

Affective Polarization in a Group Competition Framework

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Abstract

The current literature on affective polarization has benefited immensely from the incorporation of social identity theory, particular in the field of partisan sorting. In this paper, I propose an extension of the existing theoretical work on affective polarization to place it within the context of the inherently competitive nature of the winner-take-all electoral system of the United States. I argue that greater instability in control of government is likely to encourage greater levels of out-group derogation. Using data from the cumulative ANES, I demonstrate that the relationship between partisan sorting and partisan attitudes is sensitive to the margin of electoral victory at the national environment. A low margin of victory is found to be associated with greater levels of out-party hostility among highly sorted partisans of the winning party, thereby increasing the total amount of affective polarization. I discuss the implications of these findings as well as current and potential future projects that could stem from this work.

It has become a well accepted truism that modern American politics is defined by the high level of polarization between the Democratic and Republican Parties. Among political elites, polarization has primarily manifested itself in the form of two increasingly distant, ideological parties (Aldrich 2011; Poole & Rosenthal 1997; McCarty, Poole, & Rosenthal 2016), the result of decades of realignment over economic and cultural issues (particularly regarding race, religion, and gender roles) stemming from the New Deal, Civil Rights Movement, the Great Society, and other social upheavels of the mid-20th century (Aldrich 2011; Ellis and Stimson 2009; Grossman and Hopkins 2016; Hopkins 2017; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2016; Richardson 2014; Rosenfeld 2018; Schickler 2016; Williams 2010; Wolbrecht 2000). With the parties being increasingly defined along ideological divisions, interparty party cooperation has dramatically decreased as both parties instead increasingly emphasize party unity and engaging in partisan conflict in hopes of successfully gaining control of government in the next election (Koger and Lebo 2017; Lee 2016). After all, why compromise with a party that's against your interests when you can just win the next election and get everything you want without them?

Just as impactful as the increasing ideological divisions between party elites, however, has been the increasing levels of polarization among partisan identifiers. In the past, debate on polarization among the masses has often focused on whether or not issue-based polarization has occurred and whether it was in the form of sorting in an otherwise moderate electorate (Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope 2006) versus a bimodal distribution of two ideological poles (Abramowitz and Saunders 2008; Bafumi and Herron 2010; Bafumi and Shapiro 2009). While an important debate, more recent work on polarization in the electorate has begun to shift towards exploring *affective polarization*, which is the increasing levels to which partisans report strong, negative affect towards partisans of the opposing party (Abramowitz and Webster 2016; Iyengar et al. 2018; Mason 2015, 2018). Fueling this process is a combination of sincere differences in ideological and value beliefs (Hopkins 2017; Jacoby 2014; Webster and Abramowitz 2017), the sorting of parties along traits such as authoritarianism (Hetherington and Weiler 2009), and the increasing alignment of multiple

identities – particularly racial, religious, and ideological identities – with partisanship (Mason 2018).

Often missing from the conversation, however, is a discussion of how these identities function within the context of the inherently competitive nature of democratic institutions. After all, there is nothing inherent about a group identity that requires group identification to lead to out-group derogation. Indeed, according to social identity theory the only consistent result of group identification is a generally tendency to favour members of the in-group over members of the out-group (Tajfel & Turner 1979). Partisan identities, however, are embedded within an inherently conflict driven institutional structure in the form of elections in which parties are required to compete against other political parties. This particularly strong in the United States, where the prevalence of single-member plurality districts means there can only be one winner, and the strong two-party system essentially means that Democrats and Republicans will naturally consider the opposing party as the opposition. As it stands, few works have focused on how the institutional structures and competitive nature of elections interact with the psychological processes underlying partisan identities. What work that does exist, though, tends to find that the threat of electoral win and loss can encourage greater enthusiasm/anger in strong partisans (Huddy, Mason, & Aaroe 2015) and that partisan negativity increases as election day approaches (Soods & Iyengar 2016). This suggests, then, that elections can potentially encourage greater affective polarization. What is missing, then, is a theoretical framework for why this is the case.

Fortunately, scholars in other fields have provided both empirical results and theoretical ideas that can be used to develop a theoretical framework for how partisan identities function under electoral competition in the United States. Most importantly, small margins of control of government have encouraged political elites to focus on competition and providing distinct policy agendas in order to maximize the potential for keeping/regaining control of government in the following elections (Koger & Lebo 2017; Lee 2016). Translating this strategic logic to the affective response of partisan identifiers, however, will require

additional considerations of social identity theory as originally conceived by Tajfel & Turner (1979). According to social identity theory, the perceived stability and relative distribution of power within the social hierarchy plays an important role in determining the extent to which group identifiers engage in competition with the out-group and attempt to attain higher social status (Bettencourt et al. 2001; Doosje, Spears, and Ellemers 2002; Sachdev and Bourhis 1987, 1991; Scheepers and Ellemers 2005; Tajfel and Turner 1979). As instability within a social hierarchy increases, members of the minority group see the possibility of advancing up the social hierarchy while the majority group face the threat of losing high status. This combination of potential advancement for the minority and loss of status for the majority ultimately incentivizes the groups to focus on competition instead of cooperation or simply ignoring one another.

What I propose is that partisan identities – being embedded within the inherently competitive nature of electoral politics – are sensitive to the relative balance of political power between the two dominant political parties. Partisan sorting, of course, is part of the process as well. Without a strong attachment to the political parties, there is no reason for partisans to care about election results after all. To translate that sorting into competition and increased affective polarization, however, requires that both parties are equally competitive at the national level. This interaction between the level of partisan sorting and the competitiveness of the parties serve as the foundation for developing a *group-competition model of affective polarization* that serves as the central theoretical framework for this project and a variety of potential future projects.

1.1 Hierarchy Instability and Social Competition

1.1.1 The Anxiety-Inducing Effects of Instability

In writing about the nature of social competition and change, Tajfel & Turner (1979, p. 45) asked readers to consider the following scenario:

“Let us consider a comparison between two football teams that have come first and second in their league, respectively. There is no argument about which has the higher status, but alternative comparative outcomes were and, in the future, will still be possible. When the new season begins, the teams will be as comparable and competitive as they had been before. In this instance, the status difference does not reduce the meaningfulness of comparisons because *it can be changed* [emphasis in original].”

As cliché as sports metaphors are at this point in the work on affective polarization, the metaphor above is quite useful. Two teams – or parties – engage in a regular act of competition in which one team is the comparative “winner” and the other the comparative “loser”, the ability of the resulting hierarchy encourages group members to continue to engage in social competition. A loss this year, while stinging, does not prevent the possibility of winning next year. Similarly, losing an election in one year does not prevent the possibility of winning in the next election year, so why compromise now when you could get everything in the future? Instability within the social hierarchy, then, is a factor in determining whether or not two social groups will engage in social competition (Bettencourt et al. 2001; Doosje, Sears, & Ellemers 2002; Ellemers, van Knippenberg, and Wilke 1990; Ellemers, Wilke, and van Knippenberg 1993; Scheepers & Ellemers 2005; Tajfel & Turner 1979).

Why, though does this instability matter? According to social identity theory, the value of a group identity to a person’s self-image and conception of the self is in part through the comparison of the status of the in-group with that of other groups. As such, it is not just the group identification that matters, but the relative status of that group as well. Being a member of a high status group provides a variety of positive comparisons to lower status groups: your group is smarter, more powerful, richer, more successful, etc. and therefore so are you. Members of low-status groups, however, may choose a variety of possible strategies to maintain a positive self-image: 1) disassociating with the group and focusing on individual

upward mobility or; 2) engaging in social creativity by changing the nature of the comparison in terms of what the relevant comparison is, the definition of the comparisons, or the relevant out-group to be compared to (Tajfel & Turner 1979, p. 43-44). As long as the system appears stable, then, high-status group members are satisfied with their position, and low-status members may focus on other strategies for maintaining positive esteem instead of working to change the social hierarchy.

Insecurity in the position of the groups, therefore, can induce anxiety within the high-status group while encouraging low-status group members to organize. Furthermore, these processes have been demonstrated in minimal-group experimental designs. In Scheepers & Ellemers (2004), participants were informed that they had a “holistic” association style before asking them perform a reaction time task. They were then shown data that told them that people with that association style performed better (high-status) or worse (low-status) compared to those of the (fictional) “detailed associational style” group. When told that an surprise additional round of the task would occur, they found that high status group members showed higher blood pressure, a physiological symptom of anxiety, as well as lower group-self esteem: these effects were not present for those told they were low-status to begin with. In another minimal group experimental design, Doosje, Spears, & Ellemers (2002) found that low-status group identifiers were instrumentally responsive to changes in the social hierarchy. When low-status group members were told that their group was likely to perform better than the high-status group members in the second round of an assigned task, those who had been initially weak to identify with group reported stronger identification.

In short, instability within the social hierarchy both induces anxiety among the higher-status group (Doosje, Spears, and Ellemers 2002) and pushes low-status members to strengthen their identification with the group (Scheepers and Ellemers 2005). Furthermore, and this is particularly important for political parties, instability within the system also encourages a greater sense of group-efficacy, which can motivate group identifiers to act collectively on behalf of the group’s interests (van Zomeren et al. 2004; van Zomeren, Postmes, and Spears 2008).

