52)	71 (13.5)
\$100,000 – \$149,999	46 (17.7)	17.4 (17.4)	92 (17.6)
> \$150,000	37 (14.2)	14.8 (14.8)	76 (14.5)
<b>Marital Status</b>			
Single	79 (30.4)	92 (34.8)	171 (32.6)
Married	131 (50.4)	137 (51.9)	268 (51.1)
Separated	3 (1.2)	1 (0.4)	4 (0.8)
Divorced	12 (4.6)	11 (4.2)	23 (4.4)
Widowed	4 (1.5)	2 (0.8)	6 (1.1)
Never Married	9 (3.5)	7 (2.7)	16 (3.1)
Co-Habiting	22 (8.5)	14 (5.3)	36 (6.9)
<b>State of Residence</b>			
California	178 (68.5)	170 (64.4)	348 (66.4)

Illinois	6 (2.3)	4 (1.5)	10 (1.9)
Michigan	11 (4.2)	13 (4.9)	24 (4.6)
Oregon	9 (3.5)	6 (2.3)	15 (2.9)
Washington	5 (1.9)	8 (3.0)	13 (2.5)
Other States	51 (19.6)	63 (13.34)	114 (21.7)
Religious Preference			
Christian (Protestant)	134 (51.5)	139 (52.7)	273 (52.1)
Christian (Catholic)	33 (12.7)	36 (13.6)	69 (13.2)
Muslim	0 (0.0)	1 (0.4)	1 (0.2)
Hindu	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Jewish	6 (2.3)	5 (1.9)	11 (2.1)
Buddhist	6 (2.3)	1 (0.4)	7 (1.3)
None/No Preference	57 (21.9)	66 (25.0)	123 (23.5)
Other	24 (9.2)	16 (6.1)	40 (7.6)
Political Preference			
Republican	72 (27.7)	66 (25.0)	138 (26.3)
Democrat	75 (28.8)	78 (29.5)	153 (29.2)
Independent (Democrat leaning)	78 (30.0)	70 (26.5)	148 (28.2)
Independent (Republican leaning)	35 (13.5)	50 (18.9)	85 (16.2)
Voting Preference			
Democrat	138 (53.1)	140 (53.0)	278 (53.1)
Republican	95 (36.5)	102 (38.6)	197 (37.6)
Neither	27 (10.4)	22 (8.3)	49 (9.4)
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Age, in years	37.47 (14.78)	38.37 (15.89)	37.92 (15.33)
Self-reported conservativeness (1 to 7)	3.70 (1.69)	3.76 (1.65)	3.73 (1.66)
Social conservativeness (1 to 7)	3.00 (1.19)	2.95 (1.27)	2.97 (1.23)
Likelihood to vote (1 to 8)	7.21 (1.62)	7.11 (1.81)	7.16 (1.72)

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ .

Using SPSS version 22.0, a visual inspection of the research variables' histograms and Q-Q plots suggested a violation of univariate normality. A Shapiro-Wilk test of univariate normality was also completed for each research variable in order to objectively confirm univariate non-normality, but due to the likelihood of obtaining non-significant ( $p < .05 = \text{non-normal}$ ) results on this test given large sample sizes, the skew and kurtosis values for each variable were converted into a  $z$ -score in order to further confirm non-normal variables in an objective manner (Laerd Statistics, 2013). All research variables in this study were non-normal according to these methods. In addition, while multivariate non-normality can be assumed when completing multivariate analyses with variables that are univariately non-normal (Byrne, 1995), the Mardia statistic (Yuan, Lambert, & Fouladi, 2004) also confirmed multivariate non-normality in the variables of interest. Although 30 univariate outliers and 16 multivariate outliers were identified during preliminary data analyses using boxplots and a Mahalanobis distance test, these cases were retained since they increased the statistical power of the findings, and did not change the results of the analyses used to test the hypotheses of this study. Given these preliminary findings, non-parametric bivariate tests in SPSS, and robust maximum likelihood test statistics in EQS, both of which correct for non-normal data, are reported in subsequent tests of the study hypotheses.

In terms of sample characteristics, while internet-based convenience and snowball sampling resulted in participants being represented across most demographic levels, there was a statistically significant difference in the average years of education between participants assigned to the in-group condition,  $M = 16.87$ ,  $SD = 2.67$ , and participants assigned to the out-group condition,  $M = 16.27$ ,  $SD = 2.61$ , with those in the in-group

condition being more educated than those in the out-group condition,  $t(522) = 2.51, p < .05$ . However, since the effect size for this difference was small,  $d = .22$ , and given the results of the non-significant correlational analysis reflected by Table 2, this demographic difference likely has a minimal impact on the results of this study. There were no statistically significant differences between the in-group condition and out-group condition in terms of gender, age, income, race or ethnicity, political preference, religious preference, voting preference, marital status, self-identified conservativeness, social conservativeness, likeliness to vote in next election, political identity, political engagement, or social desirability.

### **Analysis of Covariates**

Results revealed that age, income, social conservatism, intensity of political identity, and political engagement were associated with the study variables, and were therefore controlled when conducting the subsequent Mann Whitney U and SEM analyses. Table 2 includes covariate means, standard deviations, and correlations with research variables as a function of study condition. Table 3 includes intercorrelations, means, and standard deviations for the research variables of this study after accounting for the covariates previously noted. A Fischer  $r$ -to- $z$  test of differences also revealed some significantly different bivariate correlations based on participants assigned to the in-group condition versus the out-group condition. Other than differences in the relations between specific items on the intentionality and controllability subscales, the relations between decreased voting intentions and anger were stronger for participants assigned to the in-group condition than for participants assigned to the out-group condition,  $z = 2.22$ ,



$p < .05$  (see Table 3). Other factor-level associations showed a trend towards significance; the relations between decreased voting intentions and empathic emotions showed a higher trend for participants assigned to in-group condition than for participants assigned to the out-group condition,  $z = 1.52, p = .06$ . Combined, these findings provided a basis for multi-group analyses, namely a test of invariance in EQS.

**Table 2.** Covariate Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations with Research Variables as a Function of Study Condition.

