"I Disrespectfully Agree": The Differential Effects of Partisan Sorting on Social and Issue Polarization

Author(s): Lilliana Mason

Source: *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 59, No. 1 (January 2015), pp. 128-145
Published by: Midwest Political Science Association
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/24363600
Accessed: 22-02-2018 21:34 UTC

"I Disrespectfully Agree": The Differential Effects of Partisan Sorting on Social and Issue Polarization

Lilliana Mason Rutgers University

Disagreements over whether polarization exists in the mass public have confounded two separate types of polarization. When social polarization is separated from issue position polarization, both sides of the polarization debate can be simultaneously correct. Social polarization, characterized by increased levels of partisan bias, activism, and anger, is increasing, driven by partisan identity and political identity alignment, and does not require the same magnitude of issue position polarization. The partisan-ideological sorting that has occurred in recent decades has caused the nation as a whole to hold more aligned political identities, which has strengthened partisan identity and the activism, bias, and anger that result from strong identities, even though issue positions have not undergone the same degree of polarization. The result is a nation that agrees on many things but is bitterly divided nonetheless. An examination of ANES data finds strong support for these hypotheses.

Political scientists tend to agree that partisan-ideological sorting has occurred in the American electorate during recent decades (Abramowitz 2010; Bafumi and Shapiro 2009; Baldassarri and Gelman 2008; Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope 2005; Jacobson 2007; Levendusky 2009). Specifically, people have sorted into the "correct" combination of party and ideology—Democrats are now more liberal and Republicans are more conservative than they were 50 years ago. Some view this phenomenon as simply a reorganization of political tendencies, with little effect on behavior or mass polarization (Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope 2005; Levendusky 2009), whereas others suggest that this sorting is a reflection of a deep polarization emerging in the electorate (Abramowitz and Saunders 2008; Bafumi and Shapiro 2009). The effects of this sorting, however, remain relatively unexplored. I argue that sorting itself has been responsible for increased levels of partisanship and polarized behavior, including partisan bias, activism, and anger. This is due to the powerful effects of the political identities involved. The partisan-ideological sorting that has occurred during the last 50 years has not been a consequence-free realignment of static identities. Sorting, by virtue of its basis in social identities, has acted to increase the strength of political identities and has polarized mass political behavior.

While sorting has brought partisan and ideological identities into alignment, levels of partisan bias, activism, and anger have increased (Abramowitz 2006, 2007, 2010; Abramowitz and Saunders 1998, 2005, 2008; Abramowitz and Stone 2006; Brewer 2005; Hetherington 2001; Jacobson 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007; Levendusky 2009; Mason 2013). In comparison, issue positions in the mass public have experienced relatively smaller increases in polarization in the same period (Fiorina and Abrams 2008; Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope 2005, 2008; Fiorina and Levendusky 2006; Levendusky 2009; Mason 2013; Wolfe 1998). Unfortunately, the difference between the social elements of polarization and the polarization of issue positions has not been clearly elaborated and has thus

Lilliana Mason is Visiting Scholar, Department of Political Science, Rutgers University, 89 George Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901–1433 (lilliana.mason@rutgers.edu).

The author would like to thank Stanley Feldman for his reading of and responses to multiple drafts of this article, and Leonie Huddy and Alan Abramowitz for many helpful comments on this topic. I would also like to thank Morris Fiorina for his queries and suggestions, and Bill Bishop for his support of this idea. Finally, I sincerely thank the anonymous reviewers, whose suggestions were insightful and kindly delivered, significantly improving the final version of this article.
The data analyzed in this article can be obtained from the National Election Studies website, www.electionstudies.org, under the title "American National Election Studies TIME SERIES CUMULATIVE DATA FILE [dataset]." The data are produced and distributed by Stanford University and the University of Michigan. These materials are based on work supported by the National Science Foundation under grant numbers SBR-9707741, SBR-9317631, SES-9209410, SES-9009379, SES-8808361, SES-8341310, SES-8207580, and SOC77–08885. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in these materials are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the funding organizations. All replication data and files for the forthcoming analyses can be found at the AJPS Dataverse.

American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 59, No. 1, January 2015, Pp. 128–145

DOI: 10.1111/ajps.12089

led to a vigorous debate among political scientists over the nature and even existence of political polarization. At a time when many Americans consider polarization to be a real and apparent problem in American politics, political scientists cannot agree on whether it exists (see Abramowitz 2006, 2007, 2010; Abramowitz and Saunders 1998, 2005, 2008; Abramowitz and Stone 2006; Brewer 2005; Hetherington 2001; Jacobson 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007; *versus* Fiorina and Abrams 2008; Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope 2005, 2008; Fiorina and Levendusky 2006; Levendusky 2009; Wolfe 1998). The theory presented here helps to clarify the terms of this debate by demonstrating how partisan-ideological sorting has increased social polarization to a greater extent than it has increased the extremity of held issue positions in the American electorate. The result is an electorate that may agree on many things, but nonetheless cannot get along.

Importance of Social Polarization

Any discussion of the polarization of the American electorate should begin with a theory-based mechanism by which polarization can be said to increase. When polarization is understood as a largely *social* phenomenon, it becomes possible to identify political influences that may drive increases in specific types of polarized behavior, judgment, and emotion. Building on work in political science that characterizes partisan and ideological identity as social identities (Bartels 2002; Campbell et al. 1960; Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002; Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012; Malka and Lelkes 2010; Mason 2013), and work in social psychology that examines the power of social identities to affect behavior and emotion (Brewer 1999; Brewer and Pierce 2005; Mackie, Devos, and Smith 2000; Smith, Seger, and Mackie 2007; Tajfel 1981; Tajfel and Turner 1979), this theory asserts that political identity is able to drive political bias, political participation, and political emotion. Furthermore, individuals can hold separate partisan and ideological identities, and as these identities move into alignment, political evaluations, behavior, and emotion grow even more polarized (Brewer and Pierce 2005; Roccas and Brewer 2002).[1]

One important consequence of understanding polarization as a social phenomenon is that it becomes clearly distinguishable from the competing understanding of polarization that focuses on issue positions. Social polarization is theorized to be motivated by partisan sorting and partisan identity because social identities have repeatedly been shown to affect judgment, behavior, and emotion (Ethier and Deaux 1994; Huddy 2001; Mackie, Devos, and Smith 2000; Smith, Seger, and Mackie 2007; Tajfel 1981; Tajfel and Turner 1979). However, there is less theoretical justification for a direct relationship between social identities and issue position extremity (for an exception, see Mackie and Cooper 1984). Therefore, as sorting drives social polarization, it is theoretically possible for issue position extremity to remain relatively constrained. This bifurcated view of polarization reveals the potential for Americans to grow increasingly politically rancorous and uncivil in their interactions, even in the presence of comparatively moderate issue positions.

The Role of Political Identity

Partisan identity should be understood here as a social identity, in line with prior work in political science (Campbell et al. 1960; Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002; Greene 1999, 2002, 2004; Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012; Mason 2013). This means that a partisan behaves more like a sports fan than like a banker choosing an investment. Partisans feel emotionally connected to the welfare of the party; they prefer to spend time with other members of the party; and when the party is threatened, they become angry and work to help conquer the threat, even if they disagree with some of the issue positions taken by the party. The connection between partisan and party is an emotional and social one, as well as a logical one.

For example, the intensity of a person's partisanship can derive from a number of nonissue influences, such as social group memberships (Campbell et al. 1960), social networks (Mutz 2002), personality (Gerber et al. 2012), specific genes (Dawes and Fowler 2009), leader-induced uncertainty (Hohman, Hogg, and Bligh 2010), or experience and habituation (Jennings and Markus 1984). Any of these influences can increase the strength of partisanship without also increasing the extremity of issue positions. They are largely associational or psychological influences on partisanship that cause an individual to feel more strongly identified with the party because the party makes up a larger or more familiar part of that individual's social world, or because he or she is otherwise psychologically inclined to cling more strongly to a political party. Partisanship is therefore a social and psychological attachment.

[1] Recent work by Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes (2012) has introduced the concept of *affective polarization*, which is closely related to the concept discussed here. I consider affective polarization to be a subset of social polarization, which includes affect (anger), judgment (bias), and behavior (activism).

Partisanship is the most prominent political identity because parties are the groups that directly compete for power in the political realm, and competition between groups increases the salience of the competing group identities (Tajfel and Turner 1979). But this does not mean it is the only political identity. Recent work by Malka and Lelkes (2010) has established that ideology—whether a person considers himself or herself conservative or liberal—does function as a social identity, one that is separable from held issue positions. According to their findings, the link between ideological identity and issue positions is by no means constant. Ideological identity should therefore also be capable of affecting political behavior, though to a lesser extent than partisanship due to partisanship's greater centrality to political competition. For this reason, the following analyses focus on partisan identity as the central political identity, but the interaction between partisan and ideological identities is a crucial factor in motivating social polarization.

Effects of Partisan Identity

Social psychologists have examined the implications of feeling part of a social group, in a field of study generally known as social identity theory. Their findings lead to three concrete predictions about the effects of a strong group identity. The results of this work on social identities can easily be extrapolated to political identities. These theories are described below in terms of partisan identity, but ideological identities should motivate similar behavior.