1.1.2 Conditions In Which Instability Promotes Competition

In Tajfel & Turner's initial elaboration of social change, however, it was noted that there two important conditions that had to be met for instability in the social hierarchy to cause inter-group competition. Writing from the perspective of a member of the subordinate group, Tajfel & Turner argue intergroup competition is most likely to occur when: “ (a) subjective identification with the subordinate group is maintained: and (b) the dominant group continues or begins to be perceived as a relevant comparison group.” (1979, p. 45). In other words, for instability to be relevant, groups members must first be motivated to remain identified with the group, whether that be a result of high costs to leaving the group or entering another one. In practice, this mostly means that effects of social identity are conditioned on the strength of identity: stronger identifiers show stronger effects. Second, the out-group must remain the main point of comparison for the group's relative status in society: winning over a group perceived as irrelevant has no effect on group self-esteem (Branscombe and Wann 1994).

Fortunately, the state of current American politics meet these conditions. It is already well established in the behavioral literature that partisan identities tend to be long-lived and rarely deviated from once formed (Campbell et al. 1960; Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008). Furthermore, while I am arguing partisan sorting alone is not sufficient to induce affective polarization, it is necessary as the alignment of identities strengthens partisan identities and dramatically increases the barrier of entry for people who are not aligned with a particular party's coalition to effectively join the party. Mason and Wronski (2018), for example, finds that individuals who deviate from the “Christian, white, and conservative” mold of the fully aligned Republican tend to have weaker attachments to the Republican Party. Similarly, for African-Americans support for the Democratic Party is heavily socialized, and deviation from that support risks social ostracization and the individual being considered to have “sold out” the group (White, Laird, & Green 2014).

Furthermore, this alignment of coalitions increases the perception of the out-group as a threat. While Mason (2018) primarily focuses on affective attachments and the relatively weak ideological motivation for them, other work on polarization has emphasized that there are distinct differences in values and interests across the parties (Grossman and Hopkins 2016; Hopkins 2017; Jacoby 2014; Webster and Abramowitz 2017). As such, competition over control of government represents not just a status threat but also a threat to the group's resources and values, all of which contribute to greater out-group prejudice and threat (Riek, Mania, and Gaertner 2006; Stephan and Stephan 2000). This can be seen in work on partisan stereotyping, where partisans routinely report wild misconceptions on the nature of the partisan out-group, such as that about 32% of Democrats were gay, lesbian, or bisexual or that about 38% of Republicans make over \$250,000. Corrections of these misperceptions, however, lowered the levels of affective polarization and the perception that the out-party's positions and priorities were extreme (Ahler 2018; Ahler & Sood 2018).

In short, partisan sorting has resulted in a combination of both high attachment to the in-party and an increased perception of the out-party as a threat. Partisans, then, are highly motivated to remain with the group as the cost of abandoning the group in its time of need is high. This will be particularly truly of highly sorted partisans as having multiple identities aligned with the partisan identity makes choosing alternative strategies for maintaining a positive self image very difficult. A white moderate Christian Southern Democrat may be able to focus on religious identity when the Democratic Party is doing poorly, but a black liberal Southern Democrat attending a Black Protestant Church is highly constrained in their choice of alternative group identities to fall back. Therefore, partisan identities very clearly meet Tajfel & Turner's (1979) first condition.

The second condition, meanwhile, is built into the very structure of American politics. A winner-take-all system in which two parties are competing for control of government will essentially force the point of social comparison to be between the two-parties. Returning to the sports metaphor, the American parties compete in what is essentially a two-team sports league. Furthermore, a winner-take-all system majoritarian systems essentially establishes

a zero-sum outcome in competition, likely heightening the perception that losing an election is a threat. Hopkins (2017) work in *Red State Blue State* presents the case that the winner-take-all system exaggerates regional differences in preferences on social issues and translates them into the the extreme divergence between political elites. Being in the minority party in these regions, then, will mean being represented by members of Congress dramatically different from you and, more importantly, unlikely to be responsive to your political demands. Furthermore, being in the minority, especially with highly close and insecure margins, incentives out-party blame and maintaining high levels of party unity to maximize the chance of winning in future elections (Koger & Lebo 2017; Lee 2016). Comparative work has also found some evidence that winner-take-all systems can exaggerate polarization. Taking advantage of variation within Swiss cantons, Fitzgerald and Curtis (2012) find that partisan discord within the family translates into greater partisan engagement in proportional systems but leads to greater disengagement within cantons relying on majoritarian systems. In an analysis of 33 nations and 67 elections, Curini and Hino (2012) find that party polarization is strongest in systems where expectations of cross-party coalition building are low (such as a majoritarian two-party system) and that voters have highly salient party preferences and low levels of independents (such as a highly polarized electorate).

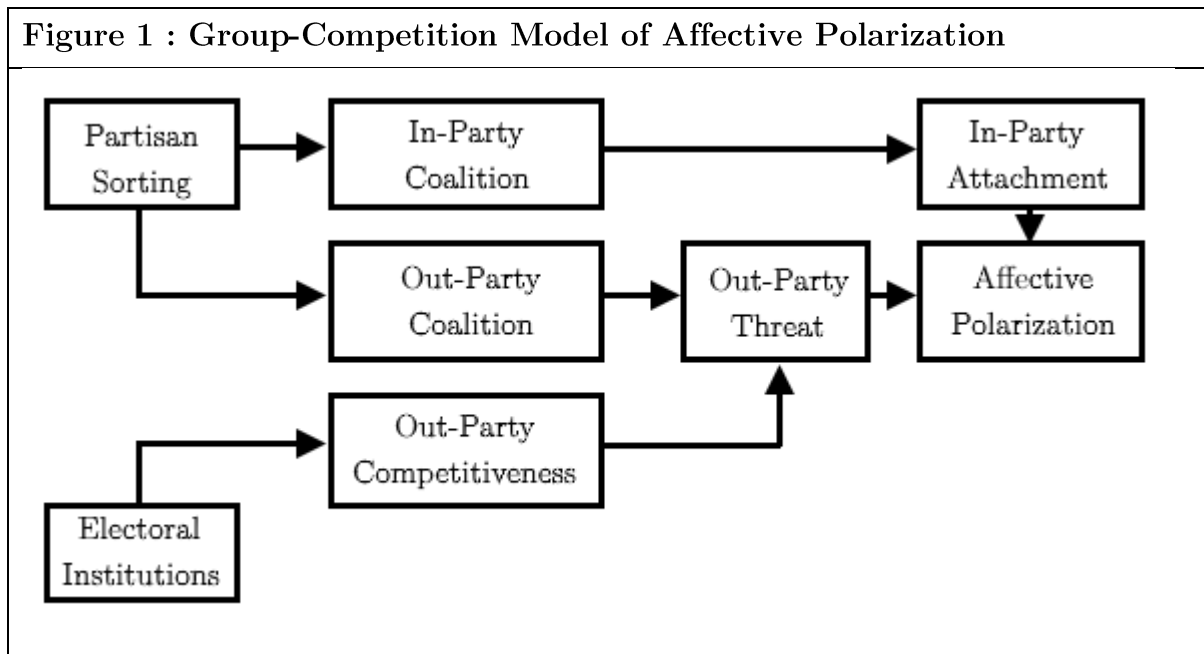
None of this, of course, is meant to dismiss the intraparty factions and coalition building that often lead to conflict within a party as groups jostle for control of the direction and identity of the party at large (Cohen et al. 2008; Noel 2013). Such activity, however, is likely to be of importance to the strongest of partisans and activists within a party. For the majority of partisans, however, the structure of the United State's winner-take-all majoritarian system is likely to encourage partisans to always consider the success and failures of the in-party relative to the status out-party as the primary point of social comparison, especially during the general election period.

1.2 A Group-Competition Theory of Affective Polarization

To establish a group-competition theory of affective polarization, I start by making several basic assumptions of the model:

1. Partisan attachment to political parties are motivated by perceptions of the link between group identities and the political parties. Strength of partisan identity, then, is a function of the alignment of group identities with partisanship (Mason 2018). The more that an individual's various group identities align with the party, the stronger the identity and the higher the cost of abandoning the party or shifting to other identities.
2. The potential threat of the out-party is based in part on the perception of the out-group as a threat to the in-group's status, values, resources, etc. (Riek et al. 2006). This occurs as a result of a perception that the out-party coalition consists primarily of groups different from the in-party coalition (Ahler 2018; Ahler & Sood 2018).
3. The United States electoral system encourages partisans to focus on the out-party as the primary comparison when it comes to the status of the in-party within the United States as a result of regularly scheduled winner-take all elections (Hopkins 2017; Koger & Lebo 2017; Lee 2016).
4. The perception of how much of a threat the out-party is perceived to be is related to the extent that they are likely to gain political power. The more competitive the out-party is perceived to be, the more likely it is perceived to be as a threat.

With these four assumptions in mind, then, I argue that affective polarization occurs as a result of the combination of highly sorted parties and highly competitive political parties. Partisan sorting is necessary to ensure that attachments to the in-group are high and that the out-group is potentially perceived as a threat. If the out-group is not electorally competitive, though, then partisan sorting is not by itself sufficient enough to translate partisan sorting into out-group derogation. An out-group that is capable of winning and maintaining political power, however, is an out-group that is capable of becoming higher status than the in-group as well as pass legislation to enact policies that directly harm the in-group or are an affront to the in-groups norms and values. Figure 3.1 presents the model graphically.



