

Delenda est Democrats/Republicans: Affective Polarization as Group Competition

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Abstract

Research on affective polarization has primarily been centered on descriptive work or an investigation of the ways in which individuals feel threatened by the outgroup party. This, however, misses a particularly important dynamic of partisan identities, which is that they are set within a context that is inherently competitive in nature. I attempt to set partisan identities within a partisan competition framework by drawing upon insights from group competition and collective action theories. In doing so, I attempt to cross the theoretical gaps between psychological theories of polarization with institutional and party competition literature through the commonalities between collective action movements and parties. I then present an attempt to empirically demonstrate the psychological underpinnings of this framework through an empirical design drawn from a sample of political blog readers. I discuss some of the difficulties of these approach and flaws within the experiment, as well as potential future plans that attempt to rectify these issues.

1 Introduction

Affective polarization, or the idea that partisans have been increasingly defined by their negative affect towards, has captured the minds of researchers in political psychology as one of the defining features of modern American politics (Abramowitz and Webster 2016; Iyengar and Krupenkin 2018; Mason 2015; Westfall 2015). Central to the story of affective polarization has been the increasing understanding that individuals structure their relationship to politics through their ties with various social groups (Achen and Bartels 2016; Conover 1988; Kinder and Kalmoe 2017), and that polarization has increased primarily as a result of the increasing sorting of various social identities – particularly race, religion, and ideology – between the two major political parties (Mason 2015; 2016; 2018; Rogowski and Sutherland 2016).

Missing from the research on partisan identities and affective polarization, however, is a framework that places these identities within the realm of partisan competition and the dynamics of elections. The research on partisan-sorting reaches somewhat into this realm, with Mason (2018) placing convergence of party-group alliances within a historical context of the shifting identity alliances across parties, and Huddy, Mason, & Aaroe (2015) notes that the expressive nature of partisan identities results in individuals becoming emotionally attached to political outcomes such that the threat of political loss creates anger and the chance of political victory creates enthusiasm. For the most part, however, the research remains primarily descriptive in nature, with an emphasis on determining the structure of affective polarization and its related effects on public opinion (Abramowitz and Webster 2016; Iyengar and Krupenkin 2018; Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012; Iyengar and Westwood 2015; Mason 2015; Mason and Wronski 2018; Rogowski and Sutherland 2016; Westfall et al. 2015).

This is not to say that those endeavors are unneeded: indeed, any good theoretical work must start with a descriptive understanding of the phenomenon. Missing from the framework, however, is an understanding of the actions of groups within the confines of political competition. Fortunately, the increasing interest in the behavior of politicians in a polarized and competitive era of politics in from a traditional institutional approaches present parallels to what we might expect individuals to behave from a social identity perspective. According to Frances Lee in her book *Insecure Majorities* (2016), politicians have increasingly emphasized negative messaging and greater in-party solidarity, with the goal of promoting the party and undercutting the opposition. Similarly, Kroger and Lebo's *strategic party government model* (2017) formalizes this idea, noting that when the margins between the party are particularly close, the incentive is for the minority party to maintain strong party unity in what is essentially a political arms race in which bipartisanship –

beneficial primarily to the party in power – is a losing position. In short, both pieces produce a picture in competitive politics and large ideological distance between the parties breeds strong in-party unity, which then feeds back onto itself to create a loop of increasingly intensifying political competition.

I argue that connecting both these literatures – the social identity driven affective polarization and the institutional and party perspective – is the role that *power* - represented by electoral power - and *threat* - represented by the increasing divergence of the social identities that make up the party coalitions - in determining both the incentives of both partisans and political elites to favor increasing polarization over other options, such as intergroup cooperation. To do so, I draw upon the insights of the collection action literature, particularly in the form of the politicized identities model developed by Simon & Klanderman (2001) and later developments of the socialized identity model of collective action (van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears 2008). According to this model, the translation from social group to politicized identities occurs when individuals who share an identity begin to engage in collective political action on behalf of the group (Klanderman 2014; Simon & Klanderman 2001; van Stekelenburg and Klanderman 2013), and is most effective when individuals are not just identified with the group but perceive that a strong injustice has been done to the in-group and that individuals feel a strong sense of efficacy in the ability of the movement to complete their goals (van Stekelenburg and Klanderman 2013; van Zomeren, Postmes, and Spears 2008; van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, and Leach 2004). Increasing partisan sorting at both the partisan and elite level has increased the threat of the out-group party, and in conjunction with competitive elections, leaves both parties feeling as if they are capable of capturing and maintaining control of government. I attempt to test this theory through an experimental design in which the basic structure of the politicized identity model is broken down into three, randomized parts of a message and translated into a party-competition framework with a goal of encouraging (or not encouraging in the case of the control conditions) affective polarization.

2 Social Identities and Group Competition

That individuals organize and respond to politics through their group membership has been part of the literature of political science for decades, stretching back to the work of Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes in *The American Voter* (1960). Central to the “Michigan School” is not just the idea that partisan identity is fundamental to vote choice, but that party loyalty is drawn from other central social identities. The rise of affective polarization in modern politics has led to a resurgence in interest in the way in which social identities structure party loyalties among political scientists, particularly among political

psychologist. This has been most true in the work on partisan sorting, which advances the argument that polarization has been driven by a greater convergence between various social identities with partisan identities, particularly those tied to race, religion, and ideology (Mason 2013; 2015; 2016; Mason and Wronski 2018). In addition, recent work by Achen and Bartels (2016) as well as Kinder and Kalmoe (2017) have offered additional defenses of the argument that the primary method by which people relate to political life is their attachments to various group identities.

For the political psychology work in particular, one of the most important theoretical foundations of this resurgence has been the work on social identity theory presented by Tajfel & Turner (1979). According to social identity theory, the importance of group identification among individuals stems from a desire to positively distinguish one's ingroup from outgroups. This results in individuals developing strong ingroup bias, such that strongly identified members of a group routinely privilege and judge members of the ingroup as superior to members of the outgroup. In political science, understanding of social identity theory has led to the treatment of partisan identity as a social identity as well, and has resulted in large literature on the various implicit (Theodoridis 2013; 2017) and explicit biases in even non-political behaviors and context (Iyengar and Westwood 2015) that strong identification with the parties has resulted in.

However, much of the research on affective polarization has found that the relationship between individuals and their partisan identities is increasingly defined not so much by pure in-group favoritism but strong, *negative* affect (Abramowitz and Webster 2016, Iyengar, Sood, and Welkes 2012), such that even individuals that don't particularly like their in-group party are still motivated to remain attached to it out of complete and utter loathing of the out-group party (Groenendyk 2018). This phenomenon requires more than the basic ingroup favoritism of aspects of social identity theory but an understanding of social identity theory within the realm of group competition and collective action.