	Age in Years	Education in Years	Income	Social Conservatism	Political Identity	Political Engagement	Social Desirability
<i>1. Intentionality</i>	-.11 (.17**)	.08 (-.07)	-.07 (.00)	-.03 (.07)	-.04 (.06)	.04 (.02)	-.06 (.11)
2. Intent 1	-.10 (.20**)	-.01 (-.05)	-.06 (.05)	-.03 (.04)	-.03 (.03)	.05 (.07)	-.07 (.12)
3. Intent 2	-.05 (.13*)	.02 (-.07)	-.02 (-.04)	-.06 (.06)	-.05 (.01)	.04 (.01)	.02 (.12*)
4. Intent 3	-.13* (.11)	.01 (-.05)	-.09 (-.02)	.00 (.07)	-.03 (.11)	.00 (-.03)	-.09 (.07)
<i>5. Controllability</i>	.13* (.25**)	-.05 (-.03)	.00 (-.01)	.06 (-.01)	.11 (.12)	.02 (.12)	-.05 (.08)
6. Control 1	.08 (.20**)	-.03 (-.03)	-.02 (-.03)	.03 (.00)	.14* (.09)	.01 (.08)	-.10 (.07)
7. Control 2	.14* (.27**)	-.04 (-.01)	.03 (.00)	.03 (.00)	.11 (.10)	.00 (.15*)	-.04 (.10)
8. Control 3	.15* (.23**)	-.06 (-.03)	-.03 (.01)	.10 (-.02)	.02 (.13*)	.03 (.09)	.02 (.07)
<i>9. Anger</i>	.11 (.20**)	.01 (-.05)	-.06 (.02)	.10 (.15*)	.10 (.11)	.02 (.04)	.05 (.04)
<i>10. Empathic Emotions</i>	-.03 (-.18**)	.07 (.06)	-.04 (-.11)	.06 (.07)	.06 (.07)	-.06 (-.10)	-.16** (-.11)
11. Sympathy	-.02 (-.16**)	.04 (.10)	-.03 (-.07)	.06 (.02)	.08 (.04)	-.09 (-.10)	-.12* (-.13)
12. Compassion	-.05 (-.17)	.09 (.01)	-.04 (-.14*)	.04 (.00)	.04 (-.02)	-.02 (-.09)	-.18** (-.07)
<i>13. Social Judgment</i>	.05 (.29**)	-.02 (-.02)	-.07 (.06)	.06 (.12)	-.05 (.10)	-.05 (.08)	.10 (.15*)
14. Punishment	.06 (.29**)	-.02 (.03)	-.04 (.03)	-.08 (.14*)	-.03 (.05)	-.07 (.09)	-.06 (.12)
15. Re-election	.04 (.25**)	-.01 (-.10)	-.06 (.09)	.05 (.11)	-.03 (.13)	-.02 (.03)	.09 (.16*)
16. Accountability	.01 (.19**)	-.02 (.03)	-.09 (.04)	-.03 (.01)	-.09 (.08)	.00 (.09)	.12 (.11)
<i>17. Decreased voting intentions</i>	.09 (.14*)	.06 (.05)	-.01 (-.01)	-.02 (.00)	-.04 (.01)	.07 (.04)	.03 (.11)
<i>M</i>	37.47 (38.38)	16.87 (16.29)	5.08 (5.12)	3.00 (2.96)	3.53 (2.51)	11.49 (11.19)	5.94 (6.21)
<i>SD</i>	14.77 (15.88)	2.67 (2.61)	2.08 (2.11)	1.19 (1.27)	0.88 (0.85)	2.22 (2.41)	2.91 (3.07)

*Note.* Out-group participants are listed in parentheses; \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Table 3.** Intercorrelations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Research Variables by Study Condition.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
<i>1. Intentionality</i>	-																
2. Intent 1	.84** (.84**)	-															
3. Intent 2	.90** (.91**)	.70** (.72**)	-														
4. Intent 3	.84** (.87**)	.51** (.52**)	.63** (.69**)	-													
<i>5. Controllability</i>	.32** (.40**)	.36** (.40**)	.25** (.37**)	.22** (.29**)	-												
6. Control 1	.23** (.37**)	.28** (.37**)	.17** (.33**)	.15* (.28**)	.90** (.93**)	-											
7. Control 2	.30** (.34**)	.34** (.35**)	.22** (.31**)	.23** (.24**)	.93** (.93**)	.78** (.86**)	-										
8. Control 3	.32** (.39**)	.34** (.38**)	.28** (.37**)	.21** (.27**)	.82** (.89**)	.56** (.70**)	.67** (.73**)	-									
<i>9. Anger</i>	.38** (.35**)	.27** (.30**)	.38** (.33**)	.31** (.29**)	.31** (.30**)	.28** (.24**)	.29** (.27**)	.25** (.31**)	-								
<i>10. Empathic Emotions</i>	-.14* (-.24**)	-.12 (-.21**)	-.13* (-.23**)	-.12 (-.19**)	-.09 (-.17**)	-.12 (-.17**)	-.07 (-.17**)	-.04 (-.14*)	-.02 (-.11)	-							
11. Sympathy	-.12 (-.23**)	-.09 (-.18**)	-.13* (-.22**)	-.09 (-.19**)	-.08 (-.19**)	-.11 (-.17**)	-.05 (-.19**)	-.04 (-.15**)	-.02 (-.11)	.94** (.91**)	-						
12. Compassion	-.15* (-.21**)	-.13* (-.20**)	-.12 (-.20**)	-.13* (-.16**)	-.09 (-.13*)	-.11 (-.13**)	-.08 (-.12)	-.04 (-.11**)	-.02 (-.10)	.94** (.92**)	.76** (.67**)	-					
<i>13. Social Judgment</i>	.48** (.50**)	.35 (.42**)	.45** (.46**)	.43** (.43**)	.34** (.37**)	.30** (.32**)	.32** (.34**)	.29** (-.34**)	.55** (.48**)	-.20** (-.27**)	-.21** (-.27**)	-.17** (-.23**)	-				
14. Punishment	.38** (.39**)	.26** (.32**)	.35** (.37**)	.37** (.34**)	.27** (.29**)	.23** (.25**)	.26** (.28**)	.23** (.26**)	.50** (.47**)	-.10 (-.21**)	-.12 (-.20**)	-.08 (-.18**)	.91** (.91**)	-			
15. Re-election	.44** (.48**)	.33** (.40**)	.42** (.43**)	.39** (.43**)	.32** (.33**)	.28** (.29**)	.32** (.30**)	.24** (.31**)	.46** (.37**)	-.29** (-.28**)	-.28** (-.27**)	-.25** (-.25**)	.82** (.84**)	.58** (.60**)	-		
16. Accountability	.42** (.43**)	.34** (.40**)	.41** (.41**)	-.34** (-.34**)	.30** (.36**)	.25** (.30**)	.24** (.33**)	.31** (.36**)	.40** (.34**)	-.17** (-.22**)	-.17** (-.25**)	-.15* (-.16*)	.75** (.79**)	.57** (.58**)	.52** (.61**)	-	
<i>17. Decreased voting intentions</i>	.30** (.29**)	.20** (.27**)	.32** (.26**)	.26** (.24**)	.31** (.30**)	.26** (.25**)	.29** (.27**)	.28** (.32**)	.36** (.18**)	-.23** (-.10)	-.23** (-.06)	-.19** (-.12)	.50** (.50**)	.39** (.38**)	.49** (.44**)	.40** (.52**)	-
<i>M</i>	<b>5.13</b> ( <b>5.48</b> )	<b>5.46</b> ( <b>5.76</b> )	<b>5.21</b> ( <b>5.63</b> )	<b>4.72</b> ( <b>5.08</b> )	5.84 (5.94)	5.80 (5.92)	5.87 (5.99)	5.86 (5.92)	<b>3.59</b> ( <b>3.95</b> )	1.73 (1.60)	1.72 (1.58)	1.74 (1.62)	<b>5.79</b> ( <b>6.05</b> )	6.28 (6.53)	<b>4.99</b> ( <b>5.40</b> )	6.09 (6.22)	<b>5.63</b> ( <b>5.90</b> )
<i>SD</i>	1.14 (1.09)	1.27 (1.17)	1.30 (1.13)	1.42 (1.45)	0.98 (0.97)	1.23 (1.10)	1.10 (0.98)	1.00 (1.10)	1.82 (1.75)	1.09 (0.90)	1.16 (.96)	1.16 (1.01)	1.31 (1.24)	2.18 (2.04)	1.49 (1.33)	.96 (.95)	1.37 (1.37)