Obviously, many of these items are likely to be at least somewhat endogenous in the real world. The make-up of the party coalitions, for example, likely affects how competitive the parties are as certain coalitions are likely to be more electorally successful than others. For the purposes of modelling what goes into a partisan’s perception of the out-group as a threat and the related partisan attitudes, however, the extent of actual partisan sorting,

the make up of the electoral coalitions, and the electoral institutions are assumed a fixed state of reality to which partisans are responding to.

As Ahler (2018) and Ahler & Sood (2018) demonstrate, though, the *perception* of the relative size and influence of each part of those coalition can be influenced, thereby influencing the perception of threat and affective polarization, and it is changes in these perceptions that are most likely to lead to changes in partisan attitudes even assuming all other aspects fixed. For simplicity's sake I also left out "In-Party Competitiveness" as it's own section of the model. By definition, if the out-party is stronger then the in-party is weaker. Manipulating the perception's of how effective the in-party is at winning elections, then, is by definition also manipulating perception of how effective the out-party is, or at least that is a simplifying assumption for my purposes.

1.2.1 Hypotheses

With the assumptions of the model declared and the central mechanisms described in graphical form, I can formalize the central claim of the model into a single hypothesis that will be tested in this paper:

Hypothesis 1: Group-Competition Model of Affective Polarization:

The impact of partisan sorting on partisan attitudes increases when partisans are within a highly competitive political environment.

2 Data and Methods

To test if the relationship between partisan sorting and partisan attitudes strengthens during competitive elections, I use the cumulative American National Election Studies (ANES) dataset. Specifically, I look at these relationships the presidential election years between 1972 and 2016. I choose to start at 1972 over 2016 for two reasons. On a practical matter, 1972 is the first year that the 7-scale ideology measure is used, and that measure is needed to construct my measure of partisan sorting. More broadly, though, the 1970s is

usually seen as the period where the parties have really begun to be sorted along the race, religious, and ideological lines that make up the current party coalitions (Mason & Wronski 2018). Going earlier than that begins to run into problems of the sorting of the parties being incomplete and therefore of more questionable comparison across time. I also restrict myself to presidential years for similarity in environment across time (the ANES stopped mid-term surveys after 2002). For the majority of years I restricted the data to fresh-cases with the exception of 1996, where a majority of respondents are from a 1994 mid-term panel and dropping them would have resulted in a significant loss of sample size. I also restricted the data to face-to-face interviews only to ensure comparability in interview mode. Finally, with the exception of the data presented in Figure 2, I dropped pure independents from the sample as I am only interested in the attitudes of partisans and partisan leaners.

2.1 Dependent Variables – Partisan Feeling Thermometers

In all almost analyses, the dependent variables in this chapter are the partisan feeling thermometers. Respondents are asked to rate each party on a scale of 0 to 100, with 0 being “cold”, 100 “warm”, and 50 “neutral”. This is a common measure of partisan attitudes in the polarization literature and is considered the “workhorse survey item” of the field (Iyengar et al. 2018). As such, I feel no need to defend the usage of the measure as the primary dependent variable, at least within the constrictions of the using the cumulative ANES data.

2.2 Independent Variables

2.2.1 Measure Partisan-Identity Alignment: Objective Sorting Measure

To measure the alignment between an individual’s identities and their partisanship, I use the *objective sorting measure* developed by Mason & Wronski (2018). This measure is an index of the alignment between a person’s racial, religious, ideological, and partisan identities in terms of objective identification with a group ie. an individual who is African-

American and a Democrat is considered sorted.¹ Construction of the index requires respondents be asked identification with a group and the strength of that identification, being scored up to +1 if the group is aligned with the party and scored up to -1 if it is aligned with the opposite party, as well an additional up to +1 for the strength of partisan identity. These scores are then averaged together to form the measure, ranging from +1 for an individual who is highly sorted to -1 for an individual who, theoretically, is completely cross-pressured.

In the Mason & Wronski (2018) piece, the group alignments are assigned as followed. Democratic aligned groups consist of African-Americans, Hispanics, secular individuals, and liberals. Republican aligned groups consist of whites, Christians, and conservatives. For an individual to be a highly sorted Democrat, they would have to be a strong partisan who strongly identified as African-American, atheist, and liberal, and their Republican equivalent a strong partisan who strongly identified as white, Christian, and conservative. However, secular individuals and Hispanics, based on their analyses, are relatively new to the Democratic Party, with their data (based on the ANES as well) showing they only began to sort into the Democratic Party starting in the Obama administration. For my purposes, then, I do not include them in the sorting measure to maintain comparability across the cumulative file.

To calculate ideological and partisan sorting, I use the traditional 7-point ideology and party scales, with strength of ideology/partisanship serving as a measure of the strength of the identity. Ideally I would have some sort of measure similar to the partisan identity scale developed in Huddy, Mason, & Aaroe (2015), but that measure and the 7-point party identification scale are reasonably well correlated and suggests any results that are found are likely to be an underestimation.

¹ This is in comparison to *subjective sorting*, which is measures an individual's perception of the alignment between the groups they identify with and the parties. Unfortunately, the cumulative ANES does not have questions necessary for this, but Mason & Wronski (2018) find the measure is highly correlated with objective sorting and found no substantively different results in using either one.

To calculate religious sorting, I start with the Religion Major Group variable, which labels individuals as Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and other. I sort Protestants and Catholics (Christian) as Republican-aligned groups (so + score if a Republican, - if a Democrat), and Jewish and Other scored 0. For strength of identification, I use frequency of church attendance. I choose this over religiosity as frequency of church attendance is both used in religious studies as a measure of identity and better captures the social identity dynamics as church attendance places someone within the religious social networks that reinforce the identity (Margolis 2018).

Calculating racial sorting was a more difficult challenge. In the cumulative ANES, there are no measures of strength of racial identity. Because the pressures for African-Americans to identify as Democratic are strong and socially reinforced (Laird et al. 2018; White et al. 2014), I ultimately decide on a binary system for African-Americans: +1 if a Democrat, -1 if a Republican. The lack of measures of identity strength, however, is particularly harmful for sorting among whites. There is a connection between white identity and identification as a Republican (Jardina 2014), but those dynamics are not equivalent to the dynamics for African-Americans. Someone who has a weak white identity is unlikely to feel pressured to be a Republican because they are white, but even weakly identifying African-Americans face pressure to identify as Democrats. Therefore, it is not justifiable to use a binary system as I do for African-Americans. In theory, the racial feeling thermometers could be used as a measure of strength of identity as stronger identity is related with greater in-group warmth (Conover 1988; Jardina 2014), but I am hesitant to do so. Instead, I made the decision to *not* sort whites on racial identity but instead sort whites and all other non-African-American respondents purely on the basis of religious, ideological, and party identity only.

In summary, then, the objective sorting measure is constructed by taking the average of racial, religious, ideological, and partisan identities for African-American respondents, and sort all non-African-American respondents on religious, ideological, and partisan identities. I also calculated the party-closeness measure, which is calculated with the same method but drops the partisan sorting component. I test the effectiveness of the measure as the first

part of the analyses, and also plot the mean score for each year in Figure 2. For a point of comparison with the existing literature in Figure 2 I also show the measure of partisan-ideological sorting developed in Mason (2015), which is scored by multiplying an identity alignment score (absolute difference between the 7-point party identity score and the 7-point ideological identity score, reverse coded) by the partisan identity strength score and the ideological identity strength score (ranged from 0 to 1). Because they are calculated differently, nothing should be made regarding the numbers, but both measures follow the same general pattern, which suggests that the partisan sorting measure, while imperfect, at least mirrors the expected results based on past literature.

2.2.2 Measuring Competitiveness: In-Party Presidential Vote Margin

To measure how competitive the respondent's party is at the national level, I use the in-party presidential vote margin in that year's presidential election, which is calculated by taking the "In-Party Presidential Vote" minus the "Out-Party Presidential Vote" creating an "In-Party Presidential Vote Margin" (IPVM) that ranges in theory from a candidate securing 0% of the vote (-1) to 100% of the vote (1). Doing so does introduce an endogeneity issue since perception of out-group threat could motivate higher turnout and therefore cause the more competitive race to happen. This initial analysis is simply looking to establish a correlational relationship I am not overly concerned about this, and if anything the relationship is likely to be cyclical in the long-run (more competitive race -> higher out-group threat -> more turnout -> more competitive race). The final presidential vote outcome then should serve as a proxy for the overall political environment in that year. Furthermore, the reason I calculated it so as to allow negative values is to allow for the measure to capture the direction of the margin as well as the strength of it as so as to better capture the high/low status aspect of the social hierarchy. I plot the presidential vote margin for each year in Figure 2 as well.