For Tajfel & Turner (1979), group identification involved not simply an understanding of ingroup favoritism but also used to sort and understanding where one's group was within the social hierarchy. After all, groups are repeatedly in competition over economic, political, and cultural power in the real world. The nature of group competition, however, varies along several lines. The first is outgroup threat, which can be defined in part by the extent to which members of a group perceive outgroups as threatening to the materialistic needs or symbolic values of the ingroup (Hewstone, Rubin, & Willis 2002; Riek, Mania, and Gaertner 2006). Second, there is the extent to which the in-group perceives itself as powerful enough to face off with the out-group, with higher levels of perceived ingroup support and strength associated with an emphasis on attacking the out-group over avoidance or cooperation (Keltner, Anderson, and Gruenfeld 2003; Mackie, Devos, and Smith 2000; Rydell et al. 2008), particularly if the status quo is perceived as illegitimate and/or unstable

(Bettencourt et al. 2001; Hewstone, Rubin, and Willis 2002; Sachdev and Bourhis 1991; Tajfel and Turner 1979).

3 Parties and Group Competition

For the most part, the current literature on partisan identity and affective polarization has focused primarily on the first part of the group competition literature. Jacoby (2014) has found that the parties are increasingly diverging on value beliefs, and the literature on partisan sorting of course finds increasing divergence between the parties on race, religion, and ideological beliefs (Mason 2018; Rogowski 2016). For the most part, however, it has been relatively quiet on the role of group strength in competition. The notable exception is Huddy, Mason, and Aaroe (2015) which does focus on group identity in the face of electoral competition, but even then the focus is primarily on the extent the possibility of losing an election is a threat to the in-group.

Fortunately, parallel to the rise of affective partisan polarization there has been advances in understanding the nature of party competition in an increasingly more competitive and polarized age that can serve as a starting point for integrating competition into our theoretical understanding of partisan identity. Frances Lee's *Insecure Majorities* (2016) argues that as competition for control of government increased, particularly as a result of the increasing competitiveness of the Republican Party in the South, the parties have begun to focus increasingly on competition over cooperation in governance and increasingly engage in negative messaging and symbolic votes in order to gain political advantage. Indeed, it was in reading Lee's interviews with Republicans who had been present in Congress during the decades long rule of the Democratic Party in Congress, and their discussion of a "minority mindset" in which they focused on getting amendments and good committee seats over winning elections, that first made me consider the connections between electoral competition and social identity theory. Specifically, the Republican emphasis on cooperation and alternative definitions of success when in a permanent minorities is similar Tajfel and Turner's (1979) treatment of how low status groups will redefine the meaning of "success" in a way that advantages the in-group. Once the status quo is more vulnerable to change, however, the low status groups may then emphasize attempting to overturn the hierarchy instead. This relationship has been more formalized recently in the strategic government model (SGM) presented by Koger and Lebo (2017). In this model, legislators will unite behind party leaders, even when not fully supporting the party's policies, when they perceive that there is more to be gained by presenting a united front and attempting to win partisan battles than in appearing too partisan. As the margin for control of government becomes increasingly thinner, the pressure increases for the parties to focus on partisan competition and strong party unity.

In both Lee (2016) and Koger and Lebo (2017), then, we are presented with a starting point for the integration of competition into social identity, with the additional benefit of starting to bridge the gap between the political psychology literature on polarization and more institutional and party competition literature. Central to establishing this connection, however, are insights from the collective action literature, which has a rich history of integrating social identity theory into describing how individuals are motivated to engage in political action. Simon and Klanderman's politicized identity model (2001) emphasizes that group identities are translated into political identities when individuals are mobilized to engage in collective action on behalf the group. As Klanderman and van Stekelenburg (2013) state:

“In processes of framing social movements, organizations work hard to turn grievances into claims, to point out targets to be addressed, to create moral outrage and anger, and to stage events where all this can be vented. They weave together a moral, cognitive, and ideological package and communicate that appraisal of the situation to the movement's mobilization potential.”

Mobilizing individuals to advance the party's political standing and offering a comprehensive package of ideological positions, of course, one of the primary jobs of political parties (Aldrich 2011), and as such parties should have a particularly strong incentive to engage with and encourage partisan identity as a mobilization tactic. The research on partisanship of course has long identified that partisans are the most likely to be politically active individuals (Campbell et al. 1960; Kinder and Kalmoe 2017) and are extremely emotionally attached to political outcomes (Huddy, Mason, and Aaroe 2015). This is exactly what we would expect according to the collective action literature, which argues that people are most motivated to participate in collective action when they strongly identify with the group and maintain a strong sense of in-group grievance. This also requires, however, people to perceive that engaging in collective action is likely to lead to a redress of their grievances (Klandermans 1984; Van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, and Leach 2004). In partisan competition, this should be intimately tied to perceptions that the party is likely to succeed in winning elections against the outgroup party, which will place the ingroup in a position to advance the ingroups agenda.

In summary, I argue that the literature on social identity, group and party competition, and collective action all converge on the same basic idea: that the relationship between partisans will be attenuated by the perception of the outgroup as a threat and whether not the ingroup is powerful enough to battle and defeat this threat. In the realm of party competition, threat can be seen as the increasing distance between the parties on various social identities and ideology, and power as the ability to win and maintain control of

government. As such, then, a competitive electoral environment combined with highly sorted political parties serves as the perfect foundation for political competition to be increasingly defined primarily by negative polarization. As the parties diverge as a result of sorting, partisans may potentially perceive the outgroup party gaining control as ultimately unacceptable, and a politically competitive environment makes this an ever salient potential outcome, forcing partisans to increasingly become more wedded to their party and increasingly negative towards the opposing party to prevent it from happening.

4 Hypotheses for Testing a Partisan Competition Framework

In order to test this theory, then, I present an experimental design that attempts to influence affective polarization attitudes through manipulations of three key variables, derived from the Simon and Klanderman (2001) model and translated to a competition between political parties:

1. Which ingroup is the respondent asked to identify with? A nonpartisan political group or a political party?
2. Which outgroup is being blamed for the ingroups grievances? A nonpartisan outgroup or the opposing political party?
3. To what extent is the ingroup capable of defeating the outgroup in the upcoming 2018 midterms? Is the ingroup weak and unlikely to win, or is the ingroup strongly and likely to defeat them?

These three aspects are placed within the context of a message identified as belonging to either a nonpartisan political group, dubbed “Americans for Better Governance” or a political party. The message design is itself inspired by the type of messages parties routinely send out in the form of fundraising emails. More details on the exact nature of the design are discussed momentarily in the Methods section. Based on the literature described above, the central hypothesis of the experiment is this:

H) Affective partisan polarization should be strongest when a message contains: a partisan ingroup, a partisan outgroup, and the ingroup party is stated to be capable of defeating the outgroup party in the 2018 midterms.

