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Intellectualism, Anti-Intellectualism, and Epistemic Hubris in Red and Blue America

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Epistemic hubris—the expression of unwarranted factual certitude—is a conspicuous yet understudied democratic hazard. Here, in two nationally representative studies, we examine its features and analyze its variance. We hypothesize, and find, that epistemic hubris is (a) prevalent, (b) bipartisan, and (c) associated with both intellectualism (an identity marked by ruminative habits and learning for its own sake) and anti-intellectualism (negative affect toward intellectuals and the intellectual establishment). Moreover, these correlates of epistemic hubris are distinctly partisan: intellectuals are disproportionately Democratic, whereas anti-intellectuals are disproportionately Republican. By implication, we suggest that both the intellectualism of Blue America and the anti-intellectualism of Red America contribute to the intemperance and intransigence that characterize civil society in the United States.

> *The very possibility of civilized human discourse rests upon the willingness of people to consider that they may be mistaken.*
> Richard Hofstadter (1968)

The ignorance and misinformation that pervade the American polity are well documented and reasonably well understood (e.g., Berinsky 2017; Delli-Carpini and Keeter 1996; Gerber and Huber 2010; Hochschild and Einstein 2015; Kuklinski et al. 2000; Lupia 2016; O'Connor and Weatherall 2019; Southwell and Thorson 2015). However, an equally conspicuous feature of the American "marketplace of realities" has attracted far less scholarship: *epistemic hubris*—the tendency to express greater certainty regarding policy-related factual disputes than the evidence actually warrants (Fischhoff, Slovich, and Lichtenstein 1977; Gilovich 1991; Grant 2021; Griffin and Tversky 1992).

Understanding the sources of such unwarranted factual certitude is important, for several reasons. First, and most intuitively, epistemic hubris may inhibit sound decision making by foreclosing the assimilation of new information (e.g., Grant 2021). Second, epistemic hubris may invite both policy gridlock and extremism by impeding the willingness to compromise (e.g., Barker, Marietta, and DeTamble 2021; Gutmann and Thompson 2012; Kavanagh and Rich 2018).[1] Third, epistemic hubris may foster social decay by breeding contempt toward people who view the world differently (Marietta and Barker 2019).

In this investigation, we take an initial step toward understanding the variance in epistemic hubris. We examine the explanatory purchase of what people loosely refer to as "intellectualism" and "anti-intellectualism"—nebulous concepts that have garnered less social scientific attention than their salience warrants (but see Gauchat 2012; Merkley 2020; Motta 2018; Oliver and Wood 2018; also see Baumgardner 2020; Hofstadter 1963; Rigney 1991; Shogan 2007 for good theoretical and historical accounts).

To be clear, for our purposes, intellectualism and anti-intellectualism are not opposite ends of the same scale. As we will elaborate more fully later, intellectualism is an *identity* trait marked by ruminative habits and learning for its own sake; its opposite is non-intellectualism.[2] By contrast, anti-intellectualism is negative *affect* toward intellectuals and especially the "intellectual establishment"; its opposite is pro-intellectualism.[3]

Thus, despite their undeniable negative kinship, intellectualism and anti-intellectualism are not mutually exclusive: many non-intellectuals are pro-intellectual, and some intellectuals are anti-intellectual.[4] Accordingly,

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[1] All expressions of epistemic certitude are not democratically injurious. When the evidence is overwhelmingly one-sided (e.g., the rate of economic growth, demographic proportions in the population, the relative safety of vaccines, the existence of anthropogenic Climate Change, the relationship between cigarette smoking and lung cancer, etc.), democracy is not served by pretending otherwise. It is *unwarranted* epistemic certitude (as it pertains to, for example, the effects associated with rising national debt, minimum wage increases, undocumented immigration, or public charter schools) that qualifies as hubristic and weakens democratic vitality.

[2] Intellectualism should not be confused with cognitive ability, a.k.a. intelligence. Many highly intelligent people are non-intellectual, and some are anti-intellectual. Likewise, intellectuals may or may not be highly intelligent in the broader sense (Hofstadter 1963).

[3] Throughout our discussion here, we use "intellectualism" and "intellectual identity" interchangeably, as we do "anti-intellectualism" and "anti-intellectual affect."

[4] We recognize that by some definitions, intellectualism might also incorporate positive affect. To maintain conceptual clarity, in this

we gauge the explanatory power of each variable both independently and interactively, comparing (a) intellectuals who are pro-intellectual, (b) non-intellectuals who are pro-intellectual, (c) non-intellectuals who are anti-intellectual, and (d) intellectuals who are anti-intellectual (the smallest category).

We posit that intellectuals (in terms of identity) and anti-intellectuals (in terms of affect) *both* tend to express disproportionately high levels of epistemic hubris—out of egotism in the former case and out of ego protectiveness in the latter case. We further hypothesize that intellectual identity and affect have distinctively partisan characters—underwriting and exceeding the growing "diploma divide" between Democrats and Republicans in the United States (Harris 2018; Kitschelt and Rehm 2019).[5]

Our observational data (gathered via the Cooperative Election Studies in 2019 and especially in 2020) are fully consistent with our hypotheses.[6] As such, by inference, we suggest that the growing intellectualism of Blue America and anti-intellectualism of Red America, respectively, may partially explain the tendency by both to view the other as some blend of dense, duped, and dishonest (e.g., Iyengar and Westwood 2015; Marietta and Barker 2019).[7]

We intend to make three primary contributions to the scholarly literature. First, we hope to spark a new line of inquiry into an important but underanalyzed element of political psychology—epistemic hubris. Second, we seek to augment the appreciation of intellectual identity and intellectual affect as elements of political cognition and to enhance the precision with which researchers study them. Finally, we strive to heighten attention to the accelerating partisan realignment that is growing up around differences in intellectual identity and affect.

THE POLITICS OF TRUTH

A long litany of studies in political science documents the prevalence of American political ignorance (e.g., Althaus 1998; Bartels 1996; Delli-Carpini and Keeter 1996; Gilens 2001; Lupia 2016), and an even larger body of research reveals the pervasiveness of misinformation (e.g., Bartels 2002; Berinsky 2017; Boudreau and MacKenzie 2014; Bullock et al. 2015; Flynn, Nyhan, and Reifler 2017; Gerber and Huber 2010; Hochschild and Einstein 2015; Kuklinski et al. 2000; Nyhan and Reifler 2010; Prior, Sood, and Khanna 2015; Redlawsk, Civettini, and Emmerson 2010).

However, the American "politics of truth" includes another important feature: epistemic hubris, which we define as unwarranted factual certitude. Despite the scientific method's admonition that knowledge is hard won and that epistemic certitude should be a relative anomaly (e.g., Darwin [1858] 1958; Gould 1993; Kuhn 1962; Popper 1935), such certitude is relatively common in the public square—even (and perhaps especially) among experts (e.g., Grant 2021; Taleb 2007; Tetlock 2005; Tetlock and Gardner 2015).[8]

The prevalence of epistemic hubris is consistent with Western culture's tendency to venerate characters (both real and fictional) who exude irrational confidence (e.g., Winston Churchill's speech to the House of Commons in 1940, Babe Ruth's called shot in the 1932 World Series, Han Solo's navigation of asteroid fields "a long time ago"), despite the litany of examples from history and literature that caution against the folly of such hubris (e.g., Icarus re: the Sun, Custer re: the Little Big Horn, the engineers of the *Titanic* re: the iceberg).

Despite its pervasiveness, however, epistemic hubris has been virtually ignored as a subject of social science inquiry (but see Fischhoff, Slovich, and Lichtenstein 1977; Gilovich 1991; Griffin and Tversky 1992; Marietta and Barker 2019 for related accounts). This investigation addresses that gap in understanding. We begin by clarifying exactly what epistemic hubris is and what it is not.