Figure 2: Partisan Sorting and National Competitiveness, 1972-2016

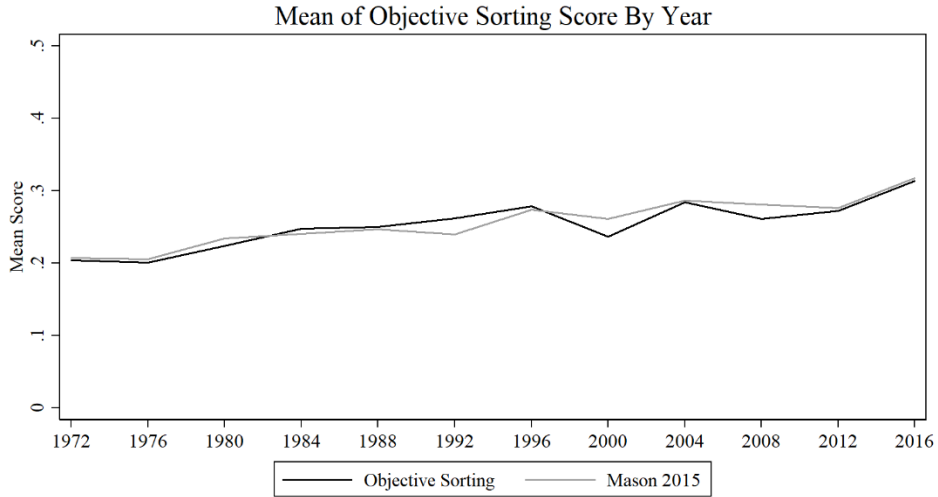


Figure 1 Plot (A)

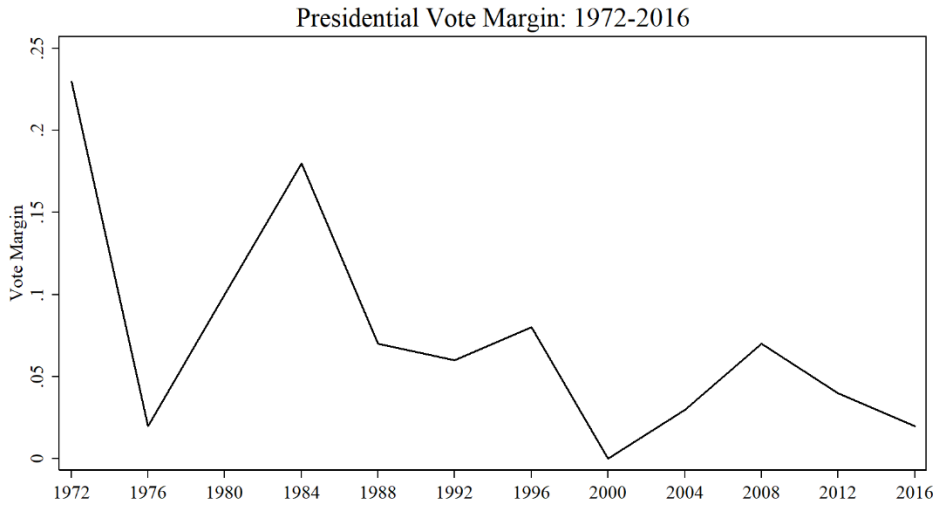


Figure 1 Plot (B)

2.3 Control Variables

Finally, I use a series of control variables to cover the usual variables of influence on partisan attitudes. Note that since race, religion, ideological identity, and partisan identity are all covered by the objective sorting measure, I do not include them again as control variables. Respondent age and gender are the only other additional demographic data

included. I also include household income, whether a member of the household is in a union, whether the respondent is from the South, and a small index of issue positions to measure issue liberalism and constraint (standard deviation from the mean of the issue index). In order to cover the whole 1972 era, however, this index is limited to respondent opinion on abortion, job guarantees, and aid to African-Americans. Calculating similar issue scales to include defense spending (starting 1980) and government health insurance and government services (1984) finds correlations with the 1972 only scale to be .946 and .881, respectively. To maximize the variance in national environment, then, I stick with the 1972 version of the scale. I also cluster standard errors on year.

3 Testing the Objective Sorting Measure

To test whether the objective sorting measure is capturing expected results, I attempt to replicate results from Mason (2015) and Mason & Wronski (2018), which present some general guidelines for what should be expected. In addition, my theory suggests that objective sorting should also predict out-party coldness, and a failure to do so would immediately put an end to the project. In summary, a measure of sorting over this period should present the following results:

1. An increase in sorting from 1972 to the present
2. Party Closeness should measure strength of partisan identity
3. Objective sorting should predict in-party warmth
4. Objective sorting should predict out-party coldness

The first of these statements was already shown in Figure 2. Specifically, the mean of the Objective Sorting measure increases from a mean of about .20 to a little over .3 during the time period. A few small dips in size occur, with the largest being the change from 1996 to 2000 (.2788 to .2367) but it is otherwise a generally positive increase over time. Note, of

course, that by not including measures of sorting for secular and Hispanic individuals, this may be potentially underestimating the amount of sorting in the population during the 2000s when those groups began to lean Democratic.

To test the predicted effects of objective sorting on partisan attitudes, I run an ordinary least squares regression on in-party feeling thermometer, out-party feeling thermometer. I also run another regression of party closeness on partisan identity strength. I present the results in Table 1 (full model in Appendix Table 1).

Table 1: Effects of Sorting on Partisan Attitudes & Identity Strength			
	<u>In-Party FT</u>	<u>Out-Party FT</u>	<u>PID Strength</u>
Objective Sorting	0.105*** (0.00692)	-0.198*** (0.0163)	---
Party Closeness	---	---	0.266*** (0.0504)
Constant	0.641*** (0.0110)	0.621*** (0.0278)	0.931*** (0.0780)
Observations	11,334	11,298	12,933
R-squared	0.068	0.081	0.051
<i>Notes:</i> OLS model, standard errors clustered by year. Full model is presented in Appendix Table 1			
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1			

The results are all in the predicted direction, and the relationships meet the usual thresholds of statistical significance. Some of these results are somewhat weaker than might be expected compared to the current literature (Mason 2018; Mason & Wronski 2018). For example, the effect of party closeness on party identity strength suggests a fully sorted individual is only .2 points higher on a 3 point scale than someone who is not sorted. However, recall that even in the 1970s the parties had not yet fully sorted and that the total level of sorting has generally increased over time. When pooling all respondents together, then, the effect may appear weaker relative to past literature that has focused on the effects of sorting in more recent years. It is also interesting to note that the effect of

sorting is stronger for out-party attitudes than in-party attitudes. This result reinforces the argument that the driving force of affective polarization has primarily been negative partisanship (Abramowitz & Webster 2016). The size of the effects aside, the measure is following the expected trends over time and is related to the expected attitudes. As such, I can be confident that the measure is capturing at least in part the underlying concept.

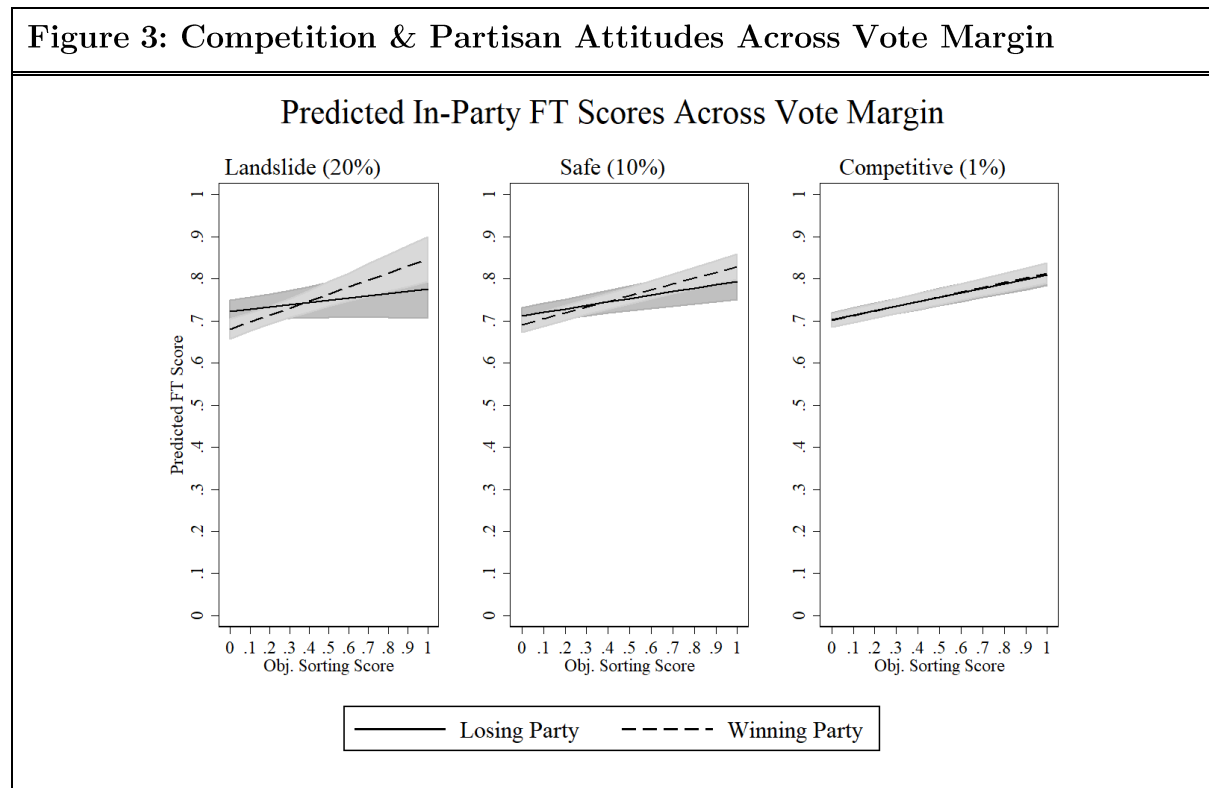
4 Relationship Between Competition and Partisan Sorting