The reason for this is rather simple: in order to stimulate affective polarization, a group should make salient a partisan ingroup and place responsibility for the party’s

grievances on the opposing political party. If, however, the message argues that the ingroup is unlikely to defeat the ingroup, then partisans may decide to shy away from the party or are less likely to be encouraged to show support, thereby weakening identification with the movement. If the group is likely to win, however, then the respondent is encouraged to maintain identification with the group and choose competition over other alternatives, thereby strengthening polarization.

5 Methods

5.1 Sample Information

The sample was collected using a socially mediated internet survey design as advocated for by Cassese et al. (2013) and has been successfully used in a variety of experiments dealing with partisan identity, such as in Huddy, Mason, & Aaroe (2015). Broadly speaking, the design relies on taking advantage of the social networks of bloggers to advertise and recruit individuals. The bloggers, being central nodes within their networks, serve as social mediators, and by requesting their assistance in ads a sense of legitimacy to the survey to potential respondents. For this research, I specifically targeted the owners of blogs that emphasis political topics or similar fields such as law or economics, and a list of sites that have hosted the survey is available in the Appendix.

This method of survey recruitment was chosen for several reasons. The first reason was a simple issue of resources. Socially mediated surveys have the potential to recruit a large number of respondents for relatively little cost beyond the time and effort to contact and cultivate a relationship with blog owners. As discussed in the Future Plans section of the paper, the long-term goal of this project is to eventually use a conjoint-analysis design approach for the estimation of the effects, but the nature of the experimental design will require a larger number of individuals than a usual conjoint design due to the emotional outcomes violating the normal assumptions that lead conjoint analysis experiments to give individuals multiple tasks. Usage of Mturk or survey services such as YouGov may have turned out to be prohibitively costly for the size needed, both in terms of the number of conditions and analysis for interaction effects. Second, readers of political blogs tend to be strong partisans as well as knowledgeable about politics, which is exactly the type of population that I am interested in when discussing partisan identity, and this approach, when done correctly, can recruit a relatively large amount of strong, knowledgeable partisans (Cassese et al. 2013). Therefore, even if cost was not an issue, there is a legitimate sampling concern that would favor usage of a blogging sample over a more traditionally nationally representative sample.

5.2 Experimental Design

The experimental design consists of a 2x3x3 experimental design, though due to the nature of having to write two different messages to reflect the partisan in-group of partisan respondents, it can also be viewed as a partial 2x2x3x3 design if asymmetric effects exist, in such that any condition with a partisan group cue must be written from both a Democratic and Republican perspective. Table 1 presents the breakdown of the variables and all combinations present in the experiment

| <i>Variable</i> | <i>Value 1</i> | <i>Value 2</i> | <i>Value 3</i> |
|------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|
| In-Group Identity | Non-Partisan (Americans for Better Governance) | Partisan (Democratic or Republican Party) | -- |
| Out-Group Attribution | Non-partisan (“special interests”) | Partisan (the opposing party) | No mention of an out-group |
| In-Group Strength | In-group is weak | In-group is strong | No mention of in-group strength |
| Perspective of Message | Written from a Democratic Perspective | Written from a Republican Perspective | --- |

The In-Group Identity variable is operationalized by the statement coming from either the fictional “Americans for Better Governance” or from a political party. As noted, the perspective of the message is not completely random. Conditional on a person receiving the Partisan In-Group condition, the message is written to meet the person’s partisan identity. A Republican or Republican leaning respondent gets a message written from the Republican perspective, a Democratic or Democratic leaning respondent a Democratic perspective. For all purposes the messages are the same, the only difference being which party is the relevant ingroup and which party is being blamed. For pure Independents or those who pick “Other”, they randomly receive any message potential message, which does give them slightly higher odds of receiving a condition with a partisan cue compared to the explicit partisans and non-partisan leaners. The total number of unique experimental stimuli is 30 different messages, with 24 of those messages being the various conditions in which a partisan cue is present and had to be written from different party perspectives.

The flow of the survey in which this experiment is embedded is as follows. First, respondents are asked a series of political questions pertaining to their partisan identity,

both in the form of the traditional 7-point partisan scale as well as the partisan identity scale used by Huddy, Mason, & Aaroe (2015). Because of a concern regarding priming partisan identity, in between partisan identity and the experimental conditions is a series of filler questions regarding political interest, trust in government, political news and viewing habits, political participation, self-reported voting, and some basic demographic information.

Respondents are then presented with instructions for the stimulus. The instructions are randomized to refer to the upcoming message as coming from either the Democratic Party, the Republican Party, or the fictional “Americans for Better Governance” group that serves as a non-partisan in-group. They then see the stimulus message, with all components of the message randomized. See Table 2 for an example message, with all conditions presented in the Appendix.

After the stimulus, respondents are given a series of open-ended questions asking them about the message regarding its tone, understandability, and overall feelings they may have about the survey. They are then given a brief emotional battery to rate anxiety, anger, and enthusiasm. Finally, they are asked information about how likely they feel they would engage in several participatory acts sponsored by the organization. This is mostly filler in order to maintain the original instructions of the survey being about messaging from organizations.

After the filler questions, respondents are then asked the primary dependent variables in this paper. First, they are given partisan feeling thermometers, which have been traditionally used in research on affective polarization as a measure of overall affect towards the parties (Iyengar, Sood, & Lelkes 2012; Iyengar & Westwood 2015), though in this case they are asked specifically their feelings about “people who identify with” the parties. Next, they are given another emotional battery to ask them about their feelings towards partisans that is based on the PANAS-X emotional batteries developed by Watson & Clark (1994). Finally, they are given a battery of action tendencies based on those used in Mackie, Devos, & Smith (2000), under the instructions of imagining that they are at a party and are told people from the other political party are there. They are then asked questions regarding their willingness to interact with, avoid, or attack members of the other party. Finally, they are asked a series of open-ended questions asking what they like and dislike about members of both parties using traditional ANES survey language.

5.3 Stimulus

Table 2: Sample Stimulus (Partisan-In Group, Partisan-Out Group, Strong)

Democratic National Committee: SUCCESS! DEMOCRATS CRUSHING THE DANGEROUS REPUBLICAN AGENDA

Let's cut to the chase: Democrats are standing up to radical Republican agenda. On every issue the extremists in the Republican Party stand in the way of what we, the Democratic Party, need to do get America moving again. But right now, Democrats are winning battles against the Republicans all over the country.

We're trying everything we can to keep it up, and we're sure that we can do it. If Democrats are truly going to stand up to the out-of-step Republican Party, we're going to need the help of people like you.

I know that I can count on you to help us out. Chip in \$4 now to help Democrats take on the Republicans.