Clarifying Epistemic Hubris

People routinely exhibit all kinds of hubris, some of which can be socially useful. Indeed, many a business model depends upon irrational human audacity (those of Las Vegas, Vail, Home Depot, and Whole Foods come to mind), as do any number of amorous relationships and reproductive decisions. Overconfidence can sometimes confer democratic benefits as well. Elections require candidates, after all, and running for office requires a willingness to flout the odds in the majority of instances.

Likewise, *moral* hubris can yield positive as well as negative democratic consequences. Whether motivated by psychological dogmatism (e.g., Altemeyer 1981; Piereson, and Marcus 1982; Rokeach 1954; Sullivan), moral conviction (e.g., Ryan 2017; Skitka, Bauman, and Sargis 2005), sacred values (Graham, Haidt, and Nosek 2009; Marietta 2012; Tetlock 1986), or "closed" personality types (e.g., Gerber et al. 2011; Johnston, Lavine, and Federico 2017; Jost et al. 2003;

paper we treat intellectualism as simply the degree to which one is or is not an intellectual, irrespective of how positively or negatively one feels toward intellectuals.

[5] See Oliver and Wood 2018 for a theoretically congruent argument.

[6] The data do not enable unambiguous causal inferences, though. It is conceivable that an overconfident personality type could nurture an intellectual identity among some people while fostering resistance to informational authority among others. We attempt to account for this possibility in our analyses, but those efforts are necessarily imperfect.

[7] By "Red America," we mean the confluence of Republican party identification, cultural traditionalism, and conservative values that characterize small towns and rural areas in the United States, especially in the South and Midwest. Conversely, by "Blue America" we mean the intersection of Democratic party identification, cosmopolitanism, and liberal/progressive values that characterize most metropolitan areas, especially on the coasts.

[8] Socrates famously asserted that "the only true wisdom is knowing you know nothing" (West and Plato 1979). Similarly, Voltaire noted that "doubt is not a pleasant condition, but certainty is an absurd one" (Voltaire 1770).

2007), zealotry can undermine democratic deliberation but it can also mobilize political participation.[9]

By contrast, *epistemic* hubris does not appear to have any redeeming democratic qualities (Marietta and Barker 2019). While epistemic efficacy (the perception that one is competent enough to distinguish facts from falsehoods) is psychologically healthy and necessary for decision making (e.g., Farman et al. 2018; Pingree 2011; Pingree, Brossard, and McLeod 2014; Pingree, Hill, and McLeod 2013), such efficacy is to epistemic hubris as confidence is to overconfidence: the former inspires achievement but the latter inspires recklessness.

To reiterate a point we made earlier, we do not consider all epistemic certitude to be hubristic (or by extension, harmful). We suggest that certitude is justified and even useful regarding epistemic disputes for which the following conditions are met:

- There is ample public evidence at hand, which has been produced by credentialed sources adhering to scientific norms of dispassionate inquiry.
- The evidence is robust across temporal and spatial dimensions, measures, methods of analysis, and interpretations.
- There is a consensus within the reputable expert community across fields (and subfields). Such a consensus does not demand 100% agreement among experts, but it does require broad and repeated convergence among credentialed authorities on the subject.

In such instances, democracy demands that policy discussions be grounded in those undeniable facts.

On the other hand, epistemic certitude is unwarranted, or hubristic, when high-quality evidence from reputable sources is (1) limited, (2) unreliable, (3) inconsistent (across studies, time, or methodological choices), and/or (4) subject to differences in interpretation/perspective with respect to the conclusions that experts draw from it.

As we will detail in the empirical section of this paper and in the supplementary materials online, we have identified a range of politically salient epistemic disputes that fall into at least one of these categories. They include the economic and societal effects associated with the national debt, undocumented immigration, minimum wage increases, gun control, free college, and public charter schools, as well as the relative quality of US health care and the inception of human life. To date, almost nothing is known about the factors that explain the variance in hubris regarding those epistemic disputes (and many others). In the next section, we offer one theoretical perspective.

WHAT EXPLAINS EPISTEMIC HUBRIS?

When empirical evidence is scant, unclear, unreliable, or inconsistent, how do citizens come to decide they are *sure* about something rather than just holding a working impression that they are willing to update? Psychologists know that most people are prone toward *motivated reasoning*, or the drive to see the world in ways that are consistent with one's attitudinal predispositions (e.g., Erisen, Lodge, and Taber 2014; Taber and Lodge 2006).[10] Some limited evidence suggests that normative orientations do indeed play an important role in structuring expressions of epistemic certitude (Marietta and Barker 2019), but we suspect there is much more to the story. Specifically, we posit that the intellectualism of the contemporary Democratic party and the anti-intellectualism of the contemporary Republican party both engender a more hubristic—and therefore less democratically competent—body politic.

Intellectual Identity and Anti-Intellectual Affect

As we mentioned earlier, for our purposes intellectualism and anti-intellectualism are related but distinct concepts. Intellectualism is an *identity* trait marked by ruminative habits and demonstrable interest in learning for its own sake—irrespective of their instrumental or commercial applications—as revealed in a person's habits, self-image, occupation, and recreational activities (e.g., Baumgardner 2020; Hofstadter 1963). It encompasses a "need for cognition" (e.g., Jost et al. 2003), but it is more than that. Although the intellectual mind is not necessarily any more intelligent than the non-intellectual mind, it is inherently more curious, more contemplative, more creative, and less conventional (Hofstadter 1963). As such, intellectuals are more likely than non-intellectuals to take interest in the arts, humanities, public affairs, and the hard sciences.[11] By extension, for those who attend college, intellectuals are more likely than non-intellectuals to pursue subjects and careers that emphasize abstract or creative thinking (e.g., as writers, editors, journalists, educators, scientists, researchers, artists, musicians, doctors, lawyers, clergy-members, and so on) as opposed to occupations that reward quick decision making and prioritize commercial reward (e.g., various business-related majors and careers).

Anti-intellectualism is not the opposite of intellectualism but rather an expression of negative *affect* toward intellect, intellectuals, and/or the intellectual

[9] More broadly, the "democratic paradox" demonstrates that participatory democracy (and the passion that undergirds it) and deliberative democracy may be fundamentally incompatible (Mutz 2006).

[10] Such motivated reasoning can even lead to "attitudinal expressiveness" by survey respondents, which is the tendency to express factual agreement/disagreement not as sincere statements of belief but as demonstrations of allegiance to a particular political tribe and/or worldview (e.g., Gerber and Huber 2010; Prior, Sood, and Khanna 2015; but see Berinsky 2018).

[11] Intellectualism often manifests as high levels of intellectual achievement and status (e.g., through educational attainment), but it need not. Due to differences in opportunity, diligence, ambition, and luck, many intellectuals (as measured by their interests and proclivities) do not hold advanced degrees. Likewise, many highly educated and knowledgeable people (i.e., people who may be quite intelligent, diligent, ambitious, and/or fortunate) do not possess an intellectual cognitive disposition (for elaboration on these points, see Hofstadter 1963).

TABLE 1. Intellectual Identity and Intellectual Affect

		Affect
Identity	**Intellectual and pro-intellectual**	Intellectual and anti-intellectual
	Non-intellectual and pro-intellectual	**Non-intellectual and anti-intellectual**

establishment (Hofstadter 1963; Lecklider 2013; Rigney 1991; Sowell 2009). It can include (1) constitutional disregard for intellect itself (stemming from either "anti-rationalism" and/or "unreflective instrumentalism"; Rigney 1991), (2) ideological umbrage based on a perception that professional intellectuals (educators, scientists, journalists, etc.) are liberally biased, and/or (3) populist suspicion and resentment toward intellectual "elites" (including those whom society celebrates as experts and those with high levels of intellectual achievement more generally).[12]

In short, intellectualism is something one *is*, whereas anti-intellectualism is something one *feels*. Though conceptually distinct, we do suspect that intellectual identity and affect are empirically related: intellectuals tend also be pro-intellectual, and anti-intellectuals tend to be non-intellectual. Table 1 depicts this expected relationship between intellectual identity and intellectual affect as a 2 × 2 table, with the reinforcing combinations in **bold**.[13]

Having clarified these concepts, we now turn to describing a theory of how they may account for epistemic hubris—both independently and in concert.