First, according to social identity theory, partisans should evaluate their own party more positively than the opposing party for no logical reasons at all, simply because they are in different groups (Tajfel 1981; Tajfel and Turner 1979). This is known as ingroup bias, and it increases as the strength of partisan affiliation increases. This effect has been demonstrated even with experimentally assigned groups that have no bearing on the welfare of the individual. People randomly assigned to Group X or Group W believe their explicitly temporary and meaningless group to be superior to the outgroup (Billig and Tajfel 1973). This effect (referred to as the minimal group paradigm) suggests that there is something inherent in group membership that causes people to be automatically biased in their assessments of relative group merits (Otten and Wentura 1999). In fact, party labels have recently been shown to induce bias in the evaluation of two candidates with identical issue stances (Munro et al. 2013). Partisans, therefore, may say that they prefer their party because of the party's positions on issues, but at some level they also prefer the party simply because it is their home team.

Second, when partisans feel strongly identified with the party, they are more likely to take action on behalf of the party (Ethier and Deaux 1994; Huddy 2001; Mason, Huddy, and Aaroe 2011). Campbell et al. (1960) predicted a similar effect, though without the theoretical backing provided by social identity theory. Partisans should be more likely to participate in politics by helping the party win elections, not simply because the party holds sympathetic issue positions, but because the party is their team (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002). A team win is a personal win for these group members, and they are motivated to act by psychological imperatives to maintain group status, not simply by their issue positions.

Third, intergroup emotions theory (an outgrowth of social identity theory) suggests that strongly identified members of parties should react with stronger emotions—in particular, anger—to party threats (Mackie, Devos, and Smith 2000; Smith, Seger, and Mackie 2007). The anger felt by partisans in the face of a threat to the party's status is not simply anger at the prospect of failing to implement their desired issue positions. They are angry because someone is threatening their team, and the stronger their affiliation with the team, the stronger the emotional reaction to that threat, independent of the strength of the issue positions they hold.

Thus, when we think of partisanship as a social identity, three testable outcomes emerge regarding the political behavior and emotion that are defined here as *social polarization*: stronger partisan identity leads to higher levels of (1) bias, (2) activism, and (3) anger.

Effects of Partisan Sorting

The characterization of partisanship and ideology as social identities only goes partway toward explaining the increase in polarization over recent decades. Specifically, it explains current levels of polarization, but not why polarization has been increasing. Recent research has found that ingroup bias (Levendusky 2009; Mason 2013), rates of political activism (Abramowitz 2010; Mason 2013), and anger at the outgroup presidential candidate (Mason 2013) have been increasing. If political identity is a substantial driver of ingroup bias, activism, and anger, why would these things increase over time?

The answer has largely to do with changes in the alignment of partisan and ideological identities over time.

Sorting has brought our ideological and partisan identities into agreement, and this new alignment has increased the strength of those identities.[2] It is possible to follow the roots of this theory all the way back to the seminal voting studies by Paul Lazarsfeld and colleagues (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1944) and Angus Campbell and colleagues (Campbell et al. 1960) that introduced the idea of cross-pressures on voters. They suggested that partisans who identify with groups associated with the opposing party would be less likely to vote. Further research suggested that these voters would be less strongly partisan (Powell 1976) and that these "cross-cutting cleavages" would mitigate social conflict (Lipset 1960; Nordlinger 1972). These earlier studies, however, suffered from methodological limitations, and they have been difficult to replicate (Brader, Tucker, and Therriault 2009).

More recent work has begun to suggest that, in fact, cross-pressures do reduce the strength of partisan affiliation and levels of political activism (Brader, Tucker, and Therriault 2009). The main limitation of the cross-pressures approach, however, is that these studies, while dancing around the concept of social identity, do not explicitly identify partisanship as a social identity. They therefore do not take advantage of the wealth of research that can be used to make concrete predictions about the types of political judgment, behavior, and emotion that are likely to come out of the most aligned, or least cross-pressured, identities.

Marilynn Brewer and colleagues have examined the psychological effects of holding multiple social identities in non-partisan contexts (Brewer 1999; Brewer and Pierce 2005; Roccas and Brewer 2002). They have found that when group identities are nonaligned, or cross-cutting, individuals are generally found to be more tolerant, less biased, and more positively oriented toward outgroups. And conversely, those whose identities are aligned to the extent that they are seen as one identity are more likely to be intolerant, to be biased, and to feel negatively toward outgroups. This is because unaligned identities undermine the cognitive and motivational bases of ingroup bias and negative emotion by reducing the perceived differences between the groups, and allow an individual to feel like he or she belongs to and is defined by a broader range of groups. Furthermore, Roccas and Brewer (2002) raise the possibility that those with highly aligned identities may be less psychologically equipped to cope with threat and may feel higher levels of negative emotions when confronted with threat.

This means that a member of a party that is unaligned with his or her ideological identity would feel less bias and anger toward the opposing party than a member of the same party who is ideologically aligned with his or her party, independent of issue positions. Partisans thus do not need to hold wildly extreme issue positions in order to be biased against and angry at their opponents. They simply need to hold aligned partisan identities. Once partisans are sorted, therefore, it can be expected that they will experience higher levels of ingroup bias and anger.

Furthermore, part of the reason for evidence of increased ingroup bias among individuals with aligned identities may be that, consistent with the cross-pressures literature, an aligned identity is a stronger identity. In other words, Democrats who identify as liberals will be more strongly affiliated Democrats than Democrats who identify as conservatives, and this will lead to all of the consequences of a stronger identity: increased ingroup bias, activism, and angry response to threat.

Issue Positions and Ideology

An increase in the strength and alignment of partisan and ideological identities does not require an equivalent increase in the extremity of held political issue positions. As Malka and Lelkes (2010) have found, the identity-ideology relationship is by no means static, and ideological identity should thus be understood as a separate construct from ideological issue positions. Furthermore, Ellis and Stimson (2012) have argued that Americans' "operational" ideology, or their actual issue positions, is a divergent concept from their "symbolic" ideology, or how they identify themselves. This means that sorting should be capable of affecting identity-driven behavior differently than it affects the extremity of held issue positions.

This is not to say that political identities have no effect on issue positions, or that issue positions have not polarized at all. Recent work has found that issue positions in the mass public have polarized somewhat, particularly among strong partisans and strong ideologues (Abramowitz 2010; Carmines, Ensley, and Wagner 2012; Garner and Palmer 2011; Jacobson 2012; Layman and Carsey 2002). However, many of these effects are relatively modest when compared to changes in social polarization. I expect to find that sorting has been capable of increasing social polarization to a greater extent than it has increased

[2] Sorting has not been limited to political and ideological identities. Over the last few decades, we have seen other political identities come into alignment with partisanship as well: partisan identities have converged with religious (Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope 2005; Green et al. 2007; Jacobson 2006; Layman 1997, 2001; Woodberry and Smith 1998) and racial identities (Giles and Hertz 1994). These types of sorting also likely contribute to behavioral polarization, but fall outside the scope of this article.

issue position polarization, leading to an electorate that behaves as if its members are more polarized than their issue positions alone would suggest.

Two major hypotheses are examined:

H1: Partisan-ideological sorting increases political bias, activism, and anger on an individual level, both via partisan strength and independently of partisan strength, even when issue positions are moderate.

H2: The effect of sorting on social polarization is greater than its effect on issue extremity.

Methods

Data are drawn from the American National Election Studies (ANES) cumulative data file, restricted to 1972 (when ideology is first available) through 2004, and the ANES Panel Study conducted from 1992 to 1996.[3]

Measures

Partisan identity strength is a 4-point scale ranging from 0 (*Pure Independent*) to 1 (*Strong Democrat or Republican*). This is an admittedly weak measure of social identity, and the results that follow would likely be significantly strengthened if a social identity–oriented measure of partisanship or ideology were available in the ANES. Mason, Huddy, and Aaroe (2011) have found the relationship between partisan identity and social polarization to be significantly stronger with a social identity–based measure than with the traditional measure used here. The results here should therefore be viewed as a conservative test of the relationship between partisan and ideological identity and social polarization.

Ideological identity strength is a 4-point scale ranging from 0 (*Moderate Liberal or Conservative*) to 1 (*Strong Liberal or Conservative*).

The *Partisan-Ideological Sorting* score multiplies an identity alignment score (the absolute difference between the standard 7-point ANES party identity score and the standard 7-point ANES ideology item score, reverse-coded) by the partisan identity strength score and the ideological identity strength score in order to account for intensity of strength as well as alignment.[4] The sorting score is coded to range from 0 (*least aligned, weakest identities*) to 1 (*most aligned, strongest identities*).

Issue position extremity is an index of six political issue items. These issues were chosen because they are the only issues that are available consistently from 1980 to 2004.[5] The issue response set is folded in half, and the index is coded to range from 0 (*weakest issue positions*) to 1 (*strongest issue positions on both ends of the spectrum*). The issues include the ANES items (1) when should abortion be allowed by law (4-point scale), (2) prioritize government services versus spending (7-point scale), (3) government's role in health insurance (7-point scale), (4) aid to minorities/blacks (7-point scale), (5) defense spending (7-point scale); and (6) should government guarantee jobs (7-point scale). These issues are only all available after 1980. As a check on this measure, *issue constraint* is also briefly examined, measured as the standard deviation from the mean of the six issue items (Barton and Parsons 1977).