Thanks for your support,
Democratic National Committee

As mentioned in the Hypotheses section, the stimulus consists of three parts being randomized throughout the message. First, is the nature of the in-group, which is presented within the fake email header and the “thank you” at the end of the message, as well as sprinkled in throughout the message itself. In the non-partisan in-group condition, the emphasis is on a fictional group with a generic title: “Americans for Better Governance”. In the partisan conditions, the relevant political party is used. Democrats and Democratic leaning independents get the Democratic Party as the in-group, and the Republican Party for the Republican equivalents. For pure independents and people who designated themselves “Other”, they are randomly assigned to any one condition. The same basic breakdown occurs for the out-group threat conditions: non-partisan condition emphasizes “special interest” groups, and the partisan conditions reference the opposing party as the threat preventing the in-group from achieving its goals. The “no out group” conditions, of course, made no reference to an outgroup, just a general call for action to support the in-group. Finally, the in-group strength conditions varied on the statement of whether the in-group

were winning or losing “battles against the [out-group] all over the country” within the message, as well as whether they were “CRUSHING” or “CRUSHED” by the agenda of the out-group.

6 Analysis

6.1 Sample Characteristics

| Table 3: Sample Characteristics | |
|---|-------|
| Democrats (%) | 36.68 |
| Republicans (%) | 17.88 |
| Independents/Leaners/Others (%) | 45.44 |
| <i>Partisan Strength</i> | |
| Strong (%) | 38.87 |
| Not so Strong (%) | 15.69 |
| Independent Leaner (%) | 22.63 |
| Pure Independent (%) | 22.81 |
| <i>Participation a.</i> | |
| Voted in 2016 Election (%) | 87.57 |
| Worked for a campaign (%) | 20.11 |
| Donated money to a candidate (%) | 45.26 |
| <i>Demographics</i> | |
| Male (%) | 79.01 |
| White (%) | 90.26 |
| Average Age (years) | 52 |
| College Degree (%) b. | 89.03 |
| a. Questions refer the 2016 election, all self-reported data. | |
| b. Completed at least a 2-year degree | |

Table 3 presents a breakdown of some of the basic characteristics of the sample at the time of this writing. Generally, the results are not unsurprising based on the experiences of Cassese et al. (2013). Politically, the plurality of the sample Democratic in nature, with 36.68% of respondents reporting identifying as Democratic. Once Democratic leaners are included, however, the sample jumps to 44.53% of the sample identifying as Democratic at some level. Of the approximately 15% who identified as “other”, a majority of them identified as “Libertarian”, with several noting that this was libertarian ideology and not the Libertarian Party. For my purposes, they were treated as pure independents. In terms of participation, it is also not surprising that most individuals were politically active. Most report having voted in the 2016 general election, with a self-reported turnout of 87.57%, though usual disclaimers about self-reported vote apply here. Furthermore, 70.26% report checking political news multiple times a day. Finally, approximately a quarter of the sample report having participated beyond voting in some form, whether attending a rally

(28.65%) , displaying partisanship in the form of buttons or stickers (25.05%), or even working on a campaign (20.11%). Slightly less than a majority donated money to a campaign (45.26%).

In demographics, the sample is primarily white males, with 79% identifying as male and 90.26% identifying as white. The sample is somewhat older than those reported in Cassese et al. (2013), averaging out at about 52 years old in age with a standard deviation of about 15 years. The sample is also highly educated, with a plurality of individuals obtaining some form of professional degree, though I will report an error in my part for not placing a “Master’s Degree” category in the demographic, which may have lead some individuals to use professional degree as a substitute for that. That error aside, the sample is overwhelmingly college educated individuals, with only a cumulative 10.97% reporting having not obtained at least a 2-year associates degree.

6.2 Collapsing of Conditions

One downside of the usage of socially mediated samples is that takes time and sometimes multiple efforts in contacting bloggers to even receive a message back, let alone approval. Sometimes one can get lucky and get the approval from a large-traffic site, gaining a large number of respondents in a short period of time. Other times, however, it takes more work appealing to smaller-traffic blogs gaining small bursts of respondents at a time. As of the time of this writing, the sample size of the sample is 548. For the long-term plans on this project, this sample size is not enough (see Future Plans for more discussion). It is enough of a sample, however, that with certain assumptions I can collapse across conditions and simplify the experimental design, thereby increasing the sample size per-cell for most “conditions” relative to the actual design. These assumptions I will attempt to justify theoretically, and will note the downsides of certain assumptions, but I am aware of the ultimately arbitrary nature of these decisions. Therefore, this analysis is primarily exploratory in nature, and does not represent any final conclusions for this project.

First, by assuming away any asymmetry in effects between Democrats and Republicans, the number of conditions collapses from 30 to 18, which is the underlying 2x3x3 design initially proposed. Research on asymmetric politics does suggest that asymmetries exist, with recent work by Liliana Mason suggesting that the high levels of homogeneity amongst Republicans in terms of the in-group identities underlying the Republican coalition may make them more susceptible to identity-based appeals (Mason 2018). Future analysis will look for this asymmetry in effect, but for now I assume it away so as to treat all conditions in which a partisan cue of some sort is present as being the same across the Democratic and Republican message. This should, overall, be the least controversial of the collapsing assumptions.

Next, I can collapse the various combinations of the relevant In-Group and relevant Out-Group into three broad categories: No Partisan Signal, Mixed Partisan Signal, and Strong Partisan Signal. In summary, collapsing across the conditions shifts the experiment into a 3x3 factorial design in which Level of Partisan Cue and Level of In-Group Strength are the factors primarily being manipulated. Table 4 presents the collapsed experimental design, with sample size for each new cell.

The No Partisan Signal category consists of conditions in which the relevant in-group was “Americans for Better Governance” and when the relevant out-group was either “special interest groups” or no mention of an out-group. While it is impossible to fully eliminate the “perceptual screen” of partisanship in political matters, the absence of explicit partisan cues should theoretically produce a weaker result than the presence of explicit cues as partisan identity is not as salient.

The Mixed Partisan Signal category consists of the conditions in which one partisan cue is mentioned, either in terms of the relevant in-group or the relevant out-group. If the in-group is not a partisan in-group, or the out-group is not a partisan one or no out-group is mentioned, the effect should be weaker as group members are not being directed to consider the situation in terms of partisan in-groups/partisan out-groups. However, it is also possible that individuals may read-in partisanship to the “Americans for Better Governance” when presented with a message that blames a partisan out-group for the in-group’s troubles. In other words, partisans may assume that a group that has the same enemies as themselves is on their side despite the claim of ‘non-partisanship’. There is also the possibility that when presented with a partisan in-group that the out-group of “special interests” is referring primarily to out-group partisan groups (ex: Democrats thinking of the National Rifle Association).