Intellectual Identity, Anti-Intellectual Affect, and Epistemic Hubris

At the first glance, neither intellectual identity nor anti-intellectual affect stand out as particularly intuitive predictors of epistemic hubris. Indeed, with respect to intellectual identity, it is easy to imagine that such a contemplative disposition would actually produce lower, not higher, levels of epistemic hubris. However, other studies have shown that education actually heightens the tendency toward motivated reasoning (e.g., Marietta and Barker 2019) and that those with the deepest expertise in a particular area are often the least likely to self-correct when they get predictions wrong (Grant 2021; Taleb 2007; Tetlock 2005; Tetlock and Gardner 2015).

These findings suggest that intellectuals may sometimes fall prey to blind spots borne of vanity and smugness. It may be more difficult, after all, for someone who prides herself on being a sophisticated "thinker" to acknowledge a lack of knowledge on virtually any front. In short, William James may have had it right when he famously asserted that "the greatest empiricists among us are only empiricists on reflection; when left to their instincts, they dogmatize like infallible popes" (James 1896). Or as fivethirtyeight's Nate Silver put it recently: "one thing I've noticed is that once someone gets a PhD, it becomes 10 times harder to convince them that they are wrong" (Twitter, October 15, 2020).

When it comes to anti-intellectual affect, one might imagine that the cynicism toward informational authorities that characterizes the anti-intellectual mindset might lead to a sense of incredulity regarding all epistemic claims, leading perhaps to nihilism rather than to hubris. However, the essence of anti-intellectualism, in many cases, is the resentful "chip on the shoulder" that some people possess toward the intellectual establishment—the kind of defensive bullishness that goes along with feeling looked down upon by others. Anti-intellectuals tend to deride those whom they view as "eggheads" who live in "ivory towers" with their heads in the clouds, having lost their collective grip on reality. They distinguish those who are "book smart" from those who have common sense, the latter of which they view as a superior means of ascertaining truth.

In sum, the preceding discussion provides the rationale for our first two falsifiable hypotheses:

H_1: Intellectual identity is positively associated with epistemic hubris, all else being equal.

H_2: Anti-intellectual affect is positively associated with epistemic hubris, all else being equal.

In the next section, we discuss what we suspect is the strong partisan character of these relationships. That is, we describe the theoretical rationale behind our expectations that intellectuals and pro-intellectuals tend to call the Democratic party home, while non-intellectuals and anti-intellectuals tend to fall into the Republican camp.

INTELLECTUAL IDENTITY, INTELLECTUAL AFFECT, AND PARTY IDENTIFICATION

Over the course of the past generation—and especially the past few years—a partisan realignment has been taking shape in the United States (and some other advanced democracies as well) which manifests in educational differences. A huge "diploma divide" opened

[12] Populism is *advocacy on behalf of the "common man" against elites* (Brewer 2016; Kazin 1998; Oliver and Rahn 2016). Its many (sometimes contradictory) expressions share a common conviction that "ordinary people" are superior to elites both morally and intellectually (e.g., Mansbridge and Macedo 2019). *Democratic* populism elevates popular democracy over centralized decision making. *Economic* populism elevates socialism over capitalism in some cases and small enterprises over large ones in other cases. *Cultural* populism elevates nativism and authoritarianism over multiculturalism and libertarianism. *Anti-Intellectual* populism—one facet of anti-intellectualism more broadly—elevates practical knowledge over erudition; it often overlaps with cultural populism but not necessarily with democratic populism or economic populism (e.g., Gitlin 2000; Hofstadter 1963).

[13] We use this 2 × 2 table for simplicity of presentation and understanding; in reality there are countless gradations of both intellectual identity and intellectual affect.

such that (a) college graduates favor Democrats over Republicans by more than 20 percentage points (and postgraduates by more than 30 percentage points) and (b) whites without college degrees favor Republicans by an even wider margin (e.g., Harris 2018; Pew Research Center 2018). We suggest that such educational differences are a relatively crude indicator of a deeper partisan gulf with respect to both intellectual identity and affect.

Intellectual Identity and Party Identification

In addition to being more likely to attain college degrees (and postgraduate degrees), Democrats are more likely than Republicans to be occupied as "knowledge workers" (educators, scientists, researchers, journalists, publishers, doctors, lawyers, entertainers, artists, etcetera)—what is sometimes deemed "the creative class." Republicans, for their part, are much more likely to be occupied in more hands-on and/or profit-centric professions such as farming (including agribusiness), entrepreneurship, corporate management, finance, sales, military, and criminal justice (e.g., Swanson 2015).

Such partisan differences reflect underlying ideological differences. Hofstadter (1963) argues that intellectualism—by definition a creative and nonconformist form of intelligence—is instinctively radical. Jean Paul Sartre (1976) and Michel Foucault (1980) expressed similar sentiments (as recounted by Baumgardner 2020). Moreover, a large body of evidence reveals that ideological liberalism is positively correlated with several traits that are conceptually related to intellectualism, including "integrative complexity," (Tetlock 1983; 1984), "need for cognition" (e.g., Jost et al. 2003; 2007), open-mindedness (e.g., Johnston, Lavine, and Federico 2017), and an ironic sense of humor (Young et al. 2019). Meanwhile, ideological conservatism is associated with non-intellectual characteristics such as a "need for cognitive closure" (e.g., Kruglanski 2004), belief in conspiracy theories (Van Der Linden et al. 2020), and authoritarianism (e.g., Barker and Tinnick 2006; Haidt 2012; Hetherington and Weiler 2008). In light of this literature, it is reasonable to anticipate that intellectual identity is associated with ideological liberalism/progressivism. So as the Democratic party has become much more culturally progressive in recent decades (and the Republican party more culturally conservative), it logically follows that the relationship between intellectual identity and Democratic party identification has also become stronger.

In short,

H_3: Intellectual identity is associated with Democratic party identification (non-intellectual identity is associated with Republican party identification), all else being equal

Intellectual Affect and Party Identification

As for the partisan character of pro- versus anti-intellectual affect, it is well known that Republicans are much less likely than Democrats to (1) trust the mainstream press, the scientific community, or nonpartisan government agencies (e.g., Funk et al. 2019; Kennedy and Funk 2019); (2) view colleges and universities as "good for America" (e.g., Parker 2019); (3) believe that science is a better informant than one's "gut" (Toth and Dewese 2020); and (4) believe that experts are well equipped to solve important societal problems (Funk et al. 2020).[14]

Republican animus toward the intellectual establishment appears to have come to a head in recent years, but it has been germinating for generations. Elite universities have long invited scorn from mainstream America for their relative receptiveness toward Marxist thought and other culturally liberal ideas (Shogan 2007; Sowell 2009), whereas anecdotal accounts suggest that Republican suspicion toward intellectuals traces at least as far back as the 1950s presidential contests between Dwight Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson (Hofstadter 1963; Shogan 2007).

Such animus picked up steam in the 1960s and 1970s, when several social movements blossomed and drew disproportionate support from highly educated constituencies (Hall, Rodeghier, and Useem 1986). Dixiecrats such as George Wallace and Republicans such as Richard Nixon pushed back, charging the mainstream media with "liberal bias" in their coverage of such movements and associating the social movements themselves with elitist social engineering (e.g., Maxwell and Shields 2019). It was during this time that conservative leader William F. Buckley famously stated that (despite being an intellectual elite himself), he would "rather entrust the government of the United States to the first 2,000 people listed in the Boston telephone directory than to the faculty of Harvard University" (Buckley 1963).