Note. Out-group participants are listed in parentheses. Boldface indicates that groups differ at  $p < .05$ ; \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

### **Hypothesis 1: Mann-Whitney U Test**

Given the presence of non-normal data, the assumptions for using an independent samples *t*-test to compare mean scores on attributions of intentionality and controllability for participants assigned to each experimental condition were not met. Instead, consistent with the first hypothesis of this study, the Mann-Whitney *U* test (a non-parametric rank-based alternative to the independent-samples *t*-test) was used to compare the median values between in-group and out-group participants on attributions of intentionality and controllability (Lehmann & D'Abrera, 2006). Distributions of the scores on attributions of intentionality and controllability for both in-group and out-group participants were similar, as assessed by visual inspection. The similarity shaped distributions allowed the researchers to interpret how large the median differences were between the two groups, as opposed to simply determining which group had median values that were higher or lower than the other group. As such, median scores on attributions of intentionality were higher in participants assigned to the out-group condition than in participants assigned to the in-group condition,  $U = 40,397$ ,  $z = 3.51$ ,  $p < .001$ . Median scores on attributions of controllability were not statistically different in participants assigned to the out-group condition versus participants assigned to the in-group condition,  $U = 36,391$ ,  $z = 1.37$ ,  $p = .17$ . Although not central to the hypotheses of this study, there were other statistically different median scores between in-group and out-group participants on other relevant research variables, as summarized in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Median differences between participants by study condition using the Mann-Whitney *U* test; variance from significant covariates was controlled prior to these analyses.

	In-Group	Out-Group	<i>U</i>	<i>z</i>
	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>Mdn</i>		
Attributions of Intentionality	5.21	5.65	40,397	3.51***
Attributions of Controllability	6.04	6.10	36,691	1.37
Anger	3.60	4.16	38,239	2.26*
Empathic Emotions	1.33	1.26	32,780	-0.89
Social Judgment	5.87	6.11	38,380	2.34*
Punishment Severity	6.42	6.61	36,452	1.23
Does Not Deserve Re-election	5.03	5.59	39,709	3.11**
Should Be Held Accountable	6.13	6.24	37,131	1.62
Decreased Voting Intentions	5.95	6.17	39,039	2.72**

*Note.* *Mdn* = Median, *U* = Mann-Whitney's *U* statistic, *z* = Standardized test statistic.  
 \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

## Hypothesis 2: Structural Equation Modeling

Hypothesis two was analyzed using the robust maximum likelihood method of estimation in Bentler's EQS for Windows, v.6.1, which corrects for non-normality and multivariate outliers in large samples (Byrne, 1995). Adequate model fit in EQS was evaluated based on a non-significant Satorra-Bentler  $\chi^2$  (Satorra & Bentler, 1994), a  $\chi^2/df$  ratio of less than 2.0 (Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003), a Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of .95 or greater (Tabachnick, Fidell, & Osterlind, 2001), and a Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) of less than .05, including a 90% confidence interval between .00 and .10, as recommended by Bentler and Hu (1999). Any modifications to the hypothesized model were based on results from the Lagrange multiplier (LM) test, the Wald  $\chi^2$  test, and theoretical considerations. Indirect structural path coefficients were calculated using procedures proposed by MacKinnon (2008).

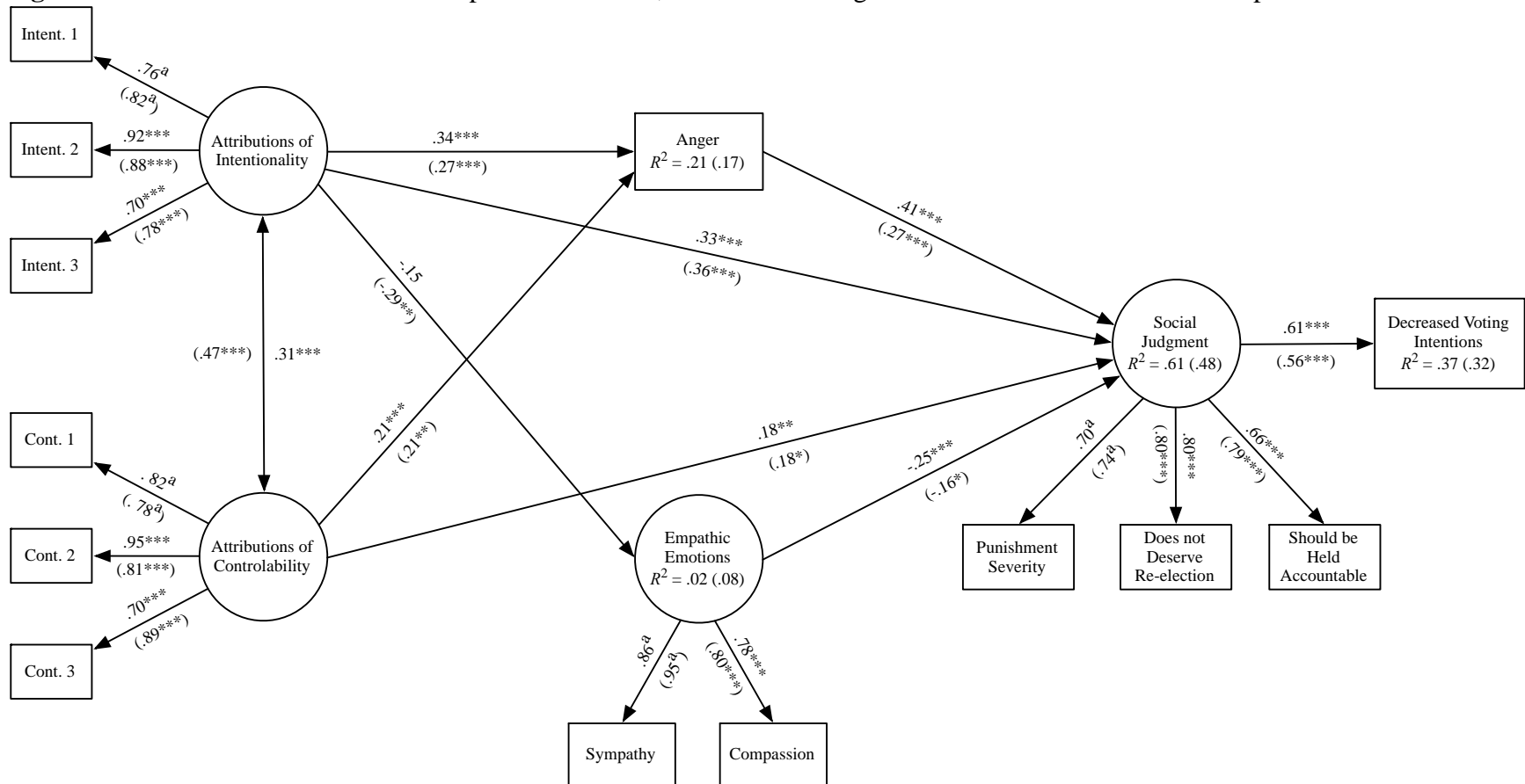
In addition, multi-group structural equation modeling, namely a test of invariance (Browne & Cudeck, 1993), was also conducted to test for differences in the magnitude of the relations between factors (structural paths) between the in-group and out-group baseline models. First, since it is necessary in multi-group structural equation modeling to establish that observed differences between groups are not due to measurement artifacts (Byrne, 1995), full or partial measurement equivalence was examined. Then, all structural paths were constrained to be equal. If the constrained structural model showed a decrement in fit based on a significant  $\Delta S-B\chi^2$  or  $\Delta CFI$  of .01 or greater, as compared to the reference model, the LM Test of equality constraints was assessed for evidence of noninvariance (Van de Vijver & Leung, 1997). Of note, since the  $S-B\chi^2$  corrects for non-normal data, and is therefore based on a different distribution table than  $\chi^2$ , the change