Finally, the Strong Partisan cue is all conditions in which both the in-group and out-group are explicitly partisan, such as the sample message presented in Table 2.

| Table 4: Collapsed Experimental Design Sample Sizes | | | |
|--|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| | <u>No In-Group</u> | <u>In-Group Weak</u> | <u>In-Group Strong</u> |
| No Partisan Cue | 46 | 49 | 59 |
| Mixed Partisan Cue | 96 | 95 | 98 |
| Strong Partisan Cue | 32 | 38 | 35 |

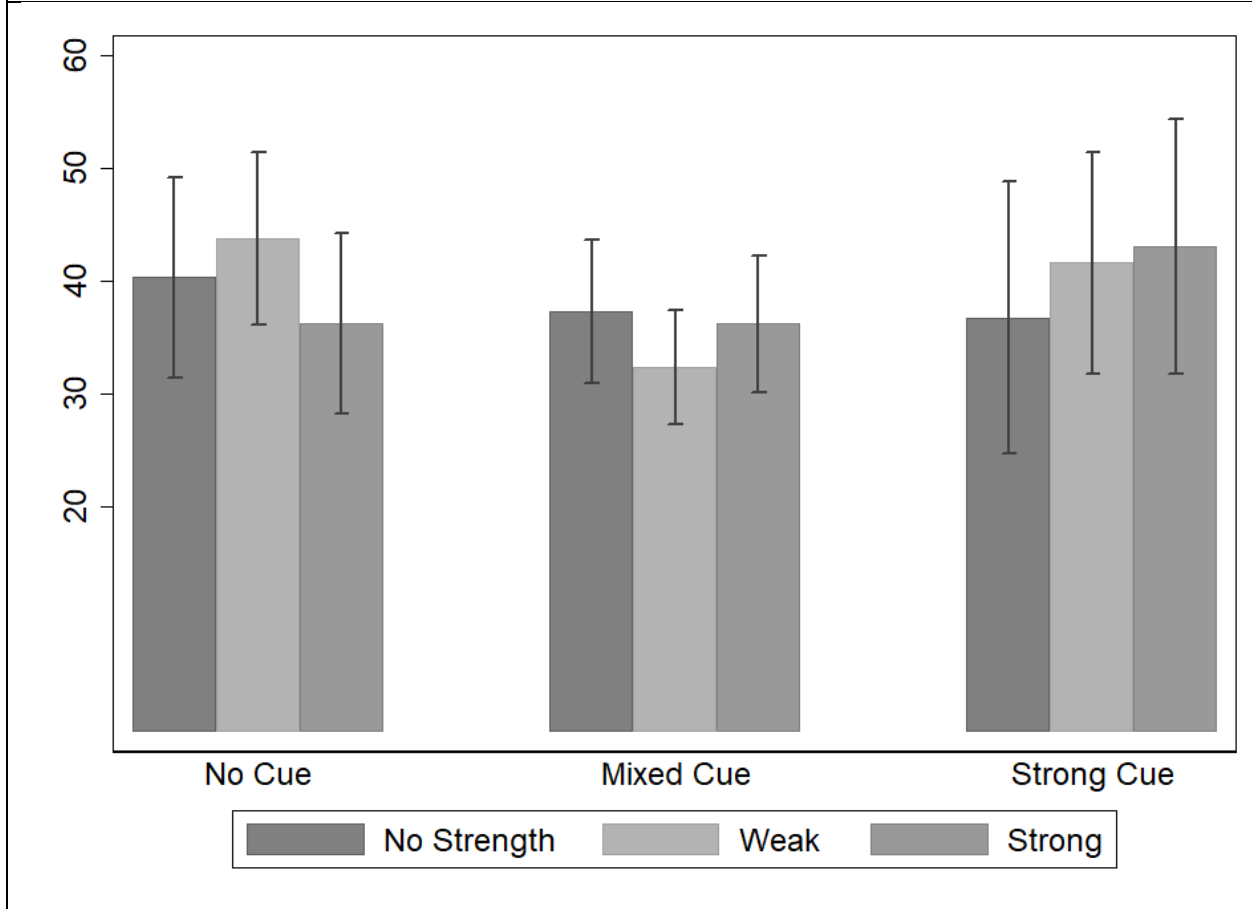
6.3 Feeling Thermometers

Analysis of the effect of the experimental conditions on feeling thermometer placements of the parties fail to find substantively or statistically significant results. This can be seen in Figure 1, which shows the mean difference in feeling thermometer placements of the parties across experimental conditions. Even taking into the large confidence intervals, there appears to be little difference in the mean differences across conditions, and there appears to be no discernable pattern. As noted, the Mixed Partisan condition is particularly tricky to discern a meaning from as there are theoretical reasons to suspect it acting similar to the Strong Partisan cue conditions if people are reading in partisanship, but that the No Partisan Cue conditions show similar levels of difference in feeling thermometers is suggestive that there simply is in fact no discernable effect of the conditions on feeling thermometer placements.

Table 5 also presents the results of regressing partisan identity and experimental conditions on the difference between the parties on feeling thermometers. As can be seen, the interactions between the two experimental variables, and the triple interaction between the experimental variables and partisan identity, are not significant. Partisan identity, however, remains both statistically and substantively significant. When conditioned on the experimental condition being the No Partisan-Cue and No In-Group Strength (which the condition when both experimental variables are set to 0), the regression coefficient suggests a movement from 0 – no partisan identity – to 1 – the strongest level of partisan identity – results in placing the parties at about 41 points apart ($\beta = 41.09$, $s.e. = 18.37$, $p = .026$). This would suggest, then, the lack of effects of the experimental conditions is being driven primarily by the fact that high levels of affective polarization, particularly among strong partisans, is heavily baked into the responses, and that therefore it is particularly difficult to move these responses with one experimental message. This was not a surprising result and is in fact part of why I am aiming for a much larger sample size and better analytical design (see Future Directions), but it is also suggestive that intervention on partisan affect may also require much stronger stimuli than that presented in a single message.

Since feeling thermometers are, in theory, representative of a general predisposition, however, effects may be present in alternative measures. For that, I turn to two additional outcomes that were measured: the PANAS-X emotional batteries and action tendency batteries.

Figure 1: Average Difference Between Parties on Feeling Thermometers



6.4 PANAS-X

Table 5 also presents the regression coefficients on the difference in the emotional ratings respondents gave to each party (ex: difference in anger at Democrats versus anger at Republicans). The results are essentially similar to those of the feeling thermometers. The interaction between the experimental manipulations show no significant results, but there does remain a conditional main effect of partisan identity on the difference in Anger and Enthusiasm, though not anxiety. In other words, going from 0 to 1 on the partisan identity scale increases the difference in Anger by a little more half the distance of the scale ($\beta = .521$, s.e. = 0.19, $p = .006$) and Enthusiasm by a little more than a third of the distance of the scale ($\beta = .374$, s.e. = 0.17, $p = .03$). The lack of effects for the experimental conditions, however, would suggest that these results are not in fact emotional reactions after exposure to the stimuli but are representative of pre-existing partisan attitudes.