Partisan bias is measured in two ways. *Thermometer bias* is a continuous scale measuring the difference between the respondent's placement of Democrats and Republicans on the feeling thermometer, coded to range from 0 to 1, with the most bias, or most uneven assessment of the two parties, coded 1. *Like bias* is a continuous scale created using the number of likes and dislikes mentioned by the respondent for each party. First, the number of dislikes for each party is subtracted from the number of likes, creating a net like score for each party. Then the absolute value of the difference between the net like scores for each party is obtained. It is coded to range from 0 to 1, with the most bias, or most uneven assessment of the two parties, coded 1.

Anger is a dummy variable coded 1 if the respondent reported feeling anger at his or her outgroup presidential candidate.[6]

[3]The 1992-1994-1996 panel is used for two reasons. First, the period from 1992 to 1996 was a time when political identity sorting was in flux to a greater extent than in the period from 2000 to 2004 (the more recent ANES panel data). In the cumulative ANES file, between 1992 and 1996, identity sorting increased from a mean of .24 to a mean of .28, a significant difference. Between 2000 and 2004, no significant difference is observed. Second, the 2004 wave of panel data does not include the 7-point measure of ideology, a crucial element in the measurement of identity sorting.

[4]This is done in order to correctly identify cases in which a person is ideologically moderate and a pure partisan Independent, and thus receives the same alignment score as an extremely liberal strong Democrat. I suggest that the Independent moderate identity is often a *lack* of an identity, and conflating those respondents with ones who hold fully aligned and strong partisan and ideological identities would confuse the results. Identities cannot be sorted if they are not present.

[5]One issue, whether women's role should be in the home, is available consistently but is strongly skewed toward the liberal end of the response range for both Republicans and Democrats, and was thus not included.

[6]Though the outgroup presidential candidate is not an ideal representation of threat, this candidate does represent the embodiment of the possibility that the ingroup will lose status. If the outgroup candidate succeeds, the ingroup will have suffered a public failure. Furthermore, the outgroup candidate spends most of his or her

Activism is a 5-point scale counting the number of the following activities engaged in by the respondent: try to influence the vote of others, attend political meetings/rallies, work for a party or candidate, display candidate button/sticker, donate money to a party or candidate. This is coded to range from 0 (*none of these activities*) to 1 (*all of these activities*).

Controls are included for education, sex (dummy), white race (dummy), age, southern residence (dummy), urban residence (dummy), frequency of church attendance (as a measure of religious commitment), and evangelicalism (as a measure of religious conservatism, a dummy variable based on denomination). All continuous variables are coded to range from 0 to 1.

Partisan-Ideological Sorting, Partisan Strength, and Issues

In order to understand increases in social polarization, it is important to understand recent trends in political identity strength and alignment. As shown in Figure 1, partisan identity strength has been increasing during recent decades. The percentage of people calling themselves strong partisans has increased by over 11% between 1972 and 2004, and the mean sorting score has increased by nearly 8% of the total range of sorting. At the same time, the percentage of pure Independents has decreased by more than 4%. Between 1982 and 2004 (the time period for which the full issue extremity scale is available), the percentage of people calling themselves strong partisans increased by about 3%, whereas the mean sorting score increased by nearly 5% and the percentage of Independents decreased by 2%.

At the same time, as shown in Figure 2, issue positions have polarized somewhat. Between 1982 and 2004, issue position extremity increased by about 3% of the total range of issue position extremity, though most of that change happened between 1982 and 1988. Between 1988 and 2004, average issue position extremity did not increase significantly, whereas the percentage of strong partisans and the average sorting score increased by 2% and 3%, respectively. Issue position constraint, or the consistency of positions across the six issues, did not significantly increase between 1982 and 2004.[7] In general, partisan strength and sorting tend to follow a similar trajectory over time, with issue position extremity and constraint following a more static pattern. In the cumulative ANES file, the pairwise correlation between simple partisan-ideological identity alignment[8] and partisan strength is .39, whereas the correlation between sorting and issue extremity is .12 and the correlation between sorting and issue constraint is .07.[9] These initial results suggest that sorting and partisan strength can potentially move without equivalent changes in the extremity or constraint of held issue positions.

In the following analyses, the causal effects of sorting and identity on social polarization are examined first, holding issue extremity constant in order to demonstrate the ability of sorting and identity to affect social polarization without the involvement of issue position polarization. These relationships are examined in three steps. First, the four measures of social polarization are regressed on sorting and partisan and ideological identities, holding issue extremity constant, and in separate models so as not to confuse the interpretation of entangled measures. Second, in order to clarify the differential effects of partisan identity and sorting, predicted values of social polarization are examined at low and high levels of sorting, keeping partisan identity at its maximum and holding issue extremity at its mean. Third, a matching procedure is used to examine the effects of increases in sorting on social polarization when respondents are exactly matched on either party or ideology and all the demographic and issue extremity covariates.

Next, the relative effects of sorting on social versus issue polarization are examined in two steps. First, predicted values of social and issue polarization are examined at low and high levels of sorting. Second, panel data are used to examine changes in social and issue polarization among people who have sorted.

Sorting, Identity, and Social Polarization

Regressions. It is expected that partisan-ideological sorting will increase social polarization via partisan strength and on its own, independent of the extremity of issue positions. First, the effects of sorting and identity on social polarization are observed individually in the pooled cumulative ANES file, controlling for issue

time publicly derogating the ingroup candidate and the traits of the ingroup as a whole.

[7]As the issue extremity measure is not only empirically a stricter test of issue polarization but also a more widely used reference for the polarization of issue positions, the subsequent analyses will examine only issue position extremity. All models in the article were replicated with issue constraint, and it performed more weakly than issue extremity in every case.

[8]The full sorting score is not used for this calculation, as partisan strength is a component of the full sorting score.

[9]The simple partisan-ideological identity alignment score is correlated with issue extremity at –.02 and with issue constraint at .07.

FIGURE 1 Partisan Strength and Sorting, 1972–2004 (0–1 scale)

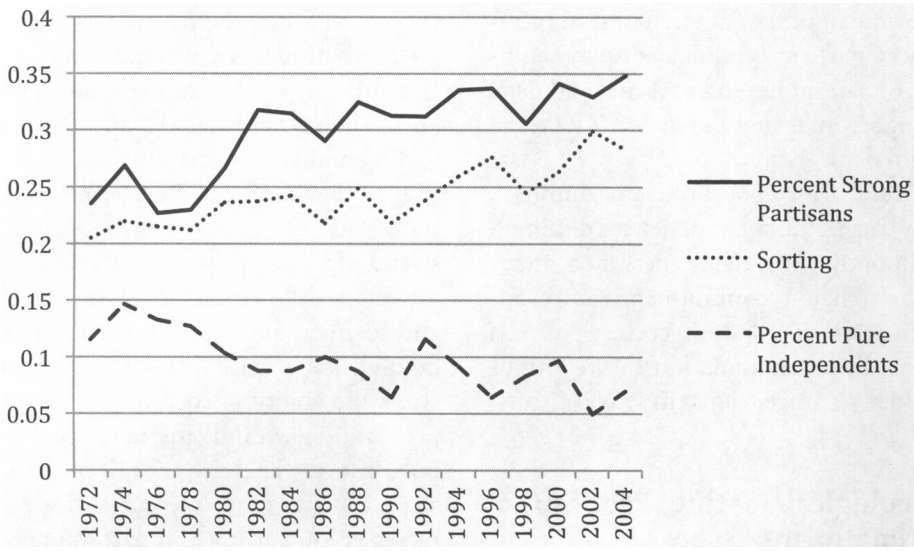
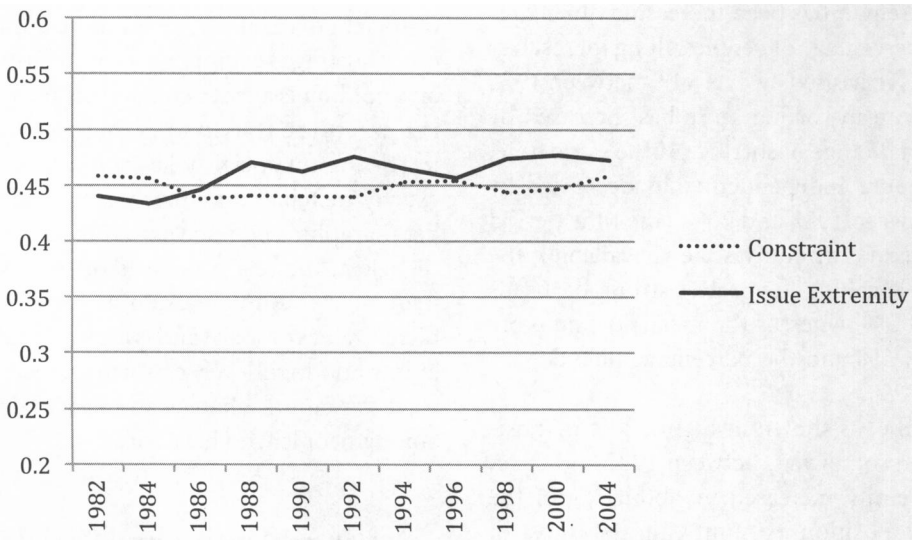


FIGURE 2 Mean Issue Extremity and Constraint, 1982–2004 (0–1 scale)



position extremity and other relevant demographic factors. In all models, standard errors are clustered by year.