values ( $\Delta S-B\chi^2$ ) described throughout these SEM analyses have been adjusted according to procedures outlined by Byrne (1995). Equality constraints were considered non-invariant and released in a sequential manner if doing so would significantly improve model fit according to LM  $\chi^2 \geq 5.0$  per *df*, and/or  $p < .05$  (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002).

### ***Test of the Hypothesized Model***

Consistent with the second hypothesis of this study, separate baseline models were obtained for participants in each experimental condition (Figure 1). The baseline model fit the data well for both participants assigned to the in-group condition,  $S-B \chi^2(57, n = 260) = 74.30, p = .06, \chi^2/df = 1.30, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .034$  (90% CI = .000 - .054), and participants assigned to the out-group condition,  $S-B \chi^2(56, n = 264) = 65.27, p = .19, \chi^2/df = 1.16, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .025$  (90% CI = .000 - .048). In fact, attributions of intentionality and controllability, along with related emotions and social judgments, accounted for a notable portion of the variance in decreased likelihood of voting for the congressperson for both in-group,  $R^2 = .37$ , and out-group participants,  $R^2 = .32$ . The factor structure, appeared similar for both groups in terms of the direction and significance of factor loadings, but there were some observed differences in magnitude and significance of the associations between factors, which were further examined in multi-group analyses.

**Figure 1.** Final model with standardized path coefficients; variance from significant covariates was controlled prior to SEM.



#### Model-Fit Statistics, Robust Method

**In-Group Condition,  $n = 260$ :**  $S-B \chi^2 = 74.30$ ,  $df = 57$ ,  $p = .06$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.30$ , CFI = .98, RMSEA = .034 (90% CI = .000 - .054)

**(Out-Group Condition,  $n = 264$ ):**  $S-B \chi^2 = 65.27$ ,  $df = 56$ ,  $p = .19$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.16$ , CFI = .99, RMSEA = .025 (90% CI = .000 - .048)



### *Test of Configural Invariance*

Testing for measurement equivalence began with the least restrictive model in which only the factor structure of the baseline models, namely the number of factors and the factor-loading pattern, was checked for equality between experimental groups (Table 5, Model 1). The requirement for configural invariance suggested that the same items must be indicators of the same factor for both groups, yet differences in factor loadings are permitted between groups (Hoyle, 1995). This model revealed a strong fit to the data,  $S-B \chi^2(113, n = 524) = 139.57, p = .05, \chi^2/df = 1.24, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .030$  (90% CI = .005 - .045).

### *Test of Measurement Invariance*

In the second level of measurement equivalence, the factor loadings of the configural model were constrained to be equal between groups, making these coefficients invariant between those assigned to the in-group condition and those assigned to the out-group condition (Table 5, Model 2). The constrained measurement model was also a good fit to the data,  $S-B \chi^2(120, n = 524) = 167.85, p < .01, \chi^2/df = 1.39, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .046$  (90% CI = .032 - .058), but showed evidence of a statistically significant decrement in model fit when compared to the configural model,  $\Delta CFI = .01, \Delta S-B \chi^2(7) = 17.29, p < .05$ . Therefore, measurement equivalence was not initially assumed, and further analyses revealed that two factor loadings, intentionality # 3 (“Congressperson Taylor meant to spend taxpayer dollars in an inappropriate way.”), and controllability # 3 (“This reason is something Congressperson Taylor could have changed or influenced.”) operated differently for the two experimental conditions. According to criteria proposed

by Byrne (1995), partial measurement equivalence was assumed, and the non-invariant factor-loading constraints were freely estimated during subsequent multi-group analyses. Despite these two non-invariant factor loadings, Byrne (1995) suggests any statistically significant variations observed on structural paths can still be interpreted as between-group differences rather than measurement artifacts.

### *Test of Partial Measurement Invariance and Structural Invariance*

To test for differences in the magnitude of the paths among the factors between the two experimental groups, constraints were imposed on all of the structural paths (Table 5, Model 3). Specifically, invariance tests for structural path coefficients were used to determine whether the relations between factors varied as a function of being assigned to either the in-group or out-group condition. In comparison with the configural model (Table 5, Model 1), the constrained structural model did not show a significant decrement in fit,  $\Delta\text{CFI} = .00$ ,  $\Delta\text{S-B } \chi^2(14) = 8.77$ ,  $p = .84$ . In addition to the fact that explicit criteria for a decrement in model fit were not met, none of the constraints in the Lagrange multiplier test met criteria for being released. In summary, these results suggest that, with the exception of two factor loadings, the structural paths of attribution-emotion processes are statistically equivalent between participants in the in-group condition and participants in the out-group condition.

**Table 5.** Model building summary and fit indices for the structure of relations in the in-group and out-group samples.

Model	$S-B\chi^2$	$df$	$p$	$\chi^2/df$	CFI	RMSEA	90% CI	Model Comparison	$\Delta S-B\chi^2$	$\Delta df$	$p$	$\Delta CFI$
1. Configural model (no constraints)	139.57	113	.05	1.24	.99	.030	(.005, .045)	-	-	-	-	-
2. Measurement model (factor loadings constrained between groups)	167.85	120	.002	1.39	.98	.046	(.032, .058)	2 vs. 1	17.29	7	<.05	.01
3. Structural model (partial factor loading constraints between groups and 9 constrained structural paths)	149.82	127	.08	1.18	.99	.026	(.026, .042)	3 vs. 1	8.77	14	.84	.00

*Note.*  $S-B \chi^2$  = Satorra-Bentler Scaled Statistic.  $CFI$  = Robust Comparative Fit Index.  $RMSEA$  = Robust Root Mean Square Error of Approximation.  $90\% CI$  = 90% Confidence Interval for RMSEA.  $\Delta S-B \chi^2$  = Adjusted Change in Satorra-Bentler Scaled Statistic.

## Summary of Findings

The first hypothesis, concerning the impact of the political affiliation of a congressperson in a hypothetical news article on attributions of intentionality and controllability, was partially confirmed. Consistent with the ultimate attribution error, when participants read a news article involving a congressperson from an opposing political party acting in an antisocial manner, the congressperson's behavior was attributed as more intentional than when participants read an identical news article involving a congressperson from the participant's political party acting in an antisocial manner. There was no statistically significant difference between experimental groups in terms of attributions controllability for the causes of the congressperson's antisocial behavior.