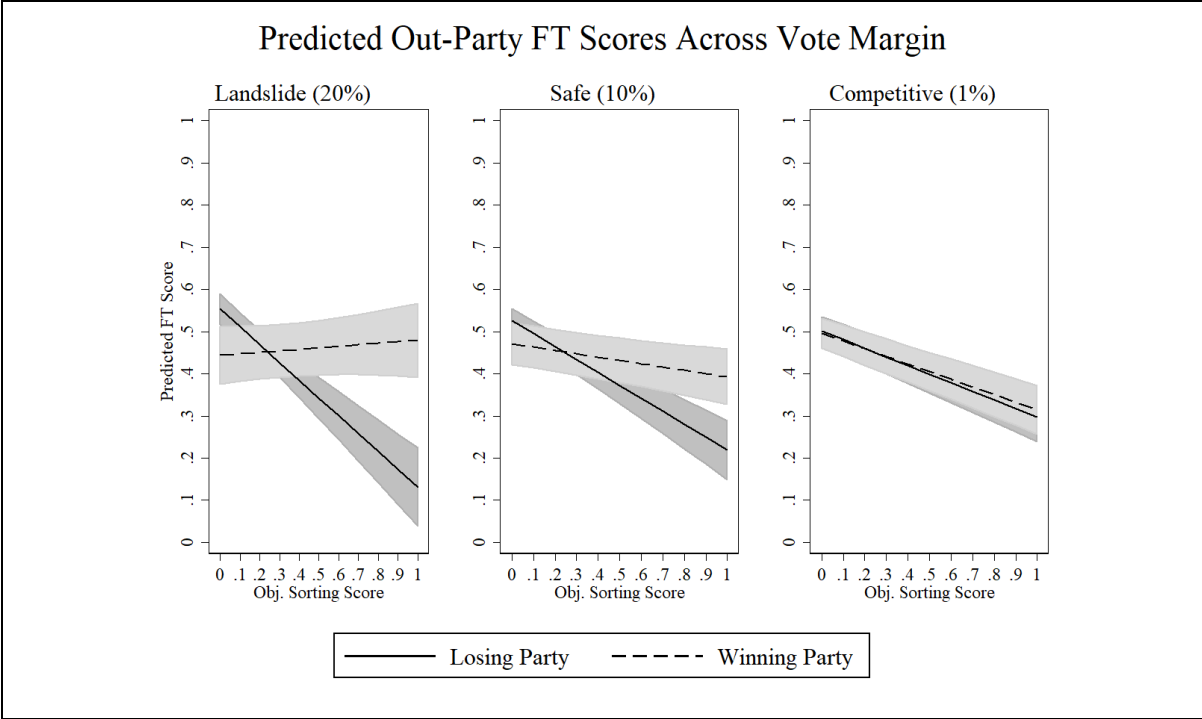
4.1 Linear Interaction Model

To test if the relationship between sorting and partisan attitudes is sensitive to the national political environment, I interact objective sorting with the in-party presidential vote margin (IPVM). The results of the regression displayed in Table 2 help to confirm that the interaction is statistically significant and in the expected directions. Note that, again, the effect is stronger for out-party attitudes than in-party attitudes, with interaction in the model for in-party attitudes reaching only marginal significance ($\beta = 0.281$, $p=0.062$).

	<u>In-Party FT</u>	<u>Out-Party FT</u>
Objective Sorting	0.110*** (0.00631)	-0.193*** (0.0155)
IPVM	-0.106** (0.0419)	-0.274** (0.0963)
OS x IPVM	0.281* (0.135)	1.143*** (0.205)
Constant	0.637*** (0.0104)	0.606*** (0.0217)
Observations	11,334	11,298
R-squared	0.070	0.103
<i>Notes:</i> OLS models with standard errors clustered by year. Full model is presented in Appendix A Table 2. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$		

One benefit of the measurement of competition is that in a predicted effects plot I can treat the positive and negative values of an in-party vote margin (ex: -10 and +10) as being the expected feeling thermometer score of a respondent of both the losing and winning party given a certain margin of victory. This helps to visualize the relationship between competition and objective sorting, as demonstrated in Figure 3, where I show the predicted effects at a landslide victory (20%), a relatively safe margin (10%) and a highly competitive and close election (1%). This helps visualize that as competition increases the attitudes of the winning and losing party partisans converges. The results also help to visualize the difference between in-party and out-party attitudes on polarization, with the change in-party attitudes across vote margin being rather minor relative to the changes in out-party attitudes.





Note: Predicted effects plots based on regression model presented in Table 2 (Appendix Table 2).

4.2 Non-Linear Interaction Model

A potential problem with this analysis, however, is that the effect discussed could be an artifact of the restrictions of a linear interaction model. Such a model assumes the change in the marginal effect of a variable on an outcome across levels of a moderator is linear. In other words, the change of the marginal effect of objective sorting going from an IPVM of 1% to 0% is the same change in the marginal effect going from 0% to 1% and so on and so on. It's possible that there is heterogeneity in the change in the marginal effect size, such as being different at low values of the moderator than higher ones. If so, a linear interaction model provides misleading estimates (Hainmueller, Mummolo, & Xu 2018).

There are good reasons to suspect that there is potential heterogeneity in the interaction between objective sorting and competition, particularly for out-party attitudes. If the mechanism by which instability in the system encourages greater out-party derogation is the threat of a change in social status, the impact of IPVM might differ at smaller values

than larger ones and may especially differ once changing from positive to negative values. Winning/losing by a large margin suggests a level of stability to the underlying system. For the winning party especially, this may weaken the perception of the out-group as a threat, thereby weakening the overall relationship between sorting and out-party attitudes. For the losing party, however, a large loss may encourage weaker partisans to focus on other identities, thereby having the effect of increasing the effect of sorting at high values relative to smaller ones, where both strong and weak partisans are incentivized to compete.

Hypothesis 2: Non-Linearity Interaction: *The marginal effect of objective sorting on out-party attitudes will vary across levels of in-party presidential vote margin, such that:*

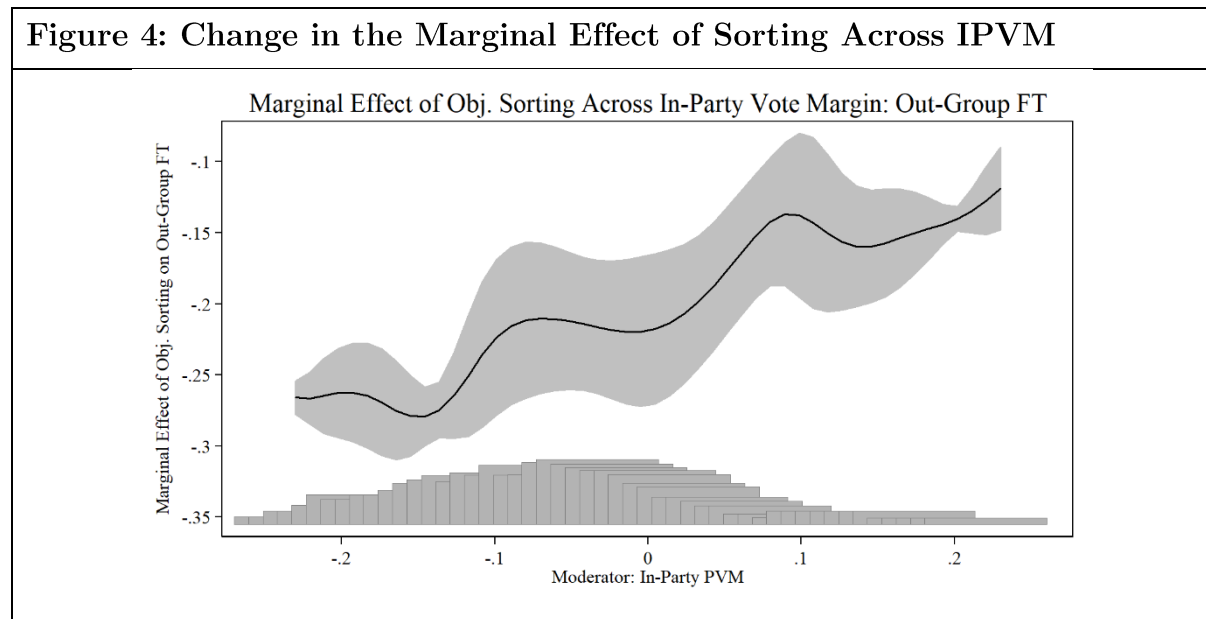
2a) At positive values, the relationship weakens as IPVM increases