The emergence of the Religious Right in the 1980s may have deepened Republican resentment of intellectuals even further. As newly politicized evangelicals joined the Republican fold, they ushered in a new era of climate denial, creationism, and other scientific heresies among Republican activists (e.g., Green and Guth 1988; Miller and Schofield 2008; Mooney 2006; Noll 1994; Oliver and Wood 2018). They fueled the political ascents of Dan Quayle, George W. Bush, and Sarah Palin—all of whom suffered under mainstream media ridicule for their (at times proud) lack of intellectual curiosity. And after some early hesitancy, evangelicals eventually converted to the candidacy of Donald Trump with characteristic zeal—spurred in part by his scientific skepticism, epistemic bravado, and confrontational exchanges with the mainstream media, whom he labeled "fake news" and "the enemies of the people (e.g., Oliver and Rahn 2016).

[14] During the COVID-19 pandemic, Democrats were three times as likely as Republicans to believe that the official death toll was understated (due to testing shortages), whereas Republicans were more than five times as likely to believe it was overstated due to political bias (Jackson and Newall 2020).

These patterns, observations, and historical trends inform our fourth hypothesis:

H_4: Anti-intellectual affect is associated with Republican party identification (pro-intellectual affect is associated with Democratic party identification), all else being equal

To summarize this section, we suspect that differences in intellectual identity and affect have become central to the Red/Blue Culture Wars in the United States (also see Grunwald 2018; Thomson 2010, 152).[15] In the rest of this paper, we consult the evidence for our somewhat paradoxical argument that intellectual vanity among Democrats *and* anti-intellectual vitriol among Republicans empower the epistemic hubris that characterizes both sides of the Red–Blue divide.

DATA, MEASURES, AND ESTIMATION METHODS

To test our hypotheses, we collected and analyzed nationally representative survey data under the auspices of the 2019 and 2020 Cooperative Election Studies (CES; formerly the Cooperative Congressional Election Studies; n = 1,000).[16] The 2019 data served as a pilot, justifying richer measurement and modeling in 2020. As such, we focus below on the 2020 analyses. (We describe the 2019 analyses in the supplementary materials online.)

Given that many of our key variables are latent psychological concepts, we measure them using multiple-item indices derived from principal components analysis (PCA). PCA uses the shared variance among multiple indicators to extract a weighted index of the latent concept in order to reduce random error in the measure relative to a simple summed or mean index (Dunteman 1989; Hotelling 1933).

Epistemic Hubris

We created our primary outcome variable of interest, *Epistemic Hubris*, in two steps. First, we created a principal component index of certitude regarding nine policy-related epistemic claims for which the best available evidence is unsettled (alpha = 0.77; eigenvalue = 3.15). The survey questionnaire randomized the order in which respondents considered the claims, each of which appears below (0–4; 0 = "certainly true"; 4 = "certainly false"; coded such that 1 = either "certainly" response; 0 = any "probably" or "don't know" response; percentage certain [either true or false] and principal component loadings appear in parentheses):

1. "If unchecked, the US national debt will cause major economic damage" (35%; loading = 0.29).
2. "If college were free, there would be much less economic inequality" (33%; loading = 0.36).
3. "Gun control reduces mass shootings" (47%; loading = 0.37).
4. "The quality of health care is better in many ways in the US than in Canada" 34%; loading = 0.33).
5. "Unauthorized immigration hurts the American economy" (43%; loading = 0.35).
6. "Significant increases in the minimum wage reduce poverty" (37%; loading = 0.37).
7. "Charter schools harm regular public schools" (29%; loading = 0.34).
8. "Human life begins at conception" (55%; loading = 0.31).
9. "To achieve professional success, grit is more important than luck" (25%; loading = 0.28).

Reviews of the relevant literature pertaining to each of these claims—demonstrating their empirical inconclusiveness—are observable at ryandetamble.com.

To avoid partisan bias in the measure, we deliberately included (a) four claims that, if true, would favor Democratic policy prescriptions (#2, 3, 6, and 7), (b) four others that would clearly favor Republican policy prescriptions (#4, 5, 8, 9), and one that is not clearly more consistent with either party's policy goals (#1).

Moreover, to be analytically prudent with respect to the degree of hubris we were setting ourselves up to observe in the sample, we deliberately worded many of the items using somewhat vague language ("much less …, "many ways …," "significant increases …," "major economic damage …"), making it easier for respondents to express uncertainty. If facts depend upon the meaning of particular qualifiers, it means that any expression of certitude in the presence of vague qualifiers is not warranted.

The mean of this index (rescaled to 0–1) is 0.37 (SD = 0.28). Table 2 breaks things down by issue and partisanship. We see that respondents tend to exhibit greater certitude with respect to high profile Red/Blue culture war issues such as gun control, immigration, and especially whether human life begins at conception (and thus whether abortion is the taking of a human life). Epistemic disputes that pertain to non-culture-war issues that are nevertheless polarized by party (health care, the minimum wage) also tend to inspire relatively high levels of certitude but to a lesser degree than do the disputes relating to the cultural divide.[17]

[15] However, we anticipate that the intraparty variance in intellectualism/anti-intellectualism remains meaningful (e.g., Kuriwaki 2018).

[16] All respondents provided informed consent. For sampling and other details regarding the CES, see Ansolabehere and Rivers 2013, www.cces.gov.harvard.edu. Replication files are available at the Harvard Dataverse (see Barker, DeTamble, and Marietta 2021).

[17] We avoided epistemic disputes pertaining to many of the most hotly contested cultural issues—those that pertain directly to gender, race, or sexuality—because many of them do have enough evidence on one side of the dispute to make certitude justifiable. However, we are dubious that many people who express certitude on those issues do so after careful consideration of the evidence. Accordingly, our decision to exclude many epistemic disputes regarding the most polarizing political issues of the day (with the exception of when life begins, which of course relates to abortion rights) means that this index may understate the degree of certitude that exists in the

TABLE 2. Prevalence of Epistemic Hubris (2020 CES)

Epistemic Dispute	Democrats %	Republicans %
Life at conception	51	61
Gun control	40	57
Immigration	37	53
Minimum wage	41	34
National debt	35	33
Health care	37	31
Free college	27	39
Charter schools	27	32
Grit vs. luck	20	32

Note: Percentage of survey respondents who express certitude (either true or false) with respect to each claim.

Because we seek to distinguish genuine epistemic certitude from that which may be a byproduct of a *Confident Personality* type, we took a second step in creating our *Epistemic Hubris* variable for analysis. We regressed the principal component hubris index on a variable measuring the degree to which respondents agreed with the statement "I am someone who gets nervous easily" (0 = "strongly agree"; 4 = "strongly disagree"; rescaled to 0–1; mean = 0.50; SD = 0.31), saved the residuals from the equation, and operationalized their variance as our measure of *Epistemic Hubris.*[18] We rescaled the variable to 0–1 for analysis.

After accounting for the relatively small amount of its variance that is attributable to a confident personality in this way, the sample reveals a substantial amount of *Epistemic Hubris*, overall, (mean = 0.39; SD = 0.25).[19] These numbers are almost identical to what we have reported elsewhere, across multiple years, using slightly different items in the index (Barker, Marietta, and DeTamble 2021).

It is also worth noting that the *Epistemic Hubris* in our sample is bipartisan, though Republicans (and Independents who lean Republican) are slightly more likely to exhibit such unwarranted certitude (mean = 0.45; SD = 0.25) than are Democrats/Democratic Leaners (mean = 0.36; SD = 0.25), a difference that is statistically distinguishable from zero ($p < 0.01$). These findings are consistent with earlier work indicating that conservatives/Republicans tend to exhibit greater rigidity than do liberals/Democrats, but such partisan asymmetry is not overwhelming (e.g., Tetlock 1983; 1984).

To account for the variance in *Epistemic Hubris*, we construct predictive models that include indexes of *Intellectual Identity* and *Intellectual Affect.* We turn to describing those indexes now, along with several potentially confounding variables that we include in the models.