The second hypothesis, concerning the direct and indirect influence of attributions of intentionality and controllability on related emotions, social judgment, and decreased voting intentions, was partially confirmed for each experimental group. The more participants attributed the congressperson's behavior as intentional, and the causes of the behavior as controllable, the more social judgment was assigned to the congressperson, and the less likely participants were to vote for the congressperson. In addition to these direct associations, the association between attributions of intentionality and social judgment was indirect through anger for participants assigned to both the out-group condition,  $\beta_{\text{indirect}} = .14, p < .001$ , and the in-group condition,  $\beta_{\text{indirect}} = .07, p < .01$ . The association between attributions of controllability and social judgment was also indirect through anger for participants assigned to both the out-group condition,  $\beta_{\text{indirect}} = .09, p < .001$ , and the in-group condition,  $\beta_{\text{indirect}} = .06, p < .05$ . The indirect effect of attributions

of intentionality on social judgments through empathic emotions was not significant for either experimental group, but there was a direct effect of empathic emotion on social judgment in that the more empathy a participant felt towards the congressperson, the less severe his or her social judgments were towards the congressperson. Strict criteria for identifying statistically significant between-group differences were not met, but some notable between-group differences can be discussed in terms of the strength of associations between variables. Namely, while the direct association between attributions of intentionality and anger was similar for each experimental group, anger was associated with higher social judgment for participants assigned to the in-group condition,  $\beta = .41, p < .001$ , compared to participants assigned to the out-group condition,  $\beta = .27, p < .001$ . For participants assigned to the out-group condition, the more a participant attributed the congressperson's behavior as intentional, the less empathic emotions the participant felt towards the congressperson,  $\beta = -.29, p < .001$ . This direct relationship was less important for those assigned to the in-group condition,  $\beta = -.15, p > .05$ . Additionally, the covariant association between attributions of intentionality and controllability was positive for both groups, but participants assigned to the out-group condition had a stronger covariate association between these attributional factors,  $\beta = .47, p < .001$ , than participants assigned to the out-group condition,  $\beta = .31, p < .001$ .

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Implications**

Consistent with the theory-driven hypotheses of this study, this research suggests individuals engage in the ultimate attribution error when responding to the antisocial behavior of political figures. In addition, this research also suggests that Betancourt's attribution-emotion model of interpersonal conflict and violence (1992) provides a strong theoretical foundation for studying the ultimate attribution error from a comprehensive attribution-emotion perspective. These findings have important implications for both attribution theory in general and partisan-based intergroup relations in specific. While using locus of control as the primary attributional dimension for the initial proposition of the ultimate attribution error was an important step towards researchers' understanding of interpersonal conflict, intergroup relations, discrimination, and prejudice from a social-cognitive perspective, this study suggests the antecedents of the ultimate attribution error should also incorporate other attribution-emotion processes besides locus of control. Namely, this study suggests perceived intentionality of an act and the controllability of its causes, emotional factors relevant to aggression and helping behavior, and an individual's judgment of the act from an interpersonal perspective should all be considered important constructs when investigating the ultimate attribution error.

In terms of implications for partisan-based intergroup relations, the results of this study contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the psychological barriers that fuel partisan-based conflicts in the United States, and thereby inhibit the development of bipartisan solutions. First, this study confirms recent research regarding an individual's

tendency to commit the ultimate attribution error within the context of partisan-based interactions (Coleman, 2013). Second, and more specifically, the results of this study are consistent with recent research that dispelled the proposition that political intolerance, inflexibility, and cognitive biases are more associated with conservatism than liberalism (Toner, Leary, Asher, & Jongman-Sereno, 2013), namely the rigidity-of-the-right hypothesis (Greenberg & Jonas, 2003). The present study suggests that individuals from both sides of the political spectrum are vulnerable to the same set of social-cognitive biases that influence the way individuals perceive the actions of political adversaries.

There are many possible causes of these misperceptions, but the most robust explanations likely include well-established influences on discrimination and prejudice, such as individuals' tendency to rely on stereotypes and heuristics to reduce perceptual complexity by grouping individuals into discrete categories (Park & Rothbart, 1982). This out-group homogeneity bias not only serves to protect the individual's group membership and fortify his or her self-image and belief structure (Toner et al., 2013), but it also leads to a tendency to exaggerate differences between social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). As applied to the current political environment, recent research even suggests that partisans have the tendency to engage in cognitive egocentrism and thereby exaggerate the extent to which their political adversaries actually disagree about social issues, such as abortion and international policy (Chambers, Baron, & Inman, 2006). Other research even suggests a self-serving (in-group) bias regarding the justification for aggressive political behavior. In an analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Shamir and Shikaki (2002) found that both parties viewed the violent behavior of their adversary as terrorism while simultaneously seeing their own violence as appropriately warranted and

highly regarded among the international community. Given these mirror image perceptions (Bronfenbrenner, 1961), it appears that groups in conflict may be predisposed to see their own actions as responses to provocation, not a causal link in subsequent events (Myers, 2013).

In addition to possible explanations for politically related misperceptions in general, there are also important causal considerations for the specific attribution-emotion relationships identified in this study. For instance, the stronger covariate relationship between attributions of intentionality and controllability for out-group participants may be explained by a broad tendency to negatively evaluate members of an out-group without specific attention to nuances in how their negative evaluation is expressed. In other words, perhaps individuals who evaluate an in-group member's behavior are more deliberate, cautious, and thoughtful in one's responses than individuals who evaluate an out-group member's behavior. In-group betrayal should also be considered as a potential explanation for the stronger relationship between attributions of intentionality and anger for participants in the in-group condition as compared to participants in the out-group condition. Although numerous studies demonstrate a strong direct relationship between perceived intentionality and anger (Malle, Moses, & Baldwin, 2003; Rudolph et al., 2004), some studies also suggest poor behavior is evaluated more negatively when performed by a member of an in-group rather than a member of an out-group (Moreland & McMinn, 1999). In the current study, it is likely that when in-group participants perceived the congressperson's behavior as intentional, they were angrier because the congressperson violated implicit expectations of good behavior for members of the same group and, in turn, tarnished the reputation of the group by association. In fact, lower



levels of anger in out-group participants who perceived the congressperson's behavior as more intentional may actually reflect another aspect of a debasing out-group bias. That is, individuals may expect members of a conflicted out-group to intentionally behave in antisocial ways, and are therefore less angry when they do. These expectations of bad behavior would bolster the individual's social identity with a superior in-group while also reinforce the individual's negative stereotypes about members of the out-group. Similar group-biases and mechanisms of social identity may also explain the stronger negative direct association between empathic emotions and social judgment for in-group participants compared to out-group participants. Individuals who empathize with members of an in-group are psychologically motivated to judge a person's actions less harshly due to the potential dissonance of being affiliated with a person with inferior attributes, characteristics, or patterns of behavior. Some research involving empathy and implicit bias modification supports this notion in that inducing empathy can easily shift negative stereotypes towards fellow in-group members but often has no effect on modifying negative stereotypes towards members of an out-group (Teachman, Gapinski, Brownell, Rawlins, & Jeyaram, 2003).