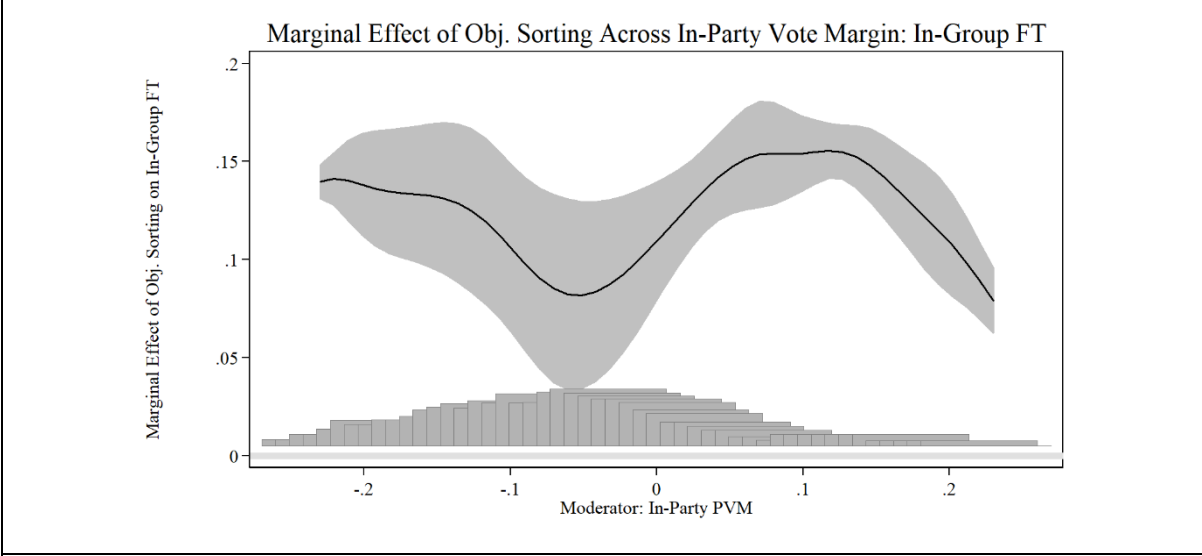
2b) At negative values, the relationship strengthens as IPVM decreases.

For completion purposes I also test for heterogeneity in the interaction in the prediction of in-party attitudes as well. After all, it is potentially the case that the appearance of a lack of an effect in the linear interaction model could have been the result of a non-linear interaction. At the same time, however, it is hard to argue from a theoretical perspective that the marginal effect of sorting should be heterogeneous across vote share. An expectation of winning an election might make stronger partisans more enthusiastic (Huddy, Mason, & Aaroe 2015), but that is not the same as suggesting that winning by a lot strengthens in-party bias more than winning by only a little among the highly sorted winners. The one potential argument that could be made is that weaker identifiers, being more instrumental (Doosje, Spears, & Ellemers 2002), may be more satisfied if the party wins by a larger margin than a smaller one and therefore report stronger in-party feeling thermometer scores when the margin of victory is high. This would suggest the effect of sorting is weaker at higher levels of victory than lower margins for in-party attitudes as both those who are not

highly sorted and the highly sorted have incentives to emphasize partisan identity, weakening the differences between them.

To test for heterogeneity, I use the Interflex package developed by Hainmuller, Mummolo, & Xu (2018), which allows for the testing non-linear interaction effect models. Specifically, I use their kernel smoothing estimator, which estimates a series of local effects with a kernel reweighting scheme to estimate the marginal effect of the independent variable on the outcome variable across the values of the moderator. By allowing the conditional effect of the independent variable to freely vary across the moderator, the package allows for the testing of non-linear interaction models. The results of this analysis is presented in Figure 4, which plots the marginal effects of objective sorting across the levels of in-party presidential vote margin.





Note: Marginal-effect estimates using kernel estimator from the Interflex package (Hainmueller, Mummolo, & Xu 2018)

Due to the size of the confidence intervals there is some caution to be had about over interpreting the model, but the general pattern in the change in the marginal effect of objective sorting on out-party attitudes across levels of in-party presidential vote margin do fit what was expected of Hypothesis 2a and are partly reflective of Hypothesis of 2b. A highly sorted person whose party won by 10% only suffers about a 13 to 14 point drop in out-party attitudes compared to an unsorted person, but the marginal effect of sorting increases as the election becomes more competitive before ultimately settling in around an approximately 22 point drop in out-party attitude at perfect competition. In other words, the marginal effect of sorting generally weakens as IPVVM increases, confirming Hypothesis 2a. For the losing party, however, there is a rather large amount of stability, with the marginal effect of sorting on out-party attitudes remaining consistently around 22 to 23 point drop all the way up to a 10% loss. From there, the estimated marginal effect increases again before settling at around 26-27 point drop for losses greater than 10%. This somewhat is in line with Hypothesis 2b, but since most electoral outcomes are within the -10/+10 range, for most real world uses the marginal effect of sorting remains relatively consistent

for the losing party in a manner. What these results suggests is that losing an election is losing, and stronger partisans will be more affected by losing than weaker partisans, but the amount by which a party wins can cause even strong partisans to weaken their negative attitudes towards the out-party.

The change in the marginal effect of sorting on in-party attitudes, however, is more unusual. Whereas how much you win weakens the effect of sorting on out-party attitudes, there is instead almost a symmetry to the change in marginal effect for in-party. During a competitive election the effect of sorting on in-party attitudes is weaker, but strengthens as the margin increase. For the losing party this makes sense: the larger the loss, the more that the weakly sorted may become detached to the party, thereby increasing the effect of sorting on in-party attitudes. This instrumental view does not, however, explain why the effect of sorting strengthens for the winning party as well. The pattern for that instead fits better with an enthusiasm story where stronger partisans are simply more excited about winning than the weakly attached, translating into higher feeling thermometer scores at higher levels. These results do suggest, though, that the lack of an interaction effect in the linear interaction model was indeed the result of high levels of heterogeneity in the effect of competition on the relationship between sorting and in-party attitudes and that more thought may be needed on the dynamics of in-party attitudes.

Overall, Figure 3 presents evidence that the effect of competition on polarization is driven primarily by changes in the attitudes of the winning party who, when faced with a highly competitive election, have attitudes similar to that of the losing party in terms of out-party derogation. When we consider that over the last few cycles the United States has had not just one but two elections where the “winning” party technically had a lower popular vote than the “losing” party (2000 and 2016), this model would suggest it is not surprising that polarization has been increasing as even winning an election feels like losing.

4.3 Relationship Between Sorting & Partisan Attitudes Over Time

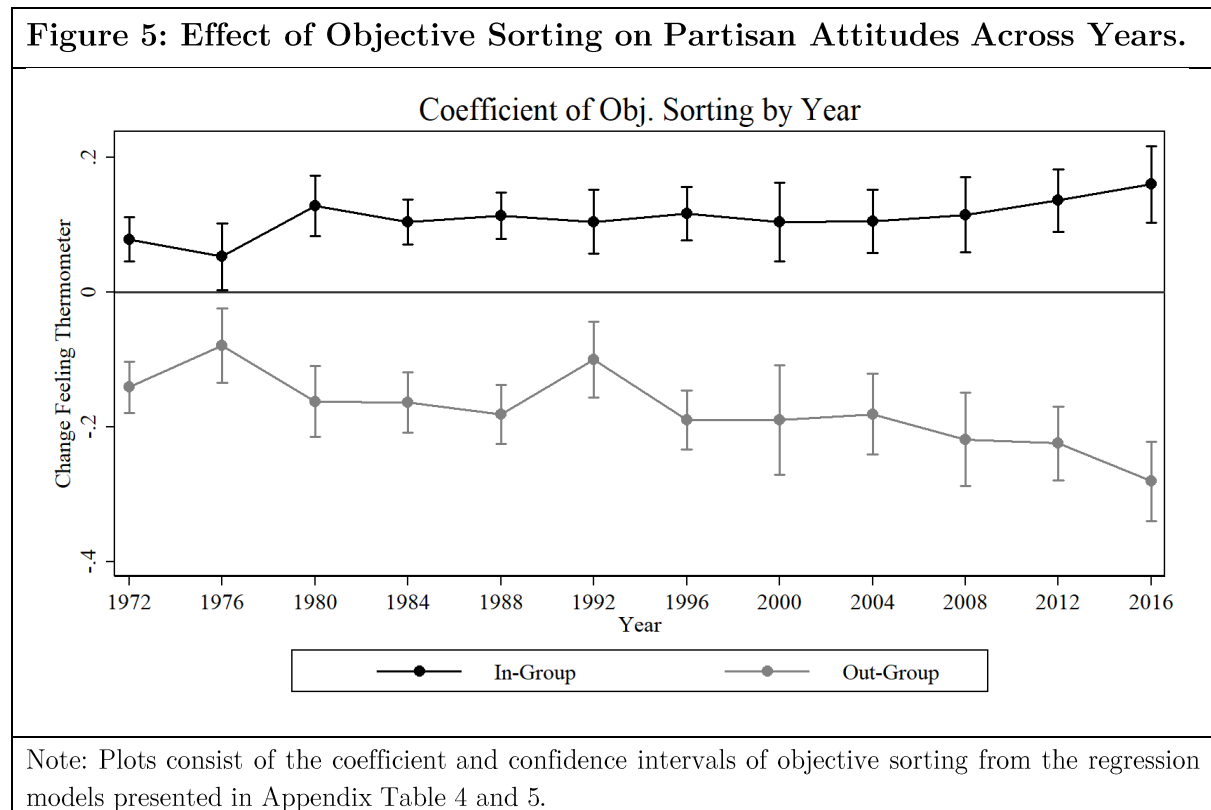
One of the major advantages of using the cumulative ANES is that it allows for the opportunity to study the effect of partisan sorting over time. As already noted, one disadvantage of the previous analyses is that by pooling all respondents regardless of year, it assumed that the relationship between objective sorting and out-party attitudes is roughly consistent across time. Like the non-linearity in the interaction model, however, there are reasons to suspect that this isn't the case.