Intellectual Identity

Measuring the variance in *Intellectual Identity*—with higher scores representing greater "intellectualism"—is no straightforward task. Given its multidimensional nature, we sought to identify indicators that would, collectively, capture demonstrable differences in the degree to which respondents possess (a) creative and ruminative habits of mind, (b) an interest in learning for its own sake without regard for instrumental or commercial applications, and (c) an intellectual self-image. We also sought to include items that are relatively inclusive of the population as well as those that are relatively exclusive, to create a variable with sufficient variance for analysis. We settled on the seven indicators listed below, all of which we rescaled to 0–1 for analysis. The principal component analysis extracted an eigenvalue of 1.68. Per our standard practice, we also rescaled the scored index to 0–1 for analysis (mean = 0.39; SD = 0.20). The individual component loadings appear below, along with the means and standard deviations associated with each indicator. The Measurement Appendix at the end of the article provides full descriptions of each indicator, including survey question wording.

- *Intellectual Occupation* (18% of sample; loading = 0.49)
- *Intellectual College Major* (39% of sample; loading = 0.58)
- *Pleasure Reading* (11% of sample; loading = 0.31)
- *News Attentiveness* (mean = 0.40; SD = 0.31; loading = 0.22)
- *Artistic Interest* (mean = 0.52; SD = 0.30; loading = 0.36)
- *"Nerd" Identity* (16% of sample; loading = 0.30)
- *Self-Perceived Imaginativeness* (mean = 0.70; SD = 0.31; loading = 0.24)

In isolation, none of these items fully captures the multidimensional nature of *Intellectual Identity*, and each of them could be used for other purposes. Collectively, though, they capture the dimensions of noninstrumental cognitive interest, creativity, ruminative habits, and intellectual self-image that we have discussed, and so we submit that their overlapping variance captures the latent concept with reasonable face validity.

Conspicuously absent from the list is educational attainment, because we want to distinguish such attainment that reflects genuine intellectualism from that which reflects some combination of ability, diligence, ambition, or social privilege.[20] We consider *Intellectual*

American body politic—at least as it pertains to the issues that really drive electoral debate.

[18] A minimum-to-maximum difference in *Confident Personality* accounted for a 15-percentage-point increase in the index (SE = 0.03; $p < 0.001$).

[19] The predictive capacities of *Intellectual Identity* and *Intellectual Affect* that we report below are highly similar if we substitute the original index of *Epistemic Hubris* as the outcome variable.

[20] Including educational attainment (and educational elitism) in the index does not alter its reliability (see the supplementary materials online, Section I, 2–5).

Occupation to fit this bill, because a college degree (and in some cases an advanced degree) is a prerequisite for most intellectual professions but non-intellectual college graduates are less likely to pursue such occupations or to remain in them for very long.

Likewise, at least one semester of postsecondary education is required to have thought about a college major, but non-intellectuals with such requisite college experience are less likely to have pursued an *Intellectual Major* in the arts or sciences than other types of majors (e.g., business).

Pleasure Reading and *News Attentiveness* seek to capture recreational habits of reading and following public affairs, respectively, both of which are inherently intellectual activities undertaken largely "for their own sake." *Artistic Interest*, *Nerd Identity*, and *Self-Perceived Imaginativeness* attempt to capture self-image—the degree to which respondents see themselves as artistic, imaginative, and "nerdy"—all of which are necessarily intellectual by the definition drawn from Hofstadter (1963) and others.

Anti-Intellectual Affect

Operationalizing *Anti-Intellectual Affect* is more straightforward because it is a somewhat less complicated concept. We measure it with another principal component index that quantifies the extent to which respondents agree or disagree with the five statements that appear below (Likert-type scales: 0 = "strongly disagree"; 4 = "strongly agree"):

- o "When it comes to figuring out the truth, it is best to just trust your eyes, heart, and gut" (mean = 2.23; SD = 1.14; loading = 0.31).
- o "Too much education can blind you to the real truth" (mean = 1.48 SD = 1.29; loading = 0.46).
- o "Most 'experts' don't have much common sense" (mean = 1.98; SD = 1.27; loading = 0.47).
- o "Public schools and universities fill young people's heads with all kinds of nonsense" (mean = 1.91; SD = 1.46; loading = 0.48).
- o "I'll take the wisdom of ordinary people over the book-smarts of intellectuals any day" (mean = 2.06; SD = 1.23; loading = 0.49).

The first item reflects a constitutional suspicion toward intellect—favoring first-hand experience and gut-level intuition over anything that can be learned second-hand (i.e., through books). It contributes least to the index. The second, third, and fourth items are anti-intellectual *establishment*, and the fifth item is a *populist* expression of anti-intellectualism. They each contribute almost identically to the index (loadings between 0.46 and 0.49). We rescale the variable to range from zero (strongly pro-intellectual, as indicated by strong disagreement with each of the statements) to one (strong agreement with each, and therefore strong anti-intellectual affect). We rescaled the index (alpha = 0.85; eigenvalue = 3.09) to 0–1 for analysis, with "0" indicating strong pro-intellectual affect (strong disagreement with each of the statements) and "1" equaling strong anti-intellectual affect (strong agreement with each). The variable has substantial variance and is reasonably normally distributed (mean = 0.48; SD = 0.25).

TABLE 3. Intellectual Identity and Intellectual Affect: Sample Percentages

		Affect
Identity	Intellectual and pro-intellectual: 12% of sample	Intellectual and anti-intellectual: 4% of sample
	Non-intellectual and pro-intellectual: 14% of sample	Non-intellectual and anti-intellectual 24% of sample

Note: Percentages of survey respondents in the top two/bottom two quintiles of *Intellectual Identity* and *Intellectual Affect*.

Demonstrating the Distinctiveness between Intellectual Identity and Intellectual Affect

To test our hypotheses, it is necessary to demonstrate that *Intellectual Identity* and *Anti-Intellectual Affect* are not only conceptually distinct but empirically distinct as well. As we anticipated, the two are significantly correlated, but not overwhelmingly so (Pearson's $r = -.38$; $p < 0.01$). Table 3 displays the combinations more vividly, with a comparison based on those who score above 0.6 versus those who score below 0.4 on both variables. The first row shows that those who score above 0.6 on *Intellectual Identity* are about three times as likely to also be relatively pro-intellectual (below 0.4 on *Anti-Intellectual Affect*) as to be anti-intellectual (above 0.6 on *Anti-Intellectual Affect*). The second row shows that those who are relatively non-intellectual (below 0.4 on *Intellectual Identity*) are a little more than 1.7 times as likely to also be relatively anti-intellectual (above 0.6 on *Anti-Intellectual Affect*) as they are to be pro-intellectual (below 0.4 on *Anti-Intellectual Affect*).

Overall, these patterns reveal that while *Identity* and *Affect* tend to reinforce each other, the cross-pressured categories are not unheard of.

INTELLECTUAL IDENTITY, ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM, AND EPISTEMIC HUBRIS

To test our first two hypotheses, we model the variance in *Epistemic Hubris* as a function of *Intellectual Identity* and *Anti-Intellectual Affect*, both independently and multiplicatively. Specifically, in successive equations we consider the predictive capacity of (1) *Intellectual Identity* without considering *Anti-Intellectual Affect*, (2) *Anti-Intellectual Affect* without considering *Intellectual Identity*, (3) both, without their interaction, and (4) both, with their interaction.

TABLE 4. Intellectual Identity, Anti-Intellectual Affect, and Epistemic Hubris

Covariates	*b* (SE)	*b* (SE)	*b* (SE)	*b* (SE)
Intellectual identity	**.12 (.04)**		**.19 (.04)**	**.27 (.08)**
Anti-intellectual affect		**.10 (.03)**	**.16 (.03)**	**.24 (.08)**
*Intellectual identity * Anti-intellectual affect*				−.19 (.15)
White	.03 (.02)	.03 (.02)	.03 (.02)	.02 (.02)
Female	.00 (.02)	−.01 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)
Age	.05 (.03)	.03 (.03)	.03 (.03)	.03 (.03)
Income	**.12 (.04)**	**.18 (.04)**	**.15 (.04)**	**.15 (.04)**
Constant	.26 (.03)	.25 (.03)	.16 (.04)	.12 (.05)
n	993	993	992	992

Note: Ordinary least squares regression coefficients of the difference in *Epistemic Hubris* corresponding to minimum-to-maximum differences in each explanatory variable. Standard errors are in parentheses. Statistically significant relationships ($p < 0.05$; one-tailed) are in **bold**.