At a practical level, the results of this study suggest there may be an escalating cycle of social, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral biases that drastically impede the development of partisan-based cooperation. For example, if an observer in the general electorate, or at the congressional levels of government, perceives an antisocial action of a political adversary as more intentional simply based on the adversary's out-group membership, the observer would be predisposed to respond to the actor's antisocial act in a more aggressive manner. If the observer then engages in an aggressive response

towards the actor, the same biases would influence the manner in which this retaliation is perceived by the initial actor, ultimately leading to an ever-increasing cycle of misinterpretation and perpetuated political hostilities. This pattern of interpersonal conflict escalation has even been demonstrated in laboratory settings (Shergill, Bays, Frith, & Wolpert, 2003), thereby suggesting the propensity to engage in tit-for-tat exchanges that quickly intensify beyond initial intentions. How much more constructive could political discussions become if these attributional biases were reduced? Perhaps recent political crises, such as concerns about the debt ceiling, or the government shutdown over the affordable care act, could have been mitigated or avoided entirely.

### **Directions for Future Research**

This study raises a number of interesting questions that may promote and inform future research. First, this study provides an empirical basis for a subsequent reformulation of the ultimate attribution error. While this study is an important step towards understanding the antecedents of this social-psychological bias from an attribution-emotion perspective, the original formulation of the ultimate attribution error not only proposed cognitive biases within the interpersonal interpretation of antisocial action, but it also proposed cognitive biases related to the interpretation of prosocial action. Therefore, more research is needed to determine which attribution-emotion processes influence the ultimate attribution error in the context of perceiving prosocial action. Other advancements in attribution theory's understanding of helping behavior could provide a useful conceptual framework in this regard since research evidence suggests emotions are a stronger determinant than causal attributions in the case of

helping behavior (Rudolph et al., 2004). Other aspects of the reformulation should simultaneously incorporate results from previous research that have identified other psychological variables relevant to the ultimate attribution error, such as the degree of prior conflict between the in-group and the out-group (Whitley & Kite, 2009), and preexisting levels of negative emotional activation in the observer, such as fear and anger (Coleman, 2013). Another relevant component of the reformulation should include replicating these theory-driven results within intergroup relations based on religious affiliation, gender, age, socio-economic status, race, and sexual orientation.

Exploring cultural determinants of the ultimate attribution error may also be an interesting area of research. For instance, as Betancourt's Model for the Study of Culture and Behavior (Betancourt & Flynn, 2009) suggests, culturally shared values, beliefs, expectations, and norms influence behavior directly, and indirectly through the mediating effect of psychological processes. Numerous studies support this proposed relationship (An & Trafimow, 2013; Betancourt et al., 2011; Choi, Dalal, Kim-Prieto, & Park, 2003; Mason & Morris, 2010; Triandis, 2001), and thereby challenge the notion that attribution-emotion processes follow universal perceptual mechanisms. Taken in the context of an increasingly polarized political system, where partisanship reflects fundamental differences in beliefs and values, cultural variables should be considered when conducting future psychological research on partisan-based intergroup conflict. For instance, moral foundations theory, as first proposed by Haidt (2012) to explain variations in political ideology between liberals and conservatives, may be an important explanatory factor regarding which cultural determinants (e.g., moral foundations) are

most relevant to the occurrence of the ultimate attribution error for both liberals and conservatives.

Moral foundations research suggests liberals endorse the individual-focused moral concerns of compassion and fairness more than conservatives, and conservatives endorse the group-focused moral concerns of in-group loyalty, respect for authorities and traditions, and physical/spiritual purity more than liberals (Graham, Nosek, & Haidt, 2012). Therefore, although this study suggests the mechanisms of the ultimate attribution error operate similarly for both liberals and conservatives, it's possible that the ultimate attribution error occurs in liberals because of their orientation to fairness, and in conservatives because of their orientation to in-group loyalty. A direct relationship between moral foundations and voting behavior has already been established (Johnson et al., 2014), so subsequent studies could expand these findings by investigating the mediating effect of attribution-emotion processes on moral foundations and voting behavior. Perhaps differences on moral foundations are related to differences in voting behaviors because one's moral foundations inform the way in which interpersonal actions are interpreted from the attribution-emotion perspective presented in this study.

### **Limitations**

Despite the significance of the study findings, some limitations should be considered. For instance, since the sample of this study was not stratified according to probability-based demographic projections reflective of the greater US population, the external validity of the results may be limited. The sample was heavily represented by individuals residing in California, who tend to be primarily democratic (approximately

60% of the voting population), socially tolerant, open to new experiences, and less affiliated with mainline Protestantism as compared to individuals from other regions of the country (Rentfrow et al., 2013). Females, Anglo Americans, and highly educated individuals (> 4 years of college) were also heavily represented. As a result, it is unclear if the results of this study would be similar using a more representative sample. The generalizability of future research would improve by using a stratified sampling method based on current demographic projections rather than snowball and convenience sampling.

The non-normality of the research variables in this study is another limitation since it required the use of non-parametric analyses and robust SEM estimation methods. Although these are statistically sound alternatives when analyzing non-normal data, they are also more conservative methods of analysis that can attenuate statistical power. The non-normal nature of the data was most likely due to using a vignette in which the congressperson clearly admitted a wrongdoing by inappropriately spending taxpayer funds. Although efforts were made to construct an ambiguous vignette that would allow the biases of the ultimate attribution error to be fully expressed by participants within each research condition, future research may benefit from an even more ambiguous vignette, such as a vignette in which it is unclear if the congressperson was even involved in the inappropriate spending of taxpayer funds but is still the subject of the participant's attribution-emotion processes.

In addition, the accuracy of the participants' responses should also be considered as a potential limitation to these results. Although many precautions were taken to reduce the likelihood of inaccurate or inattentive responding, there is no way to conclusively

ensure the quality or accuracy of the responses that were obtained. Future research would benefit from recruiting participants on an individual basis, rather than through a generic questionnaire web link that cannot be regulated. Some online survey software platforms even offer the ability to control the study participants who access the questionnaire by providing a selected participant with an individualized internet link that can only be accessed using that participant's email address, phone number, or other unique identifier. Such methods should drastically improve the quality of the responses obtained (Wright, 2006), but may lower overall participation rates and/or increase the cost per participant recruited.

Another limitation involves the use of an outcome variable that reflects voting intentions rather than actual voting behaviors. While numerous social-psychological studies indicate that behavioral intentions are an effective proxy for measuring enacted behaviors (Weiner, 2006), this methodological limitation may have confounded the effect of attribution-emotion processes on actual voting behavior. Additional research is needed to determine if the same results would be obtained when investigating actual voting behaviors. Finally, although the tested hypotheses were solidly grounded in social-psychological theory, and employed an experimental design with random assignment, the cross-sectional design of this study limits the testing of temporal relations. Certainly, some casual relationships can be inferred without temporal precedence, but the results of this study, and future research, would be more definitive if longitudinal data was used.