Table 1 examines the determinants of the four measures of social polarization: thermometer bias, like bias, activism, and anger at the outgroup candidate. In the first column of Table 1, the effect of sorting on thermometer bias is large and significant. Moving from least sorted to most sorted increases thermometer bias by about 43% of the total range of bias. The coefficients related to partisan and ideological strength in the second column are also large and significant. An increase from weakest to strongest partisan identity (holding ideological identity constant) increases thermometer bias by about 33% of the total range of bias. An increase from weakest to strongest ideological identity (holding partisan identity constant) increases thermometer bias by about 13% of the total range of bias. Thus, sorting and the two measures of political identity are all powerfully capable, on their own, of motivating large increases in bias in a respondent's feelings toward the two parties. These effects are notably resilient to the effect of issue position extremity. Issue position extremity does significantly increase thermometer bias, but far more weakly than sorting or partisan identity strength. More importantly, sorting and political identity

TABLE 1 Effects of Sorting, Partisan Strength, and Issue Position Extremity on Social Polarization

	Thermometer Bias		Like Bias		Activism		Anger	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Sorting	**0.43** (.02)		**0.28** (.02)		**0.17** (.02)		**1.63** (.18)	
Partisan Strength		**0.33** (.01)		**0.17** (.01)		**0.10** (.01)		**1.11** (.15)
Ideological Strength		**0.13** (.02)		**0.10** (.01)		**0.06** (.01)		**0.65** (.08)
Issue Position Extremity	**0.12** (.02)	**0.12** (.02)	**0.04** (.01)	**0.04** (.01)	**0.03** (.01)	**0.04** (.01)	0.28 (.25)	0.29 (.26)
Education	**−0.03** (.01)	0.00 (.01)	**0.09** (.01)	**0.10** (.01)	**0.12** (.01)	**0.13** (.01)	**0.72** (.24)	**0.83** (.24)
Male	**−0.02** (.01)	−0.01 (.01)	0.01 (.01)	0.01 (.01)	**0.02** (.00)	**0.02** (.00)	**−0.12** (.05)	−0.09 (.05)
White	**−0.05** (.01)	**−0.03** (.01)	**−0.03** (.01)	−0.01 (.01)	0.01 (.01)	0.01 (.01)	−0.20 (.20)	−0.13 (.20)
Age	**0.00** (.00)	**0.00** (.00)	**0.00** (.00)	**0.00** (.00)	**0.00** (.00)	**0.00** (.00)	0.00 (.00)	0.00 (.00)
South	0.01 (.00)	0.00 (.00)	−0.01 (.00)	**−0.01** (.00)	0.00 (.00)	0.00 (.00)	−0.10 (.06)	**−0.13** (.06)
Urban	**0.02** (.01)	0.01 (.01)	**0.02** (.00)	**0.01** (.00)	0.00 (.01)	0.00 (.01)	−0.30 (.24)	−0.31 (.25)
Church Attendance	−0.01 (.01)	**−0.02** (.01)	0.00 (.00)	−0.01 (.00)	**0.03** (.01)	**0.03** (.01)	−0.19 (.10)	**−0.23** (.10)
Evangelical	**0.02** (.01)	**0.02** (.01)	0.01 (.01)	0.01 (.01)	−0.01 (.01)	−0.01 (.01)	0.07 (.28)	0.08 (.28)
Constant	**0.12** (.02)	−0.03 (.02)	0.02 (.02)	**−0.06** (.02)	**−0.03** (.01)	**−0.08** (.01)	**−1.59** (.59)	**−2.15** (.55)
R-squared	0.18	0.26	0.12	0.14	0.08	0.08		
Pseudo R-squared							0.04	0.04
N	9858	9858	9858	9858	9858	9858	9858	9858

Note: Thermometer bias, like bias, and activism are OLS models with standard errors clustered by year. Anger is a dichotomous variable, so a logit model is used, with standard errors clustered by year. Bold coefficients are significant at $p < .05$ in a two-tailed test.

affect partisan bias even when issue position extremity is held constant. It is thus possible for partisan bias to increase due to sorting and political identity even when issue position extremity does not change.

An alternative measure of partisan bias provides similar results. The third and fourth columns of Table 1 examine the determinants of like bias. In column 3, an increase from least to most sorted increases like bias by 28% of the total range of bias. In column 4, an increase from weakest to strongest partisan identity increases like bias by 17% of the total range of bias, whereas moving from weakest to strongest ideological identity increases bias by 10% of the total range of bias. Just as in the case of thermometer bias, the like bias models suggest that like bias is strongly motivated by sorting as well as identity strength. Furthermore, the effects of sorting and identity are robust to the effect of issue position extremity, which is comparatively weak.

Activism, presented in columns 5 and 6 of Table 1, is also motivated by sorting and political identities. In column 5, an increase from least to most sorted increases political activism by 17% of the total range of activism. The measure of activism is a scale of five political activities; thus, a 17% increase in activism can be seen as the addition of nearly one new activity due simply to the increase in identity sorting. The effects of partisan and ideological strength are also large and significant in column 6. An increase from weakest to strongest partisan identity increases political activism by 10%, whereas an increase from weakest to strongest ideological identity increases activism by 7%. These effects are also robust to the effects of issue extremity, suggesting that even people who hold moderate issue positions can work hard to defeat each other in the voting booth.

Finally, columns 7 and 8 of Table 1 examine the effects of sorting and political identity on anger at the outgroup candidate. Those with strong and highly sorted political identities are expected to react with more anger to threats from the outparty. A logit model is used to predict whether a respondent reported feeling anger toward his or her outparty's presidential candidate. In column 7, sorting significantly increases the likelihood of feeling anger toward the outgroup candidate. The more aligned a respondent's partisan and ideological identities, the more

likely he or she is to feel anger toward the candidate. In column 8, partisan and ideological identities also increase the likelihood of feeling anger. In both models, the effects of sorting and identity are robust to the effects of issue position extremity, which does not have a significant effect on the likelihood of feeling angry at the outgroup candidate. However, the relative effects of sorting and partisan identity on all four measures of social polarization cannot be disentangled in a simple regression, as the measures are related by construction.

Predicted Values. In order to better evaluate whether sorting is capable of increasing social polarization beyond the effect of partisan identity, predicted probabilities are presented in Figure 3. These values are drawn from regressions similar to those in Table 1, but they include both sorting and partisan identity and exclude ideological identity for ease of interpretation (see the appendix for originating regressions). Partisan identity is constrained to its maximum value; all other variables, including issue position extremity, are held at their means; and the values of sorting are varied between the minimum possible level of sorting for a strong partisan (.09) and the maximum level of sorting (1.0).

In Figure 3, the effect of strong partisanship without partisan-ideological alignment is examined in the low sorting/high partisanship bars. Here, holding issue extremity and all other variables constant, strong partisanship with a cross-cutting ideological identity generates a thermometer bias score of .35 and a like bias score of .22. However, when strong partisanship is combined with a strong and highly aligned ideological identity, this ingroup bias score increases to .55 in the case of thermometer bias and .40 in the case of like bias. Partisanship in the absence of a strongly aligned ideological identity is therefore a far less potent contributor to ingroup bias than a highly sorted partisan and ideological identity.

These results suggest that inclinations toward one party over another are powerfully driven by the strength and alignment of political identities, even when political issue positions are unchanging. A person with moderate issue positions can still be very biased against the outparty if his or her partisan and ideological identities are aligned.

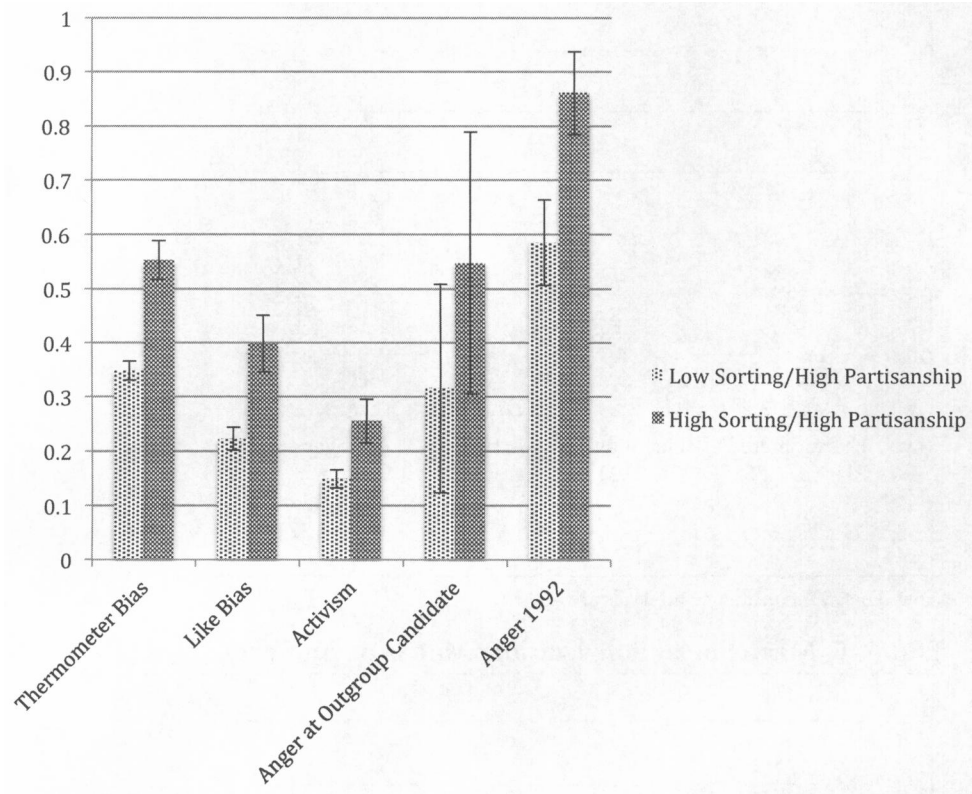
Similar results are found in the case of activism. When partisanship is strong, but unaligned with ideological identity, the predicted value of activism is .15. When that strong partisanship is aligned with a strong ideological identity, activism increases to a level of .26. A highly sorted partisan-ideological identity is therefore capable of motivating higher levels of activism than a strong partisan identity alone. Furthermore, this effect is robust to the constraints on issue extremity. Issue position moderation therefore does not moderate the increased levels of participation brought on by highly sorted partisan-ideological identities. These results suggest that even when a person's issue positions are moderate, they can be pushed into political action simply by the strong alignment of their partisan and ideological identities.