To simultaneously address concerns about omitted variable bias (e.g., Greene 2018) and posttreatment bias (e.g., Acharya, Blackwell, and Sen 2016) in our models, we estimate two sets of linear regression equations. The first set of equations includes only the variables of theoretical interest and demographic controls (*Race*, *Gender*, *Age*, and *Income*).[21] The second set of equations adds several additional covariates that in theory may account for any relationships we observe between *Epistemic Hubris* and our measures of *Intellectual Identity* and/or *Anti-Intellectual Affect.*

Specifically, in an attempt to discriminate between the predictive capacity of intellectual identity and that associated with intellectual ability, ambition, or privilege (which are related to such identity but do not define it), we add *Education* (0 = < high school graduate; 5 = postgraduate degree; rescaled to 0–1; mean = 0.53; SD = 0.30) and *Educational Elitism* (see Measurement Appendix) to the equations.[22] Moreover, because our hypotheses pertaining to *Anti-Intellectual Affect* might spuriously reflect the effects of traditionalistic ideologies, we add *Ideological Identification* (0 = "very liberal"; 4 = "very conservative"; rescaled to 0–1; mean = 0.49; SD = 0.29), *Christian Traditionalism* (a three-item principal component index; see Measurement Appendix), and *Generic Populism* (a three-item principal component index; see Measurement Appendix) to the equations. Finally, to account for the possibility that our hypothesized relationships could spuriously reflect differences in psychological rigidity that are grounded in tribal, ideational, and/or personality-based characteristics, we add *Partisan Strength* (five-point *Party Identification*, folded and dichotomized; 1 = "strong Democrat/Republican" [43%]), *Ideological Strength* (five-point *Ideological Identification*, folded and dichotomized; 1 = "very liberal/conservative"[30%]), and (3) *Authoritarianism* (three-point principal component index; see Measurement Appendix) to the equations.[23]

Results

Table 4 displays the first set of results, which show consistent support for Hypotheses 1 and 2. Specifically, as Columns 1 and 3 show, a minimum-to-maximum difference in *Intellectual Identity* corresponds to an increase in *Epistemic Hubris* that ranges from 12 to 19 decimal points on the 0–1 scale (depending on whether the model also accounts for *Anti-Intellectual Affect*), which translates into expressions of certitude regarding one to two additional claims on the nine-item index (both relationships are statistically significant at $p < 0.001$). As for *Anti-Intellectual Affect*, as Columns 2 and 3 display, a minimum-to-maximum difference corresponds to a boost in *Epistemic Hubris* of between 10 and 16 decimal points on the 0–1 scale (or certitude toward one to one and a half additional claims on the nine-item scale; $p < 0.001$).

The fourth results column shows how the two variables interact. A minimum-to-maximum difference in *Intellectual Identity* corresponds to a 27-decimal-point increase in *Epistemic Hubris* on the 0–1 scale among the most pro-intellectual respondents (expressing hubris toward nearly three additional claims on the nine-item index; $p < .001$). The effect drops to only 0.08 among the most anti-intellectual respondents (0.27 − 0.19 = 0.08). Similarly, a minimum-to-maximum increase in *Anti-Intellectual Affect* is associated with a 24-decimal-point increase in *Epistemic Hubris* among non-intellectuals (almost three additional items on the nine-item index), but the relationship falls to 0.05 among the most intellectual respondents (0.24 − 0.19 = 0.05).[24]

[21] *White* = 1 (72%); *Female* = 1 (60%); *Age*: 18–91 rescaled to 0–1 (mean = 0.42; SD = 0.24); *Gross Household Income*: (0 = < $10K; 15 = > 350K); 100 missing cases imputed based on gender, race, age, and education).

[22] Future studies would benefit from including a direct measure of intelligence among the covariates, such as the Cognitive Reflection Test (Frederick 2005).

[23] Tolerance (variance inflation) statistics reveal moderate but acceptable levels of multicollinearity in the second, fully specified set of equations. Except in the model with the interaction term, all covariates maintain at least half of their unique variance (*Intellectual Identity* = 0.62; *Anti-Intellectual Affect* = 0.54).

[24] However, the interaction term's large standard error restricts its inferential capacity. We should note that the negative interaction

TABLE 5. Intellectual Identity, Anti-Intellectual Affect, and Epistemic Hubris

Covariates	*b* (SE)	*b* (SE)	*b* (SE)	*b* (SE)
Intellectual identity	**.09 (.05)**		**.11 (.05)**	**.18 (.08)**
Anti-intellectual affect		**.08 (.04)**	**.10 (.04)**	**.17 (.08)**
*Intellectual identity * Anti-intellectual affect*				−.16 (.15)
White	.02 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.02 (.02)
Female	−.02 (.02)	−.02 (.02)	−.02 (.02)	−.02 (.02)
Age	−.01 (.03)	−.01 (.03)	−.01 (.03)	−.01 (.03)
Income	**.12 (.04)**	**.13 (.04)**	**.13 (.04)**	**.13 (.04)**
Education	.06 (.04)	**.10 (.03)**	**.07 (.04)**	**.07 (.04)**
Educational elitism	−.01 (.03)	−.01 (.03)	−.02 (.03)	−.02 (.03)
Christian traditionalism	.05 (.03)	.05 (.03)	.04 (.03)	.05 (.03)
Ideological identity (conservative high)	**.13 (.03)**	**.09 (.04)**	**.10 (.04)**	**.10 (.04)**
Generic populism	**.28 (.04)**	**.27 (.04)**	**.26 (.04)**	**.27 (.04)**
Partisan strength	**.06 (.02)**	**.07 (.02)**	**.07 (.02)**	**.06 (.02)**
Ideological strength	**.11 (.02)**	**.11 (.02)**	**.11 (.02)**	**.11 (.02)**
Authoritarianism	−.03 (.03)	−.05 (.03)	−.05 (.03)	−.04 (.03)
Constant	−.03 (.04)	−.02 (.04)	−.05 (.05)	−.09 (.06)
n	964	964	963	963

Note: Ordinary least squares regression coefficients of the difference in *Epistemic Hubris* corresponding to minimum-to-maximum differences in each explanatory variable. Standard errors are in parentheses. Statistically significant relationships ($p < 0.05$; one-tailed) are in **bold**.

Table 5 displays the results after taking account of the potential confounding variables. As expected, the explanatory power of both *Intellectual Identity* and *Anti-Intellectual Affect are* somewhat weaker than in the simpler models, but the patterns remain the same.

To summarize our results so far, the data are clearly consistent with our hypotheses. *Intellectual Identity* and *Anti-Intellectual Affect* are both associated with *Epistemic Hubris* regardless of the other's presence in the model or variations in model specification more generally. Next, we examine the partisan character of these intellectual characteristics.

BLUE INTELLECTUALISM, RED ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM?

To evaluate Hypotheses 3 and 4—that intellectualism is associated with Democratic partisanship and that anti-intellectualism is associated with Republican partisanship—we estimate a multinomial logistic regression equation that models the variance in *Party Identification* (three-point: Democrats and Independents who lean Democratic = 0 [44% of sample respondents]; Pure Independents = 1 [15%]; Republicans and Independents who lean Republican = 2 [41%]). We focus on the comparison between Democrats/Democratic Leaners and Republicans/Republican Leaners.[25] Again, we estimate four models, examining the explanatory purchase of (1) *Intellectual Identity* without accounting for *Anti-Intellectual Affect*, (2) the reverse, (3) both variables, and (4) both plus their interaction. We round out all the models with the basic demographic covariates we described earlier (*Race* [white vs. nonwhite], *Gender* [Female = 1], *Age*, and *Gross Household Income*), along with *Education* (which, as a crude measure of cognitive talent, could undergird *Intellectual Identity* to some extent) and *Christian Traditionalism* (which, as we have discussed, may partially account for *Anti-Intellectual Affect*).[26]

Table 6 displays the results, both with respect to the probability of identifying as a Democrat and with respect to the probability of identifying as a Republican.

