

# Intolerance Is Lower Than You Might Think

Research Report: CUPES-002 | December 4, 2020

## Research Question

This is the second report from our new study, the *Civil Unrest and Presidential Election Study* (CUPES), a nationally representative sample of US adults. Here, we examine whether political party affiliation is associated with tolerant attitudes towards individuals with different political views. We also check to see whether political party affiliation and tolerance changed from 2019 to 2020.

## Methodology

### Data Sources

1. Social and Political Attitudes Study (SPAS; collected October 2019)
2. Civil Unrest and Presidential Election Study (CUPES; collected in September/October 2020)

### Measures

1. *Political Affiliation*: which political party people affiliate with.
  - Surveyed in 2019 and 2020
2. *Political Party Opposition*: which political party people think has views most different from their own.
  - Surveyed in 2019 and 2020
3. *Tolerance of Political Party Members* (depicted in Figure 1): An average of four questions on how irritated the person would be if a member of the opposite political party was dating a member of their family, was their neighbor, co-worker, or local elected official. Higher scores indicate less irritation (i.e., higher tolerance).
  - Surveyed in 2019 and 2020
4. *Candidate Opposition*: which political candidate they think has views most different from their own.
  - Surveyed in 2020
5. *Tolerance of Political Candidate Supporters* (depicted in Figure 2): An average of five questions on how irritated the person would be if a supporter of a politician with opposite political views to their own were dating a member of their family, was their friend, neighbor, co-worker, or local elected official. Higher scores indicate less irritation (i.e., higher tolerance).
  - Surveyed in 2020

For additional information (e.g., statistical output, citations) not included in this document, view the supplemental page for this report located at [skeptical.com/research-center/civil-unrest-presidential-election-study/](https://skeptical.com/research-center/civil-unrest-presidential-election-study/)

## Summary of Findings

### Tolerance of Political Party Members:

- In our 2019 survey, we found that Democrats and Republicans expressed tolerant attitudes towards members of the political party with views most different from their own.
  - In our follow-up survey in 2020, we found the same trend—the average Republican and Democrat expressed tolerant attitudes (Fig. 1).

### Tolerance of Political Candidate Supporters:

- Given harsh criticism of Trump supporters and widespread claims of societal polarization, we explored the possibility that people are tolerant of members of oppositional political parties but might not be tolerant of those supporting specific political candidates.
  - Our results indicate that tolerance is lowest for supporters of Trump (Fig. 2).

### In a nutshell...

- Tolerance of Trump supporters is much lower than for Republicans in general. The implication of this is that people may be less willing to report their support for Trump than they will be to report their support for the Republican Party or Republican political views.
- Have an interpretation of this you want to share? Email it to [research@skeptical.com](mailto:research@skeptical.com)

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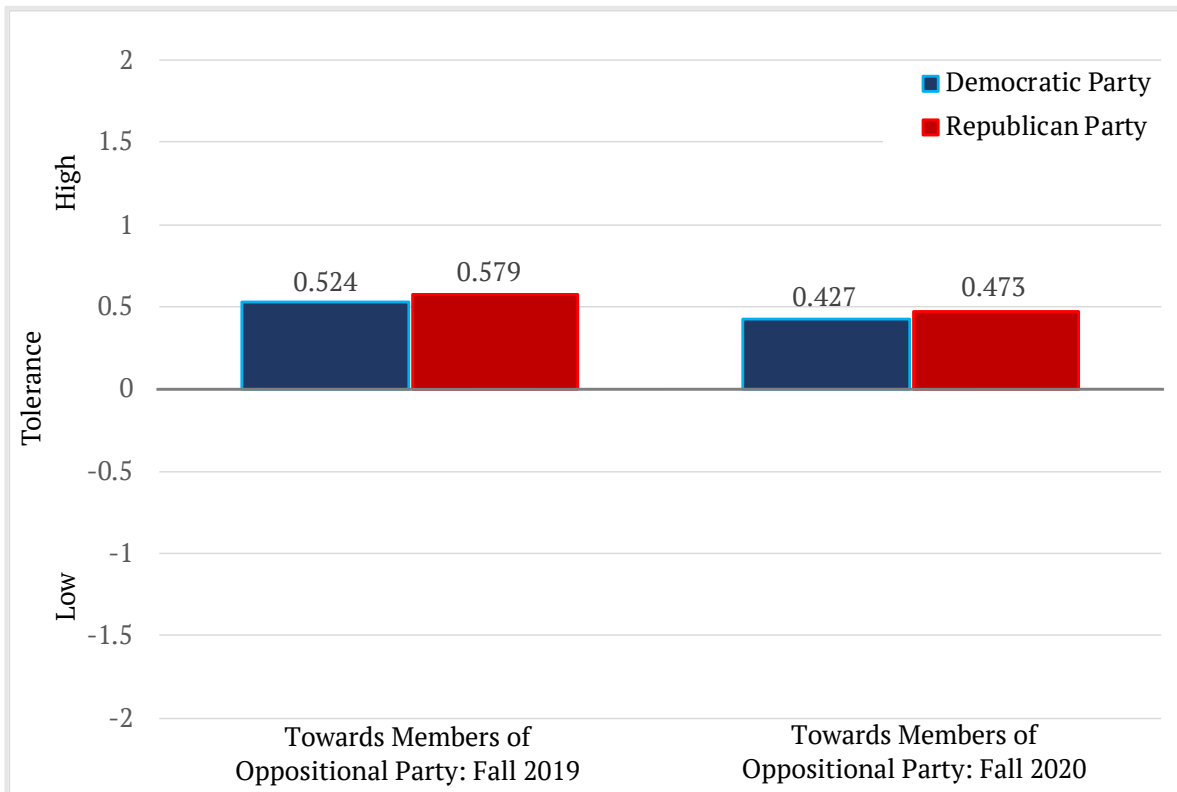
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**Figure 1**

*Tolerant attitudes towards members of the oppositional political party in Fall 2019 and in Fall 2020*

- Republicans and Democrats expressed tolerant attitudes towards members of the oppositional political party in 2019 and in 2020.
- Democrats and Republicans did not differ from each other in expressing tolerant attitudes.



**Figure 2**

*Tolerant attitudes towards those who support a politician with oppositional political views in Fall 2020*

- Democrats and Republicans expressed *neutral or tolerant attitudes* towards people that support Joe Biden after reporting that Joe Biden has views that differ from their own.
- Democrats and Republicans expressed *somewhat intolerant attitudes* towards people that support Donald Trump after reporting that Donald Trump has views that differ from their own.