6.5 Action Tendencies

It should be noted that due to a mistake on my part in the coding of the survey, only weak and strong partisans were given the questions regarding action tendencies. This dramatically reduces the sample size by removing partisan leaners from the sample for these analyses, but the analysis is presented for completion purposes. In this I finally get a significant effect for an interaction between experimental variables and partisan identity, but only for the Avoidance battery. The lack of an effect across any other outcome, however, is enough for me to avoid reading too much into this result in a larger substantive sense.

| | <i>Feeling Thermometer</i> | <i>PANAS-X Emotions</i> | | | <i>Action Tendencies</i> | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | | <u>Anger</u> | <u>Enthusi- asm</u> | <u>Anxi- ety</u> | <u>Ap- proach</u> | <u>Attack</u> | <u>Avoid</u> |
| Partisan Identity | 41.097* (18.38) | 0.521** (0.19) | 0.374* (0.17) | 0.335 (0.19) | 0.220 (0.24) | 0.240 (0.21) | -0.162 (0.25) |
| Partisan Cue | -3.165 (9.08) | 0.013 (0.09) | -0.011 (0.08) | -0.048 (0.09) | -0.098 (0.14) | -0.088 (0.13) | -0.348* (0.16) |
| Group Strength | -0.206 (7.36) | -0.007 (0.07) | -0.081 (0.06) | -0.009 (0.07) | 0.027 (0.11) | 0.037 (0.08) | -0.132 (0.11) |
| Cue x Str | 0.280 (6.35) | 0.016 (0.06) | 0.049 (0.05) | 0.046 (0.06) | 0.023 (0.10) | 0.048 (0.09) | 0.192 (0.10) |
| Id x Cue | 1.915 (15.94) | -0.100 (0.17) | -0.045 (0.14) | 0.015 (0.16) | 0.180 (0.23) | 0.097 (0.22) | 0.635** (0.24) |
| Id x Str | -2.573 (12.59) | -0.012 (0.13) | 0.103 (0.11) | -0.021 (0.12) | -0.052 (0.17) | -0.080 (0.14) | 0.231 (0.17) |
| Id x Cue x Str | 2.803 (11.19) | 0.031 (0.11) | -0.025 (0.10) | -0.035 (0.10) | -0.072 (0.16) | -0.051 (0.15) | -0.364* (0.16) |
| Con- stant | 16.140 (10.83) | 0.089 (0.11) | 0.108 (0.10) | 0.165 (0.11) | 0.357* (0.15) | 0.429*** (0.12) | 0.420* (0.16) |
| R^2 | 0.101 | 0.111 | 0.127 | 0.054 | 0.041 | 0.027 | 0.070 |
| N | 548 | 535 | 535 | 535 | 289 | 289 | 289 |

It is interesting to note, however, that all results that show significance in the Avoidance model are those that include the Partisan Cue term. This would suggest, then, that cueing partisanship may discourage avoidance behavior. I do not, however, have even an ad hoc explanation for why a stronger partisan cue would encourage individuals to not avoid members of the out-group party, and therefore cannot engage with this substantively. The Action Tendency results also does not have the otherwise normally significant effect of partisan identity on the outcome variable.

7 Discussion

Research on affective polarization has made great advances in understanding the affective and social identity driven nature of the relationship between have between themselves and the parties. Missing from this research, however, is placing this relationship in the context of a competition between social groups and the potential dynamics this competition may have on intergroup relations. The literature on collective action and party competition provide a potential pathway to understanding this, presenting both the psychological mechanisms as well as the electoral incentives for elites to take advantage of these mechanisms.

Unfortunately, it seems that this initial attempt to better understand these potential dynamics has currently produced null results. Currently, the experimental manipulation seems to have had no substantively or even statistically significant effect on people's affective attitudes towards the parties or even self-reported expectations of how they would react. Part of this may simply be a result of the sample size issues that may be rectified with further sampling, provided more blogs are willing to encourage their readers to participate. Because of the nature of the experiment, the samples within each cell are relatively small to begin with at this time: attempting to use a four-way interaction to estimate effects, then may simply be requesting too much of the data. Furthermore, collapsing across the various conditions could be muddying effects. This is why, as discussed in a moment, the long-term goal is to use a conjoint-analysis approach for estimating the effects of the variables.

Another potential reason could be a weakness in the experimental stimuli. There is some evidence to suggest this in one of the questions on the survey. As mentioned earlier, respondents were given an open-ended question to talk about their feelings regarding the message. While I have not done an in-depth analysis of these comments, a quick survey of them suggests that the reaction respondents had was relatively negative. Common complaints included the message being too "vague", "tribal", "emotional", as well as statements a lack of faith the money would be used for good ends or that the party was competent or

failed to stand for “something”. Several respondents did state that stimulus felt like the other countless requests for money that they receive from the parties, so to that extent then it appears the message is somewhat externally valid. Furthermore, open dissatisfaction with explicit partisan appeals does not inherently mean individuals will not react in a partisan manner on other measures. For example, Klar & Krupnikov (2016) note that despite explicitly stating that they dislike partisan conflict, independents still otherwise act partisan in their evaluations and vote choice. Still, the overwhelmingly negative response to the message suggests people may simply have decided to ignore the message overall.

Relatedly, it may also simply be the case that affective polarization is simply hard to move, even with a good experimental stimulus. The downside to using strong partisans, of course, is that they have strong prior attitudes coming in. This was why one concern was that strong partisans given the “weak” strength conditions may backfire and give their in-group party higher negative evaluations, which is a possible result of the anger partisans may feel when told their party may lose an upcoming election (Huddy, Mason, & Aaroe 2015). These strong attitudes, being hard to move, may simply be resistant to stimuli or require a much stronger stimuli than the one used. Evidence that the prior attitudes may be overriding any effect would be both the consistently strong effect partisan identity has on the outcome measures (minus the action tendencies), and that at looking at Figure 1 it can be seen that even in the No Partisan Cue conditions the difference between the parties on the feeling thermometers remain relatively high.

8 Future Plans

8.1 Sample Size

Routinely discussed in this paper is the fact that, with a minimum of 18 experimental conditions plus the need for interaction effects, a relatively large sample size is truly needed in order to ensure that I have the power to determine any effects if there are any present. Therefore, I am still in the process of reaching out to bloggers and am planning on continuing to recruit respondents as possible. In particular, I hope to attempt to reach to blogs that target more conservative or minority populations in order to move the sample somewhat away from the overly white and liberal makeup it currently maintains.

8.2 Conjoint Analysis

As stated in the Analysis section, the analysis presented in this paper is not the long-term plan for this project and was a matter of restricting myself to what the sample size allowed. In doing so, it also showed that analysis of the experimental design is somewhat

hampered using regression analysis. After all, the experimental design and an interaction with the partisan identifier variable would amount to a four-term interaction in a regression. Because of the complexity of estimating the effects of each component of the message using traditional regression modelling, upon gaining enough of a sample size, I plan rely upon the principles of conjoint-analysis to offer an alternative estimand than regression-based coefficients.