Finally, the bars labeled "Anger at Outgroup Candidate" and "Anger 1992" present the predicted probability of feeling anger at the outgroup candidate in the full data set and in 1992 alone, respectively. In the full sample, a strong partisan with a cross-cutting ideological identity has a 32% likelihood of feeling anger toward the outparty candidate. However, when a strong partisan is well sorted, with strongly aligned partisan and ideological identities, there is a 55% probability that he or she will feel anger toward the outparty candidate, even when holding issue extremity constant. The standard errors are large in the case of anger due to the dependence of the measure on the specific candidate in each year, so for a more precise picture, levels of anger are also examined in only 1992, and there the difference between low and high sorting is more evidently significant. An unsorted partisan has a 59% probability of feeling angry, whereas a sorted partisan has an 86% probability of being angry in 1992.[10] Sorting, therefore, is capable of driving significant levels of anger, beyond simple partisanship and other demographic variables. Furthermore, this effect is robust to the effect of issue position extremity. A moderate set of issue positions therefore does not reduce the increased anger brought on by the alignment of partisan and ideological identities. The effects of identity sorting on anger can work independently of issue position extremity.

Matching. The final test of the relationship between sorting and social polarization is to use exact matching to examine the effect of sorting on social polarization, simulating a random assignment of sorting to the population as a treatment condition. This method matches respondents on party or ideology as well as issue extremity and every control variable, creating two groups that are as similar as possible on all covariates. The only difference between the groups is the level of sorting. The sorting score is divided into low and high values by cutting it at approximately the median value. The matched

[10]This result holds in every presidential election year. The year 1992 is used as an example simply because it is a year when sorting was in flux, and it is thus realistic to discuss strong partisans who are unsorted. In 1992, the difference in predicted anger between sorted and unsorted partisans is .31. The year of the lowest difference was 1984, with a difference of .14. The year of the highest difference was 1996, with a difference of .34. All presidential election years showed a significant difference.

FIGURE 3 Predicted Values of Social Polarization at Varying Levels of Partisanship and Sorting



Note: Data are drawn from the cumulative ANES file. The 95% confidence intervals are shown. Anger models are predicted probabilities. All other variables are held at their means or modes. Low sorting is set at .09, the lowest sorting score a strong partisan can obtain. Originating regressions can be found in the appendix.

samples are then compared in their levels of social polarization across low and high sorting. Due to the exact matching, a simple difference in means on the matched data can estimate the causal effect. Because a number of the key variables are continuous, coarsened exact matching is used to make the matches more feasible (Iacus et al. 2012).[11] The ANES cumulative data file is used in order to provide as large a sample as possible for the matching process, with standard errors clustered by year.[12] Using exact matching on all covariates provides a very conservative test of the effect of sorting on behavior. To find any effect of sorting at all on people who are identical in their education, age, sex, race, location, religiosity, issue positions, and partisan or ideological identity is a particularly strict test.

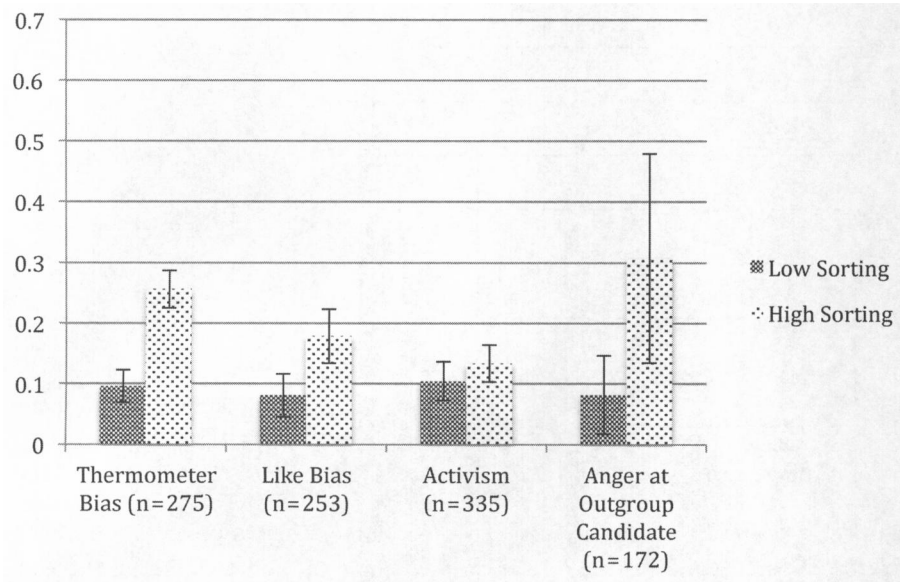
Figures 4 and 5 present the results of the matching. In Figure 4, the samples are matched on ideology, and the extent to which partisan identity is aligned with that ideological identity is varied. For both measures of partisan bias, ideologically identical people (in both identity and issue positions) are significantly more biased in their assessments of the two parties when their partisan identity is strong and in line with their ideological identity. The mean thermometer bias score for a person with a cross-cutting partisan identity is .10, whereas an otherwise identical person with a well-sorted partisan identity has a mean bias score of .26. In the case of like bias, a person with a cross-cutting partisan identity has a mean bias score of .08, whereas an otherwise identical person with a well-sorted partisan identity has a bias score of .18.

The effect of sorting on activism is smaller but is in the appropriate direction. The mean level of activism

[11]The univariate imbalance in means for each covariate is below 0.00001 for all covariates except age, for which the imbalance in means is .04. This indicates that the samples are very well balanced and thus do not require a statistical model to account for any remaining imbalance.

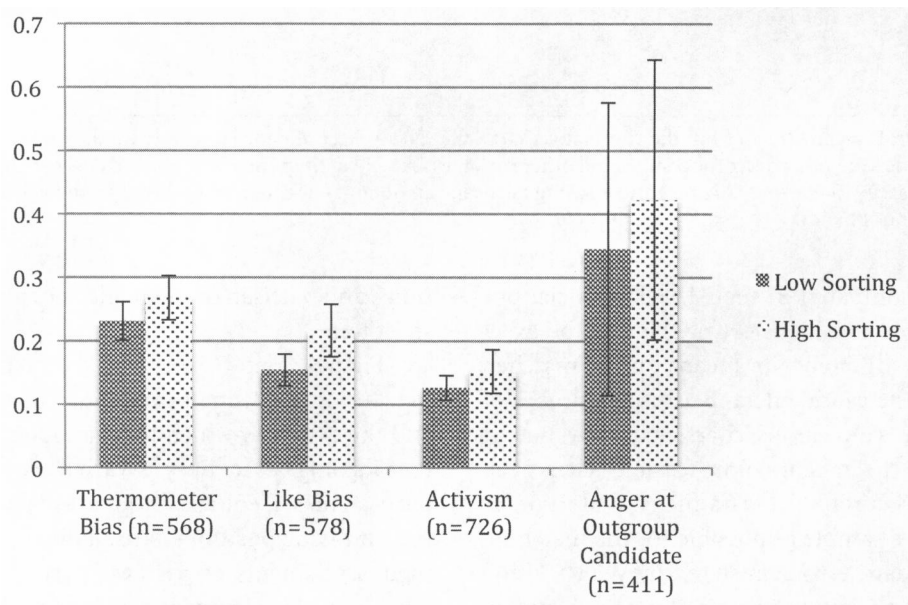
[12]Matching on year was not feasible, as the sample size was too severely restricted.

FIGURE 4 Mean Social Polarization: Matching on Ideology



Note: The 95% confidence intervals are shown.

FIGURE 5 Mean Social Polarization: Matching on Party



Note: The 95% confidence intervals are shown.

for a person with a cross-cutting partisan identity is .10, whereas a person with a well-sorted partisan identity has a mean activism score of .13.

The effect of sorting on anger, however, is the largest of the four types of social polarization. Ideologically identical people are significantly more angry at the outgroup candidate when their partisan identity is strong and in line with their ideological identity. The mean level of anger for a person with a cross-cutting partisan identity is .08, whereas an otherwise identical person with a well-sorted partisan identity has a mean anger score of .31. This is a significant difference, despite the fact that the confidence intervals are very large due to the dependence of the anger measure on the specific outgroup candidate.

The results from Figure 4 suggest that as partisanship moves into alignment with ideological identity, even

when issue positions do not change at all, social polarization increases. People who are identical in their demographics, issue positions, and ideological identity become significantly more biased and angry when their party is aligned with their ideology.