### **Suggested Interventions**

These results point to the need for interventions designed to reduce the cognitive

and emotional obstacles that impede bipartisan solutions. While it may behoove researchers to employ interventions that reflect the many empirically supported principles for reducing prejudice and discrimination (for a review see Oskamp, 2000), the results of this study are also consistent with prior research findings that suggest cooperative resolutions to conflict are less likely to occur in the context of anger, an injustice, or a perceived threat (Bodenhausen, Sheppard, & Kramer, 1994; Pyszczynski, Rothschild, & Abdollahi, 2008). Therefore, the effectiveness of any subsequent intervention strategy, as applied to the current political environment, may be drastically reduced without first addressing the inflated levels of negative emotionality that pervade political interactions. One way to address this trend could be through the induction of empathy and perspective taking between political groups, which is a popular theme in the literature on intergroup relations (Amador, 2012; Chambers et al., 2006; Halpern, 2013; Nadler & Liviatan, 2006; Pyszczynski et al., 2008). Results from the present study indicate that empathic emotions act as an important antidote to the social-cognitive biases that characterize intergroup relations, and should therefore be considered when developing intervention approaches. In fact, research suggests that when individuals are encouraged to empathize with others, they tend to make more consistent attributions, experience a higher degree of positive emotionality, and are thus more likely to engage in prosocial action (Betancourt, 1990, 2004b). In the political arena, this induction of empathy may be accomplished by asking partisans to think about social issues from the ideological worldview of their adversary, which may result in “the realization not only that there is an alternative and equally valid set of ideals involved in the debate, but also that they and their adversaries share similar opinions about those ideals” (Chambers et al., 2006, p. 44).

Another important intervention strategy designed to address the attributional biases discovered in this study is the contact hypothesis, originally proposed by Allport in 1954, which suggests that exposure to an adversarial group under appropriate conditions will lower prejudice and discrimination by increasing available information and disconfirming previously held stereotypes. A recent meta-analysis on the contact hypothesis involving more than 250,000 participants demonstrated that intergroup contact generally reduces prejudice,  $r = -.21$ , especially when there is equal status between the groups, common goals shared by each group, no intergroup competition, and a sanctioned authority that supports the intergroup contact (Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, & Christ, 2011). This method for reducing prejudice and discrimination is particularly germane to the findings of this study given prior research that found having favorable contact with homosexuals was associated with lower attributions of controllability, and therefore more political support for gay rights (Wood & Bartkowski, 2004). In terms of its application to politically based conflict and the ultimate attribution error, favorable intergroup contact would provide opportunities for partisans to disprove the existing beliefs about political adversaries that contribute to the occurrence of the ultimate attribution error as proposed by the conceptual framework of this study. This disconfirmation of stereotypes may then improve partisans' ability to engage in civil and productive political negotiations that are long overdue.

In order to reflect the importance of both empathy induction and the contact hypothesis, as previously discussed, one specific intervention strategy that could be evaluated in future studies is the use of "peace workshops." This conflict resolution strategy has been sponsored by non-governmental organizations around the world, and is



designed to promote international and intranational resolution between conflicted groups (Malhotra & Liyanage, 2005). An initial pilot intervention could be modeled after this approach using a small group of liberal and conservative undergraduate students who attend a multiday workshop geared towards encouraging effective interactions with members from opposing political parties. Workshop attendees would be peer-nominated to attend based on their perceived level of leadership and involvement with politically related activities on campus. Each participant would complete pre-intervention measures consistent with the hypotheses of the current study, to determine the participant's baseline tendency to engage in the ultimate attribution error in political contexts. The workshop would be held in a facility that would allow the participants to live and eat together over the course of a few days while they attended group discussions and activities. Among many other possible activities, workshop curricula would include generic team-building exercises (to increase positive intergroup contact), opportunities for individuals to publicly discuss the role of political affiliation in their life with other members of the workshop (to induce empathy), and role-plays of effective conflict resolution strategies that lead to a bipartisan political solution (to promote skill acquisition) (Cikara, Bruneau, & Saxe, 2011). Alternate versions of the pre-intervention questionnaire could be administered post-intervention and at a one-year follow-up to determine the intervention's efficacy at reducing the ultimate attribution error in political contexts. If the intervention proves efficacious, it could be targeted towards higher levels of government in order to reduce the psychological barriers that prevent bipartisan solutions to gridlocked political problems.

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**APPENDIX A**

**RECRUITMENT MATERIALS**

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**Facebook Recruitment Script:**

Hello!

It's time for me to call in a HUGE favor from my friends and family. I have officially started the process of collecting data for my dissertation, which is a social-psychological study on political decision-making, and I need your help with two things:

1. Would you consider personally taking my anonymous survey? It should take about 30 minutes, and you can enter a drawing to win one of ten \$50 gift cards to Amazon.com upon completing the survey. I know your time is valuable, but your help would really mean a lot. Anyone can take the survey as long as they are over 18, under 70, and eligible to vote in the United States.
2. Perhaps more importantly, would you be willing to distribute the survey among your friends, family, co-workers, etc.? I'm especially in need of more male participants. The completion of my dissertation depends on people like you to promote this study among your friends. In fact, if I can get 100 of my family, friends, and co-workers to take the study, and who get 4 of their friends to take the study, I would have all the data I need. I am hoping to have all the data collected by May 15th, 2014.

Here's the link to the survey:

[https://llu.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_9BK0B8wmKVIEdBr](https://llu.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_9BK0B8wmKVIEdBr)

If you're willing to help distribute this survey, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- a. Although status updates and social media posts will certainly help, please try to personally contact people (via email, personal Facebook message, etc.) who you think would be most likely to take the survey.
- b. While you can send out the link at any time, there is research that suggests people are more likely to take a survey if they receive the link on a Monday or Tuesday.
- c. If you need an idea for how to tell your friends about the study, here's some text that can get you started. Feel free to modify it however you like... a personal touch always helps.

"I just received an email from a good friend of mine who is working on his Ph.D. in Psychology. He needs my help recruiting people for his dissertation who are willing to take an anonymous survey about political decision making, and you came to mind. Would you be willing to help him out? The survey takes about 30 minutes to complete,

and as an incentive, anyone who completes the survey will be given an opportunity to win one of ten \$50 gift cards to Amazon.com. I know your time is valuable, but your help would really mean a lot. Anyone can take the survey as long as they are over 18, under 70, and eligible to vote in the United States. If you're willing to take the survey, or if you need more information, click on the link below. Also, if you know anyone else who might be interested in this research, please forward this message to them. This seems like an interesting and important study (then be sure to provide the link above)."

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

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## APPENDIX B

### SCALE ITEMS

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#### **Vignette of Congressperson's Inappropriate Spending of Taxpayer Dollars:**

Imagine that that you encounter a news article describing a recent political event. Please read the following article carefully.

Headline: DEMOCRATIC/REPUBLICAN STATE REPRESENTATIVE SPENDS \$8000 PER MONTH "ENTERTAINING" INFLUENTIAL CITIZENS

"Congressperson Taylor is a 44-year old Democratic/Republican state representative whose work has been well received by the Democratic/Republican party, which has resulted in consecutive election terms since being voted into office in 2006. After a recent media report was released that listed the ways current politicians spend taxpayer dollars, Taylor has been the focus of widespread criticism and scrutiny due to spending more than \$8000 a month "entertaining" influential citizens. Taylor has admitted to spending this money, but claims to have been unaware of the negative consequences of misusing taxpayer dollars."

Please think about this newspaper article as you answer the questions below.