Conjoint-analysis has long had a usage in marketing and business research as a way of testing the effects of properties of products on consumer preferences (Green & Rao 1971; Green & Srinivasan 1978; Green & Srinivasan 1990). Traditionally, conjoint-analysis has been used to measure “...the joint effect of two or more independent variables on the ordering of a dependent variable” (Green & Rao 1971, p. 355). For example, preferences for housing might be influenced by “...the joint influence such variables as of nearness to work, tax rates, quality of school system, anticipated resale value, and so on.” (p. 355). The method involves essentially asking respondents to choose or rate various hypothetical profiles of a product in which each attribute is randomly assigned a value, allowing the researcher to estimate the relative influence of each attribute on the resulting preference.

Traditional conjoint-analysis relied on identification through assuming a behavioral model for respondent decision-making and attempt to fit a statistical model to the observed model. Hainmueller, Hopkins, & Yamamoto (2014), however, brings conjoint analysis into the contemporary causal inference framework and develops the *average marginal component effect* (ACME), which is nonparametrically identified given certain assumptions that are guaranteed to hold under a conjoint-analysis experimental design. By allowing each attribute of a profile to be randomly assigned a value, conjoint-analysis presents a factorial-survey design approach that allows estimation of each components effect individually or in interaction with other attributes on the resulting preference or choice. For example, Hainmueller & Hopkins (2014) use conjoint analysis to investigate what aspects of immigrants – such as education, gender, national origin, etc. – effect American preferences for immigration. Hainmueller, Hangartner, & Yamamoto (2015) further test the estimated effects from conjoint-experimental designs in a random sample of Swiss respondents matched with the recovered effects from a natural experiment behavioral benchmark in which several Swiss municipalities used referendums to approve of citizenship applications of foreign residents.

As mentioned, however, in order to use the conjoint analysis design as proposed by Hainmuller, Hopkins, & Yamamoto (2014), three assumptions must be met. I argue that all three assumptions are met. Assumption 1 is the Stability and No Carryover Effects assumption. Quoting Hainmuller, Hopkins, & Yamamoto (2014): “Assumption 1 requires that the potential outcomes always take on the same value as long as all the profiles in the same choice task have identical sets of attributes.” In practice, this amounts to the assumption that the profiles in one task do not affect later responses. Since respondents are only given

one task, this assumption is met. This also means that I meet Assumption 2, No Profile Order Effects. Because of concerns about emotional contagion across multiple messages, respondents in the experiment were only given one message. As such, I meet Assumption 2 as there were not multiple profiles given for profile order effects to be of a concern. Finally, Assumption 3, Randomization of the Profiles, assumes each element of the profile is randomized and all possible attribute combinations are given a non-zero probability of occurring. Since all combinations are present in the study, I meet this assumption. A non-stated assumption, of course, is that the dependent variable takes on either a choice or a ranking outcome in which respondents are asked to either choose between or rate the two products on some scale. The feeling thermometers and PANAS-X variables ask respondents about both parties, and as such are in fact a rating outcome that fits this non-stated assumption of a conjoint analysis. The action-tendency questions, however, are not given for both parties, and as such cannot be analyzed under this approach.

In short, while the experimental design is missing several elements of a traditional conjoint experiment – particularly that they are only given “one” profile and do not do multiple tasks – those elements are not needed in order to take advantage of the ACME estimand. This allows for a better method of estimating the effect of each component of the message both individually and in interaction with one another or other variables than traditional regression methods. Since the nature of the stimulus prevents giving respondents multiple messages in a single session, however, the reduction in the number of respondents needed by increasing how many tasks they perform is not available to me. Therefore, usage of this estimation technique will require a particularly larger sample than a normal conjoint experiment. If this attainable, however, then a better method for estimating the effects of the manipulations is possible than the one currently provided in this paper.

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Appendix A: Blog List

A Force for Good

Blogging Blue

Café Hayek

Dorf on Law

Eclectablog

Knowledge Problem

Longwalkdownlyndale

NewMark's Door

Notes on Liberty

Saideman's Semi Spewstephen

Suburban Guerrilla

The Politics Guys

Appendix B: Relevant Survey Questions

B1. Partisan Scale & Partisan Identity

Do you consider yourself a supporter of a particular political party? Which party?"

1. Republican
2. Democrat
3. Independent
4. Other

If they answer 1 or 2: "Would you consider yourself a strong [Democrat/Republican] or a not very strong [Democrat/Republican]?"

1. Strong [Democrat/Republican]
2. Not very strong [Democrat/Republican]

If they answer 3: "Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party, closer to the Democratic Party, or equally close to both?"

1. Closer to the Republican Party
2. Closer to the Democratic Party
3. Equally close to both

How important is being a [Democrat/Republican] to you?

1. Extremely important
2. Very important
3. Not very important
4. Not important at all.

How well does the term [Democrat/Republican] describe you?

1. Extremely well
2. Very well
3. Not very well
4. Not at all

When talking about [Democrats/Republicans], how often do you use "we" instead of "they"?

1. All of the time
2. Some of the time
3. Rarely
4. Never

To what extent do you think of yourself as being a [Democrat/Republican]?

1. A great deal
2. Somewhat
3. Very little
4. Not at all.

B2. Post-Stimuli Filler Questions

How do you feel about the tone of the message? Do you feel it was appropriate?

Do you feel that the message was easy or difficult to understand?

Overall, how do feel about the message?

For each of the following emotions, rate how strongly you feel after having read the message:

Anxiety: Very Strong | Somewhat Strong | Not Very Strong | Not Strong At All

Anger: Very Strong | Somewhat Strong | Not Very Strong | Not Strong At All

Enthusiasm: Very Strong | Somewhat Strong | Not Very Strong | Not Strong At All

How likely do you feel that you would do the following if given the opportunity?

1. I'd likely donate money to the organization
2. I'd likely sign a petition sponsored by the organization
3. I'd likely wear a button, put a sticker on my car, or place some kind of sign in my window or in front of my house to advertise the organization
4. I'd likely attend a meeting or event sponsored by the organization
5. I'd likely be willing to work for the organization

B3. Feeling Thermometer

[If they got a Non-Partisan In-Group Condition] Finally, since we are asking about how you feel about messages from a political organization, we would like to end this survey by asking you how you feel in general about some of the most important organizations in American politics: political parties

[If they got a Partisan In-Group Condition] Finally, since we are asking about how you feel about a message from a political organization, we would like to end this survey by asking you how you feel in general about political parties.

To start, we will show the name of the political party and we would like you to rate people who identify with these parties using something we call the feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm towards people who identify with that party. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorable toward people who identify with that party and don't care too much for them. You would rate people who identify with that party at the 50 degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward them.

1. How would you rate people who identify with the Democratic Party?
2. How would you rate people who identify with the Republican Party?

B4 PANAS-X

Next, we would like to ask you about more specific feelings you may have towards members of the political parties after having read the message. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer to indicate to what extent you feel this way *right now* about members of the party.