First, there are several points in time that are usually pointed to as major turning points in polarization. The 1994 election in particular is considered a turning point as it was the first time in decades that Republicans had control of Congress and marked the beginnings of a period of very close, divided government that continues to this day (Lee 2016). Similarly, the 2000 election has been held as another turning point from a competition perspective, with the highly close election determined in part by the interference of the Supreme Court as well as the events of the first Bush term serving to polarize individuals further (Abramowitz & Stone 2006).

Second, while the parties had sorted enough that by 1972 the lines of the coalitions had formed, it was still an ongoing process at both the elite level (Poole & Rosenthal 2019) and mass level (as seen in Figure 1). There also tends to be a delay in the transmission of elite sorting to the masses, with Margolis (2018) noting life-time cycle effects of religious sorting where the younger generations who were socialized in the 1970s and 1980s would eventually sort on religion while older generations socialized prior to the elite sorting were not sorted. In other words, partisan sorting and people's recognition of the association between parties and identities has likely increased over time, thereby strengthening the relationship between sorting and partisan attitudes. I formalize this prediction in Hypothesis 3:

Hypothesis 3: Increasing Polarization Effect – *The effect of objective sorting on partisan attitudes increases over time.*

This is, admittedly, an indirect way of testing the relationship between competition and partisan sorting. because I used the national environment, I cannot test for interactions with competition within any one year as there is no variation in the competitiveness of the national environment within any one cycle, at least not with the data provided by the ANES². Still, for descriptive purposes, it is important to determine if there may have been any changes in the relationship after particularly important milestones moments in political competitiveness, such as the aforementioned 1994, 2000, and 2008 elections. The choice of milestones years, while driven by theoretical reasons, is ultimately arbitrary. To account for this, I choose to run the model minus the interaction with competition separately for each year in the dataset and plot the coefficient of objective sorting for each year in Figure 5.



² In theory, this could be done with panel data or potentially polling data, provided that data had demographic, partisan, ideological, and religious data, partisan attitude measures of some sort, and some measure of presidential vote choice.

As Figure 5 demonstrates, objective sorting has a significant effect on partisan attitudes in all years for both models. Surprisingly, the effect of objective sorting remains relatively stable for most of the period. The only period with a consistent increase in polarization over multiple elections is the post-2004 election years, which sees an increase in the effect of sorting on both In-Party attitudes and Out-Party attitudes. The end result is that compared to 1972, the effect of objective sorting has effectively doubled for both In-Party (change of $\beta=0.0788$ to $\beta=0.160$) and Out-Party (change of $\beta=-0.140$ to $\beta=-0.280$), with the biggest changes occurring in 1980 and over the last few election cycles. Figure 5 demonstrates, then, that the effect of sorting on party attitudes has strengthened over time during the same period of increased competitiveness at the national level. Unfortunately, this data alone cannot make any causal claims as to the direction of the effect, and as discussed in the conclusion there are potential alternative explanations. Still, they serve as a reminder that the effect sorting on polarization may not simply be an increase in the amount of people who have sorted but also that the relationship between sorting and attitudes has strengthened in the face of increasingly competitive and insecure governmental control.

5 Conclusion

In this paper I used the cumulative ANES to investigate the potential for a relationship between competition and objective sorting and how that relationship affects partisan attitudes. The results of the analyses of this paper demonstrate that there does indeed appear to be a relationship, at least in reaction to the national environment. When faced with a highly competitive national environment, the relationship between partisan sorting and partisan attitudes strengthens. Much of this movement seems to be tied into the strengthening of out-party derogation among the highly sorted, with the post-2008 era of politics in particular being the strongest era of polarization since the parties began to sort along current coalitional lines (Mason & Wronski 2018).

These results fall in line with the existing literature on competition and partisan identity, such as the experiment conducted in Huddy, Mason, & Aaroe (2015). In that experiment, partisans informed their party were likely to lose the upcoming election were angrier, while partisans who were told they were likely to win were more enthusiastic. While the results of this paper don't address the specific emotions felt, they do suggest that partisans are sensitive to whether or not their party is competitive. When the threat of losing is most salient – such as a competitive presidential election – that appears to be the case where partisans are the most polarized. This is particularly important for the “winning” party, for whom it appears to be the case the size of the winning margin is important for determining the extent to which they dislike the out-party.

Finally, the tendency for the effects on out-party attitudes to be stronger than in-party attitudes reinforces the argument that affective polarization has primarily been a story about negative partisanship (Abramowitz & Webster 2016). Winning partisans might like their in-party a bit more and the losing partisan likes their party a little less, but most of the change in attitudes was among out-party attitudes. This suggests, then, that the effect of competition is mostly in activating the need to defend the in-group against a threat and focusing that energy on members of the opposing party.

While these results present an observational case for the relationship between sorting and competition, they are not causally conclusive. For one thing, the fact that I used the results of that year's presidential election when analysing the ANES data introduces an endogeneity issue in that a more polarized electorate simply produces more competitive elections. The likely case, of course, is that these systems feedback into each other, with increasingly competitive national environments triggering stronger polarization which then leads to more competitive elections. Experimental work is also likely to be needed to fully test out the causal mechanisms discussed here. Furthermore, that is at least one potential explanation for why the effect of sorting has gotten stronger over time, but other explanations could exist. For example, I noted the possibility that there is a life-cycle effect in which elites become sorted, younger generations are socialized in an era of elite sorting

but become even more polarized, become the new elites, and the cycle starts again. Exploration of that theory, however, is best left to future projects as giving such theory its full due is beyond the scope of this paper.

These issues aside, ensuring that we take into consideration the institutional context and structure that partisan identities are located in will hopefully advance the current conversation regarding affective polarization and any attempts to mitigate or weaken its more negative effects. Most importantly, these results suggests that any attempts to deal with affective polarization will either require a) lower levels of partisan sorting or b) institutional reforms to the winner-take-all system. At least in the short term, either option appears to be unlikely. Partisan sorting does represent long-term differences in the attitudes and perceived benefits of the underlying partisan coalitions. Writing for *FiveThirtyEight*, political scientist Julia Azari notes that periods of weaker partisan animosity were often made on the bases of agreement on racial attitudes that worked to minimize or keep out minorities from participating in politics (Azari 2018), which suggests weakening sorting may also have negative effects depending on the relevant cross-pressures. Institutional reforms, meanwhile, are obviously highly difficult in the United States, with high barriers to passage in the form of the amendment process. Still, more work on how affective polarization functions across institutional structures may offer greater insight into methods of reducing it beyond simply hoping that partisan coalitions may shift enough to allow for greater cross-pressures.

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Appendix

Table 1: Effects of Sorting on Partisan Attitudes & Identity Strength			
	<u>In-Party FT</u>	<u>Out-Party FT</u>	<u>PID Strength</u>
Objective Sorting	0.105*** (0.00692)	-0.198*** (0.0163)	---
Party Closeness	---	---	0.266*** (0.0504)
Issue Liberalism	0.0789*** (0.0218)	-0.0930*** (0.0246)	0.214 (0.124)
Issue Constraint	0.00382 (0.00886)	-0.00814 (0.0160)	0.164*** (0.0453)
Age	0.00110*** (0.000179)	-0.000683** (0.000288)	0.0111*** (0.000773)
Female	0.0278*** (0.00452)	0.0116* (0.00569)	0.118*** (0.0197)
Education	-0.0114*** (0.00157)	-0.0181*** (0.00450)	0.0211*** (0.00615)
South	0.0339*** (0.00392)	-0.0172* (0.00881)	0.0836*** (0.0231)
Family Income	-0.00836*** (0.00255)	0.0105** (0.00441)	0.00441 (0.0119)
Union Household	0.0226*** (0.00448)	-0.0130** (0.00430)	0.0179 (0.0182)
Constant	0.641*** (0.0110)	0.621*** (0.0278)	0.931*** (0.0780)
Observations	11,334	11,298	12,933
R-squared	0.068	0.081	0.051
<i>Notes:</i> OLS model, standard errors clustered by year. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1			