The data strongly conform to our expectations. After converting the logit coefficients to differences in predicted probabilities, we see that when not accounting for *Anti-Intellectual Affect*, a minimum-to-maximum difference in *Intellectual Identity* corresponds to a 49-percentage-point increase in the estimated probability of identifying as a Democrat ($p < 0.001$), and a 40-percentage-point decrease in the estimated probability

term does *not* indicate that the relatively small group of people who are both intellectual and anti-intellectual exhibit *less hubris* than (a) intellectuals who are also pro-intellectual (as gauged by *Intellectual Identity* in the interaction term model) or (b) anti-intellectuals who are also non-intellectual (as gauged by *Anti-Intellectual Affect* in the interaction term model).

[25] We do not presume a causal relationship between either of the intellectual variables and party identification. Designating *Epistemic Hubris* as the outcome variable carries the advantage of enabling us to model the interaction of *Intellectual Identity* and *Anti-Intellectual Affect.*

[26] Given that *Education* and *Educational Elitism* are markers of intellectual status, and thus highly related to *Intellectual Identity*, we reestimated our models with a measure of *Intellectual Identity* that includes *Education* and *Educational Elitism* as indicators (nine-item principal component index; eigenvalue = 2.59). See the supplementary materials online, Section I, 2–5).

TABLE 6. Intellectual Identity, Anti-Intellectual Affect, and Party ID (Independent Leaners = Partisans)

Covariates	*Pr.Δ* (SE)		*Pr.Δ* (SE)		*Pr.Δ* (SE)		*Pr.Δ* (SE)	
	D	R	D	R	D	R	D	R
Intellectual identity	**.49**	**–.40**			**.25**	**–.19**	**.61**	**–.41**
	(.08)	**(.09)**			**(.08)**	**(.08)**	**(.17)**	**(.20)**
Anti-intellectual affect			**–.82**	**.78**	**–.78**	**.75**	**–.42**	**.57**
			(.05)	**(.05)**	**(.05)**	**(.05)**	**(.15)**	**(.15)**
*Intellectual identity * Anti-intellectual affect*							**–.85**	.46
							(.34)	(.35)
White	**–.20**	**.25**	**–.18**	**.22**	**–.18**	**.23**	**–.18**	**.23**
	(.03)	**(.03)**	**(.03)**	**(.03)**	**(.03)**	**(.03)**	**(.03)**	**(.03)**
Female	**.13**	**–.09**	**.10**	**–.06**	**.10**	**–.06**	**.10**	**–.06**
	(.03)	**(.03)**	**(.03)**	**(.03)**	**(.03)**	**(.03)**	**(.03)**	**(.03)**
Age	.02	.00	.09	–.08	.09	–.08	.09	–.08
	(.06)	(.06)	(.06)	(.06)	(.06)	(.06)	(.06)	(.06)
Income	–.01	.05	–.12	**.15**	–.12	**.15**	–.13	**.16**
	(.07)	(.07)	(.07)	**(.07)**	(.07)	**(.07)**	(.07)	**(.07)**
Education	.11	**–.17**	.07	**–.12**	–.01	–.06	.00	–.06
	(.06)	**(.06)**	(.05)	**(.05)**	(.06)	(.06)	(.06)	(.06)
Christian traditionalism	**–.36**	**.39**	**–.18**	**.23**	**–.18**	**.23**	**–.17**	**.23**
	(.05)	**(.04)**	**(.04)**	**(.04)**	**(.04)**	**(.04)**	**(.04)**	**(.04)**
n	999	999	999	999	998	998	998	998

Note: Cell entries are differences in the predicted probability of identifying as either a Democrat (D) or a Republican (R), converted from multinomial logistic regression coefficients that correspond to minimum-to-maximum differences in each explanatory variable. Standard errors are in parentheses. Statistically significant relationships ($p < 0.05$; one-tailed) are in **bold**.

of identifying as a Republican ($p < 0.001$). Those percentage-point changes drop to 25 and 19 points, respectively, when accounting for *Affect* but remain statistically different from zero ($p < 0.02$). Notably, these effects are stronger than those for *Female* and they are comparable to those for *White* and *Christian Traditionalism*.[27]

As for *Anti-Intellectual Affect*, the results are even more striking: a minimum to maximum difference is associated with an estimated 78–82-percentage-point decrease in the probability of identifying as a Democrat, and a 75–78-percentage-point increase in the probability of identifying as a Republican. We did not have theoretical priors about the relative strength of *Intellectual Identity* and *Anti-Intellectual Affect* as predictors—and indeed, the difference we observe here could be attributable to differences in measurement reliability or other factors—but this difference is nevertheless eye-opening and deserves further investigation.

Looking finally at the variables in concert (the last results column), we see that among the most pro-intellectual respondents in the sample, a full-range increase in *Intellectual Identity* increases the probability of identifying as a Democrat by over 61 percentage points ($p < 0.001$) while appearing to decrease the probability of identifying as a Republican by about 41 percentage points. Among the most anti-intellectual respondents in the sample, though, the predictive capacity of *Intellectual Identity* vanishes. Meanwhile, among the least intellectual respondents, a full range increase in *Anti-Intellectual Affect* is associated with a 57-percentage-point increase in the estimated probability of identifying as a Republican and a 42-percentage-point decrease in the estimated probability of identifying as a Democrat.[28] These relationships appear even stronger among those who also score highly on the *Intellectual Identity* scale, though as we discuss below, such a combination is very rare.

We can display these results in a final variant of our 2×2 table, which shows (a) the probability of identifying as either a Democrat or a Republican for different combinations of *Intellectual Identity* and *Intellectual Affect* (above 0.6 and below 0.4 on the 0–1 scales) and (b) the percentage of each party that is comprised of each category. We see that those who are on balance both intellectual in terms of identity and pro-intellectual in terms of affect are 67 percentage-points more likely to be Democrats than to be Republicans, and they comprise 22% of the Democratic Party versus only 2% of the Republican Party. On the other side of the

[27] The relationship between *Intellectual Identity* and *Party Identification* maintains when we add *Education* and *Educational Elitism* as indicators to the *Intellectual Identity* index (see supplementary materials online, Section I, 2-5).

[28] Notably, after accounting for *Intellectual Identity* and *Anti-Intellectual Affect*, the notorious "diploma divide" between Democrats and Republicans closes.

TABLE 7. Intellectual Identity, Intellectual Affect, and Party Identification

		Affect	
		Pro-intellectual	Anti-intellectual
Identity	Intellectual	*Pr.* Democratic = 0.78; Pr. GOP = 0.11 22% of Dems; 2% of GOP	*Pr.* Democratic = 0.27; Pr. GOP = 0.58 2% of Dems; 5% of GOP
	Nonintellectual	*Pr.* Democratic = 0.65; Pr. GOP = 0.19 19% of Dems; 8% of GOP	*Pr.* Democratic = 0.15; Pr. GOP = 0.70 11% of Dems; 39% of GOP

Note: Cells display (a) differences in the predicted probability of identifying as a Democrat or a Republican based on top two/bottom two quintile combinations of *Intellectual Identity* and *Intellectual Affect.* They also display the percentage of each party's identifiers who fall into each of the four *Identity*/*Affect* categories.

coin, those who are on the less intellectual and more anti-intellectual side of the ledger are 55 percentage-points more likely to be Republicans than to be Democrats, and they comprise 39% of the Republican Party versus only 11% of the Democratic Party.

In sum, these findings provide compelling support for our hypotheses that *Intellectual Identity* is associated with Democratic partisanship (H_3) and *Anti-Intellectual Affect* is associated with Republican partisanship (H_4).[29] These relationships also appear to reinforce each other such that those who are both intellectual in terms of identity and pro-intellectual in terms of affect are overwhelmingly likely to be Democrats, whereas those who are the least intellectual in terms of identity and the most anti-intellectual in terms of affect are overwhelmingly likely to be Republicans.