Interestingly, this result is weaker when party is held constant and ideological identity is allowed to move, as it is in Figure 5. Parties are the more salient groups in political competition because they are the groups that directly compete for power. When party is held constant, a potent source of social polarization is tamped down. However, the effects of sorting are still capable of motivating some increases in social polarization, even when party and issue positions are constrained to be identical across the two samples.[13]

The effect of ideological identity on matched partisans is small but significant in regard to partisan bias. Identical partisans (who are also identical in their issue positions) are significantly more biased in their evaluation of the two parties when their ideological identity is strong and in line with their partisan identity. The mean thermometer bias score for a person with a cross-cutting ideological identity is .23, whereas an otherwise identical person with a well-sorted ideological identity has a mean bias score of .27. In the case of like bias, a person with a cross-cutting ideological identity has a mean bias score of .15, whereas an otherwise identical person with a well-sorted ideological identity has a mean bias score of .22. These are significant differences.

In the case of activism, the effect of sorting is smaller than in Figure 4, but in Figure 5, this effect is marginally significant. The mean level of activism for a person with a cross-cutting ideological identity is .13, whereas an otherwise identical person with a well-sorted ideological identity has a mean activism score of .15. Just as in Figure 4, however, the difference between the two means is very close to the significance threshold.

Finally, the effect of anger in the party-matched sample is significantly smaller than its effect in the ideology-matched sample. The mean level of anger for a person with a cross-cutting ideological identity is .34 (a much higher baseline than the ideology-matched sample), whereas an otherwise identical person with a well-sorted ideological identity has a mean anger score of .42. This is not a significant difference due to the very large standard errors.

Figures 4 and 5 demonstrate two important points. First, sorting can affect social polarization even when respondents agree on issue positions. These two types of polarization can thus be understood to be capable of moving independently of each other. Political judgment, behavior, and emotion can therefore be affected by influences other than simple policy-based reasoning. Second, it is further established that while partisan identity is a powerful motivator of political behavior, the alignment between partisan and ideological identities has an additional independent effect on behavior. The bias, activism, and anger that are generated by political identities can be significantly intensified by the presence of sorting.

[13]The sample sizes in Figure 4 are far smaller than those in Figure 5. This is due to the fact that there are more people who are matched on party and the other covariates than people who are matched on ideology and the other covariates.

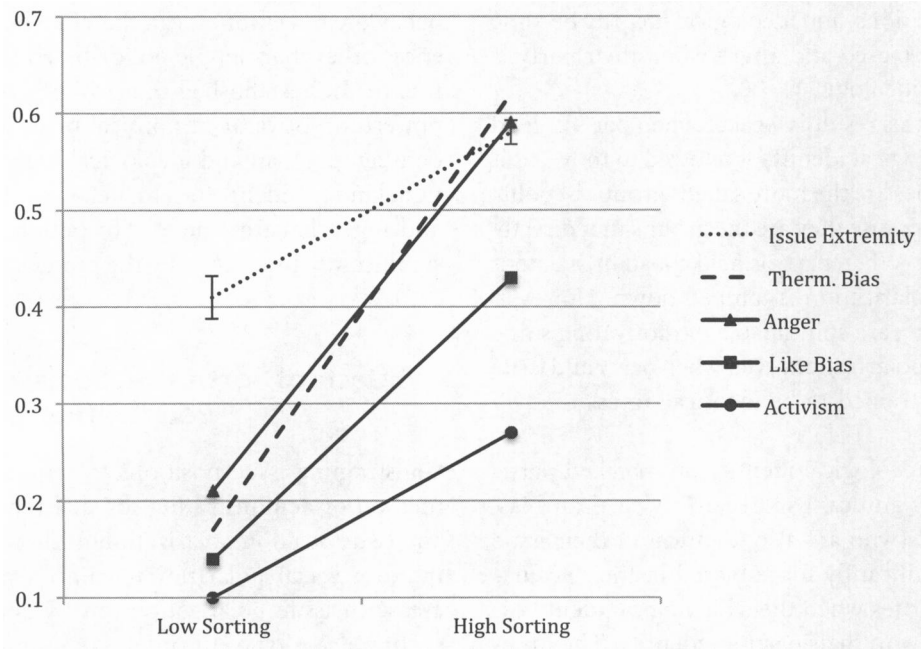
Effects of Sorting on Social versus Issue Polarization

Constraining issue positions to remain constant is one method of demonstrating the difference between social and issue position polarization. It shows that sorting *can* increase social polarization without an equivalent increase in issue polarization, but it does not show that sorting *does* do so. In order to examine the differential effects of sorting on these two types of polarization, first the relative predicted values of social and issue polarization are measured at low versus high levels of sorting. Second, the ANES 1992–1996 panel data are examined to determine the levels of social and issue polarization in the same individuals pre- and post-sorting.

It is expected that the effect of sorting on social polarization will be greater than its effect on issue polarization, due to the known effects of social identity strength and alignment on bias, action, and anger. As a first examination of this relationship, predicted values of the various measures of social and issue polarization are examined at low and high values of sorting in Figure 6. These predicted values are derived from ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models (logit in the case of anger), controlling for demographic variables, using the pooled cumulative ANES data with standard errors clustered by year (see the appendix for originating regressions).

The results in Figure 6 demonstrate that although sorting does have a significant effect on issue polarization, its effects on the four measures of social polarization are significantly larger (with the exception of the effects on activism, which are equivalent in this model). Moving from unsorted to fully sorted increases issue position extremity by 17% of the total range of issue extremity. In comparison, moving from unsorted to fully sorted increases thermometer bias by 45% of the range of bias, like bias by 29% of the range of bias, anger by 38% of the total range of anger, and activism by 17% of the range of activism. This means that as people's partisan and ideological identities move into alignment, their

FIGURE 6 Predicted Values of Social and Issue Polarization



Note: Standard errors are only shown in the case of issue extremity to improve data visibility. The increases in all four measures of social polarization are significant. All variables except sorting are held at their means or modes. Originating regressions can be found in the appendix.

issue positions and levels of political activism increase to similar extents, but their bias in making assessments of the two parties and their anger increase significantly more. The effect is an electorate whose members are more biased and angry than their issue positions alone can explain.

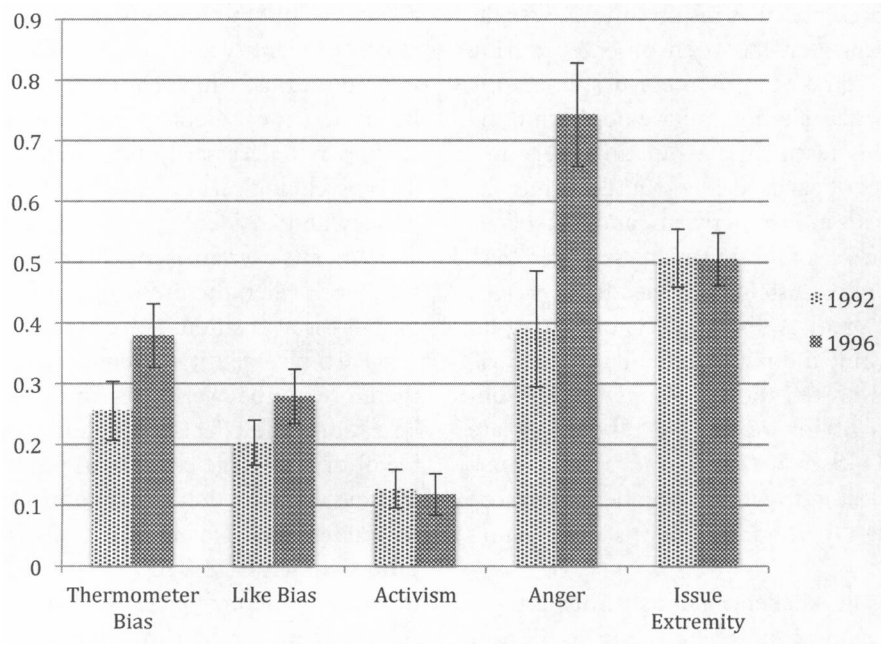
A final examination of the differential effect of sorting on social versus issue polarization is achieved by examining only those people who have sorted between 1992 and 1996, and comparing their levels of polarization pre- and post-sorting. Because the panel examines the same individuals pre- and post-sorting, demographic controls are not necessary. Figure 7 provides the mean values of polarization in 1992 and 1996 among these increasingly sorted individuals.

The effect of sorting here is similar to the effects seen above. Thermometer bias pre-sorting has a mean value of .26, increasing to .38 after sorting, a significant difference. Like bias increases from .20 to .28 after the sorting process. Thus, as people's partisan and ideological identities move into alignment, their respective evaluations of the two parties become increasingly biased toward their own party. Activism does not significantly change after the sorting process. However, among individuals who become *less* sorted between 1992 and 1996, activism does significantly decrease (.12 in 1992 and .07 in 1996). Anger at the outgroup candidate increases substantially, moving from .39 among less sorted respondents in 1992 to .74 after sorting.[14] In general, as a person's partisan and ideological identities move into alignment, his or her levels of bias and anger increase. Furthermore, these effects were compared against mean changes in the electorate as a whole (in models not shown here). These analyses showed that after sorting, respondents are not only more socially polarized than they were before they sorted, but to an extent that is greater than what is occurring among average citizens. In contrast, issue polarization among these increasingly sorted individuals does not significantly increase. Furthermore, unlike in the case of activism, a person who becomes *less* sorted does not experience a significant reduction in issue position extremity. Sorting, then, has a significant effect on every measure of social polarization, but it does not have a significant effect (in either direction) on issue position extremity.