Table 2: Interaction of Sorting and Competition on Partisan Attitudes

	<u>In-Party FT</u>	<u>Out-Party FT</u>
Objective Sorting	0.110*** (0.00631)	-0.193*** (0.0155)
IPVM	-0.106** (0.0419)	-0.274** (0.0963)
OS x IPVM	0.281* (0.135)	1.143*** (0.205)
Issue Liberalism	0.0822*** (0.0221)	-0.0788** (0.0311)
Issue Constraint	0.00171 (0.00999)	-0.0129 (0.0140)
Age	0.00110*** (0.000171)	-0.000647** (0.000273)
Female	0.0270*** (0.00448)	0.00834 (0.00577)
Education	-0.0110*** (0.00149)	-0.0165*** (0.00377)
South	0.0342*** (0.00380)	-0.0139 (0.00904)
Family Income	-0.00901*** (0.00249)	0.00762* (0.00398)
Union Household	0.0221*** (0.00520)	-0.0123** (0.00439)
Constant	0.637*** (0.0104)	0.606*** (0.0217)
Observations	11,334	11,298
R-squared	0.070	0.103

Notes: OLS model, standard errors clustered by year. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 3: Effect of Objective Sorting on In-Party Feeling Thermometers Across Years

	<u>1972</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2016</u>
Obj. Sort.	0.0788*** (0.0168)	0.0530** (0.0253)	0.128*** (0.0227)	0.104*** (0.0170)	0.114*** (0.0176)	0.104*** (0.0242)	0.117*** (0.0203)	0.105*** (0.0297)	0.105*** (0.0238)	0.115*** (0.0286)	0.136*** (0.0235)	0.160*** (0.0292)
Issue Lib.	0.0288 (0.0233)	0.0758** (0.0330)	0.0121 (0.0300)	0.0568** (0.0259)	0.0751*** (0.0235)	0.0138 (0.0308)	0.0147 (0.0253)	0.0536 (0.0397)	-0.00360 (0.0285)	0.174*** (0.0308)	0.170*** (0.0237)	0.203*** (0.0325)
Issue Cons.	-0.0402* (0.0236)	0.0185 (0.0291)	0.0132 (0.0307)	-0.00935 (0.0234)	0.0176 (0.0224)	0.0280 (0.0315)	-0.00189 (0.0242)	-0.0141 (0.0389)	0.00766 (0.0309)	0.0263 (0.0343)	0.0176 (0.0245)	-0.0317 (0.0341)
Age	0.00153*** (0.000300)	0.00252*** (0.000432)	0.00116*** (0.000388)	0.00173*** (0.000309)	0.00117*** (0.000296)	0.00114*** (0.000392)	0.00108*** (0.000309)	0.000996** (0.000402)	0.00130*** (0.000357)	0.000702 (0.000431)	0.000514* (0.000298)	0.00119*** (0.000405)
Female	0.0226** (0.00902)	0.0245* (0.0132)	0.00595 (0.0120)	0.0304*** (0.00894)	0.00762 (0.00987)	0.0446*** (0.0136)	0.0254** (0.0105)	0.0361*** (0.0136)	0.0388*** (0.0123)	0.0195 (0.0144)	0.0302*** (0.0105)	0.0603*** (0.0144)
Education	-0.00803** (0.00312)	-0.00892** (0.00450)	-0.0149*** (0.00425)	-0.00873** (0.00344)	-0.00490 (0.00330)	-0.00786* (0.00456)	-0.00574 (0.00365)	-0.00968* (0.00511)	-0.0146*** (0.00438)	-0.0127*** (0.00484)	-0.0103*** (0.00346)	-0.0110** (0.00493)
South	0.0408*** (0.0107)	0.0438*** (0.0165)	0.0458*** (0.0141)	0.0279*** (0.0107)	0.0396*** (0.0108)	0.0261* (0.0147)	0.0340*** (0.0104)	0.00486 (0.0162)	0.0646*** (0.0134)	0.0346** (0.0145)	0.0325*** (0.0108)	0.0297* (0.0160)
Family Inc.	-0.000825 (0.00478)	-0.0148** (0.00672)	-0.0124** (0.00605)	-0.00288 (0.00451)	-0.00549 (0.00559)	-0.0228*** (0.00696)	-0.0132** (0.00544)	-0.00943 (0.00685)	0.00337 (0.00636)	-0.0168** (0.00685)	-0.0134** (0.00531)	-0.00811 (0.00730)
Union	0.0155 (0.0110)	0.0175 (0.0162)	0.0228 (0.0149)	-0.00221 (0.0106)	0.0213* (0.0121)	0.0265 (0.0170)	0.0287** (0.0133)	0.0235 (0.0182)	0.0370** (0.0161)	0.0337* (0.0196)	0.0200 (0.0146)	0.0458** (0.0199)
Constant	0.664*** (0.0298)	0.560*** (0.0396)	0.676*** (0.0373)	0.648*** (0.0325)	0.652*** (0.0288)	0.643*** (0.0365)	0.655*** (0.0303)	0.688*** (0.0430)	0.653*** (0.0378)	0.603*** (0.0405)	0.610*** (0.0298)	0.476*** (0.0411)
Observations	1,394	552	802	1,359	1,259	703	1,185	623	697	662	1,291	807
R-squared	0.068	0.143	0.097	0.079	0.063	0.080	0.065	0.061	0.102	0.097	0.101	0.110

Notes: OLS models with robust standard errors. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 4: Effect of Objective Sorting on Out-Party Feeling Thermometers Across Years

	<u>1972</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2016</u>
Obj. Sort.	-0.140*** (0.0194)	-0.0792*** (0.0282)	-0.162*** (0.0269)	-0.163*** (0.0228)	-0.181*** (0.0223)	-0.0997*** (0.0286)	-0.189*** (0.0222)	-0.189*** (0.0415)	-0.181*** (0.0307)	-0.218*** (0.0353)	-0.224*** (0.0280)	-0.280*** (0.0300)
Issue Lib.	-0.0905*** (0.0281)	-0.0825** (0.0352)	-0.0578 (0.0404)	-0.121*** (0.0344)	-0.0281 (0.0323)	-0.00451 (0.0407)	-0.0390 (0.0308)	-0.0637 (0.0462)	-0.142*** (0.0398)	-0.146*** (0.0403)	-0.170*** (0.0282)	-0.0119 (0.0337)
Issue Cons.	0.0551* (0.0294)	0.0532 (0.0364)	0.0265 (0.0388)	-0.0248 (0.0294)	0.0450 (0.0290)	-0.0482 (0.0367)	-0.0213 (0.0300)	-0.0162 (0.0449)	-0.0352 (0.0365)	-0.0866** (0.0435)	-0.00192 (0.0287)	-0.0434 (0.0377)
Age	0.00152*** (0.000381)	0.00134*** (0.000507)	-7.07e-05 (0.000462)	-0.000139 (0.000383)	0.000113 (0.000410)	-0.000373 (0.000510)	0.000467 (0.000379)	-0.000117 (0.000531)	-0.000946** (0.000457)	1.27e-05 (0.000524)	-0.00137*** (0.000356)	-0.00132*** (0.000412)
Female	0.0194* (0.0108)	0.0565*** (0.0143)	-0.0262* (0.0148)	0.00571 (0.0117)	0.0141 (0.0126)	0.0206 (0.0156)	-0.00533 (0.0123)	0.0409** (0.0175)	-0.0326** (0.0162)	0.0330* (0.0174)	0.0106 (0.0122)	0.00665 (0.0143)
Education	-0.00426 (0.00370)	-0.00401 (0.00524)	-0.00986* (0.00509)	-0.00659 (0.00432)	-0.00724* (0.00427)	-0.0200*** (0.00513)	-0.00123 (0.00442)	0.00366 (0.00679)	-0.00993* (0.00597)	-0.00372 (0.00624)	-0.00562 (0.00405)	-0.00862* (0.00509)
South	0.0279** (0.0130)	-0.00817 (0.0193)	-0.00699 (0.0164)	-0.00843 (0.0141)	-0.00432 (0.0143)	0.0103 (0.0170)	0.0331** (0.0131)	-0.0130 (0.0191)	0.0111 (0.0185)	-0.0168 (0.0181)	-0.0289** (0.0128)	0.00296 (0.0165)
Family Inc.	0.00182 (0.00548)	-0.000950 (0.00812)	0.00130 (0.00731)	0.00745 (0.00604)	0.0133** (0.00676)	0.000228 (0.00809)	0.000352 (0.00629)	-0.0116 (0.00873)	-0.0104 (0.00776)	-0.00456 (0.00877)	0.00954 (0.00612)	-0.00985 (0.00751)
Union	-0.0254* (0.0139)	0.0136 (0.0178)	0.00349 (0.0176)	-0.0314** (0.0136)	-0.00269 (0.0171)	-0.0188 (0.0194)	-0.0174 (0.0164)	-0.0212 (0.0264)	0.00923 (0.0228)	-0.0485** (0.0244)	-0.0354** (0.0175)	-0.0374* (0.0197)
Constant	0.564*** (0.0354)	0.493*** (0.0435)	0.581*** (0.0450)	0.622*** (0.0398)	0.496*** (0.0362)	0.558*** (0.0437)	0.484*** (0.0381)	0.527*** (0.0542)	0.659*** (0.0442)	0.580*** (0.0497)	0.559*** (0.0340)	0.563*** (0.0428)
Observations	1,385	547	799	1,357	1,251	702	1,186	618	697	660	1,289	807
R-squared	0.088	0.081	0.056	0.051	0.057	0.058	0.066	0.054	0.093	0.096	0.091	0.146

Notes: OLS models with robust standard errors. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1