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#### **Social Attribution and Emotion Scale (SAES):**

Please think about the news article describing Congressperson Taylor's inappropriate spending of taxpayer dollars as you indicate your level of agreement or disagreement. (Placed on a 7-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree.")

#### *Intentionality Items:*

1. Congressperson Taylor's inappropriate spending of taxpayer dollars was an intentional act.
2. Congressperson Taylor inappropriately spent taxpayer dollars on purpose.
3. Congressperson Taylor meant to spend taxpayer dollars in an inappropriate way.

*Controllability Items:* In your opinion, why did Congressperson Taylor inappropriately spend taxpayer dollars? What is the reason for the congressperson's behavior? A sentence will do. (Participants are given an open-ended text box).

4. This reason is something Congressperson Taylor could have controlled.
5. This reason is something Congressperson Taylor could have done something about.
6. This reason is something Congressperson Taylor could have changed or influenced.

*Negative and Empathic Emotions Items:* When you think about Congressperson Taylor's inappropriate spending of taxpayer dollars, how much do you feel the following emotions towards the congressperson?

7. Anger
  8. Sympathy
  9. Compassion
- 

**Social Judgment Scale:**

Please evaluate Congressperson Taylor's behavior by indicating your level of agreement or disagreement. (Placed on a 7-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.”)

1. Congressperson Taylor should be held accountable for the inappropriate spending of taxpayer dollars.
  2. Congressperson Taylor does not deserve to be re-elected.
  3. Please indicate the extent to which Congressperson Taylor should be punished for the inappropriate spending of taxpayer dollars. (Placed on a 10-point Likert scale from “not at all” to “very much.”)
  4. Congressperson Taylor's inappropriate spending of taxpayer dollars decreases the likelihood that I would vote for the congressperson in the next election.
- 

**Social Conservatism**

Please express your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements about social issues. (Placed on a 7-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.”)

1. Homosexuals should not legally be allowed to marry.
  2. The government should restrict stem cell research.
  3. Abortion should be illegal.
  4. Terminally ill patients should not have the right to die.
  5. Marijuana should not be legalized for medicinal use.
  6. Pre-emptive foreign policy (strike them before they strike you), is the most effective foreign policy.
  7. The government should adopt a stricter immigration policy.
  8. Evolution should not be taught in public schools.
  9. The death penalty should not be abolished.
  10. There should not be a complete separation between church and state.
  11. The minimum wage should not be raised.
  12. The government should not adopt stricter policies to protect the environment.
  13. The government should not adopt a policy to guarantee health care to all workers and their families.
- 

**The Index of Political Engagement (IPE):**

*Electoral Behavior (EB) Subscale: 7 Items*

1. In talking to people, we find that many are not registered to vote because they are too busy or move around often. Would official state records show that you are now registered to vote in your election district, or not?
  - a. Yes, I am registered to vote.
  - b. No, I am not registered to vote. (go to EB3)
  - c. I do not know if I am registered to vote. (go to EB3)
  
2. We know that most people don't vote in all elections. Usually between one-quarter to one-half of those eligible actually come out to vote. Can you tell us how often you vote in local and national elections? Always, sometimes, rarely, or never?
  - a. Always
  - b. Sometimes
  - c. Rarely
  - d. Never
  - e. Other (e.g., eligibility problems)
  
3. When there is an election taking place do you generally talk to any people and try to show them why they should vote for or against one of the parties or candidates, or not?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
4. Do you wear a campaign button, put a sticker on your car, or place a sign in front of your house, or aren't these things you do?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
5. During the past 12 months, have you been contacted by someone *personally* to vote for or against any candidate for political office? This does not include contact through mass mailing/emailing, or recorded telephone calls.
  - a. Yes
  - b. Yes, this happened to me, BUT NOT within the past 12 months
  - c. No
  
6. During the past 12 months, have you been contacted by someone *personally* to work for or contribute money to a candidate, political party, or any other organization that supports candidates? This does not include contact through mass mailing/emailing, or recorded telephone calls.
  - a. Yes
  - b. Yes, this happened to me, BUT NOT within the past 12 months
  - c. No
  
7. In the past 12 months, did you work for or contribute money to a candidate, a political party, or any organization that supported candidates?
  - a. Yes

- b. Yes, I have done this, BUT NOT within the past 12 months
- c. No

*Political Voice (PV) Subscale: 11 Items*

Which of the following things below have you done to express your views and opinions? (Response options include (1) “No, I have not done this.” (2) “Yes, I have done this, but not within the past 12 months.” (3) “Yes, I have done this within the past 12 months.”)

- 8. Have you contacted or visited a public official, at any level of government, to express your opinion?
- 9. Have you contacted a newspaper or magazine to express your opinion on an issue?
- 10. Have you called in to a radio or television talk show to express your opinion on a political issue, even if you did not get on the air?
- 11. Have you taken part in a protest, march, or demonstration?
- 12. Have you signed an e-mail petition about a social or political issue?
- 13. Have you signed a written petition about a political or social issue?
- 14. Have you not bought something from a certain company because you disagree with the social or political values of the company that produces it?
- 15. Have you bought a certain product or service because you like the social or political values of the company that produces or provides it?
- 16. Have you personally walked, ran, or bicycled for a charitable cause (separate from sponsoring or giving money to this type of event)?
- 17. Besides donating money, have you ever done anything else to help raise money for a charitable cause?
- 18. Have you gone door to door for a political or social group or candidate?

*Attentiveness (AT) Subscale: 2 Items*

- 19. Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs, whether there's an election or not. Others aren't that interested. Do you follow what's going on in government and public affairs?
  - a. Most of the time
  - b. Some of the time
  - c. Rarely
  - d. Never
  - e. I do not know/It depends.
- 20. How often do you talk about politics or government with your family and friends?
  - f. Most of the time
  - g. Some of the time
  - h. Rarely
  - i. Never

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**Intensity of Political Identity (IDPG)**

Listed below are statements related to one’s affiliation with his or her political party, or the party that you most relate to/feel closest to. Please indicate your agreement or

disagreement with the following statements as you think about your political affiliation. (Placed on a 7-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.”)

1. When someone criticizes my political party, it feels like a personal insult.
  2. I don't act like the typical person in my political party. (REVERSED)
  3. I'm very interested in what others think about my political party.
  4. The limitations associated with my political party apply to me also.
  5. When I talk about my political party, I usually say “we” rather than “they.”
  6. I have a number of qualities typical of members of my political party.
  7. My political party's successes are my successes.
  8. If a story in the media criticized my political party, I would feel embarrassed.
  9. When someone praises my political party, it feels like a personal compliment.
  10. I act like a person of my political party to a great extent.
- 

### **The Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale**

Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Read each item and decide whether the statement is *true* or *false* as it pertains to you personally. It is best to answer the following items with your first judgment without spending too much time thinking over any one question (all items placed on a dichotomous true/false scale).

1. It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged. (F)
  2. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way. (F)
  3. On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability. (F)
  4. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right. (F)
  5. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener. (T)
  6. There have been occasions I took advantage of someone. (F)
  7. I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake. (T)
  8. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget. (F)
  9. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable. (T)
  10. I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from mine. (T)
  11. There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others. (F)
  12. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me. (F)
  13. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings. (T)
-