As Figures 6 and 7 demonstrate, the effect of sorting on social polarization, particularly partisan bias and anger, is larger than its effect on issue position extremity. Sorting has a smaller and less consistent effect on

[14] Part of this effect is linked to the specific candidates in 1992 and 1996, so it cannot all be attributed to the effect of sorting, however those respondents who sorted became more angry than the average respondent during the same period of time.

FIGURE 7 Mean Polarization, Pre- and Post-Sorting



Note: Data are drawn from ANES 1992–1996 panel data. Mean values include only respondents whose sorting score increased between 1992 and 1996. This includes 25% of the sample, or 618 individuals. In order to compare the same respondents across all types of polarization, only the individuals who responded to all polarization items in 1992 and 1996 are compared here, leaving 105 individuals. The 95% confidence intervals are shown.

activism, but this effect remains more reliable than the effect of sorting on issue extremity. The results presented here suggest that as people become more sorted, their levels of issue extremity and activism do increase, but their levels of partisan bias and anger increase substantially more.

Discussion

The findings from this research make a number of important contributions to the study of political polarization. First, by identifying political bias, action, and emotion as a relevant arena for the examination of polarization, separate from issue position polarization, this article provides a toehold from which to begin looking theoretically at whether polarization is occurring, and what we mean by polarization. As demonstrated above, issue position polarization is not by any means synonymous with social polarization. They can occur independently of each other, which suggests that when we discuss polarization, it should never be assumed that issue position polarization tells the whole story. Social polarization affects political interactions and a person's understanding of the political world, as well as the vehemence with which he or she reacts emotionally to political events.

Second, this research specifies two mechanisms by which social polarization is driven—political identity strength and alignment. Contrary to an issue-focused view of political decision making and behavior, the results presented here suggest that political thought, behavior, and emotion are powerfully driven by political identities. The strength of a person's identification with his or her party affects how biased, active, and angry that person is, even if that person's issue positions are moderate. Furthermore, when partisan and ideological identities move into alignment, that alignment is capable of motivating even more bias, activism, and anger independently of its effect on partisanship. Thus, political identities are able to motivate social polarization in two ways—through the effects of partisanship and through the effects of identity alignment. Even without any change in the distribution of issue opinions in the public, it is possible for the electorate as a whole to regard outgroup partisans with increasing prejudice, to be driven to take action against the outgroup party, and to feel anger in response to electoral challenges from the outgroup party. This can happen simply by bringing average citizens' partisan and ideological identities into more consistent alignment, a phenomenon

that has repeatedly been shown to be occurring in the American electorate.

Third, this research provides insight into the results of the political sorting that has been observed during recent decades. Though sorting is often described, the consequences of this new alignment have not been thoroughly explored. This research lays out three very important consequences of partisan-ideological sorting: the intensification of partisan bias, activism, and anger. The effects of sorting on bias and anger are stronger than its effects on activism, consistent with the identity alignment literature that predicts direct effects of sorting on bias and anger, and only indirect effects on activism, via partisan strength. However, these findings further suggest that the effects of sorting on bias and anger are significantly stronger than its effects on issue extremity, leading to an electorate whose members are more biased and angry than their issue positions alone would explain.

Finally, these results challenge an instrumental view of politics, in which people choose a party and decide how strongly to support it based solely on each party's stated positions and whether the party shares interests with them. In this view, political behavior should be driven predominantly by reasoned policy interests. If issue attitudes are the major motivators of political evaluation, behavior, and emotion, the extremity of issue positions should determine the intensity of bias, activism, and anger observed among citizens. But this is not what occurs. Naturally, issue position extremity has some effect on those behaviors, but these effects are not nearly as strong as the effects of identity and identity alignment. In contrast to issue positions, which should be logically linked to political decisions, identity is simply a group attachment. It does not necessarily have logical content behind it. This psychological and emotional sense of attachment to a party and an ideology, and the extent to which those attachments overlap, is capable of driving social polarization, even when the presumptive reasons for choosing a party—issue positions—are held constant.

Partisan identity strength and alignment should therefore not be overlooked in the study of political polarization. The effects of identity and sorting are capable of driving large changes in political thought, behavior, and emotion that are disconnected from simple policy preferences. Normatively, this is a problem for the pure democratic process in which citizens participate to make their preferences known, not to settle a score. It may therefore be disturbing to imagine a nation of people driven powerfully by team spirit, but less powerfully by a logical connection of issues to action. These results, however, demonstrate that as our political identities fall increasingly into alignment, and our partisanship consequently strengthens, the outcome is a nation that may agree on many things, but is bitterly divided nonetheless.

Appendix

TABLE A1 Originating Regressions for Figure 3

	Thermometer Bias		Like Bias		Activism		Anger (Full Sample)		Anger (1992)	
Sorting	**0.22**	(.02)	**0.19**	(.02)	**0.12**	(.02)	**1.06**	(.21)	**1.66**	(.45)
Partisan Strength	**0.27**	(.01)	**0.12**	(.01)	**0.07**	(.01)	**0.83**	(.19)	**1.47**	(.28)
Issue Extremity	**0.13**	(.02)	**0.04**	(.01)	**0.04**	(.01)	0.30	(.25)	0.44	(.41)
Education	−0.01	(.01)	**0.09**	(.01)	**0.13**	(.01)	**0.76**	(.24)	**0.76**	(.30)
Male	−0.01	(.01)	0.01	(.01)	**0.02**	(.00)	−0.09	(.05)	−0.14	(.16)
White	**−0.04**	(.01)	**−0.02**	(.01)	0.01	(.01)	−0.16	(.20)	0.19	(.21)
Age	**0.00**	(.00)	**0.00**	(.00)	**0.00**	(.00)	0.00	(.00)	0.00	(.00)
South	0.01	(.00)	**−0.01**	(.00)	0.00	(.00)	−0.11	(.06)	**−0.38**	(.18)
Urban	0.01	(.01)	**0.01**	(.00)	0.00	(.01)	−0.31	(.25)	0.35	(.18)
Church Attendance	**−0.02**	(.01)	−0.01	(.00)	**0.03**	(.01)	**−0.22**	(.10)	−0.27	(.20)
Evangelical	**0.01**	(.01)	0.01	(.01)	−0.01	(.01)	0.07	(.28)	0.15	(.17)
Constant	0.01	(.02)	−0.03	(.02)	**−0.06**	(.01)	**−1.95**	(.54)	**−1.73**	(.45)
N	9858		9858		9858		9858		785	

TABLE A2 Originating Regressions for Figure 6

	Issue Extremity		Thermometer Bias		Like Bias		Activism		Anger	
Sorting	**0.18**	(.01)	**0.45**	(.02)	**0.29**	(.02)	**0.17**	(.02)	**1.68**	(.19)
Education	**−0.04**	(.01)	**−0.03**	(.01)	**0.08**	(.01)	**0.12**	(.01)	**0.71**	(.23)
Male	0.00	(.01)	**−0.02**	(.01)	0.01	(.01)	**0.02**	(.00)	**−0.12**	(.05)
White	**−0.06**	(.01)	**−0.06**	(.01)	**−0.03**	(.01)	0.00	(.01)	−0.21	(.21)
Age	0.00	(.00)	**0.00**	(.00)	**0.00**	(.00)	**0.00**	(.00)	0.00	(.00)
South	**0.02**	(.01)	**0.01**	(.00)	−0.01	(.00)	0.01	(.00)	−0.10	(.06)
Urban	0.01	(.01)	**0.02**	(.01)	**0.02**	(.00)	0.00	(.01)	−0.30	(.24)
Church Attendance	**−0.08**	(.01)	**−0.02**	(.01)	0.00	(.00)	**0.03**	(.01)	−0.21	(.11)
Evangelical	0.01	(.01)	**0.02**	(.01)	0.01	(.01)	−0.01	(.01)	0.07	(.28)
Constant	**0.52**	(.03)	**0.18**	(.01)	**0.04**	(.02)	−0.02	(.01)	**−1.44**	(.49)
N	9858		9858		9858		9858		9858	

References

Abramowitz, Alan I. 2006. "Comment on Disconnected: The Political Class versus the People." In *Red and Blue Nation? Characteristics and Causes of America's Polarized Politics*, ed. Pietro S. Nivola and David W. Brady. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 72–84.

Abramowitz, Alan. 2007. "Constraint, Ideology and Polarization in the American Electorate: Evidence from the 2006 Cooperative Congressional Election Study." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, IL.

Abramowitz, Alan. 2010. *The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization, and American Democracy.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Abramowitz, Alan I., and Kyle L. Saunders. 1998. "Ideological Realignment in the U.S. Elections." *Journal of Politics* 60(3): 634–52.

Abramowitz, Alan, and Kyle Saunders. 2005. "Why Can't We All Just Get Along? The Reality of a Polarized America." *The Forum: A Journal of Applied Research in Contemporary Politics* 3(2): 1–22.

Abramowitz, Alan I., and Kyle L. Saunders. 2008. "Is Polarization a Myth?" *Journal of Politics* 70(2): 542–55.

Abramowitz, Alan I., and W. J. Stone. 2006. "The Bush Effect: Polarization, Turnout, and Activism in the 2004 Presidential Election." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36(2): 141–54.

Bafumi, Joseph, and Robert Y. Shapiro. 2009. "A New Partisan Voter." *Journal of Politics* 71(1): 1–24.