Democrats:

| | | |
|---------------|--------------|-----------------|
| angry towards | proud of | nervous about |
| afraid of | irritated by | confidence in |
| enthusiastic | scared of | hostile towards |
| about | | |

Republicans:

| | | |
|---------------|--------------|-----------------|
| angry towards | proud of | nervous about |
| afraid of | irritated by | confidence in |
| enthusiastic | scared of | hostile towards |
| about | | |

B5 Action Tendencies:

We are also interested in how people feel about interacting with people who identify as a member of the other party. Imagine that you are at a party or some other social gathering where people are chatting about politics, and you are informed that some of the people at that party are [Democrats/Republicans]. We would like to know how likely you feel like you would do the following things, if you had choice to do so.

Approach Action Tendencies:

1. To talk with a Democrat/Republican about politics
2. To find out more about Democrats/Republicans and their views
3. To spend time and hang out with a Democrat/Republican

Aggressive Action Tendencies

1. To confront a Democrat/Republican about something I overheard them say
2. To stand up and oppose a Democrat/Republican about something they said
3. To get into an argument with a Democrat/Republican about politics

Avoidance Tendencies

1. To completely avoid talking with anyone who was a Democrat/Republican
2. To have nothing to do at all with any Democrats/Republicans
3. To keep my distance from anyone I thought was a Democrat/Republican

Appendix C: Stimulus Materials

Non-Partisan In-Group / Non-Partisan Out-Group / In-Group Weak

Americans For Better Governance: HELP! AMERICANS ARE CRUSHED BY SPECIAL INTERESTS

Let's cut to the chase: Americans are losing to the special interests groups. On every issue these shady, greedy lobbyists hide in the dark and stand in the way of what we, the American people, need to do get America moving again. But right now, Americans are losing battles to the desires of lobbyists and their money all over the country.

We're trying everything we can to stop them, but we're not sure that we can do it. If Americans are truly going to stand up to special interest groups, we're going to need the help of people like you.

I know that I can count on you to help us out. Chip in \$4 now to help Americans take on the special interests groups.

Thanks for your support,
Americans For Better Governance

Non-Partisan In-Group / Non-Partisan Out-Group / In-Group Strong

Americans For Better Governance: SUCCESS! AMERICANS ARE CRUSHING SPECIAL INTERESTS

Let's cut to the chase: Americans are finally standing up to the special interests groups. On every issue these shady, greedy lobbyists hide in the dark and stand in the way of what we, the American people, need to do get America moving again. And right now, Americans are winning battles against desires of lobbyists and their money all over the country.

We're trying everything we can to keep it up, and we're sure that we can do it. If Americans are truly going to keep standing up to special interest groups, we're going to need the help of people like you.

I know that I can count on you to help us out. Chip in \$4 now to help Americans take on the special interests group.

Thanks for your support,
Americans For Better Governance

Non-Partisan In-Group / Non-Partisan Out-Group / No In-Group Strength
Americans For Better Governance: AMERICANS AGAINST SPECIAL INTERESTS

Let's cut to the chase. On every issue these shady, greedy groups hide in the dark and stand in the way of what we, the American people, need to do get America moving again.

We're trying everything we can to stop them, but we're going to need your help. Like it or not, campaigns are expensive. Voter registration drives and out-reach programs don't pay for themselves, after all. If we're going to reach out to Americans all over this country, we're going to need the help of people like you.

I know that I can count on you to help us out. Chip in \$4 now to help Americans take on the special interests group.

Thanks for your support,
Americans For Better Governance

Non-Partisan In-Group / No Outgroup / In-Group Weak

Americans For Better Governance: HELP! AMERICANS CRUSHED

Let's cut to the chase: Americans are losing the fight for better government. We love this great nation of ours, and we, the American people, are making sure that the biggest issues facing it are going to be being addressed so that America gets moving again. But right now, Americans are losing, and their voices are not being heard all over the country.

We're trying everything we can, but we're not sure that we can do it. If Americans are truly going to stand up and fight for better government, we're going to need the help of people like you.

I know that I can count on you to help us out. Chip in \$4 now to help Americans take on the fight for a better America.

Thanks for your support,
Americans For Better Governance

Non-Partisan In-Group / No Outgroup / In-Group Strong

Americans For Better Governance: SUCCESS! AMERICANS CRUSHING IT

Let's cut to the chase: Americans are winning the fight for better government. We love this great nation of ours, and we, the American people, are making sure that the biggest issues facing it are going to be being addressed so that America gets moving again. And right now, Americans are winning, and their voices are being heard all over the country.

We're trying everything we can to keep it up, and we're sure that we can do it. If Americans are truly going to keep standing up and fight for better government, we're going to need the help of people like you.

I know that I can count on you to help us out. Chip in \$4 now to help Americans take on the fight for a better America.

Thanks for your support,
Americans For Better Governance

Non-Partisan In-Group / No Outgroup / No In Group Strength

Americans For Better Governance: AMERICANS NEED BETTER GOVERNMENT

Let's cut to the chase. We love this great nation of ours, and we, the American people, are making sure that the biggest issues facing it are going to be being addressed so that America gets moving again.

We're trying everything we can to make government better, but we're going to need your help. Like it or not, campaigns are expensive. Voter registration drives and out-reach programs don't pay for themselves, after all. If we're going to reach out to Americans all over this country, we're going to need the help of people like you.

I know that I can count on you to help us out. Chip in \$4 now to help Americans take on the fight for a better America.

Thanks for your support,
Americans For Better Governance

Democrats: Non-Partisan In-Group / Partisan Out-Group / In-Group Weak

Americans For Better Governance: HELP! AMERICANS ARE CRUSHED BY THE DANGEROUS REPUBLICAN AGENDA

Let's cut to the chase: Americans are losing to radical Republican agenda. On every issue the extremists in the Republican Party stand in the way of what we, the American people, need to do get America moving again. But right now, Americans are losing battles against Republicans all over the country.

We're trying everything we can to stop them, but we're not sure that we can do it. If Americans are truly going to stand up to the out-of-step Republican Party, we're going to need the help of people like you.

I know that I can count on you to help us out. Chip in \$4 now to help Americans take on the Republicans.

Thanks for your support,
Americans For Better Governance

Democrats: Non-Partisan In-Group / Partisan Out-Group / In-Group Strong

Americans For Better Governance: SUCCESS! AMERICANS CRUSHING THE DANGEROUS REPUBLICAN AGENDA

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Democrats: Partisan In-Group / Non-Partisan Out-Group / In-Group Weak

Democratic National Committee: HELP! AMERICANS CRUSHED BY SPECIAL INTERESTS

Let's cut to the chase: Democrats are losing to the special interests groups. On every issue these shady, greedy lobbyists hide in the dark and stand in the way of what we, the Democratic Party, need to do get America moving again. But right now, Democrats are losing battles to the desires of lobbyists and their money all over the country.

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