One question that remains is how lasting or transient these relationships will prove to be. As we discussed earlier, the ideological character of intellectualism and anti-intellectualism (both in terms of identity and affect) has been evident for several decades, which translated increasingly into a partisan character this century as the parties sorted themselves more cleanly into ideological camps. Those trends then became spikes during the Trump presidency, which means they could in-theory recede when Trump no longer leads the Republican Party. However, at the time of this writing, the intellectual/anti-intellectual identity of the two parties appears to be hardening (both in the body politic and among elected officials)—leading us to speculate that a lasting partisan realignment has emerged.

CONCLUSION

In contemporary American culture, the three little words in shortest supply may not be "I love you," but "I don't know." In this investigation, we have analyzed the correlates of epistemic hubris, an underappreciated element of the "politics of truth" (e.g., Berinsky 2017; Delli-Carpini and Keeter 1996; Gerber and Huber 2010; Hochschild and Einstein 2015; Kuklinski et al. 2000; Lupia 2016; O'Connor and Weatherall 2019; Southwell and Thorson 2015; see Marietta and Barker 2019 for a recent, expansive review).

Using nationally representative data, we find that such certitude is common and bipartisan. As Samuel Johnson observed over one hundred years ago, "Credulity, or confidence of opinion too great for the evidence from which opinion is derived, we find to be a general weakness imputed by every sect and party to all others" (Johnson [1758] 2010; also see Fischhoff, Slovich, and Lichtenstein 1977; Gilovich 1991; Grant 2021; Griffin and Tversky 1992; Taleb 2007; Tetlock 2005; Tetlock and Gardner 2015).

We also observe that the character of such epistemic hubris appears to differ remarkably across the political divide. Our data suggest that the growing *intellectualism* of "Blue" America and the spiking *anti-intellectualism* of "Red" America contribute to each side's conviction that they are uniquely endowed with knowledge and truth. That is, we observe that both intellectual identity and anti-intellectual affect predict epistemic hubris and that the former is disproportionately associated with Democratic partisanship whereas the latter is disproportionately associated with Republican partisanship.

In conclusion, this investigation initiates a new line of inquiry into an important but underanalyzed element of political psychology: epistemic hubris. It not only complements the body of knowledge on the causes and consequences of political ignorance and misinformation but also advances understanding of what appears to be an accelerating partisan realignment surrounding intellectualism and its discontents (see Hofstadter 1963; Merkley 2020; Motta 2018; Oliver and Wood 2018; Rigney 1991). In so doing, it refines scholarly understanding of the so-called "diploma divide," and contributes to the broader canon on the nature of political polarization (e.g., Hetherington and Weiler 2018; Iyengar and Westwood 2015; Johnston, Lavine, and Federico 2017; Klein 2020; Mason 2016; Smidt 2017).

If only intellectual identity or only anti-intellectual affect marked the path to hubris—or if such hubris were

[29] As we describe in the supplementary materials online (Section II, 6–10), *Intellectual Identity* and *Intellectual Affect* correspond to the *intraparty* variance in *Epistemic Hubris* as well. Most interestingly, holding negative views toward intellect and intellectuals is overwhelmingly predictive of such hubris among Republicans but is not related to hubris among Democrats—suggesting that social-psychological reinforcement occurs when the nature of a person's intellectual affect lines up with the majority of her partisan counterparts, but that doubt seeps in among those who are cross-pressured in this way.

exclusive to only one of the parties—then the odds of building a more inhabitable public square in the United States might improve. Instead, the partisan realignment around intellectualism appears to further the hubris that has come to characterize both parties, hamstringing democracy's ability to function.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

To view supplementary material for this article, please visit http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0003055421000988.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Research documentation and data that support the findings of this study are openly available at the American Political Science Review Dataverse: https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/T9AEBN.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no ethical issues of conflicts of interest in this research.

ETHICAL STANDARDS

The authors declare the human-subjects research in this article was deemed exempt from review by American University's Institutional Review Board.

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MEASUREMENT APPENDIX

All variables rescaled to 0–1 for analysis.

I. INTELLECTUAL IDENTITY (EIGENVALUE = 1.68)

Intellectual Occupation (loading = 0.49): Open ended declaration of occupation, coded as either intellectual (1) or non-intellectual (0). Intellectual careers are those that emphasize abstract or creative thinking (e.g., writers, editors, journalists, educators, scientists, engineers, researchers, artists, musicians, doctors, lawyers, clergy-members, and so on). Intellectual = 18%.

Intellectual College Major (loading = 0.58): Open ended response: "What was your college major?" Intellectual majors (coded as "1") include those in the arts and sciences (including but not limited to the humanities, social sciences, hard sciences, communication, and education). Non-intellectual majors ("0") include, but are not limited to, accounting, finance and other primarily business-related fields, criminal justice, agriculture, recreation, hospitality, nursing, and nutrition. Those who have not attended college are also coded as zero. Intellectual = 39%.

Pleasure Reading (loading = 0.31): "On the weekend, I like to catch up on … Reading (1) | Sleep (0) | TV (0) | Shopping (0) | Housework/yard work (0) | Socializing (0)| Other (0)" Reading = 11%.

News Attentiveness (loading = 0.22): Principal component index of three items regarding news media consumption in the past 24 hours (newspaper, TV, radio); eigenvalue = 1.24), rescaled to 0–1 (mean = 0.40; SD = 0.31). Newspaper = 35% (loading = 0.61); TV = 59% (loading = 0.50); Radio = 30% (loading = 0.61).

Artistic Interest (loading = 0.36): Strongly agree (0) to Strongly Disagree (4): "I am someone who has few artistic interests" (mean = 0.52; SD = 0.30.).

"Nerd" Identity (loading = 0.30): "In high school, people thought of me as a … Nerd (1) | Jock (0) | Partyer (0) | Loner (0) | None of these (0). Nerd = 16%.

Self-Perceived Imaginativeness (loading = 0.24): Strongly disagree (0) to Strongly Agree (4): "I am someone who has an active imagination" (mean = 0.70; SD = 0.24).

II. ADDITIONAL COVARIATES

Educational Elitism: Open-ended response "what is the name and location of the last college or university you attended?" Institutions ranked in top 100 national universities/top 50 liberal arts colleges based on the 2020 U.S. News & World Report rankings = 4; 101–200 national universities/51–100 liberal arts colleges = 3; all other brick and mortar, nonprofit four-year universities/colleges = 2; community college, for profit, or online college/university = 1; no college/university = 0. Rescaled to 0–1; mean = 0.31; SD = 0.36).

Christian Traditionalism: principal component index of three items (eigenvalue = 1.92; mean = 0.29; SD = 0.32): (1) "Born Again Christian" identity (27%; loading = 0.6); (2) belief that the Bible is "the inerrant and authoritative word of God" (26%; loading = 0.59), (3) church attendance (0 = *never*; 5 = *multiple times per week*; mean = 0.34; SD = 0.34; loading = 0.54).

Generic Populism: principal component index of three Likert-type items (eigenvalue = 1.38; mean = 0.65; SD = 0.19): (1) "These days, it seems like everything is rigged against the people, to protect the powerful" (mean = 0.70; SD = 0.27; loading = 0.64); (2) "It would be better if regular people, not political elites, made decisions for the country" (mean = 0.67; SD = 0.24; loading = 0.68); (3) "Don't be fooled: a secret group of elites make the important decisions around the world" (mean = 0.50; SD = 0.31; loading = 0.36).

Authoritarianism: principal component index of three items (eigenvalue = 1.63; mean = 0.50; SD = 0.29): (1) "If you had to choose, would you say it is more important for children to learn independence or respect for elders?" (respect = 53%; loading = 0.63); (2) "…self-reliance or obedience?" (obedience = 29%; loading = 0.56); (3) Likert: "a decent and just community makes sure that young people have proper respect for authority and tradition" converted to 0–1 (mean = 0.60; SD = 0.28; loading = 0.54).