Baldassarri, Delia, and Andrew Gelman. 2008. "Partisans without Constraint: Political Polarization and Trends in American Public Opinion." *American Journal of Sociology* 114(2): 408–46.

Bartels, Larry M. 2002. "Beyond the Running Tally: Partisan Bias in Political Perceptions." *Political Behavior* 24(2): 117–50.

Barton, Allen H., and R. Wayne Parsons. 1977. "Measuring Belief System Structure." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 41(2): 159–80.

Billig, Michael, and Henri Tajfel. 1973. "Social Categorization and Similarity in Intergroup Behaviour." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 3(1): 27–52.

Brader, Ted, Joshua A. Tucker, and Andrew Therriault. 2009. "The Cross-Pressured Citizen Revisiting Social Influence on Voting Behavior." *Presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL.*

Brewer, Marilynn. 1999. "Multiple Identities and Identity Transition: Implications for Hong Kong." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 23(2): 187–97.

Brewer, Marilynn, and Kathleen P. Pierce. 2005. "Social Identity Complexity and Outgroup Tolerance." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 31(3): 428–37.

Brewer, Mark D. 2005. "The Rise of Partisanship and the Expansion of Partisan Conflict within the American Electorate." *Political Research Quarterly* 58(2): 219–29.

Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter.* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Carmines, Edward G., Michael J. Ensley, and Michael W. Wagner. 2012 "Who Fits the Left-Right Divide? Partisan Polarization in the American Electorate." *American Behavioral Scientist* 56(12): 1631–53.

Dawes, Christopher T., and James H. Fowler. 2009. "Partisanship, Voting, and the Dopamine D2 Receptor Gene." *Journal of Politics* 71(3): 1157–71.

Ellis, Christopher, and James A. Stimson. 2012. *Ideology in America.* 1st ed. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ethier, Kathleen A., and Kay Deaux. 1994. "Negotiating Social Identity When Contexts Change: Maintaining Identification and Responding to Threat." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 67(2): 243–51.

Fiorina, Morris P., and Samuel J. Abrams. 2008. "Political Polarization in the American Public." *Annual Review of Political Science* 11: 563–88.

Fiorina, Morris P., Samuel J. Abrams, and Jeremy C. Pope. 2005. *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America.* New York: Pearson Longman.

Fiorina, Morris P., Samuel J. Abrams, and Jeremy C. Pope. 2008. "Polarization in the American Public: Misconceptions and Misreadings." *Journal of Politics* 70(2): 556–60.

Fiorina, Morris P., and Matthew S. Levendusky. 2006. "Disconnected: The Political Class versus the People." In *Red and Blue Nation? Characteristics and Causes of America's Polarized Politics*, ed. Pietro S. Nivola and David W. Brady. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 49–71.

Garner, Andrew, and Harvey Palmer. 2011. "Polarization and Issue Consistency over Time." *Political Behavior* 33(2): 225–46.

Gerber, Alan S., Gregory A. Huber, David Doherty, and Conor M. Dowling. 2012. "Personality and the Strength and Direction of Partisan Identification." *Political Behavior* 34(4): 653–88.

Giles, Micheal, and Kaenan Hertz. 1994. "Racial Threat and Partisan Identification." *American Political Science Review* 88(2): 317–26.

Green, Donald, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler. 2002. *Partisan Hearts and Minds.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Green, John C., Lyman A. Kellstedt, Corwin E. Smidt, and James L. Guth. 2007. "How the Faithful Voted: Religious Communities and the Presidential Vote." In *A Matter of Faith: Religion in the 2004 Presidential Election*, ed. David E. Campbell. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 15–36.

Greene, Steven. 1999. "Understanding Party Identification: A Social Identity Approach." *Political Psychology* 20(2): 393–403.

Greene, Steven. 2002. "The Social-Psychological Measurement of Partisanship." *Political Behavior* 24(3): 171–97.

Greene, Steven. 2004. "Social Identity Theory and Party Identification." *Social Science Quarterly* 85(1): 138–53.

Hetherington, Marc J. 2001. "Resurgent Mass Partisanship: The Role of Elite Polarization." *American Political Science Review* 95(3): 619–31.

Hohman, Zachary P., Michael Hogg, and Michelle Bligh. 2010. "Identity and Intergroup Leadership: Asymmetrical Political and National Identification in Response to Uncertainty." *Self and Identity* 9(2): 113–28.

Huddy, Leonie. 2001. "From Social to Political Identity: A Critical Examination of Social Identity Theory." *Political Psychology* 22(1): 127–56.

Iacus, Stefano M., Gary King, Giuseppe Porro, and Jonathan N. Katz. 2012. "Causal Inference without Balance Checking: Coarsened Exact Matching." *Political Analysis* 20(1): 1–24.

Iyengar, Shanto, Gaurav Sood, and Yphtach Lelkes. 2012. "Affect, Not Ideology: A Social Identity Perspective on Polarization." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76(3): 405–31.

Jacobson, Gary. 2003. "Partisan Polarization in Presidential Support: The Electoral Connection." *Congress and the Presidency* 30(1): 1–36.

Jacobson, Gary C. 2004. "Partisan and Ideological Polarization in the California Electorate." *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 4(2): 113–39.

Jacobson, Gary C. 2005. "Polarized Politics and the 2004 Congressional and Presidential Elections." *Political Science Quarterly* 120(2): 199–218.

Jacobson, Gary C. 2006. "Comment on Disconnected: The Political Class versus the People." In *Red and Blue Nation? Characteristics and Causes of America's Polarized Politics*, ed. Pietro S. Nivola and David W. Brady. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 85–94.

Jacobson, Gary C. 2007. *A Divider, Not a Uniter.* New York: Pearson Longman.

Jacobson, Gary C. 2012. "The Electoral Origins of Polarized Politics: Evidence from the 2010 Cooperative Congressional Election Study." *American Behavioral Scientist* 56(12):1612–30.

Jennings, M. Kent, and Gregory B. Markus. 1984. "Partisan Orientations over the Long Haul: Results from the Three-Wave Political Socialization Panel Study." *American Political Science Review* 78(4): 1000–1018.

Layman, Geoffrey. 1997. "Religion and Political Behavior in the United States: The Impact of Beliefs, Affiliations, and Commitment from 1980 to 1994." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 61(2): 288–316.

Layman, Geoffrey. 2001. *The Great Divide: Religious and Cultural Conflict in American Party Politics.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Layman, Geoffrey C., and Thomas M. Carsey. 2002. "Party Polarization and Party Structuring of Policy Attitudes: A Comparison of Three NES Panel Studies." *Political Behavior* 24(3): 199–236.

Lazarsfeld, Paul, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet. 1944. *The People's Choice.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Levendusky, Matthew. 2009. *The Partisan Sort: How Liberals Became Democrats and Conservatives Became Republicans.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1960. *Political Man.* Garden City, NJ: Doubleday.

Mackie, Diane, and Joel Cooper. 1984. "Attitude Polarization: Effects of Group Membership." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 46(3): 575–85.

Mackie, Diane M., Thierry Devos, and Eliot R. Smith. 2000. "Intergroup Emotions: Explaining Offensive Action Tendencies in an Intergroup Context." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 79(4): 602–16.

Malka, Ariel, and Yphtach Lelkes. 2010. "More Than Ideology: Conservative-Liberal Identity and Receptivity to Political Cues." *Social Justice Research* 23(2–3): 156–88.

Mason, Lilliana. 2013. "The Rise of Uncivil Agreement: Issue versus Behavioral Polarization in the American Electorate." *American Behavioral Scientist* 57(1): 140–59.

Mason, Lilliana, Leonie Huddy, and Lene Aaroe. 2011. "The Power of Partisan Identity in Active Political Times." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL.

Munro, Geoffrey D., Julia Zirpoli, Adam Schuman, and Jeff Taulbee. 2013. "Third-Party Labels Bias Evaluations of

Political Platforms and Candidates." *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* 35(2): 151–63.

Mutz, Diana. 2002. "Cross-Cutting Social Networks: Testing Democratic Theory in Practice." *American Political Science Review* 96(1): 111–26.

Nordlinger, Eric. 1972. *Conflict Regulation in Divided Societies.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Center for International Affairs.

Otten, Sabine, and Dirk Wentura. 1999. "About the Impact of Automaticity in the Minimal Group Paradigm: Evidence from Affective Priming Tasks." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 29(8): 1049–71.

Powell, G. Bingham. 1976. "Political Cleavage Structure, Cross-Pressure Process, and Partisanship: An Empirical Test of the Theory." *American Journal of Political Science* 20(1): 1–23.

Roccas, Sonia, and Marilynn Brewer. 2002. "Social Identity Complexity." *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 6(2): 88–106.

Smith, Eliot R., Charles Seger, and Diane Mackie. 2007. "Can Emotions Be Truly Group Level? Evidence Regarding Four Conceptual Criteria." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 93(3): 431–46.

Tajfel, Henri. 1981. *Human Groups and Social Categories.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tajfel, Henri, and John Turner. 1979. "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict." In *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations,* ed. William G. Austin and Stephen Worchel. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Wolfe, Alan. 1998. *One Nation, After All: What Middle Class Americans Really Think about God, Country, Family, Racism, Welfare, Immigration, Homosexuality, Work, the Right, the Left, and Each Other.* New York: Viking Penguin.

Woodberry, Robert D., and Christian S. Smith. 1998. "Fundamentalism et al.: Conservative Protestants in America." *Annual Review of Sociology* 24: 25–56.